



THE ANU OBSERVER

Meeting of The ANU Observer Board

Date: 2/9/2020

Open of Meeting: 20:00

Item 1 - Attendance and Apologies

Present: Sam, Tristan, Anthony, Hayley, Konstantinos

Absent: Angus

Item 2 - Acknowledgement of Country

By Konstantinos

Item 3 - Previous Action Items

8.1 Angus to make a poll for social in general for a social next Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

8.2 Each team exec to work on a short report regarding KPIs for strategic meetings.

8.3 Cleaning roster (Hayley)

8.4 Ordering Shirts

8.5 Arrange a meeting with Anastasia and discuss a reserve plan.

8.6 Create a SSAF guide

8.7 Buy digital equipment for F5

Item 4 - Elections

4.1 Vote to accept Helena Burke as an Editor starting 5/9/20

This is a motion to fill a casual vacancy by unanimous decision of the Board under 10.5.1 of the Constitution.

Anthony: She'll be great.

Konstantine: Has she said anything specific about her role? I wanted to clarify when she was starting but I am happy to have her start immediately after Adelle leaves.

Moved by Tristan, seconded by Sam. For: Tristan, Sam, Anthony, Konstantine, Hayley, Angus (approval over Slack chat).

Item 4 - Reports

Chair Report: Konstantine Katsanis

We've had our Operational Meeting/"vibe check" meeting. It went well. We should have a couple more of those, with one coming up with solutions. From the meeting I got out that there is still a lack of communication and constitutional knowledge among news and visual.

I found it concerning that one of the editors was not aware that reporters are eligible to make honorarium submissions. I also found it concerning that they were not aware about electoral procedures, e.g., how one nominates themselves as an editor when there is a vacancy. I was expecting at least more experienced people within the team to pass down their knowledge of how procedures work. From the 6 elected officers that undertook the survey, no one expressed uncertainty about procedures. Hearing things like that make me question how much certainty actually exists between elected officers.

In the meeting we also discussed how much impact Observer can have in both study and personal lives, and everyone expressed that it is quite intensive. Hopefully after this meeting officers will take a look over their personal lives; it is my responsibility to ensure that they don't feel burned out and I would like people to come to me and have a talk if they feel like things are getting their way. I also found out that some people do not feel like they are getting the best out of their experiences. I think it is important for any concerns to be brought up and discussed seriously. I won't tolerate non-listeners and people who do not want to make things better for the organisations and others and I am planning to take steps to ensure that everyone is getting the most out of their role.

A full report on the survey has been listed below in the appendix. 12 responses are ok, but I was hoping all elected officers to have completed it. 87.5% of reporters completed it, which was amazing! From the 12 responses, 58.33% of the people who took the survey mentioned that they are uncertain from our procedures. All of those were reporters. This is again, quite distressing. On the bright side, everyone has found Observer to be a valuable experience.

A Strategic Meeting will occur over the break and we will discuss constitutional changes. Unfortunately, we missed the deadline to submit changes to ANU Council. I will try to contact them and see if we can still make amendments as it has been a disruptive semester. Communication with them has been minimal, as it has also been for other organisations, too.

Moved by Hayley, seconded by Sam. Passes unanimously.

Finance Executive Report: Konstantine Katsanis

I have come in touch with Anastasia, however we did not discuss a reserve funds plan. From my discussion with Woroni it is uncertain as to whether we will be having a SSAF round this year. Whether we are having one or not, we will request to keep any unspent monies. Woroni has also emailed other organisations about it. In the end, we might all meet up and draft an email to the PVC for Student Experience.

We made a considerable amount of expenses over the past few weeks, especially for events and livestream equipment. In total, we spent \$2030.75 over the past month. I transferred \$15, 000 to our other bank account, as the balance there should remain higher.

I have not asked ANU for the remaining funds because I am still waiting on the auditing company. If they do not come back to me by the end of the week, I will plan the process and consider all auditing expenses exhausted. I found out that the financial year ends on November, so we should make all of our expenses before the end of that month.

I will need to come in touch with the PARSA finance controller and see if they can assist with the auditing process this year. Last year, they expressed interest in helping us.

Moved by Hayley, seconded by Sam. Passes unanimously.

Secretary Report: Hayley Hands

I have worked on proposals regarding the use of the Community Executive/Community Team as well as the CEO. These are in the Board Slack chat and will be discussed in greater detail at next week's strategic meeting. Please submit agenda items for the strategic meeting by 5pm the day before. The Agenda has been posted in Elected Officers.

I also posted the cleaning roster in Elected Officers. This is fairly evenly spread so everyone gets to work with different people/do different tasks. As I mentioned, more than happy for people to swap but this must be organised beforehand. People will be accountable for the cleanliness of the office at the end of their assigned week.

We need to decide the date of a number of meetings today, but the most important of these is the OGM. We also need to advertise our Arbitration positions ASAP and also find a new returning officer.

Slightly bad news regarding Constitutional changes/the CEO role. According to the ANU Council's policy, these needed to have been provided to them in July. I apologise for missing this but there were a lot of other things going on. We can try to talk to ANU Council about this as it seems they are behind their schedule on items like SSAF, etc. If we are unable to make these changes now, I can draft them to pass next year. However, the CE role will only require a change to a few policies/regulations as it is provided for within the Constitution. I think this will not be too bad, as it will allow us to figure out what works and what doesn't with the Community Team, and also what work is appropriate for them to do and on what stipend.

I (again) still need to change the wording on a number of policies. I have been somewhat holding back on this due to discussions of additional changes to roles/stipends, as I would rather do this en masse. I also need to get the last couple of Board minutes up on the website.

I think our 'vibe check' meeting was pretty good. Next time, please keep in mind your commitment to listen to others and try to plan so as to not be dealing with articles as I feel a lot of valuable discussion time was missed due to this. I would like to have another one of these kind of meetings at the end of Semester as I feel it is beneficial and I really want to deal with these underlying issues as best we can.

I am looking to draft an onboarding/offboarding procedure when I have time. This would require collaboration with executives as it will outline training requirements as well as when Officers will gain access to emails, drive, office etc. In terms of offboarding, it will institutionalise our Handover process and detail the way in which we remove access to emails, drive, and office.

I am also wondering whether people would be interested in an 'Event Handover' procedure. It would be similar to role handover but would be for events such as Elections, Debates, Market Day, OGMs, etc. I think this could be very helpful in avoiding repeated mistakes and enabling new Elected Officers to feel more informed about things in general. It would require a little bit of effort following an already stressful event but I really think it would be worth looking into. Other organisations, i.e IAC, do this with their events and it is awesome for retaining institutional knowledge and ensuring newbies don't have to reinvent the wheel.

As I have said, I am likely not going to be contesting the Secretary election again. I have had one person tell me they are interested in this role, but if anyone else is I would encourage them to have a chat to me about it. I would advise people to let their Reporters/officers know that Treasurer, Secretary, Editor and VCE positions will be opening very soon as it may be valuable for them to know what they are getting into. We also need to advertise Treasurer and Secretary roles externally.

Actionables:

1. Arbitration Panel, Secretary and Finance Executive positions to be advertised on FB page. → Tristan to make Arbitration and Finance Executive graphics, Hayley to post.
2. Reporters/Other Officers to be informed of openings in all Elected Officer positions → Anthony to inform reporters at next meeting, Tristan to inform Visual Team members.
3. Looking into drafting Onboarding/Offboarding policy and an Event Handover Policy → Hayley
4. Contacting ANU Council about Constitutional changes → Hayley to contact ANU Council (Anastasia).
5. Changing wording of policies where necessary → Hayley

Hayley: I'm going to speak a little to my report. In the agenda for the strategic meeting I have outlined the CEO and CE roles. Posted a cleaning roster, it is pretty even. There is an agenda item about dates for these things. All editor positions have to go up for re-election.

Kon: Externals cannot pursue editor roles. They can pursue secretary, treasurer etc.

Hayley: We need to make sure that people are available. Vibe check meeting was good, people just need to make sure that they are engaged.

Tristan: I like the sound of the idea of event procedures

Hayley: It would be very easy.

Moved by Tristan, seconded by Sam. Passes unanimously.

Visual Content Executive Report: Tristan Khaw

Visual Team Members Update

Amna and Charlie have been helping out. Amna helped out with the BLM Town Hall Livestream with me.

Charlie helped to edit the Fortnightly Five last fortnight and Amna is helping with this one

Black Lives Matter Town Hall

Livestream went well, nothing much to report. Might want to consider picking up a portable mic of some sort for the livestreaming setup as the speakers were hard to hear.

Election Debate Livestream

The ANUSA Election debates were livestreamed this year. Despite technical difficulties, I believe the livestreams went well.

We encountered challenges in the form of a completely new setup this year. We broadcasted the event over Zoom instead of over Facebook Live. We also did this in the office. This necessitated a completely new setup with lights, microphones and broadcasting equipment. As part of this, we had to requisition new equipment. Thanks to Konstantine, we got two lapel mics and a BlackMagic Atem Mini video switcher on time for the event.

For posterity, the setup was four lights (two key/side lights, one backlight and one key light that was on either the couch or the moderators' couch), three couches (two couches for the candidates side by side and one for the moderators directly across and facing them), two cameras (on either side of the moderator's couch and pointed at the candidates, one of the two was swung to either the candidates or the moderators), a white backdrop, two lapel mics, a

broadcasting laptop and the Atem Mini. Cameras A and B routed into the Atem Mini as video inputs 1 and 2, the lapels were routed in as audio inputs 1 and 2. Each couch had one of the lapel mics. The Atem Mini was then connected to the broadcasting computer via USB. Candidates were told their speaking order by the moderators, only one at a time was allowed to speak into the lapel microphone. We tried to have a free standing microphone for the moderators on their own account however they could not get it to work and instead used their laptop's inbuilt mics.

I was not informed about the fact that certain candidates had to call in remotely as they were not in the state/country. This caused some technical issues on the Friday livestream.

Despite the minor stresses accompanying using a relatively untested setup - I believe that the videos were of a much higher quality than the previous years' attempt. The lighting and sound were of a professional quality, and were it not for Zoom's innate bitcrushing, the image quality of our cameras made the videos much better looking.

I will be uploading the livestream videos when I am not so busy. Most likely during the mid-semester break. For the future, I would avoid using Zoom again.

Anthony: In my report I expressed that both Bec and Sam are interested in taking over Visual.

Tristan: I think it would be good, Sam has already expressed interest to me about it.

Anthony: We were talking about trying to collaborate more between News and Visual.

Tristan: I personally think it would be good to have more photo journalists, would be good if Reporters knew how to use a camera. When we get back on campus they can keep a look out for stuff like that.

Moved by Hayley, seconded by Anthony. For: Sam, Tristan, Anthony, Hayley. Abstention: Konstantine.

News Content Executive Report: Anthony Lotric

Over the election period, we well exceeded our KPI's for number of articles published. While there were some corrections requested, I think it was a relatively low amount considering how much content we put out, and how fast it had to be put out.

Even so, there are a few ways that we can improve our processes and procedures for next year. First of all, as Bec has mentioned, we need to send the Gen Rep survey out earlier so that we have more time to prepare and check the cards after we make them, and then send them out to the candidates so that they can review them for errors (including those that they may have made themselves). It would also be great to have more input from the visual team on this, which will work especially well considering that multiple news team members have expressed an interest in working in digital next year. Also on this topic, it would be good for

news and digital to coordinate better to produce graphics for head to heads etc., as many are required within a relatively short time span.

On the topic of digital next year, both Sam and Bec have expressed an interest in being part of/leading the digital team next year. Both have said they have a lot of ideas, and I think having this bridge between both teams will present many opportunities, such as incorporating more graphics and photos into articles, and doing joint projects between the teams.

We need to ensure that we are giving stakeholders the opportunity to review articles before publication. If major edits have been made, then we should ask if they would like to see it again, even if they have already read it. When we are making serious allegations, we should extend a similar courtesy to parties that are having allegations levelled against them.

I have discussed with reporters processes and procedures they should follow to avoid legal issues with articles. This includes ensuring that when we are presenting allegations to parties for right of reply, we are explicit about the fact that they are in fact allegations which we want them to respond to. I have also asked them to think to themselves when working on articles that could reflect adversely on individuals or institutions. I don't want them to freak out about it, I just told them to put it in their student reporter tool box, which they seemed to understand.

I also discussed how they should think about correspondence with sources/other stakeholders after they are given an article. I divided the process into four steps that they should think through: 1. Who, 2. What, 3. How Soon, 4. How Early. The first step is who do I need to email, so that everyone that needs to be contacted is contacted. The second step is to ascertain what info you will have to give these people, and what you will have to ask them. The third asks reporters to send emails to sources as soon as they can, as this is crucial to getting articles out in a timely manner. The fourth asserts that reporters should set as early deadlines as are reasonable in the circumstances, and no later, as most people we correspond with will leave it to the last minute.

We have also been discussing as an editorial team how we might systematise editors being responsible for breaking graphics and breaking stories. We could possibly go back to the system Adelle proposed at the beginning of the year of doing a day on and then a day off during which editors are on call. Also, we should have an editor on call after every article is published, so that they can review any corrections or other issues that arise after its publication. This could also be formalised.

As expected, the DOSA article did very well. As I have stated in previous reports, we need to ensure that we are constantly looking for/working on articles that are of interest to the general student population, not just hacks, advocates and politically oriented people.

I'd like to also welcome Helena to the editorial team! We are all really looking forward to working with her.

I am planning for our output to remain relatively normal over the mid semester break, as we have a number of mid term projects still in the pipeline.

Anthony: Proud of the procedure, think it will get a better flow.

Hayley: Are you going to make it into an actual written procedure?

Anthony: Yes can do that in the break. Would be good to revisit some of the Editorial stuff e.g the 'editor on call' system. We could also systematise an Editor to stick around after articles for corrections.

Moved by Tristan, seconded by Sam. Passes unanimously.

Actionable: Anthony to write procedure

Web Administrator Report: Angus Brooks

No report received.

Anthony: Angus is otherwise perfect.

Tristan: Angus if you're reading this, I love you.

Item 5 - Items for Decision

5.1 Setting date for next strategic meeting

Hayley: Sunday the 13th of September, 11am.

Moved by Tristan, seconded by Anthony. For: Anthony, Tristan, Hayley, Konstantine.

Abstaining: Sam.

5.2 Setting date for OGM

Hayley: Plan to have it on Zoom so everyone can nominate but maybe allow some to do this from office.

Tristan: Yeah we can try to accommodate people interstate.

Hayley: Week 11 21st of October would give us enough time to contact ANU Council.

Moved by Konstantine, seconded by Anthony. Passes unanimously.

Item 6 - Items for Discussion

6.1 SSAF

Konstantine: Ideally I would have liked to start involving people in the process but we don't know anything about what's happening. I met with Woroni, they are concerned that they might not give us any money next year. It's likely they won't give us what we would usually be getting and they might prioritise ANUSA and PARSA who are giving services to students. Anastasia said

they hadn't decided what was going on. It is concerning and pretty stressful. Woroni are contacting others, I am also thinking about contacting ANUSA's Treasurer and the PARSA equivalent. I had forgotten I had this point, but I am not sure whether we should be keeping some money for the moment. We should not be making too many expenses. Hopefully we can move over left over money to next year's budget and move it to other line items such as paying people (allowances and honoraria) and rent. That is around 3/5s of our overall budget.

Anthony: Have you gone through the most to least essential expenses.

Konstantine: I haven't done it but it's pretty easy to figure out, e.g Honoraria/stipends and office are top. Especially as we are locked in a 2 year contract. I am personally fine to reduce allowances if we need to accommodate for other stuff and prioritise things that allow us to produce content.

6.2 Communication and understanding of procedures

- Honoraria
- Editorial Induction
- Role obligations for communication within teams
- Understanding what the Secretary and Chair actually do and how they differ

Konstantine: I have been putting out comments about Honoraria and have mentioned a lot of the time that everyone is eligible. Some have not read this including Elected Officers. I was expecting that they would communicate these things to reporters. When I say things in Slack related to Honoraria, or advertising a position I would have some expectation that these things would be discussed in a News Meeting. I was expecting some stuff would be passed down by you compared to me who they don't know outside of social events. I was just a bit concerned when someone pointed out that they were unsure that reporters were eligible. That made me think that there are a few issues with communication. Communication issues in other areas have been [clear] but it shows that some people might not be understanding what I or other Officers are saying especially at an Executive level. I received contradictory information about when Helena would start, or it was not completely clear that she was interested so I had to chase it up with her. It has been a bit of a rough two days because some of that knowledge hasn't passed down.

Anthony: I think a lot of this is because we didn't get any good handover from previous people and current people haven't [passed down institutional/governance knowledge]. Being a News Executive made me feel like my role was just writing reports. I think the News Executive should always be on Board otherwise it's just something that happens in a Slack channel in which [they have no context]. I think we can set it up very well for next year. I am not saying I've been perfect at this but we can set it up for next year so people are interested in it.

Konstantine: Sometimes I feel like people don't understand what should be brought up with the Secretary and what should be brought up with the Chair, I guess we are still figuring that out

aside from [stuff outlined in the Constitution]. I would like to be in the loop, that's all. If there are people interested in running for things then I am interested in knowing.

6.3 Operational Meeting

Konstantine: Looking forward to having another one discussing some of the problems that came up. We need to prioritise the strategic one but can think about meeting again sometime after the break.

6.4 Internal Survey

Konstantine: I will finalise the report and send it to you, please read it.

6.5 Reporter's liability to risk and mental health

Konstantine: I think we discussed this with Adelle at some point but someone in the survey said that, in reference to Helena's case, that Reporters might be writing articles relating to SASH and that it is really sensitive subjects where we need to check that reporters are comfortable.

Anthony: I think it depends on the person.

Tristan: We established at the start of the year that our risk appetite in terms of welfare of reporters is quite low.

6.6 KPI reports

Sam: We essentially haven't met any KPIs because we haven't updated the spreadsheet.

Tristan: Until we present it to the Board it isn't official.

Sam: You can still look back but it doesn't give us all the information.

6.7 Setting date and location of next Social event

Anthony: I have posted. Looks like Saturday this week would work best. I will make a booking tomorrow.

Item 7 - Other Business

7.1 Tristan and Konstantine to transfer money

Item 8 - Recall Actionables

8.1 Each team exec to work on a short report regarding KPIs for strategic meetings.

8.2 Ordering Shirts

8.3 Actionable: Anthony to write procedures on 'Who, what, how early and how soon' and risky story management.

8.4 Arbitration Panel, Secretary and Finance Executive positions to be advertised on FB page. → Tristan to make Arbitration and Finance Executive graphics, Hayley to post.

8.5 Reporters/Other Officers to be informed of openings in all Elected Officer positions → Anthony to inform reporters at next meeting, Tristan to inform Visual Team members.

8.6 Looking into drafting Onboarding/Offboarding policy and an Event Handover Policy → Hayley

8.7 Contacting ANU Council about Constitutional changes → Hayley to contact ANU Council (Anastasia).

8.8 Changing wording of policies where necessary → Hayley