MINUTES

PRC Meeting

First meeting of the twenty-fifth Postgraduate Representative Council [PRC]

Law Link Theatre

Friday, 31st May 2013

3-5pm


In attendance: Monica Fernandes, Dale Brosnahan, Gaea Cornelius

1: Appointment of Temporary Chair

Julie Melrose was appointed temporary Chair of the meeting

Moved: Laura Parker Seconded: Imogen Mathew

2: Election of President

Two nominations were received for the position of President:

Imogen Mathew was nominated by herself, seconded by Laura Parker

Arjuna Mohottala was nominated by Khushbu Agrawal, seconded by Evans Kyule
The candidates spoke in turn to outline their background, experience and aspirations and vision for the future of PARSA if elected to the presidency. Following a secret ballot, Arjuna Mohottala was elected President, assumed the Chair and Julie Melrose left the meeting.

3: Election of Officers

Vice-President

Belynda Akello was nominated by Naomi Rono, seconded by Laura Parker
Ben Niles nominated himself, seconded by Abhirav Bansal
Following a secret ballot, Belynda Akello was elected Vice-President.

Treasurer

One nomination was received for Treasurer.
Louisa Tang was nominated by Naomi Rono, seconded by Imogen Mathew
There being no other candidates, Louisa Tang was elected Treasurer.

Equity Officer

One nomination was received for Equity Officer.
Ben Niles was nominated by Nick West-Foy, seconded by Laura Parker
There being no other candidate, Ben Niles was elected Equity officer

Indigenous Officer

Jesse Doyle nominated himself, seconded by Laura Parker
There being no other candidate, Jesse Doyle was elected Indigenous Officer

Environment Officer

Ehsan Tavakoli-Nabavi was nominated by Salim Masoumi, seconded by Imogen Mathew
John Mwangi nominated by Naomi Rono, seconded by Abhirav Bansal
Following a secret ballot, John Mwangi was elected the new Environmental Officer
**Social Officer**

Two nominations were received for Social Officer.

Laura Parker was nominated by Imogen Mathew, seconded by Omezie Ekwudu

Ehsan Tavakoli-Nabavi was nominated by Salim Masoumi, seconded by Kaiyang Wang

Following a secret ballot, Laura Parker was elected the new Social Officer

**International Officer**

Kimberly Ashby-Mitchell was nominated by Ben Niles, seconded by Laura

Naomi Rono was nominated by Khusbu Agrawal, seconded by Louisa Tang

Salim Masoumi nominated himself, seconded by George Carter

Following a secret ballot, Naomi Rono was elected the new International Officer

*Arjuna Mohottala advised that the previous PRC had already approved the newly established positions of a Communications Officer and Education Officer. It was explained that the Communications Officer is to work closely with Monica Fernandes to increase awareness across campus of PARSA’s role in student advocacy and that the Education Officer will interact with the University Education community to ensure education services are maintained at a high level, especially given recent funding cuts. Given this, elections were held to fill these two positions.*

**Communications Officer**

Khushbu Agrawal was nominated by Horionsah Hasab, seconded by John Mwangi

There being no other nominations, Khushbu Agrawal was elected new Communications Officer

**Education Officer**

Abhirvav Bansal was nominated by Imogen Mathew, seconded by Laura Parker

Kimberley Ashby-Mitchell was nominated by Omezi Ekwudu, seconded by Naomi Rono

George Carter nominated himself, seconded by Pidison Pradhan

Following a secret ballot, George Carter was elected new Education Officer
4: Resignations, vacancies and co-options

There were no resignations.

Vacancies:

**CECS College Representative:**

Shahiara Etemadi Tajbakhsh nominated himself, seconded by Laura Parker

There being no other nominations, Shahiara Etemadi Tajbakhsh was elected the new CECS College Representative

**CPMS College Representative:**

Jamie Cole nominated himself, seconded by Laura

There being no other nominations, Jamie Cole was elected the new CPMS College Representative

**Change of Signatory Authority**

The meeting resolved that the outgoing President, Julie Melrose, and Vice President, Imogen Mathew, no longer have authority to give instructions to the bank on behalf of PARSA as from 31 May, 2013, and that this authority now rests with the following Executive Officers and Administrator, with any 2 to sign.

President: Arjuna Mohottala

Vice-President: Belynda Akello

Treasurer: Jia Han (Louisa) Tang

Arjuna Mohottala advised that last year PARSA operated with the President, Vice President and Treasurer as signatories and that this would be the same for the current PRC term.

Moved by: Arjuna Mohottala Seconded: Laura Parker

**Other Business**

Arjuna Mohottala moved that that given workload considerations, the PRC approve the honoraria for the Treasurer to be increased to $8,000 and all other executive positions, excluding that of President and Vice President, be increased to $4,000

Moved by: Arjuna Mohottala Seconded: Laura Parker

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.50pm
Meeting No: 8/2013 of the Postgraduate Representative Council was held on 19 November 2013 at 7.30am at University House

Present: Arjuna Mohottala (Chair), Belynda Akello, Louisa Tang, Ben Niles, Laura Parker, Naomi Rono, John Mwangi, Khushbu Agrawal, Georgia Driels, Salim Masoumi, Jodie Leu, Kimberly Ashby-Mitchell, Evans Kyule

Apologies: Imogen Mathew, Yingxi (Cimo) Chen

In Attendance: Gaea Cornelius

Resignation: Jan-Christoph Knester

Acknowledgement of Indigenous Australians
The Chair acknowledged and celebrated the First Australians on whose traditional lands we meet and whose cultures are among the oldest continuing cultures in human history

1. Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the PRC meeting held on 9 October 2013 were taken as read and were confirmed.

Moved: Louisa Tang  Seconded: Laura Parker

2. Matters Arising from Minutes

- PARSA President, Arjuna Mohottala, advised that the bank account approved at the last meeting was opened and we can now quickly approve payments online.
- The budget submission was also put forward to the Chancellery and there have been two meetings since that is to be discussed later in this meeting.
- The President requested an agenda item be included at the CAPA annual conference to be held next week to summarise what they have done over the years in terms of policy changes at national and state level.

3. President’s Report

3.1 PARSA Office Move

Arjuna advised the proposed office move is scheduled for the first week of February. Should it coincide with O Week, the move will be delayed until after O Week. In the meantime, Service One is moving out so PARSA should be able to move into that space temporarily at the end of this month but it will mean working out of boxes for two months. Wayne Joseph is in charge of the move as he was involved in the previous PARSA office move.
3.2 SEEF Administration

Arjuna reported he had a lengthy conversation with Richard Baker to update him on the efficiencies we have achieved in streamlining SEEF processes. As it puts a lot of work on whoever is administrating SEEF, Richard indicated he would agree to pay an honorarium to someone in the PRC of $4,000 for a year, paid quarterly in arrears. The person who is administrating SEEF will also sit on GAC. Arjuna opened discussion amongst the PRC that included the following points:

- Confirmed that the Constitution does not say it has to be a certain officer that takes the position. Traditionally, the Treasurer and Social Officer have made sure no one was granted funds from both SEEF and GAC resources. While the President must sit on the University Council, the President can designate others on the PRC to sit on other committees, unless it has been stated it has to be the President.
- SEEF was introduced in 2012. In its first year it was administered by the Chancellery, in 2013 ANUSA managed the fund for the first 6 months of the year, before handing over total control to PARSA
- As SSAF may be taken away by the coalition government, we cannot know if it will continue from 2015.
- The position will be available at least up until the end of next year. It is not difficult but it is time consuming.
- Laura clarified the job requires one day a week of work throughout the year but is full time over two weeks leading up to and following SEEF meetings when Grant recipients are decided and finances disbursed. It is checked there is no doubling up with GAC and everyone who is applying is a current ANU student. The job entails organising a meeting time and place, inviting others to the meeting and following through on up to 50 applicants. A SEEF business process spreadsheet has been created that needs to be kept up to date.
- Given the fluctuations in work load, it doesn’t function well as a paid permanent part time position.
- Written procedures were requested
- A clearly defined job description to be put to the next PRC was requested and for the position to be open to all PRC members.

Following discussion, the PRC formally thanked Laura and Louisa for all the work they have done.

ACTION: Laura Parker is to write a set of SEEF procedures.

ACTION: Arjuna Mohottala and Laura Parker are to write a job description

3.3 Postgraduate Student Space

Arjuna advised that we have to put up a proposal for a student space. He noted that Richard Baker (Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience) is of the opinion that having ANUSA and PARSA located close together isn’t workable, so instead proposed the space next to Jabal and Pauline Griffin Building where there is a lot of greenery. The other possible location is the old Woroni demountable behind The Gods where we could construct a picket fence to protect children as well as have two
BBQ areas on Fellows Oval. Discussions have not progressed since then but Richard Baker is insistent on having $200k available for the postgraduate student’s space.

Overall, of the seven ideas put forward for SSADF funding allocations, five were rejected and two remained, including the student space. It was noted that we may have to appoint a part-time administrator but could possibly use student volunteers to manage the student space.

Arjuna put the proposal to the PRC for consideration and invited further discussion. It was noted that once we get the money approved we will put together a PRC team together and look at procuring necessary items.

4. Treasurer’s Report

- PARSA Treasurer, Louisa Tang, reported that the four working accounts, including one made available for Monica Fernandes to manage payment of event items more efficiently and the COMBIZ cloud-based online system for managing accounts is now available that has significantly streamlined our payments process. Monica’s account also adds a lot of convenience as it allows us to purchase airline tickets, etc.
- We have two term deposits with one maturing in December. We will then look around all the big banks for the best terms on a further investment fund.
- The operating account has around $190k cash flow that should be good to carry us through until the next SSADF.
- SEEF payments are paid within 10 days of receiving acquittal documents.
- We are still waiting for ANUSA to provide all SEEF documents from Round 1-3 along with bank statements.
- The auditors from Pricewaterhouse Coopers will come in February 2014.
- The second lot of honorarium payments will be sent out this week.
- It was advised that we have interviewed six people so far but have not found anyone suitable as yet.
- Our remaining account at SOMB will be closed early next year.

4.1 Staff Computers

Arjuna noted that $5,000 was allocated to update computers for each staff member but it has come to $5,270. He requested PRC approve the additional $270.

Motion: To increase allocation to purchase computers for PARSA staff to $5,270

Moved: Ben Niles Seconded: Louisa Tang

As Khushbu Agrawal requested a spare computer for PRC members to allow them to come into the office, Arjuna advised PRC members can use the computer in his office and once staff get their new laptops we can keep one of the current computers in the work area for PRC members and visitors. One will also be in the staff area. The third computer will be moved to the student space for the administrator.
4.2 Approval of Finances

Motion: To accept all expenses incurred since the last PRC meeting.

Moved: Louisa Tang  Seconded: Laura Parker

5. Executive Officer Reports

5.1 Equity Officer

Ben Niles reported he will be having discussions with Wayne Joseph over the coming months. Plans for next year include working with the QUEER community and developing some women’s initiatives. We will continue to work in building up projects for students with disabilities. Ben asked that if there are any suggestions on projects related to QUEER and women’s equity, to please feel free to email him. In the past we have done such things as attending the international women’s day lunch and a brunch on the same day and are thinking of doing something different next year. As it is important to work on some women’s rights issues, this needs more attention. Ben asked for thoughts and ideas to be passed on to him, particularly from women in the team.

5.2 Environmental Officer

John Mwangi reported a sustainable gardening event was recently held at the Food Coop with 25 people in attendance. A PhD student took participants through the process on how to do the gardening, then Barbara Shreiner who is an expert also gave a lecture that was followed by lunch.

5.3 Communications Officer

Khushbu Agrawal reported that we are working on the Survival Guide for 2014 and are currently looking into sponsorship opportunities, from both on and off campus. Information on clubs and societies is to be included. As requested by Louisa Tang, SEEF information will also be included along with an events calendar requested by Laura Parker. Khushbu requested further ideas for the Survival Guide to be emailed to her.

Khushbu also had discussions with ANUSA about a combined website that should be available next year.

Arjuna added that while a lot of money is spent across campus on student clubs, communication between these entities is poor. Putting everything under one umbrella can work a lot like Facebook. It is a way to share information and bookings and documents, including doodle like facilities. It has worked well in the US but there is still a need for more homework.

5.4 International Students Officer

Naomi Rono reported that the Multicultural Festival held in November went well and that she is contacting different international student groups to start engaging with each other for next year.
5.5 Social Officer

Laura Parker reported it has been a very busy October with around thirteen different activities having been open to postgrads. The Blue Mountains trip was held last weekend and Surf trip the week before.

6. College Representative Reports

6.1 College of Law

Georgia Driels reported two events had recently been held including a BBQ with undergrads as well and a bar night. A welcome back drinks will be organised for the beginning of the year and half way through the semester, there is a plan to hold a pizza lunch. Feedback from students is that events should happen after hours, but it has been found it doesn’t actually make a difference in terms of how many students attend.

Laura Parker suggested they wait till late March to hold the next event.

6.2 College of Medicine, Biology and Environment

Kimberley Ashby-Mitchell reported they are holding a college event at Lennius Way where there will be drink and food. A panel discussion is also planned for February on topics such as the thesis whisperer, proposal writing, issues, exams and submissions.

It was noted that since the research student development centre was closed last year, the research fest they used to organise has stopped and that a few students have enquired about this. In response, Arjuna advised that in his discussions with Prof Jenny Corbet (Pro-Vice Chancellor Research and Research Training), he has told one will be organised for next year.

6.3 College of Asia and the Pacific

Arjuna Mohottala reported that the college board meets up that includes the Dean, school directors and eight student reps. One thing highlighted at the last meeting is that a lot of students want to take courses in different colleges but as courses often overlap, there has been no flexibility. Andrew McIntyre has taken this issue to Chancellery level to advocate changes be introduced to allow Colleges to talk to each other and for timetables to be more flexible.

7. PARSA Budget

Arjuna reported that initial proposals for projects using SSAF funding amounted to just over $7 million whereas SSAF funding availability is around $4 million. PARSA has been asked to find $100,000 in savings from our proposed SSAF budget for 2014 of $1,035,000.00. Our ANU Engage project proposal has been rejected because it extracurricular activity that falls outside the SSAF funding criteria.
8. **O Week**

O Week will be held 10 - 14 February, with a meeting schedule for two weeks prior to O Week.

Laura Parker reported there is to be a change in format for O Week in that it will be based largely around Colleges. As such, there won’t be a general welcome to all students, instead there will be seven separate College welcomes.

Richard Baker (the PVC of Student Experience) will be attending each of the of the 7 College welcomes, to officially welcome students. Laura requested that each of the College Reps speak with their own colleges to ensure that PARSA is included, and that postgraduate students are made aware of us. This is also a great opportunity to let them know about the events PARSA is hosting during O Week.

In addition to this PARSA will be organising four events for all postgrad students; a morning tea in Union Court on the first day, a BBQ on Wednesday on Fellows Oval (Market Day is on the same day on University Avenue). We will have a jumping castle and face painting for children, plus a drumming band. On Friday morning we will do a scenic tour that was very popular at the last Bush Week and on Friday evening there will be a welcome cocktail party at University House in the drawing room. It will be a busy week and we will be asking for volunteers the fortnight leading up to it.

Arjuna asked that it be placed on record that Laura can’t do this on her own and so we really need your help as it’s our signature.

9. **Other Business**

9.1 **PRC Composition**

Arjuna requested the PRC discuss the composition of the PRC but firstly noted there will be some PRC members graduating at the end of the year of which vacancies will be filled in January.

Jodie Liu gave advice to the PRC that she is graduating at the end of the year.

**ACTION: Arjuna is to send out an email with a list of who is graduating at the end of 2013.**

On another note that opened up for discussion, Arjuna raised the issue of members who have not been active in PARSA since the AGM who may need to be asked to move on to give the opportunity to others who would like to serve the PARSA community. Arjuna proposed he contact these individuals in December to see if they want to stay on the PRC by increasing their participation and, if not, may have to make the decision. Arjuna put this proposal to the PRC for their input, with discussion notes as follows:

- It was noted that we always see the same faces and as a team we want to see how we can move forward in the future.
- A strategy is needed to engage everyone, especially for General Reps as there is currently no benchmark for them to achieve
College reps need a list of tasks and noted that when a single meeting is missed, it is difficult to catch up. As such, it was suggested a list be given at the beginning of semester on roles to perform while asking General Reps to choose amongst them.

A suggestion was made to increase the handing over period – ANUSA has a handing over period of two months.

Arjuna has considered amending the Constitution to have the AGM by the end of April, instead of May.

It was said the job description for General Reps has always been kept broad so as to encourage more involvement, using it as a starting point for students to become familiar with PARSA as an organisation.

The point was raised that the Retreat held at the Botanical Gardens provided an opportunity to talk about passions and ideas and to allow new comers to begin to grasp what PARSA is about along with its organisational structure and workings.

There was discussion around the need for clearer guidelines on expectations to be made clearer and communicated ahead of time during future elections, therein asking for a minimal level of commitment and accountability, perhaps asking General Reps to get involved in a portfolio, as General Rep Social, for instance.

In response, it was noted that introducing such a change could have the unintended consequence of limiting the number of candidates for certain portfolios.

A suggestion was then made that General Reps could be asked to nominate a portfolio not long after the elections, at the first PRC meeting, for instance.

Other members suggested that by being overly descriptive and prescriptive, this could in effect discourage people from putting themselves forward - as it takes time to learn about PARSA and what PRC members can achieve.

Following discussions, the PRC agreed to continue to talk about this issue and streamline ideas for a final decision to be made in January.

**ACTION:** Arjuna Mohotalla will look at role descriptions over the holidays and Khushbu Agrawal will look into PRC election communications.

At the close of the meeting, Ajruna noted that this year has been remarkable in terms of increasing awareness. He then informed the PRC he will be at CAPA next week and flying to Colombo on Thursday because his father is not well. He will be back on the first week in January. He requested that if there is anything urgent, to please send a message to his mobile and he will reply quickly.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30am.