



**Student Guild of Curtin University**

**Guild Council**

**Declaration of Approval of Meeting Minutes**

I declare that the minutes of the Guild Council held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2020 have been approved and are true and accurate.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fatma Sehic".

~~Katelyn Colson~~ Fatma Sehic  
Guild Council Chairperson

1. Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners:

*"We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Whadjuk people. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this university, city and this region"*

2. Attendance

- 2.1. Members Present; Katelyn Colson (Chair), Chris Hall, Bridge Truell, Lachlan Lee, Dylan Botica, Min Dee Chia, Chris Grant, Nicola Gulvin, Jason Kim, Beatrice Panganiban, Fatma Sehic, Jesse Naylor Zambrano;
- 2.2. Others Present; David Luketina (Managing Director), Nika Velios (Minute-Secretary);
- 2.3. Apologies and Leave of Absence; Luke Bronson, Hana Arai;
- 2.4. Absent and Late Apologies; Brianna Hodgkinson;

3. Disclosure of any potential or perceived Conflicts of Interest

Chris advised that all elected in the Guild elections have a conflict of interest with item 7.4, Guild Elections 2020.

4. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

**RESOLVED/ GC #23-2020**

Motion: That the Guild Council approves the minutes of its meeting held on the 28/05/20 and Circular Resolutions #5, #6 and #7 as true and accurate records of proceedings.

Moved: Lachlan Lee (Secretary)

Seconded: Jesse Naylor Zambrano (Chair of Representation Board)

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Nil

6. Reports

6.1. President – On Leave.

6.2. Vice President – Education

Chris H shared the following in addition to his report:

- Acting President for the week and keeping up with the two portfolios, apologises for any delays in responses;
- Met with Sue Ellery and other WA Guild Presidents (except for Murdoch) regarding the impacts of state hard border closure on universities and options for international students;
- Met with the Vice Chancellor to discuss student issues around accessing Curtin departments as they are all separate areas within the university; and
- Intention to meet with Nevil Hiscock (head of Curtin Connect).

Jesse queried whether the Student Housing Advisory Committee has been elected and the plans for it. Chris H advised that the pandemic has impacted the period of involvement for students. Lachlan confirmed that the intention is to re-commence/reconvene for Semester 2.

*Katelyn ceased the conversation around campus re-opening and online elections until agenda item 7.4.*

Jesse queried how many Stress Less Weeks there were per year, whether there has been feedback and plans for changes to them. Chris H responded that they are during the study week of each semester and anecdotal feedback is that connections with students are easier in person. He added that stress less week worked well online (being the first time), and the objective to provide activities was achieved. There was positive feedback for prizes and where it was possible to engage.

6.3. Vice President – Activities – Submitted  
As tabled.

6.4. Secretary – Submitted.  
Lachlan advised that an attendance register has been established and will be updated once the minutes have been confirmed for each Guild Council meeting. He will be following up with individuals directly when attendance requirements are breached or close to being breached.

Dylan queried the reason behind the delay for sending the Agenda for this meeting. Lachlan shared that discussions for agenda item 7.4 were required to be included for this meeting; the Agenda was released once the motion was complete.

*Katelyn ceased the conversation around other regulation changes and online elections until agenda item 7.4.*

**RESOLVED/ GC #24-2020**

Motion: That the Guild Council **approves** the reports.

Moved: Lachlan Lee (Secretary)

Seconded: Fatma Sehic (Guild Councillor)

7. Business on Notice

7.1. Reforecast 2020 Operating & Capital Budget'

**RESOLVED/ GC #25-2020**

That the Guild Council approve the 2020 Reforecast Operating and Capital Budgets as attached upon the recommendation of the Finance and Risk Committee.

Moved: Lachlan Lee (Secretary)

Seconded: Chris Hall (Vice President – Education)

7.2. Curtin Student Guild Committees Constitutions Changes.

Lachlan shared the changes have been approved by Legal Committee and that the majority of the changes reflect title updates and how we operate. Jesse acknowledged that the changes are good and making committees more accessible. Fatma queried as to why it was chosen to list “not identify as a man” and “not identify as a cis-man”. Lachlan advised that in consultation with the Guild’s Queer Officer, this was the recommendation and caters to the required description. Whereby if you identify as a man for all intensive purposes you are a man and should be treated as such therefore included as a man for the affirmative action parts.

**RESOLVED/ GC #26-2020**

Motion: That the Guild Council resolve to approve the proposed changes to the committee constitutions.

Moved: Lachlan Lee (Secretary)

Seconded: Jesse Naylor Zambrano (Chair of Representation Board)

7.3. Curtin Student Guild Regulation Changes.

Lachlan noted that the changes are from 2018, an update to something more functional and includes title changes. Chris H added that the track changes in red are from the original 2018 changes, and the blue changes are additional changes. Once approved by Guild Council, this will go to the Legislative Committee in the University for final approval.

**RESOLVED/ GC #27-2020**

Motion: That the Guild Council resolve to incorporate the changes proposed in the listed Guild Regulations.

Moved: Lachlan Lee (Secretary)

Seconded: Chris Hall (Vice President – Education)

#### 7.4. Elections 2020

Chris H shared that the recommendation is to have an online election for 2020 due to the current situation and restrictions. Encompassing a number of concerns with the growing pandemic over east, everyone's health and the financial situation of the Guild. This recommendation provides the opportunity for elections to take place safely. Lalchan added that the financial implications from the pandemic has hit the Guild hard;

- clubs have been advised there are no further grants,
- WASM require to operate on a significantly reduced budget, and
- everyone has had to make sacrifices so far.

it is anticipated the Guild would not be in such a position moving forward in future years.

David shared that the logistics to run the Guild elections cost between \$25K-30K. Running a physical election is quite sizable and incorporates the hiring of equipment, following regulations to the specific timing of voting, employing people to run the elections and so forth. Therefore due to the scale of it, it is difficult to swap and change at a whim; specifically to cater to required timeframes. David continued to state that it is a judgement call on whether there will be a second wave in WA or even a cluster on campus. This is something that is required to be taken into account. In terms of software, the Guild has been testing options and making it as robust as possible. It is evident no system is perfect and all scenarios have risks. Ultimately staff and the Returning Officer will run what is decided.

Chris G raised concerns towards how this matter was brought up and that he is opposed to the motion. He shared that:

- there is a lack of information on what it will be and look like;
- online elections are fundamentally more undemocratic and reduce the ability for scrutiny and debate;
- gives an advantage to incumbents, incumbents have the network unlike minor parties and independents;
- there is always a new cohort of students who do not have an established network (having an approx. 3 year turnaround time on campus);
- concerns towards the secrecy and integrity of the ballot; and
- paper ballots are easier to scrutinise.

#### **RESOLVED**

Motion: Request to move the meeting in camera for following discussion.

Moved: Dylan Botica (Guild Councillor)

Seconded: Chris Grant (Guild Councillor)

*6.46pm: Meeting moved to 'in camera'.*

*6.55pm: Meeting resumed 'out of camera'.*

Dylan shared a variety of concerns towards online voting as well as the motion:

- online voting adds a lot of unnecessary potential for error;
- voting is completely unseen;

- no paper trail;
- re-count is not possible;
- no assurance of security that can be reasonably addressed;
- various avenues for theft or forced votes;
- not possible to be fully accountable for each vote;
- countries and states still maintain physical voting methods;
- the risk and potential for covid-19 could be addressed later/closer to the date, online could be an option of last resort;
- no clear mention in the motion on how the remaining regulations are impacted, i.e. it seems in person campaigning is still possible;
- voting can be done from a socially distant way in person;
- 48 hours is not substantial time to consider and discuss a change like this, setting a precedent for further elections;
- Appropriate detail is not written in the motion; and
- Transparency and accountability should be of priority over financial impacts.

Nicola raised that:

- A priority should be to maintain democracy for the years to come,
- Elections should be a financial priority, understandably there are students in need however this consideration is for the longevity of the Guild and safety of students;
- Representatives should be elected on a democratic ground;
- Students should be elected properly and not on fraudulent accounts; and
- More time is required for this discussion as it is a big decision to make.

Jesse shared it is not ideal to spend the large amount of money while dealing with Covid-19, however the Guild elections and maintaining its integrity should be a priority. The financial cost of the elections should not be a big factor of this decision.

Dylan queried what the Guild intended to do to prevent students voting with or without their knowledge. David shared what the system can do and has been tested, acknowledging there is always risks:

- Single use link emailed directly to every eligible voter, enter some information such as student ID (the link can only be used once). For someone to cast more than one vote, the individual requires to forward the unique link and know their student ID number;
- A receipt is provided for each vote;
- Hacking the system is considered unlikely, never an absolute guarantee however has appropriate security standards for such systems;

He added that the Guild is currently further looking at whether it is possible to track multiple votes from an IP address.

Dylan identified when logging into a library computer, email accounts can automatically be accessed. Should someone leave their computer open, anyone can go on and vote. David agreed and noted that votes can be cast when individual's act carelessly; it is not likely to make a material change to the election.

Dylan queried whether in person campaigning is allowed. David shared that to change the mode and mechanics of an entire election is difficult and in terms of campaigning, a lot is also done online and easier to change campaigning at a whim.

Dylan queried whether individual votes can be scrutinised in the online system. David shared there would not be a material difference between the different modes of elections. In terms of in person elections, the Returning Officer is always involved in the process and there is no issue with scrutineers being able to examine the voting.. David suggested that detailed questions that are technically based should be emailed through outside of this meeting so they can be specifically addressed.

Dylan queried whether a particular vote can be deciphered to determine who cast the vote. David advised that it is possible to capture any information, but is his understanding that votes be anonymous. He added that capturing an IP address increases the capability to identify any suspicious behaviour. A Returning Officer can always pull information out prior to a scrutineer reviewing. David shared that it is possible to have the Guild's auditor be a part of the process early on to verify the process is robust. Dylan confirmed that it is possible to verify suspicious activity however not who the particular voter is.

Dylan queried whether paper ballots would be accessible for those who cannot access online votes. David shared anything is possible and he will act on the instructions of Guild Council.

Chris H shared that he is disappointed around the financial conversations and they are very short sighted, re-iterating that it is a significant amount of money. He added that he would like the Council to think more long term, and undertake the moral argument around such finances. He shared:

- The importance of a scrutineering process or some sort to review how each vote is cast, and
- From research approx. 90% of votes are in the first period.

The motion is in regards to what mode the elections will be held.

Chris H also shared there may be the need to change the timing of campaigning and voting period if voting is online; to be able to maintain integrity of voters and users. Such formalities would need to be later discussed in Council. Another form of verification would be important for online voting, to have another sense of security when accessing a vote.

Chris H queried when a decision requires to be made on this topic, David responded the decision is required within the next 2 weeks. Chris H re-iterated that this motion is for the mode of voting and not all elements of the regulations.

Nicola shared these conversations are important and it is the duty of all representatives to ensure all due diligence is covered. She queried whether the scrutineering still exists in an online format. David advised that scrutineering would still exist, however different; raw data, process of voting and details for proof of votes can be provided. Nicola queried if ramifications for a miss-election and worst case scenario been considered; for financial and time. David shared it is a possibility, however he believes that there would be a higher risk for Covid-19 interrupting in person elections than that of, say, a server crashing. There is risk for either mode, and it is a matter of balancing pros and cons for each.

Nicola queried what timeframes are required for any regulation changes. David advised no changes are required, the motion relates to the relevant sections and it allows for both online or in person elections at the direction of Guild Council. Jesse agrees that not enough time has been provided to consider this motion, and would not feel comfortable to vote until all queries and concerns have been addressed. Jesse queried whether it is an option to run with an in person elections until such time as it is deemed to unsafe to due covid-19 and then change to online elections, as there is no cost to do the election online. David shared that from a budget side, there have been extensive expenditure cuts and this has been across the board except for students in hardship. He added that from an election perspective, to run with a physical election certain equipment bookings and printing is required to be done prior of which some are not possible to cancel and be refunded. He stated that \$20K of expenditure would be consumed a lot earlier than when the elections are held.

Dylan re-iterated that it is not possible to vote to overhaul the regulations without the proper information and it does not exist in the motion. A lot of the components of the regulations only make sense for in person voting. Postal votes become redundant and such information is not provided. Chris G added that even with software for online elections being completely water tight, the concerns towards individuals undertaking shady loop-hole dealings could exist in such student politics. In person ballot allows for officials to be present.

#### *General Discussion:*

Fatma raised that from a student perspective and having so many unknowns from being in a pandemic, the knowns are that students are struggling financially and there is a strong demand to reduce student fees. She is concerned how the general student body would view the Guild deciding to spend up to \$30K to run a physical election and not focusing its energy elsewhere. Fatma shared this does trigger reputational concerns even if the intention is in the best interests of the students. Potentially further thought may be needed around how the student body outside of the Guild perceive such a decision of spending a large amount of money on a physical election. Jesse felt the importance to raise that at Guild Council, it shouldn't be of concern around the reputation decisions make affect the Guild, or how student representatives are seen; it should focus of making the best decision possible. Chris H clarified that it is the responsibility of Guild Council to consider the reputation and risk of the Guild's image; regardless of an individual's personal perspective.

Fatma shared that the Guild is perceived as an ethical organisation or committee, the reputation is incredibly important. Whereby if a student cannot believe in a union, then the union is powerless and does not have support. Dylan voiced that it is of greater concern (or a bigger issues) if students cannot trust or have full confidence in the integrity of the ballot.

Chris G re-iterated that incumbents are already established and have networks, by having in person elections/polling, this allows for independents or small parties have a say in the process. Additionally, allows the student body to be more informed and can have a democratic vote. Debate is crucial and online is more of a back channel.



Chris H shared that the regulations still have a campaigning component and the candidates are still released. In terms of established connections, this exists in either format of the election.

Katelyn shared that she is not opposed to the idea of online elections, however does not agree with the current format of the motion. She suggested that the motion should be re-submitted to Council. There are no concerns towards online election in terms of cyber security and the back end. Concerns are towards online campaigning and the inability for someone to wonder around entire campus; i.e. the more physical side. The amount of paper used for elections is no necessary. There are benefits to both sides of the argument, the Guild is smaller than the national population of any country. The size of the Guild and voting for a student election is a lot smaller scale.

Motion: That the Guild Council require that voting for the 2020 student guild elections (including NUS elections) be conducted using i-voting (electronic voting systems utilising the internet).

Moved by: Chris Hall (Vice President – Education)

Seconded by: Lachlan Lee (Secretary)

**RESOLVED**

Procedural Motion: The Guild Council delay the vote for 7.4 to a special meeting to be called within 2 weeks' time.

Moved: Chris Hall (Vice President – Education)

Seconded: Fatma Sehic (Guild Councillor)

8. Minutes of Committees Reporting to the Guild Council

8.1. Representation Board – Meetings held on 21/5/2020,

8.2. Executive Committee – Meetings held on 25/6/2020, 11/6/2020, 28/5/2020, 14/5/2020 and 6/5/2020

8.3. Finance and Risk Committee – N/A

8.4. Activities Committee – Meeting held on 9/6/2020 and 21/5/2020

**RESOLVED/ GC #28-2020**

Motion: That the Guild Council **notes** the minutes of the boards and committees en bloc.

Moved: Lachlan Lee (Secretary)

Seconded: Chris Hall (Vice President – Education)

9. General Business.

It was discussed that Lachlan will arrange to special Guild Council meeting and that it will be held online.

10. Next Meeting –

The next ordinary meeting of the Guild Council is Thursday, the 27<sup>th</sup> of August at 6:00pm to be held in person, with online attendance options. Documents and motions are to be submitted no later than 4pm on Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup> to [secretary@guild.curtin.edu.au](mailto:secretary@guild.curtin.edu.au).

**Closed: 7.55pm**