

# 74th WUSC Annual Assembly

Saturday February 6th 2021

12:00 - 1:00 PM

Via Zoom Teleconference

**DRAFT**

## **Minutes**

### **1. Welcome**

Chris Eaton welcomed the members and guests to the meeting.

Gesine reviewed the instructions for the online meeting.

Margaret Biggs, Chair of the WUSC Board of Directors, began by acknowledging the indigenous lands that we are all joining the meeting on, including the unceded Algonquin and Anishinaabe territories she is joining from.

Margaret recognized all of WUSC's membership, local committees, institutional members, general members, alumni and friends of WUSC. Margaret thanked everyone for joining us online.

Margaret introduced the members of the Board who are joining the meeting online.

### **2. Approval of agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda by Isaac Rueda Alvarez, seconded by Ben McTaggart.

All in favour. **Motion carried.**

### **3. Approval of minutes from the 73rd Annual Assembly**

Motion to approve the minutes by Chris Whitaker, seconded by Sonia Laszlo.

All in favour. **Motion carried.**

### **4. Chair's report**

Margaret offered the Chair's report. She noted that she has closely observed WUSC's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the rapid response to repatriate volunteers and adapt WUSC's programming. She noted that with the support of the WUSC network, the organization has been able to achieve important results.

COVID-19 has had a negative effect on all programming areas of WUSC in education, economic opportunities and empowerment. She noted that refugee youth are particularly negatively affected. Margaret shared examples of how WUSC adapted its programming through the COVID-19 disruption, from Kenya to Iraq and Jordan.

Margaret noted that this year's SRP cohort was not able to arrive as planned in September 2020; however, due to the determination of the WUSC network, the majority of the cohort was able to arrive in December 2020 and January 2021.

Margaret noted that the management of WUSC has done a terrific job navigating the pandemic and she and the Board remain confident that the organization is resilient. WUSC also established a new Anti-Discrimination Diversity & Inclusion (ADDI) Committee.

Margaret further thanked two outgoing Board members, Dr. David Turpin and Dr. Roseann Runte.

Margaret noted that this is her last meeting as Chair, as she will transition to the role of past Chair, and Chris Whitaker becomes the Chair.

## **5. Executive Director's report**

Chris Eaton noted that the AGA coincides with the opening (February 7 - March 6) of the 10th International Forum, which will be held for the first time as a virtual event. Chris talked about the theme and invited everyone to attend and contribute to the critical conversations. Over the last year, the pandemic, climate change and global calls for racial justice have underlined the need for more solutions to address poverty, inequality and exclusion. The panels and discussions during the weeks of the International Forum will help us to further build our vision for the post-pandemic world that we want to create. This is the driving theme behind this year's International Forum: *Reimagining a Better World*.

Chris noted that our annual report is available for download; the report shares significant, exciting developments in the year of 2019-2020.

Despite the challenges we faced over a year of COVID restrictions, WUSC still had great success in delivering on our mission. Chris thanked the members and supporters for having shown an extraordinary commitment to care for one another, and to extend the care and concert globally; as have over 430 WUSC partners worldwide. WUSC staff and volunteers demonstrated tremendous resilience and resourcefulness as they adapted programs to challenges of the pandemic and even expanded to new countries of operation.

Chris noted that last March we had to repatriate our more than 100 volunteers home to Canada. We worked to develop remote volunteer placements to be able to continue to support our partners.

The SRP cohort for the 2020 school year was delayed, as mentioned earlier by the Chair. We supported LCs, who were advocating for refugee students and undertook preparations to welcome them.

We are proud of what we have been able to accomplish together. From shifting to online work, to delivering our programs under new and adverse conditions, 2020 posed many challenges to our organization and our mission. We were called upon to be creative and to adapt. We were also called upon to stand up for our values.

Chris mentioned that the *Black Lives Matter* protests re-ignited an important dialogue within WUSC, and we took stock of the progress the organization made in these issues, identified gaps in our policies, practices and programs and are planning next steps; this work will be ongoing and it is WUSC's goal that programs and operations are always consistent with and strongly supporting of the justice we want to achieve in the world.

Chris invited members to stay tuned on WUSC's work throughout the coming year via the WUSC newsletter and social media.

Chris thanked members for their support and contributions to WUSC and its mission this past year. He concluded by thanking Margaret Biggs, who has served as the Chair of WUSC's Board of Directors over the past three years.

## 6. Treasurer's report

Colin Dodds noted that he is joining from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

Colin provided the treasurer's report, including the financial statements for the FY ended March 31st, 2020. He reported that WUSC continues to be in a very strong financial situation. WUSC provides regular updates to the Board. The audit was conducted by PriceWaterhouseCoopers. The Board's Audit and Risk Committee met independently with the auditors on June 25th, 2020 to review the results of the audit. The Board is satisfied with the work of the auditors and is recommending to reappoint them.

Colin noted that he was pleased to report that no issues were noted by the auditors. The Audit and Risk Committee approved the financial statements, followed by the full Board approval in July 2020. The treasurer reviewed the balance sheet.

The treasurer invited any questions from the membership, via the chat box.

**Motion to approve the audited financial statements** for World University Service of Canada, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020 as presented to the Annual Assembly, by Réjean Laflamme, seconded by Diana Torres Palacios.

All in favour. **Motion carried.**

WUSC's auditors are appointed annually at the AGM, based on a recommendation from the Board. As a result of the review of auditors, the Board is recommending PriceWaterhouseCooper (PcW) to be re-appointed. The treasurer invited any questions from the floor. No questions were raised.

**Motion to appoint PwC as WUSC's auditors for the year ending March 31, 2021** by Saiyouira Imamkulova, seconded by Katherine Ye.

All in favour. **Motion carried.**

#### **7. Report of the Nominations Committee and election of one new Nominations Committee member for 2021-2022**

Stephen Wallace, Chair of the Nominations Committee, provided his report. He noted the importance of the work on diversity and inclusion going on at WUSC and highlighted that this is happening also at the nominations committee. This will be a priority area of work for the Nominations Committee for the coming year.

Stephen joined Margaret in appreciation for outgoing Board members David Turpin and Roseann Runte for their contributions to the Board.

Stephen reviewed the nominations procedures for the year. Call for nominations in November. The Nominations Committee received six members interested in renewal, and two new members. The deadline was January 4th.

The Committee is pleased to advise that the following six (6) current members-at-large will renew their terms: Margaret Biggs, Chris Whitaker, Colin Dodds, Don Wright, Nicole Lacasse, and Brandy Robertson.

The two new members-at-large are Dr. Marie-Josée Hébert, Vice-Rector of Research, Discovery, Creation and Innovation at the University of Montreal, and Kathy Kinloch, President, BCIT.

According to WUSC's by-laws, if only one nomination per open position is received, the person is acclaimed. Therefore both new members-at-large were acclaimed.

Stephen noted the following new roles:

Margaret Biggs, Past chair for one year (2021-2022)

Chris Whitaker, Chair

Nicole Lacasse, Vice Chair

Colin Dodds, Treasurer

Stephen thanked Sara Kuwatly from Guelph for her participation in this committee over the course of the past year. The deadline for the call for nominations was January 4th, 2021 and there was one nomination received, therefore we congratulate Tom Tao, Huron University College at Western, for being acclaimed to join the WUSC Nominations Committee for 2021-2022.

## **8. Any other business**

Chris Eaton presented the Local Committee of the Year Award to University of Manitoba. Ameen Alnaser, Chairperson of the LC, accepted the award on behalf of the committee.

Margaret extended her congratulations to the University of Manitoba committee and all LCs for their work during a very challenging year.

There being no further business, no further questions, Margaret Biggs adjourned the meeting at 12:56 p.m. thanking and encouraging everyone to participate in the International Forum starting next week and keep up their work on behalf of WUSC.

Note: 164 participants were counted at the 2021 AGA.