

Minutes

Subject:	Union Council
Date:	Thursday 10 May 18
Paper:	UC 2 18 14
Author:	Tony Moore
Purpose:	Record of decision making

Key Points

- Approved constitutions of Harry Potter, Musical Theatre, and Persian Societies
- Passed policy on the following:
 - extenuating circumstances for library loans
 - bridging the BAME attainment gap
 - Better support for 'Academic Councillors'
- Restricting entry to the Postgraduate Centre to students over 21 by swipe card
- Rejected resolution on Brexit to work with For Our Future's Sake
- Better research into the PGR experience
- Triggering immediate support for the UCU when they call for industrial good
- Specialist, jocular proposal predicated on an intimate knowledge of the Star Wars series of science fiction films
- Introduced a code of conduct for course reps

Union of UEA Students Purpose:

“To enrich the life of every UEA student”

Minutes of Union Council

10 May 2018

Voting Members present:

Due to a technical problem, there was a failure to record the details of members attending: apologies for the error.

Chair: S Lam

Apologies: N Stokes (Chair of Council)

In Attendance:

E Folan (Campaigns and Democracy Policy Analyst), Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive), J Clare (Head of Campaigns and Policy) T Moore (Democracy and Governance Coordinator)

Section 1 – Housekeeping

Quorum

Chair noted apologies from N Stokes (Chair of Council) and that as Deputy Chair they would be chairing the meeting.

Chair noted the quorum count of 41 Councillors in the room and 7 online.

2253 Membership

Council noted the new members added to the Register.

2254 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 April

Minutes agreed.

2255 Matters Arising

None noted.

2256 Club, Society, and Peer Support Group Constitutions

There were no objections to any of the proposed Societies.

Council approved the constitutions of Harry Potter Society, Musical Theatre Society and Persian Society by 39 votes for, no votes against with 3 abstentions.

No objections – all voted for at once 39 0 1

2257 Appointments

No Councillor put themselves forward for the vacant Committee positions.

2258 Vacancies

C Koosyial, (Activities & Opportunities Officer) noted that, as part of implementing a policy passed by Council, SOC were putting together an ad hoc working group to try to tackle the endorsement culture prevailing at Officer elections and asked Councillors who wished to be involved to get in contact.

CK noted that there was a University group being formed, the Student Sport Physical Activity Committee, and the group wanted to reach out to students who were not involved in sport; CK asked Councillors who would be interested in working in this area to get in contact.

Chair noted that the Campaigns and Democracy Officer had not yet arrived and the Union's Chief of Staff could brief Council on the next vacancy.

Council approved the invitation for the Chief of Staff to address Council by 27 votes for, 12 votes against with 3 abstentions.

J Dickinson, Chief of Staff, gave a short description of the Aurora Network of European universities. JD advised that Aurora looked at the big higher education issues that Councillors were concerned about. JD noted that the group had a project on ending sexual harassment on campuses and that student representatives helped inform discussions on equality and diversity and learning and teaching. JD noted that the Union was part of Aurora and would be sending the Campaigns and Democracy along with another, to be elected, delegate to next year's conference in Amsterdam.

Note: in a subsequent online election J Goddard (Nightline Society) was elected as delegate to the Aurora Conference.

Section 2 – Reports

University Committee Reports

2259

There were no reports received.

Student Officer Committee (SOC) Report

2260

C Ball (Non-Portfolio Officer), as Chair of SOC, gave a verbal report highlighting the work of the Full Time Officers and Part Time Officers.

CB highlighted the work of the following Part time Officers:

L Deary (LGBT+ Officer [Trans & Non-Binary]) – attendance at NUS Trans Conference and working on policy revisions to come to Council;

A Atkinson (Women's Officer) – working on Women's Action Day and the Changing the Culture task force;

R Purtill (Environment Officer) – working on the submission for the Green Impact award and on cycling promotion.

CB reported they had attended a HUM Course Review and had been distributing allergen survey cards.

D Box (LDC YR3 UG) noted that, under the Bye Laws, a Councillor who missed two meetings lost their place on Council; DB wondered why the rule was not, currently, being enforced.

M Colledge (PG Education Officer) thought the rule should be enforced; MC noted that the matter was under the remit of the Campaigns and Democracy Officer and should be raised with them when they arrived later in the meeting.

T Howard (HUM Faculty Convenor) noted that waiting times to see Student Services had been reduced but that if a student needed

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) there was a waiting list of several months.

I Edwards (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer) reported that Student Support Services had made some great improvements but there was still work to be done and the Full Time Officers would continue to lobby for better services.

T Howard (HUM Faculty Convenor) reported that Campus Kitchen had eliminated nuts from food production and wondered when this would be Union policy.

C Ball (Non-Portfolio Officer) noted there was currently the allergen survey being conducted and would ask the Chair of Management Committee as to what the situation with regard to nuts was.

Trustee Board

2261

Council noted the Chair of Trustees' written report without comment.

A questioner from the floor wondered as to the present status of the BDS/Palestine policy.

I Edwards (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer), as Chair of Trustees, reported that the Board had not changed its judgement on the policy's legality but that SOC had been asked to take great care when implementing the policy to stay within charity law.

Reports from Representatives

2262

There were no reports.

Section 3 – Open Discussions

Due to time considerations, this item had been omitted from the agenda.

Section 4 – Policy Making

Council voted by 36 votes for, 2 votes against with 4 abstentions to hear an Emergency Resolution on Library Book Loans.

Council voted by 26 votes for, 14 votes against with 2 abstentions to hear the Emergency Resolution at the start of the policy making section.

Council rejected by 18 votes for, 23 votes against with 5 abstentions a procedural motion to move the jocular resolution "End the Trade Federation Blockade of Naboo" down the agenda."

Chair noted that there had been a mistake in a policy that had been passed at the previous meeting (2249 'Changes to the Trustee Board Composition') and this could be corrected in a matter of moments so they would be asking the proposer to highlight a correction and for Council to consider taking action.

M Leishman (UG Education Officer), as Chair of the Appointments and HR Committee, reminded Council that the policy had increased the number of External Trustees on the Board from four to six. ML noted that it had since been pointed out that if the composition changed it would impact on the quorum for Trustee meetings. ML proposed that this could easily be remedied by Council approving the proposed amendment to the Articles of Association. ML noted the proposal was to simply change the number of External Trustees needed for quorum: to increase this from one to two.

T Barker (PG Assembly) wondered as to present External Trustees' attendance at meetings and whether the proposed increase might mean a danger of Board meetings not making quorum. ML stated that the present Trustees' attendance record was good and the change would not endanger quorum.

There were no speeches against.

The amendment to policy 2249 was adopted by 39 votes for, none against with 5 abstentions.

Emergency Resolution: Library Loans

R Pitt (HUM School Convenor), proposing, thanked Council for hearing the Emergency Resolution. RP stated the aim of the resolution would be to help students with special circumstances, such as mature students, students with disabilities, distance learners, students living off campus, or students facing financial difficulty, in how they accessed library resources. RP noted the aim would be to provide a system of extenuating circumstances similar to that in place for course work.

There were no speeches against.

Council adopted the Emergency Resolution by 42 votes for, one against with 1 abstention.

Meaningfully Tackling the BAME Attainment Gap at UEA

2263

T Braddick (Momentum), proposing, noted that the 'Gap' referred to BAME students receiving lower grades than their peers even if they had had similar grades to their peers at A-level. TB noted that the Attainment Gap, as declared by the University, was around 17% but that other sources indicated it could be as high as 25%. TB believed the University was letting down its BAME students and this failure was due to bias and discrimination. TB argued there was institutionalised racism throughout the University. TB urged Councillors to ask their BAME constituents whether they felt comfortable using the University's services. TB characterised the problem as a festering wound on the University's façade of equality. TB noted they wanted to see Councillors vote for a resolution which would begin to address the 'Gap'.

There were no speeches against.

Council adopted the resolution by 40 votes for, none against with 4 abstentions.

Academic Union Councillor reform

2264

D Box (LDC UG Other Year), proposing, noted this was their first year on Council and, as a rep for LDC students, they had found it hard to represent their constituents effectively. DB argued the resolution would help future 'Academic' Councillors by: publicising their elections, helping them communicate effectively with their constituents and addressing the present disconnect between the Education Officers, SSLC Councillors and 'Academic' Councillors. DB noted that the proposal would bring these Councillors together to discuss and formulate policy.

R Pitt (HUM School Convenor), for clarification, noted they and other 'Academic Councillors' had, in fact, good communications with the Education Officers and had been working, effectively, together. RP noted they had worked well together during the recent UCU strike. RP wondered whether rather than create a new policy it might be easier to take the matter to the Education Sub-Committee and develop a strategy there.

DB, in clarification, agreed that there had been some good work done but believed it important to have a concrete policy in place for the coming year.

B Herdman (Big C), for clarification, noted in their School, HSC, there was a huge disconnect as reps on the SSLC knew nothing about Union Council or who their Union Councillor was. BH noted that the reps did not have any faith in the Union. BH further noted that there was no training available for HSC Councillors.

There were no speeches against.

Council adopted the resolution by 28 votes for, 6 against with 8 abstentions.

It's More than Just a Space: Use of the Graduate Centre

2265

M Colledge (Postgraduate Education Officer), proposing, noted that when the Union merged with the Graduate Students Association in 2015 the Graduate Centre had been created and the refurbished Grad Bar had been renamed Scholars. MC noted that, as part of the merger, postgraduates had been assured management of the centre would remain in the hands of postgraduates.

MC noted that, because of the lack of study and social space on campus, undergraduate students were increasingly using the Centre and this had led to complaints from postgraduates.

MC noted that PGR students, in particular, had reported feeling deeply uncomfortable and having their social space invaded by undergraduates. Many PGR students were Associate Tutors (ATs) and felt it inappropriate that they might be forced to share a space with students they might be teaching.

MC thought that the campus seemed to be designed for undergraduates and that Council should be aware that postgraduates had a different set of needs from their undergraduate colleagues. MC noted that an overwhelming majority of postgraduates surveyed had backed the proposal in the resolution to restrict entry and to implement this through the use of swipe cards.

MC assured Council that access from the lift for wheelchair users would remain in place as a signal of respect for their community.

D Box (LDC UG Other Year), for clarification, wondered what would happen to poetry reading events as these were a really valuable resource for LDC students.

MC, in clarification, acknowledged the value of these events but noted they had not taken place for some time. MC noted they were organised by LDC staff and, in talks with the University, it would be emphasised that the onus should be on the University to provide the venues for its own events.

A questioner from the floor, for clarification, noted they would support the restriction during daytime but believed the bar to be relatively quiet after 8 30 pm and that banning undergraduates might impact on bar takings. The questioner believed there should be some flexibility in applying the restriction. The questioner noted an added complication in that some ATs were undergraduates.

MC, in clarification, noted that undergraduates as guests would be welcome in the evening. As to the loss of revenue, the statistics showed that any restriction would not have a significant impact.

MC thought there were no undergraduate ATs.

The questioner noted that in their School, CMP, undergraduates acted as ATs.

MC noted they would investigate.

A questioner from the floor, for clarification, noted they and their constituents would support a flexible approach particularly in the evenings. The questioner noted their constituents were MED students and were 23 or older and were on a five year course.

MC, in clarification, noted that the Resolves were based on age.

M Mahmoudi (Bio Society) for clarification, wondered as to the working definition of mature student.

MC, in clarification, noted that the working definition of a mature student was any student over the age of twenty-one and this would be used in the entry requirements and would be easy to implement.

There were no speeches against.

Council adopted the resolution by 34 votes for, 4 against with 6 abstentions.

For Our Future's Sake

2266

J Robinson (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), proposing, argued that, in the Brexit referendum, people had been given a yes or no choice and subsequently been presented with a swathe of possibilities about what Brexit would actually mean. JR noted the resolution proposed that the British people should have a say in what the final Brexit deal should be.

JR argued that the process of Brexit meant that student opportunities were being lost and Britain was closing off from the world. JR believed the Leave campaign had been full of lies and deceit. JR argued that Councillors could take responsibility for the future and concluded: 'it doesn't have to be this way'.

A Councillor from the floor, for clarification, wondered whether there would be any affiliation fees to pay for joining the national For Our Future's Sake (FFS) campaign.

JR, in clarification, noted they did not know whether there would be any fee.

The Councillor believed that this could commit the Union to paying an indefinite amount.

F Northrop (Non Portfolio Officer) tabled an amendment to take out Resolves 2 which affiliated the Union to FFS. FN, proposing, argued that FFS was a bogus organisation which purported to be an across party consensus building initiative but was in fact a front for a particular Labour party faction with close ties to Labour Students or Nolsies as they were often referred to.

JR, against, noted that the Union had taken out similar affiliations in the past and the fee would be minimal.

Council adopted the amendment by 25 votes for, 10 against with 6 abstentions.

D Box (LDC UG Other Year), moved a procedural motion to send the resolution for consideration by referendum.

DB, proposing, argued that this was a huge and divisive topic that should be decided by the entire student body.

JR, against, thought a referendum might be fun but that most students favoured Remain and there was the matter of timing: the Union needed to organise and get out campaigning.

The procedural motion fell with 18 votes for, 22 against with 3 abstentions.

L Martin (Mature Students' Officer), against the amended resolution, argued that the thrust of its proposal would be to commit the Union to working with a Labour Party front organisation hiding behind a neutral sounding name. LM argued that there were better organisations, such

as Another Europe is Possible, that the Union could work with to greater benefit.

R Purtill (Environment Officer), in favour, disagreed with L Martin as to FFS' position noting they were proud of Labour's role within the organisation. RP noted it was Council's job to set the political direction of the Union and the Brexit question was the key political decision that would affect the current generation.

T Howard (HUM Faculty Convenor) challenged the Chair's ruling to not to take a point of clarification.

Council upheld the challenge by 19 votes for, 12 against with 10 abstentions.

T Howard (HUM Faculty Convenor), for clarification, deplored the use of acronyms in debate and asked what the initials OI stood for as mentioned in the previous speaker's speech.

RP, in clarification, noted that they stood for 'Organised Independents' a political grouping within the National Union of Students (NUS).

A Mulcairn (Leeway Society), against the amended resolution, argued that FFS was a niche organisation on the right of the Labour Party which happened to be the same faction that the Campaigns and Democracy Officer currently belonged to. AM argued that this was a small grouping favoured by the Officer. AM believed there were a million more important things the Campaigns and Democracy Officer should be doing than campaigning for a faction within the Labour Party. AM argued that the Officer's promotion of FFS represented a conflict of interest.

J Robinson (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), in summation, denied that FFS was a front organisation; JR argued that its members were drawn from across the political spectrum. JR believed that the Union's aim should be to ensure that students' views on Brexit would be heard at the national level. JR stated that they would not be spending an inordinate amount of time on implementation if the resolution were to become Union policy. JR argued that the key part of the proposal would be that the Union would be able to work to set policy so that the NUS could effectively get the student voice heard across the country.

The amended resolution fell by 13 votes for, 22 against with 7 abstentions.

There was a point of order quorum call: the number of voting members was counted as 41.

Investigating PGR Engagement with the Students' Union

- 2267** M Colledge (PG Education Officer), proposing, noted that since their Officer position had been introduced it had never been held by a Ph.D. student. MC believed that the Union knew a reasonable amount about the needs of Taught Masters students but knew little about those of

PGR students and this represented a huge gap in knowledge about a large group of the Union's members.

MC argued that the resolution's proposals would enable the Union to find out a lot more about the views of PGR students, help it to engage with these students and help it create policy tailored to their needs.

D Box (LDC UG Other Year), for clarification, noted that the Union had special arrangement for first year UG students to become candidates for Club and Society Committee and wondered whether a similar arrangement could be made for PGR students to become representatives.

MC thought this was a great idea but doubted whether the positions would be filled. MC noted, however, that they would take the matter to the PG Committee for discussion.

There were no speeches against.

Council adopted the resolution by 42 votes for, none against with 1 abstention.

Increasing our efficiency when supporting students' lecturers and university staff

- 2268** F Northrop (Non Portfolio Officer), proposing, argued that the resolution would give the Union the chance to lend immediate support to the academic staff trade union, the University and College Union (UCU) when industrial action needed to be taken. FN argued that the proposal would help during the difficult period when a strike was proposed and the action took place as the Union would be able to campaign straight away rather than having to wait for a meeting of Union Council. FN noted that, as a failsafe, Council would still be able to reverse any actions that had been taken on its behalf.

There were no speeches against.

Council adopted the resolution by 30 votes for, 10 against with 2 abstentions.

End the Trade Federation Blockade of Naboo

- 2269** F Northrop (Non Portfolio Officer), proposing, argued that the student movement was oppressed and that an important element that was missing was students having fun. FM argued that, during the current year, Council had been a misery pit. FM believed that Council had been too serious: there had been an overwhelming feeling of the imminence of death and the passing of time during a year that had been characterised by a sense of loss. FN asked Council to lighten up, have fun and vote for the resolution.

J Robinson (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), against, argued that revoking the Trade Federation would be illegal and deplored the fact that this might lead to a Jedi takeover. JR argued, as to the fun

aspect that the proposer had referred to, that this had been impacted by the prohibition of drinking alcohol in Council meetings.

The proposer waived the summation.

Council adopted the resolution by 30 votes for, 11 against with one abstention.

Code of Conduct for Course Reps

2270

M Leishman (UG Education Officer), proposing, argued that the Code would ensure a set of expectations for the work of Course Reps and would lay out their role clearly. ML noted the aim would be for the Code to be included in the Bye Laws and this would be brought to Council in the Autumn Semester. ML thought the Code would increase accountability as it would give students the ability to raise any concerns they might have about the performance of their reps. ML argued that the Code would ensure that support for reps would be in place for the coming academic year.

There were no speeches against.

Council adopted the resolution by 41 votes for, none against with one abstention.

Time, Date and Place of Next Meeting

2271

Chair noted the next meeting would take place on at a time, date and place to be arranged near the start of the Autumn Semester.

Chair noted that this would be the last meeting where Tony Moore would be acting as staff support and thanked TM for their work over the years.