

Student Leadership Review Final Report

Executive Summary

In April 2015, Union Council resolved that the Campaigns and Democracy Officer should carry out a review of Student Leadership positions within the SU. The mandate was:

- The review should be focussed on, but not look exclusively at, part time roles on SOC.
- The review should adopt similar terms of reference as the one originally launched last October; examine all relevant council mandates on the issue; and look at good and emerging practice from other unions.
- That the review group should be supported by three Union Councillors.
- That the review should undertake preparatory work over the summer; consult with all relevant groups this and next term; and report by the December meeting of 2016 in time for recommendations to be approved for elections in the Spring.

This is the final report from the review. We have found:

- That our system is confusing and has developed "piecemeal"- there are multiple student leadership positions across the Union but we tend to have an unhelpful focus on a single "central committee" (the "student officer committee" or "SOC") whose role and function is confused.
- That there is considerable scope to both expand the number of opportunities available and strengthen and standardise the support available to elected representatives.
- That the current system creates large barriers to involvement both in terms of elections and workload once in an elected role.
- That there is significant and confusing overlap between Liberation Caucuses, Officers and Societies.

This means we will focus in four main areas in the future:

1. That given our size, scope and ambition, we will expand the number of leadership roles and leadership committees/boards for different types of student and different SU functions.
2. We will strengthen linkages between societies and SU functions, particularly in the area of Liberation.
3. We will improve and standardise our promotion of, training of and support for the breadth of elected student leadership positions in the future.
4. We will take steps to remove barriers to involvement for students across the structures.

Part One Introduction and Background

In the recent UEA Students' Union "Quality Students' Union" audit, our democracy was rated as excellent:

"The SU delivers an Excellent support framework to ensure that the democratic processes which support decision-making are delivered to the highest standards. Democratic engagement within the organisation fundamentally exists to represent the opinions of its members. The Union maintains a very traditional structure to policy making and works hard to ensure this effectively engages students from a variety of perspectives through the make-up of the Union Council.

"As a result, it was clear that members believe student control in major decisions is at the heart of UEA Union, upholding their purpose and commitment to act with a "Student Focus" and "Political Awareness." The Union holds fair and open cross-campus ballots for all major office positions in line with the requirements of the 1994 Education Act and has balanced the portfolio of the full-time officer team with a Postgraduate Education Officer.

"The Union's most engaged members were very aware of the role of the elected officers and a number of the key policy discussions from the current year"

However, the system and structures are not perfect. In April 2015, Union Council resolved that the Campaigns and Democracy Officer should carry out a review of Student Leadership positions within the SU. The mandate was:

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- The review should adopt similar terms of reference as the one originally launched last October; examine all relevant council mandates on the issue; and look at good and emerging practice from other unions
- That the review group should be supported by three Union Councillors
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Following this mandate an online election was held to appoint three members of the review group to work with the Campaigns and Democracy Officer. This group met in early June to agree an approach to the review and discuss key issues.

Working assumptions

Whilst the motion set out key areas to look at the group agreed some working assumptions to guide the work:

- **We are looking at elected leadership positions.** The review should focus on leadership positions that are elected and/or have a representative role rather than at structures within the student staff team.
- **We aren't just looking at the "Student Officer Committee" (SOC).** The review should focus on Part Time roles on SOC but should examine wider opportunities within the union to be an elected leader of some type.
- **We are looking at culture/support as well as structures and roles.** The review should both look at the structure of roles on offer but also the culture, support and funding around those roles to enable them to succeed.

Background

A review of Sabbatical Officer roles at UEASU was carried out in academic year 2013/14, leading to a referendum on roles which abolished the "Finance" and "Communications" sabbaticals and introduced new roles for activities and campaigns/democracy as well as splitting the academic officer into PG and UG.

This is widely believed to have had a positive impact, however no changes were made to the Part Time student officer group ("Student Officer Committee" or "SOC"). Since then a number of motions have been passed and discussions held on further developing the Student Officer team:

- Motion 1526 mandated the Student Officer Committee to do all it can to achieve a **gender balance** in all future elections including looking at quotas.
- The "Women in Leadership" action plan that arose from that proposed investigating introduction a full-time women's officer.
- In October 2015 the Student Officer Committee created a working group to look at the issue of a Full Time Women's Officer, as well as to look at other areas of potential reform following a broad piece of research from the Union, proposing to look at **gender balancing** committees in the same way that NUS now does.
- There was also a decision to look at whether or not the current **division of work** between officers is fit for purpose; and looking at the Non-Portfolio Officer roles "and how we make them work **effectively**".
- Motion 1854 mandated a review of the union's **democracy and Bye Laws**.
- Until recently the SOC included the "Graduate Students Association President" but the GSA has now been wound up by the University with its functions take on by the SU.

In its motion in April, Union Council resolved the following beliefs about the current situation:

- Union research suggests that students regard the Union as not having a sufficient **number** of leadership positions;
- Our current structures shut out enthusiasm and talent through **a lack of positions** and unnecessary **barriers**;

- **Gender** is a real issue and a mixture of **encouragement, quotas** and **dedicated positions** should be looked at properly;
- Too many of our student leaders come from the **Humanities** and not enough from other faculties;
- **Nursing students** rightly argue that their representation within the union is poor, as do others, including but not limited to students on professional body courses and placement-based courses, who find our democracy **inflexible** and difficult to engage with;
- The issues facing **EU students and non EU students** are sufficiently different for NUS to recognise the difference in their structures, and we should look at these issues too;
- Proper representation for PG students is crucial and we need to look at how we might examine their under representation on the SOC;
- There is a real debate about whether the PG sabbatical should be a general PG sabb or one that focuses on education;
- Many students would struggle to fill a full role on SOC **alone** and we should look seriously at options to reduce those barriers.

Summer 2016 work

Following the working group's meeting in June four key pieces of work have been carried out:

- **Amy Rust** has conducted a brief audit of the student leadership positions available across the SU; and has carried out desk and face to face research with over 50 SUs around the UK to look at their structures.
- **Lucy Auger** created some dialogue with peer support groups and liberation groups on how to they would like the SU to support their leadership positions and whether a liberation committee of some form would be useful for them.
- **Elliot Folan** conducted a small piece of research into definitions and examples of job sharing, alongside how that could be implemented in our SU.
- **Louise Rudd** undertook to find out more about how mature students are represented in other unions and create a recommendation of how we can improve leadership opportunities for mature students.

Part Two History and Theory

Since their inception almost all Students' Unions have had structures which include representative deliberation, policy making and accountability bodies (councils, general meetings etc) and leadership positions in the form of an executive committee. In almost every case elections to the executive have been by direct, cross campus ballot with either general meetings or student representative councils providing scrutiny, policy direction and accountability for those executives.

Executives have also followed a similar structure around the UK. Since the late 70s, almost all featured a group of part time officers and full time officers, with full time officers adopting broadly similar roles focused around Welfare, Education, Activities and Priority Campaigns. They traditionally acted both as the political leadership of an SU as well as the trustee body as the committee in control of the "management and administration" of the SU as a Charity exempt from registration.

However over the past decade there have been some interesting developments that have tended to cause SUs around the country to start to revise their structures.

- As a result of Charities legislation almost all SUs created a **Trustee Board** to handle staffing, Corporate Governance, Finance and Risk- enabling executives to focus on political and representative leadership.
- Most SUs have abandoned internal "**infrastructure**" sabbatical roles like Finance and Communications to focus on charitable outcomes like activities or campaigns.
- Many SUs have **abandoned formal democratic structures** outside of elections, with forums and online ideas platforms focussed on research and consultation rather than deliberation.
- Many SUs have created **different kinds of committee and leadership structures** around types of activity, abandoning the idea of a single central committee in control of all activity.
- Many SUs have **abandoned Part Time Officers** altogether, with volunteers and committee members being elected by smaller groups
- Some SUs have been experimenting with **gender balancing; non portfolio blocks** of officers/sabs (that later divide up responsibilities) and **school/faculty based representation**.

In almost all cases there are three commonly given reasons for introducing reform:

- The **size and scale of the SU** as an organisation being beyond the ability of a single FT/PT committee of students
- The **size and scale of the student body** being hard to represent effectively through a single committee structure
- Perceived **barriers to involvement** of representative structures like councils and elections, both generally (ie time poverty) and from an equality perspective

At UEA the SU has adopted some of the above developments, although in piecemeal fashion and without a fundamental review (for example) of the SOC. This means that the Student Officer Committee is characterised as follows:

- It has a **structure** and **candidates manifestos** that suggest it is responsible for the whole of the SU's activities.
- Its **constitutional** status and **meetings** have tended to focus more narrowly on the SU's central campaigning function with other bodies and positions starting to handle other functions.
- This has tended to lead to a significant mismatch between expectations and reality for student officers, especially Part Time Officers who tend to be successful **outside** of the auspices of the committee.

Three types of activity- three modes of participation

Essentially the SU carries out three key functions, and whilst there is clear crossover between these "functions", any organisational or democratic system has to start somewhere. Most observers accept that each tend towards at least a different **style** of democratic participation from students. The following is an adaptation from an NUS study in 2009:

Social Enterprise. The SU runs a number of professionally run services for students, including bars, entertainments, catering, and retail services. The modern day complexity of these services and their role in providing a service for students, coupled with the financial imperative for such services to succeed, command that they be run by staff with student involvement in their delivery (student staff) evaluation (student managers) and their direction (at a strategic level).

This type of activity is arguably unsuited to the debate and mandate style of representative democracy; essentially the combination of organisational values and student input ensure that the student voice is heard and that the services remain student led. Put simply, students wanting to become involved with the running of the social enterprises should be able to focus on that rather than the price of student accommodation or the organisation of sports fixtures.

Representation, Rights and Campaigning. Whilst there is a recognition above that the definition of representation can become confused dependent upon activity within a students' union, there are a clear set of activities that can be combined into this category. Representation of the views of students to the University is a crucial role, both in formal committee based terms and informal terms through liaison and meetings with key University personnel. In addition the SU will co-ordinate and train student representatives at department and course level, and run campaigns on a local and national level that seek to influence

change on students' behalf. Although some elements of the analogy are unhelpful, this section of the Union's work is akin to that of a Trade Union, where acting as a voice for students and promoting and defending their rights are crucial.

This type of activity and its associated models of democratic participation rightly needs to differ from that of the Enterprises element; not only may there be significant debate over the union's position on an issue, there is also a need to have roles that reflect types of student and particular problems or concerns that they may have- often the elected need to represent certain cohorts, concerns or courses. The mindset and mode of participation need to reflect these differences to ensure that student leaders have appropriate fora for raising concerns, debating issues and acting on them through the representational opportunities on offer. Put simply, students wanting to become involved with tackling timetabling issues in the institution should be able to focus on that, rather than being expected to monitor trading or commercial budgets.

Activities and Opportunities. The SU offers a number of activities and opportunities through which students are able to enhance their experience at University. This may include participation in sports and societies; involvement in student media; volunteering and other student development opportunities such as student skills training. This area of activity remains largely student controlled and run through groups, clubs and societies, with staff involvement often in administrative support or developmental assistance.

This type of activity and its associated models of democratic participation rightly needs to differ again from the other two; here the elected role is more about co-ordination of groups and support for their development than advocacy or speaking up on behalf of others. Again, the mindset and mode of participation need to reflect these differences, such that students can focus on activities and the co-ordination and promotion of them, through organising committees and creating appropriate policies and strategies. Put simply, students wanting to become involved with the running of societies should be able to focus on that, rather than being expected to also consider the University's response to the HE White Paper.

Being effective at Representation, Rights and Campaigning

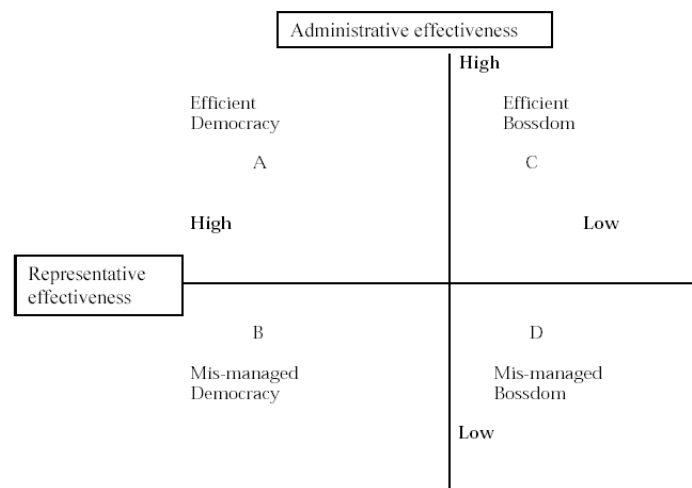
In the Representation, Rights and Campaigning function there is some useful underpinning theory from the Trade Union movement that can help us understand how to develop the structures.

Trade Unions' organisational capacity has long been seen as shaped by the tensions between representational functions and bureaucratic forms. Child, Loveridge and Warner (1973) take this tension as central factors affecting union capacity. They define **administrative** rationality as 'the logic of a goal-implementation or operational system, while **representative** rationality is the logic of a goal-formation or policy-deliberating system' (1973: 78). The "representative" rationality was characterized by a multiplicity of communications methods and strategies to reach as many people as possible; holding back on decisions until the maximum amount of consultation; lots of democracy, committees, etc. It required the union leaders, and thus the organisation, to be representative of members' aspirations and wishes.

But given that to run an organisation that needed to actually carry out the tasks of representation, there was also an "administrative rationality" required. This was characterized by carrying out tasks efficiently, employing experts, budgetary control, etc. It made the trade union efficient.

As illustrated, they pose representational effectiveness against administrative effectiveness or rationality.

Figure 1 Model of administrative and representative effectiveness



Source: Adapted from Child et al. 1973: 80.

They essentially define trade union effectiveness as an outcome of good union representation and good union administration. They point out these goals are frequently in direct conflict though they are not always at odds. In their model (see figure 1), an effectively representative trade union will be driven from the bottom, while an administratively efficient large organisation will be driven from the top.

The "ideal" trade union would be an "A" union- a hard thing to achieve, given it must be democratic and involving as well as efficient and managed well. A "B" union would be highly democratic, but perhaps with poor financial control, little in the way of effective HR policy or a lack of delegation to experts. A "C" union might have a tightly

controlled sabbatical and management team with no truer involvement in democratic decision making, poor election turnouts, etc. A "D" union would simply fail on all counts.

Arguably in an SU context the SU staff hold the principal responsibility for administrative effectiveness, with elected officers holding the principal responsibility for representative effectiveness. This is reflected in UEASU's two lead bodies- the Board handling administrative effectiveness and the SOC handling representative effectiveness.

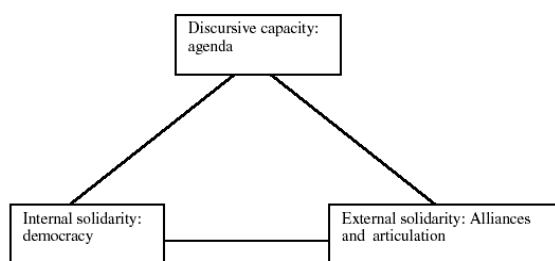
Improving representative effectiveness and political leadership

Again trade unions have also been looking at the issue have adopted a model. This is a model that places the mobilisation of different resources at the centre of the analysis of power, arguing that the success of union officers crucially depends on their power and that this power is the result of a variety of particular resources that can be mobilized to alter the terms of its relationship with other actors, organisations or services (ie in our context the University, Government, etc)

- First, it names 'agenda' or discursive power as the capacity of officers to shape and put forward their own agenda.
- Secondly, it names 'internal solidarity' which refers to cohesion: the mechanisms developed in to ensure democracy and collective cohesion members' participation, student officer profile presence and structures, and communication between general students and their officers.
- The final source is called 'external solidarity' referring to the capacity of officers to work with their communities and to build horizontal and vertical coordination with others on both a local and national level.

Whilst this model can apply to all types of SU officer it is hard to believe that an officer working Part Time will be able to develop in all of these areas successfully, particularly if their portfolio covers the whole student cohort or a large part of the SU administration. Hence many SU structures have tended towards smaller roles.

Figure 4 Local union power resources



Source: Levesque and Murray 2000

The four roles of a sabbatical officer

Over the past 15 or so years the role of student officers has become increasingly diversified and complex. The majority of an officer's role can be split into four categories or 'hats' which has allowed officers to understand better the different facets of their roles.

- **"Minister"** Role: This involves being politically responsible for an area of work, ie sports or communications.
- **"Trustee"/"Director"** Role: This is the oversight role of the SU operations and can include areas such as employment, legal compliance and financial responsibilities.
- **"Activist"** Role: Taking action around key rights issues and building campaign commitment for students outside of formal structures.
- **"Representative"** Role: Being a member of committees and meeting key people in the round as a representative of students.

In theory Part Time Officers hold smaller versions of the above, but whilst it is well established that Part Time Officers no longer carry out the **"Trustee"/"Director"** there is still an underpinning assumption that they hold the other three **"hats"**. This is very difficult to achieve and arguably has set up PT officers to fail unless significant extra support is on offer.

Man in the mirror

In 2013 NUS produced a landmark report on participation in democratic structures in SUs ("Man in the Mirror"). It found:

- The representative democracy models tended to be dominated by men
- That deliberative structures had significantly different participation patterns for different diversity groups
- That students are starting to trust representatives less and favour more local and direct forms of democracy and consultation

The Union places some emphasis on the University's Widening Participation strategies but little on its own. This both could and should change to ensure that we are monitoring in this area and removing barriers.

Summary

The above tends to cause us to consider:

- Whether the “Central Committee” assumption around SOC is unhelpful.
- Whether the SU might create more opportunities for leadership of smaller groups or functions.
- Whether we might adopt some of the models around different types of Governance for different functions albeit with overlap.
- Whether we could improve training and support for elected student leaders, and its consistency.
- Whether it is possible to create more elected positions that are more informal (ie without having to stand in a “big election”.

We will:

- Introduce **gender balancing** across all our structures and introduce confidence building support strategies for students in liberation groups across the leadership positions.
- Pilot and monitor the effectiveness of investment in **financial support** and **mentoring** for students from **Widening Participation backgrounds** to take up leadership positions.
- Introduce strategies across our structures to enable students in their **first year** to take on positions of **responsibility** and **leadership**.
- Abolish the rule on **co-campaigning** allowing students to run together in elections

Part Three

Auditing the current UEASU Picture

To inform the review we have carried out a short, surface level audit of existing elected student leadership positions throughout the SU. The overall finding is that the current practice reflects:

- An **unspoken understanding** that both the collective role of SOC as the **central committee**, and the **individual role** of its members had become "too much".
- That as a result a number of other leadership "experiments" have emerged which divide up roles, functions or part of the student body.
- That these have not been considered "in the round" and that inconsistencies in the level of support, funding, training and profile exist across the roles.

Activities and Opportunities

The most obvious area of development away from the "central committee" in recent years has been on **student activities and opportunities**.

- It is true to say that already the A&O area offers the highest number of student leadership positions within the SU- those on the committees of Clubs and Societies make up over 1000 student leadership positions.
- Some of these are "hogged" by some committee-happy students.
- These leaders may not see themselves as leaders or even part of the SU, and our training and support for them tends to focus on compliance and risk rather than leadership, skills and development.
- Over the past year a new coordinating body has been created for Sport (Sports Exec) which has been seen as successful and offering important leadership over a particular area.
- The intent is to develop a similar success out of the Societies and Media collectives.
- Med Soc has become part of the SU and also offers coordination amongst societies within a particular school.
- All of the success in these areas tends towards the "participative" style of Governance referenced in earlier sections- these students want to **get things done** and view the structures as a way to **organise** rather than **deliberate** or **debate**.

These developments are not dissimilar to other SUs although our research over the summer suggested some questions:

- Should the SU **restrict** the number of committee positions (or Presidencies) a single student holds?
- Are there some areas where the SU should **insist** on positions (ie E&D)
- Can the SU improve its **training and support** officer for both group committees and coordinating "umbrella" committees?
- Can we do more with **participative budgeting** with these groups?
- Can more be done around **student leadership** of SU wide charity fundraising and volunteering?

As a result we have resolved the following. We will:

- **Restrict** the number of **key positions** that a student can hold within student opportunity groups, dramatically **expanding** the number of students taking up leadership positions in this area.
- **Introduce a requirement** for all student opportunity groups to elect a **first year students rep**.
- Release **E&D** benchmarking data to all **student opportunity groups**, develop funding incentives around E&D work and require the creation of an **E&D rep** to drive strategies for diversification of membership.
- Review **training and support** for the leaders of student opportunity groups, aligning elections more closely with the main SU elections and creating time/space to deliver **training** before the summer.
- Trial **participative budgeting systems** with student opportunity umbrella groups and **rationalise** those umbrella groups in the bye laws.
- Develop an SU wide **charity fundraising and volunteering** strategy focussed on project work within student opportunity groups.

Undergraduate (and PGT) Education

A large group of course reps exist within the University. These are not necessarily seen as SU reps although they are trained and coordinated by the SU and carry out a key representative function.

- The University continues to underfund delivery of a **Code of Practice** on student representation but the Union will have clear staff support in this area in the year ahead.
- There are poor formal links between this group and the SU's **Education Officers** or **policy making** structures.
- Separate rep structures that divide up **schools and faculties** exist on the Union Council but are not usually filled and the process for election lacks legitimacy.
- A group of **convenors** in faculties are given a bursary from the SU (part funded by the University) but cannot be elected given rules in the Education Act 1994 on paid union office holders.
- **University committees** are largely populated by **sabbatical officers**; those that are not are generated through uncomfortable, long winded elections at Union Council.
- The union's work in this area tends to lack real profile amongst the student body.

Work with other SUs suggests that there is significant scope for development here:

- Can a more formal structure of **education focussed reps** "surround" the Education Officers?
- Can leaders in this area take a role in **Policy Development**?
- Can the union do more support this group with **research and tools** to generate it?
- Can more be done to support work at **School and Faculty level**?
- Is there a better way to **distribute and elect** positions on University Committees?
- Can more be done to **build the profile** of this work amongst students?

As a result we have resolved the following. We will:

- Create a dedicated **academic societies strategy**; mandating **statutory** academic societies within each school, and requiring all academic societies to elect a **bursaried academic Vice President** to focus on student representation and a **Postgraduate Rep**.
- Shift **faculty convenors** into the main body of the constitution, electing them from across the faculty to advocate for students and liaise with the faculty.
- Develop an **education executive** around the Education FTOs to focus on policy development & implementation and officer accountability.
- Ensure there are systems in place across the SU to **promote** the work of student **representatives** and their impact on the student experience.
- Shift appointment to **University committees** from Council to sub bodies across the SU structure (and do this before the summer) to ensure they are better supported to carry out their role.

Liberation Caucuses and Assemblies

The Union has made solid progress in this area over the past couple of years.

- **Autonomous caucuses** for LGBT, Women, BME and Disabled Students have all been created with a leadership and policy development function.
- **Assemblies** for Mature Students, International Students and PG students have also been created.
- Whilst there has been some **depth** to their work, they have all suffered variously from a lack of **breadth** of student participation.
- The Liberation officers and groups share a budget and many intersectional aims but do not meet regularly or coordinate effectively.
- The SU E&D committee has not been meeting regularly and has a confused role.
- **Standing for office** in a Cross Campus ballot for one of the Liberation positions is intimidating and especially difficult where those campaigning are forced to attempt to "guess" whether someone self defines into a group.
- Evidence suggests that students are **confused** about the respective purpose of a caucus, a related society, a related PSG and the SU officer of that group.
- Anecdotal evidence also suggests that the **core of people** active in a caucus are also active in related societies.
- It is possible for a society to disagree with an SU officer on an issue and there are not at present suitable or satisfactory structures through which that group of students can resolve the conflict.
- The current system implies that societies don't or shouldn't discuss political issues.

Research over the summer suggested some key questions:

- Can we resolve the "**crossover**" issue with related **societies**?
- Are there other ways to **elect Liberation Officers** than through a large "**Cross campus Ballot**"?
- How important is **breadth of participation** and are there other ways for students to contribute than attendance at meetings?
- Can **coordination** of the groups be improved?
- Is there a way to **clarify and strengthen** the leadership of E&D within the SU both as an employer and as an organisation?
- Can we find a solution that builds on UEA's historic strength in societies and have a system that is simple to understand, allowing students in Liberation groups to organise themselves appropriately?

As a result we have resolved the following. We will:

- Create constitutionally statutory **Liberation Societies** within the constitution which combine social activity, representation and campaigning and which are able to organise their own structures and activity to best involve their students autonomously.
- Create a similar structure for **assemblies** and deliver better support for their activities.
- Create a **Liberation, Equality and Diversity executive** to drive the implementation of the SU's award winning single equality scheme ("Transforming Equality") and better coordinate funding for and activities of Liberation groups and events.
- Recast the Trustee Board's **E&D committee** to focus on employment matters affecting both casual and career staff.

Ethical and Environmental

Both the University and the SU itself have a good history on E&E work however there has been little development in this area in recent years:

- There are two **part time officers** for each of the two “words”.
- The University **coordinates a group of students** in this area and that can be seen as rivalling the SU’s work.
- The role of **Ethical Issues officer** is highly confused and lacks real purpose.
- A large **People and Planet group**, along with some society activity, underpins much of the activity across campus in this area.

Research into other Unions suggests that the UEA’s approach here is uncoordinated and disparate, and there may be opportunities to bring together aspects of this work both across UEA and within the SU to improve impact and coordination.

As a result we have resolved the following. We will:

- Create a dedicated **ethical and environmental executive**; bringing together policy development, implementation and FTO accountability and better coordinating societies in this area.

Welfare and Community

Building structures based around the **student living experience**, and the relationship between that and local communities, has been a key development at other SUs in recent years.

- At UEA the only manifestation of work in this community area is held in the title of the **Welfare Sabbatical** and in previous years the distribution of a community newsletter.
- Unlike in other Universities with large on campus populations there are not any structures that **coordinate or represent** those in UEA Accommodation.
- **Community relations** are taking on increased importance as the University grows and the council considers planning regulation to cope with the expansion
- Unlike many other unions the SU has not developed any structures that surround the Welfare portfolio outside of the Sabbatical Officer. This is however a key concern for many students and a rich source of involvement both the union (through societies).

Again learning from other Unions throws up interesting opportunities:

- Can **housing/community strategies** be developed at UEA that involve student leadership?
- Should the Union experiment with **coordination/representation** structures for on campus accommodation?
- Is there scope for structures out in the **community** to improve **communication** and **coordination**?
- Can something be put in place to improve support for and accountability for the Welfare sabbatical and portfolio?

As a result we have resolved the following. We will:

- We will create a **Welfare, Wellbeing and Community** executive whose role will be to drive policy development and implementation in this area and accountability for the Full Time Officer.
- We will introduce **Accommodation Reps** in each block on campus.
- We will collaborate with the University over a **Community Strategy** involving liaison with representatives, a drive on student safety and a focus on housing to include a good neighbour scheme.

Student Staff

At the outset we deliberately resolved to not look at employed roles. However it is worth reflecting briefly on two issues:

- The creation of **student managers** in SU outlets, focussed on collection and dissemination of student feedback, has been seen by some as blurring the lines between representative and employee.
- The Student Staff teams lack **Trade Union representation** despite attempts at partnership work in this area in recent years.

Work with other unions suggests there may be options therefore on these two issues:

- How can we best clarify the respective roles of those **elected** with the Social Enterprises and those **employed** to gather student feedback?
- Are there ways to encourage and normalise **Trade Union membership** amongst students and the participation of Student Staff reps in Union bodies and Boards?

As a result we have resolved the following. We will:

- Seek a partnership with a **major trade union** to deliver **free or discounted** trade union membership for student staff and a dedicated **recognition agreement** securing facilities time.
- Expand the **student managers programme** with the social enterprises and more clearly define their role to exclude matters relating to terms and conditions and employment or political policy.

Social Enterprise

Following a review of these areas to improve student input there have been some ground-breaking developments in these areas in recent years:

- Employed **student managers** in each outlet/area are responsible for gathering, synthesizing and disseminating student feedback.
- Following a review corporate governance, **Development and Oversight Boards** have been created to look at strategy for Ents/bars and Retail respectively.
- These include students elected (by Council in 2014, by cross campus ballot in 2015 and hybrid in 2016)
- A number of initiatives have been successfully delivered in these areas arising from **Council mandates** (including sanitary product pricing, sexual harassment, vegan range etc)
- **Non portfolio officers** have tended to want to focus here but have only really been able to do so through DOB membership
- The University has traditionally **lacked involvement** of or representation from students in its equivalent services- but has agreed to a new student forum.

UEA is an **important innovator** in this area although there are some questions arising out of SU research and experiences this year:

- Can we improve **coordination** of and **support** for the DOBs?
- Is there a way to "**close the feedback loop**" on the work done by **Student Managers**?
- How can we ensure we **retain and bolster** the "radical edge" of initiatives generated by mandates at **Council**?
- How can we make the most of the new **Estates forum**?
- **Entertainments** is an area that lots of students want input on- how can we harness that energy whilst **managing expectations**?

Wider areas

A number of other areas have emerged during the research:

Corporate Governance: In this area- encompassing the Trustee Board and its HR and Finance Sub Committees- we have tended to adopt other unions' structures which see Sabbaticals, PTOs and "ordinary" students elected by council on the bodies. However the profile of elections to these bodies is low and "ordinary" student engagement hard to sustain- are there ways to improve here?

- We will move formally to a system which balances elected officer involvement with student and external appointments for the Board and its sub committees- where council ratifies the process and result of a selection based on skills, knowledge and diversity.

Nursing: Whilst other groups suffer from time poverty and distinct educational issues this group has an acute set of issues that the Union has recognised in recent times. The union is leading the way on staff support for Nursing students it is behind on political/representative structures although progress has been made on an academic society. What can we learn from other unions that have created specific SU structures/officers? And should there be a joined up approach on all Medical related students?

- As part of the work on **academic societies** we will deliver specific **investment and support** in the **HSC society** to enable it to succeed.

Priority Campaigns: In recent years the SOC has tended to operate as a feedback body for union services and a grant making body for campaign budgets. Is there a case for formally supporting its role as the Union's campaigns committee- and are there ways to involve more students in the leadership of our campaigns that go beyond having to stand (and win) a cross campus ballot?

- To reshape the SOC as a **priority campaigns coordination committee**, drawing in representation from the executives to ensure maximum impact to the SUs campaigning work.

Union Council: Many of the issues above relate back to Union Council, and other wider meetings like Sports Presidents and the Graduate Assembly. These are not in scope of this review but an eye should be kept on developments in these areas as they are closely related.

Elections: A number of Unions are now using technology to run smaller elections online- either for student groups, liberation positions, committees and school/faculty based elections. Many are held in the Autumn term to gather "new student involvement". Is there scope for that at UEA?

- We will **introduce and support** the opportunity to be elected to a range of bodies in the **autumn**.

SU Insiders: Some unions have begun to hold events for all student leaders on campus- elected and employed. For example At Middlesex SU an annual residential is held to improve understanding of the union and bolster communication of the SU's key priorities and messages. We only tend to bring this group together at the end of the year in the form of the SU Awards. Is there scope for such year round events/programmes at UEA?

- Our **Edge student leadership** conference will become annual and involve more students in both **design and delivery**.

Postgraduates: The PGSU set up is not in scope of this review, although it is clear that there remains a tension between the “general PG” role and the “PG Education” role that the sabbatical undertakes. In addition committee places have tended to be hard to fulfil. What can we learn from other unions on generating PG involvement in general structures and leadership of PG specific functions?

Part Four

Job-Sharing

This part summarises what “job-sharing” is, examines its use in broader politics, its use in specific student unions and some positives and negatives. It concludes by laying out how job-sharing could be practically implemented in UEA SU.

What is Job-Sharing?

Job-Sharing is a mechanism by which two or more individuals (usually two, or three at most) are able to serve in a position that would ordinarily be occupied by a single person. In organisations in which the position holds a vote on a democratic body, the two individuals share a single vote on that body between them.

The Civil Service broadly describes job-sharing as “a form of flexible working which enables two employees to voluntarily share the responsibilities and duties of one full time job”; the idea was similarly defined by Rosie Campbell and Philip Cowley as when “two or more people working on a part-time basis share the same full-time position”.

The practice of job-sharing is encouraged by the ATL in education fields; they argued in 2015 that “that job sharing is important in achieving equal opportunity in employment practice in educational establishments”.

Job-Sharing in British Politics

Job-Sharing has been raised as an issue in British political life since at least the late-1990s, when Lorraine Mann sought to stand on a job-sharing basis for membership of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 (it was rejected by the Returning Officer and the courts). The Fabian Women’s Network, the Fawcett Society, Disability Rights UK and Rethink have all since endorsed political job-sharing, and the Labour MP and current Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell put forward a private members’ bill to allow job-sharing in 2012 (like most private members’ bills, it failed to pass). The concept has since been endorsed by both the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party of England and Wales; indeed, two Green Party parliamentary candidates fought a court case in 2014 to be allowed to stand as a job-share (the case failed). The Greens routinely practice job-sharing within the party; several members of its national executive currently serve as, or are seeking election as, job-shares, including two leadership candidates.

In a 2014 academic article examining job-sharing, Campbell and Cowley conclude that as regards Members of Parliament, “Offering MPs the opportunity to job share does not challenge demand-side barriers to women’s selection and will only boost the representation of women in Parliament if accompanied by other measures. However, offering MPs the opportunity to work part-time may improve the supply of women standing as parliamentary candidates...there is an argument that job shares ought to be included in the battery of measures advocated by feminist campaigners in order to better represent women’s interests”.

Job-Sharing in British Student Unions

There are several examples of Student Unions that have adopted job-sharing options for some of their Union Officer positions:

Mid Kent College's Students' Union

The positions of Disabled Students’ Officer and Women’s Officer have been occupied by job-shares in recent years.

Bristol Students' Union

In 2015, Bristol SU had two candidates standing for Mature & Part-Time Students’ Officer as a job-share.

Swansea University Students' Union

In 2011 the part-time Events & Entertainment Officer position was occupied by two individuals job-sharing, as was the position of International Students’ Officer.

Birkbeck Students' Union

The current part-time Global Citizenship Officer position is occupied by two individuals as a job-share.

Warwick Students' Union

In 2012/13, Warwick’s LGBTIA+ Officer position was a job-share.

Nottingham Students' Union

In 2013 and 2014, the Women’s Officer position was job-shared between two women. One of the job-sharers stated: “It was a lot better doing a job share, I don’t think I could have done it by myself”.

Hull University Students Union

The LGBT+ Officer position is currently subject to a job-share, as is the part-time students’ officer.

University College London Union

In December 2014 two students at UCLU successfully proposed an amendment to the constitution to allow job-sharing for part-time positions. The amendment argued that “the workload for a part-time officer can be

incredibly high... Those with other commitments whilst they study, from caring responsibilities to clubs and societies to part-time jobs, should not be unable to get involved in the Union through lack of time".

Job-sharing for part-time positions is now an option. The UCLU website describes it thus:

"You have the option of running for all Part Time positions jointly with another student as a job-share. In terms of the election you would be a single candidate. If elected you would share the role and the duties that it requires. If you are concerned about the time commitment of a particular role this might be an option which you may want to consider. (Please note that this option is not available for Sabbatical and Student Trustee positions)."

Goldsmiths University Students' Union

Goldsmiths has operated a job-share system long enough for it to be cited as a useful system by UCLU; in 2013, for example, the Women's Officer position was a job-share.

Arguments for Job-Sharing

There are four main arguments for job-sharing:

1. It allows those with disabilities, mental health issues, caring responsibilities, intense workloads, part-time jobs or a combination of those to take up the campaigning activities of being an Officer without committing to 100% of the responsibility and stress. As an SU, we are committed to increasing diversity and this is a mechanism to do that.
2. UEA SU has long had a problem with women candidates putting themselves forward or being elected. Job-sharing is considered by feminist campaigners, politicians and major political parties to be an important tool in increasing the representation of women in politics.
3. UEA SU Officer elections have repeatedly seen instances of students seeking election but then standing aside for friends, pulling out after the deadline and seeing who was standing, or declining to stand due to not wanting to stand against their friends. This has been particularly pronounced in Liberation elections where communities are close-knit. This has meant that talented individuals have been lost as potential Officers and this is something we should seek to prevent.
4. The workload for a Part-Time Officer can be very high, and even if an officer has average responsibilities, it can still be very stressful and in one case led to the Women's Officer resigning and UEA SU being without an official Women's Officer for a number of months. Job-sharing would allow students to split the workload.

Arguments against Job-sharing

1. There's a democratic concern that less-popular candidates may seek joint election off the back of the popularity of better-known candidates. This is currently playing out in the Green Party, with ex-Leader and current Green MP Caroline Lucas seeking election as Leader in a job-share with less-known running mate Jonathan Bartley. This has attracted intense criticism from some Green Party members.
2. If job-sharing is expanded to all part-time officer roles, and the option is utilised for all of them, it would expand the Student Officer Committee from 18 people to 31. While each job-share would still have 1 vote, it would make the situation rather unwieldy in SOC meetings. However, this could be ameliorated by having each job-share only send one person to each meeting.
3. Candidates wielding one vote between them could make it harder for them to make decisions. There would need to be a solution as to what happens if they disagree.
4. There are other options beyond a wholesale rewriting of the election process – more staff support, the creation of committees for officers and other such ideas. Union Officers are not the only mechanism for democratic involvement in the SU and we could instead look at encouraging participation in other areas.

How would Job-sharing be implemented?

There are three options for implementing job-sharing, as I see it:

1. Allow all part-time officer candidates to job-share;
2. Allow only Liberation Officer candidates to job-share;
3. Leave the option of job-sharing up to Liberation Caucuses.

We will:

- Introduce the ability to "Job Share" roles across the Liberation structures

Part Five

Summary Conclusions and next steps

The above material might be summarised as follows:

1. That an SU of our size, scope and ambition should have a breadth of leadership roles and leadership committees/boards for different types of student and different SU functions.
2. That there is insufficient linkage between Liberation Caucus committees, societies and officers.
3. That we should improve and standardise our promotion of, training of and support for the breadth of elected student leadership positions in the future.
4. There are some clear options on Job Sharing of roles, in particular Liberation Roles.

We will now:

- Take forward consultation on this document and the three broad strands of work outlined above
- Bring forward draft proposals for constitutional change in December
- Seek to approve these in good time to implement change in time for the main election season in Spring 2017