

The Australian National University Student Partnership Agreement 2019

“A society, to remain vigorous requires in built sources of regeneration - and the university is, by its traditions and the quality of its members, well equipped to provide one such source, the more so since through its membership flows the ablest of our youth - those who come to our society with a fresh and innocent vision.”

- H.C. “Nugget” Coombs, Chancellor of the Australian National University

Introduction

The Australian National University Academic Board (‘the Board’), the ANU Students’ Association (‘ANUSA’) and the Postgraduate & Research Students’ Association (‘PARSA’) wish to build on our existing strengths in working together to further enhance the student experience at the ANU. This agreement sets out our approach to partnership in Academic Governance, details agreed priorities for January 2019– January 2020 and identifies opportunities for student engagement.

This agreement does not replace other strategic documents concerning student engagement. Rather, it has been developed to promote an understanding between students, staff and the Board about agreed enhancement-focused goals that are important to all individuals who are part of the ANU.

We believe that this Student Partnership Agreement represents a commitment on the part of the Board to consistently and meaningfully engage with the student body, as well as foster a community in which all members have rights and responsibilities.

This Student Partnership Agreement is designed to promote the engagement of students during their period of study at the ANU, and encourage feedback on their experience whenever possible.

The ANU community

The ANU, ANUSA and PARSA are proud of the contributions we make as the national university being first to learn the nature of things. As per the ANU Strategic Plan, “We are inclusive, open and respectful, reflecting the diversity of our nation”. This Partnership builds on our commitment to fostering a culture of inclusivity and respect for everyone where staff and students work in partnership based on mutual respect.

Our student body and its relationship with academic and professional staff is central to this purpose and vision. The ANU, ANUSA and PARSA value the diversity of our student population and work to make sure everyone feels supported and a part of the ANU community.

What is partnership?

The terms ‘partner’ and ‘partnership’ are used in a broad sense to indicate joint working between students and staff. Partnership means involving students from issue identification through to the development of issue solution. Partnerships means engaging students in meaningful and accessible ways. A successful partnership is based on the values of:

- Openness;

- Trust and honesty;
- Agreed shared goals and values; and
- Robust communication and understanding between the partners.

It is not based on the legal conception of equal responsibility and liability. Rather, partnership working recognises that all members in the partnership have legitimate, though sometimes different, perceptions and experiences. By working together to a common agreed purpose, steps can be taken that lead to enhancement in a way that works for all concerned.

Part A – The Student Voice

Formal student representation

The Board is committed to involving students in decision-making processes and ensuring that students have the best possible experience during their period of study. All students are automatically members of either ANUSA or PARSA and are members of the ANU. ANUSA and PARSA primarily exist to advocate for students across the ANU by representing their rights, needs and opinions. The ANU, ANUSA and PARSA work closely together to ensure that students are represented on all relevant University committees and are supported and trained to fulfil their roles.

Opportunities to become involved in student representation include the following:

- Standing for election as a representative on ANUSA or PARSA, (paid full-time, paid part-time or voluntary roles within the Associations) during elections in August. ANUSA and PARSA representatives sit on University committees ranging from College Education Committees to Academic Board. Similarly, there is an undergraduate and postgraduate representative on the University Council which is elected concurrently with ANUSA and PARSA positions. ANUSA representatives make up the Student Representative Council (SRC) where members of the student body can provide feedback and hold their representatives to account. Similarly, PARSA Officers make up the Postgraduate Representative Committee, which is overseen by the PARSA Board.
- Seek appointment from the ANUSA or PARSA President to represent students on the ANU Appeals Panel.
- Standing for election as the President of a Hall or College Resident Committee. Resident Committee Presidents represent resident interests to the administration of their Hall or College and form the Interhall Council of Presidents. The Chair of the Council attends certain University committees and provides feedback to the ANUSA President.
- Standing for election as a member of an academic club Executive e.g. the Law Students Society where the President and other senior members sit on Academic College Committees.
- Standing for election (or being nominated) as a Course Representative. Within most Colleges there are a number of students nominated each Semester to represent a course/year group. Course Representatives meet with staff and other representatives within the College to provide feedback and highlight issues, with training from ANUSA and PARSA to fulfil their roles.

Other forms of student involvement

Student involvement is not restricted to formal representative structures. All students are encouraged to become partners in shaping their learning experiences and life at the ANU.

Opportunities include:

- Giving honest, constructive feedback by taking part in surveys, focus groups and other feedback opportunities;
- Participating in the Student Experience of Learning & Teaching (SELT) evaluations;
- Providing feedback to ANUSA/PARSA representatives, Resident Committee Presidents, Club Executives or Course Representatives;
- Speaking directly with lecturing staff, administrative staff, Dean of Higher Degree Research (HDR), the Pro-Vice Chancellor (University Experience) or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

A key component of this Student Partnership Agreement between students and the Board is an ongoing commitment between the Board, ANUSA and PARSA to work together to address student feedback. The Board agrees to support ANUSA and PARSA to fulfil their role, whilst ANUSA and PARSA agree to ensure that they fulfil their role responsibly in making the student voice heard.

Part B – Partnership Themes and Associated Projects

The Board, ANUSA and PARSA have agreed to work together on a set of themes during the period 2019-2020 as part of our shared commitment to enhancing the student experience at the ANU. Oversight and monitoring of the Student Partnership Agreement will be undertaken by the Board, SRC and PRC. These themes should be informed by:

- Student feedback from student surveys;
- Feedback forums; and
- Existing and proposed university initiatives that the ANU, ANUSA and PARSA have agreed to work together on.

Where the initiatives align with a project that is currently being implemented by a business unit within the University, the initiatives will be delivered as part of that project.

The key themes identified for 2019 are as follows (which need to be reported at Academic Board Meeting 6 / 2019):

1. Student Representation

| Project | Responsibility | Outcomes | Rationale |
|--|------------------------------|--|---|
| Development of a policy for Course Representatives | DVC(A) ANUSA PARSA | Develop policy and procedures to standardise course reps and information flow across the university. | Practice for appointing Reps is in place but is uneven across Colleges – Need to advocate for a University wide policy to ensure best practice. |
| Engagement with the Student Voice Australia project to contribute to and encourage Student Partnership across the sector | AB (Chair) ANUSA PARSA | Continued knowledge sharing within the sector regarding Student Partnership Agreements. | As the National University, the ANU has the opportunity to take a leadership role in this space. |

2. Equity

| Project | Responsibility | Outcomes | Rationale |
|---|-----------------|---|---|
| Admissions, Scholarships & Accommodation reform | DVC(A) ANUSA | The ASA needs clear timelines of review over the coming 5 years, and should be reviewed against established measures of equity and diversity. These KPIs for review should be developed in consultation with ANUSA. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform will have considerable impacts on the student body and student concern that equity and diversity will not be achieved is best managed through working with students as partners. This aligns with the Admissions, Scholarships & Accommodation project being led by DVC(A). |

3. Wellbeing

| Project | Responsibility | Outcomes | Rationale |
|---|---|---|---|
| Healthy University Strategy & Action Plan | Registrar of Student Life ANUSA PARSA | Focus is now the implementation of a Healthy University Plan. This must be done in consultation with students, noting that the plan will need to be iterative to respond to changing impacts on the health of the university. | It is important for the success of this project to work collaboratively to report on the implementation of this Health University Plan. |

4. Quality Assurance

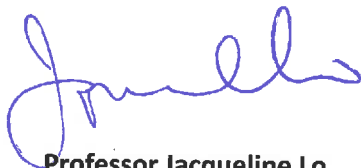
| Project | Responsibility | Outcomes | Rationale |
|---|--------------------------|---|--|
| Review into the Future of Teaching and Learning | DVC(A) ANUSA PARSA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual meeting of the TLDC be held as joint between student representatives from every academic college, as well as college representatives who regularly sit on TLDC. This meeting, chaired by PVC(E) with a key leader from ANUSA and PARSA, could focus on significant aspects of education. Continue effective student input and feedback into the ILEAP project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to involve students in the strategic direction for teaching and learning and quality assurance set by ANU. This must include capturing the student voice in issue identification. Students must be engaged at all stages to ensure the feedback loop can be closed. |

5. Quality Enhancement

| Project | Responsibility | Outcomes | Rationale |
|---|-----------------------------|---|--|
| A multi-dimensional instrument that captures student and staff evaluation of learning, teaching and the learning environment. | DVC(A) ANUSA PARSA | Continued student involvement in the Beyond Selt Project and actively seeking student feedback during the implementation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new instrument is necessary to capture student feedback throughout the course in order to provide ongoing enhancement and responsiveness to the needs of students. This aligns with the SELT Tool project being led by PPM. |
| HDR Reviews by Dean, HDR | Dean, HDR PARSA ANUSA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of an opt-in oral examination pilot for PhD candidates. Development of best practice guidelines for the HDR experience, drawing on specific examples from the various academic colleges of the University. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral examinations are proving popular in PhD programs around the world as they can be more appropriate for certain disciplines. The fact that assessors are required to justify their opinion in conversation with other assessors provides the possibility of fairer outcomes. However, there may be unintended consequences from an oral examination in regards to potential discrimination. An opt-in pilot program allows for the ANU to explore this option in a methodical manner while reviewing potential drawbacks. The HDR experience at the ANU varies considerably by discipline, college, and school. There are excellent examples at all colleges of certain practices which greatly improve the HDR experience in supervision, training, support, mentoring, |

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| | | | <p>business linkage, or social assistance. However, these are not all delivered consistently between colleges. Through reviewing these practices at the ANU colleges the AB can develop best practice guideline as examples for the other colleges to consider for implementation. This would foster a sense of collaboration between colleges, and promote an improved HDR experience.</p> |
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The Board, ANUSA and PARSA are committed to the continual development of this Student Partnership Agreement which will be reviewed jointly on an annual basis.



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