

Subject:	Union Council
Date:	Thursday 21 st March, 5pm
Author:	Beth Plant and Magda de Soissons
Purpose:	Record of decision making
Status:	For approval

Union Council Minutes

SECTION A: Standing Items

001 Statement from the Chair

Chair opens the meeting with congratulating newly elected councilors and begins with a quoracy check.

Meeting is quorate with 52 voting members.

[Quoracy Check 21/3/24 \(microsoft.com\)](#)

Procedural Motion- Move Governance Restructure of the Board to top of the agenda

Procedural motion to move Governance Restructure of the Board to the top of the agenda is proposed.

Procedural motion is approved.

[Procedural Motion \(microsoft.com\)](#)

001.5 Governance Restructure of the Board

TS presents her motion and begins by introducing herself.

TS states that there are many issues with the structure and that the board is not quite fit for purpose.

TS explains that the board allows the democracy to happen.

TS clarifies that this motion seeks to alter the make-up of the board and remove an FTO as Chair and make them Deputy Chair. TS explains that the reason for this is due to Officer workload and that this has caused a lot of problems for officers past and present.

TS explains that this motion proposal is partially in response to the recent motion of censure brought against her.

TS explains that it is still student led and that a Chair of the board can be appointed and will be someone who knows what they're doing.

TS explains that officers aren't really qualified to do some of the work required by the Chair of the Board.

TS explains that it also removes the sub-committees from the bye-laws.

TS states that the board have agreed that there will still be student representation on any committees, but that they won't be written into the bye-laws.

Motion is approved.

[MOTION: Governance Restructure of the Trustee Board \(microsoft.com\)](#)

002 Approval of the Minutes from the Last Meeting

Chair asks for minutes from the previous meeting to be approved.

Minutes are approved.

[Approval of Minutes \(microsoft.com\)](#)

003 Matters Arising

There are no matters arising.

SECTION B: Reports

004 Officer Updates

There were no officer updates given.

005 Trustee Board Report

TS states they have just appointed someone from another student union to help the venues.

TS states that they have appointed the director of NUS to the board.

Minutes on the website has been an issue but it is being worked on .

006 Student Officer Committee Report

Approved minutes of all meetings of SOC can be viewed online

<https://www.ueasu.org/officers/>.

LB reports that SOC went as usual.

She states that NUS delegates for the conference have been voted upon.

They discussed the motion points for union council and discussed the graffiti that appeared on campus.

They also spoke about alternative graduation and the UEA graduation fees.

007 Full-time Officer reports

Activities and Opportunities Officer - Luke Johnson

LJ begins by introducing himself.

LJ states that he is nearly there with the night bus but that he and Nathan have been getting money from a variety of sources.

LJ states that he has been very involved with elections, chairing Candidate Question Time and putting a projection in the square.

LJ has also been involved with a number of events.

LJ states that he is instituting a new diary system for the union that will help with room bookings.

LJ is continuing with Derby Day prep and has been on some BUCS disciplinary panels.

LJ is speaking at a student experience conference and organising Sports Awards and STARS.

LJ got £274 from SOC to take professional headshots of students.

LJ also notes that it was his dog's birthday this week.

Question: Member asks what the dog is called.

Answer: LJ responds that the dog's name is Bailey.

Question: ML asks if there is a room confirmed for the photo shoots.

Answer: LJ states that it will be outdoors, but that it is yet to be confirmed.

Question: BW asks for more information on the room bookings programme.

Answer: LJ responds that room bookings are complicated. LJ explains that YesPlan will only extend to room bookings in Union House but that the system should prevent double bookings and bookings that wouldn't work in real world situations (e.g a movie night next door to a gig)

LJ states that UEA Sport room bookings have been complicated by the Blackdale School closing.

LJ states that UEA Sport put wooden floors in Congo to help this.

Question: OS asks what LJ will do to help with the limited interest for signatory roles and whether a lack of interest in these roles will lead to the unfair shutting down of some societies.

Answer: LJ answers that if a society does not have enough interest, then the argument is whether or not the interest is there to keep it going. LJ

notes that a formal archive process has been input recently. Societies who do not meet the 20 people minimum are archived to be possible reincarnated in another year when there is more interest.

ML makes a point that there have been technical difficulties in nominations in that lots of people nominated but then didn't run. This was an issue because then no members were elected to committee positions.

LJ apologises for this; they state sometimes things fall through the cracks. They ask them to send it to the union inbox who will try their best to sort it.

LJ explains that the society election process changed to ensure that people who miss out on signatory roles still get a chance to sit on a committee.

MU states that it is hard to get people to sign up in September for roles.

LJ states that union staff will not archive academic societies.

CM moves the meeting on due to time constraints.

Campaigns and Democracy Officer - Serene Shibli Sexton

SSS states they have been very busy helping candidates during the elections period.

SSS states that she has also been encouraging students to vote.

SSS has been at the university council advocating for students. She has also been helping with TEAs shortlisting.

SSS states that she is attending the NUS national conference.

SSS states that many issues that face students are national issues that require national policy change.

SSS invites questions. None are taken.

Postgraduate Officer - Elise Page

EP begins by introducing themselves.

EP states that they have met with some researchers from BCAM (biodiversity and climate network) who have a proposal for the university to offer a module that informs on the climate crisis.

EP states that an open letter will be shared around.

EP notes that they advocated for Palestinian researchers. EP also met with the doctoral college to discuss these issues.

EP states that the university stir up fear rather than treating the issue with respect.

EP notes that they have raised PS's motion up to assist with organisations that are lobbying for this.

EP spoke to Jason Brown, Head of Finance, about the graduation costs. EP states that the rationale given was that there was an agreement to save £50,000 on graduation and that the charge will cover £18,000. When asked where the rest of the savings would be made, they responded that the university would absorb that cost.

EP states that an answer could not be given as to why students were not consulted.

EP states that this will fall heaviest on the poorest students.

EP states that UEA have only received two students emails on the graduation matter but they have had 16,000 likes on the uea(su) post.

EP congratulates anyone who ran in the elections.

EP states that they have messaged Malala Yousafzai and that they will ask her to be a trustee.

SSS also notes that they are emailing the director of Bend it Like Beckham.

EP notes that they are arranging for someone from Norfolk Police to do a survey on how black students and students of colour feel about the police.

EP notes that they are speaking at an EDI day about PG representation.

EP notes that they will put out a request for books for the Scholars Bar.

EP invites questions.

Question: HM asks if there will be a write-in organised to send more letters to the university regarding graduation fees.

Answer: EP responds that they will support students to address this however they feel is best. EP states that they asked Jason Brown if the charge would be reversed but that he refused. EP states that they seemed to believe that students weren't bothered and loved the festival provided.

Taylor Sounes- Undergraduate Education Officer

TS introduces herself.

TS notes that TEAs nominations have closed and that they are massively over target.

TS notes that shortlisting has now concluded.

TS states that the academic rep review is ongoing but that a proposal is going through the relevant committees to approval.

TS notes that these changes are significant.

Nathan Wyatt – Welfare, Diversity and Inclusion Officer

NW begins his updates by stating he has been reelected.

He notes that an Iftar meal was run in the Hive yesterday, and that 250 arrived after an expected 100 but that everyone was successfully fed.

NW notes that he set up a network of sabbatical officers in the East of England and that all of the officers came to UEA to visit.

NW states that he has been working on the night bus.

NW states that the pharmacy has made it to the next stage of the application.

SECTION C: Open Discussion

008 Open Discussion Topics

Course Closure

TS states that course closure is the discussion topic.

TS notes that one of the projects is to do with course closure and that the scale of those closures has only recently been disclosed.

TS states that about 75 courses will be closing for entry.

TS explains that this is justified by the university in terms of the course uptake numbers, which apparently are too low to make the courses financially viable.

ES speaks and states that their course and school is getting disbanded (natural sciences).

ES explains that they were told the course was disbanding before the portfolio review.

ES explains that they are unsure what can be done about it. She adds that UEA seem to believe that potential NatSci students would just study another science, however that this is not true.

ES asks for suggestions from council.

EP takes the mic and states they are sorry to hear about this, and their course American Studies has also been threatened with disbandment in recent years.

EP says they are frustrated with the lack of consultation from students or staff in all aspects of university life, including the grad fee.

EP encourages the speaker and says that they matter and that the university takes the money from students but doesn't listen to their views.

AS states that there is a problem with the executive team in them not listening to students or the SU. AS states that the VC only cares about finances. AS states that he has no confidence in the VC.

PS is speaking from the online call. PS asks what a 'pause' means on the website in regards to a course on the Pharmacy website.

TS states that recommended for pause means that students will not be recruited onto the course in that year, but it may come back in future years.

ES states that whilst a course might have been deemed for closure, it is unlikely those on the course will find out about it until it is done. She states that she cannot do this on her own.

CK takes the mic. He states that the university gets a lot of money from alumni. He suggests contacting the alumni from those courses and notifying them- as this may put financial pressure on the university if they contact the VC.

CM suggests a student forum to put into those meeting.

NW answers that they have representation on UEA's finance committee and so suggests this would be the best place to raise these issues.

SSS states TS and SSS sit on the council. They state the university believes it doesn't affect students as it is only incoming students who will be affected. They do not have to legally consult on incoming students, only current ones.

SSS states that it does affect the reputation of the course whilst students are on it.

PS speaks from the online call with more questions.

Question: PS asks why it's such a big deal if it doesn't affect current students. PS also asks if there is value for money evidence on the courses being closed. PS states that he agrees that the university should be consulting students but that he hopes that Union Council does not become an echo chamber.

Answer: ES replies that NatSci is an interdisciplinary course, as is lots of research. Therefore NatSci is very employable. ES explains that a lot of the courses being removed are very small and specific. ES states that UEA has not given a specific reason for closing these courses. ES explains that there may not be effects on current students for sure, but that it is a shame that they have not consulted students by closing these courses, and that she cannot see how this will save money. ES explains that for the last year, students will have

no cohorts above or below them, and questions whether there will be adequate support for that year.

Question: A question is asked about whether it's okay for any courses to close.

Answer: ES stats that she does not know.

Maddie states that the list due to be cut is skewed towards cutting out the arts and humanities. They put this out to the group in terms of fairness.

They also state that if students need a year out of stud, they wouldn't be able to because of course closures.

SSS states that this happened to a previous Officer. SSS states a contract is signed between the student and the university and so the university must make it work for a student in that case.

SSS notes that staff hours/low student numbers is partly why schools close, and that is the university's view of course closures.

SSS notes that humanities have low uptake because of cuts across the board from the government in terms of arts and humanities as they are more likely to not vote conservative.

KC asks a question online about course transfers. ES answers it has already been answered.

ES elaborates that a lot of people transfer on NatSci.

Question: EH asks if they can lobby the university for more transparency for the reason why they are closing each course.

Answer: ES replies she has been in discussion with TS on this exact matter and it will be followed up on.

Question: Online question from Ellie H.

Answer: ES states that some of the schools are being reformed or merged next year, and assumes it is related to that.

FL notes that this is happening at the same time as an awful lot of redundancies, and the noted the drop in course quality facilitated by this. They state the cut hours and part time staff is not helpful, especially in terms of advisors. FL states that in combination with this, the quality of the courses is dropping ridiculously. He states they are fed up of the university putting students behind profit.

ES states they are sorry. ES elaborates that NatSci are often forgotten about and empathises with FL.

Chair calls the open discussion to a close.

SECTION D: Policy Making

009: Let all candidates campaign equally

SSS explains that this motion is no longer about elections.

SSS explains that only one person running a slate won, and that officers did not have enough sway to win outright.

SSS states that this motion is now about ensuring fairness in the election.

BP makes the point that only one FTO ran this election season anyway.

SSS repeats her speech online due to tech issues.

CM asks for any speeches counter to the argument.

BP questions why this is being brought up.

SSS answers that it is to ensure that the current elections are free and fair for all candidates.

The voting is opened.

PS asks a question in the chat. CM states it was presented after voting opened so is out of order.

The motion is rejected.

[MOTION: Let all candidates campaign equally \(microsoft.com\)](#)

010: Why'd you have to go and make things so complicated?

CM steps down as chair for this motion as they are the proposer of the motion.

CM gives their opening speech. They state it was originally proposed by last year's A&O Officer. They state that current orders of voting for chair at the first union council of the year is unfit for purpose as they do not have time for training. Electing the Chair before the Summer allows time for training and would benefit Union Council's running in this way.

AS is currently Chair and asks for questions or speeches against.

There is none.

The voting opens.

The motion passes.

[MOTION: Why'd you have to go and make things so complicated? Just elect the Chairs earlier! \(microsoft.com\)](#)

CM becomes Chair once more.

011: UEA bursary for final year Medical students

MU and Adam Syed begin their speeches.

CM states there is a request for a procedural motion for quoracy check, which will be voted on.

The voting is opened.

Procedural Motion: Quoracy Check

Procedural motion passes and a quoracy check will take place.

[Procedural Motion for quoracy check \(microsoft.com\)](#)

Chair invites council to complete the quoracy check.

The meeting is quorate.

[Quoracy Check 2 \(microsoft.com\)](#)

MU begins his proposing speech.

MU begins by explaining that student loan only covers the first four years of a degree, and students are only eligible for £1000 living money from the NHS bursary.

MU states that this is financially unsustainable for Med students, and unfair after years of training and study. MU calls for UEA and the Medical School to provide a temporary relief bursary to support students who cannot make ends meet in their last year of their course, for which they receive no loan.

MU finishes by saying this needs to change.

CM asks for questions.

Question: Harry asks a question as to whether or not the motion is unfair on those not from WP backgrounds.

Answer: MU clarifies what is meant by the term widening participation in relation to lower income households.

Question: Maddie takes the microphone and further explains what widening participation means in this motion. Maddie explains that there are people that fall

outside that bracket and that those people also need support, in addition to those from WP backgrounds. MU agrees and Harry says they understand.

CM asks for speeches against the motion.

None are raised.

Voting opens.

The motion passes.

[MOTION: UEA bursary for final year medical students \(microsoft.com\)](#)

BREAK

Union Council resumes.

A quoracy check is opened and put into the chat.

The meeting is quorate with 43 voting members.

[Quoracy Check 3 \(microsoft.com\)](#)

012: Trans Rights are Human Rights – Trans People deserve to feel safe- a response to transphobia at UEA

FL begins by introducing themselves.

FL introduces the motion and explains that for trans people, university is the first chance many trans people get to live their true identity.

FL states there has been a rise in transphobia in UEA recently, including transphobic stickers in the toilets in Union House and leaflets in the changing rooms at the Sportspark. They state they cannot halt transphobic protests as they are freedom of speech, however this motion aims to make the student union part of the university is a safe space for transgender people.

FL explains that there have been a number of anti trans events on campus and that many trans people do not feel safe at UEA. FL explains that this motion will protect SU spaces and that everyone deserves to feel safe at university.

CM asks for questions.

Question: A question is raised regarding counter protests.

Answer: CM mentions this can't be put through council but outside of council they are very welcome to counter protest.

Chair invites speeches against. None are taken.

Voting is opened.

The motion passes.

[MOTION: Trans Rights are Human Rights \(microsoft.com\)](#)

013: Any Other Business

SSS wraps up by giving some elections statistics.

Question: PS asks if anything has been done about the new cost of living motion that NW mentioned in a prior meeting.

Answer: NW states that he has not forgotten but that it is a large piece of work that needs updating. He states that he is working on it and it will be coming.

PS asks if NW can put forward a plan in his motion.

THE MEETING CONCLUDES

SECTION G: Date and Time of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 25th at 5pm.