



The University of Western Australia Academic Staff Association

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 10TH 2019 AT 12.30PM IN THE ACORN ROOM, ABOVE THE GUILD SHOPS, UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PRESENT: N Kirkham (President and Chair), and members including D Judge, R da Silva Rosa, S Tarrant, J O'Shea, S Dobbs, M Ponsonnet, A Hughes-d'Aeth, K Glaskin, L O'Sullivan, S Maloney, J Elfving-Hwang, M Forsey, P Rowshan Farzad, T Harper, A Gardner, G Acciaioli, L Fernandes, A Gaynor, and N O'Sullivan.

APOLOGIES: E Brink, R Carroll, P Henry, H Jacomard, P Kastner, A McKinley, B Montgomery, G Neylon and W Taylor.

PROXY VOTES REGISTERED BY:
R Carroll, P Kastner, B Montgomery, G Neylon and W Taylor.

ATTENDING: J Manvell (administrator)

1. WELCOME:

The President took the Chair and formally opened the meeting by acknowledging that the meeting takes place on the traditional lands of the Wadjuk Noongar people, recognising and respecting their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

Members were welcomed, both current and honorary, to the 2019 AGM of the UWA Academic Staff Association and thanked for making the time to come along. Apologies and proxy votes were noted and the meeting declared quorate.

2. MINUTES:

K Glaskin **PROPOSED** that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18th October 2018 are accepted. Seconded by J Elfving-Hwang.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

None

4. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR:

D Judge **PROPOSED** that *Caffarelli & Associates, Chartered Accountants, be appointed as Auditors for 2019-20.* Seconded by S Tarrant.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER:

S Tarrant **PROPOSED** that the WA Industrial Registrar be requested to arrange for the WA Electoral Commission to conduct the elections for 2020-21. Seconded by A Gaynor.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. TREASURER'S REPORT read by the Secretary, Associate Professor Stella Tarrant in the absence of the Treasurer, Professor Allan McKinley

For the year ending 30 June 2019, the Association ran at a small loss of \$ 890, compared with a profit of \$ 8,850 in the previous accounting period.

This is due in part to the late payment of workload-release payments to the Committee for the year 2017-18, which are reflected in these accounts.

The Philippa Maddern Award has been held again this year, with costs incurred in both the 2019 and 2020 financial years, but other expenses remain relatively consistent. Expenditure is kept within annual income as much as possible.

Falling income from declining membership and low interest return on investments continue to be of concern, and we encourage everyone here to talk about the Association with their colleagues. Casual academic staff are able to join UWAASA for a cost of \$20 p.a., whilst membership fees for salaried staff continue at a low 0.16% of gross pay.

N Kirkham **PROPOSED** that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Seconded by G Acciaioli.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. PRESIDENT'S REPORT by the President, Dr Nin Kirkham

UWA ASA has had a very productive and successful year, which is surprising considering the broader University of WA context which I think it is fair to say has been unsettled and, in some respects, hostile to our Association. Nevertheless, as a committee we have just pushed on doing what we do, which is represent in good faith the views, interests and concerns of the Academic staff here at UWA.

I will just try to give you a quick summary of some of the highlights of the past year before we open up a broader conversation. So what have we been up to?

Probably the most significant project that the UWA ASA Committee has undertaken this year is our Legislative Review Project with Deirdre De Souza. This project was conceived during a discussion between myself, Jamie O'Shea and Jo Manvell on what the ASA could do to make a significant contribution to improving Academic Governance at UWA. We made the decision to employ Deirdre to, in some sense, finish the job that she had started prior to her untimely departure from the Uni. We worked with Deirdre to put forward the discussion paper on the revision of the academic statutes and regulations and we sponsored a Collegial Conversation on the topic. The project has now been taken up by a working party of Academic Board chaired by Colin MacLeod which is about to undertake some final consultation before taking the proposal to the November Board meeting for discussion and decision. I think that this represents a really strong achievement for the ASA, the proposal and the process we undertook were constructive, engaged and consultative and both could really stand as a model for how to drive necessary change at this Uni. I want to note particular thanks to Deirdre De Souza and our VP Debra Judge for their work on this.

UWA ASA hosted two forums in the past year. The first one was focused on "Trigger Warnings" and we had a panel discussion featuring our own Chair of Academic Board, Ray Da Silva Rosa, current Chair of the re-convened Gender Studies programme Chantal Bourgault du Coudray, and ex UWA political philosopher David Van Mill.

The other forum, on "The Challenges Facing Casual Staff" was hosted by the School of Design and accompanied by a preliminary print making workshop a few days prior to the meeting. This was a very well attended forum and it was great to see the engagement across the spectrum of academic and general employment types with the particular concerns that casual staff face. I would like to thank Bill Taylor and Emily Brink from the School of Design for conceiving of this forum and for making it happen.

We also recently hosted our biennial Philippa Maddern awards, created six years ago by the UWA Academic Staff Association (UWAASA) to honour the life and legacy of historian Philippa Maddern's leadership, her mentoring of students and contribution to pedagogy. We received more nominations this time than we ever have before which seems to suggest that the award is gaining broad recognition in the University. We also had the honour of having the Chancellor Robert French to present the awards and there was a pretty decent showing of the UWA Exec with David Sadler choosing to attend our awards rather than the Convocation awards (unfortunately and unintentionally organised for the same night) and the VC reportedly popping in for a few moments. Social Sciences were dominant with Professor Lyn Parker taking our Present Staff category and Dr Romit Dasgupta one of the two *Posthumous* awards. Lyn gave a rousing acceptance speech which was very well received by the academics in the audience, a transcript of which is available on our website. Professor Kim Kirsner from Psychology took out the award in the *no-longer working at UWA* category and Professor Robert Lambert from Business received the other posthumous award. The night was a great success and thanks must go to our special project officer Ali Hansen for her hard work in organising the Awards.

Over the past year we have had a couple of interesting attendees at our Committee meetings. At our meeting of October last year, the Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellor both attended, although they were unable to stay for more than 30 minutes. We used the time as constructively as possible beginning with a short introduction from the Chair about the role of the Staff Association and its relationship to the Executive. I believe that the text of my comments to the VC and SDVC from that meeting are available on our website. More recently we hosted the Chancellor at our July Committee meeting. The Chancellor himself suggested that he attend again and we had a very productive and congenial discussion about the state of the University and the desired character of the next VC. At the conclusion of the meeting the Chancellor invited us to make suggestions of appropriate candidates for VC and just last week we took him up on this offer by sending a letter to Senate on behalf of the UWA ASA Committee, outlining what we see as important in the skills, capabilities and background of a VC and suggesting some possible candidates. I am happy to run through the names we gave if people are interested.

That sums up a few of the highlights from the preceding year and brings me to the opportunity to thank all those involved. First, Debra Judge, our VP, purveyor of great advice and staunch defender of the academic mission of the University. Thanks to Stella Tarrant our Secretary and Allan McKinley, our Treasurer for their hard work over the past year. Thanks to the dedicated members of the UWA Academic Staff Association committee for all their work (Stephen Dobbs, Bill Taylor, Stuart Bunt, Jamie O'Shea, Ray Da Silva Rosa, Brett Montgomery) and also to our colleague and friend Victoria Burbank who, even though retired, continues to attend our committee meetings and provide support and encouragement for our endeavours. I also would like to take the opportunity to thank our outgoing committee members: Bill Taylor for his service on the committee—Bill has stepped down due to sabbatical and other commitments but continues to his concern for academic issues (evidenced by his organising of the School of Design Forum on Causal Staff) for his years of service on the committee.

My personal thanks to Stuart Bunt who this year retired from the University and hence from the UWA ASA committee. Stuart has been an absolute stalwart of the ASA since he joined in 1995, among other achievements defending the continued independent existence of the ASA against the NTEU's continual attempts to have it amalgamate. UWA is one of very few Australian Universities which continues to have an ASA to represent and defend the views and concerns of academics locally. Stuart has been a committee member for more than 20 years, serving as Secretary from 1999 to 2003, either Vice President or President from 2003 to 2007, and Vice President from 2007 until 2017. Stuart's contribution to the ASA is unmatched and he deserves our gratitude.

I want to welcome to this year's committee Marco Rizzi. Like our secretary Stella Tarrant, Marco joins us from the Law School and has already shown excellent leadership on the matter of the University's purchase of Cisco's Involvio app. Finally, UWA ASA continues to be so fortunate in our administrative officer, Joanna Manvell. Jo is our rock, she knows the business of the ASA inside out and keeps everything ticking over with admirable style.

Again, thanks to you all for coming. Please feel free to ask me any question or raise any issues that you would like the ASA Committee to pursue in the coming year.

R da Silva Rosa **PROPOSED** that the President's Report be accepted. Seconded by D Judge.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. OPEN DISCUSSION was broad and wide-ranging, with the following points made:-

- i. The Chair of Academic Board raised the issue of the unclear division of authority between Academic Board and Academic Council. Loosely speaking, the Board is more concerned with Academic issues, the Council with Research ones. The Chair advised that people could write to him with their organisational questions, but that the new Statute will make things clearer.
- ii. There is a need to be better informed about the University's finances. Could UWAASA employ someone to do a financial report? It is clear that the current financial model is not working. A possible question to Academic Board would be to clarify the cross subsidy of teaching to research, and the amount now being spent on central administration.
- iii. There is general disquiet about the micro-management being done by the Vice-Chancellor. There is also concern about the number of strategic appointments that have been made and the amount of money spent on consultancies.

There being no further business, the President and Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 1.55pm.