



UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY UNION

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## UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY UNION SECRETARIAT

The attached minutes have been accepted by The Debates Committee by resolution as a true and accurate record of the events of the meeting held on 5 June 2008.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Bateman', written over a horizontal line.

Chair – Patrick Bateman

31.7.08.

Date



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEBATES COMMITTEE  
HELD AT 5:00 P.M. ON THURSDAY 5 JUNE 2008  
IN THE LOGGIA, MANNING HOUSE**

**PRESENT**

**MEMBERS:**

Alice Dixon, Chair  
Vyvyan Nickels, Deputy Chair  
Daniel Wodak, Director of Debates  
Katherine Connolly  
Ellen Ferrington Michaelis  
Andrew Garrett  
Sam Greenland  
Misa Han  
Giselle Kenny  
Tim Mooney  
Stephanie Paton  
Sophie Stone  
Patrick Wall

**VISITORS:**

Julia Fetherston  
Bronwyn Cowell

**UNION STAFF:**

Louise Anthony, Director Student Programmes (Acting)  
Khym Scott, Committee Secretary  
Zinah Tam, Committee Secretary

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The Chair declared the meeting open at 5:09pm.

**1. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Ms. Rose Khalilizadeh, Ms. Roslyn Stein, Mr. Alistair Cowie, requests for late arrival were received from Ms. Vyvyan Nickels, Ms. Naomi Hart and Mr. Kishan Jasani, and requests for early departure were received from Ms. Vyvyan Nickels, Ms. Melissa Brooks, Mr Sam Greenland, Ms. Giselle Kenny and Ms. Sophie Stone.

**DC 088/08 RESOLVED** to accept apologies from Ms. Rose Khalilizadeh, Ms. Roslyn Stein and Mr. Alistair Cowie, to grant late arrival to Ms. Vyvyan Nickels, Ms.

Naomi Hart and Mr. Kishan Jasani, and to grant early departure to Ms. Vyvyan Nickels, Ms. Melissa Brooks, Mr Sam Greenland, Ms. Giselle Kenny and Ms. Sophie Stone.

*Daniel Wodak / Andrew Garrett*

## 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Minutes of the meetings held 8 May 2008 and 22 May 2008 were considered.

[Ms. Katherine Connolly arrived at the meeting at 5:11pm.]

**DC 089/08** **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the previous meetings held 8 May 2008 and 22 May 2008 *en bloc* as true and accurate records of proceedings.

*Stephanie Paton / Katherine Connolly*

## 3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Mr. Sam Greenland requested that he receive copies of the minutes of the previous meetings prior to the Committee meeting. Ms. Stephanie Paton advised him that the Members of the Committee already did, but suggested that he may not have been on the list of recipients. Mr. Greenland also noted that he has attended three meetings of the Committee this year.

## 4. GENERAL BUSINESS

**DC 090/08** **RESOLVED** to endorse Ms. Melissa Brooks and Mr. Sam Greenland as Additional Members of the Debates Committee.

*Sophie Stone / Giselle Kenny*

**DC 091/08** **RESOLVED** to endorse Ms. Julia Fetherston as an Additional Member of the Debates Committee *in principle*, pending confirmation of meeting attendance.

*Ellen Ferrington Michaelis / Patrick Wall*

### 4.1 **Reports**

#### 4.1.1 Director of Debates

The Director of Debates spoke to his report [attached].

The Director of Debates reported that he had circulated a Debates Survey, and tabled the results. He stated that he had received thirty responses in total which he believed was reasonable, with most responses positive. He noted that it was good to provide an opportunity for feedback, and to make improvements to the programme with new focus and submitted ideas. One idea mentioned by the Director of Debates was a prize for 'Best First Year', and he said that all other

suggestions would be formulated into recommendations in Semester Two. He added that the overall feedback was positive and that the Seminars were good, however noted a lack in adjudicators and Regionals and a lack of communication between the Committee and the wider Debates community.

The Director of Debates put to the Committee that points should be accessible, but noted the problem in having too many people to monitor. He suggested an Excel spreadsheet on Mr. Kishan Jasani's website, or a simplified point system. He asked the Committee to consider changing the system to remove points for Regionals and increase all others, stating that it would also remove the difficulty surrounding Pro-Am debating, and in the belief that it would make the system easier to understand. He stated that there was not much value in Regionals debating to the Debates community as opposed to other criteria in the points system. He suggested keeping the points necessary to obtain at 100, and increasing criteria worth 20 to 25, and worth 40 to 50.

Mr. Tim Mooney declared that debating at Regionals was an important part of the community and those who don't take away the opportunity for other to debate against them. He reminded the Committee that the criterion of points for debating at Regionals was created when it was noticed that older debates were not attending Regionals, and that the value of Schools Days were reduced to match. He added that he did not believe it was hard to understand the rules and caps of points for debating at Regionals.

Ms. Paton agreed with Mr. Mooney, stating that some people needing points could be described as 'novice debaters' who do not need points if they have debated at Australs or Worlds, but do if they are adjudicating at Australs.

Mr. Andrew Garrett agreed, adding that scholarships are given because of involvement in the programme, and that it would be odd to remove the act of debating from the list of criteria on which the scholarship is determined.

Ms. Katherine Connolly believed that there was not a reason to provide incentive, believing that people would come to Regionals even if they were not getting points. Mr. Greenland agreed, noting that some attendees do come to train, however suggested providing incentive to train in regards to Pro-Am. He added that it would look bad if thirty to forty people attend Regionals each week, and then another fifteen turn up at trials and be selected.

The Director of Debates reminded the Committee that they have tried to provide less incentive for people to attend and only debate with pros, saying that if the Committee has paid for people to go overseas that they should at some point give back those skills. He commented that some can swing the points system by doing nothing one Semester except for themselves and receive money.

Mr. Mooney agreed with Mr. Greenland about extra people attending trials and not Regionals, adding that it has happened in the past, and it would be wrong to assume just because the system was working well now that it would

continue to do so in the future. He also expressed disagreement with the assertion that people debating at Regionals are not doing something for others.

Mr. Patrick Wall suggested a compromise to reduce the number of points available for Regionals, but stipulate that of the necessary total of 100 points a certain number of those points be from participating in Regionals. The Director of Debates believed this would make the system more complex.

Ms. Julia Fetherston put forward that the point system was easy and that it was appropriate that people should participate.

**[Ms. Vyvyan Nickels arrived at the meeting at 5:30pm.]**

Mr. Greenland ruled that the debate was not about the point system, but how the Committee prioritises different events in the community. He suggested making some criteria of the points system compulsory, and publishing lists of both the compulsory and non-compulsory to the community to be reflected in the points system.

**[Ms. Bronwyn Cowell arrived at the meeting at 5:31pm.]**

The Director of Debates said that another alternative was to make the system clearer with the development of the website and its launch in Semester Two. He suggested writing an explanation of the Committee processes, as he had found that many people disagree with affirmative action and believe that there would be merit in explaining affirmative action and the points system. He also added that there would be merit in keeping a wiki site, but believed it would be less possible. The Director of Debates added that the people who were short on points were often the people who had not asked how many points they were on. He stated that making points available on a website would not help those people if they did not check that website.

The Chair asked whether he had clarified his suggestions with the Director Student Programmes and the Website Administrator. The Director of Debates noted that he had been given a strict deadline but was advised to dismiss it. The Chair expressed concern that the deadline had passed without action being taken.

The Director of Debates asked that the exemptions process be discussed in light of recent events, stating that the Regulations should be clarified in terms of exemptions to the points system, and that he had spoken to Mr. Tom Kaldor about the process of those getting exemptions. Ms. Fetherston asked for clarification on the topic. The Director of Debates clarified that Mr. Kaldor had been refused an exemption from the points system, but this discussion was not about his individual application, but rather about clarifying the guidelines and processes for future exemptions applications.

The Director of Debates suggested a clarification of the role of the Director of Debates in the process, stating it was difficult to be as distant from the issue as

possible, while still providing information and clarifications to the applicant. He put to the Committee that the Director of Debates should be given the application in advance to generate a recommendation to be given to the appeals panel, and stay out of all informal and formal discussion other than what is in the recommendation. He added that in the process of applying there should be an interview, stating that it was at present problematic that the issues in the application did not have an opportunity to be discussed earlier. He also added that the grounds for exemption were quite vague in criteria and timeframe, asking that the Committee consider whether past successes and achievements in debating, points versus contributions to the Debates programme, or being a selector were reasons for exemption. He clarified that an exhaustive list would not be made, but a clearer list with the level of items available.

Mr. Mooney expressed concern about providing automatic grounds of exemption.

**[Mr. Andrew Garrett departed from the meeting at 5:38pm.]**

The Director of Debates suggested providing an indicative list of what is available, and defining what a contribution to the Debates community is. He also remarked that past achievements should be equitable.

Ms. Paton agreed that a clarification should be provided on the role of the Director of Debates in the exemptions process, but remarked that the panel may find it difficult to override the Director of Debates' recommendation on an application. She expressed concern that it may multiply the anger of rejected applicants if friends were involved.

Ms. Fetherston asked whether the panel needs more information, and suggested having the Director of Debates sit in the interview or panel to field questions, but not to vote.

The Director of Debates said that the need for the Director's presence would be radically reduced when the guidelines for consideration were clearer. He concurred with the suggestion of Ms. Fetherston.

Ms. Kenny pointed out that an issue of including clarifications in the guidelines is confirming that the Committee wishes the panel to use their discretion, claiming that it would be narrower with the Director of Debates on the panel. She observed that scope was important, but that the guidelines should only have ideas.

The Director of Debates asked whether achievements in the prior calendar year or previous year should be considered, reminding the Committee that consensus in the past has been the past year.

Ms. Ellen Ferrington-Michaelis suggested considering points from the same calendar year.

**[Ms. Giselle Kenny departed from the meeting at 5:43pm.]**

Ms. Connolly put to the Committee that the point of the point system was not to deny funding, but to spread activity across the programme and encourage debaters' involvement.

The Director of Debates advised that he would draw up a set of guidelines before the next meeting of the Committee. He also advised that Mr. Kaldor may like to submit his thoughts in the drafting of the guidelines.

The Director of Debates asked the Committee whether the guidelines for the exemptions panel should include the consideration of past successes.

Ms. Fetherston said that it should be a reasonable consideration, but used with discretion. Ms. Ferrington-Michaelis added that those exempt should surely be selected on their merit, and past successes would be an indication of this.

Mr. Greenland expressed a need to make it explicit that the USU trades off past successes, and that past successes will be in the minds of those on the panel. Ms. Connolly put that there should be not less a right of exemption regardless of past successes.

The Director of Debates clarified that the main point of exemption was only meant to be about contributions, and stated that he did not want a consideration of exemption on merit, reminding the Committee that it was why the process was different from selections.

The Director of Debates further reported on retention, informing the Committee that it was good but with scope for improvement. He suggested a novice-only tournament in Semester Two.

Ms. Paton advised that this be before the pro-am tournament. The Director of Debates clarified that he intended it to be very early in Semester, as it would be good to immerse novices in BP-style debating early.

Mr. Greenland agreed that this was a great idea, and suggested a need to match the tournament with similarly styled workshops.

**[Mr. Andrew Garrett returned to the meeting at 5:48pm.]**

Ms. Paton asked whether the Committee should take the novice tournament off UTS, and hold it over two days. She reminded the Committee that in 2007 UTS held their tournament with eight teams of two BP rooms, and stated that it could be done better, suggesting that rather than holding two competing tournaments that Sydney hold the only one.

The Director of Debates advised that the current plan for the first two Seminars held in Semester Two is to have Ms. Julia Bowes and Ms. Anna

Garsia hold Seminars on BP in debates in Weeks 2 and 3. He added that he believed UTS should not see a Sydney novice BP tournament as a threat to their BP novice tournament, as the two could be complement rather than compete with each other.

Ms. Connolly warned against stealing a day from UTS, as policies on novices at UTS are less strict.

The Director of Debates further clarified that the UTS tournament was just before the pro-am tournament, and that the Sydney tournament would be potentially the weekend of Week 3.

The Director of Debates also reported on the VERGE Debate, advising that he will set a date and email people for suggestions of whom to ask to debate. He advised that the USU has six Bill Henson artworks, suggesting a debate on censorship in the arts.

The Director of Debates further informed the Committee that the sponsorship package was being developed, and that he required the submission of reports.

**DC 092/08** **RESOLVED** to accept the Report of the Director of Debates.

*Andrew Garrett / Patrick Wall*

4.1.2 Honorary Treasurer for Debates

**DC 093/08** **RESOLVED** to de-appoint Mr. Patrick Wall and appoint Mr. Sam Greenland as the Honorary Treasurer for Debates.

*Stephanie Paton / Ellen Ferrington Michaelis*

Mr. Greenland indicated that he would like to hear more about the sponsorship package. He added that he has had no handover noted from the previous Honorary Treasurer for Debates, and had nothing to report.

4.1.3 Intervarsity Director

Mr. Wall reported that Ms. Kenny was dealing with the Philippines. He informed the Committee that the President of AIDA had spoken to him in regards to the proposal of POIs at Australs and that he had been advised there was quite a backlash to the proposal due to it being brought up only two years after its last proposal. He warned that there may be antagonism at Australs, and asked the Committee whether they would like to reconsider.

Ms. Connolly argued that the proposal does not disadvantage anyone. Mr. Mooney agreed that it would not disadvantage Asian universities.

Mr. Wall clarified that the President of AIDA didn't mind the proposal, but had recognised a backlash.



Ms. Paton reminded the Committee that they knew it would be hard to move the proposal through AIDA, and that Mr. Wall and Ms. Kenny will stretch out the AIDA meeting only to be shut down.

The Chair approved that it would be fine if Mr. Wall wished to do so, and appreciated him asking the Committee, suggesting that the Committee give the autonomy for the decision to Mr. Wall.

Mr. Greenland said that there was no reason to reconsider the proposal. The Director of Debates added that it was the same for the team cap proposal.

**[Ms. Zinah Tam departed from the meeting at 5:58pm.]**

Ms. Paton noted that she believed there would be even less success with the team cap proposal, as people have been asking how Sydney has six teams but some Asian universities have none.

Mr. Greenland remarked that it was a ridiculous fact that only three teams can break, and suggested that rather than proposing an increase of number of teams that the proposal concerns the number of teams which can break.

The Director of Debates provided that they have not provided enough notice to change the proposal but that it would be useful to raise. Ms. Paton noted that there was still twenty-eight days and that a proposal may be raised.

**[Ms. Julia Fetherston departed from the meeting at 6:00pm.]**

**DC 094/08**     **RECOMMENDED** to allow Mr. Patrick Wall to raise the issue of POIs and team caps at Australs.

*Tim Mooney / Sam Greenland*  
*[Stephanie Paton voted against]*

**DC 095/08**     **RESOLVED** to accept the Report of the Intervarsity Director.

*Misa Han / Andrew Garrett*

**DC 096/08**     **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders and move to **Item 2 - Minutes of Previous Meetings**.

*Stephanie Paton / Patrick Wall*

**2.            MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Mr. Greenland asked that the minutes of the meeting held 8 May 2008 on Page 13 be amended from 'Ms. Brooks stated that there had always been two men on top' to 'Ms. Brooks stated that there had always been two men *ranking higher*'; and 'Mr. Paul Karp said that the system of a black quota was a good

thing' to 'Mr. Paul Karp said that the system of a *block* quota was a good thing'.

**DC 097/08** **RESOLVED** to amend the minutes of the previous meeting held 8 May 2008 due to clerical errors.

*Sam Greenland / Tim Mooney*

**[Mr. Sam Greenland departed from the meeting at 6:02pm.]**

**DC 098/08** **RESOLVED** to resume Standing Orders and return to **Item 4.1.4 - Women's Directors**.

*Andrew Garrett / Katherine Connolly*

4.1.4 Women's Directors

**[Ms. Misa Han departed from the meeting at 6:03pm.]**

Ms. Paton reported that the Women's Tournament was a success, despite three people dropping out on the morning of the Tournament. She recommended having reserves in the future. She informed the Committee that this meant having three adjudicators swing, and collecting three further adjudicators from college.

Ms. Paton reported that the winning team was Ms. Kathleen Heath, Ms. Julia Baine, Ms. Steph D'Souza, and the best speaker was Ms. Emily Heath.

**DC 099/08** **RESOLVED** to congratulate Ms. Kathleen Heath, Ms. Julia Baine, Ms. Steph D'Souza and Ms. Emily Heath.

*Acclamation*

The Director of Debates asked what the cost of the Tournament was. Ms. Paton advised that they were unable to afford to pay for room hire. The Director of Debates advised that it was a charge from the University and that it was only for attendants' fees. Ms. Paton added that it meant they were only \$14 in debt due to those who pulled out, and suggested asking the USU to cover the debt. The Director of Debates suggested in future considering the Women's Tournament in the same way as other major tournaments and charging those who pull out. Mr. Mooney thought that it may be difficult to do in retrospect. Ms. Paton advised that she would pass the details of those who pulled out to the Director of Debates to invoice.

Ms. Paton further reported that the Australs contingent was fifty percent female, and that the sexual harassment officers appointed were Ms. Kenny, Ms. Connolly, Mr. Mooney and Mr. Paul Karp.

**DC 100/08 RESOLVED** to accept the Report of the Women's Directors.

*Andrew Garrett / Tim Mooney*

4.1.5 Communications Director

Mr. Garrett had nothing to report.

4.1.6 Union Competitions Directors

Ms. Connolly reported that the Sydney Open was successful, however noted that they did not have any adjudicators due to many either wanting to debate, or having enough points already. She informed the Committee that Ms. Garsia and Mr. Ivan Ah Sam organised all teams, and that it was an overall success. She remarked that a problem arose on the first day as to whether teams could break in the first round but that it had been resolved.

Ms. Connolly reported that the winning team was Mr. Jack Wright, Mr. Steve Hind, Mr. Toby Mar and Mr. Joe Paton, and the best speaker was Ms. Julia Bowes. She also added that the team was owed money.

The Director of Debates claimed that the team should not be eligible for scholarships until they have paid their outstanding debts to the USU. Ms. Connolly asked what could be done about room hire money, and suggested a formalisation of financial transactions. The Director of Debates recommended that Mr. Greenland handle this.

**DC 101/08 RESOLVED** to accept the Report of the Union Competitions Directors.

*Tim Mooney / Daniel Wodak*

4.1.7 Schools' Programmes Directors

Ms. Ferrington-Michaelis reported that seventeen teams had registered for the next Schools Day, and that fourteen had paid. She added that she was expecting another fifteen to twenty teams, and that she had some still to call. She advised that most schools were sending multiple teams, and that \$3000 should be made overall.

Ms. Ferrington-Michaelis informed the Committee that Mr. Steve Hind was the contact point for adjudicators, and that it would be advertised through an email sent through the Debaterbase. She noted that it was being pushed to first years, and that at this stage she was focusing on team registration and paperwork for adjudicators.

The Chair advised that there was still a large amount of paperwork from the last Schools Day.

The Director of Debates asked all Members of the Committee to contact their old schools and one with which they have relationships.

**DC 102/08** **RESOLVED** to accept the Report of the Schools' Programmes Directors.

*Stephanie Paton / Daniel Wodak*

#### 4.1.8 Social Directors

Mr. Garrett reported that the Committee needs to decide whether to repeat the post-Easterns event with a post-Austral event, and devise something by which to retain people.

The Chair indicated that she was very keen for a post-Austral event, but that it was difficult receiving funding for such an event and that retention was not as great with Australs. Mr. Wall clarified that the event would be for the entire society, rather than solely those involved with Australs.

The Director of Debates suggested holding the event in Week 2, but not on a Wednesday. He suggested that trivia was an option, but that it could be anti-social. Mr. Garrett suggested ice-skating. The Chair suggested crab racing.

The Director of Debates advised that the simplest event to do would be something close to University and cheap, such as an event at Manning or Hermann's Bars. He suggested that the Committee consider event which could be held viably at Manning.

Mr. Garrett was not convinced that an event was required if held at Manning, and that a raise of the bar tab would be sufficient. Mr. Mooney suggested watching debating movies. Ms. Bronwyn Cowell noted that trivia was always good at first year law camp. Ms. Connolly advised that trivia may have been dismissed in the past but that the group of first years in 2008 was different.

Mr. Garrett reminded the Committee that one of the lessons learned from the post-Easterns event was that people attended to drink more than to participate in any activity. The Director of Debates added that they were still catering for a relatively small community, and that it would be possible for semi-personal trivia to foster a sense of community. He asked that this be organised over the holidays.

**DC 103/08** **RESOLVED** to accept the Report of the Social Directors.

*Patrick Wall / Tim Mooney*

#### 4.1.9 Development Officer

Mr. Mooney reported that the Seminars programme went very well, with the exception of one. He informed the Committee that Jack's Seminar on finance

had been enjoyed, and suggested a need for the Seminars to get into more complex areas.

The Director of Debates suggested asking non-debaters, such as university academics, to hold Seminars. Mr. Mooney agreed that it would be good when moving into more complex areas. The Director of Debates added that it would also be good for advertising.

**DC 104/08 RESOLVED** to accept the Report of the Development Officer.

*Andrew Garrett / Katherine Connolly*

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair asked the Committee whether they had heard of a company called 'Speaking Squared'. She advised that she had received a call from the CEO informing her of the company with a PO Box address in Wentworth Building, which provided a similar Schools Day based at Newington but charged a higher rate. She declared that it was a cannibalisation of the USU's Schools Day. Ms. Connolly remarked that if those people are not involved in the Debates programme that they have no experience.

**[Ms. Bronwyn Cowell departed from the meeting at 6:20pm.]**

Mr. Garrett advised that he had a teacher from a school approach him with a concern that they felt they had to choose between hiring good coaches at a high cost or bad coaches. He suggested providing a certification service, where those who debate at schools are able to come to the USU for one day of training. He added that money could be made from such a provision. Ms. Paton agreed with Mr. Garrett's idea, but expressed concern that they can't make good coaches. Ms. Connolly suggested a trial. The Director of Debates said that if a teacher were smart they would know how much to pay a coach. Mr. Garrett remarked that the problem was that some debaters would be keen but with no ability to up-skill. The Director of Debates added that he did not think they could make much money or produce good enough coaches in one day. The Chair recommended encouraging those debaters to come instead to the Schools Days.

The Director of Debates reported that during Australs selections some areas of Manning House were opened without permission, and were used unsupervised and left untidy. He advised that a formal apology may be asked for. He informed the Committee that they need to be more careful using hired venues. Mr. Garrett justified that he prepared in one of the areas, but was directed to do so by a person running the trials. The Director of Debates explained that it was an issue with the outlets. The Chair reminded the Committee of the support it receives from the USU.

The Chair stated that it was her last meeting as Chair of the Debates Committee, and thanked the Members of the Committee.

**DC 105/08 RESOLVED** to thank Ms. Alice Dixon for her work as Chair of the Debates Committee.

*Acclamation*

**[Ms. Louise Anthony departed from the meeting at 6:28pm.]**

The Chair reminded the Committee to submit a brief description of their portfolio for the website.

**6. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 5:00pm on Thursday 31 July in The Loggia, Manning House.

**7. CLOSE OF MEETING**

With no other business to be attended to the Chair declared the meeting closed at 6:31pm.