

PARSA Postgraduate Representative Council (PRC) Minutes Meeting #2

Date: 18th of January 2022

Time: 5:30pm

Location: Zoom

1.0 Meeting Open

5:09pm

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledged by Delephene Fraser

1.2 Attendance and apologies

Attending:

Delephene Fraser (Vice President), Eleanor Cooper (General Secretary), Gunjan Dixit (HDR Officer), Tristan Yip (Coursework Officer), Arushi Ganguly (Equity Officer and Queer Officer), Sonia Jeena (International Officer), Zhangcheng Qiang (CECS Officer, HDR), Upasana Pathak (CHM Officer, Coursework), Shukla Promite (CoS Officer, HDR), Nancy Zhang (Women's Officer)

Observing: Clair Zhang (Advocacy and Engagement), Jane Brownbill (Operations Manager), Mia Yiman Li (Finance Accountant)

Apologies: Jhana de Silva (Parents and Carers Officer), Harshita Bhatia (Wellbeing Officer),

1.3. Conflicts of Interest

Members should declare conflicts of interest as they arise throughout the meeting.

1.4 Minutes from previous meeting

Motion: to accept the minutes of the previous PRC Meeting, 21 November 2021, as an accurate and true statement of events

Mover: Eleanor

Seconder: Soniya

Outcome: Passed unanimously

2.0 Reports

2.1 Acting President's Report

For information, discussion and decision

Delephene discussed her work with Laurie and Clair on the Invasion Day event that we are running as a supportive event to the Aboriginal Tent Embassy's 50th Anniversary Rally.



PARSA will be working in conjunction with ANUSA who are using their bus to shuttle students.

2.2 General Secretary's Report

For information, discussion and decision

Eleanor is working on the new version of the PRC's honoraria system, which will hopefully be up and running in the near future, as well as working with Laurie and Della to organise an appropriate presence at the Invasion Day Rally – would like to invite anyone here to join on the day, whether or not they are able to man the PARSA stall

2.3 General Manager's Report

Jane noted that we have confirmation from the ANU as of today that we will be receiving our SSAF allocation from next week.

Unfortunately our Shut Up And Write coordinator Andy will be leaving PARSA so we will be looking for his replacement in the near future.

She outlined that PARSA used to have an in-house lawyer; at the moment we are still providing advice to students through an agreement with Legal Aid. We are looking for a lawyer to have in-house as Legal Aid cannot provide all forms of legal services.

PARSA is moving forward with elections and will be asking Bree Slater to be returning officer once again

Jane noted that we have had confirmation that PARSA Cycles will be paying back the money they owe to us for financial and governance services over the time they have been operational

Action items:

1. General Secretary and Operations Manager to open up a conversation with ANUSA about their provision of legal services to postgraduates as well as the possibility of reciprocal migration services offered to undergraduates

2.4 Financial Report

Mia gave an overview of the expenses that PARSA has been incurring over 2021, noting that some costs were over budget only because they were delayed costs, rather than actual budget overruns.

She mentioned that overall, total portfolio expenses were only 50% used due to lockdowns and many events being held online, which limited costs

2.5 Events Director Report

Laurie ran through the events that we are holding in O-Week, which is our biggest challenge, coming up soon. We are still looking for PRC volunteers to run some events, and are in the process of confirming all the venues for the events

We are also on track with our budget, with our largest event being the Postgraduate Welcome Evening, which will be in Manning Clark Hall, with Professor Schmidt speaking. This will be the only event except for the ISD x PARSA event which we may charge a nominal amount for tickets.

With the current covid concerns, events will largely be outside, though there are some which cannot be held outside. Many portfolios will also be holding events online.

PARSA will also be promoting our elections separately to O-Week, even while we are providing information about PARSA and inviting students to get involved.

Clair discussed the need to confirm aspects of events like speakers, materials such as weaving materials, and venues before O-Week. Significantly, the committee also needs to decide on details like performances, food and other details. An informal show of hands demonstrated approval of this decision

Laurie is also managing the ongoing PARSA Monthly Movie which could be either outside or inside, but this is a decision that needs to be taken

Vote taken as to whether to hold the monthly movie at Palace or outside. 7 votes for inside, and 3 for outside

Jane brought up the possibility of employing a postgraduate to act as a coordinator for O-Week

Action items:

1. Meetings to be set up with Shukla, Laurie and Clair as well as Eleanor, Laurie and Clair
2. Any interested officers to contact Clair about the PGWE
3. Operations Manager to put out an EOI for the O-Week Coordinator

2.4 Other Officer's Reports

For information, discussion and decision

2.4.1 Welfare Officer's Report

Harshita was not able to make it to the meeting but provided the following outline:

Jan			
Event	Online/Offline	Date	Status
Zentangle Workshop	Online	21st Jan	Promoted and on track
Mental Health Session (to help with the building covid anxiety)	Online	7th Feb? TBD	In discussion with an expert (Shapes & sounds)
Sunset Cinema	Offline	TBD	Laurie suggested we merge this with the monthly movie
O-week			
Event	Online/Offline	Date	Status



Farmer's Market	Haig Park	20th Feb	Arushi kindly offered to help - she is first aid trained I need some guidance of how many volunteers maybe needed for this event
Sing Along	On campus	18th Feb	Have put an ad out to the School of Music using their Finishing Touch service page - should hear from someone within this week
Farm/Pet therapy	On campus	17th Feb	Looking for alternate farms/therapy dogs
Speed Friending	TBD (Offline)	14th Feb	Venue hunting in progress
Motivational Postcard/Desk Card to be distributed to students			Quotes finalized - Yet to go to Huiruo for designing

HDR Officer Report:

Gunjan has held the first HDR officers meeting which went well, and the portfolio has their first event of the year coming up on this Sunday, which is already sold out and has a waiting list, so there is a possibility for this event to be held more throughout the semester.

She is also still planning an online information session for HDR students

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 Reports on Summer Sessions

Discussion:

Soniya is working on an international student-focused PARSA guide for incoming students about navigating ANU (additional to the Survival Guide)

Action items:

1. Any interested officers to contact Soniya about the guide for international students

3.2 Expression of interest for Big Day Working Group

Discussion:

Looking for a subcommittee of between 3-5 members to plan and run Big Day

Action Items:

1. Vice President and Operations Manager to send out an EOI by the end of the week for the Big Day subcommittee

3.3 Officer Reports on O Week

Discussion:

Short discussion updating the committee about planned O-Week events; call for assistance if needed

3.4 PRC First Aid Training

Discussion:

Jane noted that every event needs a first aider, so we need to have every possible office trained in first aid. A possible day is the 29th of January

Action items:

1. All officers to decide on one of the offered days for training before O-Week, via email

3.5 PRC Team Building Day – 23rd of January

Discussion:

There's a tentative plan for a team-building outing to mini golf in Gold Creek on the morning of the 23rd of January; discussion of this and committee members' availabilities

3.6 Division of tasks between PRC and Staff until elections

Discussion:

Jane noted that since the PRC is far more limited in number than in normal years, there is likely to be some form of blurring lines between the PRC and staff, but she will be sending out more information

3.7 Governance

Attachment: Governance Restructure Discussion Paper

Discussion:

For context, look through the Governance discussion paper prepared by Jane for an overview of the governance matters the committee faces this year

Jane discussed how while PARSA as an institution has been through significant upheaval but we do face an opportunity to build up a better system of governance. One thing is to decide leadership and delegations, as well as how to ensure transparency in decisionmaking and accountability. The emphasis in the process of rewriting the constitution will need to be on the values that PARSA hold in terms of representing students and providing services.

There will need to be a consideration of the relationship between and roles of each officer and how to separate strategy/governance and day-to-day operations. The board was initiated for this purpose but was not designed well enough to ensure this purpose was upheld.

The attached document includes models from other student associations around the country, which do differ significantly and include both board-inclusive and exclusively elected models. Another model to note would be our 2017 Constitution, which was used as a model for other universities' associations.

One model that would potentially satisfy the ANU's wish to have a representative on our board could be an Advisory Committee (detailed in the attached document) which would act as a strategic advisory body.

She noted that our consultant Eve is creating a timeline for the governance restructure, and proposed the possibility of contracting a firm to start this process, as it does not seem likely that we can employ an in house lawyer soon enough.

Jane also called for a representative from the PRC to be the 'driver' of this constitutional re-write

Motion: To outsource the legal work needed to write a new PARSA constitution to an external firm that specialises in NGO constitutions and policies, with the first step being seeking names and quotes.

Proposed: Delephene

Seconded: Upasana

8 for, 2 abstaining – motion passed

Action items:

1. Jane to reach out to appropriate firms seeking advice for a new constitution, and report back to the PRC at the next meeting

4.0 Other business

5.0 Meeting close and next meeting

Next PRC meeting to be held online on Tuesday the 1st of February at 4pm