

No to Endorsement Culture

Proposer: Sophie Atherton (Campaigns and Democracy Officer)

Seconder: Jenna Chapman (Undergraduate Education Officer)

Union Notes:

1. Following the passing of 'Dismantling Endorsement Culture', a consultation was launched into the effect that endorsement culture has on elections within UUEAS.
2. 'Endorsement' is defined as showing support for candidates through attempting to persuade or dissuade persons to vote for a candidate. This may be through writing, creating and distributing a candidate's campaign materials and manifesto.
3. 'Self-endorsement' is defined as showing support for candidates through attempting to persuade or dissuade persons to vote for oneself. This may be through writing, creating and distributing their own campaign materials and manifesto.
4. The act of an endorsement may encourage a student to vote for a specific electoral candidate through personal testimony.
5. Bye law 5.9 states that 'all elections taking place at the Union of UEA Students shall be: fair and open, democratic, accessible and transparent.'

Union Believes:

1. Following the consultation launched into endorsement culture as a result of 'Dismantling Endorsement Culture', it can be concluded that endorsements are something that affects the way students vote.
2. Endorsements can negatively impact the experience of electoral candidates.
3. No elected student officer may offer a specific electoral candidate advice on an individual level on any matters regarding manifesto realisation or manifesto construction.
4. Elected Student Officers will be exempt from self-endorsement if they choose to re-stand.
5. Elected Student Officers should encourage other students to run in the leadership elections during the nominations period.
6. Societies and clubs should encourage their members to participate and vote in elections, and the committee should be able to endorse as a collective if they have democratically decided to do so.
7. Societies and club committee members should remember that they may endorse individually but not on the behalf of the entire student group. For example, a president of a club can say you should vote, but cannot say you should vote on behalf of the entire club membership.

Union Resolves:

1. There should be clear exceptions for full time and part time officers. Full time officers will be exempt from self-endorsement if they stand for a second term. Part time officers may endorse but not in an officer capacity.

For example, if an officer is a committee member, they may endorse in that position but not under their officer title.

6. Introduce Bye Law 5.12.7 'Student Officers are prohibited from endorsing electoral candidates. 'Endorsement' is defined as showing support for candidates through attempting to persuade or dissuade persons to vote for a candidate. This may be through writing, creating and distributing a candidate's campaign materials and manifesto.'
7. Introduce Bye Law 5.12.8 'Student Officers that choose to re-stand for a second term are exempt from self-endorsement. 'Self-endorsement' is defined as showing support for candidates through attempting to persuade or dissuade persons to vote for oneself. This may be through writing, creating and distributing their own campaign materials and manifesto.'
8. Introduce Bye Law 5.12.9 'Part time officers will have their officer rights suspended for the duration of the election period if they have actively solicited in an endorsement.'
9. Introduce Bye Law 5.12.10 'Full time officers will be suspended from their role for the duration of the election period if they have actively solicited in an endorsement.'
10. Introduce Bye Law 5.12.11 'Society and club members may endorse individually but not on the behalf of the entire student group. For example, a president of a club can say you should vote, but cannot say you should vote on behalf of the entire club membership.'
11. Mandate the Campaigns and Democracy Officer to notify the Returning Officer of the introduction of Bye Laws 5.12.7, 5.12.8, 5.12.9, 5.12.10 and 5.12.11.
12. Mandate the Campaigns and Democracy Officer to notify the Trustee Board of the introduction of Bye Laws 5.12.7 and 5.12.10.