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## **Subject: Health and Medical Science Student Needs for Orientation - Planning for 2020**

Dear Julie Sulda,

My name is Tom Gransbury and I am a sixth year medical student at the University of Adelaide and current president of the Adelaide Medical Students' Society for 2019. I am writing to you on behalf of 12 student societies who represent and support students specifically within the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, regarding Orientation Week (O'Week) at the Adelaide Health and Medical Sciences Precinct in 2019, as well as the wider issue of how the FHMS Student Engagement Committee has dealt with the medical student societies.

A copy of this letter will be sent to Professor Andrew Zannettino, Professor Ian Symonds and Ms Alex Sabharwal for their reference.

### Summary of Key Changes Required (O'Week)

- *Ability to book an AHMS Lecture Theatre and Urban Park for a day within O'Week, outside of the faculty orientation day, with unrestricted presence of sponsors*
- *Agreement by FHMS faculty to advertise the AMSS First Year Welcome through email and social media*
- *Provision, if possible, of a list of name of all first years as is done within other faculties, with an affiliation agreement if required (eg. University of Adelaide Business school and the Adelaide Business Students' Society)*
- *Moving of the Twilight Event to a date closer to census date, in order to provide a welcome event for students with late offers*
- *Increased faculty financial support for the Twilight Event and consideration of financial support for the AMSS First Year Welcome and equivalent FHMS events*
- *Minor logistical changes on the Faculty O'Day such as ensuring slides are available for the 10 minute presentations, and provision of tables and shade in a more accessible location within the AHMS ground floor or Urban Park area*

### Summary of Key Changes Required (Interaction with Student Representatives)

- *Facilitating an annual meeting between the 12 Medical Student Society Presidents and the FHMS Student Engagement Committee, rather than requiring the AMSS to speak on their behalf.*
- *Structural changes to see a direct line for medical student advocacy to FHMS administration outside of the multi-society FHMS Student Engagement meetings, with similar structure set up for the Nursing, Psychology, Dentistry and Health and Medical Science societies should they also find this beneficial.*
- *A change in the mantra that "medicine doesn't deserve special treatment", towards a collaborative approach that aims to best support each student society in their individual and combined endeavors, rather than restricting societies to a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.*
- *A mutual agreement around advertising and support of events between the AMSS and the FHMS Student engagement team, where respectful, positive support is paramount.*

## Orientation Week

Meetings of the FHMS Student Engagement Committee were held between yourself, Mary Denholm, Nicole Rubino, Rebecca Pym and FHMS student representatives in November and December of 2018 and early 2019, to discuss the student needs for orientation within the new structure on campus in 2019. However, after much discussion and the subsequent running of the 2019 orientation events, I think we are yet to reach a position that meets the needs of these 12 Health and Medical Student Societies for orientation, hence the wish to escalate these student concerns with you.

The activities that would usually occur that were not accommodated for by the FHMS faculty in 2019 include:

- A 2-hour Medical Student Society First Year Welcome within an AHMS Lecture theatre in O'Week. This includes a:
  - Welcome, Introduction and Reflections on a Career in Medicine from Vice President of the AMA(SA) (Dr. Chris Moy)
  - Patron of the AMSS, Board Director of the AMSF (Prof Randall Faull)
  - Introduction to the 2019 AMSS Student Executive
  - Short Promo and Welcome Videos: Introduction to AMSA, AMSS, AMSF, MedCamp, Skullduggery
  - Admin: Introducing students to the AMSS Website, Year level Facebook Page, handing out 'Textbook talk' and 'First Year Guide' publications
  - Inviting students to the AMSS run tutoring programs: ClinPrac, MedTransit, Peer-to-Peer as well as reminding them of faculty-run mentoring programs.

In 2019 the AMSS coordinated an equivalent event on main university campus (Tuesday March 26th) however the FHMS Student Engagement committee were not supportive of this event. Most of our first year member sign ups (approximately 115 of approx 120 students) came from the AMSS First Year Welcome we ran on central university campus which Rosie from the Student Engagement Committee kindly attended. This also gave opportunity for exposure to the other 12 medical student societies; some of whom were not able to make the twilight event.

We were extremely disappointed at the faculty's refusal to support or advertise the AMSS' First Year Welcome to incoming first year medical students. The Vice President of the AMA(SA) Dr. Chris Moy who spoke on the Tuesday expressed similar disappointment that some students were missing out on important university experiences as a result of this faculty decision. I understand the Student Engagement Committee believes the focus of O'Week should be on the Faculty Orientation Day. However, I think refusing to acknowledge and advertise student-run events for students reflects very poorly on faculty student society engagement, especially given the ultimate aim of improving culture on campus. There were a number of students (largely rural, interstate and international) who approached us at the Faculty O'Day disappointed to have missed out on the First Year Welcome on the Tuesday, where many other students seemed to have already met each other. Whilst I

have individually followed up with each of these students to ensure they could have access to our resources for starting first year, I emphasised in a number of meetings that this was the expected outcome of the faculty not advertising the AMSS First Year Welcome and still no action was taken to avoid this.

- Access to the Adelaide Health and Medical Sciences (AHMS) Urban Park for a single Day during O'Week. This includes:
  - Individual stalls with representatives from each of the 12 student societies aimed at medical students as well as representation from their sponsors.
  - Opportunity to for first years to sign up to all 4 Medical Indemnity Insurance companies, which are required by the university for student placement.
  - Free pen torches, student society merchandise, as well as textbook and stethoscope giveaways and other items essential for first year.
  - Student-run tours of the AHMS building including relevant locations of tutorials, lectures, and study spaces, as well as allowing small-group activities to include simulations and workshops.
  - Use of the Urban Park space shared with UniSA would minimize any disturbance to Summer School students already using the AHMS building during this time, whilst providing the ideal sized area with power access and BBQs for the First Year Welcome.
  - Area for live music to be provided by the Adelaide University Medical Orchestra members, which was provided at the space booked by the AUU (Pfitzner Court) in 2019.
  - Appropriate location for distinguished guests: We were offered to hire the AHMS at corporate rates over the weekend with further added security costs. We felt it was very inappropriate to charge a student society for using their own university spaces in this way. During fringe season it is extremely difficult to find affordable venues of campus, and most we felt would not give the deserving University welcome to distinguished guests such as the Vice President of the AMA(SA) Dr. Chris Moy, and AMSF Board Director and former Dean, Prof Randall Faull who typically speak at this event.

In 2019 we ran an equivalent event on main university campus which followed the 2 hour First Year Welcome. This single day event represents a significant cut down from O'Week events previously run for Medical Students. Fortunately a space was eventually secured through the AUU, however may not be available in future years, hence further need to secure the AHMS space in 2020 for O'Week. Again, to be run at the AHMS this requires faculty support of the event through the FHMS Student Engagement committee, who were not supportive of, and refused to advertise, this event.

- Meaningful presence **during** O'Week
  - The importance of presence *during*, and not *after* Orientation Week cannot be understated for all of our societies. We run helpful introductory tutorials and networking events, where friendships within the first year cohort are fostered and connections are made with older students. This is vital to the health and wellbeing of students and our overall campus culture, and would be almost impossible to replicate if we were confined to the Week 1 Twilight event rather than O'Week events. Almost all membership sign-ups and sale of tickets for

our early events (Skullduggery and Medcamp) occurred during our O'Week (Tuesday) First Year Welcome on main campus and would not have been possible at the Twilight and Faculty O'Day events alone. Hence it is imperative that we are able to continue to run the First Year Welcome in O'Week.

- In the December meeting of the FHMS Student Engagement Meeting, you suggested that these events could be run out of hours in Week 1, however we are also very mindful that Week 1 of University is already extremely packed and a stressful time for 1st year students, and already has the Rural Welcome Dinner, Twilight Event and the Annual Memorial and Dedication Service as extra curricular activities. Whilst the intention of the faculty is to avoid overloading students with information in O'Week, we fear that the addition of further activities in Week 1 outside of the Twilight event will worsen rather than improve the current situation, and hence O'Week remains the ideal time for orientation activities.
- Unrestricted presence of each of our Major Sponsors
  - Each of the FHMS-specific societies rely heavily on mutually beneficial sponsorship arrangements. Without sponsorship, these societies could not actively contribute to enriching campus culture with events and educational activities. Sponsors consider their presence at O'Week vital to our agreements, hence their unrestricted presence at every O' Week prior to 2018. Difficulties in 2018 has led to a loss of support from sponsors, a recent loss of one of our major sponsors (over \$12,000 per year). Unless the faculty are able to provide alternate means of equivalent financial support to the ~\$70,000 received through sponsorship each year by individual societies, then it is crucial for our societies to continue to have an unrestricted presence of sponsors.

## 2) Faculty O'Day Specific Feedback- Wednesday 27th February 2019

For context, the FHMS O'Day in 2019 from a medical student perspective included a:

- 10 min Introductory Presentation and Society Stall
- Formal presence of the AMSS alongside the faculty, and recap of key points covered in the Tuesday AMSS First Year Welcome.
- Selling of tickets for events that occur during or immediately after O'Week (Skullduggery, Medcamp), although very poor sales given difficulty accessing the stall
- AMSS Membership Signups
- Student Welcome Bags were not handed out given they were banned by the FHMS Student Engagement Team if not all societies were able to provide them.

Despite sending the single powerpoint slide allowed for the Faculty O'Day many weeks in advance, the slides weren't available to speak to at the Faculty O'Day. The Adelaide University Rural Health Alliance (AURHA) also didn't have their slides included. As far as I'm aware all the other student societies had theirs apart from medicine, so it would be great to have this fixed for next year. Although a minor issue and likely a genuine mistake, it somewhat delegitimised our presence and made it very difficult to present on the spot and without our slides.

The actual set up of the stalls on O'Day in a small, difficult to access corridor of tables made it very difficult to get students to the stalls and sign ups that day were extremely limited as a

result. There were also not enough tables initially present, and as a result peer mentoring needed to move for all societies to have stall space. We tried to ensure all students were quiet for Prof Burt as per your request. We also made a considerable effort to not have any branding, sponsors or 'goodie bags' at the stall as you requested for this year.

### 3) SSTE "Twilight Event" Feedback - Monday 4th March 2019

It must be said the Twilight Event provided a great opportunity to work closely with the other FHMS presidents. However, I felt there were fundamental issues in its organisation from a faculty support perspective that resulted in a small number of students having to step in to organise the majority of the event a few days out.

As you are aware, the schedule was similarly packed from the medical students' perspective and included the running of:

- Workshops: Blood Pressure, Otoscopy, CPR, Suturing, Critical Care Emergency Scenarios, and Obstetrics Simulated Deliveries. It is important to note these are not teaching sessions, but rather interactive displays for students to be exposed to the types of future events run by each of the 12 societies listed below, and hence are well suited to be run as O'Week activities.

We had to limit signups to 75 students for the twilight breakout sessions (15 per station rotating through 6 stations) given availability of room space at late notice, with no room availability until 6pm. It should also be noted that whilst we are happy to continue supporting the faculty's 'Twilight Event' in the spirit of FHMS wide collaboration, we would preferably run these activities in O'Week.

In response to the email received from yourself Julie:



Having put a huge amount of work into collaboratively organising what I thought was a very successful event, I must say I think it was a shame to only hear negative feedback around a small hiccup of timing on the night, amidst an extremely successful evening and the first student run cross-society FHMS orientation event in many years! But nevertheless I'll try to give some background as to how this issue came about.

Essentially we had initially planned all the activities during the 4-7pm period. After many attempts by James to meet with Adam Montagu from simulation and finalise the event in weeks leading up, I met with the simulation team on Wednesday of O'Week and was told they were going to cancel the whole event as they felt it had been poorly organised and didn't have any oversight from a faculty level. I was under the impression from our meetings that the faculty was helping book these spaces which would be coordinated individually by each student society. However, under a week out, the simulation team hadn't heard anything about the event except from the medical student societies, and were completely unaware of the existence of a faculty wide event. Having been on placement in India and Pt Lincoln all information I received about how the event would be run was second hand, however I had the impression Rosie was going to be in contact with the simulation team if we sent through our individual society needs to her. I should mention now Rosie was fantastic to work with when she was around - unfortunately due to some bad luck Rosie fell sick and this may have been why simulation had just not heard about the event. I felt it wasn't fair for the AMSS to take over organisation given this was a multi-society FHMS wide event, and as a result I did my best to coordinate with other societies which I feel was eventually very successful. We tried to step in where necessary to help advocate for ANSS and AHMSA to be allowed to run stations (not just Medicine) as the simulation team was initially not keen on supporting their late request. Adam said if I was happy to be the one single contact (rather than 6 different societies) to liaise with for the event, then they would be happy to go ahead. Adam was extremely supportive in facilitating the final event and thanks must be passed on to him for all his work in organising this.

Simulation was only able to confirm on the day before the event that they would be able to hold the sessions and only confirmed exact room availability and room bookings on the day of the event a few hours before it started. Discussions with Adam began months out from the medical student societies and he indicated the rooms were occupied for teaching until 5pm, so would not be able to have us run activities until approximately 6pm given teaching pack up and subsequent setup time. However, this was still up in the air until the day of the event, and hence no finalised times were able to be sent through to the faculty. Given the event was advertised from 4-7pm and we had already coordinated with the other medical societies to run 2 hours worth of material (6 x 20 minute stations with all equipment and volunteers organised), it didn't seem fair to change plans on the day before and so Adam from simulation stated he was happy to have our stations run from 6-8pm. Once confirmed, I informed the other FHMS student societies to make sure there wouldn't be any issues with this. James also recalls communicating this verbally with student engagement. I was on placement in Port Lincoln throughout the day and given this was only finalised around 11am the day of the event, I did not feel it was necessary to communicate this beyond simulation, AHMS security and other societies who were the joint coordinators for the event. In future I appreciate that you would prefer to be kept in the loop about such decisions and will make every effort to do so. I would be surprised, but regardless am sorry if any students perceived this as preferential treatment. I think this should be regarded as a relatively minor issue and as James mentioned this was definitely not our intent, nor did any of the other student society presidents have concern this would have any negative effect on the student experience at the event. It was confirmed with security and simulation and this is how the event proceeded with no significant issues from our perspective.

## **FHMS Student Engagement Committee Interaction with Student Representatives**

I must express a degree of wider student disappointment around how the FHMS Student Engagement Committee looked to deal with student representatives in 2019, specifically around the orientation events. Using the Adelaide Medical Students' Society as an example: as a 130 year old society, the AMSS has had an extremely positive long term relationship with the faculty which has served both the faculty and students through mutually beneficial support of events. Students put hundreds of hours of work into helping coordinate events which ultimately create the wonderful culture we have at the University of Adelaide, which in turn attracts future students to the University. This year I heard from a number of helpers who felt they were poorly treated, intimidated and diminished by the FHMS student engagement team. Whilst the intent of this letter is not to criticise, rather focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for future first year students during orientation, I feel like it would be wrong not to pass on this feedback from students.

There also has been a significant and increasing focus by the FHMS Student Engagement Committee around the idea that "Medicine doesn't deserve special treatment". Whilst I wholeheartedly agree that as a cohort we should be (and are) aiming for increased collaborations between the AMSS and the other FHMS student societies, it is important to realise that the FHMS student societies are fundamentally different in their setup and functioning. The AMSS itself has a committee of over 80 people for around 800 members, with large scale events and budgets, and was also asked to represent a further 12 separate societies aimed at medical students within these meetings, all of whom have their own presidents and committees who we were asked to speak for. In comparison, using the example of Psychology or Nursing, they were only asked to represent their own committees, which by no reason or fault of their own are relatively new and hence smaller committees. I have already met with the nursing President Ally Hawthorn to see whether we can help them expand as a society to function in a similar way for nursing as the AMSS does for medicine, and hopefully run more collaborative events. I have had similar discussions with all other FHMS presidents. However, as it stands, these smaller societies do not have the funds/capital to coordinate the BBQ for the SSTE. This meant that the AMSS or AUDSS were the only societies in a position to spend \$500 ahead of time whilst awaiting reimbursements from faculty and other societies. This only acts to further distance our societies and essentially meant the AMSS had to coordinate the BBQ and finances of the event, despite a wish to make this as collaborative as possible.

The AMSS and 12 medical student societies we were asked to represent do not have any other means of advocating to faculty administration regarding their needs, outside of the FHMS Student Engagement Committee meetings. This committee is aimed at issues affecting students of the entire FHMS, however each student group has differing administrative needs which are not under the remit of the Head of School by their administrative nature, and hence we require a forum to raise issues outside of these meetings. At present, I fear medicine takes more than our fair share of time within these meetings, because there are no other paths for direct advocacy to the faculty administration. Usually I would voice these concerns to the Dean or Executive Dean, however you explicitly stated we should not discuss any O'Week issues with them. Our goal in 2019 was to work more collaboratively with the FHMS student societies, however I feel these meetings have served to further distance the medical students and I fear make us appear entitled and difficult to work with, when this is far from our intent. It has got to the extent that the nursing president told me in handover she was warned to

‘watch out for the AMSS reps who will try and take over the meetings’. I agree medicine doesn’t deserve ‘special treatment’, but all societies do deserve different treatment given the different nature and intricacies of their courses and student societies. We are very privileged in medicine to have such a well established student society with engaged student body and we should look to better support the smaller student societies to try and emulate this, not try to restrict the longer-standing more established societies to bring us all to a ‘one-size-fits-all’ lowest common denominator approach, as currently employed by the FHMS Student Engagement Committee.

### **Concluding Remarks**

We appreciate there were a number of unique difficulties faced in 2019 due to the presence of RCC on campus, and the FHMS Student Engagement team was very supportive in proposing the twilight event which was eventually very successful. So on behalf of all our societies, we thank you for that. I do, however, look forward to further discussing the running of O’Week events and ironing out a number of issues for future years so that it can run much more smoothly for all involved.

Furthermore, I think the faculty needs to review the way it current deals with and collaborates with the FHMS Student Societies, and in particular the 12 medical student societies, so we can improve our working relationship into the future. I am sure there are many ways that we can also improve as a society to do our part towards a better relationship, and I am eager to help in any way that we can. However, fundamentally this requires a change in the mantra that every student society requires the same treatment.

Thank you again to Rosie for her support. Having spoken to each student society president individually, I think that despite a significant number of barriers faced and lack of clear faculty organisation, the event ended up being a great success and all the student societies should be congratulated for their collaborative work in it’s running.

Please let me know if I can provide any further clarification, otherwise I look forward to discussing further once we have a chance to speak with the other societies.

We are privileged to be part of a University that engages with its students in both academia and extracurricular activities, and we thank you for taking the time to work with us. Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information about how O’ Week has run for the Medical Student Societies in previous years or you would like to meet in person, otherwise we look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,



Tom Gransbury

*2019 AMSS President*



Monica Chen

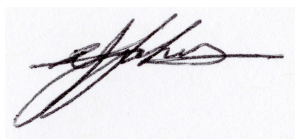
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