



MINUTES FOR A MEETING OF COUNCIL EDUCATION SEMINAR ROOM 458 6:00 PM ON 14TH AUGUST, 2014

Chair: Timothy Scriven

Minutes: Joanne Gad

Attendance: Douglas King (*departed 7:26 p.m.*), Ensiyeh Kazerouni, Brigitte McFadden, Kane Hardy, Michael de Waal (*departed 7:17 p.m.*), Ella Factor, Paul Stewart, Celeste Ellis, Helen Chen, Kieran Latty, Kylee Hartman-Warren, Gareth Charles (*arrived 6:30 p.m.*)

Guests: Zachary Wone, Xiaoyi Sun (*elected to Council*), Philip Roberts (*elected to Council*), Margaret Kirkby (*Acting SAAO Coordinator, arrived 6:40 p.m.; departed 6:54 p.m.*)

★ 1. Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country at 6:08 p.m.

★ 2. Council Inductions

Council's attention was drawn to the following section of the SUPRA Constitution:

“05.04: 14) All Councillors are required to attend Council Inductions, or arrange to have a private induction before August's meeting of Council or within a month of their appointment.

05.04: 15) All Executive are required to attend the Executive Inductions or arrange to have a private induction before August's meeting of Council or within a month of their appointment.

05.04: 16) All Councillors must sign a Disclosure Agreement stating their awareness and understanding of what it means to be on the governing body of a non-incorporated association before they begin their term on Council.”

The President read the above excerpt and explained that the first two requirements have been met by all new councillors, but that he is aware of one individual who has been overseas for the whole duration of his current term, and as a result has not met them. The President put to Council that this person should be excluded from the clause and it was his belief that this would be congruent with the spirit of the Constitution.

He added that, in his opinion, this business should be resolved before the rest of the meeting continues.

The Treasurer signalled his support of the President's interpretation of the Constitution, and that he would like to move a motion to that effect.

Another Councillor also spoke in favour, stating that in his opinion this was a fair interpretation of the Constitution.

Motion [AUG14-01]: *That the clauses be interpreted such that they exclude persons who are physically not able to attend an induction by way of illness of international travel.*

Moved: Douglas King **Seconded:** Brigitte McFadden

Carried (consensus).

★ 3. Governance

3.1. Apologies

Nayeem Faisal Shaikh
Guien Miao
Michael Butler
Maral Hosseinpour
Alexander Dore
Kaitlin Tagg
Joseph Callingham
Brendan McMonigal
Grace Sharkey
Jessica Bloom
Zachary Thompson

3.2. Proxies

Nayeem Faisal Shaikh to Guien Miao (2ndpref: Joanne Gad)
Guien Miao to Joanne Gad (2ndpref: Maral Hosseinpour; 3rdpref: Kieran Latty)
Maral Hosseinpour to Joanne Gad (2ndpref: Timothy Scriven)
Alexander Dore to Joseph Callingham (2ndpref: Zachary Thompson)
Kaitlin Tagg to Joseph Callingham (2ndpref: Douglas King; 3rdpref: Kieran Latty)
Joseph Callingham to Zachary Thompson
Brendan McMonigal to Zachary Thompson
Grace Sharkey to Brigitte McFadden (2ndpref: Kane Hardy)
Michael Butler to Joanne Gad
Jessica Bloom to Paul Stewart

3.3. Resignations

The President noted that Bhuwan Ghimire has resigned from Council.

3.4. Starring of Items

The Council was invited to identify any items not currently scheduled for discussion. A Councillor asked for clarification around the process of starring, and the President explained the process of starring and opening up items for discussion. A number of reports and items were starred for discussion.

Motion [AUG14-02]: *That Council approves all un-starred items.*

Moved: Douglas King **Seconded:** Brigitte McFadden

Carried (consensus).

4. Minutes and Reports of Meetings

4.1. Minutes of the previous month's meetings

4.1.1. COUNCIL MEETING, 16TH JULY 2014

4.1.2. PUBLICATIONS MEETING, 23RD JULY 2014

4.1.3. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, 24TH JULY 2014

4.1.4. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, 5TH AUGUST 2014

Recommendation: SUPRA Council accepts the tabled minutes.

Attached documentation: Minutes of the abovementioned meetings.

4.2. Business Arising from Minutes

5. Officer Reports

★ 5.1. President

Timothy Scriven

The President noted that SUPRA is now well under way toward setting up a campaigning presence surrounding postgraduate resourcing issues. In addition to this there had been the initiation of a Staff-President forum, and that he has completed the permanent hiring of an additional Student Advice and Advocacy Officer.

He also addressed some administrative details concerning the use of email, and encouraged councillors to be approaching relevant persons face-to-face. He reaffirmed his readiness to provide support to any councillor who would like to see anything change within the University, noting that he had recently written a note to SEG (Education) regarding assessments, and that in his position he has the capacity to address such committees. He emphasised that he is there to support Councillors with projects, and especially to support non-Executive councillors. He also noted an upcoming activism meeting which was being held in the SUPRA offices.

The President called for questions concerning his report, and there were none.

Motion [AUG14-03]: *That Council approve the President's report.*

Moved: Timothy Scriven **Seconded:** Michael de Waal

Carried (consensus).

★ 5.2. Vice-President

Kylee Hartman-Warren

The Vice-President's report was tabled at the meeting.

The Vice-President spoke to report, noting that there are a few events coming up that councillors should be aware of. These included a VISA Seminar and community Pub Night. She thanked councillors for their help with recent events and called for volunteers to help out with the upcoming events. She further reported that she has been attending various meetings at the University, and continues to be a member of the Thesis and Examination Working Party, and has taken some opportunities to be in touch with individuals from University of Technology around matters concerning representation.

The Vice-President raised her concern around the use of alcohol at events, and the Treasurer replied that he has recently sent her an email regarding the matter, adding that our practices are in line with current standards.

Motion [AUG14-04]: *That Council approve the Vice-President's report.*

Moved: Brigitte McFadden **Seconded:** Ella Factor

Carried (consensus).

★ 5.3. Education Officer

Brigitte McFadden

The Education Officer spoke to her report and noted the upcoming protest against the cuts to education, giving an outline of what the day will involve. She reported she has been making and distributing flyers to postgraduate students, and has been putting great effort into bringing a postgraduate voice to the rally. She also noted that she is currently having conversations with other rally organisers, and particularly speakers, in order to bring research training issues to the fore, as she feels there has not previously been much attention given to these issues at rallies.

She reported also that she has been running an awareness campaign using red flannel squares, and she gave a short outline of their history in Quebec, as well as an explanation of their symbolic meaning around private debt for students. She has been giving them out and students have been wearing them around campus.

The Education Officer also reported that she has been working together with organisers of the Bust The Budget Forum, and that she has also been initiating very positive dialogues, concerning postgraduate issues, with representatives of other organisations and trade unions.

The Education Officer also gave an outline of a number of other publicity items that she was putting together, such as T-Shirts.

One Councillor suggested that the organisation obtain SUPRA flags, because they would be useful at rallies. The Education Officer agreed and said that she would investigate their cost.

Motion [AUG14-05]: *That the Education Officer's report be approved.*

Moved: Mike de Waal **Seconded:** Kylee Hartman-Warren

Carried (consensus).

5.4. Treasurer

Douglas King

★ 5.5. Secretary & Director of Student Publications

Joanne Gad

The Secretary & Director of Student Publications spoke to her report, and explained how she would like to address advertising council vacancies in the future, noting that in addition to the nomination forms being considered today, two additional postgraduate students had flagged their interest in nominating for council but had not submitted their forms as yet. She also reported that she had been in touch with a student who had requested SUPRA support for attendance at a conference, however he has not been in further communication.

The Secretary & Director of Student Publications also drew Council's attention to minutes of a recently convened meeting which had been listed on the draft agenda. These minutes had been since withdrawn because the meeting failed to reach quorum.

Gareth Charles entered the room at 6:30 p.m.

Motion [AUG14-06]: *That Council accept the Secretary and Director of Student Publications' report.*

Moved: Douglas King **Seconded:** Michael de Waal

Carried (consensus).

5.6. Equity Officers

5.6.1. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER OFFICER

Michael Butler

5.6.2. DISABILITIES OFFICER

Nayeem Faisal Shaikh

No hours claimed

5.6.3. INTERNATIONAL OFFICER

Maral Hosseinpour

5.6.4. QUEER OFFICER

Grace Sharkey

No hours claimed

5.6.5. WOMEN'S OFFICER

Ensiyeh Ghanizadeh Kazerouni

★ 5.6.6. RURAL AND REGIONAL OFFICER

Position currently vacant

A councillor inquired whether there would be an election in order to fill this vacancy, in order to have a full council.

The Treasurer responded, outlining that numerous repeated attempts at holding an election had been made, but that each meeting had lapsed due to a failure to reach quorum. The Treasurer further added that as a member of the network, he is intending to write a report regarding proposed changes to the position, as a result of these problems with convening the network.

5.7. Business Arising from Reports

The Chair moved procedurally to Item 7.

★ 6. Verbal Report from a Member of Staff

Margaret Kirkby addressed the meeting with a report from staff. She said that the Administration team have been starting work on the Thesis Guide revisions, however there is a University working party still in progress and this is causing delays to pending corrections. She added that we have also run out of hard copies of the publication, so there may need to be an update made despite these changes still being in progress. The reason for this is so that some new hard copies can be printed, and any known policy changes could be flagged to readers with an insertion stating that the processes for reviewing the policies in question are still in progress.

Margaret Kirkby also noted the current review of the Postgraduate Survival Manual, which is being run by the Director of Student Publications, and said that comments and feedback is also being sought from staff. She reported also that a number of issues regarding the premises are in process of being resolved, and noted that there are a number of new microwaves and appliances being installed. She further added that there has been continuous support given to councillors in their work, and she invited councillors to come into the offices and get in touch because staff are always looking for this interaction with representatives.

In the area of casework, Margaret Kirkby reported that this week alone over 30 new students have in for individual appointments, and that it therefore has been very busy during this period for the Student Advice and Advocacy Officer team. Briefings for University committees have continued, as has individual Officer support. Outreach is now happening weekly at the faculty of Nursing, and the faculty of Health Sciences. Occasional outreach is also being done at other campuses.

With respect to the Legal Service, Margaret Kirkby reported that the SUPRA solicitor is currently away at a conference and has been dealing with matters via email. She also underlined the importance of having a solicitor from a community-service background, and that this background makes the SUPRA legal service more valuable for both SUPRA and for students.

Margaret Kirkby called for questions regarding her report, and there were none.

Motion [AUG14-08]: *That SUPRA Council accept and thank Margaret Kirkby for her report.*

Moved: Douglas King **Seconded:** Ensiyeh Kazerouni

Carried (consensus).

The Chair moved procedurally to Item 8.

★ 7. Workplace Health and Safety

The President explained that a Health and Safety Representative (HSR) was not elected at the previous meeting of Council and that there was an opportunity for one to be elected now.

The Treasurer confirmed that there was no requirement to elect a HSR and that there was a five-day training course which any elected HSR would have to complete.

The Secretary & Director of Student Publications conveyed her strong support for the election of a Council HSR, saying that since councillors perform a wide variety of work, in varied settings, it is difficult to keep track of health and safety issues which arise from time to time. In our current premises there have been numerous issues constantly arising, and while councillors have used workarounds it would be better to have a dedicated HSR who could ensure problems are addressed systematically. She also noted that much of our work involves community and social events which are after hours, or which involve physical lifting and carrying of materials, and that the nature of councillor work can be quite different to that of SUPRA staff. She added that having a dedicated Council HSR may mean more frequent reporting of issues, and a better likelihood of problems followed up appropriately.

One councillor signalled his support, and also raised the ongoing issue of a lack of lighting during after-hours events. The lights for central courtyard area switch off automatically at a set time in the evening, and this could pose a risk to not only councillors and staff, but also members who are attending our events. Our last barbecue had poor lighting and this is a known problem. The President said he will follow up this issue with the Administration Coordinator.

Another councillor asked whether there is an insurance liability issue here and the Treasurer replied that it would be a good look for the Council to have a Health and Safety Representative. The Secretary & Director of Student Publications noted that the current Workplace Health and Safety legislation put a large emphasis on reporting, and that it is our collective responsibility to create an environment that encourages reporting and addressing issues as they arise. Electing a HSR would be a strong step toward creating such an environment.

The Treasurer then nominated himself for the position of Council Health & Safety Representative.

One councillor asked about the specific responsibilities that the HSR would have to carry out, and the Treasurer replied that it is a sort of watchdog.

Another councillor asked whether the position would suit someone who is in the offices frequently, and the President responded saying that would be preferable.

Margaret Kirkby entered the room at 6:40 p.m.

Motion [AUG14-07]: *That Douglas King be elected as the Health & Safety Representative for the SUPRA Council workgroup.*

Moved: Timothy Scriven **Seconded:** Kieran Latty

Carried (1 abstention).

The Chair moved procedurally to Item 6.

★ 12. Other Business

One councillor reported the NTEU's discovery that the University has significant investments in Transfield, and that this is something that SUPRA Council should discuss at a future meeting.

The President also noted that SUPRA currently banks with the NAB, which is also a major stakeholder in Transfield. He said that divestment is being investigated, however is complicated by the fact that there are few banks which are not involved in similar activities that are also easily accessible by SUPRA staff by being on campus or nearby.

The Chair closed the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

ATTACHMENT B: SUPRA MOTION ON LIBRARY CHANGES

Motion [AUG14-11]: *That SUPRA Council adopt the tabled motion with noted amendments.*

[Attachment B: SUPRA Motion on Library Changes]

Moved: Timothy Scriven **Seconded:** Kieran Latty

Carried (consensus).

SUPRA opposes the restructure planned by library management. The university is trying to sell the changes as being in the interests of postgraduates but postgrads - like undergrads and library staff - were not consulted adequately about them.

Postgrads value library resources, collections and library staff. The postgrad study spaces and being promised do not make up for what we lose in these changes. We do not think it's fair for the university to expect us to trade one thing we need for another. As one SUPRA member said "I understand that study space/computers are important but I do not believe it is the library's responsibility to provide these services. The library should focus on its core functions."

Postgrads appreciate and need the expertise and help of library staff. When asked to comment on the library, SUPRA members said things such as "Library staff are very helpful, courteous and professional. We need them."; "Staff are very friendly and often help with relatively small and silly things like not being able to access a particular online item, but which can take a long time for someone to solve on their own," and "There should be no loss of library staff. "

We are therefore angry to hear that over 150 current staff members face redundancy. While library management likes to argue that more positions will be created, the fact is that these higher-level positions will not be filled by existing library workers and cannot substitute for their work. They also do not replace the number of positions that have been lost over the past three years in the library's hiring freeze. Instead, frontline and technical staff positions will be contracted out to private companies and permanent positions will be replaced by casual employment.

What's happening to library staff is happening across the university: the work of academic and general staff is being outsourced and casualised. This isn't good for postgrads. Staff working conditions are our study conditions. What's more, many postgrads are also employed by the university. It's important to postgrads that the library and university treat staff with the respect they deserve.

While we recognise that electronic resources are essential, postgrads also value books and still need to use them. We need the library's physical collection for our study and research. Cutting the collection and storing it off-site makes things harder for us. Research students told us that not being able to browse and having to request items from storage hinders their research and that they "often request materials that appear to have simply been lost in the move." A coursework student told us that a number of times this year they have had to "wait for weeks on end for a book because there was only one copy to share amongst a group of 30 or more."

One SUPRA member summarised the issue this way: "Please ask the university to stop treating our precious libraries as a matter of \$\$\$ and stop making these so-called "user-friendly" spaces which do not allow postgraduates to get their study done."

SUPRA supports the campaign of the NTEU in opposing the proposed changes.

We therefore call on The University to commit to:

- job security for Library staff;
- the expansion of, not cuts to, Library spaces and services in the wake of uncapped student numbers and a foreshadowed increased demand for Library services;
- openness and transparency in their plans for Library services;
- a broader consultation process that brings together more than just the selective viewpoints of certain stakeholders; and
- ensuring the knowledge of current Library staff is maintained into the future.

Note: all quotations come from the USyd Postgraduate Students' Library Experience Survey run by SUPRA