

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 15 October at 2020 at 1:00pm AESDT

Via Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Present

Eleanor Armstrong (The Australian National University), Janine Arnold (University of Tasmania), Donna Bennett (Office Logistics), Alex Bissember (University of Tasmania), Angela Brew (Macquarie University), Angela Carbone (Swinburne University of Technology), Jennifer Carpenter (Australian Catholic University), Matthew Clarke (Deakin University), Patrick Crookes (University of Canberra), Naomi Dale (University of Canberra), Lachlan Deimel (The Australian National University), Darrell Evans (The University of Newcastle), Ian Fuller (Massey University), Paul Howse (Macquarie University), Olivia Jessop (The University of Queensland), Maureen Kattau (Macquarie University), Caitlin MacDonald (The Australian National University), Joshua Maggiora (The University of Sydney), Lilia Mantai (The University of Sydney), Ben Mountford (Australian Catholic University), Eric Pawson (University of Canterbury), Asheem Shrestha (Deakin University), Rubay Tessema (The Australian National University), Denise Wood (University of the Sunshine Coast).

Apologies

Geoff Crisp (University of Canberra), Rachel Spronken-Smith (University of Otago),

1. Welcome and introduction

The annual general meeting of The Australasian Council for Undergraduate Research was called to order at 13:02pm by ACUR Chair Angela Brew who welcomed all present. She noted that normally this event is held during the Student Conference each year but in this unusual year, it was great to see everyone in this online format.

2. Minutes of the Second Annual ACUR AGM held on Wednesday 3 October 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting held at the University of Newcastle on 3 October 2019 were distributed to registrants prior to the meeting.

Motion: That the Minutes of the Second Annual ACUR AGM be accepted as tabled

Moved by Ian Fuller and seconded by Caitlin MacDonald

Carried

3. Business arising from the minutes

3.1 Length of terms and status of Chairs of the Student Committee

The Chair referred to the AGM 2019 Minutes point 6.3 that stated. "Executive was asked to bring a proposal to the next AGM about lengths of term for Chairs of the Student Committee and whether they need to be undergraduates".

At the meeting on 21 February, the Executive discussed this matter and accepted that the Chair of the Student Committee would serve for two years; one year in the ascendant position and one year in the descendent position. The Executive agreed to recommend to the AGM that this position would be an undergraduate in the first year, but in the descendent position may not still be an undergraduate.

Motion: That the AGM is asked to accept this recommendation.

Moved by Angela Brew and seconded by Ian Fuller

Carried

There were no other Matters Arising from the 2019 Minutes.

4. Financial Report

The Treasurer's report including the Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet for the year 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 was presented by Lilia Mantai (Treasurer). The surplus for this period was \$7,812.69.

In discussion:

- It was suggested that consideration be given to reduce the Institutional fee during these difficult times.
- It was noted that it would be difficult for ACUR to reduce fees and remain sustainable.
- It would not be equitable to now discount to universities that had not previously renewed.
- It was also noted that ACUR had made provision to reduce the expenditure by reducing admin hours to ensure ACUR remained solvent by the end of the year, based on no universities renewing because of the difficulty's universities are facing. It was pleasing to report that 66% of universities had renewed.
- It was advisable to keep non-member universities informed on ACUR activities and tell them what they are missing out on rather than reduce rates.
- It was noted that based on the current bank balance, there was approximately 1½ years expenses covered and with a certain number of renewals the organisation should be financially viable.
- Executive is working on sourcing additional funding from industries, e.g. funding undergraduate projects.

Motion: That the ACUR 2019-2020 Financial Report be considered and approved

Moved by Eric Pawson and seconded by Ian Fuller

Carried

4.1 Membership fees: To approve the membership fees as stated in the financial Report for the remainder of the 2020-21 financial year (same as 2019-2020)

- \$3,000 for Institutions
- \$1,000 for institutions with less than 3,000 students
- Affiliate membership: \$500
- \$75 for those waged – specified as full-time employed
- \$25 unwaged, part-time and retired
- \$10 for students (since 2019, included as part of conference fee)

Motion: THAT these Membership Fees be approved

Moved by Patrick Crookes and seconded by Darrell Evans

Carried

5. Report of the Chair

The Chair reported that the year started well when in December 2019, we held the first UGR Xchange Colloquium. That seems a long time now and owing to the coronavirus pandemic, this year was the first year without a student conference, but our Student Committee launched the Great ACUR Undergraduate Research Writing Project and we received 57 submissions from students at 18 Australian universities, 3 submissions from South America, 2 from Asia and one from Europe. 54 people from a wide range of disciplines volunteered to be reviewers 24 from Australia and New Zealand, two from Europe, 2 from Hong Kong and 1 from the USA. Submissions are now closed and are all out for double-blind review.

A key learning this year is the realisation that we cannot rely on institutional memberships to sustain ACUR. We are going to need further sources of funding if we are to continue to fulfil our vision. We are preparing the groundwork to reach out to potential sponsors.

The Chair paid tribute to the Student Committee which this year has been working through social media (@acurforstudents) and working with us on the Writing project. She thanked Olivia Jessop for her leadership of that project and especially thanked Lachlan Deimel for his overall leadership of the Student Committee. Seak Lin Ly established the Committee in 2018-19 and has been in the background this year as the descending Chair, so the Chair also thanked her for her support.

The ACUR Communications Officer, Nicki Lee has decided not to continue. The Chair thanked her for all she had done for ACUR, particularly her fantastic contributions to the website and wished her well in her new position as DVC at La Trobe University. Angela also expressed thanks to everyone on the ACUR 84-member Steering Committee, and paid tribute to all members of the ACUR Executive: Denise Wood, Lilia Mantai, Rachel Spronken-Smith, Eric Pawson, Lachlan Deimel, Rubay Tessema, Caitlin MacDonald, Seak Lin Ly and Donna Bennett for making ACUR possible.

***Motion: That the Report of the Chair be accepted
Moved by Angela Brew and seconded by Ian Fuller***

Carried

6. Report of the Executive Committee

It is a requirement of the Constitution that the Executive Committee carries out a self-review and presents at the AGM every 2 years. The Executive discussed how to do this, and each person completed a self-assessment and a SWOT analysis. A number of issues were raised which the Executive have been acting on including:

- Now have a Mission, Vision, Values and Objectives listed on the ACUR website
- Have a strong student voice
- Good events are being held such as the Colloquium and Conference
- The vulnerability of being a member organisation and disappointed with universities whose students attend our events, but they are not members, was noted
- Direct benefits to universities need to be more firmly articulated
- Wider membership needed
- Establishing a members-only area on the website
- Executive to meet more frequently to have the time to plan for the future.

***It was proposed that the report of the Executive Committee be accepted
Moved by Lachlan Deimel and seconded by Lilia Mantai***

Carried

7. Student Committee Report

Lachlan Deimel the Head of the Student Committee, reported that the Student Committee had twelve people with representatives from 6 institutions, diverse in disciplines with a 50/50 gender split. Committee was busy, despite COVID-19, with:

- Supporting the planning phase of the conference
- Significant changes to the Student Committee Terms of Reference and formalising some of the processes
- Revamping social media with thanks to Molly Turnbull for the Facebook campaign with student spotlights and now has 3,000 followers, up 1,000%.
- Posters in Parliament – made contact with the Minister for Education who is supportive and working out how to facilitate that at next years conference.
- Planning and admin for the Writing Competition
- Targeting student membership especially this year without the majority of students coming from the conference.
- Created infographic for student groups. **ACTION:** Donna (EO) to resend to all.
- Student Photography Competition was likely to go ahead over the Summer months. Eric was supportive as he was keen to have a stockpile of photos for URNA.

The Chair then noted that Posters in Parliament will depend on travel restrictions being lifted and on finances. It was noted that the event run in 2014 was very successful but expensive with Parliament House charging like a posh wedding venue.

***It was proposed that the report of the Student Committee be accepted
Moved by Rubay Tessema and seconded by Lilia Mantai***

Carried

8. Nominations

8.1 The positions of Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, NZ Representative are all nominated positions for two years and the two-year period comes to an end at this AGM. In accordance with the Constitution nominations were called for. The Chair handed over to the Executive Officer, Donna who reported on the

process of nominations for Executive positions.

	<i>Name of person nominated</i>	<i>Name of person making the proposal</i>	<i>Name of person Seconding the proposal</i>
<i>Chair</i>	<i>Angela Brew</i>	<i>Lilia Mantai</i>	<i>Denise Wood</i>
<i>Vice Chair</i>	<i>Denise Wood</i>	<i>Angela Brew</i>	<i>Lilia Mantai</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Lilia Mantai</i>	<i>Denise Wood</i>	<i>Angela Brew</i>
<i>NZ Representative</i>	<i>Rachel Spronken-Smith</i>	<i>Eric Pawson</i>	<i>Ian Fuller</i>
<i>URNA Editor & Executive Officer</i>	<i>Co-opted positions</i>		

***It was proposed that the nominations for the Executive Committee be accepted
Moved by Ian Fuller and seconded by Rubay Tessema***

Carried

The Head of the Student Committee, is nominated to serve for two years; one in the ascendant position and one in the descendant position. So each year a new Head is appointed to serve in the Ascendant position. We have received one nomination

	<i>Name of person nominated</i>	<i>Name of person making the proposal</i>	<i>Name of person Seconding the proposal</i>
<i>Student Representative</i>	<i>Olivia Jessop</i>	<i>Lachlan Deimel</i>	<i>Tandee Wang</i>

***It was proposed that the nomination for the Student Representative be accepted
Moved by Joshua Maggiora and seconded by Lilia Mantai***

Carried

The meeting was handed back to Angela Brew to chair the meeting.

8.2 The Executive Committee has expressed the desire to co-opt a person who is able to take on the job of strengthening our financial base through gaining sponsorship and new members to serve on the Executive. We would welcome the contribution of members in identifying a suitable individual with the requisite skills to take on this role. If anyone knows of someone they think would be suitable, or if anyone at this AGM feels they would like to do this, please email Angela at the close of the meeting and I will be able to provide further information.

It was noted that the communications position was co-opted and as Donna Bennett (EO) is now updating the website this position was no longer required.

The Chair noted how fantastic it was to have such a committed team of people working hard to keep and develop ACUR and looked forward to continuing this work in the next two years.

9. Conference and Events

9.1 Conference 2021

Rubay Tessema, the 2021 Conference Committee Chair, extended thanks to the Executive with special mention to Angela and Lachlan for their guidance in the decision to move this year's conference to 2021. Key points included:

- The eligibility criteria will be changed so that those that could not present at this years conference can still present next year which potentially will be more students
- Aiming for over 200 students to participate
- Have updated the ACUR website with the latest info
- Getting a steady stream of sign-ups with the communication form
- Generally ahead of schedule because of the work done this year
- Expecting to run a face-to-face conference, however if this is not possible will be able to run as an online conference as ANU has recently run a successful online conference with 120 ANU students.
- Did not retain sponsorship, however cautiously confident that they can be secured again.

9.2 Conference 2022

ACUR are still in negotiation with a University and hope for this conference to take place in New Zealand.

9.3 Other Events

We would welcome suggestions for events that you would like to see in 2021. We planned to hold a Posters in Parliament event, but this is subject to all travel restrictions being lifted. We may hold an online colloquium.

10. Newsletter Report (URNA)

Eric Pawson, the newsletter editor, noted that he was anticipating the winning essays to be in the November edition, however with the Review Panel not meeting until early November, when the issue needs to be at the printery, Writing Competition entries would need to wait until the May 2021 edition. He has enough content for November and will now have a good amount for May which historically has been a difficult issue to fill.

Eric was also keen to receive photos from the upcoming Student Photo Competition.

It was proposed that the report of the Newsletter Editor be accepted

Moved by Rubay Tessema and seconded by Lilia Mantai

Carried

11. Any other business

Angela noted that the members only area of the website was currently being populated and that a discussion forum called InConversation had also been set up.

Lilia demonstrated the Forum and encouraged those present to share your story and create community.

The report on the website and InConversation Forum was noted and accepted unanimously

No other business was raised, the Chair thanked members for their attendance and contribution.

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 14:18.