

UNION COUNCIL MINUTES

From the 3rd Ordinary Meeting of the
109th UQ Union Council, 2020

5:30PM

Monday 25 May 2020

Via Zoom

Chair: Mitchell Ablett-Nelson

a) The Meeting was declared open at 5:36pm by Secretary Thornton.

b) Credentials

The following were present:

Councillors

Allen Ding
Barclay McGain
Bradley Plant
Chloe Ainscow
Daniel Boyle
Drew Pavlou
Georgina Quayle
Ian Trinh
Jennifer Wang
Justin Gane
Lachlan Hardie
Maddy Taylor
Mitchell Ablett-Nelson (Chair)
Myah McGinity
Nathan Kerr
Olivia Nguyen
Oula Shihaan
Priya De
Swin Su
Ti Parker
Tim Heffernan
William Kugelman

Student Executive & Officers

Annie Genest
Christian Rizzalli
Dakoda Titmus
Eloise Martin
Emily Coggan
Ethan Van Roo Douglas (President)
Gustavo Pazo
Lachlan Green
Lili Wackwitz
Rebekah Thornton (Secretary)
Rowan Evans
Thomas Landy (Treasurer)
Zane Higgins

Others

Amy Sienkiewicz-Grob
Anna Redshaw
Ash Sehl
Boyi Du
Bradley Z
Briley Baldwin
Chris Hancock
Ella Gutteridge
Ellie Lewis
Emily Scott
Glenda Jacobs
Isabella Scattini
Joseph McDouall
Joshua Todd Cowper
Karen Da Silva (Minutes)
Matthew Johnson
Matthew Mercer
Stuart King
Tori Holliday
Utkrist Paudyal
William Coorey
Yuxuan Wang

The following members were absent:

Nil.

The following apologies were received:

- Sai Wai Yan
- Sol Oren

On leave:

Nil.

The following proxies were received:

- Jack Dugdale to Chloe Ainscow
- Ash Zeller to Oula Shihan
- Marnie Stollznnow to Barclay McGain
- Maddy Taylor to Mitchell Ablett-Nelson
- Nathan Kerr to Tom Landy

Resignations:

Nil.

It was moved

THAT THE CREDENTIALS FOR THE 3RD ORDINARY MEETING OF THE 109TH UQ UNION COUNCIL BE ACCEPTED.

COUNCIL 109/59

MITCHELL ABLETT-NELSON /PLANT

CARRIED

c) Elections

Nil.

d) The minutes from the previous meeting

It was moved

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE 2ND ORDINARY MEETING OF THE 109TH UQ UNION COUNCIL HELD ON 20TH MARCH 2020 BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED.

COUNCIL 109/60

VAN ROO DOUGLAS /TAYLOR

CARRIED

e) Business arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

Nil.

f) Requests for Starring/ Approval of the items not starred en bloc

Reports by the following were starred for discussion: President, VPs Student Rights, Secretary and Treasurer.

Procedural motion to consider all the other reports en bloc.

CARRIED

g) Reports

It was moved

THAT THE UNION PRESIDENT'S REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED.

COUNCIL 109/61 VAN ROO DOUGLAS/ ABLETT-NELSON CARRIED

THAT THE UNION SECRETARY'S REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED.

COUNCIL 109/62 THORNTON/ ABLETT-NELSON CARRIED

THAT THE UNION TREASURER'S REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED.

COUNCIL 109/63 THORNTON/ ABLETT-NELSON CARRIED

THAT THE CAMPUS CULTURE REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED.

COUNCIL 109/64 GENEST/ ABLETT-NELSON CARRIED

THAT THE STUDENT RIGHTS REPORTS BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 109/65 PAZO & FENNELL / ABLETT-NELSON CARRIED

THAT THE GENDER AND SEXUALITY REPORTS BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 109/66 COGGAN & TITMUS/ ABLETT-NELSON CARRIED

THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER'S REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 109/67 GREEN/ ABLETT-NELSON CARRIED

THAT THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICERS' REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 109/68 OREN & YAN/ ABLETT-NELSON CARRIED

THAT THE POSTGRADUATE OFFICER'S REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED

COUNCIL 109/69 RIZZALLI/ ABLETT-NELSON CARRIED

h) Matters arising from the Reports of the Elected Officers

The Union President's report

Cr McGain requested for an update on the Union's opposition to the University's use of the online proctoring solution ProctorU.

The President stated that discussions with senior administration at UQ were ongoing and the Union was continuing to work on the issue, targeting faculties and course coordinators.

Cr Shihaan enquired whether the President knew of course restructures and staff cuts.

The President informed the meeting that apart from the Program Architecture 2 (PA2) project continuing, they were not aware of course restructures and staffing cuts due to the impact of COVID-19.

Cr Pavlou was named once.

Student Rights Reports

Cr Trinh enquired about recruitment and an update on the Academic Advocacy Network (AAN).

Cr Plant enquired who the AAN faculty representatives were. As Student Rights VP Fennell was not in attendance, information is pending.

ACTION: FENNEL

Cr McGain queried the Union's reach out to Swinburne University. VP Pazo said that the Union's Marketing division had been in contact with Swinburne for options on keeping volunteers engaged and implement strategies for Semester 2. In response, VP Pazo said that access to food boxes and bags would be via a registration process through social media channels with the Holt Room as a collection point and that a delivery to the Gatton Campus was being looked at.

Cr Shihaan enquired whether the distribution of food survival boxes was enough in the current pandemic situation where University campuses were affected in the first instance with students forced to relocate amidst financial hardship. VP Pazo explained the support was available for students to get through the financial crisis.

Secretary's Report

Cr McGain enquired about the COVID-19 Rapid Response Group. Secretary Thornton informed the meeting that the group had had its first weekly meeting the week of 18 May and focused on campus reactivation for Semester 2 depending on the academic landscape. The members were still waiting to hear about University plans for next semester. Secretary Thornton would share more information as it became available.

Campus reactivation was discussed, and the following points were raised:

- Cr Pavlou enquired whether campus reactivation was referring to bringing students back on campus and what that would look like. Cr Shihan enquired about views on campus reopening.
- The Secretary stated that in the interest of student safety, campus reopening would be advised by Government regulations.

Treasurer's Report

The following was in response to Cr Shihan request for clarification of the Union's eligibility for JobKeeper:

- Universities are exempt from JobKeeper; however, the Union qualifies being a separate entity.
- JobKeeper pays for qualifying Union employees' positions and that the Union Executive is being paid from JobKeeper.
- No SSAF has been used towards salaries.
- Casual positions in the refectory: cannot be discussed.

Cr McGain queried the in-principle approval by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) (DVCA) of the Union's updated budget plans. The President explained that the Union receives a portion of SSAF and raises own revenue from operations, and, as UQU reports to the Student Consultative Group (SCG) an advisory to the DVCA on how SSAF is utilised, the in-principle approval is an accountability measure.

Cr De expressed concerns about future reductions to the SSAF. In response, it was highlighted that the Union had no control of the amount of SSAF as it was collected by the University. An upcoming SSAF review to address increased SSAF allocation to UQU had been delayed due to COVID-19 and more information would be available in June.

A \$34,000 spending in April by Clubs and Societies was queried. This was explained as being most likely from the International Women's Day Breakfast and Market Day and that normal spending did not need approval by the Collective.

i) Question Time

Question A

Cr De enquired about the University's course restructuring plans and the Unions opposition of the Program Architecture 2 Review and an investigation into course delivery where whole classes were being taught with previous years material and PowerPoints.

Cr Pavlou queried the 30% cut in courses as mentioned in the last UQ Senate meeting. The following points were noted:

- Course restructure was in accordance with Program Architecture 2;
- The President was not privy to Senate documents and not aware of any plans to cut courses on top of PA2;
- UQU runs independent surveys and also with UQ (SSAF Survey, Micro student surveys, etc.). Survey results to be brought to next meeting.

ACTION: PRESIDENT VAN ROO DOUGLAS

Question B

Cr Heffernan put forth for discussion, the lowering of costs of degrees. The following responses were noted:

- Ordinary options have not been able to continue due to COVID-19.
- A reach out campaign as highlighted in the Secretary's report would be developed to identify individual issues students are facing. The campaign would be released to students by Semester 2.

Question C

Cr Heffernan enquired why the PA Review was not addressed prior to COVID-19.

- The President stated that under ordinary circumstances the review would be addressed via Academic Board and the Student Consultative Group.
- Cr Pavlou suggested organising a protest and stated that Academic Board was a rubber stamp body.
- Cr De stated that the PA review be addressed in terms of course cuts, fee increases and staff cuts.

Question D

Cr Wang queried whether there was any compensation for international students affected by COVID-19.

- The President responded that they had been in contact with the University re financial assistance to international students and would have more information at the next meeting.

ACTION: PRESIDENT VAN ROO DOUGLAS

Question E

Cr McGain raised the issue of the education sector's over dependence on the international student market.

- The education sector has had a long-term international reliance.

- Conversations are being held at senior levels at the University
- The Union has always been concerned on the reliance of international students
- Lower entry levels resulting in massive representation in academic appeals; admissions need to be based on merit and all students extended the same study support.

Question F

Cr Kugelman queried the decision to hold a Council meeting online and whether the decision to do so was in response to student action. In discussion the following was noted:

- Legal process to suspend standing orders was followed.
- The flying minute was to enable all Councilors to get on board.
- Advice was sought from Mr Peter Travers, the returning officer (and a barrister) employed on a year-to-year basis.

The flying minute circulated 9-11 May 2020 was:

‘That Union Council suspend Standing Orders to such extent as is necessary (as determined by the Chair) to facilitate online meetings of Union Council. Union Council grants authority to the Union Secretary and the Chair to organise and facilitate meetings of Union Council via the use of video conferencing technology.’

COUNCIL 109/May2020

ABLETT-NELSON/THORNTON

CARRIED

Question G

On request from Cr Shihaan, Rizzalli highlighted union activism carried out by the postgraduate portfolio, describing the NTEU fightback against the National Jobs Protection Framework as the most important recent campaign.

Question H

Higgins enquired about SSAF contributing to Union staffing. It was clarified that SSAF funding is a percentage of Union funding and that the actual amount of Union funding is going to be affected for another couple of years. President Van Roo Douglas had had discussions with the Provost and confirmed that the SSAF pool is not significantly down. Higgins queried whether there was any long-term guarantee for SSAF; The President confirmed that this was dependent on a pending SSAF review.

Question I

Cr Kugelman queried the absence of a Semper report. Semper Editor Evans responded:

- That a print edition would be released soon for posterity. The team was channeling focus into pod casts (3 podcasts last week) and online editions (<http://www.semperfloreat.com.au/>) and had cut budget by 30-40%.
- Upcoming releases would highlight ProctorU and Program Architecture (which was being looked at prior to campus shut down).
- All were invited to contribute to podcasts.

j) Reports of Union Bodies

Nil

k) Business which has been proposed

Transparency for Clubs and Societies

The following motion was carried to highlight the actions and decisions of the Clubs and Societies Committee.

It was moved

THAT ALL FUTURE CLUBS AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES BE POSTED ON THE UQU WEBSITE JUST LIKE COUNCIL MEETINGS.

COUNCIL 109/70

PLANT/TRINH

CARRIED

UQ Union opposes University Restructures

In discussion of the proposal, the following key points were noted:

- A Higher Education sector in crisis.
- UQU opposes University restructures affecting students and staff.
- UQ has huge financial stores and assets.
- Lack of transparency in the measures UQ will undertake to deal with the University's shortfall in revenue.
- Streamlining/retiring 20-30% unviable courses.
- Responses to a Student Action survey indicate previous years lectures are being presented to current students without a reduction in fees.
- UQU to meet with the VC and the meeting be publicised.

It was moved

THAT UQU OPPOSES ANY ATTEMPTS TO MAKE UP THE SHORTFALL IN REVENUE BY IMPOSING COSTS ON STUDENTS AND STAFF, WHETHER IN THE FORM OF COURSE CUTS, STAFF CUTS, FEE INCREASES, OR ATTACKS ON THE STUDENT UNION.

UQU RECOGNISES THAT WHILE THE UNIVERSITY HAS EXPERIENCED A LOSS IN REVENUE, IT IS NOT IN FINANCIAL CRISIS AND CAN AFFORD TO MAINTAIN STUDENTS AND STAFF CONDITIONS.

UQU OPPOSES ATTEMPTS TO PERMANENTLY SHIFT ELEMENTS OF LEARNING ONLINE OR THE INTRODUCTION OF “BLENDED LEARNING”, RECOGNISING THAT FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT AND SMALLER CLASS SIZES PROVIDE MORE QUALITY EDUCATION.

UQU RECOGNISES THAT STAFF TEACHING CONDITIONS ARE STUDENTS’ LEARNING CONDITIONS.

COUNCIL 109/71

SHIHAN/RIZZALLI

CARRIED

UQ Union council demands a public Q&A with the Vice-Chancellor, which can be attended by any student who wishes, in order to determine what the administration has planned in the way of course cuts, staff cuts, and changes to course delivery.

UQ Union Council directs the Secretary to publish this motion on the UQ Union Facebook page on the morning of May 26.

ACTION: SECRETARY THORNTON

UQ Union calls for academic leniency for students impacted by COVID-19

The following motion was passed following discussion in support of ensuring that students do not bear unreasonable academic penalty during this period of diminished quality of education because of moving to online learning, cancellation of tutorials and their replacement by zoom-calls in the present extraordinary circumstances. The hard work that UQ staff have put in during this period of transition to online learning was acknowledged.

It was moved

THAT UQ UNION DEMANDS THAT ACADEMIC PENALTIES FOR FAILURE OF COURSES BE WAIVED FOR SEMESTER 1, AND SEMESTER 2 IF COURSE DELIVERY REMAINS PRIMARILY

ONLINE, RECOGNISING THE SIGNIFICANT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES ISOLATION HAS IMPOSED ON STUDENTS.

UQ UNION DEMANDS THAT, WHERE APPLICABLE, NO EXAMS TAKE PLACE WHICH ARE WEIGHTED AT 50% OR MORE, AND INSTEAD CALL FOR OTHER FORMS OF ASSESSMENT TO BE WEIGHTED MORE HIGHLY AND FOR OPEN BOOK EXAMS TO BE INTRODUCED.

COUNCIL 109/72

MERCER/PARKER

CARRIED

The UQ Union will contact the university administration demanding the motions be put into effect and the UQ Union will publicise these demands to students using its Facebook page and other social media platforms.

ACTION: UQ UNION

UQ Union calls for a fee reduction for students impacted by COVID-19

In discussion, the following issues were highlighted:

- Withdrawal Without Academic Penalty processes are compromised and missed.
- Shift from in-person to online learning for the foreseeable future had compromised the quality of education at UQ.
- Unstable/limited internet access.
- International students stuck overseas still asked to pay full fees.
- Full fee payment is seen as unfair on all students.

It was moved

THAT THE UQ UNION SHOULD SIMILARLY CALL FOR A FEE REDUCTION, FOR SEMESTER 1 AND ANY PERIOD WHERE ONLINE LEARNING CONTINUES, WITHOUT DIMINISHING THE SSAF AND FSA FUNDING ALLOCATION TO UQU.

THE UQ UNION CALLS FOR THE DATE BY WHICH STUDENTS CAN WITHDRAW WITHOUT FINANCIAL PENALTY TO BE FURTHER EXTENDED UNTIL THE END OF SEMESTER.

COUNCIL 109/73

RIZZALLI/SHIHAN

CARRIED

The UQ Union will contact the university with the demands of the motion and the UQ Union to publish the demands of this motions on the Facebook page of the union by May 26.

ACTION: UQ UNION

UQ Union condemns UQ for proposed redevelopment

In discussing the proposal to oppose the University's proposed redevelopment and with reference to Uqs Master Plan, the following was noted:

- UQ's plan for a \$300 million redevelopment of the current student union complex and Schonell Theatre despite community opposition (protests and a petition).
- It was suggested for the monies to be put towards addressing massive cuts due to COVID-19: job cuts and course cuts.
- Media reports (Queensland Times) indicate UQ is reported to have lost almost half a billion dollars in revenue from International student fees.

President Van Roo Douglas reported that all public works including the Union Complex had been put on an indefinite hold.

It was moved

THAT THE UQ UNION OPPOSES THE DEMOLITION OF THE STUDENT UNION BUILDING, RECOGNISING THAT THIS IS A MAJOR ATTACK ON THE ABILITY OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO ORGANISE.

THE UQ UNION CONDEMNNS THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION FOR PROCEEDING WITH A \$300 MILLION REDEVELOPMENT IN A TIME OF ECONOMIC CRISIS, AND CALLS FOR THE REDIRECTING OF FUNDS TO:

- SUPPORTING STAFF AND STUDENTS IN THE CURRENT PERIOD AND IN THE FUTURE
- AS WELL AS MAINTAINING THE CURRENT UNION COMPLEX.

THAT THE UQ UNION DEMANDS THE ADMINISTRATION IMMEDIATELY HALTS THE \$300 MILLION REDEVELOPMENT.

COUNCIL 109/74

GUTTERIDGE/HEFFERNAN

CARRIED

UQ must refuse to use ProctorU to facilitate exams

In discussion of the proposal for an alternative proctoring solution, and a call for UQU to reaffirm its position to ProctorU, the following points were noted:

- Exam software ProctorU had been contracted to prevent cheating during remote exams.
- UQ did not request for student consent in the use of ProctorU
- ProctorU can remotely access and disable various computer functions.

- Student data can be sold or transferred in case of ProctorU bankruptcy.
- Existing breaches in ProctorU policy re student privacy.
- ProctorU is spyware and invasive.

President Van Roo Douglas informed the meeting that the Union was progressing against ProctorU with written correspondence with the VC and DVCA, with a focus on micro level repercussions. The contract value would be brought to the next meeting.

ACTION: VAN ROO DOUGLAS

It was moved

THAT UQ UNION DEMANDS THAT THE UQ ADMINISTRATION CANCELS ITS CONTRACT WITH PROCTORU TO HOST EXAMINATIONS, AND INSTEAD SEEK ALTERNATE FORMS OF COURSE DELIVERY.

COUNCIL 109/75

SEHL/SHIHAN

CARRIED

(Maddy Taylor leaves the meeting; proxy to Mitchell Ablett-Nelson.)

That the UQU president be condemned for labelling Drew schizophrenic

Cr Plant clarified that President Van Roo Douglas had only described Cr Pavlou's actions as schizophrenic and 'inconsistent with reality,' and noted that the President had not made a comment on Cr Pavlou's mental health per se.

(Nathan Kerr leaves the meeting; proxy to Tom Landy.)

It was moved

THAT THE UQU PRESIDENT BE CONDEMNED FOR LABELLING DREW PAVLOU SCHIZOPHRENIC.

COUNCIL 109/76

PAVLOU/BOYLE

CARRIED

Recorded vote:

Allen Ding	<i>Abstain</i>
Barclay McGain	<i>Against</i>
Billie Kugelman	<i>In Favour</i>
Bradley Plant	<i>Against</i>
Chloe Ainscow	<i>Against</i>
Dan Boyle	<i>In Favour</i>
Drew Pavlou	<i>In Favour</i>

Georgina Quayle	-
Ian Trinh	<i>Against</i>
Jack Dugdale	-
Jennifer Wang	<i>Abstain</i>
Justin Gane	<i>In Favour</i>
Lachlan Hardie	<i>Against</i>
Maddy Taylor	<i>Abstain</i>
Marnie Stollznaw	<i>Against</i>
Mitchell Ablett-Nelson	<i>Abstain</i>
Myah McGinity	<i>In Favour</i>
Nathan Kerr	<i>In Favour</i>
Olivia Nguyen	<i>In Favour</i>
Oula Shihaan	<i>Abstain</i>
Priya De	<i>Abstain</i>
Swin Su	<i>In Favour</i>
Ti Parker	<i>Abstain</i>
Tim Heffernan	<i>Abstain</i>

Semester 2: reopening in-person campus activities

The following was noted in discussions to consider reopening a viable option at present:

- The motion was to request for an *investigation* into reopening in Semester 2.
- Caution be exercised and any move in favour to be based on medical advice.
- Opposition was expressed to any government or institution putting the economy before students' lives.
- Motion to emphasise only medical advice.
- 2nd and 3rd waves to be considered.
- Lock downs to remain for as long as possible with advice from the Government and the Chief Medical Officer.
- The motion was seen as pointless as reopening would be on advice from the Government.

It was moved

THAT THE UQ UNION COUNCIL CALLS UPON THE UQ ADMINISTRATION TO INVESTIGATE THE LIKELIHOOD OF REOPENING IN-PERSON CAMPUS ACTIVITIES FOR SEMESTER 2 AND IF IT CONCLUDES THAT THIS WOULD BE UNFEASIBLE OR DOES NOT COMPLY WITH GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS, THAT IT WOULD CONSIDER THE COSTS IMPOSED UPON STUDENTS GIVEN THAT THE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE WILL HAVE BEEN SEVERELY LOWERED AS A RESULT OF THESE RESTRICTIONS.

COUNCIL 109/77

MCGAIN/LANDY (KERR)

MOTION FAILED

Upholding free speech

Cr Pavlou stated that he should not be expelled to protect the University's business interests/finances. Cr Boyle, in support, said that the University should not be using finances as an excuse to expel students. Cr McGain reiterated support for upholding free speech. The President agreed that no student should be expelled to protect the University's interest.

It was moved

THAT DREW PAVLOU SHOULD NOT BE EXPELLED TO PROTECT THE UNIVERSITY'S BUSINESS INTERESTS.

COUNCIL 109/78

PAVLOU/BOYLE

CARRIED

UQ Union Council Condemns the Executive's unconstitutional suspension of Council meetings

The suspension of the Union Council meeting in April was strongly opposed.

It was moved

THAT COUNCIL AFFIRMS THAT A DIGITAL MEETING OF COUNCIL HAS ALWAYS BEEN ENTIRELY POSSIBLE AND VALID UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, REGULATIONS AND STANDING ORDERS.

UNION COUNCIL THEREFORE CONDEMNS THE UQU EXECUTIVE'S DECISION TO VIOLATE THE CONSTITUTION BY "INDEFINITELY SUSPENDING" COUNCIL MEETINGS AND SUBSEQUENTLY FAILING TO HOLD AN APRIL MEETING OF COUNCIL.

COUNCIL 109/79

GANE/KUGELMAN

CARRIED

Women's Collective Approval of Expenditure

Approval of funding was queried. As the motion was out of order due to budgetary powers, it was tabled and would be investigated.

It was moved

THAT THE UQU COUNCIL DIRECTS THE WOMENS OFFICER EMILY COGGAN TO SEEK APPROVAL FROM THE WOMENS COLLECTIVE BEFORE AUTHORISING EXPENDITURE, FUNDING CRINGE NEOLIBERAL BREAKFASTS AS PER THE UQU REGULATIONS REQUIRING ELECTED OFFICERS TO HEED THEIR RESPECTIVE COLLECTIVES.

1) General Business

Nil.

The meeting closed at 8:48PM.

Confirmed