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## General Council Meeting

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### Zoom

28<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Minutes written by Lana van Wyk

#### Attending

**Eric De Sousa (President)**  
**Georgia Comerford (Vice President)**  
**Mikaela De Kok (Treasurer)**  
**Elizabeth Lee (Welfare Chair)**  
**Sophia Giuffre (Clubs Chair)**  
**Taneisha Ricketts (Marketing Director)**  
**Bless Rañola (Sports & Health Director)**  
**Japneet Mehta (Events Director)**

**Also in attendance as an observer:**  
**Kieran Belfield (Student Employed Assistant)**

#### Attending via proxy

**Lana van Wyk – Proxied by Eric De Sousa**  
**Julia Watson – Supposed to be proxied by Lana van Wyk**  
**Tharushi Kannangara – Proxied by Mikaela De Kok**

#### Apology



N/A

Absent

N/A

## Opening

Eric De Sousa opened the General Council Meeting of the Notre Dame Student Association on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 5.43pm .

## Agenda Items

### 1) Acknowledgment of Country

Eric De Sousa reads through the Acknowledgment of Country. He also highlighted that it is Reconciliation Week.

### 2) Approval of Proxies

Motion		
Approve the Proxies of Lana and Tharushi	Moved by: Eric Seconded by: Julia	In favour: All Against: N/A Abstained: N/A
<b>The motion is passed.</b>		

### 3) Vice-President's Update

Apology:

- Georgia wanted to apologise for the omittance of the SSAF discussion at the meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April.
- Georgia stated that she is happy to include or send through any notes that she had written from that meeting.

Formal Apology to NDSA Council



- Regarding my omission of the SSAF discussion from the 30/4 minutes.
- Written apology accompanies this verbal apology.

#### 4) Secretary's Update

<b>Motion</b>		
Approve the speaking rights for Kieran Belfield as an observer.	Moved by: Eric Seconded by: Bless	In favour: All Against: N/A Abstained: N/A
<b>The motion is passed.</b>		

#### Website:

- Kieran explained why Wix has been a challenging website tool to use.
- Kieran explained that we have paid a 12-month subscription instead of a monthly subscription so will need to see how that can work, may potentially be able to get a refund.
- Kieran explained that Squarespace will be cheaper and will also be saving Kieran a lot of time.
- Eric suggested we look at what the 12-month subscription would mean but said that it sounds reasonable.
- Eric said that we should look into what the transition will look like. Said that it is good timing as we are going into a break time now.
- Eric suggested that we come back to the website in the next meeting.

#### Website Details following Resignations

- Query as to whether Shanara and Edward will still be remaining on their respective sub-committees.
- Liz stated that Shanara hasn't told her that she's stepped down from her position on the Welfare council.
- Eric stated that he hasn't heard from Tharushi, but he assumes that it is the same and wouldn't need to be changed on the website.

#### 5) President's Update

#### Sustainability at Notre Dame

- National Student Board (NSB) coming up.
- Student Affairs Committee has endorsed the Sustainability at Notre Dame paper to be brought up at the NSB.
- Eric described the paper, highlighting the key actions which are:



- Urgent audit and external consultation on the University's environmental, social and economic sustainability.
- Immediate reasonable action to meaningfully reduce the University's carbon footprint.
- Commitment to a strategic sustainability plan that includes a net zero target in advance of the Governments 2050 net zero target.
- Eric explained that all other universities in WA have this sort of set up and many of the top universities in Australia do as well.
- Eric explained that Notre Dame doesn't have any current Sustainability plans. Explained that it is bringing up that students want this sort of change.
- Eric asked the council if they have anything to add, and if they were in support of this plan. There was a general agreement.

#### Policy Review:

- Eric explained that the university wants to review some of the UNDA Student policies.
- Eric has been asked to review the following policies, all available via the UNDA Policy site below. Please provide any additional feedback in the next 2 weeks:
  - <https://www.notredame.edu.au/students/your-enrolment/student-policies>
  - Code of Conduct for Students
  - Use of Alcohol by Students
  - University Affiliation of Student Clubs
  - University Affiliation of Student Clubs PROCEDURE
  - External Sponsorship of Student Associations
  - Financial Recognition of Student Association Executives
- Eric will ask for an extension on the feedback.
- Eric has said that he will bring forward any comments that he has made at the next meeting.
- Eric asked if people had any more feedback on the policies which the council did not have at that point.

Kieran Belfield left the meeting at 5.58pm.

Eric mentioned that attached to the agenda was the minutes from the dispute raised against Eric and Georgia. Explained that he would like to move the discussion to confidential as he would like to respect the privacy of the student who raised the dispute. Explained that he would like to move to In Camera. Explained what that means.

**Motion**



Eric put forward the motion to move the meeting to In Camera to discuss the minutes of the dispute resolution meeting at 5.59pm.	Moved by: Eric Seconded by: Taneisha	In favour: All Against: N/A Abstained: N/A
<b>The motion is passed.</b>		

Council motioned and reconvened back to regular meeting at 6.12pm.

Feedback from Meeting with Selma last week.

- Eric asked if there was any feedback from the meeting, the council generally had nothing to ask.
- Taneisha apologised for not being able to attend that meeting.
- Eric asked Georgia if she remembered the main points which were discussed.
- Georgia stated that a lot of the questions were clarifying what the money would be used for. Especially going with the misconceptions from a few other people who weren't on this council.
- Georgia mentioned that a lot of the meeting was clarifying what the money could and couldn't be used for.
- Eric raised at said meeting that he asked how they would be able to keep the university accountable and they said that in the SSAF governance meetings they would present what it would be spent on so that they can be kept accountable.
- Eric stated that it will now be student majority on the SSAF Governance Committee.
- Eric stated that he hasn't received any interest from the clubs regarding the position on the committee.
- Eric asked if people have the clarity regarding the NDSA's position on the SSAF.
- Taneisha asked if Selma delved specifically regarding what the SSAF will be spent on and if they have a plan on what it will be spent on and if that will be included on the SSAF Website.
- Eric stated that the SSAF Survey email has gone out and once that feedback is returned the SSAF Governance Committee will decide where to spend it using that feedback. The university can't make decisions regarding how or where the SSAF will be spent without gaining student feedback via the SSAF Governance Committee. Once the data comes back and the Committee starts to meet, they will know how it will be spent. We do know that there are funds which will be able to be used from July 1<sup>st</sup> onwards so they will have initiatives that can start from Week 1. Regarding how they will spend it they have to wait for the student feedback. Since it is Student majority Committee the hope is that it will be greatly tailored towards what the students want and need.



- SSAF Governance Committee will start meeting either end of this week or next week. Eric stated that he is hoping to be able to come to it and say this is the resolution that the NDSA council has supported and is asking for. Stated that it is still an advisory committee so in the end it is still up to the board to decide what will get put through. Given feedback that has been received and that there will be changes regarding how it can be distributed to student associations, from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, 40% of SSAF Funds must be given to Student Associations according to the Federal Government.
- Eric state that he personally thinks he is pro the stance SSAF should be delayed until next year (2025). Said that he would like to hear other people's opinion on that.
- Taneisha said that she is in favour of that stance too as she believes that it was presented rather abruptly and that for other students who aren't on the NDSA they didn't get a lot of warning about it and a lot of people aren't prepared financially and that 2025 will make it better for SSAF to be introduced. Believes that it will make it a lot harder for it to be introduced in Semester 2.
- Sophia said that it would probably be a much smoother transition if SSAF did start in 2025. Vast majority of the university wasn't aware of SSAF until they received the email unless they came from other universities where they had had SSAF fees as well. Believes that implementing SSAF once the federal governments legislation of making 40% of SSAF go to Student Associations will also be beneficial for student clubs and will be reassuring. Means that they will actually be able to plan for it. Stated that Selma mentioned that there will be another survey in October. All of this points ot the benefit of it being implemented in 2025.
- Eric mentioned that he had gotten feedback that one student didn't receive the email regarding SSAF and asked if anyone else had heard of anything similar. Council had not heard of anything.
- Eric mentioned that another key consideration towards the delay of SSAF is that, since from January 1<sup>st</sup> 40% of SSAF must go towards Student Associations, adjusting in 1 Semester in such a large increase might be hard but it might also not be.
- Georgia mentioned that she is for advocating for the delay of the fee, besides being in the final year of her degree, but she believes that it will be a massive change that will be required and delaying it will give us the chance to think about processes to set up for the next council coming in as there will be a lot of new faces like every year so we can set it up so that when they come in they will be able to manage it, so that we're looking forward to next year instead of focusing on the present.
- Liz said that she is also for the delay of SSAF to 2025 as it will give students more time to prepare without it being as abrupt.
- Eric stated that he thinks we have heard from students from nursing, education and counselling. Asked Mikaela if she has any thoughts from the perspective of a law student.
- Mikaela stated that she doesn't think she can speak on the behalf of all law students, but she does know that the Law Society has sent through a document to the SSAF email. Stated that



she can't remember if it was asking for a delay in the SSAF implementation or if it was happening this semester for there to be reduction in the price. There were a few things outlined. From this document she can deduct that the law school is generally pro delaying the SSAF to 2025. She states that they are also wanting a reduction of the SSAF fee, but she highlights that this is a separate thing that we don't have to currently go into. Without speaking on behalf of students, she believes that across the schools most students are in favour of delaying the SSAF fee to 2025.

- With the petition that went out that was requesting the delay of SSAF to 2025 had a generally positive response which indicates that students are wanting the delay of the SSAF to 2025.

#### SSAF Petition

- Selma and CFO response; stated that they can't use the SSAF fee on the Facilities. Stated that the petition was asking to delay until the library was open, but the fee can't be used for the library.
- Clubs also had a meeting with Selma regarding SSAF; stated that after looking at a couple other universities that also have SSAF, the university has decided to go with the maximum fee possible. After researching other universities there is no other university which charges lower.
- A point that Selma brought up was that Notre Dame offers a lot more concessions to the fee than other universities.
- There are a few degrees which don't have to pay the fee, as well as part-time students, online students and Broome students have a reduced fee.
- Bless mentioned that she also supports the delay of SSAF for the same reasons as the others so that students have more time to get information regarding SSAF especially as the nursing students are going on prac which means a lot of them don't have a lot of information.
- Japneet stated that she is also for the delay of SSAF to 2025.
- Japneet suggested that the university could probably have started SSAF for the new enrolments starting Semester 2 instead of current students, as the current SSAF lead up in Semester 2 has caused a bit of tension amongst students, with the NDSA and within the NDSA.
- Eric stated that that is something he brought up earlier when it was actually going through. Believes that what the university said that it wasn't fair to the newly enrolled students to charge them given that the services would be provided to all students.
- Eric stated that the issue with it not being fair towards graduating students is that they can get a lot of the immediate stuff, with the things that are set up within this semester, but a lot of the really impactful and meaningful things that will require a couple of months to set up- the graduating students won't get access to which is another reason why it would be beneficial to delay it to 2025.



- Eric stated that if the universities decide to go ahead with the implementation of SSAF in July 2024 then what they've said is that they will try and cater activities towards graduating students, this might mean funding graduation so that it is cheaper or towards funding graduation parties for each of the cohorts.
- Eric gathers from everyone else's opinions that we are happy to delay SSAF to 2025.
- Julia has stated in her proxy that she would like to abstain from all SSAF related discussions. Lana has stated that she is in favour of any discussion regarding delaying SSAF but would like to abstain from any other one.
- If the motion is approved, it can be put on our website that the NDSA is for delaying SSAF to 2025. This might help relieve a bit of the burden that a couple of our members have been getting.

<b>Motion</b>		
For the NDSA's official stance on SSAF to be changed to it being delayed to 2025.	Moved by: Eric Seconded by: Taneisha	In favour: Rest of Council. Against: N/A Abstained: Julia
<b>The motion is passed.</b>		

### 6) General Business

Liz stated that she had her Dev Day today. She was wanting to know how much can we advocate for queer students on campus. States that from what she's heard from her queer representative is that in the past the university has been very reluctant to pass queer centred events. Was wanting to know if that is something that has happened in the past before.

- Eric mentioned that he has been the president of Stripes before and has also been on the council involved with queer centred events. He stated that he doesn't think that the university is against us having queer centred events but there was a period of time where it was very difficult, where the university wouldn't allow for pride flags to be hung.
- Eric mentioned that there are a few things that we are still not allowed to do such as; no club is allowed to attend pride, not allowed to hand out informative documents regarding sexual health and contraception.
- Liz stated that it was mostly regarding things such as posters and posts that say things such as 'your identity is accepted' but in the past it has been shut down which is a shame.
- Eric said that during his time as president they were always able to put stuff up, especially during orientation they were allowed to put things up at their stall.





- Eric said that he is very happy and would like to hear everyone else's thoughts on this. The NDSA is able to stamp posters as well, and we can say that we have approved it so if the university has an issue, they will have to come to us rather than the clubs, so the clubs can say that the NDSA has approved it. So we can advocate for them on their behalf.
- Liz asked if that could be applied to social media posts.
- Eric said that as long as it doesn't contravene university objects. Eric said that he personally hasn't had any posts regarding sexuality or queerness been taken down by the university. Suggested to steer clear of political discussions or touchy topics such as abortions or women's rights to abortions. They can always send it through to us and we can approve it and they can say that the NDSA has approved it and again if the university has an issue, they can come to us instead. If Stripes has any issues they can go to Sophia, and we can deal with it.

#### Shanara's Resignation as Ordinary Council Member

- Eric mentioned that Shanara's email containing the Resignation letter included everyone in it.
- Eric stated that the email does accuse the Executive of a lot of horrible actions which were hard to read such as 'we are hiding things from the council' and that 'we are mouth-feeding you information'.
- Eric mentioned that this was quite distressing for the Executive as that is definitely not our intention, and that we're not malicious people at heart.
- Eric stated that however, someone on the council felt this way and although he doesn't feel that it isn't something that we have done so it is something that needs to be addressed.
- Eric stated that if that is the way that it has ever been presented, he is sorry and that was not the intention at any point. He said that feedback is something that we thrive on and something that he personally asks for a lot during meetings which is one opportunity to come forward, but the council can also send through any questions via email, especially if they have any questions about their role.
- Eric mentioned that he knows that there have been multiple members that have come up and asked questions regarding what to do in their role. Mentioned that we can't do their roles for them but hopefully we can give guidance.
- Eric mentioned that OCM's have always been hard roles as in the Terms of Reference it just says, 'assisting the council'. It is to their determination if they want to host anything. There have been instances where people have requested help, but no one has come forward. There is less commitment to it as they don't have to submit regular reports.
- Eric states that going forward we'll probably be looking to recruit the new OCM's following exams.



- Eric reflects back on Shanara's first two points, saying that it is disappointing to hear that. Eric personally tried to receive feedback and has gotten a response, but it did not provide further clarification beyond the initial email.
- Eric mentioned that there is an anonymous feedback box on the google drive in case members of the council wouldn't want to do it directly.
- Eric mentions that he is always happy to receive feedback. He is always happy to set up check-in meetings, but it is a two-way street.
- Taneisha mentioned that she thinks it is a shame Shanara has left and will miss her. Mentioned that she is unsure of if this is something to discuss currently but continues to say that she is currently finding her role quite hard when Kieran is in the picture as she is unsure what her role is as a lot of her role has now gone to Kieran and she is unsure of what she should be doing going forward and is confused. Eric stated that he is happy to meet and go forward with discussing these things following exams. This is to ensure that Taneisha is getting maximum benefit out of her role.
- Eric asked if everyone is happy with the anonymous feedback box. Taneisha stated that she really appreciates the initiative of the anonymous feedback box as she thinks it will be really good for people who are maybe not as comfortable meeting in person, or if people don't have time to have a catch up regarding the issues.
- Eric clarified that he will be the only one who has access to it, and any points that are raised to other executive or to the rest of council will get shared to the Exec anonymously. If people would like a follow up that is an option as well.

## Closing

Eric officially closes the general council meeting at 6.49.

## Confirmation of Minutes



By signing below, I, Eric De Sousa, confirm that these minutes are a correct and accurate reflection of the meeting dated 28/5/24.

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Signed: Eric De Sousa, President