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# MINUTES OF THE AUSA STUDENT COUNCIL MEETING WEDNESDAY 12 MAY 2021



OWEN G GLENN BUILDING, 260-321 | 6PM - 8PM

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**PRESENT:** *Alan Shaker (EVP, AUSA), Makayla Muhundan (eNVP, AUSA), Ishie Sharma (WVP, AUSA), Alofa So'olefai (Treasurer-Secretary, AUSA), Emma Cooper-Williams (PGO, AUSA), Seini Pua (PISO, AUSA), Lavi Abitbol (QRO, AUSA), Ash Singh (President, SAMS), Blake Scanlen (President, SOMSA), Rishi Khattar (President, OPTOM), Holly Mace (President, ALES), Lucy Collier (President, ESSA), Jessica Kim (President, APSA), Vanessa Falcunitin (Co-President, ASO), Kevin Guo (ISO, AUSA), Nikita Turoa (Co-President, AUPHSA), Vira Paky (President, AUGSS), Ishita Chawla (President, AUCSA)*

**LATE:** *Anamika Harirajh (President, AUSA), Vivien Whyte (WRO, AUSA),*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Ella Morgan and Jessica Hopkins (Craccum reps), David Tuifua (AUPISA VP), Brett and Jeff (Digital Strategy reps), Nicola and Zoe (Ministry of Education), Heather Merrick (Academic Audit)*

**APOLOGIES:** *Hannah Colquhoun-Petherick (President, SciSA)*

MEETING COMMENCED 6:09PM

## 1. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

### 1.1. **Welcome, Check-ins and Introductions, Notices**

The Chair welcomed each President and President representative. Presidents and President representatives introduced themselves to one another and to the attendees.

### 1.2. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest

### 1.3. **Notices**

In accordance with the AUSA Constitution, the EVP has been appointed Chair of the AUSA Student Council Meeting in the absence of the AUSA President.

The EVP informs the Student Council about the free exam seminars that will be held soon and implores them to promote the opportunity to those in their own faculty. The application date closes this Friday.

## 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

### CHAIR

THAT the AUSA Student Council minutes of the previous Student Council Meeting held on Wednesday 21 April be taken as a true and accurate record.

*Carried Unanimously*

## 3. DIGITAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Jeff and Brett talk about the last digital strategy that we have is due for a review the digital strategy. This was endorsed in 2018 but the world of digital things moves quite quickly, and they have updated it to be in line with the strategy of Taumata Teitei. Link to the slides: <https://bit.ly/dig-scg>

MOE REP (NICOLA) ENTERS THE MEETING AT 6:15PM

The Digital Strategy is a sub-strategy for the entire university informed by Te Ao Māori principles and to align with the Waipapa framework but it is not an information technology strategy. The digital approach they speak of refers to the experience of students, access, and availability of data and technology. Brett and Jeff seek feedback from the Student Council of the following:

1. Digital dexterity: how to make experiences for people memorable with respect to making business processes efficient and effective.
2. Digital equity: how do we transform our systems so that there are little to no differences between those who are resourceful and those who are not.
3. Data availability: how do we ensure that data about the university is accessible and available for all students to view and interact with when making decisions?

AUSA PRESIDENT AND MOE REP (ZOE) ENTERS THE MEETING AT 6:21PM

Some founding thoughts for the Digital Strategy:

- Digital Dexterity has been uplifted around the university
- Physical and Digital: making sure that this aligns with our sustainability
- Environmental sustainability: how does university achieve their digital strategy while trying to achieve the goal of being a net-zero carbon business?

The Digital Strategy team pose the following question to the Student Council: What would an outstanding and distinctive digital experience look like for students at the University of Auckland in 2025?

- Equity through accessibility. How do we deal with barriers?

- Currently they are working with the Equity team to ensure that this is an equitable strategy.
  - Integrating digital literacy into the coursework to account for the time and effort spent on this.
- Staff being trained on how to use Canvas.
    - This is currently something that the university is trying to do. Lecturers are more than capable within their respective fields, but the lockdown highlighted many weaknesses regarding digital literacy.
    - Remote emergency teaching isn't the experience that everyone wants. What are the new sets of delivery mode and models and how do we ensure that they are effective?
    - Changing the culture around the technology amongst the teaching staff. Some lecturers are more susceptible to using it more while others aren't which provides inconsistencies with the students and disrupts their way of learning.
- Upskilling students coming into the university.
    - Serving the mass can be acquired through simplicity.
    - The University should be teaching students the basics of university e.g. how to navigate SSO, how does Canvas work, etc. Currently the university does have videos, but these videos are not as straightforward as the university thinks. Students are going to YouTube where they have videos of students showing students how to navigate these websites. It should be the university filling these gaps not students.

WRO ENTERS THE MEETING AT 6:36PM

CRACCUM REP (JESSICA) ENTERS THE MEETING AT 6:38PM

BRETT AND JEFF LEAVE THE MEETING AT 6:39PM

#### 4. CODE OF PASTORAL CARE

Nicola and Zoe are here to present the Code of Pastoral Care on behalf of the Ministry of Education to the Student Council and to receive feedback about it. Currently, NZUSA, TMA, TP and the National Disabled Students' Association have been a part of the consultation so far. The government is not happy with the system as it stands, as all students – current and future – deserve to be successful and to achieve this. The goal is to attempt regulation around this to ensure this success.

The question posed by the MoE representatives is this: The requirement is that providers will work with learners (including communities, organisations, stakeholders essentially) as key partners in developing

practices that influence their learning environment and their wellbeing and their safety. What does this look like to you? The Student Council respond with the following:

- The heart of partnership is consultation. In addition, if universities wish to get information from their students, they need to be compensated for their and efforts to highlight issues within the system and consult with administrators. The advice that they seek from students are generally for the future and students now don't get any benefit. Compensation is a must.
  - Universities tend to do what they think is best for the students without consultation. They need to be consulting students.
- There are times when the University apply a blanket approach to issues which obviously doesn't work. They tend to group similar groups together, but Māori students are different to Pacific students, International students are different to Domestic students, etc; the needs differ from group to group.
- It shouldn't be on the students to reach out necessarily. However, this also tend to differ depending on the faculty that you are in. It's a partnership, but currently we feel that we, the students, aren't playing a part in this.
- Postgraduate students have a unique dynamic with their teaching staff. It is difficult to cultivate this dynamic with international postgraduate students who are studying online.
- The University has a lot of students who have been asked to give feedback e.g. Student Consultative Group, however, these students don't have the mandate to provide the best feedback on behalf of their faculties nor their ethnic groups.
  - The consensus in the Student Council is this: What is the point of running for these positions, e.g. Executive roles but President in particular, if your voice isn't heard?
  - Experiences are different and as much as you can give insight and be empathetic to these situations they need to reach out to the students on the forefront.
- The consultation is just ticking boxes.
  - When asked how we could solve this problem, a member states that a solution is having students at the decision-making levels making the decisions with them.
- You can't create partnership if there is no relationship or stable foundation. They aren't present in the events and the spaces that we as students hold. They are distant and don't interact with us where we stand.

A member of the Student Council asks whether it is possible to quantify on the Code of Pastoral Care the number of students or a percentage that needs to be consulted in a given time period. Nicola replies that this is possible, and it was in the past, but this has only worked for the majority and those who aren't considered or who need the most help are the ones who aren't in the majority.

QRO EXITS THE MEETING AT 7:10PM

MOE REPRESENTATIVES (NICOLA AND ZOE) EXIT THE MEETING AT 7:11PM

The AUSA President informs the Student Council that consultation for the Code of Pastoral Care will close on Friday 21 May.

AUSA PRESIDENT EXITS THE MEETING AT 7:13PM

## 5. ACADEMIC AUDIT

QRO ENTERS THE MEETING AT 7:14PM

The audit looks at how the university looks at, responds, or seeks student voice through quality assurance processes. Heather poses the following question: What do you want the university to start doing with Student Voice?

The AUSA Student Council responds as follow:

- Students want transparency about the feedback that we provide. They provide feedback with evaluations, but actions aren't visible.

AUSA PRESIDENT ENTERS THE MEETING 7:18PM

- Consistency across the board around giving feedback to students. Some teaching staff go above and beyond while other do not even bother. Of course this also calls for lecturers to be compensated for the feedback that they provide as this would require more time.
  - Heather informs the Student Council that there is a policy that students should get feedback before the next assignment however not many lecturers follow this.
- Our exams are such a big percentage of our grade, yet we don't get feedback on it.
- There must be communication between the teaching staff because there are inconsistencies e.g. between tutors and lecturers.
- Consistencies need to be in all aspects of a course across the university. A member of the AUSA Student Council highlights that a course that she is taking that is completely online however the effort seems to be non-existent compared to a course that is taught in person, as this course is using lecture recordings from previous semesters.
- When students give feedback should they also include equity issues? Is the SET Evaluation the correct forum? E.g. should they include it in the class evaluations about how they felt in the class during the course.
  - The university might not be receptive of this information through this medium as the SET Evaluation is mainly for how a course is taught. However, this doesn't mean that there isn't an opportunity for it to be created.

- Covid has highlighted the weakness of the university system due to their reliance on online platforms to test course outcomes i.e. the standard essay and exam structure. Perhaps this is an opportunity for the University to reassess their course structures in allowing some exams to even be 70% of a grade.

Heather notes that she will come back to another meeting to finish this discussion as the feedback provided is very useful.

MEETING BREAKS 7:33PM

ISHITA AND ASH LEAVE THE MEETING 7:34PM

MEETING RECONVENES 7:42PM

## 6. NZUSA MEMBERSHIP

Since the last meeting that SC had, AUSA has had many meetings to discuss their membership with NZUSA. They have passed the following:

PISO AND AUPISA VP LEAVE THE MEETING AT 7:44PM

1. Pending a majority vote at an AUSA General Meeting, AUSA should give NZUSA 12 months' notice that we are terminating our membership in accordance to section 5.6 of the NZUSA constitution
2. AUSA will use the remaining 12 months of our membership to work collaboratively with NZUSA and its members to see what reform can be affected from within the organisation to address the issues outlined above
3. AUSA is committed to working collaboratively with Te Mana Ākongā and Tauria Pasifika to ensure their ongoing financial security
4. Revisit the topic of NZUSA membership in early 2022 and make a decision, in consultation with our members, whether we will re-join or not

AUSA are seeking a motion to be passed by the Student Council in agreeance of the motion passed within the AUSA Executive meeting to adhere to the above recommendations. This will then be taken to the AUSA Annual General Meeting in a few weeks to decide AUSA's future membership with NZUSA.

The Student Council ask the following:

- What would the be ideal for AUSA?
  - The AUSA President responds that the levies have been something talked about with no action. Commitment to relooking at the levies to accommodate for all student associations that are currently part and not a part of NZUSA would be ideal. If NZUSA are truly wanting to

advocate for students nationwide, levies shouldn't be a barrier. Currently, AUT is not a member despite being the second largest tertiary student body in the country.

- As it stands, AUSA will remain on the subcommittees that they are a part of to advocate for the student. We will also be staying on the subcommittees to advocate for the Auckland voice
  
- What changes are AUSA looking for to see them rejoin or stay within the union?
  - The current executive would like for NZUSA to change the way that they consult with students along with the structure of NZUSA. Currently most of the subcommittees are only open for students that are a part of NZUSA. NZISA is a good example of what AUSA would want to happen as student representatives from non-member tertiary providers should be consulted regardless.
  - Likewise, another problem is that NZUSA is Wellington based so many of the events are held in Wellington, requiring members to travel in when needed. This is financially draining given that there are multiple events that the President of AUSA must attend throughout the year such as monthly meetings and the conference at the end of the year.
  - Just with how Nicola had come to consult the AUSA Student Council, if NZUSA truly represented all students, then the MoE should have been able to simply consult with NZUSA rather than going around to all student bodies.
  
- Would it be helpful to see what they do their money?
  - AUSA knows where the money goes as the levies go to pay for the advocacy that they provide for lobbying as well as salaries amongst other things.
  
- What are benefits of NZUSA?
  - They lobby on behalf of students to public bodies and provide platforms that allow for collaboration between student bodies. One of our main concerns is that this collaboration is not worth \$45,000.

**CHAIR**

THAT the AUSA Student Council endorses the recommended actions as outlined in the NZUSA Exec Change Proposal.

*Carried Unanimously*

## 7. OTHER NOTICES

The WRO is hosted a workshop around sexual harassment tomorrow to discuss the short-term and long-term goals that students wish to see within the university system regarding these matters. The members of the AUSA Student Council are invited to take part.

## 8. NEXT MEETING

The next Student Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 30 June. Location and time to be confirmed.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8:07PM

**SIGNED AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anamika Harirajh', written over a horizontal line.

**Anamika Harirajh, Chair of the AUSA Student Council**