



MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Student Representative Committee (SRC) meeting held on Thursday September 9 2021 via Zoom video/teleconference.

PRESENT: Udai Kamath (Assistant Chairperson – appointed Interim Chairperson)

All SRC representatives attended virtually

Amy Lamont
Peshala Denagamage
Fatima Khan
Kaitlin York
Sadra Yousefi
Curtis Micallef
Aakansha Jadhav
Ziyan Tejani
Saliha Rehanaz
Allastassia Carter
Amanda O'Neill
Eryna Tasha
Jeremiah Dixon
Jarrod Currey
Jayden Whaites-Fruitrich
Claire Wescombe

APOLOGIES:

ABSENT: Harry Stone
Sheel Bhansali
Pavel Pfitzner

IN ATTENDANCE: Professor Mariella Herberstein – Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Lilia Draganov – Senior Manager, Student Life and SRC Secretary
Melinda Chadwick - Manager, Office of Executive Director

SECRETARIAT: Kimberly La – SRC Secretariat Officer, Student Life

1. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1.1. Acknowledgement of Country

The Chairperson (Chair) opened the meeting at 6:05 pm. Ziyan Tejani provided the Acknowledgment of Country as per the text provided by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy):

“I respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Macquarie University land, the Wallumattagal clan of the Dharug Nation. May we pay respects to the Elders, and knowledge holders who have, and continue to, pass on their knowledge and wisdom for the sustainability of our environments, our cultures, our education and our communities. May the ancestors spirits watch over us today to ensure that we have a successful and productive meeting and may we remember to tread lightly on our countries and to thoughtfully carry on the legacy of those that walked before us on this land.”

ACTION: Allastassia Carter to provide the Acknowledgement of Country at the next meeting of the SRC, to be held on 18 October 2021.

1.2. Chair’s Welcome, Quorum, and Apologies

The Chair declared the meeting quorate and welcomed all attendees.

The Chair noted that apologies were received from Claire Wescombe and acknowledged the University staff in attendance.

1.3. Disclosure of conflicts of interest

No conflict of interests were declared.

2. PRESENTATIONS BY INVITED GUESTS

Melinda Chadwick presented on SSAF Fees for 2022 and reported on feedback that was received in 2021. She also presented on how Macquarie University compares to SSAF fees of other universities and it demonstrated that we are aligned with other universities. Melinda then proposed the expenses for the SSAF fees in 2022 which include the online financial literacy course, support groups and PAL sessions. In line with Departmental requirements, Macquarie University will publish their SSAF fees by October 1st.

Udai Kamath asked how other universities spent their SSAF Fees, to which Melinda replied that the allowable categories for SSAF expenditure are outlined in the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP). Therefore, most universities spend their SSAF fees in a similar way.

Eryna Tasha asked whether SSAF fees go towards Grapeshot, to which Lilia Draganov confirmed that it did not in 2020 and 2021. Student Publication is being funded from the student engagement operating fund.

Jarrod Currey asked whether SSAF was used towards ReConception in previous years. Lilia Draganov answered that most of that funding is from the operating budget. Lilia referred the group to review the [SSAF survey results](#) to see what students are asking for, pointing out that majority of the student population asked for SSAF to be dedicated towards academic and employment support.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 2 August 2021

The Chair called for any comments or amendments to the minutes of the SRC meeting held on 2 August 2021. None were declared.

Resolution SRC 21/13

The Student Representative Committee RESOLVED to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 2 August 2021 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3.2. Summary of outstanding action items

The Chair highlighted the outstanding item of Amy Lamont's draft letter to University Council. She confirmed that the letter can be finished by September 10th

3.3 Business arising from the minutes (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)

Ally verbally updated the SRC that Walanga Muru and herself have shortlisted applicants for the SRC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awards Program. She provided notice to the SRC that the motion will be voted on via a circular motion.

4. REPORT FROM SRC TREASURER

4.1. SRC July 2021 and Postgraduate Fund (MUPRA) August 2021 Expenditure Report

Sadra confirmed that the grant to fund the Online Study Buddy Program has been transferred. He also noted that his report has not been updated to reflect the increased amount that was received since May meeting.

The Treasurer confirmed that there has been no expenses from the MUPRA budget and noted that \$38,00 has been set aside for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Extra-Curricular Award Program 2021.

The Committee noted the report.

5. REPORT FROM SRC SPOKESPERSON/S

Ziyan Tejani provided a verbal report outlining what enquiries have been received in the SRC communication channels. This included students asking what support is provided to international students, whether SRC meetings can be attended by students and societies requesting assistance with marketing of events.

Amy Lamont questioned why students have been denied entry to SRC Meetings, to which the Chair clarified that he has answered this question previously. The Chair reiterated his reasoning provided from previous meetings: he is following the precedent of previous SRC bodies and only allowing students to attend if they serve a purpose towards an SRC motion.

The Committee noted the report.

6. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The student elected member of the University Council (Jayden Whaites-Fruitrich) informed the SRC that there was a strategic meeting that discussed technology partnerships and he is looking forward to upcoming initiatives.

The Committee noted the report.

7. REPORT FROM STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Udai Kamath stated that a separate task force has been made for the SRC constitutional review and that SRC will receive updates regarding that.

The Committee noted the report.

8. REPORT FROM THE STUDENT JOURNEY & EXPERIENCE TASK FORCE

Sadra Yousefi updated the SRC that strategies regarding improvements towards the student journey will be presented at a later meeting.

9. AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

9.1. Lockdown Financial Relief

Jayden Whaites-Fruitrich spoke to his motion which has the aim to support international students or students financially impacted by COVID who are unable to access Centrelink payments. He outlined how the SRC of 2020 passed a similar motion to assist students, which converted into food hampers and gift vouchers.

Eryna Tasha questioned that if each person received \$1000, then only 40 students will receive help. However, Jayden responded that the amounts received will be under the discretion of Student Wellbeing who will be responsible for the administration and ideas of how to best use this funding from the SRC.

Saliha Rehanaz asked if SRC should consider lowering the amount and Jarrod Currey also supported this staggered approach. Alternatively, Sadra Yousefi suggested that the SRC separate \$40,000 into 2 separate motions. However, Jayden reminded her that any leftover money not spent by the SRC does not roll over to next year. Jarrod also asked which students will be prioritised and Jayden confirmed that Student Wellbeing will make decisions regarding that. Further, Lilia updated the SRC that the university is now partnered with Ozharvest and that Student Wellbeing will prioritise low SES background and regional area students.

Peshala Denagamage asked how this initiative is going to be different from the financial assistance already provided by the university. Jayden passed this question on to Lilia who confirmed that the funding this year has decreased.

Resolution SRC 21/14

The Student Representative Committee PASSED the motion to commit \$40,000 to students who require financial assistance due to the pandemic.

9.2. Deadly Ball

Allastassia Carter summarised the purpose of the Deadly Ball which is to recognise the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Further, she outlined SRC's history of supporting the Ball in previous years.

There were no further questions from the SRC.

Resolution SRC 21/15

The Student Representative Committee PASSED the motion to commit \$8,500 to support awards at Walanga Muru's Deadly Ball.

9.3. Postgraduate Employability

Aaksansha Jadhav presented on this motion and emphasised that the main goal is to increase employability and give a chance for the university to hire its best students. Sadra Yousefi described their consultation process and clarified that the amount will be from the MUPRA budget.

Saliha Rehanaz asked for further details regarding what tasks students will do in their 100 hours of experience. Sadra responded that the tasks will vary from each role but the main purpose is to develop common CV skills such as writing and communication.

Resolution SRC 21/16

The Student Representative Committee PASSED the motion.

9.4 Arcade Games

Sadra presented his motion again to respond to feedback received from previous meetings. His changes include that no money will be made from this project, rather it will be a gift from the SRC. Namely, the SRC constitution outlines that SRC initiatives should not be income-generating.

Saliha asked about maintenance costs, to which Sadra said that any damage would be covered by the perpetrator of such vandalism. She also asked if the power points will be compatible with AU voltages and Sadra confirmed that they would be.

Eryna asked why he decided to choose five machines and not a lower number, to which Sadra explained that his decision is due to variety.

Resolution SRC 21/17

The Student Representative Committee PASSED the motion to purchase five arcade games for \$6,000.

9.5 Save our Staff: Join the Campaign to Fight Forced Redundancies

Amy Lamont explained that she is presenting this motion again to ensure that SRC follows up on their position of fighting staff cuts.

Eryna highlighted that the NTEU website says \$60 million was spent on the law school building. However, in the previous SRC meeting, the Vice Chancellor clarified that the buildings were funded by financial instruments which can not be used to pay for staff. Further, Jayden clarified that the law building is from a loan. However, Amy defended her position by stating that money is being prioritised away from staff and that money can be reallocated between budgets.

Peshala asked Amy what her ultimate aim is, to which Amy stated that she believes sharing documents such as a petition can send a strong message to university management and to demonstrate that there is resistance.

Further, Jarrod asked to confirm that Amy was not recording the meeting as he does not provide consent. He questioned the use of politicised words such as activism and solidarity. Amy responded how she does not understand how supporting staff is considered as political.

Eryna asked Amy whether she has spoken to different staff unions outside NTEU and questioned whether there has been success in the past and what her end goal is. Amy defended that the lack of success is probably because this issue hasn't been publicised enough and the end goal is to not to sack staff. Peshala asked whether other universities have done this and what their objectives were. Amy responded that other universities would not even question this motion and provided the example of a successful strike that occurred at the University of Sydney in 2017. She concluded that the objective is to stop trends such as cutting staff and courses.

Sadra asked to what extent does supporting the NTEU mean. Amy confirmed that it would be word of mouth and sharing posts. Sadra further asked if there were any subsidiaries that SRC would be indirectly supporting if SRC supported NTEU. Amy clarified that there are none and it would solely be the NTEU.

Eryna asked whether Amy believes there will be a financial implication on students if staff are not sacked. Amy expressed that management does not genuinely care about quality of education and that concern is not legitimate. Further, Peshala suggested that the marketing subcommittee oversees the sharing of posts related to staff cuts so that neutral posts can be made so that SRC does not aggravate university management. Jarrod Currey supported this and Peshala proposed that the spokespeople are good with dealing with such issues, therefore the marketing team and spokespeople can collaborate to present what the SRC stands for to the university community.

Motion NOT PASSED.

10. REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

10.1 Marketing and Communications Subcommittee

Aakansha listed the number of events and initiatives that SRC have promoted and reminded SRC members to contact herself and Claire if they want any content shared.

Eryna asked if the meeting overview should be posted by the spokespeople or marketing team and Aakansha said that she is welcome to that idea if the SRC agrees with it. No conclusion was made regarding this suggestion.

The Committee noted the report.

10.2 Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) Subcommittee

Ziyan presented the grants to the SRC and explained that the reason for denying some grants were that some applications lacked sufficient evidence.

The grant that has passed is for MacqPsych to subsidise Mental Health First Aid Training for its members.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolution SRC 21/18

The Student Representative Committee PASSED the motion to provide \$2000 to MacqPsych.

10.3 Mental Health Subcommittee

Peshala reminded the SRC that it is R U OK Day and that the subcommittee had a meeting in August, where they identified a number of issues including international students feeling isolated, an increase of 3 to 5 free therapy sessions for students, repositioning the link for support on iLearn, promoting a partnership with the gym, offering a meditation workshop hosted by Headspace or a similar organisation and speaking with societies via Discord to increase events.

The Committee noted the report.

Action Item:

Confirm who the Chair of this subcommittee is at the next SRC meeting.

11. Other Business

Lilia Draganov updated the SRC regarding elections for SRC's three vacant positions and confirmed that the Governance team has emailed students to nominate. The term of these vacant positions will be from November 8th to May 13th 2023.

Sadra and Aakansha noted that they are having meetings with the employability team and invited interested SRC members to contact them if they wish to be involved.

Ally provided an update regarding the Indigenous Awards program and confirmed that successful applicants have been chosen by herself and Walanga Muru. However, given that successful recipients are to be informed by October 5th and the SRC meeting is not until October 18th, the motion will be voted via a circular motion.

Amy Lamont presented her views about the Religious Freedoms Bill and explained how it will give rights to religious institutions to deny services to LGBTIQ individuals. She provided a link to an open letter with over 150 names agreeing that the SRC should care about this issue. Further, she asked the Chair why SRC has not been allowed to discuss this issue as it also affects women and disabled students. However, the Chair reiterated that the motion is outside the scope of the SRC and that reasonings have been provided via email prior to the meeting multiple times. The Chair suggested that Amy contact university staff or her fellow SRC members to adjust the motion so that it is inside the SRC terms of reference.

11. QUESTION TIME

Jarrold & Eryna updated the SRC that they have been working together for inclusive education and asked Professor Mariella Herberstein whether it is possible to have on campus exams for vaccinated students. Professor Herberstein outlined that the university is acting in line with the public health order and when on campus exams can happen, they will prioritise units that require on campus exams.

Jarrold asked if there is a possibility for a subcommittee and the Chair suggested raising a motion at the next meeting.

Amy warned that it would be very dangerous if we opened up too early. Jarrold emphasised that it would be optional, and Jayden clarified that it would only be offered to the few hundred students who have learning disabilities. Ziyan questioned Amy when she thinks it is appropriate for the campus to open again. The Chair diffused the debate and redirected the SRC. Peshala then suggested that the library can be open for a few people.

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SRC will be held on 18 October 2021. Agenda items are due by 7 October 2021 via e-mail to srcsecretariat@mq.edu.au.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed by the Chair at 8:02 pm.

CONFIRMED as a true and accurate record of the meeting and its proceedings:

Draft approved by SRC Alternate Chair via email on September 15th 2021.

Udai Kamath

SRC Assistant Chairperson

Date: September 15th 2021