**Minutes of USAP Annual General Meeting**

**12:00 pm, Thursday, 24 August 2023, via Zoom**

**Present:** Manuel B. Graeber (chair), Shumi Akhtar, Brad Buckley, Ron Clarke, Rifaat Ebied, Mitchell Guss, John Hearn, Ivan Kennedy, Iven Klineberg, Timothy Langrish, Sunny Boy Mahboob, Joyce Nip, Patrick Rey, Suzanne Rutland, Jonathan Stone.

**Apologies:** Dexter Hoyos, Maria Fiatarone Singh, Elizabeth Martin, Chris Murphy, Goetz Richter, Hans Zoellner

Manuel welcomed all participants and paid acknowledgement to country.

**1. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 18August 2022 – attached.** Rif moved, seconded by Iven that the minutes be accepted. Iven complimented Suzanne on her extremely useful minutes (meticulous care).

**2. Matters arising from the Minutes:** No matters arising

**3. Treasurer's Report (Associate Professor Shumi Akhtar) – attached:** Shumi reported that we are in an excellent situation with about $50,000 in the bank and that we need to use this funding for creating greater visibility for USAP. She noted that it is a reasonable amount, but in terms of any possible activities, it is not great.

In response to a query from Rifaat, Manuel noted that the typo re 2023 has been corrected. Rifaat noted that normally the treasurer’s report includes a recommendation re the member’s subscriptions – whether to increase or decrease and that a letter should go out to inform the members and to remind them about resubscribing. Shumi thanked Rif for the question, and she said that there would be no increase or decrease for the next 12 months. She has noted that she has not received any complaints about the amounts. This can be revisited for the following year starting in August 2024.

Manuel noted plan to have a conference which will be able to draw on the funding. Brad is on the events planning committee with Goetz. Glyn Davis has been suggested as a main speaker in relation to the Accord. Another idea is a national conference with PUA and G. Hinton as the speaker on universities and artificial intelligence. He suggested that 20K would be the upper level to spend like 5 yrs ago which was a highly successful meeting. We can do this on Zoom or as a hybrid/physical meeting. He invited volunteers to join the planning committee. Rifaat noted should also plan for some face-to-face meetings which would entail some expense. Manuel noted the 7 September on-campus meeting. Discussion about this and the need for an event – Manuel noted the expense with catering should be avoided when possible.

**4. President's Report (Professor Manuel Graeber) – attached**: Manuel noted that the focus of USAP on academic values and principles that are foundational for a university has not changed; a brief report this year given the attached ministerial submission – a key issue is to ask more professorial colleagues to join.

**5. Election of Office Bearers for 2023-2024.**

Standing for re-election:

President: Manuel B. Graeber

Vice President: Chris Murphy. Discussion about this because he was unable to attend in person, but the was then re-elected unanimously by the attendees.

Treasurer: Shumi Akhtar

Secretary: Suzanne Rutland

Members of USAP Council (in addition to Office Bearers, above):

Brad Buckley

Dianna T. Kenny

Elizabeth Martin

Garth Nicholson

Goetz Richter

Hans Zoellner

Ivan Kennedy

Iven Klineberg

Jonathan Stone

Maria Fiatarone Singh

Mitchell Guss

Rebecca Mason

Rifaat Ebied

Ronald Clarke

Sunny Boy Mahboob

Tailoi Chan-Ling

Unanimously, passed.

Jonathan moved and Rifaat moved a resolution of appreciation for the President’s excellent leadership over the last year.

**6. General Business**

Manuel stressed the importance of increasing our membership. We shall have some events that will justify the fees. He also noted that USyd has been leading the country with AAUP and that USAP’s contact with the Minister is trend-setting hopefully. He hopes we shall have a say in terms of the governance problems that we are facing, especially the selection of the next VC and Chancellor.

John Hearn noted this has been an important year and added his congratulation to Manuel for his significant leadership while under fire. John proposed a motion of support for Manuel for his activities in USAP, AAUP and PUA. What he has achieved in terms of emphasis on academic values and definition of what a university should be is excellent. He raised the following points:

1. Need further movement to a much more concise statement on the role of USAP – update in one page as to what the academic values are.
2. Need more associate professors and active professors to strengthen our position with management and see what services what we can provide to encourage more associate professors to join.
3. John Hearn is mindful that in the VC’s first discussion with us and with university: trust and engagement but will not comment too much because the level of managerial has risen but collegiality has declined. Problems of bullying, racism, sexism etc. Need to stress academic values.

Discussion on these points: Manuel’s response – ~ 20% of members are currently Associate Professors – they are the future, with Shumi, Ron and Joyce as examples. It is their future. Re the leadership – he does not like the term, but he stressed that we do need to propagate the issue of values. Good ideas move people so making colleagues see is what we have to do (rather than “lead"). Ivan working on a manifesto. Ivan commented re the need for a manifesto that is one page, compelling with an action list, but due to his current research pressures he is unable to work on this until late October. This led to a discussion of the importance of emeritus professors, with Ivan’s publications given as an example with his work with climate change. Emeritus professors have experience, knowledge and judgement which amounts up to wisdom. The meeting stressed that we need to note the importance of professors who have retired and Ivan said he was happy in the future to provide material relating to this. Shumi said she was happy to meet with Ivan.

Ron Clarke:

1. More re the national survey results. Re looking at the latest results, for US Syd 75% positive teacher quality but only 54% positive about student support which has been ignored. Action for this meeting, Ron is prepared to go ahead to develop an analysis for the current results and update what he did last year.
2. Issue of whether USAP should prepare a statement on The Voice discussed. Jonathan noted that this is a conscience vote. General discussion about this: Jonathan Stone noted should not put out a statement. Ivan – people should use all the intelligence they have, and that people should make their choice along that basis. Ivan feels need to come up with an approach with which 90% can agree with – if the referendum is accepted, he feels that the vote will be very close. John Hearn suggested that USAP should not make a statement, as this is a matter of individual choice, not an institutional choice and USyd has a very diverse culture. Ivan said, if we want to be successful in any policy, one needs 90% support or more. General consensus was that USAP should not prepare a statement.

The following motion was then moved by John Hearn and seconded by Rifaat Ebied:

The Annual General Meeting of USAP:

1. Expresses unanimous support for President in championing academic values; and
2. Agrees that Council should update the statement on academic values with simple, clear and concise language; and
3. Endorses the VC’s stated priorities of the need to build trust and engagement within a safe workplace and having a duty to be vigilant vs workplace bullying and other forms of abuse.

Further discussion followed, with Joyce commenting as a new member, her appreciation for what the group has been doing. She read the report and some of the content really shocked her. She agreed with the principle re the concept of academic values. She does have a question re the report: issue of use of survey and focus groups – she asked why these are not good enough as scientific methods (they are in social research) and noted that, as a social science researcher, she does not agree with this statement. What are the other disciplines? Because people from the Humanities may have a different approach.

Re the point about reaching out more for more members – need to be more engaged with the many issues, re management. Discussion re the referendum goes beyond academic issues, so wise not the make a statement. She is aware that working in a voluntary role needs time and effort. A lot of academics are very pressured by the university and to divert some of their energies beyond their personal advancement is difficult. Manuel happy to hear any specific ideas that Joyce may have to increase the membership and Council will be happy to consider them. He requested her to submit ideas. Re Ron’s point, agree should not comment on content issues of the Voice at all, but stresses good, universities would not make political statements as laid out in the Magna Charta Universitatum which has been signed twice by USyd.

Rifaat also said we should not make a statement re the referendum and seconded John’s motion, and we really need an urgent meeting with the professoriate. He noted that in the past USAP had attendance with 60-70 people, and we need to find a way to reach out to more professors and associate professors – we need the backing of the membership.

Rifaat asked about approaching the minister and Manuel explained that we are waiting for the new minister to be appointed.

Iven re reminding Council re proposed date for the dinner – 19 October, hoping with a speaker and that we shall have a big presence. Need more than one a reminder for membership. Brad and Goetz about to meet – perhaps a symposium before the dinner and then follow-up with the dinner. Brad commented that Goetz will email. Brad did go through an intermediary – Glyn Davis more likely to speak to a national association and cannot do anything in October. Discussion about changing the date, to early November. Iven said he will investigate possibilities and Brad and Goetz will come back with possible speakers.

**The following motion, moved by John Hearn and seconded by Rifaat Ebied, was then endorsed unanimously:**

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Meeting closed at 1.04pm.

The USAP Constitution states that only financial members are eligible to vote on matters raised at General Meetings of the Association. The membership fee can be paid via Commonwealth Bank, Society Cheque Acct 062–284 1087

6903 or online:

https://sydney.onestopsecure.com/onestopweb/V9P/tran?UDS\_ACTION=DEFAULT&UDS\_ACTION\_DATA=1334

Members can check their payment status at

https://unisyd.sharepoint.com/sites/usap/SitePages/Home.aspx

The membership fee is $90 for Professors and $60 for Associate Professors p.a.