



## Message from the Chair

### Marlee Bourke

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I cannot even begin to explain the year 2020.

When I think back, the first words that fill my mind are stressful, long, complicated and overwhelming. All of these words of course tied to the very complex issue that is COVID-19 and how it impacted our lives, our work, our study and our ability to function as a society in a 'normal' way.

I went from being a 'student', to a 'Student Senate member', to a 'Student Senate member during a pandemic' in a blink of an eye, and it was a massive adjustment, completely crushing all of my initial expectations for the year.

However, once I move past the surface and start to really reflect upon 2020, I realise that words like **rewarding**, **fulfilling**, **educational** and **exciting** begin to appear alongside these other thoughts and feelings.

2020 was a **rewarding** year because I got to be part of an amazing team of students responding in real time to student concerns as the pandemic developed.

2020 was **fulfilling**, as I got the chance to help advocate for ideas that would support students like myself through the changes we were facing – both pandemic and non-pandemic related.

2020 was **educational** because on top of my own studies I had the opportunity to learn so much about the university, my fellow students and leadership. I had gone into this role expecting to learn so much, so when the pandemic hit my focus shifted instead to making it through the year and I put self-development to the back of my mind. However, I am amazed to realize just how much of my initial vision of 2020 was able to be retained – albeit in a very different way, and how much more I actually learnt because of the situation.

2020 was **exciting** because I had the opportunity to meet like-minded students who have a passion for student experience; a passion that we were then able to share with staff who feel the same way. It was exciting to see all of these amazing minds come together to overcome obstacles that I could have never foreseen.

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### Message from the Chair continued...

None of what we achieved in 2020 would have been possible without the **amazing Federation University staff**, so here is a massive thank you, from me to you.

You saw in myself and my fellow Student Senate members the same passion and drive to deliver superb student experience and support, and took what were often merely ideas, thoughts or feelings and helped turn them into tangible, practical and **achievable goals**. It is because of you taking time from your day to listen to us, that support and communication increased. It is because of your **passion, drive** and **dedication** that we have all made it to the end of the 2020 study year and can look forward to what 2021 will bring – whether that is more study, new careers or a completely new path.



Thank you on behalf of the  
2020 Student Senate team.

**Thank you for listening to us**

even when you already had so much on your plate.

**Thank you for understanding us**

even when we were unsure of what we were trying to say.

**Thank you for believing in us**

your trust and faith was so important in keeping us motivated and on track, when we otherwise could have easily been overwhelmed by all that the year was throwing at us.



I would like to **wish you all the best for 2021** and beyond – it warms me to know that the future of the Student Senate is so well supported by passionate staff, and that the whole of the student body have caring and dedicated individuals ready to listen to, learn from and care for students no matter what comes.

**Marlee Bourke, 2020 Chair**

## 2020 Figures

30

Student Representatives

39

COVID Issues Resolved

17

Major Proposals

100%

Representatives satisfied  
with team culture

# Achievements



The Senate stepped up as a key conduit for student issues and feedback relating to the outbreak and transition online. The Senate representatives worked tirelessly during periods of great personal stress and anxiety to consistently champion and advocate for the needs of students most affected by the outbreak.

## Representative proposals

Senate representatives developed and submitted seventeen proposals to the University. A new proposal process ensured the students were supported to workshop and plan implementation of their proposals with senior University leadership. See next page for the proposal highlights.

## COVID advocacy

In 2020, Senate raised and tracked thirty-nine distinct issues with the COVID response team. Over one hundred students reached out to the Senate with concerns relating to COVID, these have been condensed in the table below.

### Distinct COVID Issues Raised

10	Communications
8	Financial support and fees
5	Online study & tech
5	Grades & deadlines
4	Student residence
3	Campus access
2	Student services
2	Placements



## Student Senate representative proposal highlights

### The Senate Recommended

Increased support for international students during COVID.

Establishment of a student business incubator.

Investigation and resolution of various issues for students on residence.

Improved opportunities for industrial engagement.

GPA opt-out for those impacted by COVID.

Processes to improve student input on Facilities and Policy.

Various facilities improvements.

Improving timely release of course information.

Establishing a multifaith committee.

Affordable parking options and safety for students at Ballarat city campuses.

Clear information on facilities at residences prior to arrival.

### And the University...

Expanded financial aid and built the Case Management team.

Invited the Senate to participate in the design and launch of the Innovation Bootcamp.

Restructured residence services. Student Residential Advisors report improved satisfaction.

Conducted a review into all opportunities by course which recommended improved targeted promotion.

Implemented an opt-out for both semesters.

Developed a process for Senate submission of facilities requests and invited the Senate to participate in development of campus masterplans.

Tracked these using the newly built process.

Built a working group with the Senate to consider all academic recommendations.

Supported the Senate to build the committee, launching in 2021.

Reviewed current processes and clarified student after-hours parking options on SMB campus.

Commenced a project to review and update the quality of this information.

## The Chair's top three recommendations for 2021:

### Communication



Ongoing and timely communication is essential. This is especially important for return to campus plans and in degrees/courses that have a majority of their components face-to-face.

An increase/improvement in communication to students would be welcome. We found repeatedly in 2020 that the rumour mill churns and students get more anxious when they hear nothing. Even messages that offer no updates, but reassure students answers will be forthcoming and matters are being worked on, are helpful and valued.

### Impact on arts



Continue to work closely with degrees in arts who are impacted by government funding cuts and work with them to promote different career opportunities, funding opportunities, etc. – eg. Arts Academy, Bachelor of Arts, etc.

### Student feedback



Re-establish means of every student being able to provide feedback for every class they undertake to ensure that classes are constantly being revised and updated to suit current needs for industry.

For example, ensuring that art theory (painting, sculpting, etc.) is not compulsory for performing art students, OR, that Business Statistics (very math heavy) is not compulsory for Human Resources Students, or what is being taught is more tailored to what each student may need, such as reading graphs not creating complex graphs, etc.

(These examples are based on feedback I have heard from students)

## Introducing 2021 Chair, Olivia Carey



As we slowly get back to a little bit of normality, I am ready to start working with our awesome and diverse team of such bright and innovative people as the new Chair for 2021.

I am in my third year of a Bachelor of Business, majoring in Human Resource Management and Marketing. I've loved every minute of my time at Federation so far, which is why I feel so passionately about our Student Senate and the work that we do. I am still unsure of where I will take my degree, but I have already been able to implement much of what I have learnt in my management role at the Red Lion Hotel in Ballarat.

I am so excited to Chair the Senate of 2021. Our 2020 Chair, Marlee, did a fantastic job of facilitating what has been one of the most successful and difficult years for the Senate. Knowing that I have big shoes to fill, I am going to devote myself to ensuring her great work continues through 2021.