

ANU Observer General Meeting 17/10/18

Item 1: Meeting Opens and Apologies

Meeting Opens at 1826

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

Given by the Chair

1.2 Apologies

None received.

Procedural to move Item 7 to the next item of the agenda.

Motion passes.

Item 7: Notices of Motions

7.1 Motion to read:

That the policy in Appendix F, entitled "Electoral Regulations", be made a regulation of The ANU Observer.

Moved by Eliza Croft

Seconded by Julian Lee

Eliza: We have Electoral Regulations, but we accidentally passed them as a policy, this is to officially make them Regulations. They have been misnomered until this point.

Moves to a vote.

Abstaining: Eben Leifer

Motion passes.

7.2 Motion to read:

That the word "policy", when used in the Electoral Regulations to refer to that document, be amended to "regulation" wheresoever the term appears.

Moved by Eliza Croft

Seconded by Julian Lee

Eliza: This is to make sure that it is compliant with itself and makes sense upon reading.

Moves to a vote.

Motion passes.

7.3 Motion to read:

That the policy in Appendix G, entitled “Financial Regulations”, be made a regulation of the association.

Moved by Eliza Croft

Seconded by Julian Lee

Eliza: Our funding is stable and therefore so are these Regulations. We hope to have more concrete regulations in future years.

Moves to a vote.

Motion passes.

Item 2: Minutes from the Previous Meeting including Matters Arising

2.1 Minutes from Previous Meeting:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15CGLwaRjasWIt7GIvsfwt6C4dYGRqdjAXGhbedpTrg/edit?usp=sharing>

Motion to accept the Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Moved by Skanda Panditharatne

Seconded by Adelle Panditharatne (?)

Motion passes.

Item 3: Reports and Matters Arising

3.1 Report of the Chair of the Council (Appendix A)

Eliza: Only thing I want to flag is to thank everyone for coming and thank you for a fabulous year.

series of inane and self-worshipping questions

Motion to accept the Chair’s report.

Moved by Taz Hudson

Seconded by Jason Pover

Motion passes.

3.2 Report of the Chair of the Editorial Board (Appendix B)

Skanda: I will take my report largely as read, I just want to flag a few things. It’s been a good semester for news. A huge congratulations to all our reporters who went above and beyond consistently.

Michael: What would you see as the big challenges for news next year?

Skanda: I think as our news team grows it will be important to maintain our quality and consistency of news output. We attempted to be regular and have 5 articles each week. We didn’t always make that so working on that is a key point.

Motion to accept the Editorial Report

Moved by Michael

Seconded by Taz

Motion passes.

3.3 Report of the Digital Team (Appendix C)

Konstantinos: I am currently the 3rd Digital Editor. We had a lot of changes this year, but we made a lot of progress. We've expanded our focus and equipment. We've filmed and live streamed lots of events. We aim to progress further moving into next year. Consistency is definitely going to be a focus for next year.

Skanda: With the changeover, how do you think we can stop the damage that inconsistencies and frequent change causes?

Konstantinos: In the begin the 2 digital editors definitely had distinct differences in vision. Trying to keep everyone on the same page and equally committed will be key if there are 2 editors again.

Motion to accept the Digital Report.

Moved by Skanda

Seconded by Jess

Motion passes.

3.4 Secretary's Report (Appendix D)

Joel: I have been fairly absent recently so I'll be moving that I don't get paid for this pay period.

Motion to accept the Secretary's Report

Motion passes.

3.5 Treasurer's Report (Appendix E)

Jules: I'll take my report mostly as read. We'd be here a while otherwise. I want to thank Eliza for her work as Chair, she's really stepped up to cover for me when I've fallen behind. We are anticipating spending 95% of our SSAF allocation, excepting the legal pool. We may have a spot in Kambri, we will find out later this week.

Michael: Could you give any sort of information about the SSAF process for this year? Is Observer bidding for more or less?

Jules: We're bidding for about 1.5x what we received last year. Decent chunk of the increase is upping the editors pay. It's a tough job and Woroni pays their editors substantially more than we are given the funds to.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report

Motion passes.

Item 4: Elections

Noting that Lewis Pope, the appointed Returning Officer, is not able to be present for the entire duration of elections, Eben Lefier renounces membership rights and is appointed by the Council as Returning Officer for the 2018 Observer Elections. Each candidate speaks for 2 minutes and time is given for questions.

4.1 Election of News Editors

There are three (3) News Editor positions in 2019. The nominees for the role of News Editor, in speaking order, are:

Kida Lin - Has experience writing on complex topics while writing for Honi Soit at USyd. Moved to ANU in July 2018. New but very keen to give it his all.

Adelle Milhouse - Has attended every SRC this year despite their ridiculous length. Has written many articles for Observer.

Eliza Croft - Has no life outside of Observer. Loves being a part of the group. Brings a wealth of experience and institutional knowledge. Has done the governance stuff and the editor role for a year.

Jessica Whiting - Started at Observer January 2018. Has been doing the SASH updates, including really intense content. Understands high quality content and wants to bring that to the editorial board next year. Isn't a governance bro, more of a manager. Likes to formalise good practise.

Questions

Taz: Specifically for Kida. Do you think you have the experience and institutional knowledge to be an editor?

Kida: I am the newest, so I wouldn't want to say that I have the most knowledge. I believe I can bring something different. I can learn the additional institutional knowledge quite quickly, but I can bring a new eye for things that can help balance out the team.

Skanda: This is a stressful job. There can be lots of conflict and personal stress. How would you resolve conflicts in the editorial team?

Jess: Meetings need to be structured, the method in which conflict is resolved needs to be formally structured and timely. You have quite a personal relationship between editor and reporter, so I hope to establish those relationships quite quickly and consult with the other editors when I need.

Eliza: I've been an editor so I've encountered these issues a fair deal. I welcome robust debate. I support keeping things productive and taking breaks when they start steering to unproductive territory.

Adelle: The others have been fairly comprehensive. Being productive and not going in circles is important.

Kida; Making people feel comfortable with different opinions is key. You also need to create an environment where people feel they can express diverse opinions without worrying that they will step on toes or start conflict.

Michael: Not all of you will be elected. If you are not, will you remain part of Observer anyway?

Eliza: Just like Malcolm Turnbull, Editors should not stay around if they're not longer an editor, so I would probably leave.

Adelle: I love the drama, so I would stay.

Kida: I would stay if I was an editor.

Jess: I'm too far down the rabbit hole to quit now.

Jason: How do you balance protecting your journalists with maintaining editorial oversight.

Adelle: It is important to allow them their own projects.

Kida: I would like to maximise autonomy because reporters can often come up with things that the experienced editors hadn't considered. Allowing them to do things they feel passionate about is important.

Jess: It starts on day 1 with hiring. People expect a certain vibe or structure, so that's important, but allowing them to pitch their own ideas is also good.

Eliza: I think that the place for autonomy is in pitching and early stages.

Observer's style and voice needs to dominate in the later stages though. We are a team-based model, not a contributor-based model.

Elected: Eliza Croft, Jessica Whiting, Adelle Milhouse

4.2 Election of Digital Editor

There is one (1) Digital Editor position in 2019. The nominees for the role of Digital Editor, in speaking order, are:

Konstantinos Katsanis: I believe I know what this organisation needs and how it can grow and improve. I started as a photographer, where I could see all the issues in the Digital Team from the ground. I grew to the point I'm at now, and I have that experience of how things went wrong, and how the team felt disconnected. It's something I've tried to change and I want to keep working towards.

Stavros Dimos: I joined Observer a few months ago as a troubleshooter and solver of infrequent problems. I have taken on a lot of Adam's responsibility since he left. In my time I've been berated with tech problems and I think it's a serious issue that I really want to focus on solving. My long term goal is to make changes to the way things are run. My transition into this role was lengthy, confusing, and that's a serious issue. I think creating a well-defined procedure for each role and building up the institutional knowledge that isn't carried in a single person is important, especially given all the digital editors we've had.

21 Voters

Elected: Konstantinos Katsanis

4.3 Election of Secretary

Uncontested.

Elected: Jason Pover

4.4 Election of Treasurer

Uncontested.

Elected: Julian Lee

4.5 Election of Arbitration Panel members

No nominees.

Item 5: Items for Resolution

No items for resolution.

Item 6: Items for Discussion

No items for discussion.

Item 8: Other Business

Item 9: Date of next meeting and Close

The next General Meeting of The ANU Observer will be held in Semester 1, 2019.

Appendix A: Council Chair's Report

Eliza Croft

What a year it has been for *The ANU Observer*. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the team - my fellow Editors and Council members, reporters, researchers, photographers, videographers, tech people. *Observer* is its team, and it relies on all of you who work way too hard to deliver news to students.

I'd like to use my report to highlight what I think are the most important points in the past year for *Observer's* governance.

Perhaps our biggest moment was receiving Student Services and Amenities Fee funding. We were the first new organisation at ANU to receive this since SSAF began. It was a massive undertaking, but receiving SSAF makes us a sustainable organisation and has cemented our place as a campus institution.

Relatedly, *Observer* became democratic. All ANU students are now members and can vote for our Elected Officials. This was a requirement of receiving SSAF and one we were happy to comply with. I hope students make the most of the opportunity to help shape *Observer*.

Another big moment, governance-wise, came with the stepping back of Michael Turvey, one of our co-founders. I thank Michael for their incredible work. Their departure marked our final step away from a two-person project to a campus institution.

Also noteworthy was our first General Meeting where students could vote. This was very well-attended, and I was proud to see democracy in action with the election of Arbitration Panel members.

We successfully bid for additional SSAF in the mid-year round. In fact, in an unprecedented move, we were awarded more money than we bid for. This provided a valuable top-up to our modest funds and has allowed us to purchase additional equipment.

And that brings us to now, our second General Meeting of the year. I look forward to the election of next year's leadership team, and I look forward to seeing them help *Observer* grow even more in the coming year.

Of course, it would be remiss of me to talk about significant points for our organisation without mentioning the passing of Isabel Matthews. She was a much-loved member of our Digital team, and I have no doubt that she would be here today, likely running for Digital Editor, had she not passed from a brain aneurysm. I hope that our organisation always remembers Isabel and the valuable contribution she made, not just in terms of her work but also through her enthusiasm and humour. To that end, in consultation with her family and after receiving SSAF funding, we will be instituting an Isabel Matthews Memorial Award. This

will be given to a team member who is reliable, dedicated, and contributes to a positive team atmosphere. I hope that this continues through the years, and that every year when it is awarded, we remember Isabel.

I've already thanked our team, but I would like to thank them again. Finally, though, I'd like to thank every single student, staff member, and member of the public who has read our stories, engaged with articles online, or come up to us and said hi. We do this for you; your encouragement gives us the energy to keep going, and your advice helps us improve. We want to provide you with the most timely, accurate, detailed, and relevant news coverage we can, and I look forward to *Observer* doing this long into the future.

Appendix B: Editorial Board's Report

Skanda Panditharatne

Over the past semester, the *ANU Observer* has continued to produce consistent, quality news coverage. This report will discuss our news output, the challenges we faced, and the staff who produced our journalism since our last General Meeting on the 9th of May.

News Output

This semester, we have published a variety of articles on issues relating to students, including a number of breaking news articles, explainers, liveblogs, and ordinary news articles. Our subject matter included ANU campus developments, issues relating to student governance bodies, teaching and learning, ANU administration, and issues at halls of residence.

We also published a number of breaking news updates on our Facebook page, many of which drew significant attention on social media. Links to all our articles and updates were also posted to Twitter.

We returned from our hiatus on May 15, and published nine further articles in May, including six news articles, two Catch-Ups, and an explainer. An article on admissions changes drew particular interest, attracting over 750 views and significant social media discussion.

In June, which included the Semester One exam period and part of the winter break, we published five news articles. An update on the new Kambri precinct attracted around 750 views.

In July, which included the rest of the winter break, we published ten articles, including seven news articles, two explainers, and a Catch-Up. An article about changes to parliamentary internships for international students drew over 2700 views, and an article about an applicant wrongly rejected from an honours program attracted over 2000 views.

In August, we published 31 articles, averaging over an article a day. This included 21 news articles, five analysis articles, a live blog, and four Catch-Ups. This month included the ANUSA and PARSA elections, which we covered extensively. Several articles received significant readerships: an article on residential hall rents received over 1800 views, one on a motion condemning the NUS Queer/LGBTI Officer drew over 1250 views, and an analysis article recounting past ANUSA elections attracted over 1000 views. We also hosted events surrounding the ANUSA election, including an Education Officer Candidate debate and President-Elect Interview co-hosted with *Woroni*, and an NUS Delegate Candidate debate we hosted on our own.

In September, we published 14 articles, including six news articles, four Catch-Ups, a two-part explainer and two liveblogs. We began a daily blog on the Alex Ophel trial, which was of

significant interest to students and attracted over 4000 views. Observer reporters attended the entirety of the trial, which went for 15 days. An article on the PhB Arts program ending also attracted interest with over 1100 views and significant social media discussion.

Up to the 16th of October, we have published five articles, including one news article, an explainer, two Catch-Ups and a liveblog on Inward Bound. The Ophel Trial Daily Blog also continued into October, concluding on the 9th. The Inward Bound liveblog attracted very significant interest with over 3600 views.

Issues and Challenges

Covering the Ophel trial was a challenging experience to say the least. The issues involved in the trial were highly disturbing with significant potential for distress. We attempted to take all precautions to protect staff welfare – only volunteers were assigned to cover the trial, and we attempted to spread out shifts in order to not overwhelm reporters. However, given only a small pool of reporters were available to cover the trial, it still remained a difficult experience at times. It was also the first time Observer had covered an ongoing trial, and we had to quickly develop new skills in court reporting, reporting what occurred plainly and factually and taking great care to avoid any potential contempt. We also took precautions to protect reader welfare by issuing content warnings on each post and providing resources for assistance, as well as coordinating with moderators of ANU Schmidtposting (a Facebook group) to avoid distressing students when sharing articles there. We were ultimately very happy with our reporting on the trial, and grateful to receive positive feedback from several members of the public.

As discussed below, a number of reporters left at the end of Semester One, leaving us with a smaller than usual team for the beginning of Semester Two. As such, we had just six members on the news team during election season, which led to a higher than usual workload for all members. Nevertheless, the team performed admirably, as evidenced by the remarkable amount of news coverage we produced in August.

We continued to liveblog SRC as we are still prevented from livestreaming the meetings. As mentioned in the previous report, this is challenging in that it requires a significant number of staff to be available at the meeting, though the liveblogs continue to be well received by our audience.

Our email system was down intermittently for some weeks as we transferred to a new system. This led to some challenges as we were unable to send or receive emails for some time, and were unsure as to whether emails from others were being received or bouncing back. Thankfully, we are now confident in the new system.

Hiring

One of our reporters left towards the end of Term Two, and former News Editor Madeline Birdsey stepped down from the Editorial Board at the end of Semester One. She remained with the organisation in a Reporter at Large capacity. Michael Turvey also continued in a Reporter at Large capacity through Semester Two.

We hired two new reporters in September, and one more in October.

Acknowledgements and Summary

We have been very happy with the progress of *Observer's* news coverage this semester. The team has performed admirably in all aspects, even in trying circumstances at times. Several members of the team have regularly gone above and beyond in their reporting, and for that we thank them.

Observer's News team has also grown together well as a unit throughout this semester. We have instituted fortnightly social evenings that have allowed us to become friends, as well as colleagues. On a personal note as Executive Editor, I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know everyone in the organisation and will miss the camaraderie of *Observer* tremendously next year.

As an organisation, *Observer* has made tremendous progress this year. I look forward to seeing it continue to grow and provide consistent, quality news coverage for ANU students for years to come.

Appendix C: Digital Team's Report

Konstantinos Katsanis

The Digital Team has expanded quite a lot throughout the past one year. We have acquired the following digital equipment:

- Sony a6300 with the 18-135mm f3.5-5.6 kit lens
- Manfrotto 190go! Tripod with two interchangeable heads
- A RODE Microphone
- Two WD HDDs
- A sage

That equipment is aimed to serve our needs for the following year and/until we upgrade to a better system. There is still space in the budget to buy phone mounts for tripods and battery packs.

We started the year by having two Editors, Rebecca (Ebe) Ganon and Adam Cass. Due to either personal, social or commitment issues, both of them have resigned from their roles. Konstantinos Katsanis acquired his role halfway through the year, taking over Ebe's position. At the moment, Konstantinos is only Digital Editor left in the organisation and has no intention of resigning until his term is completed. We hired a fair number of people in the beginning of the year, but a lot of them have left or are not with us anymore. The passing of Isabel Matthews was a great loss for the digital team and the organisation, and her photographic work has been appreciated in the articles we have published. At the moment, the following members are currently officially part of the digital team:

- Broneal Sarkosh (Video Editor)
- Tristan Khaw (Photographer)
- Jessica Wu (Video Editor)
- Sandra Tong (Video Editor)
- Stavros Dimos (Web Developer)
- Deepu Ashok (Photographer)

Events that we have covered include livestreaming of guest lectures, ANUSA OGMs and Clubs Council Meetings. We have filmed Student Representative Council meetings and lately we just started filming IAC events and theatrical productions. Photography has covered a range of events, from cultural to breaking news.

At the moment, almost all the graphics have been developed by the News Team, but we aim to incorporate the digital team in the creation of graphics next year. We also aim to undertake larger projects and assign more consistent and well-planned assignments ahead of time, so that our digital reporters will be able to attend events. It is in the plans to open a sub-editor position, but this is to be further discussed with Council.

Appendix D: Secretary's Report

Joel Baker

Not submitted.

Appendix E: Treasurer's Report

Julian Lee

Good evening, friends. I'm here to provide the end-of-year report for the ANU Observer, as the current Observer Treasurer.

We've had a productive and busy year here at Observer, having expanded our operations significantly. Despite some significant personal setbacks, we have acquired a significant volume of new equipment, run several successful events and – most importantly – put out a high volume of excellent stories.

I've been with the team since the end of May, following the departure of Tatsunori Yamaguchi, and I've had an incredible time working with everyone. It's been a long road and a steep learning curve, but with help from the rest of the Council, we've pulled through.

Overall, we expect to be spending over 95% of our total SSAF money this year, excluding the \$2,000 legal contingency fund (which we thankfully haven't had to spend, and were not expected to spend).

Expenditure Report

Line Item	Initial Budget	Spent	Notes
Allowances	\$18,150	\$14,520	Remaining will be handed out in the last allowance payment at the end of the year.
Honoraria	\$4,530	\$2,365	Remainder will likely be paid out at the end of the year, at the discretion of the Arbitration Panel.
Administration	\$600	\$127	
Legal	\$2,000	\$0	Didn't need to use it.
Office Supplies	\$200	\$111.46	The main purchase here has been that safe you can see in the corner, for keeping our valuable equipment protected.

Advertising & Merchandise	\$600	\$768.99	This factors in some repayment for shirts, but we still ran slightly overbudget on this line item. This overpayment, unfortunately, happened in its entirety before my arrival as Treasurer.
NUS National Conference	\$1,300	\$1,300	Skanda had to pay some of this out-of-pocket, as flight costs were higher than anticipated; we're therefore bidding higher for next year.
Meetings/Events	\$900	\$424.69	Not an exact figure – as I had to submit this by 5pm Tuesday, this doesn't include the pizza you're eating right now!
Equipment	\$3,000	\$2,767.64	Remainder is expected to be spent by the end of the year.
Mid-Year SSAF	\$2,250	\$129	A great mark of success for Observer this year was receiving more than we bid for in mid-year SSAF. The majority of this money is dedicated to the Isobel Memorial Award, which is still a work-in-progress. However, the Observer phone has been purchased and paid for, and is currently in action!

2019 Bid Process

I'd like to thank Eliza Croft, our Council Chair, for her invaluable assistance in this. We've bid for approximately \$72,000 for 2019, of which \$20,000 is a provisional 'rent and office fit-out' pending more information on us receiving a space in Kambri (we've been told to expect an update on this on 19th October, so fingers crossed!). The rest of our bid represents a roughly 50% increase on last year's funding. We're looking forward to what happens next!

I would like to thank our Council Chair, Eliza Croft, for her assistance in the SSAF process. It's a complex and internecine process with many idiosyncrasies, and I'm very lucky to be guided and assisted by someone who's done it before.

SSAF Acquittal

Come the end of the year, we expect to be acquitting between \$2,000 and \$3,000 back to SSAF; the lion's share of which will be our legal contingency fund being repaid (as we didn't run into any legal issues which we couldn't access ANUSA's lawyers for).

Appendix F: Electoral Regulations

This policy can be viewed here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nOyfqP4PLNc7KV6li022pESGvwfdRf92BnzkiDcAIA/edit?usp=sharing>

Appendix G: Financial Regulations

The proposed regulations may be viewed here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1arAAM610YFbvkkNi2Qo1OwdEuc_KK_Cx7GpkcgZ-0Ac/edit?usp=sharing