

## **Minutes of the Student Officer Committee**

**6 November 2014**

### **Key Discussions**

- Council policy on Free Education and Accessible Campaigning
- Zone Conference attendance and the engagement of officers

### **Key Actions**

- SOC took the decision to withdraw UUEAS support for the Free Education Demo scheduled for the 19<sup>th</sup> November

### **Voting Members present:**

Freddie Redfern (Ethnic Minorities Officer), 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), Liz Cody (Non Portfolio Officer), Theo Antoniou Phillips (Non Portfolio Officer), Dan Wrigglesworth (LGBT+ Officer), Tom Southerden (Non Portfolio Officer) Iain Goddard (Environment Officer), Josh Wilson (Ethical Issues Officer), Stela Glakousaki (International Officer)

### **Chair**

Holly Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer)

### **Non-Voting Members present:**

None

### **In attendance:**

Josh Clare (Head of Student Engagement)

### **Apologies:**

Dolly Ogunrinde (Women's Officer), Oliver Steward (Postgraduate Officer), Tom Etheridge (Non Portfolio Officer), Tony Moore (Democracy and Governance Coordinator), Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive)

## **1298 Departmental Presentation: Communications**

C Alexander was unable to attend the meeting and so the Communications presentation will present at the following meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> November.

## **1299 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October**

C Jarvis suggested that he was under the impression that point under 1291 (Action Log) was not due for this meeting.

*With this change, the minutes were agreed.*

### **Matters Arising**

*There were none.*

## **1300 Action Log**

L McCafferty pointed out that there is a referenda timetable being developed for the GSA/UUEAS legal merger with the voting timeline to be proposed to the GSA Committee.

H Staynor informed the committee that the policy implementation document will be developed for the end of November and that new policy passed at the last Union Council will come to the next SOC.

## **1301 Free Education Demo Update**

H Staynor gave some background to issue:

- a policy passed through Union Council supporting the planned for the 19<sup>th</sup> November
- since this NUS withdrew support due to concerns surrounding access and safety

The question for SOC was whether we support the demo still and if so what measures need to be put in place.

C Jarvis informed SOC that over the past 2 days he has sought clarification from the organisers, NUS and other SUs on the situation as it stands.

In respect of the question regarding safety:

- Stewards are being recruited to be trained on 12 November
- There will be a 1 steward to 50 attendees ratio
- The route has been agreed by the police

In respect of the question regarding accessibility:

- There will be pace management and students with disabilities at the front of the march

- A leaflet with more access information will be delivered by organisers on 10<sup>th</sup> November
- 3 points on the routine are being proposed to police as points to leave the demo early
- Internally to UUEAS we are working on Risk Assessments for our delegation, should one be sent

C Rand updated SOC on what Toni Pearce, NUS National President, had said at Zone Conferences in respect of the Demo:

- "External risk assessments couldn't be created"
- A list of stewards is still unavailable
- The nature of the structure at the rally part of the demo was not yet known
- Sound and PA equipment was not yet known
- First aiders were yet to be identified
- Missing children processes were yet to be identified
- No public liability insurance was in place

L McCafferty informed SOC that NUS Scotland and NUS London were still in support of the Demo

M Levene stated that he believed that in light of the policy of accessible campaigns just being passed by Council it would be foolish to throw this out. He suggested that it was on UUEAS to make sure our transport was accessible and on the organisers to ensure the rest of the event was accessible. C Jarvis informed SOC that he was chasing the organisers and lobbying to ensure that the event was as accessible as possible.

T Antoniou Phillips asked for clarification on NUS concerns and C Rand suggested that they ranged from the structure of the event, if there was SWP involvement in the organisation, regarding the safe exit from the event. C Rand reminded SOC that UUEAS are leaders of liberation and that if there are problems with an event we need to uphold our beliefs.

H Staynor agreed that organisers didn't do enough in terms of liberation and that as a result we had to choose between not going as a result or going and trying to influence this. SOC was reminded that we as a Union do inaccessible things such as bar based events and don't want them to stop rather we want to improve their accessibility.

L McCafferty stated that he believed the pressure from Unions had helped to focus the organisers on issues and that students were still likely to attend from UEA even if we withdrew our support.

C Rand agreed that students who want to go should be able to go however questioned if there was enough time left to rectify the

issues. He questioned if we as a Union we asking students to choose between attending a demo with accessibility problems or stay at home and feel bad for not taking part.

T Southerden stated that he believed that risk assessments not being in place this close to the event and no Public Liability insurance were for him the biggest concern. He suggested that if this event was on campus it would be stopped and that we should support the campaign for free education in a better, safer way.

D Wigglesworth reiterated that Council had just passed policy on accessible campaigning and questioned if SOC could be confident the event would be accessible without a risk assessment in place.

L McCafferty suggested that from his experience there is always a degree of complexity in respect of accessibility of demos and this is why the campaign must be varied. In the past attendees have carried placards on behalf of others who couldn't attend. He asked SOC if they felt they could wash their hands of students who would attend even without UUEAS backing.

S Glakousaki stated that all students had the right to attend. She questioned who took on responsibility for the risks and C Jarvis informed SOC that it would be the organisers legal but that there would be some ethical responsibility on UUEAS.

C Rand suggested that by supporting attending the demo we are stating that we believe in it and that we are encouraging student involvement. He suggested students may feel that by not taking part in a UUEAS backed demo they might feel they are "coping out". He reminded SOC that he helped write the initial policy supporting the demo.

I Goddard questioned if SOC should consider risk and C Jarvis suggested that the trustees can intervene on issues of risk. C Rand suggested that while the Trustee Board can intervene on matters of risk that risk and access are intrinsically linked.

M Levene suggested that it felt as if there was a decision to be made between supporting liberation or supporting the cause and the demo. H Staynor suggested this was not the case and that they were not mutually exclusive.

C Jarvis suggested that there were still grey areas for the organisers to clarify but that we should try to force liberation to the heart of the agenda. L McCafferty stated that a number of SUs in the country are waiting to see what comes from NUS Scotland.

C Rand asked SOC to consider who would organise a demo without thoughts on liberation already in mind. He suggested that with 2 weeks to go NUS believed there is not enough time to sort problems and that the hurry to complete things highlights the problem not suggests a solution.

M Levene suggests there are two questions SOC should have in mind: what are the limitations of access and are we stopping some people attending should we withdraw support? And on the other hand, are we comfortable with sending students to an event with potential risks?

J Wilson agrees that liberation should have been at the heart of the demo however disagreed that marching meant UUEAS would be showing support for the organisers that it was a march for free education. He would support an idea to delay the vote on attendance a week to see the outcome of new developments over the course of the week ahead. C Jarvis agrees this is a good course of action.

L Cody asked that if we support the event and look again at the developments would advertising be in place. C Jarvis suggested it would be advertised in the interim and then withdrawn if support was withdrawn at the next meeting of SOC. L Cody suggested this could look contradictory for UUEAS.

D Wrigglesworth suggested that Council wanted to campaign and that we should find diverse routes for this.

C Rand suggested advertising and later pulling support could be worse as it would leave less time for plans to be put in place and that this was particularly important for students with disabilities. He asked if SOC would be happy to start advertising an event they didn't know was safe.

The Chair called an end to the discussion and suggested two votes. The first would decide if SOC wanted to make the decision on attending this week or to delay decision until next week in the hope that more information.

Vote to support making the decision at this meeting:

For- 7

Against- 6

As this falls, another vote was called to support attending the demo. Vote to support attending the demo:

For- 6

Against- 7

***SOC resolves to remove support for the demo taking place on the 19<sup>th</sup> November.***

C Jarvis informs SOC that they will now have to inform Council of the decision at next sitting.

L McCafferty wished for it to be noted that he was unsure if this decision fell into the remit of SOC.

### **1302 Reports from Zone Conferences**

L McCafferty reported that there were some interesting items but that it was mostly tedious.

T Southerden reported that he got a lot out of it and engaged in the sessions. He stated that he felt some of the sabbatical officers didn't engage well enough and reminded SOC that members money was spent on them attending.

T Southerden stated that he had felt embarrassed and had apologised to other Unions on UUEAS's behalf. D Wrigglesworth would second T Southerden's view. C Jarvis apologised that T Southerden felt this way.

C Rand reported that he had some gripes about the new structure but that some sessions were very useful.

H Staynor reported that she ran for a national position on the Welfare Committee.

***C Rand left the meeting due to prior engagements***

### **1303 Campaign Budget Spending**

J Clare reminded SOC of the new process they had agreed for requesting money from the Campaign Budget and the need to use this process to ensure spending could be tracked.

C Jarvis informed SOC that £650 had been spent on attending the TUC Demo which had been agreed at a previous meeting of SOC.

### **1304 Officer Go Around Reports**

S Glakousaki: Held first caucuses which raised cultural awareness. Will be meeting the University next week to discuss international fee cap and improved the take up of Council seats amongst international societies.

L Cody: Held meeting with D Messling on joint honours provision. Meeting with C Rand and L McCafferty on taking this forward.

T Southerden: Attended Zone Conferences. Had a good meeting with D Messling.

I Goddard: attended a Carbon Crew meeting, Green impact awards meeting, parking appeals meeting, world café.

F Redfern: Discussed future campaigns with UUEAS staff and held first caucus.

Theo Antonio-Phillips: Working with Pride on Trans awareness week.

M Levene: Held first caucus which was really useful. Informed SOC that it is disability history month from the 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

H Staynor: Held carry that weight, attended the Zone Conference, attended senate, Equality and Diversity strategy is coming soon.

Y Yu: Attended Zone conferences. Meet with the University Director of Sport in regards to the pricing of Sports Park for students.

L McCafferty: Attended Zone conferences. Worked on Graduate Engagement Strategy. Attended Senate. Worked on the Marking Boycott work.

C Jarvis: Attended Zone Conference, working on the Demo and marking boycott, carry that weight campaign, mentoring and development of their mentors.

D Wrigglesworth: Attended Zone Conference. Held the first caucus and helped to organise trans awareness week.

J Wilson: Met careers central regarding an ethical careers fair. Also speaking with Unison regarding fair pay on campus.

### **1305 Reports on Priority Campaign/Reports**

C Jarvis informed SOC of a Defend Education Campaign event in the Hive 12<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm.

### **1296 Any Other Business**

F Redfern asked if SOC could approve a funding request. C Jarvis reminded SOC of the procedure that had been agreed and the chair stated that they had turned down a request proposed for AOB.

### **1297 Time, Date and Place of next Meeting**

5. 00 pm, 13 November in a venue to be confirmed.