



## COVID-19 Forum – TAG Senior Management 11.00, 20/04/20

Lowan Sist **(LS)** – Monash Student Association

Sarah Jennett **(SJ)** - UCX

Matt Posetti **(MP)** – Swinburne Student Union

Elise Redmond **(ER)** – MONSU Peninsula

Lisa Dwyer **(LD)** – ECU Guild

Ben Bible **(BB)** – UNE Life

Chris O’Grady **(CO)** – FUSA

Ben Smith **(BS)** – FUSA

Ella Scoringe **(ES)** – Swinburne Student Life

Rob Patterson **(RP)** - Griffith Gold Coast Student Guild

Matt Hoskins **(MH)** - Griffith Gold Coast Student Guild

Kerry-Ann Plant **(KP)** – ActivateUTS

Tess Knight **(TK)** – ActivateUTS

Andrew Scotford **(AS)** – CITSA

Clint Wooler **(CW)** – UQ Union

Monica Millar **(MM)** – UOW Pulse

### General

**KP** Campus is restricted to staff and students only, with swipe card access.

Two commercial venues remain operational, but with limited capacity.

Undertaking strategic reviews of the organisation during the downtime, in preparation for a return to normal operations, which is anticipated in mid-September..

**AS** Return to full operations may see staff needing to be redeployed or upskilled to be more student-friendly way. “If we weren’t customer-focused before, we will be 100% customer focused now.”

**MH** All systems go reshaping “who we are, what we do, and what we deliver”.

22 new programs launched in the last couple of weeks, with encouraging take-up from students.

Identifying and filling gaps in student needs, better positioned to do this rather than the university. University is receptive to receiving this advice from the Guild.

**TAG** At what point will we reach saturation point in trying to engage students remotely?

**MM** All programs have been successfully migrated online. Trivia is now more popular than when it was held physically.

Uni is looking for programs to mirror their own online delivery. Consequently, Pulse and the university are working together more closely than has been the case previously.

Gym has also migrated programs online. As gyms and bars are likely to be among the last businesses to have restrictions eased.

Pulse childcare services remain open, but with reduced patronage. Some tenants remain operational.

**LS** University stance is that things might not return to any normality until late July/August.

Potential summer lab and prac teaching may mean that MSA staff are impacted on their ability to prepare for Orientation as they will be delivering services instead.

Asana has proved effective as a team productivity and communication platform.

**ES** Not expecting students back until Aug/Sep.

**MP** All physical operations and activities on campus have ceased. Consequently, there has been exponential growth in online engagement, which is performing well above traditional benchmarks.

**LD** All physical operations and activities on campus have ceased. Money allocated for those has been diverted to direct student support and online events where possible.

**SJ** UC is a virtual campus until the end of S1 (31st May). Would normally have a winter term (June-July) but await an update from the university as to whether this will proceed. It is normally a quiet term regardless, with a limited number of units.

**BB** University VC is quietly hopeful for a July return to normal operations.

UNE Life has drawn closer to the university in jointly communicating to students, as well as staff.

**CW** Commercial activity represents around 80% of UQ Union's income, so a return to normal operations is critical.

**RP** The goalposts are constantly moving. Last week, the university directive was that all classes in S2 would be online. This week, the directive is that they will be blended.

Commercial activity represents a significant amount of the Guild's income, so students on campus and a return to normal operations are critical. They have offered rent relief to their tenants, which compounds this.

**ER** Currently reworking their constitution, so SGM and AGM this year will have to be held via Zoom.

**TAG** **TAG has a strategic relationship with Big Pulse that offers members substantial savings on online elections:** <https://www.tertiaryaccessgroup.com.au/contracts/online-elections-with-big-pulse-with-tag-discount/>

Don't forget that there are GST exemptions for registered charities.

<https://www.tertiaryaccessgroup.com.au/news/are-you-eligible-for-gst-concessions-relating-to-c/>

## **SSAF**

- KP** ActivateUTS will receive part-payment from the university, representing roughly half of their usual SSAF allocation. However, there has been no reduction in SSAF for UTS students.
- MH** Last advice from university is that SSAF will remain “as usual”, although that may be open to interpretation.
- MM** SSAF suspended after Q1. Have been advised that no more funds will be available, as they are redirected towards “essential” student requirements. This unfortunately impacts their budget significantly.
- LS** University has reverted to online SSAF rate, which is a 66% reduction. As a result, MSA has adjusted and centralized budgets to maintain some control and reversed as many activities as possible. Seeking compensation on losses incurred by the university cancelling Orientation twice.
- Concerned that enrollments in 2021 may experience continuing negative impact of the pandemic that will have a knock-on effect in relation to SSAF amounts.
- BS** Flinders University is refunding all students their SSAF fee, but at this point, FUSA’s funding has been guaranteed for the rest of the year.
- MP** Current university stance is that there will be no reduction of SSAF to the Union.
- SSAF represented less than 50% of their revenue, until commercial revenues disappeared due to the campus shut down. Depending on how long services are offline, SSAF could potentially grow to 70-80%.
- LD** ECU has cut SSAF to Online Rate. Guild will receive a 50% share of SSAF. Overall, this represents a 57% reduction in expected funding. Currently negotiating with the university for additional funds over 50% of the share of SSAF. Results of those negotiations will not be known until mid/end of May.
- SJ** SSAF is provided per initiatives deployed by UCX. Have been asked by the university to identify which initiatives/programs can be reduced/delayed, rather than applying a blanket cut to overall SSAF funding.
- BB** SSAF funding charged per unit to students, at the same rate regardless of whether they are attending physical or online.
- For UNE Life, it is tied to delivery of programs, events, and initiatives. Will receive less for those that do not actualise this year but will receive more for those that will be more important by necessity under current circumstances.
- CW** SSAF is expected to be reduced, by how much is not yet known. University has asked for a three-month plan of how SSAF is intended to be used by the Union.
- ER** SSAF has been reduced by 50% to 65%

## JobKeeper and Staff

- KP** Eligible for job seeker, all staff who can have it are being paid it. About 20% of casuals on ineligible visas.
- MH** Services/operations team have abandoned PDs in favour of project-based work allocations. This has greatly sped up development of new services and resulted in no reduction of core staff time.
- AS** CIT is connected to the ACT government, who have advised that they will continue to support current contracted arrangements, including salaries until at least July 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Eligible for JobKeeper, which will extend staff retention until the end of September.
- Reducing staff pay by 20% to extend reserves, with leave accrued at a full-time rate.
- MM** Have applied for JobKeeper.
- LS** Eligible, as a registered charity with a 15% reduction in turnover.
- JobKeeper eligibility has resulted in staff previously placed on forced leave now able to return to duties, albeit deployed to other areas for the duration.
- Staff morale remains high despite contraction in wages. Attributes this to their policy of checking in with staff very regularly.
- EBA due for negotiation mid-year.
- ES** As part of the body corporate of the university, Swinburne Student Life is ineligible for JobKeeper.
- Have not looked at reducing staff pay, but many casuals involved with the delivery of events and activities have been stood down as they were unable to be repurposed.
- EBA currently under negotiation.
- BS** Same as above
- CO** Staff have been redeployed across the university.
- MP** Eligible for JobKeeper, but 50% of their casuals have been employed for less than 12 months and have since been stood down.
- LD** Applying this week, as a registered charity with a 15% reduction in turnover.
- SJ** Eligible for JobKeeper.
- BB** Eligible for JobKeeper. As most of their staff earn in excess of \$1,500/fortnight, there will be some reduction of hours.
- Hoping to re-engage fitness centre staff through JobKeeper

- CW** 80% of staff are either on reduced hours, on leave or have been stood down over the past 4 weeks.
- Eligible for JobKeeper.
- ER** Eligible for JobKeeper. This means that their small team of 4 means will not experience standowns.
- ER** Eligible for JobKeeper. Short term bar and general store casuals have been stood down.

## Student Support

- AS** Jobs for Canberrans fund has been launched by the ACT government, which will assist international students who have lost their jobs.
- Link to the resource ANU International Students Department set up which is focused on ACT but may be useful: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1isUSGoVN-QlgFAthundml3KZAMkhvXAE6sIHSHvwce4/edit?fbclid=IwAR1pSdPH1aljCt1DuQLntc-kgR-Fa923DMq1631kb\\_vwFzLt9OMciwvnWAg](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1isUSGoVN-QlgFAthundml3KZAMkhvXAE6sIHSHvwce4/edit?fbclid=IwAR1pSdPH1aljCt1DuQLntc-kgR-Fa923DMq1631kb_vwFzLt9OMciwvnWAg)
- Link to hardship grants for post grads compiled by CAPA:
- [http://www.capa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Student-Hardship-Assistance-by-universities-across-Australia-CAPA-and-NATSIIPA.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0kqt\\_3CC0eipk2dGkt-Wr1vL3Q6kc0cnkwbvMLJRtnbdhSHg6Bx8ZdmGQ](http://www.capa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Student-Hardship-Assistance-by-universities-across-Australia-CAPA-and-NATSIIPA.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0kqt_3CC0eipk2dGkt-Wr1vL3Q6kc0cnkwbvMLJRtnbdhSHg6Bx8ZdmGQ)
- Council of International Students Australia have prepared a proposal to Fed Govt. IEAA and ISANA are asking govt for a hardship grant to complement the existing arrangements at each institution but state govts are increasingly looking at local solutions like food banks, etc.
- BS** Flinders University has created a \$1M Student Emergency Grant fund (\$500 grants for students in need), which FUSA has been asked to administer. Taken up to date at a rate of about 75% by International students, approx 1000 International student applicants so far.
- CO** International students are being hit the hardest, particularly with their ineligibility to access government support.
- Flinders also has the Matthew Flinders Scholarship, \$2000 for students who are not eligible for Centrelink payments.
- University has committed to spending \$12M to support students in need.
- MP** Have surveyed students to identify impacts of the pandemic. International students are particularly impacted negatively.
- In response, have launched the “Free Feeds” program, where 150 students will receive five precooked meals each week, along with an essentials pack. This also creates work for staff.
- Have successfully advocated for international students to “underload” enrollments for the current semester, to counter concerns about being forced into online learning.

Have also successfully argued for census date to be delayed by a fortnight.

Partnered with Foodbank.

**LD** Offering international students grocery grants of \$50. 1,000 grants available, with only 50% take up.

Partnered with Foodbank WA to provide food hampers to some students. Open to staff and general public for donations.

Advocating on behalf of students for reduction in fees. University is very resistant.

**SJ** Have partnered with a local Canberra food relief network, who provides free pre-made food hampers. UCX collect and distribute to students at campus. Very popular with international students.

**BB** Food Pantry is moving from a walk-in free-to-all, to a merit-based system utilising online gift cards, to ensure that international students are taken care of.

Seeking additional assistance from university for international students, such as direct rent relief.

**BB** Are providing food packs and emergency supplies to students in need.

**BB** Students at UQ protesting the use of ProctorU, citing privacy concerns.

Link to the UQ Union's stance on ProctorU and the template letter  
<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=uqunion>

### **TAG Mentor Program:**

Want to share your expertise to assist your colleagues and strengthen the sector, or want to benefit from the experience of colleagues who have been in the sector for many years?

<https://www.tertiaryaccessgroup.com.au/for-members/tag-mentor-program/>

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TAGmanagementgroup>