



THE ANU OBSERVER

Meeting of The ANU Observer Board

Date: 13/02/21

Opening of Meeting: 13:22pm

Item 1 - Attendance and Apologies

Present: Konstantinos Katsanis (Chair) - in-person
Angus Brooks (director) - in-person
Brandon How (director) - via video-conference
Keeley Dickinson (director) - via video-conference

Absent: Helena Burke (director) - without apologies
Jacqueline Du (director) - without apologies

Item 2 - Acknowledgement of Country

Delivered by Konstantine.

Item 3 - Previous Action Items

Item 4 - Reports

Chair Report: Konstantinos Katsanis

Not much has happened regarding our external stakeholders. The most copious process has been SSAF. We were provided with a SSAF agreement draft, where we were asked to fill in the gaps with important information regarding our organisation. However, there was a delay in signing the agreement because of some legal revisits. We finally signed it a few days ago and we are in agreement until 2023. I also introduced Jacqui to PKF which is the accounting firm that will be handling our audit.

Moved by Keeley

Seconded by Brandon

Passes unanimously

Secretary Report: Konstantinos Katsanis

We've had two emergency board meetings without requesting any reports. They were also very short as they were meant to accommodate specific matters.

We approved Declan as an Editor. Welcome.

We revised and passed the amendments to the new Payment Policy.

The governance training went well and everyone was present, so thank you a lot for attending it. There will be another one organised by the uni after O-Week.

As much as I would have liked to work on more policies, I've been extremely preoccupied with the new drive. I will hopefully have it ready by Sunday night. It has been a huge effort, but I hope that the changes will be for the best. I would like everyone to move to that drive by the middle of O-Week.

I have also been slightly busy with fulfilling some of the Visual Content Executive duties. I had a think about a few things that we can do in O-Week, I had a meeting with the other members of the Visual Content Team and a meeting with the Editors. Things seem to be going ok for the moment, despite this this being not an ideal situation. I hope to start Fortnightly Five as soon as we get some videographers in.

Moved by Brandon

Seconded by Angus

Passes unanimously

News Content Executive Report: Helena Burke

The past month has been a predictably quiet period in terms of article output.

The 'in pictures' article about the Invasion Day protest was well received. I intend to push for a greater number of visually-focused articles this year.

I believe the Editorial Board handled the PARSA governance drama situation well. In future, we have agreed to navigate highly time-sensitive stories such as these on a case-by-case basis. Reporters will only be assigned to such stories if they can confirm that they will have them completed in full by the set deadline.

The News Editors will continue to be heavily involved in these stories as they arise.

The Editorial Board is very excited about the addition of Declan to our team. Declan proved himself to be a hard-working and talented Reporter in 2020, and he has already displayed these same attributes as an Editor.

The Editorial Board requests the addition of two unofficial titles within the news team.

'Executive Editor' is to be renamed 'Editor-in-Chief'. This title is more in-keeping with the standard terminology used in the journalism industry.

'Senior Reporter' is a title that the editorial team will delegate to Reporters who have been in the news team for a minimum of 6 months, and who have proven to

be dedicated to the production of high-quality articles, and to Observer as an organisation. Senior Reporters will not be entitled at a baseline to any additional honoraria or privileges within Observer.

At this stage, we intend to give the title of 'Senior Reporter' to Bec Zhong as she works on the MSI investigation.

Applications for new Reporters will commence tomorrow and will close on March 1. The editorial team intends to follow a similar hiring procedure to previous years. Applicants will apply online. If successful, applicants will then be sent a mock article. Applicants successful after this stage will be interviewed in-person (or via Zoom in exceptional circumstances).

An in-person training day for new Reporters is planned for March 6; however, this date has yet to be fully confirmed.

Moved by Angus

Seconded by Keeley

Passes unanimously

Finance Executive Report: Jacqueline Du

Not much to report. I've sent allowance amounts to the arbitration panel, phone card holders have arrived and keep sending me receipts

Moved by Angus

Seconded by Brandon

Passes unanimously

Community Executive Report: Angus Brooks

Little to report

Konstantine: Any plans for the coming weeks?

Angus: Wanna do an office tied up, probably after O-Week.

Moved by Keeley

Seconded by Brandon

Passed unanimously

Web Executive Report: Angus Brooks

Putting finishing touches on email system in preparation for market day, will prepare QR code's etc for sign ups

Moved by Konstantine

Seconded by Brandon
Passes unanimously

Item 5 - Items for Decision

Item 6 - Items for Discussion

6.1 External reporters

- Konstantinos: Not sufficient time in the previous meeting to discuss in depth.
- Angus: assess case by case
- Keeley Same. Would need to abide the policies and be careful of bias
- Brandon: Represent the organisation when contacting people.
- Konstantinos: Do you think the reporters will feel uncomfortable with the idea, considering that it sounds easier to write an article or two and then leave, rather than staying as a reporter, and attending all things?
- Keeley: The difference with externals is they don't get the same resources (tips offs and stuff). So, the workload of finding a story would be much higher with an external. There is also not the potential of getting honoraria.
- Angus: Internals are also welcome to go and find their own story
- Konstantinos: Have you thought about how to tell reporters about it?
- Angus: You could ask the news team to see how they feel about it.
- Keeley: I think other media organisations do that and it doesn't seem to affect their output of attention.
- Brandon: My suspicion is that by creating this external option, a lot of students who don't want to be following the organisation's KPIs and meetings, and stuff, it might provide them with less incentive to join the organisation or continue. Other organisations have them employed, here are volunteers.
- Keeley: We could require to work with an external reporter, to see whether they will continue with incentive.
- Keeley: How many people come to us to write?
- Konstantinos: About 4 a year.
- Angus: But they are usually for opinion pieces. How many reporters do we have at the moment?
- Keeley: We have James, Eleanor and Maddie.
- Brandon: Bec for this one.
- Keeley: 4 then.
- Angus: How about as the CE I do some consultation with the news team to see how they feel about it.
- Keeley: Ye sounds good.
- Angus: Do we know when the article will be published?
- Keeley: Next week.

- Angus: Keep me on the loop, because I will need to work on the technical side of things. When published I will organise a message to meet with them and see how things are going.
- Brandon: Determining whether the external can write or not might be hard. There might be cases the editors will need to do some extra work if the article is not that good.
- Keeley: There might need to be a need to already have a pre-existing relationship with the organisation.
- Brandon: We might want to also formalise getting externals.
- Konstantinos: I think there is a need to have a policy.
- Angus: I reckon we wait to see how the article goes and see how the consultation goes. Hold off the policy until we know how the team feels, and will report to the next board meeting.
- Angus: Does the news know about Kai?
- Brandon: No, it is just the editors.

Angus to consult with the reporters and see how they feel about the external reporter.

6.2 Senior reporter

Brandon: Basically, it is mostly a title to commemorate/honour people or reporters who have been with us for a long time (reporters). The editors have determined that they deserve a quote promotion.

Konstantinos: Much discussion?

Brandon: One meeting to discuss that. At the moment one person in time, which is Bec.

Konstantinos: So I believe most of the editors agree with that.

Keeley: Ye I think so, unless there are no practical changes and it is not automatic thing. I don't think this should be a time thing. Should be a commitment. I do agree with Brandon that this encourages reporter retention.

Angus: I am fine with the idea. I quite like it. Just be conscious that senior reporters are not expected to receive editorial responsibilities. It should be an honorary thing.

Konstantinos: Have you thought about how to bring it up?

Keeley: Haven't discussed that yet.

Angus: Don't announce it over Slack, I think it should be announced in a meeting.

Brandon: Ye agree.

Keeley: Ye.

6.3 Google Drive

- Konstantinos: upgrade has been going well, very time consuming but we will have this running this week, so I'll try add it probably tomorrow to finish it up most of the heavy content like the visual content which is about 30GB has been uploaded, so all the heavy stuff is out of the way. Will have to go back into the drive to make sure nothing new has been uploaded. Everyone will have access by Monday or Tuesday I hope.

6.4 Visual x News and VCE casual vacancy

Keeley: Wasn't the plan to hire a bunch of people

Brandon: How about you, Bec and Jo share the responsibilities and then hire people, your focus being to consolidate the responsibilities and make this clear to new people. From the new cohort, we get a new one. I like how you guys consolidate the portfolios.

Keeley: I don't think we can just throw someone new to this.

Brandon: At the previous meeting, we discussed how it is important to have someone with pre-existing institutional knowledge.

Konstantinos: I worry it might be too much for me from a point onwards.

Brandon: I guess you don't need to do this for the whole sem. Maybe can train people to pick the role quickly.

Konstantinos: Chase up with Helena about School Art and Design.

Bec, Jo and I will undertake the responsibilities, but this will remain a vacancy. Push hard to hire people to fill that role. Train them up as soon as we can.

Keeley: I don't think graphics should move away from visual. I think it is really important and very low likelihood for reporters to do graphics. Skill and time. It's not fair to expect reporters to have the skills for photoshop and art.

Brandon: The way we do it now is Jo is reporting to news. Cause he is doing it for us. Because he is doing graphics for articles, not sure if he belongs more to one team than the other. Not sure what would happen if videos become more of a thing. What if VCE has him on a long-term project.

Keeley: I think there should be communication between VCE and Editors, and the VCE should have someone ready to help news.

Brandon: Tristan wanted to get Jo to do a new style guide. Jo has carried on doing graphics on his own style, so we probably should change the guide. Should we wait for VCE or should we do it ourselves?

Konstantinos: Ye, go for it.

6.5 Strategic Meeting

I was hoping everyone would be here so we could pick a date, but because we need a date where we can focus and set a date, will discuss lots of things like KPIs etc and go into depth and put everything into writing. I think we had this strategic meeting that went for 3 hours last year. They can be quite long but they are very important. We will be talking risk, KPIs and a lot of other things. Just quickly wanted to ask when people wanted to have this meeting.

- Keeley: this time slot works well for me, or Friday during the day.
- Konstantinos: normally we would have this after University governance training but they haven't given me a date yet.
- Angus: not week 1
- Konstantinos: maybe week 2 or week 3
- Brandon: this would work well since we will be recruiting early March.
- Angus: Probs week 3.

Item 7 - Other Business

7.1

Brandon: Generally, I thought executive sounds authoritative whereas EiC less dictative.

Keeley: I think Helena mentioned it is because it is more consistent with the other things. Will it need constitutional change?

Konstantinos: No.

Brandon: EiC will deal with stakeholder relationship and skills

Keeley: I was under the impression it was more of a name change.

Brandon: Yes. This is more of the responsibility that passed down.

Konstantinos: Should we write a policy?

Brandon: We are in the process of writing the responsibilities. I think last year it was not clearly defined, but maybe it will be better if it is defined.

Brandon: I was under the impression that decisions are more communal rather than an executive being the primary contact with the Secretary. I think the idea was to redefine the responsibilities.

**Organise a meeting to discuss role descriptions with the Secretary.
Editors to come up with a proposal with proposed changes before the meeting.**

Item 8 - Recall Actionables

1. Angus to consult with the reporters and see how they feel about the external reporter.
2. Organise a meeting to discuss role descriptions with the Secretary.

Editors to meet and to come up with a proposal with proposed changes before the meeting.

Closing of Meeting: 14:46

Appendix A

SSAF Agreement

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M5h8o9vcn3KYY9Bp7ZPbCSWGh5-0OMrY/view?usp=s>
haring