

2265 Academic Union Councillor reform

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Seconder: Oliver Hawksley (Bad Film Society)

Union Notes:

1. Each school is supposed to have four Union Councillors; one First Year (UG) Union Councillor, one Second Year (UG) Union Councillor, one Other Year (UG) Union Councillor, and one Postgraduate Union Councillor. Additionally, many members of the SSLC, such as school and faculty conveners, also hold Union Council seats. For the length of this motion, they shall be collectively referred to as 'Academic Union Councillors'.
2. In the 2017/18 Academic Year, the amount of Academic Union Councillors elected was significantly below the maximum number of Academic Union Councillors mandated to be on Union Council, oftentimes with schools only having one out of four or two out of four Academic Union Councillors.
3. Academic Councillors are elected by, and thus held accountable by and represent a significantly large cohort of students, usually an academic year of a school when there is a full complement of four Academic Councillors elected, but oftentimes can result in a single Academic Union Councillor having to represent an entire school on Union Council if they are the only Academic Union Councillor elected.
4. Academic Union Councillors are often left out of consultations on Union Academic policy, and oftentimes do not have a close professional relationship with the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Officers.
5. Academic Union Councillors find it very difficult to contact their constituents, or be contacted by their constituents. This is very noticeable in low-contact-hours schools such as LDC.
6. Oftentimes, Academic Union Councillors are unclear what their role actually entails.

Union Believes:

1. The role of an Academic Union Councillor is a difficult role, due to difficulty of constituent engagement, many of the roles oftentimes being vacant, and the large constituency sizes.
2. Difficulty in Academic Union Councillors engaging with constituents, and thus constituents engaging with their Academic Union Councillor, places accountability measures at risk of irrelevance.
3. The lack of UUEAS members running for the Academic Union Councillors is a significant issue. UUEAS can do significantly more to promote the election for Academic Union Councillors.
4. UUEAS can engage more with Academic Councillors on Academic matters, and they should always be a port-of-call for any motion which affects their school or UEA academic practice as a whole.
5. UUEAS can offer significantly more support to Academic Councillors in terms of training and facilitating engagement with constituents.

Union Resolves:

1. To mandate to organise, and subsequently run post-autumn election season, a specific programme of training sessions to aid Academic Union Councillors in successfully fulfilling their council role. The organisation and planning of these session will involve the Undergraduate Officer, the Postgraduate Officer, and returning students who are currently Academic Union Councillors.
2. To mandate that the aforementioned training programme culminates in a semesterly forum where Academic Union Councillors, SSLC Student representatives, and the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Officers, can discuss concerns raised by constituents and formulate motions together in a supportive environment.
3. To mandate the set up of an email relay so that Academic Union Councillors can successfully, easily and efficiently report back to their constituents on their actions, and thus in turn easily be held accountable for the actions by their constituents.
4. To mandate for a stronger relationship with the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Officers, and to be consulted more frequently in discussions related to the schools they represent.
5. To mandate that UUEAS better publicise the elections for Academic Union Councillors, to be on an equivalent scale of publicity as society and club elections.
6. To mandate that, in the instance that no-one runs for an academic rep position, elections are reopened bi-monthly until the position is filled.
7. To mandate the introduction of three new categories into the Union Awards; one for best Club Union Councillor, one for best Societies Union Councillor, and one for best Academic Union Councillor.