

UNION COUNCIL MINUTES

**From the 2nd Ordinary Meeting of the
110th UQ Union Council, 2021**

5.30 PM

Tuesday 6th April 2021

Schonell Theatre, Union Complex

Chair: Ji Davis

a) The Meeting was declared open at 5:40 pm.

The Chair acknowledged the traditional owners of the land.

b) Credentials

The following were present:

Councillors

Anastasia Georgiou
David McGovern
Ella Gutteridge
Gabby Callow
Hamish Barnett
Jason Wang
Ji Davis
Jordan Mark
Kurt Monckton
Kyle Clunies-Ross
Michael Walker
Myah McGinity
Sam Adams
Stuart Moss
Thomas Stephen
Tim Heffernan
Zoe Goss

Student Executive & Officers

Alicia Steele
Alicia Steele
Benjamin Kozij
Emily Scott
Kurt Tucker
Liam Heseltine
Lisa Pham
Matthew Johnson
Oula Shihan
Richard Lee
Ryan Jover
Ti Parker

Others

Anna Heale
Bradley Plant
Bradley Stone
Cara Rowe
Claire Sturm
Cristian Gutierrez
Glenda Jacobs
Matthew Pereira
Myo Sumoko
Peter Travers
Rowan Evans
Tristan Murdoch
Vishnupriya De
Zwe Htet Aung
Nay Lin Zin

The following apologies were received:

Nil

On leave:

Nil

The following proxies were received:

Anastasia Georgiou to Tristan Murdoch
Annabel Bartley to Kurt Tucker
Chamal Abeytunga to Matthew Pereira
Darcy Creighton to Benjamin Kozij
Elise Northcote to Hamish Barnett
Elloise Campbell to Benjamin Kozij
Hamish Barnett to Thomas Stephen
Jordan Mark to Cara Rowe
Julia Bejleri to Kurt Tucker
Tyson Etri to Bradley Plant

Resignations:

The Union Chair noted that Heisen Xu has resigned as Campus Culture Vice-President.

Procedural motion to suspend standing orders

CARRIED

Standing orders were suspended to hand the meeting over to the Returning Officer, Peter Travers.

c) Elections

i. Campus Culture Vice-President

The Returning Officer confirmed the following nominations were received for the shared position of Campus Culture Vice-President:

- 1) Matthew McCarthy
Kyle Clunies-Ross
- 2) Kurt Tucker
Benjamin Kozij

The meeting was adjourned at 5.55pm in order to count the ballots.

The meeting returned at 6.05pm.

The Returning Officer declared Kurt Tucker and Benjamin Kozij elected to the position of Campus Culture Vice-President.

ii. Gatton Board Member

Procedural motion that the meeting move ex camera

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 6.10pm.

Cr Georgiou arrived at 6.10pm.

The meeting reconvened at 6.31pm.

c) Requests for Starring/ Approval of the items not starred en bloc

The Student Rights' (Academic), President's and Semper Editor reports were starred for discussion.

Procedural motion to consider all other reports en bloc.

CARRIED

d) Reports

It was moved

THAT THE UNION SECRETARY'S REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 110/35

JOVER/DAVIS

CARRIED

THAT THE UNION TREASURER'S REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 110/36

JOVER/DAVIS

CARRIED

THAT THE STUDENT RIGHTS (COMMUNITY WELFARE) REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 110/37

HESELTINE/DAVIS

CARRIED

THAT THE CAMPUS CULTURE (EVENTS) REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 110/38

MCCARTHY/DAVIS

CARRIED

THAT THE GENDER AND SEXUALITY (WOMEN'S OFFICER) REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 110/39

SEARLE/DAVIS

CARRIED

THAT THE GENDER AND SEXUALITY (QUEER OFFICER) REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 110/40

BLANCH/DAVIS

CARRIED

THAT THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICERS' REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 110/41

DING/DAVIS

CARRIED

THAT THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICERS' REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 110/42

ROWE/WALKER

CARRIED

e) Matters arising from the Reports of the Elected Officers

Student Rights Report:

Cr Gutteridge queried the rationale behind UQ's development of digital classrooms.

It was noted that VP Le was not in attendance, but had made themselves available to answer questions online. In response, it was explained that the reasons for the development, three years before COVID, were unclear. Essentially, the classrooms are an enhanced Zoom, with students attending class both online and in-person, and are a way of facilitating hybrid classrooms. It was noted that VP Le had raised their concerns at the meeting and will continue to report on any further developments.

Students queried when the university were planning on rolling out the technology. The President responded that UQ are currently early in the consulting stage.

Abilities Officer, Alicia Steele, raised that this development could provide an accessible learning option to those that need it and should not be dismissed outright.

Postgraduate Officer, Richard Lee, suggested the Union consult with the NTEU on the issue to ensure staff members feel supported and will receive appropriate training.

Environment Officer, Oula Shihan, noted that there is a key difference between accommodating for students with accessibility issues and completely restructuring the delivery of education. They stated that it is not in the interest of students to do online learning en masse. While these options should be made available to those that need them, it is likely the development of digital classrooms is a cost-cutting measure that will force students to pay for a worse learning experience. They urged the Vice-President (Academic) to be vocal in their opposition.

Environment Officer, Ti Parker, noted that online education is in the broader context of cuts to university funding. A shift online would reduce staff numbers and the time staff can spend one-on-one with students. This significantly impacts the quality of education and has been a trend across the tertiary sector in recent years.

Vice-President Tucker raised that hybrid models dissuade students from coming to campus which leads to less money for Union outlets and student services. While the hybrid model is attractive on paper, the reality is the option is being presented for the financial wellbeing of the university. These options should be specifically for students with accessibility issues, rather than the larger student community.

Student, Bradley Plant, noted that the report states all representatives have been chosen for the Academic Advocacy Network and asked for a list of the chosen representatives.

The Vice-President confirmed, via the Union President, that they would take the question on notice and publish a list of names for Union Council.

It was moved

THAT THE STUDENT RIGHTS (ACADEMIC) REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 110/43

DAVIS/LE

CARRIED

President's Report

Student, Priya De, asked for further information on the Union Development.

The President confirmed that a second meeting had been held with UQ that focused on business trading. The Union reiterated that they want to retain the student theatre, as well as the need for more C&S space for storage lockers, and space for all union collectives.

It was moved

THAT THE UNION PRESIDENT'S REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 110/44

DAVIS/TUCKER

CARRIED

Semper Report

Student, Chris Stewart, queried why the response to the Bob Katter interview had been given such a prominent position in the magazine and questioned why such a piece would have been chosen for inclusion.

Semper Ed. Johnson stated that all students are welcome to submit pieces to Semper.

Officer Shihan raised that students have a right to reply to articles written within a student newspaper.

Members queried the 2k budgeted for Environment Collective meetings. Officer Shihan explained that they have budgeted for speakers such as community organisers. VP Tucker noted that the Environment Collective have consistently fallen under budget in previous years. They queried whether it would be more appropriate to approve budgets based on prior actuals, with additional expenses approved by council when necessary.

In response, Officer Shihan noted that the Environment Collective has been run poorly in recent years, with officers largely inactive. Budgets should therefore be approved based on the plans of the current officers.

It was raised that the lack of a detailed breakdown for each portfolio is generating confusion and approving the budget without this information would be negligence. Council agreed that the budget should be tabled in advance of each portfolio's budgetary breakdown.

It was moved

THAT THE 2021 BUDGET BE TABLED

COUNCIL 110/47

DE/TUCKER

CARRIED

The Treasurer explained that discretionary funding would need to be approved to cover the period until the extraordinary meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.09pm in order to calculate a reasonable figure.

The meeting reconvened.

It was moved

THAT \$400,000 DISCRETIONARY FUNDING BE APPROVED TO COVER THE PERIOD PRIOR TO 2021 BUDGET APPROVAL

COUNCIL 110/48

DAVIS/TUCKER

CARRIED

The Treasurer confirmed that the budget would be circulated prior to the extraordinary meeting, omitting the commercial in confidence information only. Discussions on cash flow and business trading will continue to be held in camera.

Solidarity with Myanmar

Mover, Myo Sumoko, raised that they are a member of the Myanmar Students Society. It was explained that, due to the ongoing military coup in Myanmar, students' mental health has been impacted which is affecting assignments etc. There is not currently a sufficient number of counselling sessions to meet demand, with all sessions booked until the end of next month. It was noted that this is not exclusive to students from Myanmar, but all students at UQ.

VP Tucker queried whether the motion should include reference to lobbying the Australian government on issues such as refugee visas and diplomatic sanctions.

Student, Zwe Htet Aung, raised that, while it would be of benefit for the Union to contribute to the voices already lobbying the government, the current priorities are practicalities like waiving late fees and access to counselling sessions.

Student, Priya De, urged council to support the motion. They raised that a revolution is taking place in Myanmar, with courage shown in universities across the country who are fighting for the reversal of the coup and the end of military control. They noted that it was only recently that the Australian government cut military ties with the Tatmadaw, and the government should stop arming oppressive regimes.

Abilities Officer, Alicia Steele, raised that the counselling sessions are a frequent issue for members of the abilities collective.

Student, Zwe Htet Aung, noted that at the University of Technology Sydney, international students are reimbursed for the cost of external counselling sessions. This could be something UQ could consider to support students from Myanmar.

VP Heseltine raised that the Union has repeatedly approached UQ with different options to increase counselling capacity, such as bringing in a third party like Headspace. The University continues to reject these offers.

Officer Shihan suggested Union Council take a solidarity photo. With 400 student held in prisons and fighting on the front line, it is important to have a visible symbol. Union Council agreed to take a photo at the conclusion of the meeting.

It was moved

THAT

- 1) THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND UNION CALLS ON THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO LISTEN TO THE VOICES OF THE CIVILIANS OF MYANMAR AND DEMAND THE RELEASE OF THOSE ARBITRARILY DETAINED
- 2) THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND UNION CONDEMNS THE MILITARY COUP AND RECOGNISES THE CRPH (COMMITTEE REPRESENTING PYIDAUNGSU HLUTTAW) – A NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY FORMED AFTER THE COUP TO COUNTER MILITARY RULE
- 3) THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND UNION SUPPORTS THE CDM MOVEMENT
- 4) THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND UNION WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS RUN BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FROM MYANMAR.

- 5) FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION BY EMILY SCOTT AND MYO SUMIKO, THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND UNION WILL CONTINUE TO LOBBY THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND TO:
- a) MAKE MORE COUNSELLING SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR ALL UQ STUDENTS;
 - b) GIVE STUDENTS AFFECTED BY THE CLOSURES OF ALL MEMBER BANKS OF THE MYANMAR BANKS ASSOCIATION EXAMPTIONS TO THE \$100 LATE FEE; AND
 - c) AWARD EXTENSIONS AND DEFERRALS WHEN ASSESSMENTS CLASH WITH INTERNET BLACKOUTS IN MYANMAR
- 6) THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND UNION COMMITS TO SUPPORT ALL STUDENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED OR ARE EXPERIENCING SIMILAR TRAGEDIES TO THE PEOPLE OF MYANMAR
- COUNCIL 110/49 SUMIKO/LIN ZIN CARRIED

Audit of bureaucratic procedures for students identifying with a disability

The following statement was read to Union Council:

Bureaucratic hurdles exist for students with disabilities* which prevent these students from being able to access appropriate accommodations and have these accommodations implemented in a timely and stress-free manner. This is unfairly disadvantaging students with disabilities at UQ. Below I will give three examples from my own experience.

1. Despite applying through appropriate channels, I spent the days prior to my first quiz for a subject sending emails and making phone calls because my approved alternative accommodations had not been implemented. The time and energy I used on this caused me immense stress and adversely impacted my ability to study for the quiz. My time spent chasing these accommodations was time that should have been spent studying. (Please note that this situation has so far occurred to me twice)
2. This semester, I applied, using the correct and appropriate form, for an extension to the due date for a prac report which I had been unable to complete due to experiencing 3 days of constant seizures. I emailed the school to clarify that I had been unable to submit the extension request prior to the due date for the same reason as I had been unable to complete the prac report. My SAP clearly states that I experience non-epileptic absent seizures which can cause me to be incapacitated for days at a time. My request was denied on the arbitrary grounds that the request was not made prior to the due date as per university "rules" (arbitrary "rules" alone should not be grounds to deny a legitimate request, and if rules are being used as such then the "rules" ought to be changed). The Deputy Director of Academic

Services, Helen Morahan, who denied my extension request, was made aware of my email to the school and its contents, had read my SAP, and is aware that my course coordinator is happy and willing to approve the extension. Despite this, I have still been directed to lodge an appeal. The appeal is expected to succeed – and quite frankly, if denied would likely be in contravention of disability discrimination law – although it will be a further waste of my time, which I could instead be using to catch up on the coursework I missed due to my disability.

3. Perhaps the most blatant and obvious example of time wasting, and one which affects most students who have a Student Access Plan (SAP) at some point, is that we are required, every semester, to download our SAP from one university website and upload it to a different university website every time we require an extension for an assessment item. So we're essentially taking a document from one place and putting it in another place and filling out a form in order to the request that accommodations be approved that *had already been* approved at the start of the semester.

The constant busywork and follow-up that students with disabilities are required to engage in to ensure that they receive equitable access to education, is itself a barrier to equitable access to education. The chasing up, the phone calls, the emails and fighting to ensure that already approved accommodations are actually implemented causes undue stress to students with disabilities. Every time we face one of these barriers it is like being told that we don't belong here, and we are not wanted here. Since taking on this role as Abilities Officer, I have learned of at least two students with disabilities who have given up trying to navigate the bureaucracy at UQ and have left to go to Griffith instead (which has a much better reputation for proactively accommodating students with disabilities).

*Please note that for the purposes of this statement and for the activities of the Abilities Collective, the term "disability/disabilities" is inclusive of mental illness, chronic illness and neurodiversity.

ENDS

Officer Steele raised that the hope is that the actions outlined will benefit all students by giving outdated procedures across UQ an update.

Procedural motion that the motion be put

CARRIED

It was moved

THAT THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND (UQ) PERFORMS AN AUDIT OF ALL BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES CURRENTLY AFFECTING STUDENTS WHO

IDENTIFY AS EXPERIENCING DISABILITY, MENTAL ILLNESS, CHRONIC ILLNESS AND/OR NEURODIVERSITY.

COUNCIL DIRECTS THE STUDENT EXECUTIVE TO PURSUE THESE ISSUES WITH THE RELEVANT UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT TO INVESTIGATE HOW BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES AFFECT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WILL ENCOMPASS INVESTIGATING ALL BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES THAT STUDENTS MAY ENCOUNTER AT ANY POINT IN THEIR STUDIES, FROM A DISABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY PERSPECTIVE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE ABILITIES COLLECTIVE IN THEIR CAPACITY AS REPRESENTATIVES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT UQ WHO ARE MOST DISADVANTAGED BY THESE PROCEDURES

COUNCIL 110/50

STEELE/ROWE

CARRIED

Cargo ship Evergiven

Cr Adams raised that, if a human had struck such a blow as the Ever Given, they would be considered a hero.

It was moved

THAT THE UNION TAKES AS AN OFFICIAL POSITION THAT WE ACKNOWLEDGE AND CELEBRATE THE BRAVE EFFORTS OF COMRADE CARGO SHIP EVER GIVEN BY SELFLESSLY DISRUPTING GLOBAL CAPITALISM BY BLOCKING THE SUEZ CANAL FOR 6 DAYS, STRIKING A MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR BLOW AGAINST TYRANNICAL CAPITALISTS

COUNCIL 110/51

ADAMS/CLUNIES-ROSS

CARRIED

Minutes - Facebook page

Cr McGinity explained that publishing the minutes on the Facebook page would make them more accessible and would help students to engage with Union Council. They should also be published in sufficient time prior to the next meeting.

Cr Walker raised that minutes are usually approved prior to being published. The Union Secretary confirmed that they are happy to publish with the declaration that they are yet to be approved.

It was moved

THAT THE MINUTES OF UNION COUNCIL MEETINGS BE MADE AVAILABLE ON THE UNION FACEBOOK PAGE IN A TIMELY FASHION FOLLOWING EACH MEETING. AND BE POSTED 2 DAYS PRIOR TO THE NEXT UNION MEETING

COUNCIL 110/52

MCGINITY/ADAMS

CARRIED

Land Forces Expo

The following statement was read to Union Council:

From the 1st to the 3rd of June, the “Land Forces” exposition will be taking place at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. The exposition is a gathering of more than 600 of the biggest weapons companies in the world to market and sell their cutting-edge weaponry and military technology to armies in the region. This conference, hosted by the Australian Military and invited to Brisbane by the Queensland State Labor government, is a disgrace. Corporations have profited from decades of suffering inflicted by western wars, particularly with the continued presence of Western armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. They provide a service which will allow the Australian and other governments to wreak havoc and kill many more civilians in the crosshairs.

We believe these resources would be better spent on health, education and welfare; ordinary people should not be left in the dust of an overinflated army. What is needed is community action, including student action, to oppose Land Forces and the ongoing militarisation of Australia and its allies. There is a planned protest against the expo on the 1st of June, which the UQ Student Union should do everything in its power to support.

END

The mover raised that the weapons at the land forces exposition have been used to commit war crimes in Afghanistan, to train the Tatmadaw and to commit other atrocities. The military budget continues to be increased and millions is poured into developing weapons of mass destruction so the government can profit from death and destruction.

Officer Parker raised that the Union should be in opposition to war, which has no benefit to ordinary people and the vast majority of the student body. Weapons companies make millions from the sale of weapons designed to kill men, women and children in other countries. UQ has a history of students opposing war, including the Vietnam War, and council should continue this tradition.

Procedural motion that the motion be put

CARRIED

It was moved

THE UQ STUDENT UNION OPPOSES THE LAND FORCES WEAPONS EXPO

THE UQ STUDENT UNION SUPPORTS THE SHUT DOWN LAND FORCES PROTEST,
TAKING PLACE AT THE BRISBANE CONVENTION CENTRE ON THE 1ST JUNE AT
7.30AM

THE UQ STUDENT UNION WILL ADVERTISE THE SHUT DOWN LAND FORCES PROTEST ON ALL AVAILABLE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS WITH AN ATTACHED POST MAKING AN ARGUMENT FOR STUDENTS TO ATTEND COUNCIL 110/53 REDSHAW/PARKER CARRIED

Language Students

The following statement was read to Union Council:

The University of Queensland administration have proposed the outsourcing of language teaching from the Institute of Continuing and TESOL Education (ICTE) that will see job cuts, increased casualisation, and significantly reduced wages for the same work.

UQ has proposed merging ICTE with UQ College, a subsidiary company of UQ that currently sits outside of UQ's Enterprise Agreement.

The current proposal will see the loss of 13 full-time continuing Language Teacher jobs and two Academic Managers. These cuts follow the loss of 43 jobs from ICTE in 2020.

This is in the context of UQ bragging about achieving a budget surplus in 2020, despite the loss of revenue due to international border closures.

The Australian reported that the University of Queensland recorded a \$109 million operating surplus last year, which was only slightly below the \$128 million surplus recorded in 2019. Nor have international student fees collapsed, as UQ continued to charge Chinese international students almost full fees to study online. Vice-Chancellor, Deborah Terry, said that this year's international student acceptances were only 4 per cent less than 2019, which was the last year not affected by COVID.

As it stands, the management of UQ College may seek to terminate the Enterprise Agreement pay and conditions for UQ staff transferring to UQ College, after 30 June this year. This would mean their conditions and protections under threat.

Existing UQ College staff and any new employees will not receive the same wages and conditions, creating an unfair, two-tiered structure for staff – those who have and those who have-not.

If the management of UQ College does seek to terminate the Enterprise Agreement, this may result in:

- Pay cuts of up to 23% for Language Teachers and on average 20% for professional staff despite the work being the same
- The danger of current and future casual staff losing the job security protections they have in ICTE;

- Cuts to employer superannuation contributions of 7.5% for continuing and fixed-term staff;
- Significant reductions in redundancy entitlements.

Because of the calibre of its teaching and professional staff, ICTE is renowned both in Australia and overseas for the quality of its English language programs. Outsourcing this work to a UQ-subsiidiary, and then employing staff on the minimum terms and conditions, would have a direct impact on students' learning conditions.

This proposal reveals the rank, profit-driven response of university administrations to the pandemic. Despite recording a budget surplus, they will still attempt to slash staff pay and working conditions in order to make the largest amount of profits, squeezing international students' learning conditions, too. UQ should listen to staff and students and revise its disgusting, profit-driven proposal, with consultation from staff affected. Staff are resisting these attacks, and have started a petition to be presented to management on Tuesday the 13th, which has over 1000 signatures currently.

ENDS

The mover stated that the Student Union should stand in solidarity with staff; staff conditions are teaching conditions. The proposal demonstrates a profit-driven response by the university to the pandemic. Furthermore, the money UQ makes should have no impact on staff working conditions. UQ should therefore be condemned for the proposal.

Procedural motion that the motion be put

CARRIED

It was moved

THAT UQU CONDEMNS UQ FOR THEIR PROPOSAL AND STANDS WITH STAFF IN ICTE FACING SIGNIFICANT ATTACKS ON THEIR WORKING CONDITIONS

THAT UQU EXECUTIVE AND COUNCILLORS SIGN AND SHARE THE PETITION ON THE UQU FACEBOOK PAGE, TO LET STUDENTS KNOW ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

COUNCIL 110/54

GUTTERIDGE/HEFFERNAN

CARRIED

h) Question Time

Nil

i) Other business

Nil

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.28 PM.