

<b>Subject:</b>	Union Council
<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2023
<b>Author:</b>	Abbie Mulcairn
<b>Purpose:</b>	Record of decision making
<b>Status:</b>	For approval
<b>Paper:</b>	UC 072

## UC 072 – 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), Claire Boothby-Barnbrook (UEASU Staff, Acting Deputy CEO), Caroline Wilson (UEASU Staff, Acting CEO)

**Apologies:** Aaron Campbell, Serene Sexton

**Voting members present:** Ben Baldwin (NBS - Student), Chinedu Ekeke (ECO - Student), Lauren Gallagher (PSY - Student), Chanel Munroe (PSY - Student), Andrew Nairn (CMP - Student), Laksha Sivaram (PSY - Student), Kirsty Soanes (BIO - Student), Sophie Ciurlik Rittenbaum (PPL - Student), Matthew Stothard (HIS - Student), Alice Ocraft (ECO - Student), Nathan Wyatt (PPL - Student), Jack Fendley (BIO - Postgraduate Researcher), Jasmine Johal (MED - Student), Eleanor Lewis (LDC - Student), Erin Whitby (HIS - Student), Eunchan Kim (PHA - Student), Holly Summers (EDU - Student), Joe Hanson-Kahn (ECO - Student), Chimdindu Otuekere (DEV - Student), Chris Njoroge (NBS - Student), Darcey Gardiner (CMP - Student), Liz Bigalke (BIO - Student), Sai Saney (NBS - Student), Rayan Hussain (CMP - Student), Lauren Barrett (PPL - Student), Christopher Kershaw (AMA - Postgraduate Researcher), Scarlett Mcnicol (HSC - Student), Isabella Yau (NBS - Student), Vishal Savaliya (NBS - Student), Thomas Ingall (PPL - Student), Felicity Eardley (PHA - Student), Ali Sabba (DEV - Student), Oluwaseun Ekorhi-Robinson (DEV - Student), Callum Pullen (PPL - Student), Elise Page (AMA - Postgraduate Researcher), Katie Millar (BIO - Student), Rebecca Harris (LDC - Student), Adam Walker (PPL - Student), Padraig Smead (PPL - Student), Diana Enero (NBS - Student), Ollie Baker (AMA - Student), Josh Bell (ENV - Student), Aiste Adomaviciute (NBS - Student), Paris Maben-Hume (PPL - Student), Taylor Sounes (UEASU - Staff), Isaac Carrington (ECO - Student), Maya Patel (MED - Student), Serene Shibli Sexton (HIS - Student), Kelsey Middleditch (AMA - Student)

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

### **Section 1: HOUSEKEEPING**

#### **057            Statements from the Chair**

The Chair took a quorum count and 43 voting members were present and therefore the meeting was quorate. The Chair opened the meeting and noted

that the agenda was long and reminded Councillors to address the Chairs rather than other councillors when speaking.

**058 Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting**

The meeting approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on [23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023](#).

**059 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

**060 Club, Society and Peer Support Group Constitutions**

The Chair called for speeches in favour of the recommendation to reject Zumba Soc. E Drennan spoke in favour of the recommendation noting that no further information had been received by the society since the previous meeting from which the item was deferred. There were no speeches against the proposal.

38 votes were cast and the society was rejected.

**Section 2: REPORTS**

**061 Student Officer Committee Report**

The Chair of SOC gave a verbal update on SOC activities. L Bigalke (Chair of SOC) reported that SOC had met and discussed desk moves for Officers in the main SU office but nothing else of note was discussed.

**062 Trustee Board Report**

The Chair of the Trustee Board gave a verbal update noting that the Trustee Board had met multiple times since the last Council, and had hired an external consultant to conduct a governance review of the Union. They noted that there was one vacancy for a Student Trustee that had arisen. They invited councillors to email them if they had any questions about charity law or the Board.

**063 Full-Time Officer Reports**

The full-time officers gave verbal updates in addition to the written reports which can be viewed in the agenda.

T Sounes gave a verbal update noting that academic rep elections had opened and nominations will close on the 28<sup>th</sup> April. They noted that LTC are discussing changes to extenuating circumstances that will come into place in September. They noted that details can't be shared with students yet as a final decision hasn't been made on whether the changes will come into effect.

**Activities and Opportunities Officer – Evie Drennan**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Update</b>
Manifesto Priorities	
Campaigns	Student events - huge praise for everyone doing these.

	<p>Women's History Month and This Girl Can: Women's only gym hours throughout March, social media campaign with sport execs</p> <p>Sustainability in student groups</p>
Meetings	<p>Derby Day: finalising details before the big day e.g security, timings, sports night etc. filming some promo videos.</p> <p>UEA Sport: Sports Awards decision time</p> <p>BUCS Big Wednesday: Went to Nottingham for a sabbatical officer network and advisory group on how to make sport more inclusive and cost effective (and I watched some sport whilst there!)</p> <p>WonkHe – The Secret Life of Students conference – covered things such as cost of living, trust with students, NSS (national student survey), how to be 'the perfect student' and more.</p> <p>Supporting the Opportunities team with complaints.</p>
Policy	'Food for Thought': Pathfinder motion - with Elise

### **Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer – Aaron Campbell**

A Campbell sent apologies to the meeting and no written report was received

### **Postgraduate Education Officer – Elise Page**

Postgraduate Officer – Elise Page March Union Council Update Covering the period 15th February – 15th March.

- Student Officer Committee met to discuss officer strategy in responding to the UEA's financial crisis; how we shout about student priorities and what those priorities are.
- We had the February Trustee Board where we discussed the high-level workings of the student union and thought about priorities going forward.
- I took part in Mental Health First Aid training, which was really insightful and gave me new confidence in helping out others if they seem to be not okay. So I'm now a qualified mental health first aider, which gives me a lot of pride. Sadly I have used my training a few times already, which shows how important of an issue mental health is. But I'm glad I had the tools to help.
- SU Officers, supported by our acting CEO, had a meeting with Ian Callaghan, Chief Resources Officer at UEA. We chatted about UEA finances, potential changes to our block grant (funding the SU gets from UEA) and other provisions, as well as what the future of UEA might look like.

- Evie and I worked on the motion we are bringing to council in support of the Trussel Trust's Pathfinder Project.
- I attended the Jewish Staff and Students' Community meeting, we mostly discussed the impact of potential UEA cuts on marginalized communities such as the Jewish community. We talked about how we can raise our voice during this time. We were supposed to meet with the VC as a group but he resigned before we could meet.
- I chatted to a member of staff at the Norwich Business School to discuss how to best support international students' employability, and the dangers of the university treating international students as "cash cows" while simultaneously expecting students to fit in a box rather than UEA changing provision to suit students.
- Evie, Aaron and I attended Senate. I spoke up when I was given an unsatisfactory response to my question about consulting students on UEA's financial plans.
- I did campaigning!
- My campaign was successful!
- This is amazing because I get to support you all for another year !!
- I attended a focus group about the future of the Library; what it could look like in the future, what students want from it. I contributed but I also learned a lot.
- I got back from annual leave on the 8th of March and I had MANY unread emails
- I took part in university mental health day, alongside some of our amazing part time officers as well as colleagues from UEA Student Services, Nighline, and UEA Sport.
- We had a really productive postgraduate committee meeting, we made some progress with improving communication between students and the committee, and we discussed a motion that is coming to Union Council.
- I met with Erin, the LGBT+ part time officer (trans and non binary place) to brainstorm support for queer and particularly trans students, such as a trans and non binary garment fund and a regular chilled out social.
- I was a panel member at a Q&A about the UCU strikes which started again on the 15th March. If you have any questions please do talk to your SU officers!

### **Campaigns & Democracy Officer – Serene Shibli Sexton**

S Shibli Sexton sent apologies to the meeting and no written report was received

### **Section 3: OPEN DISCUSSIONS**

A Bethell and E Whitby (Part-Time Officers) led the discussion. They asked for councillors to give feedback on what they would like to see from the SU in the upcoming year.

The feedback from councillors covered:

- More support for part-time officers and the Society Exec
- More sustainability events throughout the year, not just on certain days or months

- Better protections for student workers
- More transparency in terms of pay and hours when student jobs are advertised
- Academic reps recruited specifically to represent disabled students
- Better covid safe practices in Union meetings and spaces
- To see the SU push a welfare focused message throughout UEAs upcoming financial challenges

## **Section 4: POLICY MAKING**

### **064 In-house Support for Eating Disorders and Disordered Eating**

E Matthews proposed the motion and noted that there is currently no specific support offered to students struggling with eating disorders and noted that with the high prevalence of this amongst university aged students, that the University should offer tailored support.

There were no speeches against and the proposer gave a summation speech. The Chair moved to a vote.

*The resolution was adopted by 29 votes for, 1 vote against with 2 councillors abstaining from voting.*

### **065 Staff Support UEASU Motion**

The Chair noted that an amendment to the motion had been submitted and received by the Chairs, and had been rejected by the proposer. The Chair invited the proposer of the amendment to speak in favour of the amendment first.

T Sounes proposed an amendment to remove Resolve 3 from the substantive motion. They argued that this resolve would require full-time officers who sit on University Council to immediately stand down from their positions as it would entail a conflict of interest. They argued that this is because one of the responsibilities of University Councillors is to look out for the financial interest of the University, and adopting a zero redundancies position would be in contradiction to this as it is the only feasible way to secure the financial stability of UEA. They noted that if this resolve remained it would mean that there would be no student representation on the highest body of the university's governance. They noted that this would have other impacts, as officers who sit on council have used their position to reject increases to rent on campus and to protect the block grant in previous meetings. They noted that the University had proposed a 20% reduction in the block grant given to the SU's which was voted down because of FTO attendance at University Finance Committee. They also noted that FTOs participated in shortlisting and hiring panels for the interim Vice-Chancellor which has a huge impact on students. They noted that University Council also approves the Student Protection Plan which won't be on the agenda if FTOs are forced to resign.

J Williams spoke against the amendment. They argued that it is not true that FTOs would be forced to resign from University Council and noted that it is a

legal requirement for the University to have student representatives on their governing body. They noted that HUM could be looking lose up to 30% of its staff, and decisions like these are actually more financially irresponsible than zero redundancies at it would put the University into a financial death spiral. They argued that therefore it is untrue to state that the resolve would force a resignation, noting that FTOs are in a key position to make the argument for zero redundancies as the financially responsible way forward. They noted that the University Charter mandates student members of University Council, so if the current FTOs chose to resign their positions, another election could be held to find new councillors. They noted that if the current UG Officer chooses to resign, this would be a choice on their behalf, not a legal requirement as suggested in their opening argument. They noted that all members of University Council will have their own interests, and officers can dispute and argue against them without this being a conflict of interest.

The Chair asked Union Councillors whether they had any questions or points of clarification about the arguments made so far.

One councillor asked whether as Trustees, if FTOs would be breaking their legal duty by asking the University to take a zero redundancies position. T Sounes responded that yes, they would be legally bound to not take this position as redundancies are the only financially feasible option that the University can take right now. J Williams also responded to the question and disputed this answer, noting that they used to fulfil this role as a University Councillor at a previous institution, and noted that students and FTOs would frequently dispute and oppose proposals taken to these meetings. They noted it is therefore untrue to claim that this is a legal responsibility. They noted in addition that the argument made by T Sounes that redundancies are the only financially responsible option was ludicrous, as these deep cuts would result in a much worse outcome for UEA. They argued that if cuts to this extent were made, then degrees obtained from UEA will be worthless in the future, and ended by stating that it's a matter of opinion not fact that opposing redundancies is a legal requirement.

E Whitby asked whether there are any alternatives to the mass redundancies proposed by the University or if this is the only viable option to make necessary savings. T Sounes responded that there is currently no other alternative means of making the necessary savings.

A Councillor asked T Sounes as the proposer of the amendment whether they have had access to all of the relevant financial information from the University in order to make the assessment that there are no alternatives ways forward, or whether this is just based on the word of the Executive Team of the University.

T Sounes responded that they wouldn't be able to give the councillor any information about this as it would break their confidence as a Trustee of the University but noted that they have seen financial statements.

H Summers spoke in favour of the amendment arguing that the resolve wasn't specific enough and wasn't clear exactly what it is asking officers to do. J Williams noted that further clarification could be added to explain what this

resolve means. H Summers responded that this wouldn't solve the issue as the motion is still too vague.

S Ciurlik-Rittenbaum spoke against the motion arguing that its important for the SU to stand in solidarity with UCU and the motion opens up conversation about broader marketisation of University's and funding for HEI's more generally.

L Johnson spoke in favour of the motion. They argued that the resolve is flawed due to a lack of focus and there is too much room for interpretation, and it doesn't specify who and how long. They argued that mandates should be interpreted literally, and official orders have to be taken with no exception which officers shouldn't be bound by. They argued that due to this, the officers would have no choice but to resign from University Council if this resolve passes.

J Williams raised a point of order noting that this is a matter of opinion and not a factual statement. L Johnson disagreed with this point of order and continued with their speech, noting that there is a conflict of interest in officers being mandated to argue against zero redundancies.

P Smead spoke against the motion, noting that the debate has been held as if the student officers occupy a majority vote on University Council which they do not, so even if they argued against zero redundancies, the likely outcome is that officers could take this position to negotiate downwards from. If the officers are in favour of zero redundancies as stated in the previous speech, then what difference does it make to mandate them to take this approach. It is a matter of opinion whether officers would have to resign from University Council, and other officers do not share that opinion even if they do choose to resign.

There were no additional rounds of speeches and the Chair moved to a vote.

*The amendment was adopted with 22 votes for, 9 votes against with 8 councillors abstaining from voting.*

The Chair then called for a proposing speech on the amended motion.

J Williams proposed the motion arguing that the motion expands on two previous motions that passed to make the SU's position more explicit and clear. It is clear that all three campus trade unions have a zero redundancies position but the SU's position is less clear. The motion also mandates the SU to organise a series of demonstrations against the redundancies, which the SU should be doing alongside and as well as attending meetings, as UEASU has a rich history of student protest and demonstration.

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

*The motion was adopted with 18 votes for, 7 votes against with 9 councillors abstaining from voting.*

## **066           MAGA – Make Allergens Gain Awareness**

L Johnson proposed the motion and spoke in favour. They argued that students

with allergies should have better access to suitable food and drink on campus and labelling should be made clearer in all catering outlets.

There were no questions of clarification and no speeches against the motion. The Chair moved to a vote.

*The resolution was adopted by 27 votes for, 3 votes against with 2 councillors abstaining from voting.*

#### **067            Show us the MONEY!**

T Sounes proposed the motion and spoke in favour. They argued that council should only be able to vote on the discretionary part of the budget, which is the part that they are able to effect, rather than the budget as whole as has happened in previous years. The bye-law change states that an update on union budget and strategy will be delivered to Council, and they argued that the aim of the motion is to ensure that only information that is relevant and changeable by Union Council is included in this financial update.

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

*The resolution was adopted by 23 votes for, 2 votes against with 4 councillors abstaining from voting.*

#### **068            Food for thought**

E Page proposed the motion and spoke in favour. They noted that council had heard a lot about the pathfinder project from previous officer updates, and this motion affirms the SU's commitment to joining the Trussell Trust Pathfinder Project.

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

*The resolution was adopted by 26 votes for, 1 vote against with 1 councillor abstaining from voting.*

#### **069            I'm starting with the bye-law in the mirror**

E Drennan proposed the motion and spoke in favour. They noted that the motion aims to accurately reflect the committee structures that are already in place and changes the signatory roles of committees to be more in line with how student societies already function. This would mean that a Vice-President role would be a signatory role if the motion passes. They noted that the motion also adds a welfare responsibility to committees and mandates them to have a health and safety officer on their committees.

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

*The resolution was adopted by 26 votes for, 5 votes against with 3 councillors abstaining from voting.*



**070            Any Other Business**

There was no other business considered by the meeting.

**071            Details of the next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for the 27<sup>th</sup> April at 5pm in JSC 3.02

The deadline for motions to this meeting is 18<sup>th</sup> April