

2021 Annual General Meeting Minutes

12.00pm-2.00pm

Wednesday 6th October 2021

[Zoom](#)

AGM opens: 12:05pm

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

1.1. Acknowledgement of Country

Chair acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Pambalong clan of the Awabakal people, on whose traditional land this Callaghan Campus of the University of Newcastle is situated and respective lands that everyone is zooming in from.

1.2. Welcome & Introduction of Chair

1.3. Chair Introduces Himself And Instructs Students To Send Any Questions That Come Up To Hugh Milligan (UNSA Online Experience & Engagement Officer) through the zoom chat function. Questions will be collated and answered during item 7.1 General Questions Without Notice From Members.

Chair introduces guests attending from the University of Newcastle: Vice Chancellor, Alex Zelinsky and Deputy Vice Chancellor-Academic, Mark Hoffman as well as the auditor from Nexia, Vishal Modi. Chair invites the VC and DVC-A to speak.

Vice Chancellor Alex Zelinsky begins by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land and thanks UNSA for the invitation to attend. The past two years have been really tough on students, but UNSA did a lot of work to support students throughout lockdown, especially those isolated students in residences. VC shares his roadmap for the return to campus and is focused on how we can make 2022 a great year. VC states that the University will not be mandating vaccinations for the general return to campus (although it is required to be on campus at this time). However, the VC encourages everyone to get vaccinated because that is the right thing to do.

Deputy Vice Chancellor-Academic Mark Hoffman takes the opportunity to reflect on UNSA over the last 12 months. When the DVC-A began at the University, there were three separate student associations which have now become one as UNSA. DVC-A saw the first UNSA Board come to life which is a great testament to the students as they were able to come together with different views onto a board that truly represents students. DVC-A gives a special thanks to the Independent Directors Scott Evans and Jane Gray for their support. In this year's University SFUN survey there was a big uptick in how the student association is addressing issues for students. To achieve that in the first 12 months is something that is especially impressive. DVC-A gives a big thanks to the UNSA Board, Student Representative Council (SRC), and staff.

DVC-A's confidence in UNSA operations and the running of student activities and events has increased considerably over the transition process. DVC-A concludes that it is important to reflect on the last 12 months and how much has been achieved by UNSA so far.

1.4. Apologies

Apology received from Harry O'Brien Smith (Newcastle Campuses Committee Convenor).

1.5. Rights of Audience and debate

Chair grants rights of audience and debate to UNSA members and staff.

1.6. Voting

Chair explains that voting will be conducted via zoom polls.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Chair confirms that quorum of 25 members is established with 45 student members present via zoom.

3. 2020 SSAF ANNUAL REPORT

Motion: To Accept the UNSA 2020 SSAF Annual Report.

Moved By: Jessica Philbrook

Seconded By: Evan Gibbs

In Favour: 33

Opposed: 1

Motion Carried.

4. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS FOR PERIOD ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2020

4.1 QUESTIONS ON FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Chair opens the floor to questions regarding the financial statement.

Member asks where the documents are accessible?

Chair answers that all documents are accessible on the AGM event listing on the UNSA website <https://Unsa.Org.Au/Events/Unsa-2021-Agm> as well as the governance and reporting webpage. They have also been circulated to members via email.

5. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

Auditor thanks UNSA for the opportunity; accounts and records were kept well by the GM and UNSA team. Nexia looks forward to working with UNSA again and assures members they are always accessible and approachable. Auditor can be reached directly or through the General Manager. Auditor asks if there are any questions to please let him know.

Motion: To appoint Nexia as UNSA's external auditor for 2021.

Moved by: Zack Schofield

Seconded by: Max Tran

In favour: 36

Opposed: 0

Motion carried.

6. 2021 SRC MEMBERS- ROLES & GOALS

Chair invites each SRC member to introduce themselves and speak through their goals.

Chloe Jones, Vice President Education

1. To lead an education committee that genuinely captures and represents the voice of all students at the university by spreading awareness of the committee and fostering an environment where students feel empowered to represent their school during meetings.
2. To promote and spread awareness of UNSA as the student association continues to grow through attending events, networking with students and collaborating with the SRC.
3. To advocate on behalf of students to ensure that the quality of education given at uon is maintained despite the challenges of covid-19 and online learning. I focus on listening and supporting students when academic issues arise and liaise with relevant members of academic staff.

Feisal Masmali, Postgraduate Students' Senate Convenor:

I am focusing on promoting awareness of UNSA's postgraduate students' senate committee by reaching out to postgraduate student clubs and talking to their executives and members about UNSA. I listen to students to identify postgraduate students' problems and issues and meet with the Dean of Graduate Research regarding student concerns and vice versa. I plan to use communication channels, social media, and emails- to introduce the PSS committee and promote postgraduate students events and activities.

Georgie Cooper, Vice President Experience & Engagement:

I have been focusing on networking with clubs and student groups to gather their feedback on the student experience, as well as more broadly with students to ensure effective representation and advocacy. I have also been working with the Clubs Support Officer to support clubs in collaborating on events and more. I contribute to UNSA's strategic operation and initiatives through working groups, event planning and more. I also advocate for improved student spaces, including co-developing a consultative framework to ensure the university will champion students in decision-making from the very start. Lastly, I have been helping to grow Opus Media to increase avenues for student voices to be amplified. I regularly contribute written Opus articles and the SRC podcast/videos and encourage other students and clubs to do so.

Evan Gibbs, Academic Senate Student Representative:

Research students are unlike other students with unique needs that need to be advocated for differently. My goal is to enhance awareness of how HDR students are often not considered by management. These students often fall somewhere between coursework students and staff.

Jessica Philbrook, Vice President Welfare and Wellbeing.

UNSA has five collectives, Queer, Women's, Indigenous, Accessibility & Equity as well as a brand-new Parents & Carers Collective. The launch of the equity collectives was delayed due to resourcing and taking time to gather community input. However now we've met the goal to launch the collectives, now we're meeting with students to sort out how each collective should be run and governance documents through lived experience. Secondly, through student feedback, it was clear that students have concerns over safety and security. To address this, I've conducted the research on self-defence courses and how they can empower people to feel safer, however these are on hold due to covid. I am also working on Developing greater welfare and wellbeing resources for students.

Lucas Dowling, University Council Student Representative:

- Increase student participation in governance including participation in student representative elections across the university e.g., University Council, Academic Senate and UNSA elections. Thank you to everyone who voted in the recent University Council, Academic Senate, and Faculty Board elections.
- Positively contribute to student engagement through events, activities, and student media, the Poker Club as well as the Opus podcast.
- Help ensure the UNSA SRC structure is optimised for student engagement.

Mandip Kour, Central Coast campus Convenor:

My goal is to reach student problems and to bring those concerns to UNSA. Second is to plan events outside of class for student free time to support student welfare and wellbeing.

Max Tran, Acting Queer Collective Convenor:

- Increase support for queer students and increasing engagement in the Queer Collective.
- Finalising Queer Collective Terms of Reference and elections process for 2022.
- Continuing work with university staff to ensure campuses are a welcoming space for queer students and helping students to find community both inside and out of the university. This includes assistance with name changing, talking to tutors, planning Pride Week, serving on Ally Training panels, participating in university research, and helping academics.

Rachel McGuinness, Cloud Campus Committee Convenor:

- To co-ordinate and collaborate with on campus environment events, students, and wellbeing.
- To encourage cloud student participation with UNSA and student environment
- To give voice to cloud students in UNSA and the student environment

Shuang Zhang, International Students' Senate Convenor

- Help build awareness of UNSA supports through events and activities.
- Make a guide for international students to feel welcome when they are at uni.
- Direct international students to support services both internal university and UNSA supports and external supports.

Steve Bennett, Port Macquarie Campus Committee Convenor

We had hit the ground running this year with events lined up with students and staff at Port Macquarie, but unfortunately lockdown put a stop to these events. As nursing and teaching students, students spend a lot of time away from campus, so I have been trying to support students on placement who are experiencing placement cancellations due to covid and other issues that come up. Happy to report it is going well and most students have been able to do their hours on placement. I am working to support students who are part time or must repeat a subject, as you all know Port Macquarie Campus will be finishing up as a campus at the end of this year.

Luka Harrison, President

My goal this year is to rework the SRC structure to make it work better for student representation. We've had a few issues come up that have shown the structure is a little bit too prescriptive and we don't have as much representation as we would like to. At the next meeting tonight the SRC will form a working group to finalise the structure with the goal of implementing it by the end of the year.

There are a few questions in the chat from members regarding access to the meeting agenda, it can be found here <https://unsa.org.au/events/unsa-2021-agm>

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1. GENERAL QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

Chair opens the floor to questions sent to UNSA staff via zoom chat.

Regarding the UNSA club guidelines, which (if any) clubs were consulted as the guidelines were drafted? Why was this the case?

Georgia Killick, GM: to develop clubs guidelines we examined previous associations and consulted with Student Central as well as other large student associations across Australia. We have taken on recent feedback into consideration and released an updated version of the guidelines that is available on our website.

Jessica Schuhmacher, Clubs Support Officer: We've updated those guidelines on the website and sent an email to all affiliated clubs with the updated guidelines. You can find them under the 'starting a club' section. It is a living document, so we do welcome your feedback.

Whilst you say that you said you have changed the UNSA guidelines, you say under 4c: "if your primary objective is to convert other people to believing the same as you, UNSA will not affiliate you." How is this different from the proselytization clause that was in the previous clubs and societies guidelines? Where the guidelines formerly stated that "proselytization of any kind is not permitted. UNSA will not affiliate any club whose aims and objectives amount to proselytization."

Georgia Killick, GM: as we've reflected multiple times, we want clubs to be a place to build community. Which means bringing together people with shared interests. That should be the main objective of any club, to build community within the university.

Jessica Schuhmacher, Clubs Support Officer: If you could please review the new guidelines, there will be more clarification on this as well. Lots of sections have changed based on the feedback we were given.

Regarding the composition of the SRC, how does the UNSA board ensure that the students of faith are represented on the SRC? Would UNSA support the creation of a 'faith collective', or similar, as a way for faith-based communities on campus to be properly represented on the SRC?

Luka Harrison, Chair: I can't speak to how the SRC vote on any particular issue, but if you would like to speak to an SRC member to bring up a particular issue, then you are free to do that at any time.

Jessica Philbrook, VPW: I think there may be some confusion between collectives and clubs. Collectives are an identified equity group that is in some way disadvantaged or marginalised within the higher education sector. For example, parents and carers have duties that impact on their studies and experience barriers to success as a student. Another example would be that queer students are a recognised equity group, so creating supports for those students, offering resources, and providing a voice to inform decision making is really important. If you think that a faith collective should be created, you can reach out to me with that and I'm more than happy to field and address that.

Various UNSA documents state that UNSA is an apolitical and non-partisan organisation – that UNSA is not involved in politics, has a lack of affiliation with, and lack of bias toward, any given political party. However, at an emergency meeting of the SRC held Monday 20th September, a request from the UNSA Queer Collective for UNSA to formally reject a Bill before the NSW Parliament was discussed at some length. A motion was moved by the Acting Queer Collective Convenor and passed by the SRC: "That UNSA formally reject the One Nation - NSW Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020 and take proactive steps to advocate against the Bill to support Queer and Gender diverse students." I have two questions regarding this:

As the discussion, rejection, and advocacy against any Bill before Parliament would be judged by most to be of a political nature, how can UNSA continue to claim it is an apolitical organisation?

The request to UNSA and the subsequent motion at the SRC Meeting was moved by the Acting Queer Collective Convenor (AQCC). This would appear to be a conflict of interest, with the AQCC moving and voting on their own request. Can you comment on this and how conflicts of interest are handled regarding Collectives?

Luka Harrison, Chair: This question is regarding a recent motion moved at a recent SRC meeting and is regarding UNSA taking a stance on a bill that was recently in parliament. In terms of being apolitical, UNSA believes that being apolitical means no political affiliation. However, when it comes down to representing students on issues affecting them, that is something we have a real stake and duty to support. Chair invites Vice President Welfare & Wellbeing (VPW) and Acting Queer Collective Convenor (AQC) to speak to this.

Max Tran, AQC: first and foremost, the motion was against the particular bill and not the political party. It would be incredibly difficult to do any work without involving politics and things get political

very quickly. That is how most bills work, it was a motion against the bill not the party. That was made very clear in the discussion that the SRC noted.

Jessica Philbrook, VPW: the implication with the question is that because Max is the acting convenor, he shouldn't move the motion. However, each person on the SRC is implemented to serve a specific purpose to their portfolio. Prior to bringing this to the SRC meeting, the Queer Collective passed a motion to bring this item to the SRC. By bringing this issue from the Queer Collective up to the SRC, Max is performing according to the duties of his role. This is standard governance practice across the board, you'll see it in other student associations as well. You can move a motion that you brought, it is seconded by someone else, and in this particular case the motion was carried unanimously. This is a great example of how the SRC and portfolio committees, senates and collectives operate from a governance perspective.

Parking has been brought up as a question. Chair explains that unfortunately that is not our jurisdiction, but it will be passed on to the university for them to answer along with other questions relevant to the University (and not UNSA).

You gave notice about moving to QPay, when will that be finalised?

GM: QPay is a clubs software management system that we're reviewing and advertising to clubs at the moment to let them know that it is free to use. No date on finalisation at this stage as we're still investigating.

Can you explain how the new club rules don't amount to religious discrimination on the basis that missionary work is a key fundamental principle in not only Christian ideation but amongst other religious sects?

Georgia Killick, GM: There is nothing in the Clubs Guidelines that prevent missionary work. These guidelines have been created in collaboration with the university. I can't answer this as it is not addressed in our guidelines. Clubs Guidelines were created to ensure students feel safe and supported on campus.

So, no UON clubs were consulted in the drafting of the guidelines, and the rules haven't changed in the new guidelines regarding sharing views on campus, i.e. Feedback was ignored?

Jessica Schuhmacher, Clubs Support Officer: There were multiple information sessions held for clubs to provide the opportunity for consultation around the transition and Clubs Guidelines. Both Student Central and UNSA clubs were invited to attend these sessions and provide feedback.

As there are a lot of repeating questions, Chair invites students to reach out to UNSA directly via email: unsa@newcastle.edu.au.

Luka Harrison is a member of the Labour Party, what do you mean it doesn't have any affiliation with any group or organization.

Luka Harrison, Chair: Yes, that is true, but just because I am a member of the Labour Party does not mean that UNSA has any affiliation to any political party.

Does, or will, UNSA prioritise hiring students for events, etc. So that student funds go to students as much as possible? I've noticed there are a few regular events that hire people external to the university.

Georgia Killick, GM: UNSA employs multiple students in front-facing roles such as photographers, event assistants, performers etc. Next year we plan to expand the number of opportunities for students to be employed.

If you can see that there are so many issues with club affiliation, do you not consider that a sign to change the way you are doing things? Clubs are feeling that UNSA is inadequately responding to concerns. You say everyone is to feel welcome on campus, but the way you are treating some clubs isn't representative of that stance.

Jessica Schuhmacher, Clubs Support Officer: We're not actually having that many issues. We've had several Student Central clubs transitioning successfully and smoothly. Our inboxes are always open to you, and we invite you to email us with questions and/or feedback. I think we've made it clear that we're addressing the feedback through multiple updates to the Clubs Guidelines.

Zack Schofield asks that since there are a lot of clubs questions, could post a link to the updated guidelines. UNSA staff share link via zoom chat: <https://unsa.org.au/club-guidelines>

Will UNSA consider establishing its own volunteering for students?

Volunteering has now moved into the Careers and Employability department at the University. UNSA plans to partner with them and work towards recognising volunteer hours on the AHEGS statement.

Can you please clarify as to whether or not the Newcastle Christian students Club can affiliate or not?

Luka Harrison, Chair: any club that completes the requirements for affiliation can affiliate.

Jessica Schuhmacher, Clubs Support Officer: all you need to do to affiliate is to fill out affiliation form, make sure you have ten members, and make sure you have a constitution.

Georgia Killick, GM: we can't discuss particular club affiliations at the AGM.

I see a lot of messages coming through that seem to negative and relating to religion, are you able to tell us the success stories and some positive news please! :)

Jessica Schuhmacher, Clubs Support Officer: We have a number of affiliated clubs that have success stories. Both the Bangladesh Students Association and the Islamic Society held successful large-scale Ramadan events. The UON Christian Club was having weekly bible studies before lockdown hit. Bottom line these clubs and events give students the sense of belonging. For more information on successful UNSA clubs, check out our Clubs Spotlight every Tuesday on the UNSA Instagram (@unsa.uon).

Chair concludes the AGM since there are no further questions that are not repeats.

8. CLOSE OF MEETING 1:19PM