



MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Student Representative Committee (SRC) held at 2:00pm on Thursday 17th October 2024 in person and via Zoom link.

<p>PRESENT:</p>	<p>SRC Members</p> <p>Ria Prasad – Women’s Representative (Chair) Annalise Pollard – LGBTQIA+ Representative Aaron Douglas – Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences Representative Rizki Deni – Faculty of Arts Representative Hansani Daluwatta Galappaththige – HDR Representative Kathy Htun – Faculty of Science and Engineering Representative Pedro Roh – Member of Council (attended online)</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Kamil Zielinski – Secretary</p> <p>Guests</p> <p>Professor Leanne Piggott – Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Students Melinda Chadwick – Head of Student Engagement, Inclusion and Belonging</p>
<p>APOLOGIES:</p>	<p>Coco Chen – Macquarie Business School Representative Anna Smith – Official University Sport Representative</p>
<p>ABSENT:</p>	<p>Rhys Collyer – Postgraduate Representative Cameron Last – Disability Representative (attended online briefly and left early without notice)</p>

SECRETARY: Kamil Zielinski

CHAIR: Ria Prasad – Women’s Representative

MINUTES

1. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1.1. Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair commenced meeting at 2:15 PM. The Chair provided an acknowledgement of Country.

1.2. Chair's Welcome, Quorum, and Apologies

The Chair noted apologies and welcomed the staff members present.

1.3. Disclosure of conflicts of interest

No conflicts of interest declared at commencement of meeting, although conflicts of interest relating to some grant agenda items later declared and noted in minutes accordingly under relevant grant. Members with declared interests abstained from voting on these motions.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1. The Student Representative Committee resolved to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

- Member of Council advised that there is no update as Council has not convened since the previous SRC meeting.

4. AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4.1 Proposed Faculty of Arts Professional Staff Transformation

(Motion for voting)

- Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences Representative provided update in relation to actions advocating against Faculty of Arts reform including protests, forum explaining reform and vote of no confidence against Executive Dean of Faculty of Arts by National Tertiary Education Union members. Provided his view of the adverse impact of reform including firing of casual staff and merging of departments.
- The Chair advised that she had met with Executive Dean of Faculty of Arts in a meeting, which was also attended by Faculty of Arts Representative and Dean of Students. She then invited Faculty of Arts Representative to address the committee in relation to what was discussed with the Executive Dean.
- Faculty of Arts Representative advised that his key takeaway from the meeting was that there would be a comprehensive restructuring of the Faculty with the only course impacted will be languages with four majors to be taught out: Russian, Croatian, Greek and Italian. This is due to very few enrolments in these majors. Advised that arrangements have been made with the impacted students for the completion of their courses through either units being taught out at MQ or through enrolment at other institutions. The representative also mentioned that the large number of assessments was discussed in the meeting with the intention to reduce this to a more manageable level for students.

- The Chair added to the overview of the meeting provided by the Faculty of Arts Representative that there was a focus on discussing over assessment and staff changes during the meeting. The Chair offered her view that the reduction of the number of assessments would also result in a reduction in casual staff due to a reduced need to mark assessments. Advised that there have not been cuts to courses but instead a restructuring of departments and clarified that students studying existing courses will be able to complete their courses in their existing form. Also clarified that the very few students impacted by reforms (those undertaking the four languages) are being supported, and that teaching quality more broadly would not be impacted by changes.
- Faculty of Science and Engineering Representative queried as to where students would be able to find more information relating to Faculty of Arts reform as many students are confused about upcoming changes.
- The Chair advised that there is no specific resource for students as they are not directly impacted by reforms due to it being an internal administrative restructuring. However, The Chair also advised that she is open to raising this in her next meeting with the Executive Dean of Faculty of Arts to gauge any possible future impacts on students.
- Member of Council queried if there are any casual staff who are being terminated without their roles being restructured.
- Dean of Students provided insight by explaining that casual academic staff are offered contracts with specific timeframes so they would not be terminated during these contracts because of reforms. Advised that Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) includes commitment by University to decasualise academic staff and replace with permanent staff positions, which would result in improved student experience. Dean of Students provided broader context by explaining government reforms in relation to casual workers and the implementation of a rostering system to apply across all industries. In accordance with the EBA, 70 permanent roles will be made available for conversion from casual employment with the first 11 of these being allocated to the Faculty of Arts during this current round of restructuring. Reinforced previous point from The Chair that there is overassessment of students with a renewed focus on offering deeper and more meaningful learning with fewer assessments, although acknowledged that this has not happened yet as the University is still looking at the design principles which would inform that change. Dean of Students acknowledged potential negative impact on casual staff due to reduced workload if fewer assessments for marking. She also strongly affirmed that the student experience and enhancing student learning is the number one objective.
- Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences Representative disagreed that changes would not impact quality of teaching and that students are the University's number one priority. Asserted depreciation in quality of teaching would occur as a result of the Faculty changes and pointed to student to staff ratios, which will be further impacted through terminating and not rehiring casual academic staff. Also suggested that not rehiring casuals will result in greater workload for existing staff and that more teaching work will be done in relation to research and administrative functions, which will make teaching more difficult. Also expressed concerns in relation to restrictions for academic staff taking leave during teaching periods and loss of staff knowledge from casuals who would not be rehired.
- Faculty of Science and Engineering Representative queried if there would be a commitment to taking on more full-time staff.
- Dean of Students provided context in relation to government legislation impacting on universities including student caps for each university which will result in large revenue losses across university sector and in turn lead to job losses.
- The Chair called for the motion from Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences Representative to be voted on and encouraged committee to express their view on this.

- LGBTQIA+ Representative suggested SRC start by releasing statement to student body explaining the reform. Not comfortable voting on statement as currently worded due to it stating cuts instead of reform.
- HDR Representative requested for more information before voting.
- Faculty of Science and Engineering Representative suggested SRC should be supporting students in a way that is informative and offered her view that there seems to be a lot of confusion from student body regarding what the reform constitutes and how it would be affecting them.
- Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences Representative suggested that SRC would be criticised for not taking a stance on reform and that the hundreds of staff opposing changes should indicate which side SRC should take. Provided his view that SRC should be active in fighting for students by opposing reform.
- Faculty of Arts Representative suggested that there is a lot of confusion about reform and the best way to resolve this is by releasing a statement but also urged caution to avoid spreading misinformation regarding reform.
- Member of Council resolved to say no to proposed motion and advocated to amend motion to include objective information rather than taking position on the reform itself.

Resolution:

- One in favour of motion and five against with one abstention. The motion: *“that the SRC condemn the arts cuts”* is rejected.

Action Items:

- Ria Prasad to organise a follow up meeting with Executive Dean of Faculty of Arts
- Ria Prasad to query possible future impact of reforms on students during next meeting with Executive Dean of Faculty of Arts
- Ria Prasad to request that Executive Dean of Faculty of Arts provide information on reform for dissemination to student body by SRC

4.2 SRC Grant (2024) (Bulathsinhelage Perera) Ecological Conference

(For discussion and voting)

- The Chair provided brief overview of grant.

Resolution:

- Six in favour and one abstention (HDR Representative) due to conflict of interest. The grant is approved.

Action Items:

- Secretary to inform applicant of outcome.

4.3 SRC Grant (2024) (Darshika Dissawe) Entomological Conference

(For discussion and voting)

- The Chair provided brief overview of grant.
- Member of Council suggested that although accommodation appears to be expensive, it would be reasonable given comparable rates for destination city.

Resolution:

- Six in favour and one abstention (HDR Representative) due to conflict of interest. The grant is approved.

Action Items:

- Secretary to inform applicant of outcome.

4.4 SRC Grant (2024) (Fraser Gray) Philosophy Conference
(For discussion and voting)

- The Chair provided brief overview of grant.

Resolution:

- Seven in favour of motion. The grant is approved.

Action Items:

- Secretary to inform applicant of outcome.

4.5 SRC Grant (2024) (Krystal Lau) Alumni Night
(For discussion and voting)

- The Chair provided brief overview of grant.
- Committee expressed concerns regarding only supporting evidence for cost of catering provided.

Resolution:

- Committee unanimously decided that additional information should be provided for entire breakdown of costs beyond just catering costs.

Action Items:

- Secretary to reach out to grant applicant to request full breakdown of costs.

4.6 SRC Grant (2024) (Mhairi Hammond) Sydney Symphony Orchestra Trip
(For discussion and voting)

- The Chair provided brief overview of grant.
- Member of Council provided more information on grant as he was involved in putting it together.

Resolution:

- Six in favour and one abstention (Member of Council) due to conflict of interest. The grant is approved.

Action Items:

- Secretary to inform applicant of outcome.

4.7 SRC Grant (2024) (Tessa Yutzy) Blue Mountains Hiking Tour

(For discussion and voting)

- The Chair provided brief overview of grant.
- Committee expressed reservations regarding lack of information relating to number of attendees and vague information pertaining to sponsorships with bus companies which may influence total cost.

Resolution:

- Committee resolved that more information is needed regarding how many attendees are expected, sponsorships with bus companies, and how this trip relates to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and to Macquarie University.

Action Items:

- Secretary to reach out to grant applicant to request number of attendees, more information relating to sponsorships with bus companies, and how this trip relates to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and to Macquarie University.

4.8 SRC Grant (2024) (The Anh Than) Entomological Conference

(For discussion and voting)

- The Chair provided brief overview of grant.

Resolution:

- Seven in favour of motion. The grant is approved.

Action Items:

- Secretary to inform applicant of outcome.

4.9 SRC Grant (2024) (Tangigul Haque) Evolution Conference

(For discussion and voting)

- The Chair provided brief overview of grant.
- Member of Council requested more information about the conference and Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences Representative suggested that if the clarification needed is about the conference itself then this information can be looked up online without the need to follow up with grant applicant directly.
- The committee was satisfied with voting on the grant without the need to request further information from grant applicant.

Resolution:

- Six in favour and one abstention (HDR Representative) due to conflict of interest. The grant is approved.

Action Items:

- Secretary to inform applicant of outcome.

4.10 Subsidised Meals

(Motion for voting)

- Head of Student Engagement, Inclusion and Belonging suggested that this item be held off as we are approaching end of session. Proposed to present new year budget at first SRC meeting of 2025 for implementation in Session 1 2025.

Resolution:

- Vote did not take place.

Action Items:

- Head of Student Engagement, Inclusion and Belonging to present new year budget for Subsidised Meals initiative in January 2025 SRC meeting.

4.11 SRC Logo Rebranding

(For discussion)

- Head of Student Engagement, Inclusion and Belonging provided overview of progress including communication from Fiona Rooney (Marketing Planning Director) advising that concept is being built for review and that a time will be booked in with Kathy Sewell (Content Coordinator) to present ideas. Suggested SRC section of Macquarie University website could be utilised further to boost profile, and this could also be discussed with Kathy Sewell.
- The Chair advised that SRC has underutilised social media accounts which could be discussed at next SRC meeting and Faculty of Arts representative offered to take on this role of coordinating social media for SRC.
- Faculty of Science and Engineering Representative proposed that there should be a plan for structuring social media posts to ensure consistency in messaging if multiple representatives are involved, and a plan for producing content which aligns with key dates during session.
- The Chair suggested that Faculty of Science and Engineering Representative and Faculty of Arts Representative could meet separately to discuss how social media presence could be effectively managed ahead of next SRC meeting.
- Member of Council requested that Saghar Khandel (Lecturer in Media and Business) be invited to next SRC meeting as she has indicated interest in advising on social media for the SRC.

Action Items:

- Secretary to add social media as agenda item for discussion at next SRC meeting.
- Faculty of Science and Engineering Representative and Faculty of Arts Representative to meet before next SRC meeting to discuss social media strategy
- Secretary to reach out to The Chair to request Saghar Khandel be invited as guest to next SRC meeting.

4.12 Student Engagement with Fitness Options

(For discussion)

- Secretary provided context regarding this agenda item based on discussions from August SRC meeting.
- The Chair suggested that this agenda item be deferred until the next meeting given the Sport Representative (Anna Smith) is an apology for the SRC meeting today.

Action Items:

- Secretary to add this agenda item to the next SRC meeting.

4.13 Grapeshot Engagement Update

(Hold off until next meeting)

- Deferred until next meeting

Action Items:

- Nil

4.14 Lighting on Campus Update

(Hold off until next meeting)

- Deferred until next meeting

Action Items:

- Nil

4.15 Security Update

(Hold off until next meeting)

- Deferred until next meeting

Action Items:

- Nil

5 OTHER BUSINESS

- Secretary advised of opportunity for SRC to collaborate with Sydney FC through involvement in upcoming matches and gauged interest of committee. LGBTQIA+ Representative endorsed SRC involvement with this opportunity and suggested it could also be beneficial in relation to fortifying SRC social media presence.
- LGBTQIA+ Representative queried what happens to unused budget and Head of Student Engagement, Inclusion and Belonging clarified that unused budget does not carry over to following year and any unused budget at end of year will reduce budget allocation for following year. Advised that she has been working with Secretary to find ways to spend remaining budget and that this will be provided to The Chair for review. Also advised that annual report for SRC is being worked on which will include information relating to expenditure.
- Head of Student Engagement, Inclusion and Belonging advised that approved grant recipients have been reached out to for the purpose of providing statement/photos about how grant money was spent and that this can be included in reporting and social media. The Chair queried if the grant application form can be amended to minimise the need to seek more information from grant applicants.

- LGBTQIA+ Representative queried if remaining SRC budget could be used to support students during upcoming exam period (e.g. snacks) and Head of Student Engagement, Inclusion and Belonging provided context by clarifying that *Destress for Success* initiative is already being run under Student Engagement, Inclusion and Belonging. Clarified that if SRC pays for cost of activity then that will be attributed as SRC initiative. Also advised that library has destress space which can be funded by SRC, and campus activations can also be sponsored by SRC. Any such SRC initiatives can then be included in annual reporting.
- The Chair expressed concerns about lack of seating space in library due to influx of high school students utilising university spaces. Dean of Students recommended that The Chair email her a clear and explicit request agreed by the committee which she can take to the Head Librarian and Head of Property.

Action Items:

- Secretary to confirm which upcoming Sydney FC matches SRC wishes to be involved in for coin toss opportunity.
- Secretary to send proposal for expenditure of remaining budget to SRC for review and then send to representatives as circular motion.
- Secretary to add amending grant application form as item for discussion to next SRC meeting.
- Ria Prasad to draft email approved by SRC to send to Dean of Students regarding relocating high school students to free up study spaces for university students.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Student Representative Committee (SRC) will be held TBC, all agenda items must be submitted to the Secretary at least 10 business days in advance by emailing SRCSecretariat@mq.edu.au.

Dean of Students suggested that any items for voting could be done via circular motion due to exam timetable clashes which would make it impractical to hold SRC meeting. Then anything needing discussion can be held off until the final meeting of the year, with the date to be determined by Secretary based on availability of representatives.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed by the Chairperson at 3:48 PM.