

Minutes



Meeting:	BME Caucus
Date:	Wednesday 25 January 2017
Paper:	03
Author:	Annie Bhila
Purpose:	Record of Third Meeting

Union of UEA Students Purpose:

“To enrich the life of every UEA student”

Minutes of the BME Caucus

25th January 2017

Chair:

Edidiong Bassey (PSY),

In attendance:

Sharmin Hoque (PPL), Tarun Sridhar (LAW), Bhavna Raghuvanshi (LAW), Rhys Purtill(PPL), Karen Sakihama(PPL), Mae Kabore(DEV), Chloe Wint (PPL), Julian Canlas(LDC), Israel Okwiye (LDC), Nyime Onene Akara(NBS), Jessica Fong (BIO), Prudy Zheng (DEV), Seb Bekos (PPL), Emmanuel Agu(CHE), Mohammed Rashwan (PHA).

1. Introduction by Chair.

2. Approval of Minutes.

- Those in attendance were given the opportunity to read the Minutes.
- The Minutes were approved.

3. Presentation from Amy Rust on Student Leadership Review.

- Amy Rust (AR) began the presentation by explaining the history of the Review.
- AR highlighted how there was no structure for supporting students after they get involved with the Union. AR expressed how there is a structure for supporting the 20 officers but not necessarily the hundreds of students who work and volunteer through societies and liberation groups.

- There was no review on how Officers have been supported in the past few years.
- AR pointed out that although there is more Equality and Diversity training, the training did not focus on all liberation groups and did not address all the issues.
- The training was not tailored to the different roles and contributions students may be making to the union. AR expressed how the one size fits all approach to training was a mess and not working.
- AR noted that Union Council had too much power. This results in a lack of breadth of student participation.
- AR moved on to explaining her proposals. These were:
 - *The formation of one Constitutional Society instead of separate liberation groups*
 - *Looking into whether liberations groups may need more than one Officer. Possibly bypassing some of the Council requirements.*
- Edidiong Basse (EB) re-explained the issues highlighted by AR and proceeded to ask those in attendance for their thoughts.
- Rhys Purtill (RP) commended AR for bringing a more dynamic approach to the idea of Equality and Diversity training and liberation groups.
- AR explained how the system currently in place is detailed bylaws and it assumes that all liberation groups are the same. For example, the generic meeting times and structure of meetings.
- AR pointed out how unnecessary some Council processes are for example a liberation group cannot ask for more support without it going through Council.
- AR expressed how that should not be the case and no one should be the gate keeper for liberation.
- Julian Canlas (JC) expressed how he had an issue with the current system and the lack of communication of liberation group budgets, council policy and lack of advertising of liberation groups. JC proceeded to ask AR how her framework would work in terms of liberation group budgets.
- AR explained how it would be a decision made the Constitutional Society depending on liberation group needs.
- JC expressed the issues encountered during fresher's week and how there should be policy that enables BHM to be run effectively.
- AR explained how this may not be a policy related issue but a planning issue. AR expressed how the SU often fails at planning and a change of resource allocation may be needed.

4. Theo's Equality and Diversity Education Framework.

- Emmanuel Agu (EA) expressed how vital access to turnitin is for BME students.
- Mae Kabore(MK) spoke about the issues created by asking lecturers for feedback and the idea of anonymous marking. MK expressed how a lot of students do not know about complaints mechanism in place.
- JC brought up the idea of cultural sensitivity training for all lecturers. JC expressed how some biases are instilled within modules for example discussing colonialism from a Eurocentric basis.
- EB asked what the difference was between this framework and the Why is my curriculum white campaign.
- EA explained that this framework is pushing Equality and Diversity whereas the Campaign is more about representation.

5. Ethnic Minorities Officer Update.

- In the last meeting the Officer had been mandated to come up with a motion expressing the Caucus' disappointment in Union support and lack of diversity in full time staff members within the Union.
- The Officer presented a motion to the Caucus.
- The motion was discussed and edited by those in attendance.
- The motion was passed.

6. Discussion point from Student Union.

- Those in attendance were asked to discuss what life at UEA is like for BME students.
- Israel Okwenje expressed how he had been subjected to racial discrimination at the SU bar and the lack of seriousness it was handled with.
- JC expressed the lack of diversity within those who teach and how this adversely affects BME students.
- RP expressed how the university did not have a good complaint system. RP explained how there is no special training for complaining mechanisms. He explained how the environment is not safe and friendly, if he were to be harassed he would say nothing.
- Mohammed Rashwan explained how one of the obstacles BME especially international students face is segregation even in lecture.

- Chloe Wint expressed the lack of support cultural societies get from marketing at the Union is a barrier a lot of BME students face. She proceeded to talk about how the Union failed in advertising some events during BHM.
- There was a consensus by those in attendance that as BME students they often felt side lined and marginalised.

7. Any Other Business.

- Discussion of the NUS Summer Conference and how voting would work for this.
- The Chair and Officer were to discuss the time and date of next meeting.