

Meeting of The ANU Observer Council

2018-02-04

Meeting Opens at 16:21

Councillors in Attendance: Michael Turvey, Eliza Croft, Joel Baker, Tatsunori Yamaguchi, Ebe Ganon

Members in Attendance: Jason Pover

Item 1 - Acknowledgement of Country

Given by Michael Turvey.

Item 2 - Previous Action Items

Action: Michael to make Ebe admin of the live page.

Michael: This has been done.

Action: Tatsu to speak to PARSA treasurer about SSAF flexibility.

Michael: Tatsu isn't here yet.

Action: Tatsu to meet with PARSA treasurer to discuss accounting.

Action: Joel to investigate whether legislation requires performance metrics on behalf of ANU in allocation process.

Michael: So essentially this is about us wanting to give feedback regarding SSAF. There are no performance metrics or feedback mechanisms. It would be good to know if SSAF requires this and if ANU is meeting its requirements.

Action: Joel to contact ANU regarding the need for auditing.

Michael: Auditing would cost several thousand dollars. We talked to Richard and he didn't think we needed it, but he wasn't 100% sure. He didn't assign us any money for auditing.

Eliza: You may want to check the requirements for incorporated associations.

Item 3 - Reports

3.1 News Report

News:

- Got our first explainer and news article for the year out - explainer on What is Observer and news article on Friday Night Party move.
- We're collecting various explainers from the summer from our reporters.
- A number of articles in the editing process at the moment that should be ready for publication shortly.

Missed the Union Court renaming breaking story, we will review our procedures at the next Editorial Board Meeting to address this.

O-Week Observer:

- Jason and I working on collecting old stories and organising a distribution team. Design work essentially complete, pending information on sponsorship.

3.2 Digital Report

Communications/Marketing

- Merchandise: stickers and t-shirts have been ordered and are on their way. Most of the business cards have been printed, and I am waiting on an update from Adam about the banners.
- Website: Adam said that we would have a few designs to show us around this time, but I have not yet received an update about that.
- Social media: boosted posts will start at the end of this coming week. I wanted them to go for longer but budget is a constraint at the moment for marketing. These will include one recruiting post, one post booting the release of the NewsBot, and the O-week Stall and info Session events.

Digital Team:

- I have restructured the way that the Digital Team operates on Slack as we are growing, and the existing way was going to become unsustainable. This should solve the issue about the distinction between comms and digital.
 - The biggest take away point from this is that reporters need to make requests for photos in their articles in the #digital channel. Not by personal message, or in a dedicated photo channel, as this is now private.
- Have introduced our two newest members to Slack. I will be meeting with them in O-week.
- I will be hosting a Digital Team meeting at the beginning of week one, so that everyone is on the same page re: expectations and operations.
- New templates for articles have been designed, and I am just finished the rest of them up - all still available via canva.

Questions

Jason: Michael mentioned that we had a limited amount of content. What is that?

Michael: We don't have a strict limit. They said they don't want more than 2 or 3 a week. We need to make sure it's relevant to first years.

Jason: I just want to make sure everyone knows there is a limit.

3.3 Financial Report

Not delivered prior to meeting.

Michael: The bank account has been opened. It'll be usable after Monday.

Tatsu: I've met with the PARSA Treasurer regarding the above actionables.

3.4 Other Reports

SSAF

Michael: I messaged Alyssa Shaw because we hadn't heard from ANU regarding the meeting on Thursday. Alyssa confirmed the constitution was approved. We should be receiving SSAF. This is really good news.

Departure

Michael: I've mentioned before that I won't be staying for the entire year. I've decided that I want to end my formal involvement after Term 1. I want to focus on preparing for leaving the ANU, and I'm conscious I've been doing this for a long time. I am reasonably ready to move on. My goal for the next 3 months is to make myself non-essential and dump as much knowledge on the rest of the team as possible. There will need to be a replacement editor - casual vacancy. I want to make the information that I'm leaving available to the team after O-Week.

Item 4 - Items for Decision

4.1 Frequency of Council Meetings

Michael: We've been meeting on and off throughout the summer based on need. My suggestion for during term-time would be fortnightly. I believe that will keep up with the hiring cycle and changes to policy and budget. Thoughts?

Joel: I support fortnightly.

Michael: We'll need to establish a day and time. News meetings are on Monday nights. Do people have a preference of day for Council meetings?

Joel: Outside of business hours.

Tatsu: I like weekends.

Ebe: Just not Tuesday nights.

Eliza: I can't do Friday evenings. We could wait for the Wattle sites to go up and then do a Doodle poll?

Michael: We'll establish fortnightly meetings and pick a date and time once tutorial times are known. We should advertise these meetings on the website once we have a set time.

Actionable: Doodle Poll for Council meetings once tutorial times are available - Michael.

Actionable: Advertise meetings on website once time is set - Joel.

Actionable: Get Joel access to the website - Adam/Ebe.

4.2 Honorary Life Membership for Ming-Dao Chia and Benjamin George Roberts

Michael: This was discussed last year. Ming setup Observer Live and was a founding board member. Ben Roberts set up our website, email server, etc. He's a professional public servant who didn't have to donate his time to us, but he liked what we were doing. He helped us with issues throughout the year. I think these are noteworthy contributions.

Eliza: Is there any issue with Roberts not being a member?

Joel: None.

Motion that Ming-Dao Chia be granted honorary life membership to The ANU Observer.

Moved: Michael Turvey

Passes Unanimously

Motion that Benjamin George Roberts be granted honorary life membership to The ANU Observer.

Moved: Michael Turvey

Passes Unanimously

Michael: Congratulations to those two.

Actionable: Communicate honorary life membership status to Ming and Benjamin - Michael.

4.3 Payment for Live Content on Main Page

Michael: At the last meeting we discussed the future of the Live page. We reached the decision that we would shut it down and have major live-streaming occur on the Observer page. Smaller things would require working through the website of smaller organisations. The question we wanted to leave for this meeting is: Whether we allow organisation to pay for content to be on the main page - in essence advertising or promotion.

Eliza: I am a hard no. To me that is in the same vein as getting organisations to pay us for certain stories being published. We shouldn't let organisation pay to dictate our published content.

Tatsu: I think we should look into other areas for revenue - advertising may be one of those but we need special policies in place for this.

Ebe: I've thought about this a lot. I'm inclined to agree with Eliza. There has to be an intermediary solution.

Michael: You don't think we should have paid content?

Ebe: Ethical practise says no.

Michael: The \$32,000 from the University is money from the students. They are paying us to be their media organisation. It wouldn't be appropriate to charge uniformly for those services given they're paying already. It wouldn't be equitable to charge groups that can afford to pay for it. We serve the student body and it wouldn't be appropriate to give advantages to student groups that can afford it. A live stream isn't an article, but it's not responsible.

Tatsu: Could we discuss in the future if we can find an ethical way?

Eliza: There's a lot of advertising we can do. I think that this one is probably a closed case.

Michael: As a member of this body, you should always offer your perspective if you can see options that the rest of us can't. It's good to have this discussion.

Motion that The ANU Observer allow campus organisations to have content live-streamed on the Observer page in exchange for payment.

Moved: Michael Turvey

Opposed Unanimously

4.4 Staff under Treasurer's Portfolio

Michael: Tatsu raised this idea at the last meeting, which we tabled until today.

Tatsu: For me to manage the revenue raising and financial policy is a bit much for one person. If I could have people to work with that would make the role easier.

Michael: How many hours are you intending to put into the role?

Tatsu: 10-12 hours per week.

Michael: What do you want to delegate?

Tatsu: Working on advertising and revenue raising.

Eliza: On that point, isn't it more of a one-off task?

Tatsu: It still requires monitoring and it would be useful to have more people looking at it.

Eliza: I can see the value in having other commerce people to bounce ideas off. It's an area the rest of the team is lacking in. It would be very short-term or one-off work. They might meet with you once a fortnight?

Tatsu: Trying to increase our revenue sources will be an ongoing project that having more people to work on and come up with proposal would be beneficial.

Ebe: I'm wondering if this discussion is based on Tatsu's work with PARSA and other groups to get setup for the year. Once this workload goes down, is it possible you'll have more time to work on these things? I'm also not sure if coming up with advertising schemes falls under the Treasury portfolio. I don't know that I see the value in adding more people to the portfolio.

Michael: I think that speaks to Eliza's point. The establishment of a budget and financial policies is very front-heavy work. When all this is done, what does the portfolio look like?

Tatsu: I anticipate that the day-to-day transactions of Observer will be there. Regulating financial policies and monitoring their progress. Advertising will be ongoing.

Michael: Ebe, do you see sourcing advertising and sponsorship as Digital, not Treasury?

Ebe: Yes. The role of Treasurer doesn't seem like the person who goes out to find people to market.

Michael: I agree it isn't the default interpretation. It was our intention though when we created the role. We thought without that work the Treasurer role wouldn't be substantial. I don't believe transactions will be a major part of the role.

Eliza: Receipts and invoicing will be some.

Michael: On digital managing advertising, it doesn't fit immediately into any portfolio. Ebe has a lot of experience, but that doesn't mean any other Digital Editor will have the same skills.

Tatsu: Perhaps Ebe and I could share the role.

Jason: Tatsu, as you imagine it now, would these people have advisory or delegatory responsibilities?

Tatsu: Advisory.

Jason: If it is purely advisory, could we form a body that includes Ebe and some new people to do that?

Eliza: I assume advertising would become collaborative over time. On the Treasurer having operational staff - I would feel weird if Joel brought on someone to do minuting. Making someone an Officer for writing occasional policy doesn't seem right.

Ebe: My conception of the process is that Digital would be sourcing what advertisers want - duration, location, marketing tools - while Treasury would work out what charge rates we would apply, and then chase down payments. It's also important to differentiate between something like Observer and something like Bossy. We don't run with sub-committees, and we're being paid a stipend to do these particular jobs.

Tatsu: One of the main advantages I see is the opportunity to get a wider range of staff from various backgrounds - commerce, marketing, etc.

Michael: I agree with Ebe that my gut instinct is to not increase the size of Observer without cause. That being said, there are no natural pathways in the organisation towards achieving the role of Treasurer. This could potentially result in a skill shortage in future years. Establishing rates, processes for receipts, and financial policy are the remaining jobs for the portfolio. These can be done with the time you're devoting to the role each week. Working alongside the digital team makes sense.

Eliza: If you want someone to bounce ideas off, you could possibly get a group together unofficially to source ideas. We could revisit the idea once things have settled down if that's not sufficient.

Tatsu: I could bring a business case later on. I'm very reluctant to discuss Observer things with students who aren't involved. This might be worth investigating later.

Eliza: Re-evaluate middle of Term 1 or during Semester break. Give it a go before we hire anyone new.

Item 5 - Items for Discussion

5.1 Policy

Michael: We passed several policies at the last meeting. Conflict of Interest, Leave and Article Approval. There are things you may want to update or fix in there, Joel. There will also be more coming down the track. Article approval is polished. Leave differentiates between personal and compassionate leave. Joel, I would like you to keep track of when people are on leave and how much they've taken.

Joel: In that case I'll just need you to make sure that the reporters are letting me know when they take leave.

Michael: And the Council has discretion to not grant personal leave.

Jason: Consequences of breaches are detailed in the policy for both Officers who receive a stipend and those that don't.

Actionable: Review passed policies - Joel.

5.2 Feedback for the SSAF Process

Michael: Joel can you follow up with the University if there is an opportunity to give feedback regarding the SSAF process.

Actionable: Contact University regarding SSAF feedback - Joel.

Meeting Closed at 17:24