



WOLLONGONG
UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION

JUNE MEETING MINUTES

Date: 28 June 2020

Time: 18:00

Location: Discord

President: Taani Hendriks

General Secretary:
Imogen Draisma

June Meeting Minutes

MEETING OPENED 18:08

Acknowledgement of Country: Cr Hendriks

Apologies: Dylan Tomasi and Eliza Lourenço

Attendees: Taani Hendriks, Imogen Draisma, Aish Cowgill, Clare Dunning, Kaia Cox, Alec Hall, Jamie Caulfield, Liam Douglas, Robin Pierson, Sean McLachlan, Alex Oluk, Albert Leung, Katherine Minns, Jack Mansell and Jye Langley.

Confirmation of the March Minutes: Moved: Taani Hendriks Seconded: Aish Cowgill

Correspondence Incoming: NUS Education Conference (EdCon) to be held online due to COVID-19 outbreaks - 12 - 13 July
Letter from VC about the demands of the 'Fight Back' campaign

Correspondence Outgoing: N/A

President's Report: Been successful in collaboration with UOW Finance to set up a petty cash account of \$400, which will be available soon. Continuing to address SA and WHS concerns in accommodation, including meetings with the University.

Representative Reports

Cr Caulfield: Refugee and Palestine protests have been successful. The 'Fight Back' campaign continues with plans for further meetings and action in the Spring Semester.

Cr Dunning: Currently working on planning a Climate Strike in July, with further details to come. As well as plans to increase awareness about climate change and the COP26 conference.

Cr McLachlan: Lockdown has stifled capability to organise, but still had a successful Refugee protest before the lockdown.

Cr Cox: Mirrored the comments of Crs Caulfield, Dunning and McLachlan and spoke about how movements can still grow in the current circumstances.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Motion to discuss emergency motions on block.

Moved: Imogen Draisma **Seconded:** Taani Hendriks

MOTION CARRIED

WUSA Supports the Wollongong Palestine Protest and Will Reimburse Funds Used to Organise the Protest

Moved: Jamie Caulfield

Seconded: Kaia Cox

Preamble:

On Saturday 22nd May, a protest was held in Wollongong to demand an end to the evictions of Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah, and an end to the bombing campaign in Gaza. A number of WUSA office holders and representatives were involved in organising the protest; speaking at the event, giving support and organising logistics.

WUSA has already endorsed this action at a previous council meeting. It is important that student unions support political causes not just in words, but in actions as well, which is why it is important that WUSA materially support the efforts of its office bearers in doing so.

Platform:

- 1.WUSA supports the Wollongong Palestine Protest that occurred on Saturday 22nd May.
- 2.WUSA supports its office bearers and representatives using funds to support protest movements and campaigns.

Action:

- 1.WUSA will reimburse Jack Mansell \$105 for the hiring of a generator.
- 2.WUSA will reimburse Jasmine Duff \$63 for purchasing fabric, dowels and paints to be used to make a banner in support of the protest.

MOTION CARRIED

WUSA Supports its Members Attending The NUS Education Conference 2021

Moved: Jamie Caulfield

Seconded: Taani Hendriks

Preamble:

The National Union of Students (NUS) will be hosting its annual Education Conference from Monday 12th July to Wednesday 14th July. It is an important space for student unionists to make arguments on what perspectives the national body should take, as well as educate unionists on the history of student activism and draw out those lessons for today.

The Education Conference will be going ahead in 2021 in some form, depending on the COVID 19 situation, and it is important that unionists be given the chance to attend, whether that is online, or in person. In order to facilitate this, WUSA should allocate funds for office bearers and representatives to attend.

Platform:

1. WUSA supports its members and recognises the importance of attending NUS conferences when they occur.

Action:

1. WUSA will allocate up to \$2,000 of the Education Officer's budget in facilitating members in attending the NUS Education Conference 2021.
2. Each conference attendee will be able to claim up to \$25 in funds to cover registration.
3. The Education Officer will create a Google form so that student activists can register their intent to claim funds.

MOTION CARRIED

Adopting a definition of anti-Semitism

Moved: Jack Mansell

Seconded: Clare Dunning

Preamble:

Recently, Israel has been waging a violent campaign against Palestinians inside the 1948 borders, the West Bank, and Gaza. It also has a new, far-right Prime Minister Naftali Bennett who proclaimed that he had "killed lots of Arabs in my life and there's nothing wrong with that". To silence opposition to this state of affairs, Zionists accuse supporters of Palestine of being anti-Semitic. They have done so through the use of the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, which claims that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitic.

Kenneth S. Stern, an original drafter of the IHRA definition, has himself come out opposing its use in silencing pro-Palestine voices. Likewise, Jewish Voice for Peace, a large US-based Jewish organisation, has repeatedly condemned the IHRA definition and its abuses. The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, an alternative definition of anti-Semitism, has been developed in order to prevent the charge of anti-Semitism being cynically used against Palestine supporters, whilst maintaining a steadfast commitment to defending Jewish people from genuine discrimination.

Anti-Semitism is experiencing a revival globally, alongside a resurgence of far-right politics. Attacks on Jewish people have increased, along with the normalisation of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. Resisting anti-Semitism is an important task for the anti-racist left. Far-right violence, fuelled by anti-Semitism, has been on the rise in the US and beyond. Likewise, prominent right-wing politicians such as Viktor Orban spout anti-Semitic conspiracy theories about "globalism" and Jewish businessman George Soros, without reprimand from the political mainstream.

In this context, the attempt to slander Palestine supporters as anti-Semitic is destructive, and aims fire at the anti-racist and anti-fascist left, rather than combating the genuine threat of anti-Semitism in society. With far-right politics experiencing a real and concerning comeback, and anti-Semitic politics with it, there is no excuse for using cynical and false accusations of anti-Semitism against the anti-fascist left.

Platform:

1. WUSA rejects that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism, as claimed in the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism;
2. WUSA condemns the normalisation of anti-Semitic activity by both the far-right, and mainstream right-wing politics;
3. WUSA asserts that anti-Zionism is not a form of anti-Semitism, and supports the struggle of Palestinians for self-determination.

Action:

1. WUSA adopts the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism;
2. WUSA publishes this motion from its social media.

MOTION CARRIED

NUS No Cuts Campaign Motion

Moved: Jamie Caulfield

Seconded: Sean McLachland

Preamble:

Across the university sector, severe austerity measures are being implemented to preserve university budgets at the expense of staff and students. At UOW, these attacks are well-documented and ongoing. Management has cynically used the Covid-19 situation to ram through a series of cuts. The national, sector-wide nature of the attacks that are occurring demands a national response.

The National Union of Students has its Education Conference coming up, and is well placed to use its resources to amplify the campaigns against local campus cuts by giving them national direction and coordination. Its reluctance to commit to protest-based organising has been a serious shortcoming in the last year.

A national campaign against campus cuts will mean that students across the country can engage in a common struggle for our education. A nation-wide response can give currently fragmented campaigns additional energy, focus and solidarity. It also develops our fighting capacity as a national student body, for future campaigns against attacks by Liberal or Labor governments.

Platform:

- 1.WUSA opposes all cuts taking place in the university sector;
- 2.WUSA endorses a national perspective for campaigning against cuts in the university sector.

Action

- 1.WUSA releases a statement calling on NUS to organise a national campaign against campus cuts as well as a direct petition to the NUS leadership.

MEETING CLOSED 18:48

Next meeting to be held 26 July 2021.