

**Meeting of the Debates Committee
5.30pm, 13 May 2010, The Chancellor's Room,
Holme Building, Science Road, University of Sydney.
MINUTES**



Committee Members Michael Buckland (Chair), John 'Scott' Brownless (Director)
Eleanor Jones (Director of Debates), Julia Baine, Rebecca Barrett,
Michael Coutts, Tim Mooney, Daniel Swain, Andrew Thomas, Nina Ubaldi.

USU Staff Louise Anthony (Programmes Manager), Bryce Williams (Committee Secretary).

Visitors	Duncan Campbell, Melissa Brooks, Rhys Pogonoski.
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No#	Details
	The Chair opened the meeting at 5.36pm.
	1. Apologies And Leaves Of Absence
DC 040/10	Resolved that apologies be accepted from Courtney Tight, Naomi Hart, Catherine Marks and Alistair Cowie, a request for late arrival be accepted from John 'Scott' Brownless and that a request for early departure be accepted from Daniel Swain and Louise Anthony. <i>Eleanor Jones / Daniel Swain</i>
	2. Minutes Of The Meeting Held 15 April 2010
DC 041/10	Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held 15 April 2010 be accepted as a true and accurate record of proceedings. <i>Eleanor Jones / Daniel Swain</i>
	3. Business Arising From The Minutes
	There was no business arising from the minutes.
	4. General Business
	4.1 Report of the Director of Debates
	Eleanor Jones (the Director of Debates) spoke to her report regarding the Regionals tournament, stressing the successes of the tournament. She suggested that there was room for policy development in the second semester. She noted the problems the tournament had with teams not showing up or not contributing judges to the pool. She argued that the tournament had the best balance between formality and flexibility. She expressed her particular gratitude to Julia Baine, Daniel Swain and Steph D'Souza.
	Ms. Jones spoke to her report regarding Seminars, and said that she sought the advice of the committee on the organisation of Seminars in Semester Two. She said that a greater proportion of experts would assist in promotion, and would also prevent the reduction in the quality of seminars

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as debaters' expertise was becoming exhausted.

Ms. Jones noted that she had spoken with Louise Anthony, and that the USU could assist with suggestions and contact details of alumni. She said that official correspondence could be sent to potential seminar speakers in the break, with hopefully a stronger response.

Ms. Jones said that it was important to adhere to the calendar of issues, but that it had not been possible for a number of reasons. As a result, no economic seminar had been presented this semester, and it was difficult for Steph D'Souza to set topics when seminars were changing at the last minute.

Ms. Jones noted that fatigue had begun to creep in at Sydney.

Rhys Pogonoski entered the meeting.

Ms. Jones noted that the Sydney Open tournament was well organised and well attended. She expressed her thanks to Julia Baine and Daniel Swain. She said that a clash with Australs was not the fault of the committee members.

Daniel Swain added that representatives of Monash and Melbourne Universities had apologised for the clash.

Ms. Jones said that no additional teams were likely to compete at Australs, and expressed her concern that a sufficient number of selectors had not been confirmed.

Melissa Brooks entered the meeting.

Ms. Jones said that she had been assisting Tim Mooney with the process of selection, but had relinquished rights to the database to him. She said that no-one should be concerned that she would sabotage the registration process.

Ms. Jones added that an issue had arisen in respect of a regulatory change not being passed. She said that with the novice quota as it was, this was not yet a problem, but could become a problem if a fourth team was allowed. She stressed that she was merely bringing the issue to the committee's attention and that it was the responsibility of the committee to reintroduce the change if the members so desired.

Ms. Jones said that she had discussed the Debates Dinner with Louise Anthony and that the Union's position was that it would be preferable to hold the dinner during Union week, when other formal dinners would be held. She noted that this would occur before Women's and World's trials. She said that she would be happy to hold a celebration after these events.

Mr. Swain suggested that awards for the Women's tournament could be pushed back into next year's awards, in same way that World's tournament awards are currently arranged. He noted that this year had been a comparatively short year for debating, and that this was not necessarily problematic.

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Eleanor Jones (Director of Debates) said that the change had occurred because of legal requirements, and added that the system would be much better now that it was 'on the books'.

John 'Scott' Brownless entered the meeting.

DC 043/10 Resolved that the Report of the Honorary Treasurer of Debates be accepted.

Tim Mooney / Michael Coutts

4.3 Report of the Intersivity Directors

Tim Mooney said that there had been very little interest from selectors. Two selectors were available, Leloy and Evan. He noted that Evan was checking his availability with his manager. He said that the process of attracting selectors was becoming more difficult every year, with new people and women's requirements in particular. He suggested that selection processes should begin at the first meeting of the year.

Melissa Brooks noted that World's selection occurred during peak wedding season.

Mr. Mooney replied that two potential selectors had been unavailable because of a wedding.

Daniel Swain said that Easters selectors were chosen at the first meeting.

Eleanor Jones (Director of Debates) expressed her support for an earlier discussion, but noted that the timing of the discussion was at the discretion of the Intersivity Directors.

Ms. Brooks said that discussion would be shorter, as lists would be carried over.

Michael Coutts suggested that a central database be maintained.

Mr. Swain asked whether contacting potential selectors earlier would have an impact on their availability.

Mr. Mooney replied that it would be easier to do so, but that it would not necessarily affect their availability.

Louise Anthony (Programmes Manager) asked about the process of contacting selectors.

Mr. Mooney replied that he would have to wait until a selector replied before contacting the next selector.

Ms. Brooks suggested that the selectors could be ranked in brackets, which would give the people choosing selectors more autonomy.

Mr. Swain expressed his disapproval of the bracket suggestion, as it would give the people choosing selectors a discretion based on convenience.

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Ms. Jones said that it was the role of the committee to rank selectors, and that giving these people discretion would be problematic.

Ms. Brooks suggested that the bracketing idea could be adjusted such that failing a prompt reply, people choosing selectors could move on to the next person in the bracket.

Nina Ubaldi asked whether availability could be considered in the ranking process.

Mr. Swain replied that the committee should not prejudice selectors based on perceived availability.

Ms. Jones said that criteria, such as presence on the East Coast, could be established, so that availability within those criteria would not affect rankings.

Ms. Brooks noted that there were no rules about what criteria could or could not be considered.

Ms. Jones added that ADAM was scheduled for the weekend before Australs (25th-27th).

Ms. Anthony suggested that Tim Mooney establish communication with Eleanor Jones.

DC 044/10 Resolved that the Report of the Intervarsity Directors be accepted.

Daniel Swain / Andrew Thomas

4.4 Report of the Women's Directors

DC 045/10 Resolved to note the submission of the Report of the Women's Directors.

Daniel Swain / Andrew Thomas

4.5 Report of the Communications Directors

Daniel Swain said that the website design had been completed, and that it was ready for content. He said that he had initially thought that content had already been created, but that this was not the case. He said that he had attempted to contact Kishan. He noted that he would prepare content and that it should be complete by next Friday.

Eleanor Jones (Director of Debates) said that a meeting with Adam was to be set up.

Michael Coutts asked about the content of the website.

Mr. Swain replied that the website would contain information from the orientation guide, and would have a blog set-up.

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Ms. Jones noted that some content was available but that it needed to be changed.

Michael Buckland (the Chair) suggested that in advertising the website, an email could be sent out that requested feedback on potential content for the website.

Mr. Swain responded that the questions could be appended to the competition survey.

Melissa Brooks asked whether meta files had been uploaded and whether a wiki had been considered.

Mr. Swain responded that a wiki was part of the second stage of the website, alongside a private area within the website.

Ms. Brooks suggested that the survey could be made available on the website itself.

Louise Anthony (Programmes Manager) encouraged Daniel Swain to meet with Adam to discuss the look of the website, including its colour scheme.

Eleanor Jones (Director of Debates) noted that a meeting was set up for next Friday.

DC 046/10 Resolved that the Report of the Communications Directors be accepted.

Julia Baine / Tim Mooney

4.6 Report of the Union Competitions Directors

Julia Baine tabled a report and said that there were two primary issues for the Committee to consider: the Sydney Open and Regionals.

Sydney Open

Ms. Baine said that they had no money to fund adjudicators and that a \$50 surplus had been estimated. If this surplus was to materialise, it would be used for prizes for the Regionals competition.

Ms. Baine noted that the event would include a champ dinner at Nags, 2 lunches, afternoon tea and breakfast. She said that 65 people had been confirmed, and that another team was tentative.

Regionals

Ms. Baine expressed her satisfaction with the Pro-Am teams and the commitment shown by those teams and her concern with the declining levels of participation. She noted that some of those who did attend expressed their disappointment at not being exposed to good debates or adjudicators. She said that holistically, the tournament was very good.

Daniel Swain said that there was a problematic trade-off regarding debaters with low levels of confidence. He noted that this year, there had been a significant improvement in the number of these debaters. He said that it was

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important to have a space for novices, but that regular debates were also needed.

Melissa Brooks said that in some instances, debaters were lucky to get any adjudicator at all.

Eleanor Jones (Director of Debates) said the problems were not attributable to the tournament itself, and that teams would organise themselves in a similar way outside the tournament.

Mr. Swain said that it was better than the standard system.

Ms. Brooks raised the issue of stripping points for teams without an adjudicator.

Ms. Jones said that she had come to the opposite conclusion, in that there needed to be a balance between casualness and formality, and that adjudicators from teams should be encouraged, not chastised.

Ms. Baine said that the pro-team that did end up breaking brought judges.

Ms. Jones said that the issue of scarcity of judges was primarily an issue with the amateur teams.

Ms. Brooks clarified that she was concerned about stripping points from repeated offenders and making the expectation of teams clearer.

Mr. Swain replied that some teams simply won't come or don't care about points, and suggested that tournament convenors should have some discretion.

Ms. Jones suggested that the threats of points removal should be made more forceful, but that enactment should be kept discretionary.

Nina Ubaldi said that the Regionals tournament worked well and suggested that punishment should be a social punishment. She noted that stripping points does not work.

Michael Buckland (the Chair) noted an Israeli economics paper in relation to childcare that confirmed such a conclusion.

DC 047/10 Resolved that the Report of the Union Competitions Directors be accepted.

Eleanor Jones / Tim Mooney

4.7 Report of the Schools' Programmes Directors

The Schools' Programmes Directors had nothing to report.

4.8 Report of the Social Director

The Social Director had nothing to report.

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4.9 Report of the Development Officers

Michael Coutts noted that the expert for next week was organised for an Asia-Pacific themed seminar for the 3 Australs teams.

Tim Mooney asked who the expert was.

Mr. Coutts replied that it was someone from the Asia-Pacific Centre. He noted that they had been given 3 weeks notice and were unlikely to pull out.

Louise Anthony (Programmes Manager) asked whether the primary issue with experts was trying to get experts or that experts were pulling out.

Mr. Coutts noted the very late nature of many of the pull-outs.

Ms. Anthony asked how much notice was provided to the experts.

Mr. Coutts replied that one week was the typical notice.

Ms. Anthony suggested that for next semester, the Calendar of Issues should be adhered to and that emails should be sent out during the University break.

Melissa Brooks noted that the timing of seminars were somewhat awkward.

Daniel Swain stressed the importance of keeping to the same schedule, but noted the alternative options (including show debates). He said that it was important to be consistent for the sake of competitions.

Eleanor Jones (Director of Debates) said that Steph's concerns were real and that the seminar pull-outs would affect the quality of tournament topics.

Melissa Brooks said that show debates can be unconvincing.

Nina Ubaldi asked how the seminars had been advertised.

Mr. Coutts responded that the seminars had been advertised in Debaterbase.

Ms. Ubaldi asked whether the seminars should be advertised to a broader audience, as many covered areas of general interest.

Mr. Swain said that a facebook event could be created for each week and that other societies could be invited in Semester 2.

Ms. Jones stressed that a facebook event should only be created for special seminars.

Ms. Brooks noted that given greater notice, others, including C&S representatives, could assist.

DC 048/10 Resolved that the Report of the Development Officers be accepted.

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Andrew Thomas / Daniel Swain

5. Other Business

Bryce Williams (Committee Secretary) noted that an Honour Roll had been compiled by Mitsie Kent, a USU archivist. He said that the document should be checked for consistency and accuracy by the committee.

Rhys Pogonoski noted that some Sydney University teams had competed in the UNSW Intervarsity tournament, but that the team led by Caitlin Gleeson had not been recognised (for example in Debaterbase). He stressed that the committee should make an effort to send adjudicators to other tournaments.

Eleanor Jones (Director of Debates) noted that the tournament was in conflict with the scheduling of state trials.

Mr. Pogonoski replied that the conflict would not have made a difference.

Daniel Swain said that it made a significant difference in his case.

Ms. Jones noted that she had received a resentful communication from the UNSW Debsoc. She said that the event had been advertised in Debaterbase and that Debsoc needed to exercise caution when scheduling events.

Mr. Pogonoski replied that it was not an issue of fault, rather it was necessary to ensure that the Committee's responsibilities were fulfilled.

Mr. Swain noted that that they had approached Macquarie University and UTS for Regionals but had been turned down. He noted that the response to the Sydney Open had been better. He said that the committee would not be 'playing to the persecution complex'.

Melissa Brooks noted that 'n-1' adjudicators had been sent, which was the minimum requirement.

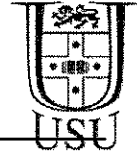
Ms. Jones noted that teams had been acknowledged, just not the breaking teams. She agreed that in future, all breaking teams should be recognised.

Michael Buckland (the Chair) noted that it would be the second last meeting of the committee before a changeover in the committee's Chair. He suggested that the committee should give commentary on how the Chair acts.

Ms. Brooks suggested that a handover document, including all the information required for the new Chair, should be tabled.

Louise Anthony (Programmes Manager) noted that the Kirby Cup Finals were happening next week.

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6. Date of the Next Meeting – 10 June 2010
7. Close of Meeting
The Chair closed the meeting at 6.32pm.
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These minutes, having been reviewed and accepted by resolution of the Debates Committee as a true and correct record of the meeting:

Resolution Number: Date

Chair's Signature

DC 050/10

10/06/10

DRAFT