



SYDNEY UNIVERSITY LAW SOCIETY INC.
ABN 49 844 560 526

Minutes of Executive Meeting held on **4/4/2022**

Chair: Ben Hines

Minute taker: Eden McSheffrey

Meeting opened: **9:10pm**

Present:

Ben Hines	President
Irene Ma	Vice President (Education)
Thrishank Chintamaneni	Vice President (Careers)
Naz Sharifi	Vice President (Social Justice)
Julia Tran	Treasurer
Eden McSheffrey	Secretary
Kelly Ma	Sponsorship Director
Harriet Walker	Competitions Director
Maja Vasic	Competitions Director
Grace Wong	Socials Director
Vivienne Davies	Socials Director
Onor Nottle	Campus Director
Adam Schaffer	Sports Director
Ariana Haghighi	Publications Director
Michelle Chim	International Student Officer
Yijun Cui	Equity Officer
Grace Wallman	Disabilities Officer
Elizabeth Nutting	Women's Officer
Edward Ford	Queer Officer
Nishta Gupta	Ethnocultural Officer
Ben McGrory	First Nations Officer
Julia Lim	Marketing Director

Absent:

Apologies: Justine Hu

Late:

Early Departures:



MINUTES

1 Welcome, Apologies and Conflicts

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and delivered an Acknowledgement of Country. An apology was received from Justine Hu.

Motion: that Justine Hu's apology be accepted.

Moved: Thrishank Chintamaneni

Seconded: Onor Nottle

The motion was carried unanimously with zero abstentions.

No conflicts were declared.

2 Procedural matters

Motion: That the minutes from the Executive Meeting held 28 March 2022 be approved as a correct and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: Ben McGrory

Seconded: Grace Wallman

The motion was carried unanimously with zero abstentions.

3 Last week updates/shoutouts

- Naz shouted out Julia T for treasury work with the social justice portfolio.
- Thrishank shouted out everyone for keeping on top of assessments.
- Michelle shouted out Nishta for organising the trivia night and collating the questions. She also shouted out Elizabeth, Edward, Grace Wa. and Ben M for helping with preparing for the event.

4 What's on this week

- a. **Mon:**
- b. **Tues:** Paint & Sip, Panel Discussion: What Can the Law Do About Climate Change
- c. **Wed:** Interfaculty Sport - Basketball; Ethnocultural Cross-Cohort Mentoring Coffee Catch Up
- d. **Thurs:** Alumni Careers Panel: London; The road from Uluru to a Referendum: The story behind the Uluru Statement
- e. **Fri:**
- f. **Mon:**

5 AGM 2022

Eden discussed the procedure, time and format for the upcoming AGM. The executive decided to hold the AGM online. There was also discussion about the timeline for certain review motions passed in previous general meetings and it was settled that these would occur during the June-July break.



6 Golden Gavel

Ben H noted that we can send two golden gavel contestants in and discussed the procedure for sourcing students.

7 Bylaw Amendments

Ben H proposed the following amendments to the bylaws:

Old Clause	New Clause
<p>9. Any competitor who has participated in the Junior pool of a skills competition is eligible to re-enter the competition in its next season, provided that they enter the Senior pool. Competitors who have competed in the Senior pool are then ineligible to re-enter either of the pools of that competition for subsequent seasons.</p>	<p>9. Any competitor who has participated in the Junior pool of a skills competition is eligible to re-enter the competition in its next season, provided that they enter the Senior pool. Competitors who have competed in the Senior pool are then ineligible to re-enter either of the pools of that competition for subsequent seasons if they progress to the quarter finals.</p>
<p>107. The officers of the autonomous portfolios are: a) The Women’s Officer b) The Queer Officer; c) The Ethnocultural Officer; d) The First Nations Officer; e) The International Students’ Officer</p>	<p>107. The officers of the autonomous portfolios are: a) The Women’s Officer b) The Queer Officer; c) The Ethnocultural Officer; d) The First Nations Officer; e) The International Students’ Officer; f) The Equity Officer; g) The Disabilities Officer</p>
<p>125. Personal information collected upon registration of members or thereafter includes but is not limited to the: a) student identification (SID) number; b) USU access number; c) cohort group; d) university degrees and year of expected completion; e) emails; f) phone numbers; g) mail addresses; h) bank account details; i) gender; j) date of birth; k) interests; l) competition registrations; m) social event registrations.</p>	<p>125. Personal information collected upon registration of members or thereafter includes but is not limited to the: a) student identification (SID) number; b) USU membership number; c) cohort group; d) university degrees and year of expected completion; e) emails; f) phone numbers; g) mail addresses; h) bank account details; i) gender; j) date of birth; k) interests; l) competition registrations; m) social event registrations.</p>



159. In determining what is in the Society’s best interests, consideration should not be made to any personal views or opinions held by members of the Executive, rather consideration should be made collectively by the Executive to what a reasonable and objective member of the Society’s will want and expect from SULLS as an organisation.	159. In determining what is in the Society’s best interests, consideration should not be made to any personal views or opinions held by members of the Executive, rather consideration should be made collectively by the Executive as to what a reasonable and objective member of the Society will want and expect from SULLS as an organisation.
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Maja suggested that the word ‘quarter finals’ in the proposed motion for cl 9 be changed to ‘semi finals’, such that the Bylaw be changed to read:

Old Clause	New Clause
9. Any competitor who has participated in the Junior pool of a skills competition is eligible to re-enter the competition in its next season, provided that they enter the Senior pool. Competitors who have competed in the Senior pool are then ineligible to re-enter either of the pools of that competition for subsequent seasons.	9. Any competitor who has participated in the Junior pool of a skills competition is eligible to re-enter the competition in its next season, provided that they enter the Senior pool. Competitors who have competed in the Senior pool are then ineligible to re-enter either of the pools of that competition for subsequent seasons if they progress to the semi finals.

This change was accepted by the Executive. There was a broader discussion about internal negotiations competition procedures. Maja and Harriet suggested we return to the junior aspect of the clause at a later meeting.

Motion: That the proposed amendments to cls 9, 107, 125 and 159 of the Bylaws be accepted.
Moved: Thrishank Chintamaneni
Seconded: Grace Wallman
The motion was carried unanimously with zero abstentions.

8 Directors’ Duties and Fiduciary Responsibilities

Ben H reminded the executive of their obligations and responsibilities by being directors of an ACNC-registered charity and incorporated association.

9 Ramadan Iftar Dinner

Naz Sharifi discussed the Ramadan Iftar event and asked the executive to tell their friends to register when it opens.

10 Campus Committee Ideas

Onor brought several proposals by her committee to the SULLS executive. She also discussed the interfaculty blood drive challenge and her Paint and Sip event.



11 Merch Matters

Adam noted that the success of recent merch sales and the popularity of the navy crewneck. He also discussed future merch drops with the executive and some potential designs.

12 First Nations Sponsorship AGM Motion

To contextualise the discussion, Ben H explained the existing procedures for sponsorship and the allocation of sponsorship funds. He noted that the current procedure is that SULS takes the sponsorship prospectus to firms and within the events listed, we sell things like naming rights or the right to send a speaker. The prices we charge are not necessarily the price of running the event, and this incorporates the consideration that certain events SULS runs will not get sponsored. That pool of funds accrues from sponsorship and then the treasurer distributes the funds to the portfolios accordingly.

Ben M said that the purpose of his proposed amendment is to remove any issues of miscommunication under Constitution s 57, and that he wanted to introduce a sub-clause which specifies that sponsored items specific to the First Nations portfolio or reconciliation will go to this portfolio only.

Ben M emphasised that transparency was important and that he has been asked by sponsors about his progress on sponsored events. He thought it was damaging to SULS' reputation where the funding has not been allocated. He said that it wasn't possible to cater an event with \$50. He thought it was important that those sponsored funds went directly to his portfolio and that his concern was that firms donate with the intent to meet their reconciliation guidelines and that it wasn't fair that the funds were not transferred in reality. He said the purpose of the proposed amendment was so that there was enough funding, and he noted that some of those events won't be able to be run with the current budget allocated.

Edward asked Ben H and Kelly if it is transparent and clear to the sponsor what they get out of the deal in the prospectus, e.g. name rights for an event or a speaker. Ben H showed the executive the sponsorship prospectus, showing how much it costs, and what rights they get, and that we sell that bundle of rights. He noted the obligation on SULS is that we provide all of those rights to the sponsor and then we have a corresponding obligation to run events which are sponsored. Edward then asked Ben M about the lack of transparency in relation to the events under this system and there was a discussion about the sponsorship procedure for events.

Ben H explained that there is no standard form contract sent to sponsors, and that the costs charged are not closely related to how much it is to run an event. He noted it is rather sold as a bulk package after discussions where we undertake the obligation to ensure any sponsored event will go ahead and that it is appropriately funded.

Irene said she has three issues with the proposed amendment. She wanted to point out as a preliminary point that the approach to funding events is flexible, and suggested that Ben M could have asked for more funding first from Julia T or bring it to the executive and have a discussion here about whether to allocate additional funding to any new events.



Irene noted the first was that our sponsorship agreements are not a donation but rather they are purchasing rights to name events, buy media posts, or send representatives, and not to directly allocate funding. She thought that the danger here is that sponsors in effect would become involved with the daily operation of SULS, and would be able to dictate how much spending is given to a particular portfolio. She said it is a basic point of governance that we cannot allow external individuals or non-members to run our society, and that Sydney Law School students should always have control over how we run the society. She said that while they might have a good vision on certain issues, they still do not have an understanding of our student demographics or strategic plan.

Returning to her second point, she queried why this motion only applied to the First Nations portfolio given that we have eight autonomous portfolios and fifteen other directors. She said that we all have different portfolios to represent and that everyone wants more funding to go to their events but its important to understand that we represent SULS as a whole. On this point, she wanted to note the intersectional nature of all the portfolios, e.g. that queer students may have a disability or first nations students may be queer, and that non-autonomous portfolios like careers and education also help these students.

Irene's third point was that she doesn't feel comfortable passing this amendment due to transparency. She noted that if this passes it would not be shown how the funding is spent nor would it allow the executive to scrutinise. She noted that Ben M is raising an important amendment and that it brings up important questions about how we should proceed in the future about funding, suggesting for example that we should pass a motion to approve the budget at the beginning of the year together.

Naz wanted to preface her comments by saying that as a non-indigenous person, she cant speak to the situation they feel in the law school and she respects Ben M's position. She had a query about not being able to hold events because they were not conducive to the budget. She recalled that when she was in a similar position, it was solved by having a conversation with the treasurer. She asked whether funding for this event was discussed with Julia T before.

There was a discussion about the order of events leading to the proposal of the motion as well as the correspondence between Ben M and Julia T in relation to both existing and new events. Ben M thought from his discussion with Julia T that the budget was fixed subject to securing faculty funding and said that he did reach out to Julia T about these issues. Julia T responded that the only discussion that occurred was the initial budget chat and that she was not reached out to about discussing further event funding. She noted that she made a comment in the draft budget document in their first meeting about having another call to review the First Nations Portfolio budget, which did not occur. She felt that contacting her directly would have been the best option and that the budget was a draft and could be amended.

Ben M had a further question about viewing the amount of funding each autonomous portfolio receives. Ben H said he could show Ben M the draft budgets and that there is always room to manoeuvre in expanding budgets.



Grace Wa. said that there are similarities between her and Irene's position, and that she had three main points. She said first, that it has been thrown around that funding has been the primary reason why there have not been a greater breadth of First Nations events previously – she noted that there have been a lot of different conditions about the availability of our First Nations officers not contingent solely on a lack of funding. Secondly, she said that what is most likely to eventuate from this amendment is that some autonomous portfolios would be funded significantly less than others and, while noting the discussion is broader than her own portfolio, that the Disability Portfolio did not get any private funding at all this year. She noted that we have agreed to an intersectional approach, and that it wasn't possible to numerically rank the different portfolios and that there is a strong complexity to this issue which cannot be resolved by the motion.

Grace Wa. also said that there was an issue with being beholden to the PR and marketing decisions of our sponsor firms, and that recruiting priorities and interests may be disparate across the firms and that allowing these companies to decide how we distribute our funds is not appropriate. She also queried why this motion was specifically for the First Nations portfolio and not others, and that it might create inconsistency in this respect.

Ben H said that there are two distinct issues, the first being about the funding arrangements we have with the First Nations portfolio and other portfolios, and the second being about how sponsorship agreements are made. He said on the first, that he agrees with some of the things Ben M has raised and that it's important for us to appropriately fund initiatives and that \$50 for an event is not enough, but going forward that discussion here should happen. He said there's a question of how we do this process moving forwards, and that this could look like not necessarily mandating funding but rather having a clear discussion between portfolios. He said the budget at the outset is a draft and that it can be changed, and that rather than jumping to a constitutional amendment we need to become clearer about the existing channels which can resolve this issue. He noted, as Grace Wa. mentioned, that not everything gets sponsored and deciding the allocation of those funds on the agreements we have with firms presents a few issues. Namely, the funding is not necessarily directly related to the cost of the events, and allocating funds automatically means you will have unused funds or will disadvantage portfolios like Disabilities which doesn't currently have sponsorship. He said this is not to say that one portfolio is more important than another but that rather that it's important SULS retains the ability to make decisions about the funding between portfolios. He noted the reason we charge prices in the way we do is to ensure that we can supplement the budget of portfolios who don't get sponsored events. He said Ben M is correct to outline that firms are aware of how this works and this brings up the two issues and the distinction between the funding arrangements and the sponsorship agreements. He said going forward, he thinks Ben M's initiatives do need further funding and that can be resolved with discussion with our treasurer, and that instead of mandating that all of the sponsorship money goes to any given portfolio that greater transparency could be afforded by giving the executive the opportunity to approve a provisional budget at the beginning of the year. Ben H said he thinks this perception of a fixed budget is the cause of the miscommunication here and that transparency in this way would solve those issues. He noted that he has introduced a motion to that effect for the next AGM. He said the flexibility to allocate funding can be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and that we need to understand as a team the mechanisms in place to solve funding issues without necessarily going to the constitution.



Ben M said that he would still like to go ahead with the motion and will include it in the motions for the AGM. He said that he understands the points raised in discussion but that it comes down to the fact that indigenous students are very isolated and that from his previous conversations with law students, they feel too scared to come out in such a colonial space and don't see themselves represented in SULS. He noted that he thinks his motion goes back to having these events run. He said if you go to other law societies they support those events more and they are more welcoming to indigenous students, noting that he thinks SULS is a very colonial space. He said his motion is about making firms have confidence in first nations events being funded.

Ben M noted that there are still ways of working through this together and that we need to reflect on our actions and remember the land was never ceded, we live on stolen land, and that this is still a colonial space.

Ben H said it was important to remember that we all don't have the same experiences and that Ben M shared a very valid perspective with all of us.

13 Other Business

None raised.

Meeting closed: **11:09pm**