

**April 2022**

### **Advisory Committee for PARSA**

As part of reviewing PARSA's Constitution it has been highlighted that our current governance structures have limitations. An Advisory Committee would be able to address these by fulfilling the following requirements:

1. bring outside skill and talent into PARSA;
2. allowing there to be a split between operations and strategy; and
3. create a permanent position for an ANU representative within PARSA.

In saying this, the reader should remember that PARSA is a democratic, student-led, association. Each year new members of the PRC are elected. While this should keep ideas fresh, it can also create issues with information retention. PRC members have been elected to represent current postgraduate student needs. This means that PRC views should be paramount, as providing non-student representatives (such as those who might sit on the Advisory Committee) with binding power undermines PARSA's true function.

#### **1 Function**

The Advisory Committee's main purpose is to provide in-house expertise on issues which members of the PRC might not have experience with. A leadership team draws strength from having a diverse skillset. Although dividing leadership skills between a strategic and operational team *typically* diminishes the power of both teams, this is not the Advisory Committee's purpose.

The Advisory Committee should have the ability to provide guidance on long-term strategic planning. They can also review decisions made at PRC meetings which are not labelled as confidential. Confidential items should only be issues which affect individual people within PARSA's membership. This term should not be overused by the PRC to limit the Advisory Committee's remit.

Upon request by the PRC, Advisory Committee members can attend PRC or executive meetings as observers.

The Advisory Committee is described in the Constitution and is supported by the relevant regulations. It is important that the Advisory Committee has no voting rights within PRC and is kept to high-level advice and does not interfere with operations. The operations of PARSA is oversighted by the PRC via the President. Members of the PRC and staff have defined roles and responsibilities. Any involvement by the Advisory Committee in operations could cause confusion for staff as reporting lines would not be defined. Any disputes are to be handled as per PARSA's dispute resolution process and do not involve staff.

#### **2 Responsibilities of Advisory Committee**

The Advisory Committee is meant to act as the strategic advisory body to the PRC. Their projects will be guided by the advice required by PARSA and the PRC. This is because their primary goal is to help PARSA achieve its strategic objectives.

Important to note – the PRC are under no obligation to follow any advice provided, noting that failure to consider reasonable suggestions may be considered a breach of duty.

### 3 Structure

The Advisory Committee should be comprised of between four (4) and seven (7) individuals who are not Officers of the PRC. The PRC President is an *ex-officio* Committee member, the General Secretary (or their delegate) is the only member of the PRC who must attend Advisory Committee meetings. This is so they can provide written updates to the PRC on a regular basis.

Advisory Committee members are appointed for two-year terms in line with a skills matrix. Expertise in the following areas is valuable:

- legal;
- human resourcing;
- financial;
- governance
- marketing; and
- public policy.

ANU's Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Student and University Experience (DVC SUE), or their delegate, has a permanent role on the Committee.

Members of the Advisory Committee should elect a Chair and a Deputy-Chair to organise meetings. With the General Secretary's assistance, Advisory Committee Chair(s) organise agenda papers. It is their responsibility to run the meetings and ensure that action items are decided upon. All Advisory Committee members have one vote, with a majority vote (50%) being needed to pass motions.

Advisory Committee members should be appointed for a term of two (2) years. Meetings should occur on a quarterly basis (more can be called if necessary), with two-thirds (2/3) of Committee members needed for quorum.

Inclusion on Committee is decided via an EOI where potential candidates apply and highlight their area of expertise, skill and experience to undertake role.

An interview process is undertaken by President and at least two other executive members of PARSA. Abiding by a clear skills matrix and gender quotas (to be discussed) must occur. Reviewing the Advisory Committee's skills matrix must occur annually; however, committee members can serve for a maximum of three years which is in line with the skills audit.

### 4 Advisory Committee conduct

Members of the Advisory Committee do not participate or attend PRC meetings unless invited. Ideally, members of the Committee are not members of PARSA (unless they can demonstrate they possess the specific skills required to undertake the position).

Staff support the Committee by providing papers and administration. Staff report to President and PRC via the General Manager if issues need to be raised with the Advisory Committee. Staff and Advisory Committee members have no direct lines of reporting.

## **5 Relationship to the PRC**

The Advisory Committee interacts with the PRC through the General Secretary. During each meeting, the General Secretary is obliged to take minutes (and have them be approved by the Advisory Committee) prior to attaching them to the subsequent PRC meeting agenda.

Although the Advisory Committee is encouraged to provide the PRC with advice, they *cannot* override decisions made at PRC meetings. Not considering the Advisory Committee's advice may be a breach of the executive's fiduciary duties.

## **6 Relationship to the Staff**

Staff members report to PARSA's executive through the power delegated to them by the PRC. They do not report to the Advisory Committee. This distinction must be clear within the Constitution to protect staff members from being put in compromising positions.

Committee members can interact with PARSA's General Manager through the General Secretary. They can also directly provide advice to the Manager of PARSA Cycles.