



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 18 September 2008.

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

Chair – Patrick Bateman

16.10.08.

Date



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEBATES COMMITTEE
HELD AT 5:00 P.M. ON THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2008
IN THE READING ROOM, HOLME BUILDING**

PRESENT

- MEMBERS:** Alice Dixon, Vice President (*ex officio*)
Patrick Bateman, Chair
Douglas Thompson, Deputy Chair
Daniel Wodak, Director of Debates
Naomi Hart, Immediate Past Director of Debates
Ellen Ferrington Michaelis
Andrew Garrett
Sam Greenland
Misa Han
James Johnston
Tim Mooney
Stephanie Paton
Patrick Wall
- VISITORS:** Courtney Tight, Director
Stephanie D'Souza
Tom Lee
- UNION STAFF:** Alistair Cowie, Director Student Programmes
Zinah Tam, Committee Secretary

The Chair declared the meeting open at 5:07pm.

1. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

DC 142/08 RESOLVED to accept apologies from Mr. Ruchir Punjabi, Ms. Katherine Connolly, and Ms. Giselle Kenny; as well as a request for late arrival from Mr. Sam Greenland; and requests for early departure from Ms. Alice Dixon, Mr. Douglas Thompson and Ms. Courtney Tight.

Tim Mooney / Patrick Wall

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Minutes of the meeting held 21 August 2008 were considered.

DC 143/08 RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the previous meeting held 21 August 2008 as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

Tim Mooney / Patrick Wall

3. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

[Stephanie Paton and Tom Lee arrived at 5:11pm]

4. **GENERAL BUSINESS**

4.1 **Definition of a Novice**

The Director of Debates reported that the matter was discussed at the previous meeting; that the definition of a novice be amended to include those who have broken at Astrals.

[Douglas Thompson departed at 5:12pm]

Ms. Stephanie Paton asked why the amendment does not involve the addition of those who have completed but not broken at Astrals.

The Director of Debates replied that those who have completed are more likely to be qualified.

DC 144/08 RESOLVED to accept the recommendation of the Report of the Union Competitions Directors tabled from the previous meeting.

Recommendation 1: That for the purposes of the pro-am tournament, the definition of a novice or amateur should be (a) any debater in their first year of studies at the University of Sydney, or (b) any debater who has not debated at Worlds or in the Octo-Finals (or beyond) at Astrals.

Tim Mooney / Patrick Wall

Stephanie Paton dissented

4.2 **Criteria**

4.2.1 Selection of the “Debater of the Year”

4.2.2 Selection of “The Debater’s Port”

The Director of Debates expressed his opinion that it is unnecessary for lengthy discussions on the criteria for “Debater of the Year” and “The Debater’s Port” to occur. He communicated his belief that the criteria should be kept discretionary as each year the “Debater of the Year” is awarded for different, but exemplary efforts and achievements, and thus, is not, and should not, be standard.

[Douglas Thompson returned at 5:15pm]

Mr. Tim Mooney requested that the people involved in selecting the “Debater of the Year” be formalised.

The Director of Debates replied that at the moment, the Chair and Director of Debates select the “Debater of the Year”.

Mr. Patrick Wall asked whether nominations for “Debater of the Year” would be appropriate.

The Director of Debates replied that unrewarded nominees may be resentful.

4.2.3 Exemptions from the Points System

The Director of Debates expressed his opinion that the Debates Regulations are vague on the matter.

[Sam Greenland arrived at 5:18pm]

[Naomi Hart arrived at 5:19pm]

DC 145/08 RESOLVED to accept in principle, the following clarifications in regards to exemptions from the points system:

Clarification 1: That "present a case" refers to a formal written application;

Clarification 2: That the application is to be presented to and decided upon by the Member Services Manager, President and Vice President; and so long as it is practically possible, the applicant shall be interviewed by the Member Services Manager, President, Vice President, and Director of Debates;

Clarification 3: That the criteria upon which applications will be assessed is (a) reasonable grounds for why the applicant could not gain sufficient points within the calendar year, and (b) the applicant's contribution to the debates community, particularly those contributions which are not recognised in the points system, and not exclusively those contributions which were made within the past calendar year; and

Clarification 4: That the applicant's past debating success is not a factor that will be considered in these cases.

Tim Mooney / Patrick Wall

DC 146/08 RESOLVED to accept apologies from Mr. Kishan Jasani, Ms. Sophie Stone and Ms. Melissa Brooks.

4.3 Public Speaking Program

The Chair informed the Committee that there appeared to be great interest in a public speaking programme because it helps students to strengthen communication skills outside of a debating environment. There will be a portfolio specifically for the public speaking programme, and the Chair encouraged interested Members to speak to either the Immediate Past Director of Debates or himself on the matter.

The Director of Student Programmes advised that a date be specified for such changes to Debating Regulations to ensure that the public speaking programme is implemented next year and before the Kirby Cup.

The Director of Debates expressed his concerns that the public speaking programme will be seen as separate from Debates.

The Chair replied that the Portfolio will involve setting up the complete public speaking programme as well as involvement in the Kirby Cup. The public speaking programme will consist of regular meetings where students take turns giving speeches and comments are made on those speeches. Ideally, an inter-university, public speaking competition will also be established.

4.4 Reports

4.1.1 Director of Debates

The Director of Debates reported that the Verge Debate was successful, and wished to thank Mr. Michael Falk, Mr. Steve Hind, Ms. Giselle Kenny, Mr. Tim Mooney, Ms. Stephanie Paton, and Mr. Craig Reucassel. However, he expressed his opinion that Bingo at Manning was a distraction, and, whilst the Verge Debate was a good start to increasing awareness, the Committee needs to find ways to promote Debating events.

The Director of Debates continued that the Debates submission to the Union Recorder is almost finalised, and wished to thank Mr. Michael Falk, Mr. Patrick Wall, and Mr. Patrick Bateman.

[James Johnston arrived at 5:25pm]

DC 147/08 RESOLVED to accept the report of the Report of the Director of Debates

Alice Dixon / Stephanie Paton

DC 148/08 RESOLVED to formally thank all those involved in the Union Recorder and the Verge Debate.

Acclamation

4.4.2 Honorary Treasurer for Debates

The Honorary Treasurer for Debates had nothing to report.

4.4.3 Intervarsity Director

The Intervarsity Director reported that Ms. Julia Bowes has been selected as the chief adjudicator for Sydney Mini. Rooms for this event have not been finalised, as the Intervarsity Directors are investigating whether payment is required to book all rooms.

The Intervarsity Director continued that for World's, 20 adjudicators and three teams have been selected. However, this is pending further information on funding and scholarships.

The Director of Debates asked whether Mr. Ivan Ah Sam will adjudicate.

The consensus was that he will not.

The Director of Debates commented that Mr. Ah Sam was willing to adjudicate.

Ms. Ellen Ferrington Michaelis remarked that 13 people are registered to trial, which is a lower number than she expected.

DC 149/08 **RESOLVED** to formally thank Ms. Ellen Ferrington Michaelis for finding three excellent selectors for Worlds trials.

Acclamation

DC 150/08 **RESOLVED** to accept the Report of the Intervarsity Director.

Tim Mooney / Ellen Ferrington Michaelis

The Director of Student Programmes suggested that students be allowed to watch trials as it may be a good learning experience.

The Director of Debates replied that the consent of all students that trial need to be obtained.

4.4.4 Women's Directors

The Women's Director reported that 12 teams were sent to Women's Intervarsity. Many adjudicators were needed, and the Women's Director thanked the University of Technology, Sydney and Macquarie University for solving their adjudicator problems. The Sydney University team consisted of Ms. Alice Dixon, Ms. Naomi Hart, and Ms. Julia Bowes.

The Immediate Past Director of Debates asked whether an email of the teams have been sent.

The Director of Debates replied that it will be sent that night as he was waiting for the list.

DC 151/08 RESOLVED to accept the Report of the Women's Directors.

Tim Mooney / Andrew Garrett

DC 152/08 RESOLVED to formally thank Ms. Felicity Wilson

Acclamation

4.4.5 Communications Director

The Communications Director reported that there is no Debates website, so it is unnecessary to hold meetings to discuss the website. He reported that Mr. Kishan Jasani has spoken to the Union staff about updating the Debates part of the Union website.

The Director of Debates advised the Committee decide whether they believed that a separate website is necessary, as there appeared to be resistance.

The Director of Student Programmes corrected this notion; there is no resistance, but limited time and resources to create a Debates website.

DC 153/08 RESOLVED to recommend that the USU invest in a Debates website.

Tim Mooney / Andrew Garrett

4.4.6 Union Competitions Directors

The Union Competitions Director reported that 9 teams will be participating at pro-am, however, there are a shortage of adjudicators. The Union Competitions Director will also organise food the day after the meeting.

DC 154/08 RESOLVED to accept the Report of the Union Competitions Directors.

Douglas Thompson / Tim Mooney

4.4.7 Schools' Programmes Directors

The Schools' Programmes Directors had nothing to report.

4.4.8 Social Directors

The Social Director informed the Committee that the Debates Dinner will be held on October 10.

DC 155/08 RESOLVED to accept the Report of the Social Directors.

Patrick Wall / Stephanie Paton

4.4.9 Development Officer

The Development Officer reported that Seminar attendance numbers have been decreasing, consistent with the decrease in Regionals attendance. However, the Development Officer believed it was encouraging that some students left the Law Revue to attend the Seminar.

The Director of Student Programmes recommended that the Committee devise strategies to improve retention over the next few months.

Mr. Tim Mooney agreed that there are not enough adjudicators attending Regionals, as students prefer an opportunity to debate before trials.

[Misa Han arrived at 5:40pm]

Mr. Sam Greenland proposed that students that debate for three weeks must adjudicate before they are able to receive points for debating at Regionals.

Mr. Mooney asked whether Mr. Greenland was referring to a student having debated with a pro, 3 times.

Mr. Wall expressed his opinion that this will be complicated.

The Director of Debates communicated his belief that it may be awkward for students if rooms finish earlier than others. He believed that it is a better strategy to promote adjudicating via a mentoring programme during Semester 1.

Mr. Greenland communicated his opinion that novices are trained by the “pros” when they debate as a team, resulting in a smaller emphasis on adjudicators. However, an adjudicator is required when there are no “pros” present.

Mr. Mooney agreed with the Director of Debates that a culture for adjudicating needs to be developed and will be successful for Pro-Am. He suggested that those with experience be encouraged to provide feedback after debates, particularly when novices may not generally receive enough feedback.

The Immediate Past Director of Debates commented that not many “pros” attend Regionals, so it adjudicating may serve as a disincentive. She expressed her opinion that it is unfair to restrict their practice with other “pros”.

Mr. Greenland suggested that the drinks tab be reserved for adjudicators after Regionals.

The Director of Debates remarked that it will be difficult to administer and monitor.

Mr. Mooney commented that it may work better at Hermann's Bar.

DC 156/08 RESOLVED to accept the Report of the Development Officer.

Andrew Garrett / Patrick Wall

5. OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair reminded the Committee that the Debates Dinner will be held on October 10.

Mr. Greenland informed the Committee that the St. Paul's College Formal is to be held on the same night.

The Director of Student Programmes reported that he had called the College about the date.

[Courtney Tight, Alice Dixon and Douglas Thompson departed at 5:49pm]

Further discussions on the St. Paul's College Formal continued.

Mr. Greenland commented that St. Paul's College Formal is perceived as an important event – those heavily involved in campus events attend the Formal.

The Director of Student Programmes agreed that it will affect the Chancellor, and Vice Chancellor's timetables. He suggested that he discuss this issue further with the Chair after the meeting.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 5:00pm on Thursday 16 October in the Reading Room, Holme Building.

7. CLOSE OF MEETING

With no other business to be attended to the Chair declared the meeting closed at 5:52pm.