



THE ANU OBSERVER

Meeting of The ANU Observer Board

Date: 18/6/20

Open of Meeting: 1734

Item 1 - Attendance and Apologies

Present: Konstantine, Tristan, Adelle, Hayley, Sam, Angus

Absent:

Item 2 - Acknowledgement of Country

By Konstantinos

Item 3 - Previous Action Items

3.1 Actionable: [Cleaning up the Canva - Sam](#)

3.2 [Fixing up COVID procedure for office transition](#) → Chase up how many people we can have in office.

3.3 [Shirts: Konstantine](#)

Item 4 - Reports

Chair Report: Konstantine Katsanis

I received a response from Lodge. We can access our office, as long as we are following government directives. I will prepare a message to post in #general when I receive information about how large our office is in order to determine how many people can be inside at the same time. However, it is definitely large enough for the Board and all the editors to be inside at the same time while maintaining social distancing.

Our Arbitration Panel is preparing an Honoraria guide that will help officers in their Honoraria decisions. I am expecting that to be sent through in the next few days.

Finally, I wanted to address some of my concerns in regards to content in the past couple of weeks. I understand it has been extremely busy for everyone, however we have KPIs to follow. Since our last meeting I have seen only 5 articles and 1 liveblog, with only an article a week for this and the past week. With 4 editors, I would have expected that we would be more efficient in the production of content. Visual team output has also been low. I would expect sufficient reasons as to why this has been the case from both teams in their reports. Furthermore, I would be interested to see a reflection in every report from now on as to why

KPIs are not met. I would also like to create a survey to get feedback from other Observer officers about their feelings towards the organisation and their teams.

Chair passes to Adelle.

Kon: I will take it as read.

Adelle: Any questions?

Moved by Tristan, seconded by Hayley. Passes unanimously.

Actionable: [Internal Survey](#)

Finance Executive Report: Konstantine Katsanis

Lodge verified that we do not need to pay rent for 6 months. That means that we have a huge residue. We have two options: try to spend it all on office furniture and supplies or try to engage in conversations with the ANU about building a reserve for the years to come. I am in favour of the second option, as I do not think we need to spend that much on decorations, furniture or supplies. We still have a lot from last year. Building a reserve was in my objectives for this year. I think a good starting point is by asking the university to allow us to keep what we have at the moment rather than requesting extra in later years.

I still have not heard anything in regards to SSAF. Will send an email to Luby this week.

Expenses for the past three weeks include paying for Hover (domain name), Digital Ocean subscription (server), and Slack. Stipends and Honoraria are expected to be paid on July 9.

Lastly, I would like to list some goals that I want to achieve over the break:

- 1) Collect all our receipts and update the excel document with all our expenses.
- 2) Create an application, an ANU Observer Treasurer's calculator, that will help us calculate stipends and honoraria easier in the future. I will undertake that task myself and hopefully will have it finished by the end of the break.
- 3) Prepare a SSAF plan and a guide about how to prepare, write and submit business cases for the current and future Board directors.

Kon: I will take it as read.

Tristan: Can we get a drone?

Kon: That is [your responsibility]

Moved by Tristan, seconded by Angus. Passes unanimously.

Secretary Report: Hayley Hands

Received late with apologies

I don't have much to report as these past few weeks have been hectic between assignments, exams and moving houses. I have tried to stay as active as I can in the Slack but I understand I wasn't as available as I usually have been.

I have received feedback about the handover policy from one person who said it was good.

I will be working full time over the uni break but intend to fix up those 2 or 3 policies that still refer to 'Council' rather than board. Kon and I also intend to talk about the creation of a 'CEO' type role.

Thank you to most people for submitting reports on time. I was disappointed that the news team did not submit a report (**Sam ended up being a legend and writing one last night!**). I have a number of questions for news/visual this week, and reports are especially helpful because they can answer questions and queries before people need to bring them up.

With honoraria coming up, I would like to ask that the article tracker be updated correctly with editors being included in the 'assigned' section, as well as adding the publish time/dates and corrections. This helps us to see who was involved in what and with putting in accurate/specific submissions. I posted the guide that arbitration have handed onto us last night which we can discuss in general business if anyone has any problems.

I'm looking forward to transitioning to the office and seeing everyone in person. Note that our next meeting will probably be in person. I hope everyone is doing alright and that exam/assignment week wasn't too harsh!

Moved by Tristan, seconded by Adelle. Passes unanimously.

Visual Content Executive Report: Tristan Khaw

Visual Team Status

Since the start of exams, I have not heard anything from my team. They have stopped filling the graphic requests so I assume that they are no longer committed to Observer. I had to take a small break to finish my own exams and assessments but am available from now on to fill any requests.

As mentioned previously, I will be contacting our previous applicants and starting a round of hiring early. I am aiming for 4 to 6 members of the visual team so that we have enough personnel to spread the workload around.

Long Term Projects

From this week, I will be planning and testing out an improved version of the tracker sheet that we are using currently.

There have been some suggestions for projects for the period in between semesters.

Kon suggested doing a semester wrap up video, similar in format to the F5.

Kon also suggested a cheeky documentary series looking at the origin of the statues around campus. I would like to do some more long format mixed media articles. Maybe something like 3 projects a semester. It would be a collaboration between teams, focusing on a deeper examination of non-time-critical topics that we could perhaps bank up and then release during exam periods when we have a bit of a content drought.

Tristan: I'll take mine as read. I want to speak to a few things that I was speaking about at the start. I haven't heard about anything from my team members so I am going to assume that they are no longer

committed. There's a couple of long term projects but if anyone has ideas for stuff we can do in the break or in the lead up to next term that would be a good start.

Kon: I have 3 questions. When you say that people are not committed do you mean currently or that they're done with it?

Tristan: Charlie said he was going to travel in semester 2 on an exchange program but with covid I don't know what is going down. Amna is always busy but it seems like [throughout the semester] they are both responding less and less. It's to the point where I'm sending FB messages to read the Slack messages so their heart is probably not in it.

Kon: I was going to advise don't completely exclude them, they might need a fresh start with the new people.

Tristan: I will extend the offer to them but we have to plan as if they're not going to because they've shown they're not going to do what they need to do. It might change if we go back to face to face with video projects, but Observer is work so you can't just show up for what you like.

Kon: You mentioned that you're going to be 'afk', can you clarify that because I have noticed you have been absent over the last few days busy with exams. Will it be that busy afk or will you be not checking anything?

Tristan: I don't see it being to the extent it was during exams, but to be honest I am not sure. This is the first time I will be moving out and there are a bunch of complicating circumstances around it like my job. It might be that I pick a place and move and be done or that it might be more protracted. I don't see it being as [it has been in the last few days] and I have returned to doing graphics again.

Kon: Last time there was a bit of conflict stuff happening between you and Anthony. Is that going better?

Tristan: I haven't spoken to Anthony. Sam in particular has been a good lad, I read the news team report as well and I do appreciate that they are taking steps towards better cooperation. [We wouldn't have been able to do things like the BLM]. I don't personally know what's going on with Anthony but I am willing to work together on that sort of stuff. I don't know if news team has any vibes on that.

Adelle: We haven't put enough out for there to be friction [since the last meeting].

Moved by Angus, seconded by Sam. Passes unanimously.

News Content Executive Report: Sam Wright

Submitted Late with Apologies

Content

It has been a hectic past couple of weeks, on top of the already uncertain times we have been working in. Due to this, output has not been very high and we have not been hitting our KPI's, but this was a little expected. Since our previous board meeting on the 27th of May, we have put out 5 articles, including the SRC Liveblog. This is low, but I believe that the content was strong, given only one article was stupid related. Topics such as SASH, Budget Cuts and the Black Lives Matter movement are topics that matter to students and so, whilst our output was low, I feel that our articles were able to connect with readers. As exams come to a close, I think our output will improve and those KPI's will be back within reach.

Cooperation with Digital

As discussed in the last board meeting, cooperation between our two teams had deteriorated in the lead up to May 27. I believe this was in part due to COVID but also due to Tristan having to take on an

unnecessarily large workload. To assist with this, we produced a few graphics to lighten the load, and I took some photos at the Black Lives Matter protest, running them past Tristan before publication. Ideally, and I think I speak on behalf of all of news team, when I say that this is what a good relationship with digital should look like. Obviously, the pictures would have been better if done by digital team but having pictures in as many articles as possible will help to reward members of digital for their hard work and will also make our articles more appealing. We had some issues with the Facebook graphic not appearing on the page properly, an issue which Angus was able to fix without too many issues. I believe Angus has said that he will give us some info on how to fix this issue if it happens again, and so myself and the other editors will make sure this is passed on to the reporters as they learn how to publish.

Future Content

We have a few different areas of interest lined up for potential articles, such as the Winston Churchill statue that seems a hot topic on Confessions, as well as some ongoing articles.

Sam: I will take my report as read.

Hayley: Are all articles from [a while ago] being shelved?

Sam: I believe there are [two still in the works].

Hayley: Last board meeting explainers were discussed to release in busy periods.

Sam: yeah, it was good in theory I don't think it worked in practice.

Tristan: Two things, I think it would be good to collaborate to do some longer form projects [so we can release one big thing] rather than doing it all just before exams. The second thing I was going to ask about is what was the go with the thing that Hayley brought up in the Slack.

Adelle: I wasn't super involved with it but it seemed like standard stuff, ANU Media was accusing someone of something so they needed to be able to respond to it.

Kon: For that article, who was supposed to be writing and who was supposed to be editor. Some of you didn't know who was assigned.

Adelle: Anthony had initially taken it up and I was quite busy. By the time it got up to that point Anthony had exams and stuff.

Kon: What concerned me with that specific thing, it felt like some people in the editorial team did not know what had been assigned to who.

Adelle: With Hayley's message it was unclear which article was being talked about.

Sam: I think that with exams reporters [don't attend online meetings]. Because of the exam season there hadn't been [as much chance to communicate about the meeting].

Konstantine: When was the last time you guys had meetings?

Adelle: We had an Editor's meeting on news meeting. News meeting was about 2 weeks ago.

Tristan: My primary concern was that she mentioned the person who Helena contacted mentioned when the article was coming out.

Adelle: That's very standard for comment.

Tristan: In general, coming from previous thing where we said we don't promise that articles will come out at X or Y date.

Adelle: You'll generally say we're looking to publish x date.

Hayley: Why has article tracker become less updated/less detailed.

Sam: Just a lack of time/exams. I will try to go through and update it. The only explanation I can offer is exams/covid.

Tristan: I would like to revamp that sheet. It was very useful for F5. To make it more useful to an organisation as a whole it should be as frictionless as possible. People are like "uh it's too much mental load to think about on top of other deadlines" so I am thinking of implementing something that's a bit more streamlined.

Moved by Angus, seconded by Tristan.

For: 5

Abstentions: 1

Web Administrator Report: Angus Brooks

I have recently been very busy with assessment and have therefore very little to report. Now that I've finished assessment, I will be about to commit more time to Observer. Current priorities include looking into Facebook sharing difficulties, site performance, guides and documentation, and Google Drive cleanup.

Angus: I will consider my report presented and read. I have one thing to say. I put together a guide on how to tame the FB beast, but FB is always notoriously difficult. There are so many algorithms going on and this will help to know if there are any issues on Observer's end or FBs end.

Kon: I will message you about the Google Drive.

Angus: Yeah, I'll be around but will probably going a bit back and forward.

Kon: I will message you to sort it out, don't feel like its a task you have to do. I know this stuff, there's stuff there from like 3 years ago.

Angus: I have had a look at it to the best I can, it needs a lot of work.

Moved by Tristan, seconded by Sam. Passes unanimously.

Item 5 - Items for Decision

Item 6 - Items for Discussion

6.1 KPIs: Output, timeliness and communication.

Tristan: It's a bit hard with the 'timely' news kind of thing. Maybe we should think of stuff that we haven't previously covered to give us a new form of media to try out. We can see if we can collaborate or do some bigger projects so visual can handle some stuff as well.

Konstantine: How much do you guys go about finding stories that aren't a tip but are [research based] that students might not necessarily know. Like the article Hayley shared that are more like ANU, which has impact to students but is not necessarily related to a course or something. We used to have researchers as a role, is there this possibility.

Adelle: The thing about stuff like harassment is there would be no way [to cover it unless we had heard something]. I can see the value in trying to research things but I don't think we'll get the amount of stories from it [in terms of the effort].

Sam: A lot of the time if we pick up on small bits of info it might not be enough and we need someone to come forward and tell us about it. If you think that would be [beneficial] I am happy to look into it.

Tristan: We do have relations with organisations like ANU Sport who we could talk to for some other content.

Sam: I can't say I know a lot about that stuff.

Adelle: I also know very little about ANU Sport.

Sam: My only concern with [doing that] is the news would be skewed to what looks good for them.

Tristan: I feel like its up to us to say no, we can look at stories with a critical eye but it's a jumping off point. My mind was thinking of things like if an ANU student is going off to uni games

or olympiads. Even being aware of stuff like that which is relevant to students might be a good idea. I think we discussed this at that board meeting at the start of the year where we would have to make it clear to them that we [have] journalistic integrity.

Kon: There have been articles which have taken a while or haven't been posted in schmidtposting.

Adelle: The standard practice is the reporter does the share but reporters have been away from their computer which is a bit weird. Reporters should be responsible for putting their own stuff out there and we need to be clear about that.

Sam: In that particular one there was already 1 or 2 shares in Schmidtposting. We made a decision that it had been shared enough. If that was to happen again I would probably just do the share myself.

Konstantine: I think if it takes longer than 10 mins the editor should just do it, it doesn't matter who it is. Ideally yes the reporter but it is better to get it out there because things can happen, yes reporters are responsible for that but let them know that this is their job but it eventually has to go out. If someone has already shared it and you feel like there is no point that's understandable.

6.2 Internal Survey

Kon: I mentioned that I would be interested to have a survey to get feedback from everyone in the team about their experiences in Observer. The problem is this has been a special semester and is not representative of what we do in Observer during a generic semester but I think it would still be good to get a survey out. I think this is something that editors, VCE and the Board would all be interested in asking certain things. We can work on the survey outside of the Board meetings. I would be interested as Chair to see what reporters for example feel about Observer at the moment and I think it's good to get that feedback about what they think. We should think whether it should be filled just by non-exec or by everybody.

Tristan: I do agree that we should have one, I think a good way would be [before a party] with a kumbaya circle and talk about it. It would be a good idea for people on the Board to pass down some of the context of the decisions we make [like governance]. I think it would be a fun thing to do.

Kon: I am really committed to organising a meeting and working on the survey.

Actionable: Organise a meeting regarding the internal survey.

6.3 News Report

Adelle: We're going to have a chat with Anthony. Sam has offered to write it if need be.

Sam: I will be advocating that I take on that role. It seems Anthony is pretty busy and I'm not as busy.

Item 7 - Other Business

Item 8 - Recall Actionables

Actionable: Organise a meeting regarding the internal survey.

3.3 Fixing up COVID procedure for office transition → Chase up how many people we can have in office.

3.4 Shirts: Konstantine

Meeting closed at 1825