

Subject:	Union Council
Date:	Thursday 26 th January 2023
Author:	Abbie Mulcairn
Purpose:	Record of decision making
Status:	For approval
Paper:	UC 042

UC 042 – Union Council Minutes

Chair: Chanel Munroe

Deputy Chair: Ollie Thornton

In attendance: Abbie Mulcairn (Student Voice and Academic Engagement Manager, acting as Secretary to Union Council)

Apologies: Taylor Sounes, Elise Page, Chris Njoroge

Voting members present:

Anureet Kaur Kaur (NBS - Student), Laksha Sivaram (PSY - Student), Chimdindu Otuekere (DEV - Student), Chanel Munroe (PSY - Student), Kirsty Soanes (BIO - Student), Alice Bethell (LDC - Student), Aiste Adomaviciute (NBS - Student), Andrew Nairn (CMP - Student), Scarlett Mcnicol (HSC - Student), Sophie Ciurlik Rittenbaum (PPL - Student), Annabelle Lambert (BIO - Student), Asta Kirkham (MED - Student), Eleanor Radford (PPL - Student), Natasha Tsekiri (BIO - Student), Erin Whitby (HIS - Student), Serene Shibli Sexton (TSR - Student), Ernest Blas (HSC - Student), John Whitehead (HIS - Student), Georgia Hubbard (HIS - Student), Hayden Rose (EDU - Student), Holly Summers (EDU - Student), Jake Rushbrook (CMP - Student), Sophie Handyside (LDC - Student), Simran Anand (NBS - Student), Matthew Stothard (HIS - Student), Elspeth Leslie (LDC - Student), Josh Bell (BIO - Student), Alice Ocraft (ECO - Student), Thomas Carvalho (BIO - Student), Christopher Kershaw (AMA - Postgraduate Researcher), Jack Fendley (BIO - Postgraduate Researcher), Felicity Eardley (PHA - Student), Emma Packard (BIO - Student), Lars Cockwell (HSC - Student), Ella Matthews (NBS - Student), Eleanor Lewis (LDC - Student), Eunchan Kim (PHA - Student), Ben Baldwin (NBS - Student), Lauren Aarons (PPL - Student)

Voting records: [Can be viewed here](#)

Section 1: HOUSEKEEPING

031 Statements from the Chair

The Chair gave an update about the SU Annual Elections for 2023. They noted that nominations are currently open and closing on 16th February and encouraged Councillors to nominate themselves for elected positions.

The Chair conducted a quoracy check. 40 members were in attendance and the meeting was therefore quorate.

032 Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting

The meeting approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th November 2022

033 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

034 Club, Society and Peer Support Group Constitutions

There were no applications received from the Societies Exec to be considered and approved by Union Council

035 Election to Democratic Procedures Committee

The Chair noted that there were two vacancies on the Democratic Procedures Committee that had arisen since the previous meeting of Union Council.

The meeting voted to appoint students to the Democratic Procedures Committee.

29 votes were cast and the results were:

- Luke Johnson – 26 (elected)
- Felicity Eardley – 27 (elected)
- Re-Open Nominations – 0 (elected)

Section 2: REPORTS

036 Student Officer Committee Report

The Chair of SOC gave a verbal update on SOC activities. L Bigalke (Chair of SOC) reported that SOC last met in November where they discussed the outcomes of Union Council and decided on funding requests. L Bigalke noted that Georgia (Invisible Disabilities Officer) gave a presentation on a disability awareness training that officers attended and is being rolled out within in the University.

037 Trustee Board Report

The Chair noted that apologies were received from the Chair of the Trustee Board and no written report was submitted from the Trustee Board.

038 Full-Time Officer Reports

Taylor Sounes (UG Officer) sent apologies. A full written report can be found in the agenda.

Aaron Campbell gave a verbal update. They noted that they are running admin life session in the SIZ, that the Inclusive Language Project is being delivered to the University Exec soon and planning for LGBTQ+ history month is underway. They noted that the cost of living letter had been sent to the University in November and a response has been received which Officers are now considering next steps for. They noted that following announcements about UEA finances, the strategy for the campaign is being reviewed. Met with VC to share concerns about cost of living, and noted that the SU continues work on practical solutions like providing blankets in Union House, warm spaces and working with Southern SU's on wider lobbying work. Met with Trussell Trust and launched pathfinder project which ueasu is the first SU to join.

Evie Drennan gave a verbal update. Working on publication of the Hidden Cost of Sports campaign. Engagement fund going live soon, and noted that a £5000 pot had been allocated to widening participation groups to get additional funding for club and soc activity. Noted that SU had partnered with Pathfinder, and noted that Derby Day timetable would go out at the end of Feb. Planning for sports awards had begun.

Elise Page (PG Officer) sent apologies. A full written report can be found in the agenda.

Serene Shibli Sexton gave a verbal update. They noted that work had begun on the bye-law review. Working on rectifying policy lapse errors and bringing back policy to Union Council which lapsed without democratic oversight. Noted that they were planning a trip to UCL to learn about their democratic review and a plan will be taken to DPC and SOC and eventually Union Council to be reviewed and implemented. Attended meeting with VC about cost of living. SS noted that £400 had been raised for a local LGBT+ charity as a result of screening the World Cup in December.

Section 3: OPEN DISCUSSIONS

A Campbell noted that UCU industrial action is going ahead with 18 days of planned strike action happening over next 7 weeks. First day will be 1 Feb and will continue until March 21st. They noted that towards the middle of the weeks there will be 3 and 4 day stretches of strikes. Staff do not have to inform students if they are striking but some may. There will be an impact on learning but hard to anticipate numbers. Staff are currently doing action short of a strike which may also impact teaching and learning. Noted ongoing situation with university – UCU are meeting to discuss local action over UEA's financial situation. Noted that the planned strike days are only over the national disputes. Officer team met with the chair of UCU who gives regular updates to the SU. Aaron asked councillors to give their views on what they want officers to do in response to planned strike action.

G Hubbard asked if the SU has an official position on whether they support the strikes. They asked what the plan is to put pressure on the university.

S Sexton responded that UEA has multiple policies to support all action taken by UCU. The motion can be revoked through union council but as things stand the SU is on the side of UCU by default. Noted that some members of the SU are also in UCU. Noted that the UG Officer and C&D Officer sit on university council and can apply pressure to the university there. When student mood is pro-strike the university is less able to pin blame on striking lecturers. Policy enables officers to pro-actively support UCU in meetings with the university. SS noted that the SU used to be able to host UCU in building but since teaching has started happening in SU buildings striking members would consider being in union house a breach of the picket line.

G Hubbard noted that from a 3rd year point of view, first year was lost to covid and wasn't a proper year of uni, and now 6 out of 8 weeks of module in final

year will be impacted by strikes. Hard to get students who aren't involved in democratic spaces to support the strikes as a result. Is there anything that the SU can do to speak from the students point of view. 3rd years are not getting the right level of support. Danger that students won't support because of the amount of teaching that they will be missing.

A Campbell thanked the member and noted that this feedback will be taken into consideration. Education officers are raising these concerns on behalf of students in university meetings. A Campbell noted that they support staff getting a pay rise as is deserved, but students will always remain the priority. Noted that the SU advice team and the academic reps can be reached out to.

S Sexton noted that they also lost time at uni due to strike action. They noted that its incredibly frustrating and fair enough that students wouldn't automatically support strike action. Officer team have also discussed this. Officers decided to support the policy position because strikes will happen whether or not the students like it. S Sexton noted that if the SU don't support UCU then the university will be less likely to support striking lecturers and therefore the Officers position is pragmatic. Officers cannot make the university or UCU do anything but if SU acts in support then something is more likely to change in the long term. Negotiations will only happen with pressure which is why it's best for students to support the strikes.

A member noted that T Sounes mentioned a possible marking and assessment boycott (MAB) in their officer update report, and asked if there is update on what the mitigations for this might be from the university.

A Campbell noted that there was planned to be a MAB this semester which has been delayed. The hope is that there won't need to be a MAB as UCU is hoping for a resolution following the strike action. A Campbell noted that T Sounes will be able to provide full update as they sit on the University's Education Committee.

E Whitby asked if there is a precedent for MAB and is it possible that graduations will be delayed as a result. They asked if Officers could get answers from UCU and the University around this.

S Sexton noted that there have been conversations about a MAB but the issue is that ASOS means that lectures are working up to the contract and nothing more. A MAB is considered a breach of contract which means staff will lose 100% pay so UCU are trying to avoid this at all costs. National negotiations are with UCEA and UCU don't want to do a MAB. If it does happen then the university will have to mitigate the impact and they legally have to have a plan for addressing this. The timetable won't affect progression into next year unless UCU reballots and wins on having another strike. Progression won't be impacted due to the timeline set out by UCU which is likely deliberate. They could get external markers in to mitigate. An employer cannot ask striking workers to make up for work lost due to strike action. S Sexton noted that it is up to individual lecturers whether they want to share additional or mitigated materials.

L Johnson asked what mitigations will be made if assessments are delayed or cancelled due to strike action

S Sexton noted that there is no policy to cover this as UEA can't make lecturers make mitigations in event of strike action. What tends to happen is exams are removed or omitted from assessment content. Nobody can promise this due to laws around strike action but would recommend reaching out to individual lecturers.

G Hubbard noted that students with heavy teaching content could be missing a huge swathe of content. Content could still be assessed when no teaching on those topics has been delivered. They asked whether the SU can tell the university that they can't leave students this short and that plans should be made and published to students.

S Sexton noted that the SU doesn't want strikes to happen and it wants the strikes to end because a formal agreement has been reached. They need to support students welfare but making sure that staff don't feel the need to strike.

A Campbell advised members that they could write a motion to go to next Union Council if students want the SU's position to change.

Section 4: POLICY MAKING

039 Goodbye my lover...Goodbye my inactive committee member (Amendment to the Bye-Laws)

E Drennan proposed the motion and spoke in favour. They noted that the only way currently for committee members to be removed is for the committee to meet quoracy and this almost never happens. They noted that last time, a substantial amount of Officer and committee time was spent chasing inactive members of clubs and socs. They explained that this motion proposes that committees should be able to hold a vote of no confidence in committee members if they haven't attended 2 meetings in a row, and this decision can only be overturned by Union Council.

S Sexton seconded the motion and noted that the motion only means that a vote of no confidence can only be held if two meetings in a row are not attended without apology. They noted that the precedent is based on a previous motion that sets out that Union Councillors can automatically be removed from their positions for not attending two meetings in a row. This motion provides grounds for a vote of no confidence but doesn't trigger this automatically.

The Chair asked if there were any questions of clarification.

E Whitby asked is there are currently any requirements to host another election following an absence after a committee member leaves or resigns?

S Sexton noted that it depends on the committee position. Certain roles trigger an automatic by-election, but other roles are option.

There were no speeches against the motion and the Chair moved to a vote.

The resolution was adopted by 33 votes for, 0 votes against with 1 councillor abstaining from voting.

040 Any Other Business

There was no other business considered by the meeting.

041 Details of the next meeting

The Chair noted that the next meeting is scheduled for the 26th February at 5pm in LT3. The deadline for motions to this meeting is 14th February 2023.