



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 16 April 2009.

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

Chair – Patrick Bateman

14.05.09

Date



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEBATES COMMITTEE  
HELD AT 5:00 P.M. ON THURSDAY 16 APRIL 2009  
IN THE READING ROOM, HOLME BUILDING**

**PRESENT**

**MEMBERS:** Patrick Bateman, Chair  
Douglas Thompson, Deputy Chair  
Steven Hind, Director of Debates  
Stephanie D'Souza  
Angela Evans  
Ellen Ferrington Michaelis  
Naomi Hart  
Alice Hudson  
David Mann  
Tim Mooney  
Andrew Thomas

**VISITORS:** Courtney Tight, Director  
SuJin Cho  
Michael Coutts  
Michael Falk  
Sam Greenland  
Xiaoting Guo  
Elle Jones  
Paul Karp  
Heydon Letcher  
Catherine Marks  
Naomi Oreb  
Daniel Swain  
Patrick Wall

**UNION STAFF:** Khym Scott, Committee Secretary

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The Chair declared the meeting open at 5:10pm.

**1. APOLOGIES AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

**DC 048/09** **RESOLVED** that apologies be accepted from Mr. Ruchir Punjabi, Ms. Alice Dixon, Mr. Jacques McElhone, Mr. Daniel Wodak, Mr. Alistair Cowie and that late arrival and early departure be granted to Mr. David Mann.

*Stephanie D'Souza / Steven Hind*

## 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Ms. Courtney Tight observed that Daniel Swain was incorrectly noted as David Swain in the minutes.

**DC 049/09** **RESOLVED** that apologies be accepted *retrospectively* for the previous meeting held 12 March 2009 from Mr. Jacques McElhone.

*Douglas Thompson / Ellen Ferrington Michaelis*

**DC 050/09** **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held 12 March 2009 be accepted as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

*Naomi Hart / Andrew Thomas*

## 3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes.

## 4. GENERAL BUSINESS

### 4.1 **Reports**

#### 4.1.1 Director of Debates

The Director of Debates spoke to his Report.

**[Mr. Sam Greenland arrived at the meeting at 5:08pm.]**

**[Ms. Angela Evans and Mr. David Mann arrived at the meeting at 5:09pm.]**

**[Ms. Courtney Tight arrived at the meeting at 5:12pm.]**

The Director of Debates flagged that UTS and UNSW were wanting to send ten teams to Regionals regularly. He suggested that this would improve Sydney debaters, but raised concern of space constraints.

The Director of Debates noted an importance to discuss potential amendments of a novice from someone never having been to Australs to someone who could have gone once. The Director of Debates also spoke to his proposal of allowing speakers to submit CVs when they trial.

The Director of Debates suggested that it would be good to inform speakers of the costs involved when they trial for Australs, noting difficulty in estimating costs prior to establishing funding arrangements.

**DC 051/09** **RESOLVED** that Mr. Patrick Bateman be thanked for the organising of the Debates Dinner.

*Acclamation*

The Chair noted that the Debates Dinner was funded by the Public Issues Portfolio budget, rather than the Debates budget. He agreed that the number of awards should be revised, though put that the Spirit Award should kept.

Ms. Naomi Hart reminded the Committee that the Debates Port does have criteria, the most important being service, followed by achievements, and then social contribution. She raised concern that the Spirit Award may not be respected enough.

The Chair responded that the Debates Port covers respect in personal achievement, whereas the Spirit Award covered respect not necessarily in achievement but community service.

**[Mr. Patrick Wall arrived at the meeting at 5:26pm.]**

Mr. Patrick Wall suggested that the reason the Spirit Award was created was to award something rather than nothing at all.

Mr. Tim Mooney raised concern that the Spirit Award downplayed service criteria.

The Director of Debates asked whether the Debater of the Year award could be awarded to one individual in two consecutive years.

The Chair directed further feedback to the USU Special Events Manager.

**DC 052/09 RESOLVED** that the Report of the Director of Debates be accepted.

*Stephanie D'Souza / Naomi Hart*

4.1.2 Honorary Treasurer for Debates

The Director of Debates informed the Committee that the Director Student Programmes was in the process of establishing monthly meetings with the Honorary Treasurer for Debates. He reminded the Committee that they were under-spending the Socials budget intentionally. He noted that while the Honorary Treasurer for Debates' work was good, that the Committee should be reminded of the potential to dismiss Office Bearers not currently fulfilling their role.

The Chair reminded the Committee of the intention to broaden the aims of the portfolio to cover sponsorship initiatives.

4.1.3 Intervarsity Directors

Ms. Stephanie D'Souza reported that trials for Easters were running smoothly. She noted the unlikelihood of being able to send more than four teams to Australs.

The Director of Debates asked that the Intervarsity Directors obtain the names of the people who pulled out of Easters trials legitimately or otherwise. He advised that he would contact those people to ask them to attend the next meeting of the Committee.

Ms. D'Souza confirmed that all withdrawn places had cost money.

Ms. Hart suggested asking those people to pay the fee required with a caveat that they may provide a reason for not attending to the Committee. She asked

how the Committee would decide whether or not to charge people upon hearing their statements.

Ms. Angela Evans asked whether they were made to sign terms and conditions, suggesting implementing a new system.

Ms. D'Souza replied that a disclaimer was present on DebaterBase.

The Director of Debates added that it had been made clear several times, but that it would be good to have a signed declaration in future.

**DC 053/09** **RESOLVED** that the Contingent Captain of Easters 2009 be thanked.

*Acclamation*

Ms. D'Souza noted that the sexual harassment training sessions were not as well attended as they should have been, and that it should be made clearer that they are mandatory.

**DC 054/09** **RESOLVED** that the Report of the Intervarsity Directors be accepted.

*Angela Evans / Tim Mooney*

**DC 055/09** **RESOLVED** that Sydney 1 – Ms. Elle Jones, Mr. Daniel Swain and Ms. Eliza Forsyth - be congratulated.

*Acclamation*

#### 4.1.4 Women's Directors

Ms. Alice Hudson reported that the afternoon tea social event held was well attended, and that it could be improved in future by further advertising.

Ms. Hudson noted that it had been difficult to get people to attend the equity briefings, suggesting more advertising. She put that it was impossible to ask people to come to the second briefing had they not been in attendance at the first. She suggested holding it at the tournament at a time when all required would be present.

**[Mr. Douglas Thompson departed from the meeting at 5:40pm.]**

Ms. Ellen Ferrington Michaelis added that all in the tournament had been briefed on their rights and responsibilities, and that the Director Student Programmes had given a very comprehensive session.

**[Mr. Douglas Thompson returned to the meeting at 5:40pm.]**

**[Mr. Sam Greenland departed from the meeting at 5:41pm.]**

The Director of Debates stated that he could see a tangible change displayed in the tournaments, and asked the Women's Directors whether another event would be held in Semester Two.

Ms. Ferrington Michaelis confirmed that they would like to hold an event during Semester Two, as well as another training tournament this Semester,

to be potentially held on 3 May 2009, but was unsure due to the lack of time available to advertise the event and find adjudicators.

The Director of Debates suggested contacted the Clubs and Societies Manager to provide a cost for room hire.

**[Mr. Sam Greenland returned to the meeting at 5:46pm.]**

Ms. Hudson further reported that they were proposing to bid to host the Women's Tournament in 2010, and that meetings were being held to concretely determine support and logistics.

The Chair asked whether the bid would be contested.

Ms. Ferrington Michaelis remarked that if they advertise their intent early enough it could potentially be guaranteed.

Ms. Hart stated that she did not expect other bids for the tournament.

**DC 056/09 RESOLVED** that the Report of the Women's Directors be accepted

*Naomi Hart / Steven Hind*

**4.1.5 Communications Directors**

The Chair informed the Committee that three quotes had been received for the Debates website and that they would be reviewed next week. He estimated a completion date of two to three months.

The Director of Debates informed the Committee that he was trying to put together an institutional memory spreadsheet.

The Chair noted that content would be compiled soon, and asked that ideas be emailed to him.

**4.1.6 Union Competitions Directors**

Mr. Andrew Thomas reported that twenty six teams had been entered for Grand Slam, which had been cut to twenty four.

**DC 057/09 RESOLVED** that Ms. Naomi Oreb and Mr. Sam Greenland be thanked for their respective roles as Chief Adjudicator and tab director of Grand Slam.

*Acclamation*

Mr. Thomas noted that the grand final had commenced a little late, but that there were no further problems. He added that the event's costs had broken fairly even, and that adjudicators had not been charged registration fees.

Ms. D'Souza reported that Sydney Open would be held 8 to 9 May 2009, and that they were waiting on team confirmations and a list of potential chief adjudicators. She noted the intention of the Union Competitions Directors to compete in all remaining internal tournaments during 2009.

**DC 058/09 RESOLVED** that the Report of the Union Competitions Directors be accepted.

*Ellen Ferrington Michaelis / Steven Hind*

#### 4.1.7 Schools' Programmes Directors

Ms. Evans noted that nothing had been held during Semester One, but that she was looking to both consolidate and expand the Portfolio.

#### **[Ms. Courtney Tight departed from the meeting at 5:56pm.]**

Ms. Evans suggested that the mishap of the previous Schools Day in 2008 had been since rectified and their reputation maintained, and suggested running two schools events over two consecutive days during the school holidays to make up lost revenue.

Ms. Ferrington Michaelis asked whether there were proposed dates.

The Director of Debates confirmed that these were scheduled in the Debates calendar. He added that a junior tournament would be held with topics released early and pre-prepared, and also a senior training session.

#### **[Ms. Courtney Tight returned to the meeting at 5:58pm.]**

Ms. Evans further reported that she had spoken to the Director Student Programmes regarding schools' feedback, and noted that no advice had been given on how to improve the programme. She suggested expanding the Schools Day in terms of providing further training packages and services, advising that it was important to remember not all schools had coaches and it was potentially an opportunity to tap into.

Ms. Naomi Oreb suggested holding a session where teachers could learn to be coaches.

The Director of Debates reminded the Committee that they had shied away from training teachers in the past because the NSW Department of Education and Training offered it freely.

Mr. Mooney remarked that Macquarie University debaters were travelling to schools at present.

Ms. Evans clarified that training would not be aimed at making teachers adjudicators, but better coaches.

**DC 059/09 RESOLVED** that the Report of the Schools' Programmes Directors be accepted.

*David Mann / Naomi Hart*

#### 4.1.8 Social Director

Mr. David Mann reported that the most immediate concern was the post-Easters celebration party. He suggested holding it either prior or after Sydney Open.

The Director of Debates suggested that the event could be held without a large amount of expenses, such as going to bowling grounds or dinner in Newtown.

Mr. Mann noted that there was not much remaining in Semester One, and that the next event to be held would be the Semester Two opening and welcome event with a BP demonstration.

**DC 060/09 RESOLVED** that the Report of the Social Director be accepted.

*Angela Evans / Steven Hind*

4.1.9 Development Officers

Ms. Hart spoke to her report.

**[Mr. Douglas Thompson departed from the meeting at 6:08pm.]**

**[Mr. Douglas Thompson returned to the meeting at 6:09pm.]**

**[Ms. Angela Evans departed from the meeting at 6:11pm.]**

**[Mr. Paul Karp departed from the meeting at 6:11pm.]**

**[Ms. Angela Evans returned to the meeting at 6:12pm.]**

The Chair spoke regarding mentors being in contact with the teams, asking whether it was possible to give email addresses to the mentors in advance.

Ms. Hart advised that they did not foresee the problem in time, but would consider it for the next tournament.

**[Mr. Paul Karp returned to the meeting at 6:12pm.]**

Ms. Elle Jones commented that several teams were unhappy with the commitment of their mentors, suggesting that if there was no accountability of the mentors' commitment that points should not be awarded.

Mr. Michael Coutts reminded the Committee of the problem faced in 2008 of not having a feedback system.

Ms. Evans suggested implementing a feedback form.

Ms. Hart asked whether Ms. D'Souza could send this to the Easters contingent.

The Director of Debates raised concern that it could seem accusatory.

Ms. Hart clarified that it would not be aimed at received complaints, but rather informal feedback in general.

Mr. Daniel Swain suggested allocating proportions of points to the fulfilment of different requirements of mentors.

The Director of Debates confirmed that points were already divided.



**[Mr. Sam Greenland departed from the meeting at 6:17pm.]**

Ms. Evans remarked that feedback should not be received on an ad hoc basis and that a more formal mechanism should be employed. She clarified that the aim was not to place blame but to understand what works and what participants want, and that it would be valuable for development.

The Director of Debates replied that it was easy enough to acquire points without coaching Easterns teams, and that it would not foster a nice culture to rank mentors.

Ms. Hart believed that the majority of mentors would receive good feedback, and claimed that if the Committee was worried about receiving hostile feedback that feedback should not be requested at all.

Ms. Oreb suggested announcing mentors along with the registration of Easterns teams. She also reminded the Committee of the general feedback form circulated in 2008 by the Immediate Past Director of Debates.

Mr. Mooney foresaw difficulty with announcing mentors on the same night as selections, but agreed that it was important to announce mentors early.

Ms. Evans further clarified that feedback should not imply ranking, and should remain confidential.

Mr. Mooney spoke to the problem concerning the starting time of Seminars, and advertised the upcoming presenters.

**DC 061/09** **RESOLVED** that the Committee be granted a time extension of up to thirty minutes.

*Douglas Thompson / Angela Evans*

Ms. Evans asked who the Development Officers would be looking to fill the currently vacant seminar slot in Week 8.

Mr. Mooney advised that the topic was planned on foreign intervention, and that their particular person in mind was now unavailable.

**DC 062/09** **RESOLVED** that the Report of the Development Officers be accepted.

*Stephanie D'Souza / Andrew Thomas*

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair noted that the report structure of the meeting was working well, suggesting the reports be emailed earlier to Members, identifying that they were meant to speed up the meeting rather than delay it further.

The Chair advertised the public debate being held by Sydney Talent, and advised that they were looking for two interested people to participate.

**DC 063/09** **RESOLVED** that discussion be moved *in camera*.

*Douglas Thompson / Tim Mooney*

**DC 064/09** **RESOLVED** that visitors be invited to remain.

*Ellen Ferrington Michaelis / Steven Hind*

**DC 065/09** **RESOLVED** that the Committee be granted a further time extension of up to thirty minutes.

*Douglas Thompson / Steven Hind*

**DC 066/09** **RESOLVED** that the lists of selectors be accepted.

*Steven Hind / Naomi Hart*

**DC 067/09** **RESOLVED** that discussion be moved *ex camera*.

*Steven Hind / Douglas Thompson*

**6. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 5:00pm on Thursday 14 May 2009 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 7:58pm.