

W E L L I N G T O N

SPEAKING

UNION

# Annual General Meeting 2009

## Minutes

**Date:** 9 November 2009

**Time:** 6:30 PM

**Venue:** Turnbull House

**Present:** Christopher Bishop (President), Stephen Whittington (Treasurer), David Dewar (Secretary), Kirsty Hazeldine (Wellington College), Kathy Ryan (St Catherine's College), Clodagh O'Connor-McKenna, Seb Templeton, Udayan Mukherjee, Jenna Raeburn

**Apologies:** Des Boyle (St Patrick's College, Silverstream), Robyn McKenzie (Wellington Girls' College), Jane Dewar (Hutt International Boys' School), Edmund Salem (Tawa College), Genevieve Herder (St Mary's College), Kathy Scott-Dowell

### 1. Confirmation of 2008 AGM Minutes

Christopher Bishop presented the minutes of the 2008 AGM. He noted that no complaint had been received in relation to their content.

**Motion:** *That the 2008 AGM Minutes be confirmed*

**Moved:** Clodagh O'Connor-McKenna

**Seconded:** Stephen Whittington

**Motion Passed**

### 2. President's Report (including Premier Grade/adult debating)

Christopher Bishop presented his President's report for 2009.

The report noted that 2009 had been a good year for the Union – with five grades and 148 teams (8 fewer than 2008) entered from around Wellington including all the way up to Marton. Sponsorship was obtained from the "Friends of Wellington Schools Debating" and the Retirement Commission.

The Union is financially sound. The Parliamentary Shield was run on a cash neutral basis, (unlike previous years). And the intercollegiate grades recorded a surplus. For the first time, schools were required to pay a membership fee of \$10 as part of their entry fees for the grades.

The Union has moved onto a more secure legal and administrative footing. The new constitution, adopted at the AGM in 2008, is now in force. The 2008 accounts were approved at a general meeting of the Union in March. The Union became a registered incorporated society in May and a registered charity in June.

The Union's new website has been kept relatively up to date throughout the year. Some information from the old website still needs to be transported across to the new website. Intercollegiate debating in particular made extensive use of the WSU website.

A new logo was designed in October.

The President's report noted that, while Intercollegiate Debating had another successful year, there remain questions about the role and future of adult debating in Wellington given continued lack of interest in competitions such as the Premier Grade/Parliamentary Shield. In particular, there have been various complaints that the competition is overly dominated by university students and that the standard of debating is dropping.

*Discussion on this point noted (1) that university presence was integral to achieving a solid foundation for the adult competition. (2) It was also pleasing to note the presence of school teams coming to watch the final.*

Questions for the Union to consider in future would therefore include the viability of continuing with the Parliamentary Shield competition as well as whether (and how) to resurrect previous WSU competitions including the McDonald Oratory competition.

A number of people were thanked in the report for their work for the Union throughout the year, including Stephen Whittington (treasurer); Kitty Higbee (for designing the new logo) and Pei Huang (for assisting with the website).

**Motion:** *That the 2009 President's report be accepted*

**Moved:** Seb Templeton

**Seconded:** Udayan Mukherjee

**Motion Passed**

### **3. Intercollegiate Report**

Christopher Bishop presented his report as Convenor of the Intercollegiate Competition for 2009.

Convenors for the Intercollegiate grades in 2009 were: Stephen Whittington (Premier A), Seb Templeton (Premier B), Jane Dewar (Senior Certificate), Kathy Ryan (Junior Premier), and David Dewar (Junior Certificate).

Overall, 148 teams entered the grades, which was eight down on 2008. *Discussion on this point noted that this could be due to teachers cutting back*

*on their co-curricular activities and was unlikely to be owed to the imposition of the \$10 entry fee per school.*

In terms of changes from 2008 the report noted that, in 2009, the number of preliminary rounds in the Premier A and B, Junior Premier and Certificate grades increased by one (to five).

At the start of the year, **adjudication** and **coaching workshops** were put on, hosted by Christopher Bishop and Julia Fetherston (coach of the World Champs-winning New Zealand Schools' Debating Team). Both workshops were well attended and received good feedback.

A key objective behind the workshops had been to achieve a greater degree of consistency and quality of adjudicators. There is scope for WSU to look at "licencing" skilled adjudicators and coaches who could go to schools and deliver workshops in exchange for a small fee.

*Discussion on this point noted that up-skilling coaches and adjudicators remained a worthwhile objective. The workshops had been a great idea and were worth continuing; however there were still inconsistencies between adjudicators in the junior grades. David Dewar noted that the Junior Certificate Grade could perhaps benefit from having quality (Prem A level) senior students made available to adjudicate these debates. Another simple idea could be the compilation of a 'senior student adjudicator list' (made up of all Prem A debaters), who could be made available to coaches in order to help with adjudicating junior debates throughout the year.*

In 2009 the intercollegiate debating grades received sponsorship of \$1250 from the "Friends of Wellington Schools Debating". Liz Bowen Clewley's company, Competency International Limited, contributed \$500 of the total amount. A large payment from the Retirement Commission was also received in exchange for organising a debate between the two Wellington regional teams on financial literacy. Acquisition of sponsorship was one of the aims for 2009 identified at last year's AGM. It is hoped that the relationship will continue for 2010.

*It was noted that there was a good spread of winning Schools in the 2009 competition.*

The new website was used extensively throughout the year with results posted periodically as well as the ability to download information on the grades as well as necessary entry and adjudication forms. Powerpoint presentations from the coaching and adjudication workshops were also placed on the site.

*Discussion on the website noted that it was a useful tool for debaters to check their results and the leader-boards throughout the grade. It was suggested that the site could maybe include links to filmed debates (i.e. from worlds etc). In terms of saving time and 'spreading the load', it was suggested that*

*individual convenors might be given scope to post their grades' results directly onto the site.*

In terms of future direction of the Intercollegiate grade, questions to consider were: Licencing of adjudicators and coaches qualified to give workshops in schools; Electronic entry of teams rather than the return of hard-copy forms; Provision of "demonstration debate" videos for schools; Maintenance of the various sponsorship arrangements; and running a workshop in the Wairarapa aimed at building capacity and constituency "over the hill".

**Motion:** *That the 2009 intercollegiate report be accepted*

**Moved:** David Dewar

**Seconded:** Kathy Ryan

**Motion Passed**

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Stephen Whittington noted that his was an interim report only, as the final report would be presented at the end of the financial year in March 2010.

##### Main Account

##### **Current Balance:**

The main account (otherwise known as the "adult account") had run up a small deficit due to the reimbursement of a single dinner receipt at the Parliamentary Shield dinner, which had not been paid for by one of the guests. The deficit was more than made up for however by the large surpluses in the other accounts.

##### Intercollegiate Account

##### **Current Balance:**

The Intercollegiate Account was currently cash neutral. However a number of schools have outstanding debts to the Union in terms of underpaid entry fees (namely Aotea College, HVHS and HIBS). These schools will be prevented from entering the 2010 competition until these outstanding amounts are accounted for.

##### Savings Account:

##### **Current Balance:**

The Savings Account had been maintained via an auto-payment of \$10 per month in order to keep it active.

In terms of the Union's financial position, this was currently very healthy, with a sizeable surplus.

*Discussion on this point canvassed a number of options for spending the surplus, including a stock-take of all grade trophies and replacements where necessary. Medals for winning teams and cups for best speakers in finals were also considered. There were also suggestions of putting aside some money for the Regional/National competitions (e.g. a WSU-hosted event for competitors). Some consideration was also given to putting on a "thank-you" social event at the end of the year for those who had contributed to the success of the grade.*

**Motion:** That the 2009 Treasurer's report be accepted  
**Moved:** Christopher Bishop  
**Seconded:** Kathy Ryan

**Motion Passed**

## **5. Election of Officers**

Nominations for 2010 WSU President were as follows:

1. Stephen Whittington  
(Moved: Stephen Whittington; Seconded: Clodagh O'Connor-McKenna)

**Stephen Whittington** elected WSU President for 2010

Nominations for 2010 WSU Treasurer were as follows:

1. Christopher Bishop  
(Moved: Stephen Whittington; Seconded: David Dewar)

**Christopher Bishop** elected WSU Treasurer for 2010

Nominations for 2010 WSU Secretary were as follows:

1. David Dewar  
(Moved: David Dewar; Seconded: Stephen Whittington)

**David Dewar** elected WSU Secretary for 2010

## **6. General Business**

2010 Intercollegiate grade convenors were confirmed as follows:

1. Seb Templeton (Premier A),
2. Udayan Mukherjee (Premier B),
3. Jane Dewar (Senior Certificate),
4. Kathy Ryan (Junior Premier),
5. David Dewar (Junior Certificate)

## Moots

The comment was made that, in some cases, intercollegiate Moots had possibly been set at a level that was slightly too high for debaters in the various grades. In particular there had been a lot of debates about economics rather than a wider range of genres. It was noted that this could have been owed to the topicality of the Global Financial Crises (GFC) this year.

## Team Entry quotas

It was noted that, for some schools, the team entry quotas presented a barrier to debaters being able to participate in the competitions. This was primarily an issue in the senior and junior certificate grades. A number of potential solutions were canvassed, including (1) widening the quota for schools of more than 1000 pupils or (2) asking schools to nominate additional teams outside their quotas if they wished to do so, and leaving it up to individual grade convenors to add these extra teams on a random basis as required in order to make up numbers. It was pointed out that such a solution, in order to work, would necessarily be subject to the individual convenor's discretion and schools would have to accept this. It may also involve teams being placed in other 'zones' and needing to travel. David Dewar noted that, as this was primarily an issue with the Junior Certificate grade, he would think about a possible solution.

## Results Sheet

The idea of an electronic (Google docs) results sheet was considered. Rather than emailing or faxing results forms to convenors, results could, instead, be entered into an online form that would synchronise with the WSU website. The importance of winning schools having responsibility for entering results was re-emphasised.

<b>Meeting closed at 8:30pm</b>
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