

UNION COUNCIL MINUTES

From the 8th Ordinary Meeting of the
109th UQ Union Council, 2020

4 PM

Wednesday 21 October 2020

Holt Room, Union Complex

Chair: Mitchell Ablett-Nelson

a) **The Meeting was declared open at 4:11 pm by Secretary Thornton.**

b) **Credentials**

The following were present:

Councillors

Barclay McGain
Bradley Plant
Guohang Ding
Ian Trinh
Ji Davis
Maddy Taylor
Matthew Pereira
Mitchell Ablett-Nelson (Chair)
Myah McGinity
Priya De
Tiarna Parker
Tim Heffernan

Student Executive & Officers

Brodie Fennell
Christian Rizzalli
Ethan Van Roo Douglas (President)
Rebekah Thornton (Secretary)
Rowan Evans
Thomas Landy (Treasurer)

Others

Alex Smock
Amy Sienkiewicz-Grob
Bradley Stone
Elias Blanch
Ella Gutteridge
Gabrielle Callow
Glenda Jacobs
Hugo Reitano
Jaafar Jabur
Jack Bardon
Jason Wang
Jiancong Wang
Jocee Coleman
Jordan Mark
Karen Da Silva & Anna
Heale (Minutes)
Matthew Mercer
Michael Walker
Natasha Brettell
Stjepan Pavic
Tristan Murdoch
Utkrist Paudyal
Will Chen

The following members were absent:

- Daniel Boyle

The following apologies were received:

- Ash Zeller
- Chloe Ainscow
- Emily Coggan
- Ethan Van Roo Douglas (President) – late arrival
- Georgina Quayle
- Jack Dugdale
- Jia yi Wang
- Justin Gane
- Lachlan Hardie
- Nathan Kerr
- Olivia Nguyen
- Oula Shihan
- Rifki Sanahdi
- William Kugelman
- Yunying Su

On leave:

Nil.

The following proxies were received:

Ash Zeller to Priya De
 Chloe Ainscow to Amy Sienkiewicz-Grob
 Georgina Quayle to Mitch Ablett-Nelson
 Jack Dugdale to Amy Sienkiewicz-Grob
 Jia yi Wang to Jiancong Wang
 Justin Gane to Michael Walker
 Lachlan Hardie to Maddy Taylor
 Nathan Kerr to Tom Landy
 Olivia Nguyen to Hugo Reitano
 Oula Shihan to Priya De
 Rifki Sanahdi to Elias Blanch
 William Kugelman to Elias Blanch
 Yunying Su to Jordan Mark

Resignations:

Nil.

It was moved

THAT THE CREDENTIALS FOR THE 8TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE 109TH UQ UNION COUNCIL BE ACCEPTED.

COUNCIL 109/139

THORNTON/ABLETT-NELSON

CARRIED

c) The minutes from the previous meeting

It was moved

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE 7TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE 109TH UQ UNION COUNCIL HELD ON 23RD SEPTEMBER 2020 BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED.

COUNCIL 109/140

TRINH/ABLETT-NELSON

CARRIED

d) Business arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

Nil.

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

The President's, Students' Rights and the Secretary's Report were starred for discussion.

Procedural motion to consider all the other reports en bloc.

CARRIED

f) Reports

It was moved

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

COUNCIL 109/141

LANDY/ABLETT-NELSON

CARRIED

THAT THE GENDER AND SEXUALITY (WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE) REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED.

COUNCIL 109/142

COGGAN/ABLETT-NELSON

CARRIED

THAT THE POSTGRADUATE OFFICER'S REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED.

COUNCIL 109/143

RIZZALLI/ ABLETT-NELSON

CARRIED

The outstanding reports and question time was moved to later in the meeting.

g) Matters arising from the Reports of the Elected Officers

Nil.

h) Reports of Union Bodies

Nil.

i) Business which has been proposed

Censure C&S Department

Cr Plant noted that the following motion was passed at the 3rd Ordinary Meeting of Union Council:

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

As of yet, no minutes have been posted on the Union website. The C&S department should therefore be censured for not complying with the previously passed motion.

Cr Trinh waived speaking rights.

It was moved

THAT THE UQ UNION COUNCIL CENSURES THE 2020 C&S DEPARTMENT FOR NOT FOLLOWING THE MOTION ‘TRANSPARENCY FOR CLUBS AND SOCIETIES’.

COUNCIL 109/144

PLANT/TRINH

CARRIED

Reject the Higher Education Reform Bill

Cr De advised Union Council of the following:

- On 9 October 2020 the Federal Government approved Tehan’s Higher Education Reform Bill which doubled fees for Humanities’ courses and effectively amounts to funding cuts.
- This is an historic attack on higher education that will further deepen inequality in Universities.
- UQ Vice Chancellor Deborah Terry in her capacity as chair of Universities Australia has expressed positive general comments about the suite of reforms.
- The final discretion for the cost of degrees lies with University Senates. The UQ Union should call on the Senate to refuse to implement the fee increases when they are federally mandated on 1 January 2021.
- The Government mandates maximum fees, not minimum.
- It is well within the University’s power not to accept fee increases. E.g. protests against a fee increase the Howard government tried to introduce years ago is a precedence for the University.
- The University administration has had an ambiguous stand on the issue.

Cr Heffernan added that the purpose of the motion was to recognise and criticise the University administration in passing fee increases.

Cr McGain raised that the bill is not about fee increases but to cut fees for students studying IT, Education, Clinical Psychology and Languages. Rather than an attack on higher education, the bill encourages students to consider employment outcomes upon graduation. The Current HECS debt is unsustainable and the current fee structure effectively subsidises study in the Arts and Humanities fields.

It was moved

THAT THE UQ UNION CALLS ON THE UNIVERSITY SENATE TO REJECT THE HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM BILL.

COUNCIL 109/145

DE/HEFFERMAN

CARRIED

Action: UQ Union to advertise this appeal on the Union Facebook page.

ACTION: UNION SECRETARY

Transparency for C&S Grants

Cr Plant asked Council to allow public access to club grant allocations (requests with details and amount allocated).

Cr Trinh waived speaking rights.

It was moved

THAT ALL GRANTS FROM THE C&S DEPARTMENT TO CLUBS AND SOCIETIES BE PUBLISHED SO THAT IT MAY BE VIEWED BY THE PUBLIC, INCLUDING: CLUB, EVENT, DATE, GRANT AMOUNT.

COUNCIL 109/146

PLANT/TRINH

CARRIED

UQU PHOTOGRAPHY JOBS TO UQ STUDENTS

Cr Plant received an anonymous request for UQ Union Photography to remain exclusive to students and alumni of UQ. He noted that event photography is funded by students' fees (SSAF) and is intended to enhance the experience and welfare of UQ students. The following was stated:

- Of the last 14 UQ Union events, 11 were assigned to external photographers (QUT students) even though UQ students indicated interest.
- The Union has previously dismissed photographers' concerns as a non-issue and these concerns have gone unheard for the last two years.

In discussion, the following was noted:

- UQ Union Photography offers an 8-hour credit to the Clubs and Societies community.
- A good supply of UQ photographers (students and alumni) is available.
- The use of external photography services financially impacts UQ students who rely on photography assignments.

- Delays noted in uploading event photos to the Union Facebook page.
- Photography of UQ Union events be handled by either a Council representative, the C&S Committee or UQ Union Photographers instead of the UQU Marketing and Events department.

Cr Trinh waived speaking rights.

Cr McGain stated that price and quality would have to be considered when engaging photographers.

Procedural motion that the motion be put.

CARRIED

It was moved

THAT NO UQU JOB IS ALLOWED TO BE OUTSOURCED TO NON UQ STUDENTS IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THERE ARE AVAILABLE PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO ARE CURRENT OR PAST UQ STUDENTS.

COUNCIL 109/147 PLANT/TRINH

CARRIED

UQ Administration Attacks Staff Christmas Leave

In early September, as part of her first attack on UQ staff in the name of “cost-saving,” VC Deborah Terry announced that there would be changes to the typical leave arrangements for staff over the Christmas period. Up until this year, UQ has always had a mandated closure over Christmas, in which staff have been given 3 days of leave to account for the closure. This year, however, the University administration has announced that not only will those 3 days of additional leave be revoked, but that the Christmas closure will still be going ahead. As a result, the administration is claiming that it is a requirement for staff to use their own personal leave over those 3 days of closure. This disgraceful attack on the leave entitlements of hard-working staff is in fact a direct contravention of the UQ staff Enterprise Agreement, in which it is clearly stipulated that management cannot direct the taking of leave for any members of staff. In light of this, a number of activists in the NTEU have begun organising resistance to the UQ administration’s new measures. It is essential that we, as students, stand with those staff who are leading this fightback and call out the UQ administration for their underhanded attack on the conditions of our educators.

Rizzalli advised that the University’s mandate has seen the granting of 3 days’ additional leave for staff during the Christmas period revoked and for University staff to use personal leave instead. The changes are in contravention of the enterprise agreement evidencing management running over existing, legally-established work rights; Rizzalli encouraged students to show solidarity with University staff and highlighted this as the first concrete attack on UQ staff in the name of COVID cost saving measures. If management is successful in implementing the changes, it will signal that they can continue with further, more far-reaching attempts to cut pay and leave.

Cr Davis was against the motion stating that the use of personal leave during a Christmas closedown was normal practice in professional places.

It was moved

THAT THE UQ UNION STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH NTEU MEMBERS IN CONDEMNING THE UQ ADMINISTRATION'S RECENT CHANGES TO CHRISTMAS CLOSURE ARRANGEMENTS. WE EMPHASISE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTEMPT TO DIRECT THE TAKING OF LEAVE FOR ALL UQ STAFF DIRECTLY CONTRAVENES THE UQ ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT AND THEREFORE THESE PLANS MUST BE ABANDONED IMMEDIATELY.

COUNCIL 109/148

RIZZALLI/DE

CARRIED

4:34pm Ethan Van Roo Douglas joins the meeting.

Natural Gas

Cr Parker stated that:

- we are living in a climate catastrophe and it is shameful that both sides of the government continue to prop up the fossil fuel industry and to push development of the coal industry.
- University students have demonstrated that their number one concern is the environment and Union Council should therefore take a stand against the Federal Government's proposal for a 'gas led recovery'. The project will involve the expansion of fracking and natural gas is not clean but produces methane, which is more destructive than CO2 in the long term.
- in Queensland, the Labor government has announced that 18 new coal mines will be approved for central Queensland on top of the existing coal projects slated for the Galilee Basin.

Student, Ella Gutteridge, raised that it is an international disgrace that in a two-party system there is effectively no opposition on the issue and that Union Council should listen to students' demands for climate action.

It was moved

- THAT THE UQ UNION CONDEMNS THE CLIMATE VANDALISM OF THE FEDERAL AND QUEENSLAND STATE GOVERNMENT AND
- THAT UQ UNION ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO ATTEND THE OCTOBER 23 "NO GAS LED RECOVERY: CANCEL QUEENSLAND COAL" DEMONSTRATION AT 5PM IN KING GEORGE SQUARE.

COUNCIL 109/149

PARKER/GUTTERIDGE

CARRIED

UQ Union stands in solidarity with the Thailand protests for democracy

Student Matthew Mercer advised Union Council that the protests in Thailand are overwhelmingly student protests against an undemocratic government; a government that the Australian government has economic ties with and that the Union should therefore show solidarity with the protestors.

They described the situation:

“Over the last few days, tens of thousands have taken to the streets in Thailand in a determined fight to overthrow the monarchy in the name of democracy, also including demands for the removal of the nation's prime minister and amending the country's constitution. In a country where insulting the monarchy can be punishable with 15 years in prison, it is perhaps unsurprising that the struggle for democracy has been met with harsh state repression by the quasi-military government. More and more protesters, a large number of whom are young workers, university students, or high school students, have taken a heroic stand regardless. Many thousands were shocked and stirred into action by the Thai police's use of water cannons, using water laced with chemicals typically used to make teargas in order to harm and intimidate the protesters, and also laced with blue dye, so that police were able to identify protesters after the demonstrations had ended. Police have banned all political gatherings of 5 or more people, and so far arrested over 50 people, including some leaders of the movement, a targeted program of intimidation and repression. It's entirely possible that there could be a repeat of the student protests in 1976, in which the Thai military massacred at least 40 protesting students. The Australian government has a trade and economic relationship with the Thai government, so as Australian students in a neighbouring region, we have a responsibility to stand in solidarity with any of those who are struggling for democracy around the world, particularly when many of those struggling are students like us.”

Cr De waived their speaking rights.

Cr McGain echoed the sentiment and expressed support for the motion calling for transparency.

It was moved

THAT THE UQ STUDENT UNION OFFICIALLY STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE THAILAND PROTESTERS IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY.

COUNCIL 109/150

MERCER/DE

CARRIED

That the UQ Student Union council takes a solidarity photo and uploads it to its social media platforms at the soonest possible time.

ACTION: DE

Theft of data for electoral purposes

Cr Trinh explained that the purpose of the motion is to condemn Rebuild for the theft of student data during the election. They noted that Rebuild are yet to publicly distance themselves from the person responsible, giving the impression that the recently elected executive are complicit.

The Union President waived speaking rights.

Cr McGain queried whether the motion called for any concrete penalty to be imposed. In response, Cr Trinh noted that the issue has been referred to the relevant statutory authorities and it is up to the electoral tribunal to decide on an appropriate penalty.

Cr De stated that while they agreed that the action was a breach of student privacy, the motion is a cynical move designed as point scoring against political opponents. De said that the 90 minute (no campaigning) time out for Rebuild on the Friday of election week had been decided by the Returning Officer and that Council cannot determine an outcome.

It was moved

- THAT THE UQ UNION EXPRESSES ITS DISAPPOINTMENT AT REBUILD, FOR HACKING INTO THE UNION'S DATABASE, AS A MEANS OF GATHERING DATA TO SEND OUT A MASS TEXT MESSAGE TO STUDENTS, TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO VOTE FOR REBUILD ON THE FINAL DAY OF VOTING. UQ UNION COUNCIL ALSO EXPRESSES ITS DISAPPOINTMENT THAT REBUILD HAVE NOT PUBLICLY CONDEMNED THE ROGUE OPERATIVE ON ITS FACEBOOK PAGE, SHOWING THAT REBUILD ARE COMPLICIT IN STEALING STUDENT'S DATA.
- THAT UQ UNION COUNCIL EXPRESSES CONCERN THAT REBUILD HAVE CIRCUMVENTED ELECTORAL RULES AND REGULATIONS, IN A BID TO WIN THE EXECUTIVE, COUNCIL AND SEMPER FLOREAT BALLOTS DURING THIS YEAR'S UQU ELECTION.
- THAT UQ UNION COUNCIL EXPRESSES ITS OUTRAGE AT THE REBUILD ORGANISERS, FOR FAILING TO OUTRIGHTLY CONDEMN THOSE WHO OPERATE AS ROGUES. COUNCIL EXPRESSES ITS DISPPPOINTMENT THAT REBUILD WOULD BE WILLING TO BREACH LAWS AND THE UNION REGULATIONS, AS A MEANS OF PERSUADING STUDENTS TO VOTE FOR THEM.

COUNCIL 109/151

TRINH/VAN ROO DOUGLAS

CARRIED

Recorded vote:

Priya De (proxy for Ash Zeller) *Abstain*
Barclay McGain *In Favour*

	Bradley Plant	<i>In Favour</i>
Amy Sienkiewicz-Grob (proxy for Chloe Ainscow)		<i>In Favour</i>
Mitch Ablett-Nelson (proxy for Georgina Quayle)		<i>In Favour</i>
	Guohang Ding	<i>Abstain</i>
	Ian Trinh	<i>In Favour</i>
Amy Sienkiewicz-Grob (proxy for Jack Dugdale)		<i>In Favour</i>
	Ji Davis	<i>In Favour</i>
Jiancong Wang (proxy for Jia yi Wang)		<i>Abstain</i>
Michael Walker (proxy for Justin Gane)		<i>Abstain</i>
Maddy Taylor (proxy for Lachlan Hardie)		<i>In Favour</i>
	Maddy Taylor	<i>In Favour</i>
	Matthew Pereira	<i>In Favour</i>
	Mitchell Ablett-Nelson (Chair)	<i>In Favour</i>
	Myah McGinity	<i>In Favour</i>
	Tom Landy (proxy for Nathan Kerr)	<i>In Favour</i>
Hugo Reitano (proxy for Olivia Nguyen)		<i>Abstain</i>
	Priya De (proxy for Oula Shihan)	<i>Abstain</i>
	Priya De	<i>Abstain</i>
Elias Blanch (proxy for Rifki Sanahdi)		<i>Abstain</i>
	Tierna Parker	<i>Abstain</i>
	Tim Heffernan	<i>Abstain</i>
Elias Blanch (proxy for William Kugelman)		<i>Abstain</i>
	Jordan Mark (proxy for Yunying Su)	<i>Abstain</i>

Workplace health and safety on University sites

Cr De waived speaking rights to Ella Gutteridge.

Ella Gutteridge advised Union Council that the motion relates to the recent death of a construction worker on campus at Curtin University when a roof collapsed on a construction site. The contractor was asked to speed up the process of installing glass prior to the incident, resulting in a pointless death linked to the University's desire to remain as profitable as possible.

Union Council was alerted to serious safety issues raised by the CFMEU on construction of the Liveris building. Given the recent death and serious injuries on construction at Curtin University, UQU should call on the administration to ensure safety standards are upheld and that UQU will support workplace safety stop works.

Cr Parker raised that council should stand in opposition to cutting corners when it comes to safety and all workers have the right to come home safe. The pressure that was exerted on construction workers by the Curtin University administration is directly linked to the fatality.

Cr Davis raised that contractors are ultimately responsible for maintaining safety standards, not the client. In response, Cr De noted that universities are responsible for whom they contract and for the for-profit model of universities puts workers' lives at risk.

Procedural motion that the motion be put

CARRIED

It was moved

THAT THE UQ UNION STANDS WITH THE CONSTRUCTION, FORESTRY, MINING AND ENERGY UNION (CFMEU) IN SUPPORTING WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY ON UNIVERSITY SITES.

COUNCIL 109/152

DE/PARKER

FAILED

j) Reports continued

Union President's Report

President Van Roo Douglas gave a verbal report:

- It is the end of the President's second year in Union office.
- Working on the development of the Student Honour Code
- Finalising the Union's COVID Pivot Plan
- Working on the Union's long-term strategic plan. 2021 is expected to look much like 2020. Outlets are being recalibrated to respond to the change in demand/foot traffic on campus.
- Incredibly busy ensuring governance structures: increasing secretariat for 2021 and amending the position descriptions.
- Board of Directors: council appointments are postponed until the returning officer is available to conduct them; at an extra ordinary meeting or at the next Council meeting.

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

COUNCIL 109/153

VAN ROO DOUGLAS/ABLETT-NELSON

CARRIED

Question A - Course Cuts

Cr De queried whether the Union President had been privy to any discussions at Senate meetings on future course cuts. The President responded that they were not privy to any information on program architecture that is not already public knowledge and published on the UQ website.

Question B – Free Speech Report

Cr De asked for information on the content of the President's free speech report in lieu of the document's circulation. In response, the Union President noted that he had sought legal advice and has been advised not to publish the report while the review was ongoing.

However, the President gave a brief overview of the content of his report, including:

- The increasing commercialization of universities and the subsequent impact on free speech

- The UQ senate endorsement of the *UQ Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom* in February of this year and the lack of action taken since the endorsement.

Student Rights (Academic Advocacy) Report

THAT THE STUDENT RIGHTS (ACADEMIC ADVOCACY) REPORT BE ACCEPTED AND CONFIRMED.

COUNCIL 109/154

FENNELL/ABLETT-NELSON

CARRIED

Question C – Academic Advocacy Network (AAN) on the incoming fee increases

Cr Heffernan queried the VP Fennell's response to fee increases.

VP Fennell stated that they supported the position the Union had taken.

Cr Heffernan questioned whether VP Fennell believed that the AAN has been an effective strategy in fighting the higher education bill fee increases and whether lobbying as opposed to protests was the more effective response.

VP Fennell explained that bringing the student voice to faculty members is the aim of the AAN, that a protest is not going to change a Head of School's opinion and that the AAN is not the avenue to fight fee increases.

Cr Heffernan noted that the Vice President's response demonstrates that lobbying is an ineffective strategy.

Union Secretary's Report

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

COUNCIL 109/155

THORNTON/ABLETT-NELSON

CARRIED

Question D – Cross nominating in Elections

Cr McGain asked Secretary Thornton whether there would be efforts to restrict cross nominating for UQU elections in the future. In response, Secretary Thornton stated that their job is to follow the regulations and the election will continue in its current form as long as the regulations remain the same and advised proposed changes to the regulations be presented to Rules Committee via the Council Secretary.

k) Other business

Nil.

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 5:26 PM.