

MINUTES

MEETING: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

HELD ON: 25 August 2020

TIME: 1:02pm to 2:56pm

LOCATION: Online via Zoom

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ruolin Ma, President, Chair (via audio-visual link)

Nick Forbutt, Vice President (via audio-visual link)

Caitlin Brown, Honorary Treasurer (via audio-visual link)

Yinfeng Shen, Honorary Secretary (via audio-visual link)

Benjamin Hines, Director (via audio-visual link)

Ruby Lotz, Director (via audio-visual link)

Kailin Qin, Director (via audio-visual link)

Nicholas Rigby, Director (via audio-visual link)

Belinda Thomas, Director (via audio-visual link)

Di Wang, Director (via audio-visual link from 1:25pm)

Prudence Wilkins-Wheat, Director (via audio-visual link)

Jane Drummond, Senate Appointed Director (via audio-visual link)

Marie Leech, Senate Appointed Director (via audio-visual link)

Connor Wherrett, Immediate Past President (via audio-visual link to 1:57pm)

USU STAFF

Jess Reed, Acting Chief Executive Officer (via audio-visual link)

Dane Luo, Board Secretary (via audio-visual link)

OBSERVERS

Nina Dillon Britton (via audio-visual link)

MINUTES

1. Opening

The meeting opened at 1:02pm.

The Chair delivered the Acknowledgement of Country.

1.1 Apologies and Leaves of Absence

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was conducted online via audio-visual link.

Di Wang requested an apology for a late arrival. **Connor Wherrett** requested an apology for an early departure.

Resolved

B155/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS agree to conduct this meeting online via audio-visual link and accept the apologies of Di Wang and Connor Wherrett.

Mover: Marie Leech

Seconder: Yinfeng Shen

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

1.2 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

There are no disclosures of conflicts of interest.

2. Meeting Administration

2.1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The draft Minutes of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS held on 31 July 2020 was tabled and taken as read.

Resolved

B156/20

That the Minutes of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS held on 31 July 2020 be approved as a true and correct record.

Mover: Nicholas Rigby

Seconder: Ruby Lotz

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

2.2 Business Arising from the Minutes Not Addressed Elsewhere

No business arising from the Minutes not addressed elsewhere.

2.3 Open Question Time

Nina Dillon-Britton asked for the position of the USU regarding reports in the Sydney Morning Herald that staff at Universities may go on an unprotected strike. **Ruolin Ma** said that the BOARD OF DIRECTORS has not discussed the issue but noted that the BOARD OF DIRECTORS supports staff members.

Nina Dillon-Britton asked whether any decision about closing staff outlets in solidarity of unprotected staff strikes would be conducted in camera. **Ruolin Ma** said that the BOARD OF DIRECTORS needs to discuss the matter and no position of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS can be assumed.

Nina Dillon-Britton asked if Honi Soit will receive future media releases. **Ruolin Ma** answered affirmatively.

Nina Dillon-Britton asked what is being discussed at the BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting today. **Ruolin Ma** said that she can't speak until the BOARD OF DIRECTORS has discussed the issue. Honi Soit can request an agenda from the Board Secretary. **Dane Luo** agreed to send Honi Soit the agenda of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting.

2.4 Motions on Notice

There are no motions on Notice.

3. Matters for Discussion

3.1 CEO/Secretariat Report

Recommendation 1: That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS notes the Report.

The report and Return to Campus Plan (as of 20 August 2020) were tabled and taken as read.

In response to questions from **Prudence Wilkins-Wheat**, **Jess Reed** clarified the following:

- WIP stands for a work-in-progress meeting. At this meeting, all the Departments meet to discuss their projects;
- Online training for clubs has been delayed due to a bottleneck of resourcing; and
- The National Code of Conduct is a document made by the National Cabinet regarding tenancies during COVID-19.

The BOARD OF DIRECTORS requested for the details of the deferred payment plan.

Resolved

B157/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS accepts the recommendation and notes the CEO/Secretariat Report.

Mover: Belinda Thomas

Secunder: Kailin Qin

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

3.2 Finance Report

Recommendation 1: That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS notes the Report.

The report and Finance Dashboard were tabled and taken as read.

In response to questions from Directors, **Rebecca Sahni** provided clarification on the following:

- Total fixed assets depreciate monthly;
- The value of cash in current assets depreciated in July because the USU had expected receive its Student Services and Amenities Fee payment in that month but it was received in August;
- The cost of sales has decreased because of the JobKeeper payment;
- Pay As You Go (PAYG) tax and the balance of GST inputs and outputs in the Business Activity Statement (BAS) needs to be paid to the Australian Taxation Office by law;
- There was a decrease in cash on hand in July because the USU needs to pay wages to its employees and a progress payment for utilities to the University; and
- The investment portfolio is at \$3.24 million.

Di Wang entered the meeting at 1:25pm.

The BOARD OF DIRECTORS requested the following:

- Benchmarks for ratios of reserves against other commercial organisations;
- Information about the volatility of the market from the investment portfolio manager; and
- Suggestions on how to diversify our investments.

Resolved

B158/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS accepts the recommendation and notes the Finance Report.

Mover: Nicholas Rigby

Secunder: Nick Forbutt

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

3.3 USU Activities Report

Recommendation 1: That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS notes the Report.

The report was tabled and taken as read.

Tania Moroko said we have almost reached 32,000 members. In July, we were working on the C&S Directory and Virtual Welcome Fest, which was launched last week. We gained 330 new members at the Virtual Welcome Fest. Our engagement levels have increased over July and August. As campus is getting back to normal, digital engagement is continuing. Over the next few months, the digital marketing team will be showcasing profiles of some of our clubs and societies.

The BOARD OF DIRECTORS thanked the staff for their work and noted the very positive feedback received.

In response to questions from **Prudence Wilkins-Wheat**, **Jess Reed** clarified that Palladian Cup is being organised with SUSF and has been paid for by the colleges.

The BOARD OF DIRECTORS requested that the COVID Safe Policy be referred to the C&S Committee.

Resolved

B159/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS accepts the recommendation and notes the USU Activities Report.

Mover: Prudence Wilkins-Wheat

Secunder: Ruby Lotz

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

3.4 Report of the Honorary Secretary

Recommendation 1: That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS notes the Report.

The report was tabled and taken as read.

Yinfeng Shen noted the following:

- The Virtual Welcome Fest was a success and a great milestone. It is positive to see different departments working together;
- He encourages the BOARD OF DIRECTORS to think creatively and responsibly; and
- The C&S Committee student member applications are currently being considered.

Resolved

B160/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS accepts the recommendation and notes the Report of the Honorary Secretary.

Mover: Benjamin Hines

Seconder: Caitlin Brown

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

3.5 Report of the Honorary Treasurer

The report was tabled and taken as read.

Caitlin Brown noted the following:

- Congratulations to Virtual Welcome Fest;
- There has been a positive month with students returning to campus;
- In making financial decisions, the BOARD OF DIRECTORS needs to think conservatively as we do not know how the landscape will change;
- She has been invited to sit on the COVID-19 Response Committee to hear about the financial aspects; and
- The Finance Committee has been super active and it has been positive to hear an external active voice.

Resolved

B161/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS notes the Report of the Honorary Treasurer.

Mover: Belinda Thomas

Seconder: Marie Leech

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

3.6 Report of the Vice President

The report was tabled and taken as read.

Nick Forbutt noted the following:

- The BOARD OF DIRECTORS must be cognisant that we can't deliver the best student experience without the work of the staff;
- He welcomes feedback on committee reporting; and
- He has attended meetings about teach students about COVID safe practices and improving accessibility on campus.

Resolved

B162/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS accepts the recommendation and notes the Report of the Vice President.

Mover: Marie Leech

Seconder: Yinfeng Shen

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

Resolved

B163/20

That the Chair be moved to the Vice President.

Mover: Di Wang

Seconder: Yinfeng Shen

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

3.7 Report of the President

Recommendation 1: That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS notes the Report.

Recommendation 2: That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS appoint another external member who has practical knowledge in recruitment

The report was tabled and taken as read.

Ruolin Ma noted the following:

- Virtual Welcome Fest has been the high note of August'
- She has been working closely with the University for their plans in the rest of 2020 and 2021 so that our operations can accommodate students who return to campus;
- Given we have key vacancies with CEO and Director P&C, she recommends that the BOARD OF DIRECTORS appoints an additional external member to the Remuneration Committee with specialty in recruitment;
- On the issues of transparency and communication with staff, it is important that we consider these issues together, not separately. We should have a strong communication strategy as this is to the tool for increasing transparency;
- The USU has changed the meeting agenda to move confidential business to the end to increase participation. In addition, motions on notice and Executive reports are published online.

Resolved

B164/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS accepts the recommendations.

Mover: Yinfeng Shen

Seconder: Nicholas Rigby

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

Resolved

B165/20

That the Chair be moved to the President.

Mover: Prudence Wilkins-Wheat

Seconded: Marie Leech

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

3.8 Other Matters for Discussion

The BOARD OF DIRECTORS took a picture to celebrate Wear It Purple Day on Friday.

4. Matters for Decision

4.1 Other Matters for Decision

Nick Forbutt presented a motion regarding transparency. The text of the motion provides:

Accountability is essential to good governance. As the largest student organisation in Australia, and one that values its staff and membership, the USU Board must be transparent and accountable in its decision-making.

Recently, staff and students have expressed disappointment with the lack of transparency around board decisions. The 2020-2021 Board has a responsibility to listen and adapt to feedback from its membership and stakeholders to improve the process by which significant decisions are made.

Whilst some in-camera decisions pertain to confidential information which cannot be revealed (such as staff salaries and commercially sensitive information), often decisions have been held in-camera without alignment or reference to the USU's in camera policy.

The USU has not conducted a Transparency Review or reviewed the in-camera policy since 2014. This failure to regularly review critical governance policies demands urgent consideration.

As Board Directors who are elected by our membership, we must take active steps to increase our accountability because the voices of membership are central in a democratic student organisation.

As such, the University of Sydney Union Board:

1. *Commits to a review of the USU's current in-camera policy before the September Board meeting to:*
 - a. *Clarify the criteria for moving in-camera.*
 - b. *Clarify if the voting record of the Resolutions passed during the in-camera part of the meeting should form part of the ordinary minutes.*
2. *Commits to diminishing the instances of in-camera voting where possible, and where not possible, publicly justifying why a vote must be conducted in camera according to the reformed in-camera policy.*

Resolved

B166/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS agree to the motion.

Mover: Nick Forbutt

Seconded: Ruolin Ma

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

Prudence Wilkins-Wheat presented a motion about climate change. **Benjamin Hines** proposed an amendment, which the mover accepted. The text of the motion, as amended, provides:

The University of Sydney Union (USU) has demonstrated lately its commitment to sustainability and eco-friendly practices on-campus. However, it is our belief that more can be done to tackle climate change on a systemic level. Given the devastating effects that mining, fracking, and drilling are having on the world and the future of our members, it is time the USU develops a stronger stance on climate change in line with the dramatic consequences of these practices.

On 19 September 2019, it was expressed that:

“The USU Board and Staff strongly care about a safe climate future and together we support Global Climate Strike action. We are operating on reduced staff levels on Friday 20 September to allow for participation.”

Whilst this symbolises our growing desire to support the climate movement, we as a key representative body at the University of Sydney should recognise the conditions that create the need for such protests: a climate emergency.

Millions of hectares across NSW burned early this year, stopping many of our own staff from coming onto campus because of respiratory concerns, and yet the government still allowed the expansion of coal mining under the Woronora Reservoir and businesses like Rio Tinto continue to destroy sacred Aboriginal Land, and the University has yet to divest from the fossil fuel industry.

We must heed the United Nations Environment Program’s Emissions Gap Report, dated 29 November 2019, which states that countries party to the Paris Agreement must increase efforts fivefold to avoid a more than 1.5°C increase in global warming. The Department of the Environment and Energy report, dated December 2018, shows Australia is not on track to meet the target set at the Paris climate change conference to reduce emissions to 26-28 per cent on 2005 levels by 2030. Despite this, the government’s national disaster risk reduction framework, dated 5 April 2019, only sets out strategies to collect disaster data and identify potential disaster risks, rather than clear action on climate change. There hasn’t been enough work to mitigate the effects of climate change.

With all this in mind, we must use our influence to speak out against those who remain inactive on the issue of climate change.

In keeping with the unequivocal scientific consensus on the immense risk of climate change, we call on the University of Sydney Union to:

1. *Declare a climate emergency and implore governments, corporations, and universities, including the University of Sydney, to:*
 - a. *Halt new fossil-fuel-dependent projects, phase out existing fossil fuel use, and increase the implementation of renewable energy;*

- b. *Divest from entities and projects that contribute in some form to climate change or similar; and*
 - c. *Champion the need for legislative and governance decision-making to be based on independent, peer-reviewed science;*
 2. *Make a public statement through social media - Facebook, Instagram, and WeChat to:*
 - a. *Reaffirm the Board's commitment to sustainability and action on climate change and declare the climate emergency;*
 - b. *Promote School Strike 4 Climate's September 25 action; and*
 - c. *Advocate for an ambitious implementation of the sustainability strategy.*
 3. *Commit to running more educational seminars and events that directly discuss climate change alongside sustainability and empower students to take proactive action for our planet.*
 4. *Further commit to improving the USU's own carbon footprint by including environmental targets in our Strategic Plan.*

Resolved

B167/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS agree to the motion.

Mover: Prudence Wilkins-Wheat

Seconder: Belinda Thomas

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

Connor Wherrett left the meeting at 1:57pm.

4.2 Confidential Business

The Chair stated that confidential business includes a discussion about the scale of the organisation, which includes salary and privacy issues.

Resolved

B168/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS move *in camera*.

Mover: Di Wang

Seconder: Yinfeng Shen

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

The BOARD OF DIRECTORS moved *in camera* at 2:03pm.

Resolved

B169/20

That the Confidential Minutes of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS held on 31 July 2020, as amended, be approved as a true and correct record.

Resolved

B170/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS accept recommendations 1 and 2.

Resolved

B171/20

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS, by Special Resolution, accepts the recommendations 1 and 2.

Resolved**B172/20**

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS accepts the recommendations of the Remuneration Committee on 11 August 2020.

Resolved**B173/20**

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS notes the recommendation of the COVID-19 Response Committee on 18 August 2020 and defer further consideration to next week.

Resolved**B174/20**

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS move out of camera.

Mover: Benjamin Hines

Seconder: Di Wang

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

The BOARD OF DIRECTORS moved *ex camera* at 2:53pm.

5. Matters for Noting**5.1 Minutes of the Remuneration Committee**

The draft Minutes of the Remuneration Committee held on 15 July 2020 and 29 July 2020 was presented.

Resolved**B175/20**

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS notes the minutes of the Remuneration Committee on 15 July 2020 and 29 July 2020.

Mover: Benjamin Hines

Seconder: Yinfeng Shen

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

5.2 Minutes of the COVID-19 Response Committee

The draft Minutes of the COVID-19 Response Committee held on 11 August 2020 was presented.

Resolved**B176/20**

That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS notes the minutes of the COVID-19 Response Committee on 11 August 2020.

Mover: Nicholas Rigby

Seconder: Nick Forbutt

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

5.3 Other Matters for Noting

There are no other matters for noting.

6. Close of Meeting

6.1 Matters for Disclosure

There are no matters for disclosure.

6.2 Next Meeting

Resolved

B177/20

That a special meeting of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS be held on Tuesday 1 September 2020 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm.

Mover: Marie Leech

Seconder: Yinfeng Shen

13 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

The meeting closed at 2:56pm.

BOARD REPORT

PRESIDENT

USU BOARD MEETING DATE: 25 Aug 2020
AGENDA ITEM: 3.7
REPORT PERIOD: Jul - Aug 2020
AUTHOR: Irene Ma
TITLE: President
PHONE/MOBILE: 0450 108 966

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Recommendation 1 That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS note the report.		
Recommendation 2 That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS appoint another external member who has practical knowledge in recruitment		

Welcome back everyone to a new semester.

August has been a busy month with the change of staff capacity and enormous financial impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Living with uncertainty is likely to be the most difficult thing we are experiencing. I appreciate staff who put their trust on the BOARD OF DIRECTORS and I recognise their commitment and hard work. This month, I attended a large number of meetings with stakeholders in the University and focused on communications and more consultations with members of staff.

VIRTUAL WELCOME FESTIVAL

I must start my report with a high note of student experience in August – the first Virtual Welcome Festival of the USU. Thanks to Tania, Sam, the digital team and the Student Program staff who organised the Virtual Welcome Festival and made the history. Thanks as well to all the Board Directors who attended the live stream.

UPDATE ON UNIVERSITY MEETINGS

Meeting with Chancellor

Jess and I met up with the Chancellor this month to discuss about a number of issues pertaining to the current situation of the USU and University, as well as the student body more generally under the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

- The Chancellor recognised the difficult decisions the BOARD OF DIRECTORS has to make to ensure the USU's future sustainability during this trying time. This is an extraordinary situation for the USU and the University.
- We discussed the delivery of on-line classes and the issue of international students returning to campus. I pointed out that some technical failures of Zoom may add additional barriers for students who chose on-line courses. The Chancellor assured me that the University has been working on the technical issues during the winter holidays and has fixed them.
- I also discussed with the Chancellor the need to increase the financial literacy of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS, and asked if the University can introduce academics from Business School to deliver some training session. The Chancellor agreed, and also suggested to contact David Wright for a COVID-19 focused financial session.
- The Chancellor has advised me that I will be able to give a 5-minute presentation soon.
- The Chancellor emphasised now is the time that the Board needs to put their political differences aside, and focusing on working as a team to respond to the pandemic.

Meeting with Susanna and Pip

Jess and I met up with Susanna and Pip, and discussed about the future relationship between the USU and the University. I expressed that despite of the USU and the University as two independent organisations, we share many common goals in providing the best student experience to our community. We need a strong relationship during this unprecedented time to help each other to better achieve these goals.

- Following the discussion with Pip at February Board meeting, we discussed about the coming strategic planning year for both the USU and the University.
- We also discussed about the SSAF. Pip informed me the student enrolment is better than what was anticipated. The SSAF is highly likely to be delivered as estimated.
- I discussed with Susanna about the collaboration in the digital transformation of co-curriculum.
- We also discussed about the coming orientation week. The University will move the orientation week entirely online this semester, due to the increasing risk of second wave.
- We also discussed about students returning to campus. The University is aiming for approximately 30% of students to come back on campus daily in Sem 2. The timetable for next semester is not ready at the time when we met, and they will share more details with the USU once the timetable has been set.

Other Meetings with University

- a. Jess and I met with David Pacey via zoom to discuss the current situation of the USU and the University. He suggested to meet up with the Chancellor and would help arrange a meeting.
- b. We met with David Wright via zoom to discuss financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the USU's response. He is happy to deliver a COVID-19 focused financial session to the Board or the Finance Committee.

UE SCC

At the Student Consultative Committee, we discussed the recommendation provided to move a semester permanently to 12 contact weeks. Even though this recommendation is in line with the most Group of Eight universities, it has certain impact on the USU operations that I have scoped out at the meeting:

- The USU commercial operation highly relies on student foot traffic. Shortened contact weeks directly affects the foot traffic over the course of a year.
- Clubs and Societies must hold their AGM or IGM within the semester according to the Constitution. A shortened semester will also affect clubs and societies to schedule their AGM / IGM.
- Some Clubs and Societies provides classes throughout a semester. It will also affect their teaching schedule once the change is made.
- If the final decision of moving a semester permanently to 12 contact weeks, the USU should start language exchange program in orientation week. As the semester workloads become more intensive, it will provide students especially international students whose English as foreign language more time and opportunity to prepare for their studies before the beginning of the semester.

ESTABLISH OF COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMITTEE

Following resolution B131/20 that was carried at the meeting on 24 June 2020, the BOARD OF DIRECTORS has established COVID-19 Response committee, that responds to:

- Develop a roadmap;
- Review the motion regularly; and
- Updates the Board at least twice per month

I will leave the detailed updates to Vice President.

APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL MEMBER TO THE HR & REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

In accordance with sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the Regulations, the Board appointed Wendy Klaassen to the HR & Remuneration Committee. I want to thank Wendy for voluntarily putting your hand up to the committee, and I look forward to working with you. Jess and I have met her before the appointment. I believe she will bring her experience and knowledge to assist the USU in Organisational Culture Review, and establishment of a whistleblower channel.

Given the organisation is facing to fill the vacancy of two key positions – Chief Executive Officer and Director of People and Culture. I recommend the BOARD OF DIRECTORS to appoint another external member who has practical knowledge in recruitment.

CURRENT ISSUE ON CAMPUS

The Students with disabilities are constantly experiencing barriers in participating in co-curriculum. As always, the Board strongly supports marginalised students participating in clubs and societies' events and will continue to work on how to better facilitate.

Nick and Ruby has met up with a former Disability Collective Office Bearer from the SRC. I will leave it to the Vice President to report.

TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

Actions speak louder than words. Without a doubt, the Board is committed to increase transparency, and to find the balance in between transparency and good governance.

- a. The Executive Committee has decided to move the confidential discussion to the end of the Board meeting, in order to increase participation.
- b. Regular presidential letters have been sent out to increase the communication between the staff and the Board.
- c. I have met up and spoke with some staff members this month. Most are casual chat for feedback and communication of BOARD OF DIRECTORS' decision. I appreciate all your patience and understanding at this trying time.
- d. The Senate Appointed Directors, Marie and Jane, and I met up with three members of staff for a lengthy discussion about the current USU situation. We very appreciate all the inputs from staff. We have and will take all the feedbacks into our discussion and decision-making process.

Dear Staff of the USU,

From the many conversations I had with staff members last week, I know many of you are concerned about the financial uncertainty posed by the pandemic. Living with instability is likely to be the most difficult thing we are experiencing now, and we appreciate your patience as we navigate these tumultuous times alongside you. I also appreciate the staff who reached out to me and the Board to share concerns, views, and suggestions. The Senate-Appointed Directors and I met with three members of staff last week for a lengthy discussion about the current USU situation. We very greatly appreciated this input from them and will discuss in detail their very valuable input with the rest of the Board. I want to assure you that the Board made these decisions, and will continue to make all future decisions, with extreme care, and a consideration of the bigger picture.

2020 is a uniquely challenging year for us all. During this unprecedented pandemic, it has become clear that all businesses have been affected in some way; the crisis is one that has been felt both internally and externally. Unfortunately, we are in a sector which is, due to its unique nature, being very seriously damaged by the economic impacts of Covid-19. The initial shocking damage in March/April saw the loss of over 1,000,000 casual jobs in the hospitality, arts, and entertainment areas. In those early days of the pandemic, our sector had to let go 18.7 per cent of employees. Universities Australia Chair Professor Deborah Terry said: “[an estimation] that universities face a revenue decline of between \$3 billion and \$4.6 billion this year”, and these losses are, by virtue of their underlying causes, correlated with the hindered performance of the USU.

As the President, I am immensely proud of how our staff are working together to continue to deliver an inspiring student experience under the most challenging of conditions. Wellbeing and managing financial risk are the two main objectives that need to be prioritised. In March, the USU did not follow these typical early actions of capacity reduction. Through careful oversight, we protected our Staff in those early anxious days by keeping them on full salary and ensuring we were supported by JobKeeper for all eligible employees. This is something we are incredibly proud of as an organisation that values its staff highly. We managed to continue that for the first two months of the pandemic, allowing some breathing space even though of course we were all aware of family and friends who were experiencing the more typical damaging financial impacts – lost jobs, forced leave-taking, and pay reductions to only JobKeeper. Notably, we continued to hold off any of these measures despite large reductions in revenue, seeing unprecedented financial losses.

In early May, we continued to have close to zero income, but ongoing large salary costs and our forecasts indicated the need for immediate action. We reluctantly agreed that a reduction to 60% of salary was urgently needed, and we maintained that through May, June, and into July. This decision was vindicated when the USU saw a reduction of approximately \$5.5 million in income, which is a 92% decrease in Quarter 2 compared with the same quarter last year.

While the DVC wish to bring more students to return to campus for their wellbeing, the recent threat of a second wave forced the University to conduct the orientation week entirely online. A plan of return to campus with only around 30% of students at a time under the practice of physical distancing due to the campus capacity. Ongoing examination of our close to zero income, a loss of 97% of customers, continued high salary costs, the threat of a second wave, and financial forecasts have shown, and continue to show, the unavoidable need for further cash containment. At a time when the University is expecting on-campus traffic to be at 30% of its usual number, we have reluctantly agreed, with an eye on the survival and sustainability of the organisation as well as to avoid potential harsher measures arising from delaying the decision, that a reduction to 40% of capacity was needed.

To survive, organisations like ours that had lost the majority of their business overnight simply had to focus on containment of cash outflow, and focus on the survival of the organisation. There is no reason for this action other than ensuring our wonderful organisation will continue to survive through what will clearly be difficult times. We have put this change in place with extreme care, ensuring it will be monitored on a weekly basis, and will be reversed as soon as practicably possible. This is a point we feel needs to be emphasised, both in terms of its importance and so that you know it is something we are committed to. We cannot stress enough the fact that this reduction is something we do not like having to do, and is something we wish to reverse the moment it is viable.

During this time, we as a community must support each other. We want to support all of our staff the best as we can. Apply for special consideration if you are in an extremely difficult financial situation and have taken all the available steps to ameliorate.

My final point today is that the pandemic will end and we will return to normal operation as soon as it is financially viable for us to do so. Be safe, and look after each other, and yourself. Do not hesitate to reach out if you have any concerns, suggestions, or questions.

Moving forward, I will provide a regular general update for the foreseeable future.

Kindest Regards,
Irene Ma

IRENE MA
PRESIDENT | BOARD DIRECTOR

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BOARD REPORT

VICE PRESIDENT

USU BOARD MEETING DATE: 25 August 2020
AGENDA ITEM: 0.0
REPORT PERIOD: July 31 – August 25
AUTHOR: Nick Forbutt
TITLE: Vice President
PHONE/MOBILE: 0429549521

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Recommendation 1 That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS note the report.		

The past month has been a challenging time for the USU. First and foremost, I would like to express my deep gratitude for all staff. I appreciate the complex and incredibly valuable work that you continue to perform during such a tumultuous time.

The Board must always be cognisant of the fact that the USU cannot deliver the best university experience in the country without its staff. One only needs to look at the seamless delivery of Virtual Welcome Festival and the new C&S Directory to understand the hard work and dedication of our staff members, without which we would not have such impressive projects.

COMMITTEES

Establishment of COVID-19 Response Committee

The Board recently established the COVID-19 Response Committee to monitor government and medical advice regarding COVID-19 and plan responses to a variety of risks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, the COVID-19 Response Committee has met on two occasions.

I would like to thank Robyn Matthews for joining the Committee as the Staff Representative. Robyn has already provided valuable insight into the significant effects of the Board's decision.

As Chair, I endeavour to ensure that this committee is decisive and effective, and that the staff reductions are lifted as soon as feasibly possible. I encourage all staff members to reach out to me if you would like more information about the committee or would like to see an item placed on the agenda.

Committee Reporting

During my term as Vice President, I will report to the Board about the delegated authority exercised by Committees and issues that they are considering.

COMMITTEE	MAJOR ISSUES/RISKS	DECISIONS	THINGS TO DO
COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMITTEE	<p>Staff Capacity Reductions.</p> <p>The primary external risks to our organisation are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased government restrictions, specifically a move to stage three restrictions. 2. A COVID-19 case at a USU outlet/on campus. 3. Face-to-face teaching being cancelled in Semester Two. 	<p>That the Committee:</p> <p>Recommends that the Board of Directors at its next meeting vary resolution B131/20 of the Board of Directors to increase staff capacity to 60%, provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The revenue of outlets from 3 August exceeds \$90,000; and b. Face-to-face teaching will continue. c. There are no changes to government restrictions to food and beverage which are prohibitive to USU Operations 	<p>Continue monitoring the external environment, government and medical advice.</p> <p>Continue to meet regularly with the University to be in step with their approach.</p> <p>Create a financial risk strategy/plan so that we are prepared in the event that the risks eventuate.</p>
HR & REMUNERATION COMMITTEE	<p>Recruitment of a Director of People and Culture.</p>	<p>That the Committee recommends that the BOARD OF DIRECTORS directs the management commence the recruitment of a Director of</p>	<p>Investigate managing recruitment internally at the lowest cost possible.</p>

		People and Culture when the capacity reduction returns to 60%.	
FINANCE	Cashflow and Future Operations. Tightening of JobKeeper eligibility/declining levels of government support.	N/A	Continue monitoring the cashflow and performance of operations. Adjust cashflow with updated JobKeeper and sales estimates.
DEBATES	Transitioning to online & disruption of events due to COVID-19.	N/A	N/A
EXECUTIVE	USU Rewards Refunds.	Extending Rewards to the end of Semester 2, 2021 at no extra cost for those students who bought a full year, or to Sem 2, 2020 for those that bought one semester.	Monitor the communication to members of the refund.

TRANSPARENCY

Thank you to the staff who have provided the Board with feedback on recent decisions.

Accountability is essential to good governance. As the largest student organisation in Australia, the USU Board must be held accountable to its staff and membership. The 2020-2021 Board has a responsibility to listen and adapt to our membership and improve the process by which significant decisions are made.

The USU has not conducted a Transparency Review or reviewed the in-camera policy since 2014. This failure to regularly review critical governance policies has led to votes and discussion being held in-camera without alignment or reference to the USU's in camera policy. This failure to regularly review critical governance policies demands the Board's urgent consideration.

WEAR IT PURPLE DAY

Friday the 28th of August is **Wear it Purple Day**, an annual LGBTIQ+ awareness day that celebrates diversity and young queer people in Australia. Thank you to the Board for popping on some purple for this meeting!

We have a responsibility to create a safe space on campus and show young LGBTIQ+ students that they are seen and supported. This year's theme is "WE ARE THE CHANGE", which encapsulates the necessity for our generation to implement productive and inclusive changes in our community.

COVID-19 RETURN TO CAMPUS

On August 13 I met with Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Pip Patterson and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Life) Susanna Scarparo to discuss return to campus plans. The University is planning to implement a COVID-19 module that informs students about COVID-19, the risks of infection and how to be COVID-19 safe on campus. This module is scheduled to be released on canvas within the next few weeks.

I requested that more immediate information be distributed to students about the University's plans to ensure tutorials are safe. At the time of writing, the University's key messaging is for students to keep at least 1.5m physical distance from others, practise good hand hygiene, and stay home and get tested if you're unwell or have any symptoms. The University has also said that all staff and students are welcome to wear a mask as an additional

measure if they wish and where physical distancing cannot be maintained, however masks have not been made mandatory or even recommended.

Pip and Susanna reassured me that no student would be punished if they felt unsafe in the classroom and refused to physically attend class.

DISABILITY CONSULTATION

The newly elected Disability Portfolio holder Ruby Lotz and I recently met with a past Disability Collective Office Bearer (OB) and have since been connected with the current Collective OBs.

Past USU Boards have expressed good intent in relation to supporting students with disabilities. This has materialized in a motion supporting the facilitation of a disability space on campus, as well as the creation of the Disability Portfolio. Unfortunately, this intention has not led to too many productive developments that have made the USU more accessible.

As an organisation that values student consultation and the voices of marginalised students, it is important that we maintain ongoing consultation so that the needs of students with disabilities are met.

The below dot points are items that Ruby and I are currently working on:

- Arranging a follow up meeting between the USU, Disability OBs, and Campus Infrastructure to ensure that progress is made on a Disability Space. For context, Campus Infrastructure have indicated that they have capacity to provide a space, although this has put this on the backburner due to COVID-19.
- Working with the Head of Operations to change the type of straws available at student outlets to 'bendy straws' because our current straws negatively impact students with cerebral palsy/other disabilities that impact swallowing.
- Working on an Accessibility Policy/checklist to bring to the C&S Committee. This will involve working with the Disability OBs to develop a comprehensive and inclusive accessibility policy for clubs and societies, including a checklist for clubs and societies to follow (e.g. Is our event wheelchair accessible? Will there be strobe lighting at our parties/ balls? Is there an AUSLAN interpreter available at speaking events?)

Hello all,

Again, a massive congratulations to those involved in bringing to life Virtual Welcome Fest! As I was in quarantine I watched the livestream and was taken back at the quality and levels of engagement from the USYD community. It also made me discover new emojis I hadn't used before- here's to more use of Falafel!

As discussed in the finance report we have seen a more positive month in the success of some initiatives, including the opening of some more outlets and graduations program. Although positive, we should still be working conservatively along on par with the Universities back to Campus plan starting Monday the 24th August.

I received an invite to sit on the COVID-19 Response Committee last week and can report that the committee is very active in responding to the financial crisis with robust discussion and thorough investigating. I hope the board takes time to read all recommendations meticulously.

Myself, the director of Finance and the finance committee have been active in responding to concurrent financial issues whilst monitoring the cause and effect of any deviations. A reminder that none of our recommendations, conversations or ideas are static and must evolve with the current circumstances.

The Director of Finance and I are planning more sessions with the first-year board directors in understanding financial literacy, and fiscal stimulus to further assist the board in making financial decisions in the best understanding.

Kindest,

Cady

BOARD REPORT

HONORARY SECRETARY

USU BOARD MEETING DATE: Tuesday 25 August 2020
AGENDA ITEM: 3.4
REPORT PERIOD: jULY 2020
AUTHOR: Yinfeng Shen
TITLE: Honorary Secretary
PHONE/CONTACT: 0435346281/ y.shen@usu.edu.au

	Page No.	Res. No.
Recommendation 1 That the BOARD OF DIRECTORS notes the report.		

VIRTUAL WELCOME FEST

Congratulations on the success of the first Virtual Welcome Fest!

Impressive outcomes:

100+ prizes given away to members, **60+** clubs showcasing exclusive contents, **5** hours live stream, **9** student Board Directors sharing helpful tips for getting most out of university, membership hitting **32k**.

I would like to thank all the staff and student members who helped create the contents, worked behind the scene, and made the first VWF come to life.

Special credits to the staff team from Marketing, Student Programs, Innovation, IT and Operation who have been working days and nights to produce and dedicated to deliver the student experience promised to members.

Thanks to University and Sponsorship Partners for co-promoting the event, continuously care for the student community and support the USU to deliver the best student experience.

Thanks to the Board for supporting and helping the event as always, especially Ruby serving as the key contact of the Board on the day, Vikki and Belinda who helped contact performers on the day and make the content more engaging and fun.

All the work could not be achieved without any of you.

As the Chair of the Club & Society Committee, it was a great pleasure to help organize the event with staff, give the opening and closing during the Virtual Welcome Fest and host the Live Spin and Win session together with fellow directors.

'UNLERAN USU' 2020 has been a special year, a special year for the wider community, for the USU and every one of us. The outbreak of COVID challenges us in all aspects but also push us to think differently and creatively, to reimagine and to rebuild. The success of hosting the first Virtual Welcome Fest is a big milestone in the USU history. This also remarked a new chapter for digital transformation and innovative engagement with the membership for the organization.

The joint launch of new **C&S Directory** on the website and University **V Sydney** make it even easier and more accessible for every student to connect with each other in the virtual space regardless of where they are located around the globe and meet like-minded individuals who share the same passion and interests or explore something different together.



C&S COMMITTEE UPDATES

C&S Directory

Thanks to the hard work and collaboration of Marketing and Student Programs, the new C&S Directory is launched on 17th August with a clearer structure and more engaging and convenient interface featuring six main categories, Arts & Performance, Faith & Ethnocultural, Faculty & Professional, Just for Fun, Social Sports and Special Interests.

The executives were involved in the development of the new C&S Directory and provided relevant feedbacks. Members can now join a society by simply clicking the 'Join Now' button and find all info about the society and refer to relevant social media pages from the profile.



The USU has over 250 clubs and societies to choose from, so there's something for everyone! You can join just one, or as many as you like – it's the easiest way to get involved in Uni life and make new friends. Simply work out what your interests are and click on the category below.

Remember, to join a club or society, you need to be a USU Member, so be sure to sign up. It's FREE!



[Clubs & Societies](#) > [Clubs & Societies Full List](#) > [Faculty & Professional](#) > [Sydney Marketing Society \(SMS\)](#)

SMS - Sydney Marketing Society

Sydney Marketing Society's mission is to help students learn, be curious, and challenge themselves to succeed in the marketing industry of the future.

We hold multiple events throughout every semester including networking sessions, panel discussions, workshops, competitions and mentoring opportunities. We work with diverse companies within the marketing industry ranging from advertising, market research, consulting, technology and start-up firms.

Our members also have unlimited access to our careers guide, blog posts and newsletters which provide the latest in marketing trends and advice from experienced students and industry partners.

In 2019, we won three USU Clubs & Societies awards: 'Best Website', 'Best Small Event' for our annual Mentoring Program, and the Dave Burnett Award for Most Successful Large Club.

This year, we will continue to pursue our aims of connecting students to professionals. Become a member today and we will strive to help you in discovering career opportunities through our new, collaborative, and forward-thinking initiatives.

Why join us?

Members have opportunities to learn from our many industry partners, including Nestle, Microsoft, and Google, as well as expand their network and meet marketing students.

Famous FOMO experiences on offer

Our popular annual Mentoring Program gives you the exclusive opportunity to meet with and learn from an experienced industry mentor.

Meet ups & Community

We hold a diversity of events every semester where you can meet and collaborate with ambitious and like-minded students within your discipline.



Membership fees
Free!

Interests
Business
Marketing

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Appointment of C&S student advisors to the committee

The application of student advisors to the committee was sent out on 13th August to call out two student members who share a passion for C&S program and committed to representing the voices of the diverse student community and engaging in major decision process of the committee. Both the Chair and Deputy Chair have provided feedbacks on the application process.

The application will close at the end of August followed by the selection panel and aim to have the first committee meeting with all members in September together with the New Club Panels meeting.

The attached is the working sheet for the summary of the informal meeting of the committee in July.

The highlight part are the projects currently working on and mainly focused.

Agenda Items	Discussion and resolution
AGMs	<p>The USU will try best to support clubs and societies conducting the AGMs with the current resources in house.</p> <p>For larger societies, online AGMs will be encouraged by following the regulations.</p> <p>Any specific enquiry can refer to Kiriti and Sam.</p>
New club panels	To be scheduled in Sep 2020.
Appointments of committee members	<p>Send out the job advertisement in the early August latest in the USU socials, EDMs and C&S Newsletters.</p> <p>Complete the selection process by the end of August and aim for the first committee meeting in Sep 2020, two weeks prior to the BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting.</p> <p>Sam and Kiriti draft the job description and bring back to the committee for review.</p> <p>Kiriti looks into the demographics and engagement of the current committee members and make sure more student and membership voices are covered and represented in the selection of the two student committee members.</p>
C&S training	<p>To be conducted online (Sep 2020 ideally)</p> <p>A more complete online modules to be developed to allow better resources efficiency and accessibility.</p> <p>Seek for further training modules in compassion, MATE's Bystander, sexual assault and etc.</p> <p>The exploration of online training also provide more formalized option for future C&S executive training program.</p>
COVID safe C&S events guidelines	<p>To be completed by the end of July.</p> <p>(adjustments to be made with the updating government regulations)</p>