

Minutes

Subject:	Union Council
Date:	Thursday 30 November
Paper:	UC 21187
Author:	Tony Moore
Purpose:	Record of decision making

Key Points

- Approved guest speakers for next term new Student Opportunities Groups:
- Approved constitutions of Beat Society, Bicycle Repair and Recycle Society, and UEASocietea
- Discussed privately funded new student accommodation in the City
- Heard reports from SOC Sub-Committees and the DPC
- Open discussions on One Thing You would like to Change about Union Council
- Approved policy on defending and supporting Direct Action
- Approved policy for the Union to trial Meat Free Monday options
- Approved policy on working to prevent sexual harassment or sexual assault by staff on students
- Approved consultation document to be sent by the Union to the new regulator – the Office for Students
- Approved basis to lobby the University on better support and conditions for students doing dissertations

Union of UEA Students Purpose:

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"

Minutes of Union Council

30 November 2017

Voting Members present:

Luke Aldridge (School Convener (PPL)), Amy Atkinson (Women+ Officer), Lucy Auger (Non-Portfolio Officer), Jemma Bailey (Non-Portfolio Officer), Chris Ball (Non-Portfolio Officer), Tim Barker (PG Assembly), Heather Bingham (Conservation and Wildlife Society), Eddie Booth (Politics Society), Daniel Box (LDC YR3 UG), Thai Braddick (Momentum Society), Sophie Bunce (Concrete), Edward Capstick (Touch Rugby Club), Jacob Chamberlain (The Broad Magazine Society), Jenna Chapman (RAG Society), Maddie Colledge (Postgraduate Education Officer), Chloe Crowther (Nelson Court), Emily Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer), Liam Deary (LGBT+ Officer (Trans & Non-Binary)), Anna Deas (English lit and Art History), Chloé D'Hondt (Philosophy Society), India Edwards (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer), Michael Eldar (School Convener (ECO)), Scarlet Francis (Cancer Support), Jamie Freeman (Blog Society), Zoe Freeman (AMS YR2 UG), Katherine Frost (Headlights Comedy Society), Jake Goddard (Nightline Society), Jessica Gossett (Physio Society), Callum Harling (Vegan Society), Oliver Hawksley (Bad Film Society), Oliver Healy (Liberal Democrats Society), James Houghton (Rock Climbing Club), Mae Kabore (LGBT+ Officer (Open Place)), Camille Koosyial (Activities & Opportunities Officer), Michael Kyriacou (PG Assembly), Mary Leishman (Undergraduate Education Officer), Victoria Leung (International Assembly), Lidia-Veronica Lucaci (Korean Society), Matin Mahmoudi (BIO SOC), Abbie Mulcairn (Leeway Society), Uzoamaka Ndukuba (Afro-Caribbean Society), Charlie Norman (PSY Other YR UG), Tilly Norton (Environmental Soc), Georgie Pearsall (Archery Club), Bethany Pearson (Assassins Society), Rhys Purtill (Environment Officer), Aitana Ramon Guillena (School Convener (MTH)), Sophie Ritchie-Yates (Women's Association), Jack Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer), Aaron Scott-Carter (AMS YR3 UG), Sophie Sibley (Rugby Women's Club), Jonathan Squire (Games Society), Emily Ward (Speech and Language Society), Jenny Wedde (School Convener (DEV)), Ananya Wilson-Bhattacharya (Feminist Society), Rob Klim (Ethical Issues Officer)

Chair: N Stokes

Deputy Chair: S Lam

In Attendance:

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

Apologies: S Leviton (Mature Students Assembly), R Flaherty (PG Officer)

Section 1 – Housekeeping

Quorum

Chair noted the quorum count of forty-five.

Guest Speaker

Chair noted that S Martin, NUS President had been unavailable to attend the meeting.

2170 Membership

Council noted the new members added to the Register.

2171 Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 November

Minutes agreed.

2172 Matters Arising

None noted.

2173 Club, Society, and Peer Support Group Constitutions

There were no objections made to any of the proposed Societies.

Council approved Beat Society, Bicycle Repair and Recycle Society, and UEASocietea constitutions by: 42 votes for, 1 votes against with 3 Councillor abstaining from voting.

2174 Appointments

Chair asked any Councillors interested in the PG positions on the Senate Disciplinary and Appeals committees to contact the Democracy and Governance Coordinator.

2175 Approval of Guest Speakers

Chair noted the following list of speakers for the Spring Term as proposed by the DPC and the Campaigns and Democracy Officer:

- 25 January: no speaker, NUS Conference Resolutions
- 8 February: Jon Sharp, Director of Student Support Services on UEA's mental health strategy
- 1 March: Becky Price, Widening Participation Manager on Widening Participation, Progression and Achievement at UEA
- 19 April: David Richardson, Vice-Chancellor on Working in Participation to Make UEA Even Better

C Ball (Non-Portfolio Officer) noted, for clarification, that the proposed date for the rescheduled invitation to S Martin was to the same meeting as the Vice-Chancellor.

Council approved the invitations by: 43 votes for, 0 votes against with 2 Councillor abstaining from voting.

Section 2 – Reports

2176 University Committee Reports

There were no reports received.

2177 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 and Part Time Officers.

CB noted that that the previous year's Student Leader Review had created several Sub-Committees of SOC with the idea that students interested in specific areas of Union activity could directly engage. CB noted that some of the Chairs of the Sub-Committees would be reporting to Council.

A Mulcairn (Leeway Society) noted that plans had been announced to build over 1,000 student accommodation units in the City and these would not be built by the University but by a commercial company; AM noted this would represent a big change in University policy.

J Robinson (Campaigns and Democracy Officer) agreed that this represented a huge change. JR noted that the Full Time Officers had been consulted in confidence but the University had subsequently broken its own confidentiality. JR noted the reason for the change had been the University's shortage of funding. JR noted there was a possibility of further developments including more units on campus. JR noted that the Union would be consulted further on the plans but was in favour of the increase in capacity. JR noted that the University had claimed that the accommodation in the City would be the same quality as that on campus. JR noted that Council would be updated as more information became available.

D Box (LDC Other YEAR UG) noted first year LDC students' concerns about Home Run and housing; DB noted that housing had formed key parts of Part Time Officers' election manifestos and asked for an update on what SOC had been doing.

J Robinson (Campaigns and Democracy Officer) reported there had been a great deal of activity as housing was one of the Priority Campaigns and had included housing socials, ready to rent workshops and guidance to landlord and an overall push to drive standards up in the market. JR noted a core focus on campus living costs. JR reported a change based on student feedback: the release of the Home Run list had been moved to a Saturday.

Education Sub-Committee

M Leishman (UG Education Officer) noted that the Chair of the Sub-Committee had yet to be elected; ML made an interim report.

ML noted that the aim of the Sub-Committee was to connect with course representatives, gain a steer from the grassroots and give them a direct input into making education policy. ML noted the Sub-Committee had built two of the education resolutions and done a lot of work on lecture capture and would be working with the Union and the University to take this forward.

Ethical and Environmental Sub-Committee

R Purtill (Environment Officer) reported the Sub-Committee had been working on the Union's long-term sustainability strategy for a five to ten year horizon. RP noted more immediate work had focused on low cost vegetarian recipes, the food bank, hardship funds, students living sustainably, a paperless University and the Green Impact award.

The Liberation, Equality and Diversity Sub Committee

I Edwards (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer) reported that the Committee had not elected a Chair; IE noted the Sub-Committee had received updates on the gender neutral toilets for the new building on Chancellors' Drive and from the Changing the Culture working group.

The Welfare, Community and Diversity Sub Committee

E Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer) reported that the first meeting had been inquorate but that items that would be addressed in future were: the First Bus service and Loneliness on Campus. EC noted that a meeting in the coming week would look at exam stress.

2178 Trustee Board

I Edwards (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer), as Chair of Trustees, reported that the next Board meeting would be in December; a full report would come to the first Council of 2018. IE noted that Union staff members had been on a series of trips to look at best practice in other students' unions and their findings would feed in to future planning.

2179 Reports from Representatives

T Barker (PG Assembly), as Chair, reported from the Democratic Procedures Committee. TB noted all the Committee places had been filled and members were engaged and committed to making improvements to Council.

TB noted the Committee had changed the timing of Council Survey: this normally went out at the end of the year but would go out over the upcoming holiday period so that any changes suggested could be

looked at and maybe implemented in time for meetings in the Spring Term.

TB reported the Committee had been focusing on increasing Council's engagement with the wider student body and would be meeting with Union staff to work on improvements to the accessibility for the Council part of the Union website.

TB noted that the Committee meetings were open to all students and urged Councillors with an interest in improving Council to come along and join the discussions.

Section 3 – Open Discussions

One Thing You would like to Change about Union Council

Councillors fed back on the discussions:

E Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer) thought the timing of Council made it inaccessible to some groups of students;

H Bingham (Conservation and Wildlife Society) argued that there should be a no acronym rule for Union business;

R Klim (Ethical Issues Officer) reported that they were working on an 'acronym-buster' which would be available in the near future;

M Colledge (PG Education Officer) thought there were issues around: timings for students on placements, a need for fun, accessible explanations on Council procedures, the advantage of some Councillors having inside knowledge was not good, the results of the Open Discussions needed to be better and more widely reported, Full Time Officers should be held more to account with better publicity as to Council's power to censure and there should be more use of videos for training and explanation of procedures;

C Ball (Non Portfolio Officer) noted that 90% of resolutions came from Student Officers and Council needed to look at how to address this imbalance;

D Box (LDC Other YEAR UG) noted that Council was only just above quorum and that it was not fair on their constituents when Society Councillors did not attend meetings;

Chair noted the issues around academic deadlines and the appalling weather that might have prevented Councillors from attending;

C Crowther (Nelson Court) thought there should be a special section for Councillors to raise issues that affected their constituents;

Chair noted that these should be brought under the Reports from Representatives section;

J Robinson (Campaigns and Democracy Officer) noted that, on accessibility and the timing of Council, that this had featured in every Council Survey and the majority of Councillors had preferred the present arrangements;

G Pearsall (Archery Club) suggested that, if timing were in issue for some students, Council might experiment with some alternative timings;

J Robinson (Campaigns and Democracy Officer) thought this would be a possible way forward.

M Kyriacou (PG Assembly) noted the quality of ideas expressed in the current discussion and believed it be an excellent example of best practice as to how Council could function effectively.

Section 4 – Policy Making

2180 Defending and Supporting Direct Action

L Auger (Non-Portfolio Officer), proposing, noted the resolution, if passed, would mandate the creation of a resources hub of materials that would be instantly available if needed for actions called at short notice and believed this would make actions far easier to organise. LA noted the resolution would set up workshops to educate activists as well as the signposting to Union Advice for anyone looking at getting involved in direct action and wishing to find out about the legal aspects and the remit of the University's General Regulations. LA noted that the resolution also proposed organising an Activist Fair with invitations to external community groups to take part.

There were no speeches against.

The resolution was adopted by 43 votes for, 2 votes against with 1 Councillor abstaining from voting.

Chair reminded Councillors when asking a question not to turn the question into a statement for or against a resolution: points of clarification should only be used to get information about the resolution. If they turned into speeches they upset the balance of debate and this would not be fair to either side.

2181 Meat Free Mondays

R Klim (Ethical Issues Officer), proposing, noted human life depended on a planet of finite resources and highlighted the link between animal husbandry and the production of greenhouse gases. RK asked Council to consider the following statistics: 40,000 farm animals were killed every second and the production of a meat burger used 2,000 litres of water. RK believed the resolution fitted into the University's ethos: it preserved freedom of choice whilst promoting ethical alternatives to meat eating.

J Gossett (Physio Society), for clarification, wondered as to the reasoning for having a trial period of a month.

RK, in clarification, noted the idea was that the trial period would allow the Union to gather data and assess whether the scheme would be commercially viable.

R Purtil (Environment Officer), in further clarification, noted the scheme had been proposed after wide student consultation and that the Ethical and Environmental Sub-Committee had had a lot of input in to the drafting of the resolution. RP noted the time frame had come from the student consultation where students thought it would be good to synch the scheme with Go Green.

J Gossett (Physio Society), for clarification, asked if the Union might look at sourcing from more eco-friendly products. RP thanked JG for the suggestion and noted they would take it to the Development and Oversight Board for Retail and Catering.

The proposer accepted an amendment from M Mahmoudi (BIO SOC) to add a phrase to the end of Resolves 1 to read:
"However, without compromising the lifestyle choices of students consciously choosing meat."

There were no speeches against.

The amended resolution was adopted by 40 votes for, 4 vote against with 2 Councillors abstaining from voting.

2182 Working to End Student – Staff Sexual Misconduct

A Mulcairn (Leeway Society), proposing, noted the resolution had been formed on the back of many years of activism. AM noted that universities in the UK had taken guidance on how to deal with the issue of sexual harassment from the 1994 Zellick Report. AM noted that the Report, which precluded universities from investigating any allegation of sexual harassment until after any police investigation, had been discredited and the University had discontinued its reliance on it as an authoritative document. AM noted that the University was currently establishing a centralised reporting system on sexual harassment. AM believed there was still a lot to do as the University working group was not looking at staff sexual misconduct toward students and this was a key area that must not be ignored. AM argued that the resolution would enable the collection of data to identify the scale of the problem alongside measures to protect students. AM highlighted the vulnerability of PG students, in particular, and measures in the Resolves were aimed directly at safeguarding this group.

D Box (LDC Other YEAR UG), for clarification, wondered if the Resolves would treat every gender identification equally.

AM, in clarification, noted that gender identity was referenced in Resolves 2 and the resolution was gender neutral.

A question from the floor, for clarification, wondered as to the position with regard to students who were minors.

AM, in clarification, noted they were unsure but that they would investigate and any information they might find would feed into policy implementation.

There were no speeches against.

The resolution was adopted by 42 votes for, 3 votes against with 1 Councillor abstaining from voting.

2183 UEASU Response to OfS Consultation

M Leishman (UG Education Officer), proposing, noted that after the Chief of Staff's presentation on the new regulator, the Office for Students (OfS), the OfS had been the subject of a Council Open Discussion. ML noted that Councillors' responses had been collected and these, along with thoughts from the Education Sub-Committee, had been built into the resolution which detailed the Union's response to the OfS consultation.

ML highlighted the proposal to push for all students to have equal access to all aspects of the student experience.

ML noted that the resolution also addressed the issue of the new government-backed private providers, the 'cashpoint colleges', which had no meaningful student representation.

There were no speeches against.

The resolution was adopted by 41 votes for, 4 votes against with 1 Councillor abstaining from voting.

2184 Going it Alone: Improving Dissertation Support

M Colledge (PG Education Officer), proposing, noted that dissertations represented a huge proportion of marks on some courses of anything up to 100%. MC noted that the Union had undertaken research into the issues surrounding dissertations which had revealed a huge level of student dissatisfaction. MC noted that there was no common framework across the University in terms of: the way dissertations were submitted and marked, the time frame provided to complete a dissertation, what was expected of the supervisor role, and the provision of research methods training. MC noted that there was currently no common baseline of support across the University. MC highlighted the risks faced by international students under the Tier 4 visa system when the marking of dissertations overran. MC argued the resolution would provide a solid base on which to lobby to University to address the problems.

There were no speeches against.

The resolution was adopted by 44 voted for, 2 votes against with 1 Councillor abstaining from voting.

2185 Time, Date and Place of Next Meeting

Chair noted the next meeting would take place on Thursday 25 January.