

Minutes

Subject:	Union Council
Date:	Thursday 19 October
Paper:	UC 2139
Author:	Tony Moore
Purpose:	Record of decision making

Key Actions:

- Elected Nick Stokes (Darts Society) as Chair and Sean Lam (Lacrosse) as Deputy Chair of Council
- Councillors questioned the Director and Deputy Director of Estates on student concerns including: disability access, teaching space and sustainability
- Approved the following new Student Opportunities Groups: Bowling Society, Cancer Support Society, Chemistry Society, Don't Be a Wasteman Society, Foodcycle Society, Lego Society, Paramedic Society, Peace and Freedom Society, Radical Youth Society, Reggae Appreciation Society, Spanish Society and Think Tank Society
- Consideration of SciComm Society was deferred until a future meeting
- At the first meeting, Council has a lot of administrative business to get through and it only managed to consider one of the policy resolutions on the agenda before the 10 30 guillotine.
- This was 2135 Giving the SU Back to its Members which was rejected by Council

Union of UEA Students Purpose:

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"

Minutes of Union Council

19 October 2017

Voting Members present:

Aaron Scott-Carter (AMS YR3 UG), Abbie Mulcairn (Leeway), Abigail McIlpatrick (Hockey Women's), Abu Tadesse (DEV PGT), Adi Goldman (Hickling and Barton), Alex Stacey (Poker), Alice Marks (LGBT+ Liberation Society, Disability), Amanie Mathurin (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Amber Sheldon (Paramedic), Amy Atkinson (Women+ Officer), Ananya Wilson-Bhattacharya (Feminist), Andrea Hejdánková (Triathlon), Antonia Wilde (Waterpolo), Apple Bustamante (Shotokan Karate), Ben Plummer (Table Tennis), Ben Smith (Boxing), Bethany Pearson (Assassins), Callum Harling (Vegan), Camille Koosyial (Activities & Opportunities Officer), Charlie Norman (PSY Other YR UG), Charlotte England (Bowling), Chloé D'Hondt (Philosophy Soc), Chris Ball (Non-Portfolio Officer), Connie Man (Pharmacy), Dalel Makhsut (DEV YR2 UG), Daniel Box (LDC YR3 UG), Daniel Mastrangelo (Geek), Dominic Clarke (Live Music Society), Edward Capstick (Touch Rugby Club), Eleesha Kyriazis (Judo and BJJ), Eliza Gurner (Tap), Ellie Johns (Crossfit), Ellie Reeves (LGBT+ Liberation Soc, Women's Place), Emily Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer), Emily Ward (Speech and Language), Finn Northrop (Non-Portfolio Officer), Freddy Harris (Spanish), Freya Leslie (Ultimate Frisbee), George Goldberg (Livewire), Georgina Raymond (Sailing and Powerboat), Giorgia Rose (Art), Hannah Murgatroyd (Disabilities Liberation Society, Physical Illness Place), Haqqeem Abdul Razak (Malaysian), Harry Jordan (Social Society), Heather Bingham (Conservation and Wildlife Society), Hywel Finden-Browne (Windsurf & Paddleboard), Imran Ahmed (Buddhist), India Edwards (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer), Jack Annand (Business Society), Jack Bear (American Football Club), Jack Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer), Jack Sayer (Korfball), Jacob Chamberlain (The Broad Magazine), Jake Goddard (Nightline), James Houghton (Rock Climbing), Jemma Bailey (Non-Portfolio Officer), Jenna Chapman (RAG Soc), Jonathan Squire (Games), Jordan Shepherd (Marrow), Katherine Frost (Headlights Comedy), Khalil Al Wazir (People and Planet), Laura Graham (Sport and Exercise Medicine), Lauren Moreton (PG Assembly), Lewis Martin (Mature Students Officer), Liam Deary, (LGBT+ Officer, Trans & Non-Binary), Lizzie Carter (LGBT+ Liberation Society, Open Place), Lucy Auger (Non-Portfolio Officer), Lucy Dewar (Language and Communications Studies), Maddie Colledge (Postgraduate Education Officer), Mae Kabore (LGBT+ Officer, Open Place), Mary Etheridge (Food Cycle), Mary Leishman (Undergraduate Education Officer), Matin Mahmoudi (BIO Soc), Matthew Shields (Cricket), Mbarak Shakuwe (Law), Michael Kyriacou (PG Assembly), Miles Folkes (ENV Other YR UG), Misha Camp (International Development), Mohaned Alhasan (International Students Officer, Non-EU), Mohib Iqbal (Indian Society), Naomi Littolff (Cheerleading Stunt), Nick Stokes (Darts), Nissi Kristo (Indonesian), Oldrich Capek (Rock and Alternative Music), Oliver Hawksley (Bad Film Society), Oliver Kuhl (Taekwondo), Omari Edwards (Kett

House), Patrick Hall (Quiz), Pui Lok Leon Cheung (Hong Kong Soc), Raasul Merali (Kazakhstan), Rhys Purtill (Environment Officer), Rob Klim (Ethical Issues Officer), Ruby Galley (Gymnastics), Sam Brown (Christian Union Society), Samuel Bruce (Model UN), Sean Lam (Lacrosse), Shinichi Williams (Filmmaking), Sophie Bunce (Concrete), Sophie Ritchie-Yates (Women's Association), Sophie Sibley (Rugby Women's), Thai Braddick (Momentum), Theo Smith (Capoeira), Tim Barker (PG Assembly), Tom Grimshaw (Cycling), Tyler Bell (CMP YR2 UG), Uzoamaka Ndukuba (Afro-Caribbean Society), William Richardson (Economics), Zoe Brown (Chemistry Society), and Zoe Freeman (AMS YR2 UG)

Chair: S Lam

In Attendance:

E Folan (Campaigns and Democracy Policy Analyst), Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive), J Clare (Head of Campaigns and Policy), A Efstratiou (Student Support) and F Munro (Student Support)

Apologies:

J Gossett (Physio Society), K Wodenitscharow (International Students Officer, EU Place) and S Stevens (Disabilities Liberation Society, Mental Health Place)

Section 1 – Housekeeping

Quorum

102

2120 Membership

Council noted the new members added to the Register.

2121 Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair

N Stokes (Darts) and S Lam (Lacrosse) came forward as candidates for Chair.

N Stokes was elected Chair.

S Lam came forward as Deputy Chair.

S Lam was elected Deputy Chair.

Note: N Stokes had to leave the meeting due to a previous commitment. S Lam chaired the meeting in N Stokes' absence.

2122 Presentation by the University's Director of Estates

Roger Bond (Director of Estates) and Rose Jenkins (Deputy Director) outlined the aspirations of the Department to involve all stakeholders, including students, in the development of the campus and sketched out the University's long term development aims.

M Folkes (ENV Other Year UG) wondered what could be done to improve the, what M Folkes believed to be, woeful service provided by First Bus.

RB highlighted the growing road congestion within the City which impacted on the bus service to campus. RB mooted the alternative of the University providing its own bus service but noted, also, that the University was in constant contact with First Bus exploring ways to improve the existing service. RB asked Councillors to take part in the Bus User Forum and to help keep the pressure on the company.

E Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer) believed there had been no progress as to accessibility on campus: EC reported that the new lifts in the Library were not fire resistant and that, across campus, fire doors often did not function due to maintenance problems.

H Murgatroyd (Disabilities Liberation Society, Physical Illness Place) confirmed the issues around electric doors not working and noted this was a fire safety issue for wheelchair users. HM noted their own particular problem in not being able to access the Arts Hub without dismantling their wheelchair.

RB asked for Councillors to pass the details of the breakdowns to Estates. RB highlighted the problems with the existing lifts: as Estates were constrained by the Listed Building requirements they had to continually apply piecemeal solutions when what was needed was the installation of entirely new lift shafts. RB noted that it would be possible to put in new shafts during the Teaching Wall refurbishment.

J Bailey (Non-Portfolio Officer) observed that the refurbishment was scheduled for 2021 and wondered whether this meant that much of the Arts building would be inaccessible for wheelchair users until then.

RB reiterated that Estates would continually look at 'work around' solutions prior to the refurbishment.

RJ reported that the Access All Areas working group had not yet met in the current academic year but that there would, although there had been some delays, be a £250,000 budget to improve accessibility with half allocated to construction and half social support.

L Deary (LGBT+ Officer (Trans & Non-Binary) wondered as to why the majority of toilets in new buildings were not gender neutral.

RJ reported that there had been complaints raised as to all toilets being gender neutral so Estates had responded by taking a pragmatic approach intended to provide maximum choice and to satisfy as many staff and students as possible.

LD wondered as to the nature of the consultation over the change: RB stressed it came after the initial installation as one needed to consult after people had had experience of using the facilities.

R Klim (Ethical Issues Officer) reported that some students from different cultural backgrounds had experienced difficulties using gender neutral facilities. RK added that there had also been concerns raised by self-defining males who, when attending the LCR, preferred to use a urinal facility.

T Barker (PG Assembly) wondered where the planned new buildings would be sited and whether Estates kept track of the increase in student numbers and the ability of facilities to absorb the increased demand.

RJ reported that Estates analysed a wide range of data on service use across campus. RJ stressed that the new buildings would provide a significant increase in teaching space and that Estates would be consulting with students as to how to maximise usage of the available space.

RJ reported that the University had been working with the City Council on the planning details for an extension to the Teaching Wall but if this proved to not be viable it would be looking at other possible campus sites.

A questioner from the floor wondered if an ecological impact assessment would be made for the Colney Lane development. RJ confirmed there would be an assessment and that they would put the questioner in touch with the survey group.

A questioner from the floor observed that it was only four weeks into term and the study space in the Library was already full at peak times.

RB stated Estates would be looking at providing extra pop-up study spaces in the Teaching Wall; RB believed it important to incentivise students to break an almost umbilical link to the Library and see the merits of using the space available across campus.

RJ noted that Estates would be looking at the need to provide 24-hour access to the study spaces in buildings other than the Library.

H Bingham (Conservation and Wildlife Society) queried whether the sustainable development goals would be embedded in the planning for the new buildings

RJ confirmed the goals would be a key part of the process and students were welcome to become involved. RJ noted Estates' pride in its commitment to sustainability and conservation; RJ highlighted the installation of the largest bat roof in Norfolk, part of the refurbishment of Earlham Hall, as an example of the department's commitment.

Chair thanked RB and RJ for their presentation and for taking questions from Councillors.

Councillors held an Open Discussion on the theme of How Can We Make a Better Campus?

2123 Remit of the Council

Noted without comment.

2124 Standing Orders on Conduct of Union Meetings

Noted without comment.

J Dickinson (UEASU Chief Executive) showed a NUS video, based on NUS National Conference, underlining standards of behaviour expected of members at Union meetings.

2125 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 May

Minutes agreed.

2126 Matters Arising

None noted.

2127 Club, Society, and Peer Support Group Constitutions

Chair moved that all the constitutions of the proposed Societies that had been unconditionally recommended for approval by Societies Executive be considered in a bloc.

There were no objections made to any of the Societies.

Council approved: Bowling Society, Cancer Support Society, Chemistry Society, Don't Be a Wasteman Society, Foodcycle Society, Lego Society, Paramedic Society,. Reggae Appreciation Society, and Spanish Society.

Council considered the proposed Peace and Freedom Society. A speaker from the proposed Society stated that it would be affiliated to the group in Norwich and would focus on the refugee crisis; the speaker added they had been in talks with Amnesty Society who had no objections to the proposal.

Council approved Peace and Freedom Society.

Council considered the proposed Radical Youth Society. A speaker from the proposed Society stated that they would focus on the promotion of Christianity in association with the performing arts and part of their programme would include a weekend of confidence building and networking in Wales.

M Folkes (ENV Other YR UG) wondered whether there would be an overlap with other Christian Societies such as the Christian Union.

S Brown (Christian Union) stated that the proposed Society would be very different from the Christian Union and believed it should be approved.

Council approved Radical Youth Society.

Chair noted that there were no representatives of the proposed SciComm Society present.

Council deferred consideration of SciComm Society to a future meeting.

Council considered the proposed Think Tank Society. A speaker from the Society stated that they would be a discussion group focused on ideas that members would post on a discussion board and they had gathered a lot of expressions of interests.

L Auger (Non-Portfolio Officer) asked as to what kind of external speakers the Society would be inviting. The Society's representative stated that guests would include students interested in climate change as well as local politicians.

Speakers from the floor wondered how different from TED-X the Society would be and, given the general reputation of think tanks, how inclusive it would be.

R Kabore (LGBT+ Officer, Open Place) stated there would be no clash with TED-X's activities.

A speaker from the Society stated that it would be following the SU's rules on inclusivity and would give a warm welcome to all SU members.

Council approved Think Tank Society.

2128 Appointments

J Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer) outlined the role descriptions for the vacant positions on SU and University committees. JR noted that the places would be filled by online elections and the results would be announced early in the coming week and reported to the next meeting of Council.

2129 University Committee Reports

There were no reports received.

2130 Student Officer Committee (SOC) Report

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

M Kabore (LGBT+ Officer, Open Place), as Deputy Chair, gave a verbal report highlighting work undertaken by the Part Time Officers.

L Auger (Non-Portfolio Officer) believed that, for accountability to work, SU democracy needed to be transparent. L Auger noted they had tried to find the minutes of Management Committee, the sub-committee of the Trustee Board where the Full-Time Officers meet to take decisions on operational matters, and the last to be published was from January 2016.

J Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer) agreed, as to the importance of Management Committee's minutes being available to Union members, and noted that they would investigate why the minutes had not, as yet, been published.

A Mulcairn (Leeway) asked, as to the actions of the Change the Culture working group, as there had been concerns expressed as to the graffiti warnings the group placed around campus in Freshers' week which had highlighted the threat of violence posed on university campuses ; AM believed that the graffiti had made members, particularly trans members, feel unsafe.

I Edwards (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer), as a member of the working group, stated that there would be a big publicity launch in February and that the Councillor's feedback was an example of what was needed to help formulate the group's approach. On the graffiti statements, IE argued that they were meant to be informative but also challenging.

2131 Trustee Board

Chair noted that this item had been delayed due to the recent resignation of M Colledge as interim Chair of Trustees; Chair noted the Trustees' apologies and assurance that a report would be made to the next meeting.

2132 Reports from Representatives

There were no verbal reports.

J Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer) drew Council's attention to the two items raised by A Tadesse (DEV PGT): prices in the Shop and the bus service. JR stated they would investigate the Councillor's points and report back to Council.

2133 Practice Resolution and Debate

Due to time considerations, this item was dropped from the agenda.

Chair announced the results of the Priority Policy Ballot and the resultant order of debate.

2135 Giving the SU Back to its Members

J Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer), proposing, stated they first got involved in Union politics when there had been a referendum on banning a song from the LCR: they and their flatmates had felt empowered by being able to take part in the referendum.

JR believed the Union was at a crossroad and that the resolution would give power back to students. JR argued that if Council was debating a ban or a controversial proposal it needed to take the student body with it.

JR argued that, at present, students did not have faith in the Union's democratic process and all the great work the Union did was often discredited by decisions taken without consultation: JR believed the resolution would fix this problem.

JR pointed to the Nestle ban which had stood the test of time and was still Union policy; JR believed this was because it had been passed by a referendum with full consultation of all the members.

JR asked that Council hand back power to the members and to break the continuing decline in legitimacy that was happening to Union democracy.

JR stated that Council had been created before the internet: the Union had the capacity available to run multiple referendums and genuinely

involve the members in decision making. JE asked that Council choose the right road to restore power to the membership and adopt the resolution.

M Kyriacou (PG Assembly), against, agreed with the proposer that the Union needed reform but argued that the resolution would not achieve this as it was, MK believed, riddled with inconsistencies. MK argued there were technical mistakes in the proposed Bye Law change. MK wondered why, if the argument was there were too many democratic bodies, had the Union created a raft of new ones. MK observed that new bodies had been created to increase engagement and believed these should be given time to bed in and assessment made as to their success in engaging members.

MK argued the resolution erroneously conflated representation with engagement. MK noted that Council was supported by the Democratic Procedures Committee yet the resolution had been brought to the first Council of the year before the DPC had met to consider it.

MK concluded by stating they found offensive the resolution's implication that Councillors, who were elected and were dedicated to representing their constituents, should be viewed as 'hacks'.

C Ball (Non-Portfolio Officer), for clarification, wondered whether it was permissible, within the Code of Conduct for Meetings, for speakers to shout into the microphone; CB believed this harmed accessibility as did the clapping that had greeted the end of the previous speech.

M Kyriacou (PG Assembly), in clarification, noted that they had only been elected the previous evening and the only guidance they had had had been the video shown earlier evening which had not contained any warning against speaking loudly. MK apologised if their loud voice had harmed accessibility.

J Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer), for, thanked the previous speaker for challenging the resolution as this was the first time one of JR's resolutions had been challenged at Council; JR argued this demonstrated the lack of scrutiny that Council gave to proposals. As to the speaker's arguments, JR argued that the new student leadership bodies had been created to make it easy for students to become involved in decision making and it was not inconsistent with the aims of the resolution which was, also, to widen participation in decision making.

JR reminded Council that, in terms of widening participation, at present because of Council's inaccessibility its numbers drop toward the end of term and this meant that sometimes only 28 people were empowered to change the constitution of a body with 16,000 members; JR believed this to be totally unacceptable.

JR underlined the facts contained in the National Student Survey data that students thought the Union to be unrepresentative; JR argued that most Councillors could understand the difference between representation and engagement but that few of the wider membership would.

JR stated that the new bodies were elected and JR was confident that their members had been returned by far more votes than those cast for Union Councillors.

JR believed that if Councillors wanted to ban a product or a service that it was unacceptable for the decision to be made by just a few people in a room.

JR agreed that it was part of their role to engage the membership in Union democracy and JR believed that the resolution was the best way to increase that engagement.

JR noted in relation to the DPC that its relentless focus had been on how to involve students from outside Council in the democratic process.

JR urged Councillors, before they made any decisions to ban anything, to get out of the Council chamber, to talk to students and take part in a referendum campaign.

M Colledge (PG Education Officer) stated it was never a nice experience to speak against another Full Time Officer but MC believed the resolution to be democratically unsound. MC wanted to bring Councillors' attention to one part of the resolution in particular: the idea of Management Committee filtering students' ideas and proposals for implementation. MC wondered how this proposal sat with the resolution's ostensible aims of widening student involvement in Union democracy. MC argued that, under the proposal, a closed meeting of Full Time Officers could take up one student's proposal for implementation without any further consultation; as a member of the committee, MC felt deeply uncomfortable being given this amount of unmediated power. MC stated that the infamous decision to ban sombreros had been made in a closed meeting of Management Committee without any wider student consultation.

M Camp (International Development Society), for clarification, asked for a definition of democracy: as both Union Councillors and Full Time Officers were elected representatives it would be helpful to have a working definition in the context of the debate.

C Norman (Young Greens) asked as a Point of Order that speakers should address the Chair rather than fellow Councillors.

J Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer), in clarification, thought the definition to be: the ability of as many people as possible to influence decision making, the power of the majority over the minority.

T Braddick (Momentum), for clarification, asked, in light of the extra powers the resolution would give to the Campaigns & Democracy Officer, what would be the limits on which proposals would be sent for decision by referendum.

J Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer), in clarification, noted that the text of the referendum question would be exactly the same as any proposal that had been submitted to Council: the Campaigns & Democracy Officer would not be given any extra powers.

Council approved another round of speeches.

J Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer), for, addressed M Colledge's point about the powers of Management Committee by arguing that the resolution did not give the Committee any extra powers; the point was it would reduce the powers of Council. JR argued that the crux of the resolution was whether we trusted ordinary members to make decisions; not the minor changes that would allow Management Committee to consider ideas from individual students. JR noted disappointment that Councillors with criticisms had not submitted any amendments prior to the meeting.

M Colledge (PG Education Officer), for clarification, reported that J Robinson had been on leave during the run-up to the amendment deadline and uncontactable for the submission of amendments.

A Mulcairn (Leeway Society), against, argued that the reality of the resolution was far from the intentions of widening democracy that the proposers had spoken of; AM urged Councillors to read the Resolves carefully as, AM believed, they were fundamentally at odds with the resolution's purported aims. AM noted that the Resolves would give the Campaigns & Democracy Officer the power as to how ideas and proposals would be submitted by individual to students to Council; AM believed this to be a direct transfer of power away from Council to one person, the same person who had placed the current resolution before Council. AM believed the proposal to be a repugnant power grab by one Full Time Officer.

M Kabore (LGBT+ Officer, Open Place), in summation, thanked Councillors for an interesting debate. MK noted, when starting as Councillor, being unsure as to what Council did, how to make change and how the views of students from outside Council were taken into account. MK believed that, despite recent changes, there had been little progress toward making Council an inclusive and understandable space. MK argued it should be simple: when asking to ban something the Union should ask all students their opinion not just those who were most involved. MK believed the Union did some wonderful things to empower students but that, as things currently stood, the great majority of students were alienated from Council. MK argued that the points made about an increase in Management Committee's powers were incorrect: Management Committee's remit was operational matters and the day to day running of the Union and the proposal fitted exactly within the current remit, there would be no extension of its powers. MK believed the matter had been raised by a small group of Councillors and the reason they had raised it was to hold on to their power. MK asked Council to vote for the resolution and restore members' trust in the Union. MK believed the Union needed reform and to make its decision making more legitimate and there was no better way to do this than, when big decisions were made, to simply ask the members.

The resolution fell by 26 voted for, 42 votes against with 16 Councillors abstaining from voting.

Chair noted that the guillotine had fallen declared the meeting over.

Chair noted the next meeting would take place on Thursday 2 November.