

# Minutes

Subject:	Student Officer Committee Minutes
Date:	Thursday, 18 September 2014
Paper:	SOC1156

## Key Discussions

- Anti-Semitism and the Israel/Palestine conflict
- Spending on TUC demonstration
- Constitutional role of Management Committee with regard to policy implementation

## Key Actions

- Approved the original text of a public statement on anti-Semitism without any amendments
- Elected H Staynor as Chair and C Jarvis as Deputy Chair
- Agreed a Cycle of Business
- Agreed Election Timetable for 2014-15
- Elected T Antoniou Phillips as Non-Executive Director of SUS LTD and S Glakousaki as Non-Executive Director of Waterfront LTD
- Agree attendance at the lobby of the UKIP national conference and allocation of £100 funding for travel
- SOC agreed to spend, in principle, up to £1,650 on publicity and coaches for the TUC demo
- Amendments to proposal on Policy Implementation to be brought to future meeting
- Consideration of paper on the UEA Postgraduate Experience deferred to next meeting
- T Etheridge, F Redfern and L Cody appointed as panel members for disciplinary hearings under the Code of Conduct.
- Agreed proposed structure for staff mentoring of Officers
- Agreed direction of travel with regard to a change to the Charity Budget for the Opportunities Department; detailed consideration to be made by Management Committee



**Union of UEA Students Purpose:**

“To enrich the life of every UEA student”

**Minutes of the Student Officer Committee**

**18 September 2014**

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**Voting Members present:**

Max Levene (Students with Disabilities Officer), Liam McCafferty (PG Education Officer), Connor Rand (UG Education Officer), Yinbo Yu (Activities and Opportunities Officer) Chris Jarvis (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), Stela Glakousaki (International Officer), Freddie Redfern (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Tom Etheridge (Non Portfolio Officer), Liz Cody (Non Portfolio Officer), Iain Goddard (Environment Officer), Theo Antoniou Phillips (Non Portfolio Officer), Dan Wrigglesworth (LGBT+ Officer)

**Chair**

Holly Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer)

**Non-Voting Members present:**

Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive)

**In attendance:**

Tony Moore (Representation Support Worker), Alex Wyatt (Director of Social Enterprise), Josh Clare (Head of Student Engagement)

**Apologies:**

Oliver Steward (Postgraduate Officer), Josh Wilson (Ethical issues Officer), Dolly Ogunrinde (Women’s Officer), Tom Southerden (Non Portfolio Officer), John Taylor (Mature Students Officer)

D Wrigglesworth, as interim Chair, asked SOC to approve the text of a statement condemning anti-Semitism which had been written in response to: comments in Concrete, the subsequent online reaction and wider concerns about anti-Semitism in the student movement. He noted that the text of the statement had been shared with the Jewish Society.

S Glakousaki believed that as International Officer she should have

been involved in the drafting of the statement. She thought that this would be a big issue for the membership and that the Union should not pick sides in the Israel/Palestine conflict.

C Jarvis thought there was a broad agreement to condemn anti-Semitism but that the references in the statement to the current conflict could be contentious. He believed SOC should issue a general statement of condemnation.

C Rand argued that the references to the conflict were integral to the statement. He noted that the committee members of the Jewish Society were international students and argued that Jewish students had been made to feel unsafe and unwelcome on campus.

L McCafferty believed one could take two possible approaches to the statement: to oppose hatred and not mention the conflict or to mention the conflict and oppose both sides' expressions of hatred.

M Levene believed that the statement was a response to a pro-Palestinian article and would, therefore, provide some balance.

T Etheridge thought that a recommendation that students from both sides could, if they wanted to, talk to the Advice Centre.

I Goddard believed SOC could easily be discussing the rise of Islamophobia and that the current statement was a reaction to a few comments in social media; he thought that SOC should consider how they reacted in general to comments in social media and whether they should react to every single social media comment.

C Rand believed that, when it came to a liberations issue, SOC were obliged to react to social media comments.

L McCafferty believed that SOC were all agreed on the need for a statement and he proposed that the statement be redrafted to reflect the concerns that had been expressed.

C Jarvis thought that there should be three proposals for SOC to decide upon: to approve the statement as it stood, to approve the statement but to remove the references to the conflict or to widen the statement to reference anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and to consult with the relevant societies.

SOC agreed to move to a vote on the three proposals.

*SOC voted against an amendment to remove the references to the conflict from the statement.*

*SOC voted against an amendment to reference both Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in the statement and to request the Islamic Society and the Jewish Society to endorse the statement.*

H Staynor asked that it be minuted that SOC would be building a strategy toward combatting Islamophobia on campus.

I Goddard suggested it would have been better if SOC had been able to discuss any amendments to the text before it had been shown to the Jewish Society.

C Rand noted that the Society had been made aware that the text would be presented to SOC for approval.

*SOC voted to approve the statement for publication in its original form.*

### **1237 Election of Chair and Deputy Chair**

H Staynor was the only candidate except RON for Chair.

*H Staynor was elected Chair and took over chairing the meeting.*

T Etheridge and C Jarvis stood for Deputy Chair.

T Etheridge believed it was important that the voice of Part Time Officers was heard, especially when reviewing the decisions made at Management Committee.

C Jarvis noted that part of his Officer job role was overseeing Union policy and he would as Deputy Chair hope to focus on SOC's role of coordinating the implementation of Union policy.

*C Jarvis was elected Deputy Chair.*

*SOC agreed that a guillotine would be set for 7.30 pm.*

### **1238 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 Jun**

*The minutes were agreed.*

*SOC noted that, for the meeting of 22 May, due to staff absence no minutes had been taken and that the recording that had been made on which to base any notes had, unfortunately, been lost.*

### **1239 Matters Arising**

There were none.

### **1240 Action Log**

J Dickinson noted that there was a proposal to recognise a new trade union for student staff and that he would be consulting with this body or possibly with it and the current trade union as to the issue of zero hours contracts.

Chair noted that UUEAS had an extra place on Senate.

C Jarvis noted it should be minuted that the GSA President no longer sat on Senate.

#### **1241 Cycle of Business**

J Dickinson advised that the cycle would enable Officers to give close scrutiny to different layers of UUEAS' structure.

C Jarvis believed that the leader of the NUS delegation should be chosen at the same time as the delegates and therefore this should be moved back to Week 5 in the Cycle. He further noted that this would need to be delegated to SOC by Management Committee.

*SOC agreed the Cycle of Business with the above changes.*

#### **1242 Union Elections' Timetable**

T Antoniou Phillips noted that Liberations elections would now be campus wide and he thought it important that Liberations support groups should be made aware that they would no longer be in charge of the elections to the NUS Liberations Conferences.

Chair noted that she would explain the changes to the different groups.

C Jarvis noted that it had been decided at the meeting of the Commercial Boards that the student members of the Board would, for the current year, be elected by Union Council and not be cross-campus ballot and that this election should be taken out of the timetable.

*SOC agreed the timetable with the above change.*

#### **1243 Departmental Presentation: Strategy Update**

J Dickinson reported that the PESTLE exercise that SOC had undertaken had now also been completed by staff groups and the Trustee Board and that the Board had been briefed on the new brand and visual identity. He noted that because of the focus on the building refurbishment the strategy formulation would now take somewhat longer and would be presented to SOC in October. He noted that in the interim, SOC would receive the Departmental Annual Plans which would give them some idea of the strategic focus of different areas.

#### **1244 Elections to Commercial Boards**

*T Antoniou Phillips was elected unopposed as the first student non-executive director of SUS LTD.*

S Glakousaki and M Levene stood for election for the position of non-executive director of Waterfront LTD.

*S Glakousaki was elected as the first student non-executive director of Waterfront LTD.*

## **1245 Priority Campaigns and Projects**

C Jarvis noted he had sent outline plans to SOC which Officers had been broadly happy with.

On updates, he reported that one of the aims of an individual campaign had been achieved: as of the previous day UUEAS was now a Living Wage Accredited Employer.

He noted there had been developments with regard to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) in that the government had made changes to their proposals: the main changes had been deferred to 2016, the cuts to specialised accommodation had been removed and small changes had been made to funding for laptops. He noted he would be meeting with the Welfare Officer to discuss the changes and other Officer were welcome to attend the meeting.

He noted that there would be a Democracy Day the following week with stalls for each of the Priority Campaigns and that many students had signed up to the campaigns through the website. He noted that the Campaigns would also be promoted at the General Meeting to be held on Democracy Day.

## **1246 Priority Campaign Working Groups**

L McCafferty noted it would be important to have a semester plan for each campaign and these would be designed by a working group for each campaign. He asked Officers to sign up for at least one working group in a paper he circulated to the meeting.

## **1247 Funding Request for coach to Diversity Festival on 27th September**

L McCafferty noted that, on 27<sup>th</sup> September, UKIP would be holding their annual conference in his home town, Doncaster. He noted that the FTOs had discussed the matter and agreed UUEAS should attend a lobbying of the conference. He noted that We Are Norwich, an affiliate organisation to UUEAS, were organising a coach to the event at £5 a seat. He noted that the Diversity Festival had been cancelled and the event would be simply a lobbying opportunity.

SOC discussed the details of how to book seats and the pleasures of visiting Doncaster.

C Rand asked that, in future, funding requests should include a detailed breakdown of costs and be submitted in advance.

C Jarvis noted that he and the Chair would present a proposal to a future meeting on allocation of Campaign Budget spending and of how Officers could submit funding proposals.

*SOC agreed unanimously to allocate up to £100 for attendance at the lobby of the UKIP national conference.*

L McCafferty noted that he had sent an agenda item in an email to the SOC secretary which had, unfortunately, been missed off the agenda, a funding request for attendance at a TUC demo backed by the NUS: 'Britain Needs A Pay Rise' to be held on 18 October.

SOC agreed to consider the item.

L McCafferty thought that it would be good to start by booking three coaches as he believed there would be a huge amount of interest in the event. He had not put an exact costing as this would depend on negotiations with the coach companies but he thought it would be around £500 per coach.

C Jarvis argued that publicity costs should be added to the request.

T Etheridge noted his concerns over spending such a large part of the Campaigns Budget on one demo. He believed that there should be a focus on what could be done for students locally as well as supporting national events.

C Rand thought there should have been detailed proposals tabled concerning what would be a large spending commitment.

C Jarvis noted, that in the past, SOC had spent a large proportion of the budget on one event and then had found money to bolster the central Campaigns Budget from elsewhere.

*SOC agreed to spend, in principle, up to £1,650 on publicity and coaches for the TUC demo, with further details on spending to be brought to the next meeting.*

## **1248 Policy Implementation**

C Jarvis thought some aspects of the recommendations might prove contentious and he would incorporate any changes that SOC wished to make as agreement should be by consensus.

He highlighted the suggestion made that, in a time sensitive situation, particularly over the summer, decisions over implementation might be left to Management Committee. He noted that this might be problematic in terms of constitutionality and might involve a decision to seek an amendment to the Constitution.

He noted the complaints made over the fact that Facebook was not an accessible and appropriate forum for the discussion of policy implementation and he recommended that this should just be used purely for speedy organisational decisions.

He noted, finally, that the democratic implications of the introduction of Policy Precedent should be more closely examined.

C Rand asked that public statements should be explicitly included in the recommendations. He also thought that the definition of 'time sensitive' could be contentious and he asked that this be clarified. On Management Committee, he thought there were good constitutional reasons why it was not charged with policy implementation. He thought one interpretation of the recommendations could be that they would take power away from the PTOs as they was no provision for consultation with them and Management Committee and a provision for consultation should be made explicit and be an overriding principle. T Etheridge thought that consultation could be held through an emergency meeting via video conferencing.

C Jarvis agreed with the above observations but noted that Management Committee could be seen as a venue where the FTOs all met together and another parallel political role for it might be investigated to allow it to consider policy implementation emergencies.



L Cody noted that decisions had been made by UUEAS over the summer without consultation with the PTOs but which the PTOs had been held responsible for by their constituents; she believed this issue should be addressed.

Chair noted that she and C Jarvis would rework the recommendations in line with the discussion and bring them back to the next meeting.

C Rand left the meeting, for Officer Go Round, he reported he would have a review of progress on his manifesto commitments ready for the following meeting.

#### **1249 Transforming the Postgraduate Student Experience at UEA**

Chair noted that J Taylor had asked that, in view of his absence, the matter be deferred to the next meeting.

Chair noted her view that the matter was purely for discussion and should be considered at the present meeting.

C Jarvis noted that there were three PG members of SOC and that only one was present; in view of this, he felt that SOC could not meaningfully discuss the PG experience.

L McCafferty noted that the paper had been produced by O Steward and himself who were the PG representatives on SOC and that J Taylor, with respect, was the Mature Students representative. He noted the idea was to simply gain some initial feedback from SOC.

*SOC voted to defer consideration of the paper to the next meeting.*

#### **1250 Officer Go Around/Reports**

L McCafferty: PG inductions, PGSE report, GSA consultations

F Redfern: liaising with all the ethnic minority Societies

S Glakousaki: international arrivals, Union presentation to international students, working on Reduce, Reuse, Recycle; working with ISS on Asian Day and International Basketball

M Levene: work on the DSA

C Jarvis: Priority Campaigns, writing NUS funding request on DSA and the general election campaign, papers on broadening democracy, meeting with the University on Fossil Free and WRC

L Cody: working on issues facing Joint Honours students particularly with regard to exams

I Goddard: working on Reduce, Reuse, Recycle which had run successfully

T Antoniou Phillips: Trustee Board, elected to HR Sub-Committee

T Etheridge: working with Livewire as to Welcome Week information

D Wrigglesworth: attendance at TransAction Conference, liaison with local LGBT+ groups

Y Yu: preparing for Club and Society training, completion of the Union App, working with mature students

T Etheridge: working on Media Day, equality and diversity with Livewire

H Staynor: Black History Month, equality and diversity for Clubs and

Societies, staff training on issues concerning sexual harassment

**1251 Reports on Priority Campaigns/Projects**

SOC noted this had been covered in Item 1245.

**1252 Departmental Find and Fix Feedback**

M Levene asked as to the accessibility of the tills in the Shop.  
J Dickinson advised that this was being addressed.

**1253 Management Minutes**

SOC noted the minutes of the meetings of 8 July, 22 July, 4 August and 1 September without comment.

**1254 Any Other Business**

*T Etheridge, F Redfern and L Cody volunteered to join a pool of Student Officer members of the Disciplinary Panel for hearing complaints brought under the Code of Conduct.*

J Clare, Head of Student Engagement, advised that his paper on the assignment of staff mentors to Officers would be added to the agenda papers.

*SOC agreed to the proposed structure of mentoring for Officers.*

Y Yu proposed an emergency amendment to the Charity Budget which he circulated to the meeting to include an extension of funding for website development for a further three weeks.

He noted that more time was needed to train Clubs and Societies in use of the website.

I Goddard noted that he had been on the Societies Committee the previous year and a lot of money in the budget had been left unspent.

J Dickinson advised as this matter was a detailed revision of an internal budget it should properly be considered by Management Committee.

*SOC agreed the direction of travel and referred the matter for detailed consideration to Management Committee.*

Chair asked Officers to, in future, not bring highly detailed proposals under AOB.

**1255 Time, Date and Place**

5. 30 pm, 2 October at a venue to be confirmed.