



Meeting of the Outgoing Debates Committee
5.00pm 22nd November 2012, Reading Room,
Holme Building, Science Road, University of Sydney.
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Committee Rhys Pogonoski (Chair)
Members

Edward Miller (Director of Debates), Abigail McCarthy, Boston Zhang, Daniel Swain, Eleanor Jones, John Tsaousidis, Joseph Ware, Sam Molloy, and Solange Handley.

USU Staff Louise Anthony (Programmes Manager) Margaret Hinder (Committee Secretary)

No# **Details**

DC 129/12 **Resolved to accept apologies from Eleanor Gordon-Smith, Tom Williamson, Anne Gribble and Paul Karp. Also to accept a request for late arrival from Daniel Swain.**

Solange Handley/John Tsaousidis

Item 2: Minutes of the Meeting Held Thursday the 18th of October

Aside from minor adjustments to the names of committee members, the minutes were approved.

DC 130/12 **Resolved to accept the minutes of the meeting held 18th October 2012 as a true and accurate record, with minor changes.**

Eleanor Jones / Joseph Ware

Item 3: Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes, although Mr Pogonoski noted that in future, the resolutions of previous meetings should be discussed under this item to update the Committee on the progress of the decisions taken at the previous meeting.

Item 4.1 The Report of the Director of Debates

Mr Miller began by reviewing the semester, noting that it had begun well and finished with a bang, but waned in the middle. He noted that the Committee had trialled some new ideas which should assist the Society to avoid this in 2013. He also noted that the University of Sydney Union Debaters had been won the Australian Women’s Debating Championships, ANU Spring, the Wollongong IV and the UNSW IV, making the Society the premiers in all intervarsity tournaments held in NSW in Semester 2 2012. He congratulated Mr Swain and Mr Karp on the results of their development program, and the Society as a whole for its achievements.



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He then discussed the upcoming Schools Day and encouraged any members of Committee who had any time and had not already volunteered to offer their services. He also noted that the upcoming British Parliamentary Championships looked excellent, particularly the socials.

He finished by noting that Debating is one of the most important parts of the university experience and is run by the Debates committee with the USU. He considered the challenges for the 2013 Committee to be how to create an inclusive atmosphere that balanced the needs of first years with pros. He also noted that being committed to clear communication with the whole society was extremely important.

DC 131/12 Resolved to accept the Report of the Director of Debates

Solange Handley / Joseph Ware

DC 132/12 Resolved to thank Edward Miller for all his work as the Director of Debates for 2012

Passed by acclamation

Item 4.2 The Report of the Mandarin Debating Officer

Mr Zhang said that he had little to report, but thanked Ms Anthony for her support and noted that the highlights of the year for the Mandarin Debating Society had been their overseas success and hosting their own tournament. He felt that the society as a whole had made good progress in their development and announced that he would be returning as the Mandarin Debating Officer in 2013.

DC 133/12 Resolved to accept the Report of the Mandarin Debating Officer and to thank Boston Zhang for his work as Mandarin Debating Officer, Head of the Mandarin Debating Society and to welcome him back to the Committee for 2013

Eleanor Jones / Solange Handley

Item 4.3 The Report of the Honorary Treasurer of Debates

DC 134/12 Mr Ware announced that there was nothing to report.

Item 4.4 The Report of the Intervarsity Director

Ms Jones spoke to her report, and noted that the upcoming British Parliamentary Debating Championships (otherwise known as the Sydney Mini) would be the largest tournament that the USU had ever hosted, including the Australian Women's Debating Championships. She announced that the tournament was nonetheless on track, with gifts for the adjudication core bought, Championship Dinner sorted, although Taste was



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proving elusive regarding whether a social could be held there.

She also noted that it had been suggested that the Sydney Mini in 2015 coordinate with Vic Wellington for Auckland Worlds in 2015, so that it could produce a circuit. Competitors could participate in the Sydney Mini on the 12th-14th of December, with Vic Wellington holding their pre-Worlds tournament on the 19th and 20th, prior to Auckland Worlds. This would not only improve the quality of the competitors, but increase its international participation.

Resolved to accept the Report of the Intervarsity Director

Solange Handley / Abigail McCarthy

Items 4.5 The Report of the Women's Director

There was nothing to report.

Item 4.6 The Report of the Communications Director

There was nothing to report.

Item 4.7 The Report of the Union Competitions Directors

Ms McCarthy noted that the new format at Regionals of a Q&A format was excellent, and that the increased collaboration between the Development and Competitions portfolios was very welcome.

DC 135/12 Resolved to accept the Report of the Union Competitions Directors

Joseph Ware/Solange Handley

Item 4.8 The Report of the School's Programmers Directors

Ms Handley reported that the Schools Day for Friday the 23rd of November had proved extremely popular, with 54 teams registered, and more teams that had been turned away. She noted that finding adjudicators had been quite problematic as it was still the exam period. She emphasised the need to make it clear to schools that it was a first in, best dressed system.

She also suggested that the points system should be reconsidered, which Ms Jones agreed, noting that it could be written into the World's contract for future years.

It was also discussed that having one day for years 7-10 was not ideal, as Ms Handley pointed out, having the same topics for year 7s and year 10s was extremely difficult. Ms Jones suggested that they should be grouped similarly to Friday night competitions. Ms Handley agreed, but noted that having separate days for years 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12 made scheduling very difficult. She explained that she was going to get feedback from the teachers the next day regarding good dates for the next year.



DC 136/12 Resolved to accept the Report of the School's Programmes Directors
Edward Miller / Eleanor Jones

Item 4.9 The Report of the Social Director

There was nothing to report.

DC 137/12 Resolved to move the chair to Edward Miller for the Report of the Chair of Debates
Eleanor Jones/ Sam Molloy

Item 4.11 The Report of the Chair of Debates

Mr Pogonoski reported that the USU operations were winding down for the year, with the USU officers to close on the 18th of December. He noted that the USU had submitted a joint application with the other student organizations to the University for the SSAF. While their efforts to produce a collaborative bid were successful, the University misunderstood one organization's bid and believed that the organization was requesting an additional million dollars. This has since been fixed and the application is being considered.

The USU is also making an application for funding from the Capital Sinking Fund, which is separate to the SSAF. This fund is partially funded by the SSAF, and the USU hopes to access some funds from this Fund, which will hopefully lead to an increase in funding in 2013.

DC 138/12 Resolved to accept the report of the Chair of Debates
Eleanor Jones/ John Tsaousidis

Mr Pogonoski then resumed the chair and turned to the Motions on Notice.

Ms Jones explained that the proposed changes to affirmative action were the result of difference between the requirements for the debating contingent and the contingent as a whole. This could create situations where there either no female adjudicators, or all the adjudicators had to be female, depending on tournament guidelines. She noted that the proposed changes could marginally reduce the requirements for female representatives at Worlds.

Mr Swain arrived at 5:40pm. The motions were passed unanimously.

DC 139/12 Resolved to accept the proposed changes to affirmative action requirements as a block:

Proposed Motion One – Addition to 'Easters IV' – 5.6.4



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For Easter IV the proportion of females selected and funded in teams must be at least 50%. At least four (4) females must be selected in the top three (3) teams. There must be one male and one female in each funded team unless insufficient numbers of either sex apply for selection. **One-third of the adjudicators selected and funded in the contingent shall be female-identifying.**

Proposed Motion Two – Amendment to ‘Austral’s’ – 5.7.4

In the Australasian IV Debating Championship, the minimum number of females funded shall be equal to the number of teams funded and the minimum number of females sent shall be equal to the number of teams sent. At least three females must be selected in the top three teams. **One-third of the adjudicators selected and funded in the contingent shall be female-identifying.**

Deleted: At least one-third of the contingent, inclusive of adjudicators, shall be female-identifying.

Proposed Motion Three – Amendment to ‘Worlds’ – 5.8.4

For Worlds there shall be at least one female funded per two teams funded and the minimum number of females sent shall be equal to at least half the number of teams sent. In the event that an odd number of teams are sent, the number of females required to be sent shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number. **One-third of the adjudicators selected and funded in the contingent shall be female-identifying.**

Deleted: At least one-third of the contingent (debaters and N-1 adjudicators) shall be female.

Eleanor Jones/Daniel Swain

DC 140/12 Resolved to accept the proposed changes to the adjudicator requirements:

The Committee shall fund:

- i. at least six (6) qualified adjudicators for Easter IV;
- ii. at least three (3) novice adjudicators for Easter IV, where 'novice' means an adjudicator who has not adjudicated or debated at an Australasians or Worlds or more than one Easter IV;
- iii. The Committee shall fund N-1 adjudicators to all other tournaments. For the purposes of Austral's and Womens the Committee may fund, at its own discretion, adjudicators in excess of N-1.
- iv. within the provisions of (iii) above, one adjudicator who has not previously been funded as an adjudicator to Australasians should be funded where more than three teams are sent to an Australasians;
- v. within the provisions of (iii) above, **one novice adjudicator, as defined by section 5.8.6 (an individual who has not debated or adjudicated at Worlds) should be funded where**



more than two teams are sent to Worlds.

Deleted: "... one adjudicator who has not been previously funded as an adjudicator to Worlds where more than two teams are sent to a Worlds."

Eleanor Jones/Daniel Swain

DC 141/12 Resolved to accept the proposed addition to the regulations regarding the Awards at Debates Dinner.

Eleanor Jones/Daniel Swain

Item 4.10 The Report of the Development Officers

Mr Swain presented his suggestions for the Development Program in 2013, which had been the result of extensive collaboration with other members of the Committee.

Ms McCarthy announced her support, particularly for the changes outlined to the points system, and suggested that the task of keeping track of points be assigned to the Treasurer's portfolio.

Ms Jones added that the easiest way to keep track of service points accrued by pros for debating with novices at Regionals was for the Competitions Officers to save the draw.

Mr Miller thanked Mr Swain and Mr Ware for their input into the proposed development regime, and agreed that while the Committee should avoid social engineering, it was responsible for creating an inclusive atmosphere. Particularly in the early weeks, providing fun and an excellent development program may not be sufficient; members of Committee needed to be welcoming during that period. Being inclusive did not mean being contrived, but is important.

Mr Swain agreed, and suggested that perhaps he should recast his statement; socials should be fun, the development program should give people a reason to attend, and members of the society should recognise the obligation generated by regular etiquette, but had no special obligation. He agreed that people needed to feel welcome, but suggested that the social outings that had been trialled this year had not been successful.

Ms Jones added that external additional socials produced a reverse effect, where new members felt more excluded that they would have if they simply felt a bit out of the loop at Regionals.

Mr Miller explained that he was not trying to push for the continuation of the external socials, but the maintenance of a good social atmosphere and inclusive etiquette.

Mr Swain said that he felt that the Committee trying to change social dynamics seemed odd as it was primarily a bureaucratic organisation. He



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felt that it was best for the Committee to encourage debaters to meet new people. Mr Miller said that the Committee itself had to focus on meeting new people, and that it was about making an effort, especially for those new people who did need help. Ms Anthony pointed out that the Committee members should try to make others feel welcome, but that it would be impossible for some onlookers to not view the society as cliquey, regardless of the veracity of that opinion.

Ms Crowther added that the presence of older people who made an effort had made a difference for her personally, and that even if the person making the welcoming overtures felt as though it was contrived, it could be very helpful for those who felt anxious.

Mr Swain concluded the discussion by revising his three aims as such:

For the Debates Committee to provide

1. Fun socials
2. An excellent development program
3. Extra effort to welcome members struggling to feel at ease in debating circles.

Ms Jones then added that the double debates currently being held on Wednesday were excellent. Ms Anthony added that a consistent theme coming through Committee interviews was that development was excellent for novices, but that pros needed more debating in Semester 2. She suggested that during weeks with seminars, a pro debate be held elsewhere. Then afterwards, pros could adjudicate or debate with a novice. This could also improve pros willingness to adjudicate at Regionals. It was agreed that this would be worked into the new Regionals program.

Ms Handley also suggested the need for more seminars relevant for pros. Mr Swain pointed out that tutoring was also much better for pros than running seminars, as their debating definitely benefitted from it.

Ms Anthony also pointed out that there were few opportunities for development for adjudicators. Ms Jones noted that Sydney did not produce many career adjudicators. Mr Miller added that usually there was an adjudicating seminar prior to adjudicator trials, and that opportunities like at Easters were available. Mr Swain also pointed out that when competitions were run with a rotating adjudicator, this allowed for consensus panels. In general however, the Committee agreed with Mr Swain's final point, that being a better debater made one a much better adjudicator.

Ms Jones also noted the need to develop novices who were often good enough to attend Australs on multiple occasions but had not been selected for World's teams. Mr Swain suggested that his proposed speech deconstruction seminars should prove useful.

Mr Ware suggested that the ethos of Regionals should be changed so that people took the debates more seriously. This would improve their development potential, and encourage attendance. Mr Swain added that it was important for the Development Officers to experiment with new formats, but to have a long term plan for the Development program.



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Mr Pogonoski thanked Mr Swain for all his efforts, and added that his suggestions should be discussed at the first meeting in 2013.

DC 142/12 Resolved to accept the Report of the Development Officers

Eleanor Jones / Edward Miller

Item 5. Other Business

Ms Anthony announced that the Kirby Cup may stop running after 2013 if the current attrition rate between the initial and final rounds did not stop. She made a number of suggestions which were discussed at length. The Committee welcomed the news that the judges would be paid in 2013.

It was agreed that the primary issue in 2012 had been a total lack of promotional material for the Kirby Cup. As it had only been promoted in Debaterbase, it had only got past participants who were looking out for information about it. Attendance and participation rather than quality of participants were the big problems, but promotions could fix that.

Mr Swain suggested that it should be included as a fixture in the Debating calendar, and that a heat should be held at Regionals, so that it would not clash with a debate. He agreed that novices should get points for participating in Kirby cup. Ms Crowther also suggested that good speeches from previous years should be put on Youtube, and links placed on the promotional materials, so that participants had a clear idea what the judges were looking for.

Ms Handley added that if material about the Cup was provided to the Debating Stall during O-Week it could be given to the many people who came by to ask about public speaking opportunities at university.

Ms Anthony concluded by thanking Mr Miller and Mr Zhang for their work running the Debating Societies.

DC 144/12 Resolved to congratulate the 2012 Debates Committee and Mandarin Debating Society on their achievements

Edward Miller/Boston Zhang

DC 145/12 Resolved to thank Rhys Pogonoski and Margaret Hinder for their work as Chair and Committee Secretary to the Debates Committee in 2012

Passed by acclamation

DC 146/12 Resolved to thank Ms Louise Anthony for all her service to the USU Debating Society

Passed by acclamation



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DC 147/12 Resolved to congratulate the incoming Debates Committee for 2012
and Ms Solange Handley on her appointment as Director of Debates

Passed by acclamation

The Meeting Concluded at 6:50pm.
