



THE ANU OBSERVER

Meeting of The ANU Observer Board

Date: 20/09/21

Opening of Meeting: 17:43

Item 1 - Attendance and Apologies

Present: Konstantinos Katsanis (Chair)

Angus Brooks (director)

Sung-Jae Lee (director)

Declan Milton (director)

Alex Ellwood (director)

Joseph Oh (director)

Ali El-Zein (director)

Keeley Dickinson (director)

Absent:

Item 2 - Acknowledgement of Country

Delivered by Konstantine.

Item 3 - Previous Action Items

SungJae to come up with a date for a second budget meeting by the end of Week 1.

The Editors/VCE to update the ad info so it reflects how much work a reporter is doing per week.

Will discuss in next Editors Meetings.

Item 4 - Reports

Chair Report: Konstantinos Katsanis

Since our last meeting I have managed to talk to Anastasia. I inquired about the SSAF process, and I was informed that it will run similar to last year's. The date is not known yet, but I advised that wherever possible to not have deadlines that fall within the exam period. The feedback was appreciated, but I am not sure how much would that be possible, as we still have not been informed regarding this. Additionally, we received the number of students from last semester. Now that I have our board member's details, I

can lodge our two annual returns, pending for quite some time, and relief ourselves from risking any fines.

We need to hold our OGM. Although preferably in Week 10, we might need to schedule it for Week 11 in case I have not finalised two regulations that can only be passed at an OGM. These are an updated Team Regulation and the creation of the Financial Regulations. I was under the assumption that we need to give 21 days notice to members, but it is not stated anywhere. So we might actually be able to have it in Week 10. It will have to be Thursday for me.

Talk to Anastasia about SSAF and other process regarding our position as a student organisation.

Moved by Keeley

Seconded by Declan

Passes unanimously

Secretary Report: Konstantinos Katsanis

I finished applying the approved amendments to our constitution and will be sending these amendments to Access Canberra for their records. We will need to pay a small fee. I will also be paying our annual fee for retention of the name. This is not mandatory, but it means that we cannot claim the name if another organisation is created using the same name.

Now that we have received our audit report, we can present it at our OGM and lodge the annual return before the end of the year. Furthermore, I am working on regulations and some policies. I was hoping to have some policies updated before the commencement of this meeting, but I did not manage to achieve that in sufficient time due to exams and other commitments. However, work is not as intense, and uni assignments are getting out of the way, so I am confident that I will have at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the policies that I want to update, or create, before the OGM. I hope that I will have everything set up for the new committee, which we will hopefully know who would be after the outcome of this OGM, looking forward to it.

Lastly, I would appreciate if I see more actionables getting actioned. I would encourage officers to be going back to the previous agenda and look for those actionables, as well as reading the minutes and compare on things stated then with the state of things now, which I think might help with the reflection component in future reports.

Moved by Jo

Passes unanimously

Editor in Chief Report: Declan Milton

Hi all. I've been really proud of the work the editorial team has accomplished since our last board meeting. We survived our busiest time of the year in the ANUSA elections, and produced content which added value and insight, rather than sticking with the traditional mould of regurgitating ticket statements. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic also emerged in the leadup to the elections (probably the two biggest events to cover in the year, happening at the same time). I felt we were innovative when it came to what we published – with the inclusion of a COVID live-blog – whilst also sticking to our guns with an array of high quality stories. I've been really impressed with everyone across the board as the vast majority (excluding Keely and myself) have not had the experience of the stupol election scene and covering COVID news.

The recruiting process has also taken its time in light of these events, however I am confident that we will have a robust team ready to go in the coming weeks. We have three reporters guaranteed to start writing this week as well as what looks to be a highly competent applicant.

One thing that I have noticed and we need to be aware of is the rapid speed Woroni seems to publish their articles. Although they are usually short in length, they tend to get information out quickly, sometimes leaving us second best. I am of the opinion though, with a little extra time and focus, our stories tend to add more value, with more voices included in the articles. Our Facebook analytics seem to second this with either matching, or greater engagement with the student body, due to a more detailed article. However, I would like to stress to reporters that deadlines are there for a reason, and we need to focus on improving output circulation.

We met and exceeded our KPI in the month of August, and likely to in September (even with a mid-semester break), which is a trend we are looking to continue as this year draws to a close.

Declan: Apologies for the delay of recruiting reporters. COVID and elections slowed down the process, but we have them now we are going back to general stuff.

Konstantine: Regarding the legal case the other day, I wanted to get some clarification about what Nathan said that we do not cover certain incidents or legal cases.

Declan: I think he meant that certain events, like if there is a not-so-significant incident, like something racist on campus, we do not report on it unless it is significant. But I think like that case the other day we should, as it involves an ANU student involved in assault.

Konstantine: I would advise looking into our coverage of the Ophel trial. That was what brought the Observer into the spotlight.

Declan: For sure. We are on it, and yes, we are aiming to cover these kinds of things.

Konstantine: Also, regarding racist stuff, a good example would be Brandon's article on Neo-Nazis.

Declan: Yes. It is also something we judge as case by case as a committee, we discuss those things.

Konstantine: We should be careful so we don't run into troubles like last year. Although as a board we cannot rule out what you do, we can at least advise if there is some divide between editors about the risk a story bears.

Moved by Angus

Passes unanimously

Visual Content Executive: Joseph Oh

- New team members have joined, and they are making graphics which is very good to see
- Not much else has happened, I ran a training session for graphics which went well. Unfortunately, Rowan cannot join the team, and I haven't heard back from Mim so I'm guessing she's not going to join either.

Konstantine: How's work?

Jun and Mady are doing well.

Mim didn't respond, and Rowan got a bit busy with stuff.

Abby and Shona responded. Need to see how committed they are. Otherwise, might tell them to resign. People need to put the work to this.

Konstantine: Covid really fucked up things.

Jo: Yes.

Konstantine: I think the Visual Team has been hit the hardest over the years.

Jo: We were doing well, fortnightly five was getting traction, we were covering things on campus, and the gallery stuff, and we had other plans. But cannot do them now.

Konstantine: I reckon you should come up with a plan over summer.

Jo: I think we will get out of lockdown before the end of the year.

Angus: I agree after we reach a vaccination number.

Konstantine: Yes, I just suggested it as a prevention measure for other future disasters.

Moved by SungJae

Passes unanimously

Finance Executive Report: Sung Jae Lee

Since our last board meeting, I have completed the following:

- Submitted period 3 allowances
- Paid period 3 honoraria
- Finalised the 2020 Audit and paid PKF for their auditing services

I would like to present a brief summary of our financials. Please note full documents and spreadsheets can always be found in the google drive. The insights below are not obtained by any technical analysis and is accessible to anyone at any time.

Since our last budget meeting, our expenditure remains almost unchanged.

44.83% of the budget remains unspent which is a substantial \$29,865.39. On average, we have spent around 30% on each line item. Thus, our greatest financial concern is our lack of spending.

As we pass the latter half of the semester, we must encourage healthy and frequent spending in order to avoid any deadweight loss since leftover funds do not rollover into next year's budget. Following the budget meeting, if you have any ideas for any purchases, please do not hesitate to seek approval for them. I would also like to request that the editors consult the news team on any purchases they may require whilst emphasising the urgency to spend our budget.

I would also like to remind everyone to upload any receipts into this year's "Expenditure Accounts" folder in our Google Drive.

In the budget meeting that will follow this board meeting, we must change allocations in order to give more attention to line items that will see more expenditure than predicted. For brevity, I will discuss my proposal regarding these changes in the budget meeting.

As for my initiative to investigate more rigorous metric analysis, I see this as a long-term project since creating such a complicated analysis tool cannot be done as an actionable between board meetings. I see myself as being part of observer long term, so I am not concerned if this project takes time.

Other than this, I will be completing the following tasks in the near future:

- Following arbitration approval, payment of period 3 allowances
- SSAF bid matters
- Encouraging expenditure

Moved by Declan

Passes unanimously

Community Executive Report: Angus Brooks

Lockdown has had implications for the office, including, again, the delay of signage update. Everything is done from our end, but it is considered non essential work for the time being.

The office lease is coming up for renewal. ANU Commercial Services has offered us the office space again, for similar terms. I'm keen to get approval at this meeting to proceed.

Survey to be out by the 27th.

Moved by Alex

Passes

Web Executive Report: Angus Brooks

I have very little to report. I continue to look into solutions for visual team portfolios on the site, but am yet to find anything that works the way I would like it to.

Please continue to log any technical issues via the web_support channel.

Moved by Alex

Passes unanimously

Item 5 - Items for Decision

5.1 Approval of the following candidates as officers of the ANU Observer and as part of the News Team:

- Alayna Bourke (Conflict of Interest under Appendix A)
- Xanthe Murrell (Conflict of Interest under Appendix B)

Konstantine: Can you tell us a little bit about them?

Declan: They both went through the same procedure as the others. Did well.

Moved by Keeley

Seconded by Declan

Passes unanimously

5.2 Decision to renew our rental agreement

Konstantine: How do people feel?

Alex: I like using the office, engaging meetings.

Keeley: Good for our legitimacy as an organisation.

Ali: Agree

Moved by Angus

Passes unanimously

Item 6 - Items for Discussion

6.1 Budget

SungJae: Considering we didn't spend in office supplies we might want to reallocate some to merchandise.

Angus: Have we been invoiced yet?

SungJae: No.

Angus: I will chase up with UniLodge.

SungJae: Are there any restrictions taking from other line items?

Konstantine: There are, but those requests are provided in the reports we present to ANU. Considering ANU has been a bit slack about a few things, I don't think that going above the budget and requesting reallocation will be a problem.

SungJae: I think we should wait until we know how much rent we need to pay.

Konstantine: You could take from equipment as well.

SungJae: According to the last meeting we did not find many things we could spend those on.

Konstantine: How much money do you need?

SungJae: We need something like \$900 or more for better quality.

Angus will call UniLodge tomorrow 22/09 and try to get a response regarding rent by Friday COB.

Jo to come up with a list of specific items to purchase Monday 27/09.

6.2 OGM

Set for Week 11, Thursday 21/09/2021.

Item 7 - Other Business

Item 8 - Recall Actionables

Konstantine: Talk to Anastasia about SSAF and other process regarding our position as a student organisation.

Angus: Survey to be out by the 27th.

Angus: Call UniLodge tomorrow 22/09 and try to get a response regarding rent by Friday COB.

Jo: Come up with a list of specific items to purchase Monday 27/09.

Closing of Meeting: 19:05

Appendix A

Alayna Bourke Conflict of Interest:

- Resident at Fenner Hall (current)
- ANU Literature Society Member (current)
- ANU Scholarship Recipient "academic and merit" scholarship (current)

Appendix B

Xanthe Murrell Conflict of Interest:

- Burgmann College close friend of V.P.S.