

# Minutes

Subject:	Minutes of the UUEAS Union Council 11 December 2014
Produced by:	Claire McCoy
To:	Council
Date:	12 December 2014
Action:	To approve
Purpose:	Record of Decision Making

Voting members present or online:

M Jones (Amnesty), J Norrington (Anime), E Folan (Concrete), H Baker (Circus), G Macnaughton (Debating), J Geller (Deviant), E Horton (Dharma), L Parker (Fetish), H Mallett (Food Co-op), O Alfridijanta (Games), R Kalayer (Knitting), R Attfield (Law), A-J Thurlow (Leeway), Y Malinowski (Liberal Democrats), S Cooper (Liverwire 1350), K Collis (Mainstream Media), E Morris (MS), A Edwards (People and Planet), T Dosumu (Physiotherapy), A Rust (PSI), R Drury (UEA TV), J Keech (VegBox), F Dunkley (Young Greens), E R Athey (Ice Skating and Hockey), C Lancaster (Korfball), D Julian (ECO Other YR UG), R Wishart (ECO SLLC), E Kitching (ENV School), R Riley (ENV SLLC), V Patel (PHA Other YR UG), K Murray (PHA YR2 UG), J Wilson (Ethical Issues), T Southerden (Non-Portfolio Officer), I Goddard (Environment Officer), C Rand (Undergraduate Education Officer), H Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer), Y Yu (Activities and Opportunities Officer), H Hipwell (Art), J Thompson (Creative Writing), J Noble (Feminist), A McClostey (Labour), S West (Live Music), B Dandan (Women in Business), A Patel (Norwich Nightline), J Caruso (American Football), E Sciville (Cheerleading Stunt), S Panthaky (Taekwondo), C Odey (Tennis), T Walker (CMP Other YR), S Jones (PSI YR2 UG), C Mellowes (PSI YR1 UG), C Jarvis (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), T Etheridge (Non-Portfolio Officer), T Antoniou-Phillips (Non-Portfolio Officer), D Wrigglesworth (LGBT+ Officer), A Hood (Judo), S Glakousaki (International Students Officer), L Gilson (Netball), R Benjamin (Trampolining), R Staniforth (Computer Science)

In attendance:

J Dickinson (Chief Executive), J Clare (Head of Student Engagement)  
 Chair: S Lane

- Chair informs Council of the use of the LiveTweet app to ensure that tweeters use the #ueaunioncouncil properly, and asks for silence during speeches.
- Voting will take place with clickers.

## 1623 MEMBERSHIP:

S Lane Will look into membership of societies after Christmas, to make sure that the required numbers of members are present in each society.

#### **1624 MINUTES OF THE MEETING 20 November 2014:**

C Lancaster (Korfball) Minutes regarding Roosterteeth Society: the minutes mention racism as in the opposing speech, questions whether this was said. Chair calls for it to be checked. (Upon checking the recording of the meeting, racism was mentioned in the opposing argument).

Voting takes place and minutes –apart from the issue posed by C Lancaster - are approved.

#### **1625 MATTERS ARISING**

None.

#### **1626 CLUB, SOCIETY AND PEER SUPPORT GROUP CONSTITUTIONS**

A-J Thurlow (Leeway) comments on the potential overlap between Sexual Assault Awareness Campaign and Leeway.

C Jarvis (Campaigns and Democracy Officer) bylaw amendment allows duplicate societies on the grounds that they are providing a service for a particular school, or for particular students. If council does not deem this society to do so, they can vote against.

V Patel (PHA Other YR UG) looks for the exact wording of the bylaw.

S Lane proposes sending Sexual Assault Awareness Campaign back to societies committee to check while C Jarvis speaks against, commenting that it has already been approved by societies committee.

A-J Thurlow (Leeway) speaks to not approve the society as it is a duplicate society and A Edwards speaks to approve stating that it is an external charity working within UEA.

*Vote taken to approve Sexual Assault Awareness Campaign, SAAC report approved*

#### **1627 STUDENT OFFICER COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Council heard report from H Staynor (Chair of SOC committee and Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer): on things that have been happening since last council: Planning referendum for the merger for postgrads. Equal opportunities sat and planning to run an audit next semester to compile a report. Consideration of the Autumn Statement about postgrad loans with reflections from Liam and information to help students make informed decisions. Met with university to make and action plan and they are nearly ready to sign the Time to Change pledge. Aiming for winter graduations for postgraduates and nurses. Oil rig created by Fossil Free that was given to university to encourage them to divest from fossil fuels.

C Jarvis (Campaigns and Democracy Officer): Review of all policies that have been passed this term. Ethical Steering group set up and met as a response to council. Democratic workplace motion, looking to improve the democratic nature of workplace decisions. General election strategy student officers and staff members asking student opinions for a student manifesto which can then be used to lobby for change that students want. Ongoing negotiations through the Sports Partnership Group. Postgraduate Employment Charter, Liam has been trying to get the university to sign on to the NUS UCU Employment Charter to ensure that postgraduates get a decent deal when employed as associate tutors and similar roles. In addition to this, Liam has been working to improve postgraduate experience, trying to get feedback from postgraduates about what the new postgraduate centre should look like and has set up a working group for discussions on how to run the referendum on whether the GSA should merge with the Union. Connor has been working for useful assessment and

feedback and has been encouraging the university to sign up to an NUS benchmarking tool which would set basic standards. Equal opportunities have been looking in to how campaigns can be more accessible and the red box demonstration for free education as part of the 'No to Marketisation' of education policy took place. All sanitary products are being sold in the shop at cost price.

C Rand apologises for lack of report in agenda but informs council of his activities. There have been issues in individual schools, AMA and PPL for example, to do with organisation and staffing that are being dealt with. Ongoing discussion taking place over school title on degree certificates as well as ensuring individual, helpful exam feedback occurs. Advisory review means that all advisors will have to meet with their advisees three times a year and also PPL portfolio scheme, although it is considered compulsory there will be no sanctions for students who do not complete it.

#### **Questions arising from SOC report:**

E Folan (Concrete) asks about progress regarding gender neutral toilets.  
H Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer) informs that the issue was taken to management committee but council regulations limit what can be done to Union House due to the existing building structure and layout. Apologies made, and potential lobbying of the council to take place.

D Wrigglesworth (LGBT+ Officer) list of possible spaces on campus to be published.

*Vote taken to approve SOC report, SOC report approved.*

#### **1628 ETHICAL STEERING GROUP REPORT**

J Wilson (Ethical Issues) First ethical steering group meeting held and it seems a good to keep the union going in the way of policy. First meeting discussed a multitude of things including Ubuntu which is an ethical cola drink that now has been restocked in the shop and will be in the bar next semester. Discussed the usage of paper, using unbleached paper on documents that don't need to have bleached paper used. Cup issue discussed and they will all become completely compostable in the coming months. Issues about staff uniform were discussed and it will be a priority to make sure they are Fairtrade next time that stock is ordered. Ethical food policies to be made more substantial as well.

*Vote to approve Ethical Steering Group Report, report approved.*

#### **1629 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES**

T Walker (CMP Other YR) SSLC met and there was talk of remote desktops for students as they use more software that is specific to CMP, however was discussed 12 months ago and was found to be expensive. Now that the Office Suite has been issued for home use and there are some paid ones then it may be a possible way around not having the desktop at home.

R Attfield (Law) Issue about Law School in Earlham Park, lighting not good in the area around the building which is owned by council. The lights were not working and so the Law School asked UEA to contact the council, they did, and it was resolved within a week. Students are a lot happier now.

#### **1630 AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION ON THE PSI-UKIP EVENT**

Discussion took place with councillors grateful for L McCafferty's clarification on the policies regarding speakers and the action taken by the Union. The conclusion of which stated:

- There will be an internal review to ensure no repeat.
- They were entirely right to respond to petition.
- Regulatory actions are always in proportion to risk
- They are open to suggestions on how they could have handled it better

Councillors then argued for and against the usage of students to act as opposing speakers and the importance of the referred speaker policy was highlighted as a way of mitigating risk.

### **1631 DISCUSSION OF ROOSTERTEETH**

C Lancaster (Korfball) Roosterteeth is a group of people who write a script and act it out using video game characters. Last time Roosterteeth was discussed the speech against said that it was sexist, misogynistic, homophobic and racist. This was due to a video called 'Connect the Hots' however, C Lancaster states that it was not to be taken seriously, and an apology was issued. The community as a whole did not like the video and that is why it was taken down, the video is not representative of their views. 40% of the members are female in a male dominated area and women are also employed in key roles within the company. Several members of Roosterteeth in relationships with those in the LGBT+ community. Recently they had a live stream to raise money for children's hospitals and they raised £500,000 for the charity. C Lancaster stated that the allegations are unfounded and with 46 members at the minute the video should not be a reason for it to not be approved.

T Walker (CMP Other YR) asks about the trademark Roosterteeth and C Lancaster responds that the president has been in contact with Roosterteeth and has asked them about this issue. They have responded that as long as no money is being made and the official font and logo are not used by the society then there is no issue.

D Julian (ECO Other YR UG) asks if the membership fee counts as making money for the society but C Lancaster comments that the membership fee is compulsory as stated by the Union policy.

D Wrigglesworth (LGBT+) comments that Ray used the word faggot in one of their videos and the members say that even though it may be offensive in certain contexts it is not in others. This is damaging.

C Lancaster these comments were on the website from the general community and some of these members may be homophobic but Ray himself has commented that there is nothing wrong with homosexuals. Understands the concern over Ray using the word faggot in the video.

E Folan (Concrete) asks if they support the usage of offensive slurs that have been presented, comments on the use of the R and N words. C Lancaster responds saying that Roosterteeth does not support these views and neither does the society.

R Attfield (Law) comments that some points being made may be unfair as there are other societies that exist at UEA that have done the same.

S Glakousaki (International Students Officer) this is a society within UEA, so what is important is the way in which the Roosterteeth society present themselves. C Lancaster

says that it is a way to make friends with those who like the same thing, hope to help improve the societies media content.

Following a question regarding discipline C Lancaster comments that if there were any offensive or discriminatory statements made by members there would be disciplinary procedures.

H Staynor comments that it seems reminiscent of the blurred lines situation where there was a decision to stand against sexism.

C Rand states that the situation cannot be compared to political parties as multiple people within the party are known to most so it can be understood that the views of the individual are not representative of the views of the collective. However, not many know the front facing members of Roosterteeth so the same statement cannot apply in reference to these comments.

T Etheridge (Non-Portfolio) comments that they would not be able to break the equal opportunities regulations as it is part of the committee agreement.

E Folan (notes that their views here are not that of Concrete) and states the games can make people feel unsafe and that the issues should be acknowledge, addressed and not supported in order to move forward.

Speech against Roosterteeth from A Patel (Norwich Nightline) on behalf of S Jackson (LDC):

"The proposed Roosterteeth society is centred around a team of people who in their videos are frequently racist, sexist, homophobic, and offensive in almost every conceivable way. There is a blog called "AH Trigger Warning Archive" (AH standing for Achievement Hunter, one of the Roosterteeth shows) which details the potentially triggering material in every one of their Achievement Hunter videos. This list includes racial slurs – particularly their frequent use of the N word – child abuse, anti-Semitism, domestic violence, eating disorders, Islamophobia, rape, suicide and transphobia. These kinds of "jokes" made at the expense of oppressed groups are also rife in the Roosterteeth forums, where fans can be found making crude, offensive jokes much like the ones the team make in their videos. This goes so strongly against our values as UEA students that we cannot support the creation of a society based upon these people.

Looking up Roosterteeth fan blogs, it is easy to find disturbing quotes from the Roosterteeth team, such as a Gavin fan blog quoting Gavin as saying "Nazis weren't racist, were they?" These throwaway lines are so common in the Roosterteeth videos, they must surely go unnoticed by the majority of their avid viewers. One glaring example of their offensive – and in this case sexist – behaviour is a particular game that two members, Gavin and Geoff admitted to playing in one of their videos. Sophie referred to this game last week, a game called "Connect the Hots". Geoff, one of the older members of the Roosterteeth team described this 'game' as follows:

"Alright, so Gavin and I have a rule...where if we're driving to work, and we see a hot chick, we have to follow her, at a very slow and deliberate and creepy pace...Uh, until, uh, we see another hot girl. Or if we see another hot girl then we have to switch and follow that girl. And we keep this going until we run out of hot girls. Now since Gavin and I live pretty close to the college, sometimes we can get distracted a good, I dunno Gavin, would you say like 20 minutes?"

Later on in the same video, they refer back to the game, this time talking about a paedophilic version that they have played around schools:

Geoff says "I have made Gavin look like a really creepy paedophile on more than one occasion". Gavin affirms this, saying "Yeah, we went past a school once". The conversation ends as Geoff tells the audience "I have caught Gavin checking out questionably aged people a few times though".

Not only does this game, which they "highly recommend" to their viewers, terrorise and objectify women, but it also encourages the sexualisation and stalking of children. After receiving criticism for this video, the team apologised "to those who were offended" but did not attempt to make further reparations for the damage their 'game' had done. This is the kind of gaming culture bred by the Roosterteeth team, and it is absolutely inappropriate to support this with the creation of a UEA Roosterteeth society. To associate ourselves as a union with Roosterteeth, would suggest to all UEA's minority students – women, people of colour, LGBT+ people, etc – that we do not take discrimination or harassment against them seriously. To condone Roosterteeth's behaviour would make UEA students feel unsafe, and unheard by their own university. This is not a call to stop the students who are interested in Roosterteeth from meeting up on their own time to engage in these activities, but UEA students should not have to morally and financially support a Roosterteeth society."

Speech for Roosterteeth from A Hood (Judo):

These voices within the gaming community irritate and repulse the silent majority of gamers everywhere. The Roosterteeth is more like the gaming community in this way than like the views of the comments. As a disabled student, the gaming community was accepting loving and liberal. The concerns come from a very positive place and they are understood and the anger may be misdirected, perhaps better aimed at GamerGate. As an independent UEA body with no connection with the individuals who make the remarks the Roosterteeth society should be able to exist. The gaming community should remain vigilant to ensure it is a fraternity of passion and love.

Speech against Roosterteeth from D Wrigglesworth (LGBT+):

It took seconds when researching 'Roosterteeth homophobic' to find disturbing remarks on the internet. The fact that the pace in the 'Connect the Hots' video need be described as not a 'creepy pace' shows that we should not approve these sort of actions or the society.

*Vote to approve Roosterteeth Society, Roosterteeth approved.*

## **1632 STUDENTS NEED HOMES- CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARTICLE 4 RESTRICTIONS**

H Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer) explains that council is looking at imposing article 4 restricting the ways in which HMO's are created in Norwich. Houses with for or more occupants that are not related to each other. The justification is that residents are noisy, a nuisance and that houses are not aesthetically pleasing. Having met with councillors in Norwich they actually comment that they have no problem with student residents. Aiming to support the idea that if the article is implemented wanting support part 4 to create and accreditation scheme.

V Patel (PHA Other YG UG) asks if the council are then going to provide extra housing if they want to restrict the building of HMOs? H Staynor replies that there are no current plans to fill the gap and the students will end up paying premium prices for accommodation.

*Vote to approve motion, motion approved.*

### **1633 ACCESS IS NOT THE ONLY ISSUE**

C Rand (Undergraduate Education Officer) states that it should be a big issue that access to university is still dominated by the middle class and it should be the priority for any incoming government. However, dropout rates from universities frequently reflect their socio-economic background from before they arrived, which is unacceptable. UEA's access agreement focuses heavily on application and access with little on success and dropout rates, we should be looking to lower dropout rates and increase support.

*Vote to approve motion, motion approved.*

### **1634 EQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

H Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer) comments that younger students are more likely to qualify and other inequalities exist in regard to race and employment after university. As a union we need to stand up to that and let the government know that we are doing so, and need to put as many provisions in place as possible to help students and put pressure on the university to make sure that they are doing things about it as well.

V Patel (PHA Other YR UG) asks what Athena Swan is? H Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer) replies that Athena Swan is a gender equality charter that the university has signed up to, involving looking at the amount of women in the institution and looking at ways to making it a fairer balance.

*Vote to approve motion, motion approved.*

### **1635 THE COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY**

C Rand (Undergraduate Education Officer) explains that they have recently released draft guidance for universities and compared them in regard to the level of contractual service and how they complied with consumer law with other areas. What students are promised and what is delivered, for example. The result of this is far more solid legal rights for students when they enter higher education.

V Patel (PHA Other YR UG) asks in the draft guidelines are available to view. C Rand (Undergraduate Education Officer) replies that they are under consultation and are available to read.

*Vote to approve motion, motion approved*

### **1636 VEGANS NEED FOOD TOO**

V Patel (PHA Other YR UG) explains that people have complained about the ability to get hot vegan food on campus, this motion is to get the officers in to looking at bringing in hot food and more of a choice for vegans.

*Vote to approve motion, motion approved*

### **EMERGENCY MOTION- POSTGRADUATE LOANS**

Speech for vote to hear motion: L McCafferty (Postgraduate Education Officer) Motion did not get submitted in time due to human and technical error but it is big issue so it needs to be talked about.

Motion heard:

L McCafferty (Postgraduate Education Officer) explains that in light of the Autumn Statement, a national loan system for postgraduate taught students has been announced. NUS welcomed this and we should too. There is a consensus that education is a right and should be based on ability and not ability to pay. The government has recognised that there is a crisis with access to postgraduate study and this is a positive thing, but it is not actually a solution as by giving more debt this is not encouraging students to partake in postgraduate level study. This could be more to do with the current graduate employment market which is saturated at the moment. We have to look at what we want and are aiming for in regard to education and what demands we could put forward instead of just putting off more debt e.g. a grant scheme or writing off some of the undergraduate debt.

V Patel (PHA Other YR) ask what ideas there are for fairer funding models for postgraduate level study. L McCafferty (Postgraduate Education Officer) responds by saying it means ways to reduce debt, when more progressive models arise, those while be argued for.

*Vote to approve motion, motion approved*

### **EMERGENCY MOTION- RECYCLING POLICY**

Speech for vote to hear motion: I Goddard (Environment Officer) Meeting with Andrew Watts (Waste Management) was late and so the statistics could not be submitted before the deadline. It is important to have input in to changes that are happening in Union regarding the cups.

Motion heard:

H Barker (Circus) shares that this is an important policy as one of the key values of the Union is sustainability. There is an increase in waste from last year's figures and Unio is trying to make its cups compostable and all cups will be compostable by the end of the year, but the only bins in Unio are landfill bins. The aim then is to get compost bins and recycling bins wherever there is a landfill bin in Unio, therefore reducing the University's carbon footprint. More recycling and compost bins needed.

K Collis (Mainstream media) asks if the figures include October and it is clarified that it does, it covers September to November.

R Attfield (Law) asks if steps will be taken to make it clear which items are to be put in each bin. H Barker (Circus) responds by acknowledging this idea and resolving to put stickers to let people know what goes in each bin.

I Goddard (Environment Officer) notes that an educational campaign would be run too in order to help increase awareness.

*Vote to approve motion, motion approved*

### **NEXT MEETING**

7pm, Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January in Lecture Theatre 2.