

# Minutes

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| Subject: | Student Officer Committee Minutes |
| Date:    | Thursday, 5 February 2015         |
| Paper:   | SOC1368                           |

## Key Discussions

- The Waterfront's Activities
- Financial Position of the SU
- Items to be included in the 15-16 Budget
- The Anti-Terrorism Bill

## Key Actions

- Officers to feed into Budget 'wish list'
- Agreed revised Election Timetable
- Noted funding for Go Global survey
- Agreed funding for attendance at Standing OUT LGBTQIA Women in Leadership

**Union of UEA Students Purpose:**

“To enrich the life of every UEA student”

**Minutes of the Student Officer Committee**

**5 February 2015**

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**Voting Members present:**

Dolly Ogunrinde (Women’s Officer), Max Levene (Students with Disabilities Officer), Josh Wilson (Ethical issues Officer), Liam McCafferty (PG Education Officer), Chris Jarvis (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), Freddie Redfern (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Tom Etheridge (Non Portfolio Officer), Theo Antoniou Phillips (Non Portfolio Officer), Dan Wrigglesworth (LGBT+ Officer), Connor Rand (UG Education Officer), Yinbo Yu (Activities and Opportunities Officer), S Glakousaki (International Officer)

**Chair**

Holly Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer)

**Non-Voting Member present:**

Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive)

**In attendance:**

Tony Moore (Democracy and Governance Coordinator), C Lear (Waterfront Coordinator), J Armstrong (Waterfront Venue Supervisor), J Williams (Waterfront Deputy Venue Supervisor)

**Apologies:**

Iain Goddard (Environment Officer), Josh Clare (Head of Student Engagement), Liz Cody (Non Portfolio Officer), Tom Southerden (Non Portfolio Officer), John Taylor (Mature Students’ Officer), David Hall (Postgraduate Officer).

**1355 Statements from the Chair**

Chair noted that there would be an extra item brought forward in the Cycle of Business: a presentation on the Waterfront.

**Departmental Presentation: the Waterfront**

C Lear, J Armstrong and J Williams made a presentation on all aspects of the work of Waterfront. In particular, they highlighted the team's engagement and outreach with the local community.

Chair asked whether the opening of new alternative music venues, such as the Owl Sanctuary, had had an adverse effect on the Waterfront.

C Lear believed that the new venues should be viewed positively as they brought into the City more supporters of alternative music. CL noted that the Waterfront management had developed good relationships with the new venues and that there were good opportunities from cross-over audiences and joint-marketing.

J Wilson wondered whether the Propaganda nights had proved a success.

C Lear thought they had but that there was still some work to be done on delivery; CL noted that various possible means of support were being looked at, including putting on buses direct from campus.

Chair thanked the staff for their presentation.

Chair noted receipt of the GSA statement concerning the Referendum and noted that the General meeting for the Referendum would be held on 11 February.

#### **1356 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January**

D Wrigglesworth noted they had been absent but they had been minuted as attending as well as giving apologies and T Etheridge noted that Livewire was spelt as one word, with these corrections the minutes were agreed.

#### **1357 Matters Arising**

There were none.

#### **1358 Action Log**

Chair noted that the lobbying on the DSA cuts would take another form than that of a letter and they would action this.

Chair noted, concerning trans-exclusion in election regulations, that they had spoken to NUS and their reaction had been somewhat negative and that they would be sending a policy proposal to NUS Conference.

#### **1359 Financial Estimates Steering Discussion**

J Dickinson made a presentation on the SU's financial position and the financial model it was working to, as in the current budget. J Dickinson advised that after the presentation, Officers would have an opportunity to feed their ideas into the setting of the next budget.

J Dickinson advised that for the December accounts, five months into the financial year the organisation was £115,000 off budget in relation to income and this was a poor set of results. JD advised this cumulative variance would be hard to recover from in the current year. J Dickinson advised that management would be addressing the situation by:

- Reviewing whether the problem was due to performance or the financial model or a mixture of both
- Sharing the results of the review across the organisation
- Agreeing clear management action points
- Reviewing the results to inform the next budget cycle

J Dickinson outlined the old financial model of the organisation and contrasted it with the new financial model which had formed a central part of the Improvement Plan. JD advised that in the old model profits were hoarded within the commercial arm with little money being allocated to the charity; in contrast, the new model aimed at allocating more money to the charity to provide services to members whilst cutting money spent on infrastructure and bureaucracy. JD drew attention to the problems encountered in the transition from the old to new models and that there had, also, been some one-off costs incurred.

J Dickinson advised that, for the commercial arm, turnover was holding up but that profitability was a problem in the first semester. JD advised that this was due to:

- Some short term administrative problems with associated costs
- Implementation of the Living Wage for student staff
- Failing to get the balance right in reducing the queues in the shop and the cost of doing so
- In Bars and Unio the organisation had not been running the student staff % against the turnover%
- The small spend per head in ENTS

J Dickinson noted that the steep rise in student staff numbers had then led, in the case of Unio, to precipitate actions to cutback student staff hours and this had led to severe problems for the staff involved.

J Dickinson advised that management were reviewing systems and behaviours to increase the through put in the LCR.

SOC discussed the issues concerning the long queues and resultant serving time in Unio and the need to not incur fixed labour costs by planning staff ratios to match demand on an hourly basis.

J Dickinson advised that although Unio was the most visible area to Officers, it was not the most pressing issue, in financial terms, as the overspend in retail, ENTS and bars was far more concerning for the charity.

J Dickinson concluded the review of the finances by noting that the

management accounts for January and February should reveal whether the issues were performance related or whether there was a deeper structural problem.

J Dickinson outlined the structure of the charity budget and noted it could be divided into four parts:

- Advocacy and representation
- Opportunities and activities
- Infrastructure
- Incoming money

T Etheridge asked if student numbers were to fall would this mean a cut in the Block Grant.

J Dickinson noted there was no correlation in place with regard to numbers and funding.

J Dickinson highlighted the extremely high number of societies per head but the extremely low overall expenditure.

J Dickinson highlighted areas of pressure on costs within the charity:

- Salaries and utilities
- Pension deficit
- Possible significant reduction in the amount reclaimed by the charity as to VAT

J Dickinson asked Officers for their thoughts on the financial reports and suggestions for spending on areas which would benefit their constituents.

Chair asked as to the testing in relation to the financial situation.

J Dickinson advised that there would be testing of performance across the organisation and this would run alongside a lobbying of the University as to issues such as the rising cost of the pension deficit.

S Glakousaki noted that the LCR was due to be refurbished and would this have an effect on the spend per head.

J Dickinson advised that improving the spend per head would play a key part in the refurbishment plans and, also, new systems would be in place to complement the changes to the physical structure.

C Jarvis noted that there was clear staff support for both FTOs and PTOs in some areas but there was no dedicated support in place for the C&D role, that of the Environment Officer, the Ethical Issues Officer or for the Non Portfolio Officers. CJ believed money should be budgeted to provide this support.

J Dickinson advised that a post had been envisaged to provide this support but had been deemed unaffordable and that provision of the support had been subsumed into the duties of another staff member. He advised that this solution had not been a success and that there should be an ambition to look again at creating the support post.

C Rand thought the increased spend on media societies had led to a

revelation in what these societies had been able to deliver and he would want to see this protected in the budget. CR noted, however, that the SU would reach a point where it would have to consider the fact that it had a very low spending on sports and that members of sports clubs had every right to complain of the low spend.

J Wilson asked how the SU's spending on sport compared to other students' unions.

C Rand noted it was in the bottom quartile.

SOC noted in passing the SU's investment in the Whitlingham Boat House.

Y Yu noted the number of complaints received as to the low spending on sports; YY also noted his belief that there should be an increase in the funding of Derby Day. YY believed there should also be an increase in funding for societies.

J Dickinson advised that there should be some cost benefit analysis as to the spending on both sports and societies to inform the budget setting.

S Glakousaki noted the high spending on the media societies.

T Etheridge clarified that a high proportion of the funding had come from the Alumni Fund and other grants.

S Glakousaki believed the ambition should be that all societies should have the same level of funding as the media societies and the elite sports clubs.

J Dickinson advised that a key part of helping societies develop was staff support and that changes were underway to free up staff from administrative duties to allow them to concentrate on direct development work with societies.

Y Yu noted work with SU staff on societies' handover and this would involve each society submitting a development plan when applying for funding.

J Dickinson advised that it was intended that there would be a focus on the following provisions:

- Societies
- Student Media
- Specific projects to address identified gaps in participation
- International and Postgraduate students
- Nursing students (with a staff member in place)

Y Yu asked that their request for an increase in the funding for societies should be minuted.

L McCafferty asked for some kind of analysis of outcomes in relation to funding to be brought to a future meeting to inform future decision making.

J Dickinson advised that this would be a good set of numbers to bring to the discussion of the budget estimates at Union Council.

*SOC agreed that Officers would feed in to a wish list so that*

*Management Committee would be able to then present SOC some clear budget choices.*

J Dickinson advised Officers to have a look at how other students' unions prioritised spending and what kinds of special projects they ran as this might be useful in building the wish list.

**1360 Election Timetable Update**

*SOC agreed the revised Election timetable.*

**1361 Go Global/survey/experience leaflet**

S Glakousaki gave a brief overview of Go Global. S Glakousaki noted the survey would collect information about what international students wanted from inductions and from their leaving experience.

**1362 Officer Go Round/Reports**

T Antoniou Phillips: attendance at University's Music Steering Group, looking at areas on campus where bands can rehearse

C Jarvis: reported World Café had taken place; thanked staff and Officers for their contributions

D Wrigglesworth: started Pride at UEA, emailed all Clubs and Societies

T Etheridge: Derby Day/Livewire

M Levene: reported exciting developments with an Access All Areas Group on campus which would establish principles for the University to pledge to follow in the design of future buildings

D Ogunrinde: organising self-defence class and empowerment workshop

S Glakousaki: multiple presentations to incoming INTO which were very successful; SG hoped that these would continue in future years

Y Yu liaising with NBS over an LCR event to celebrate the Chinese New Year

Chair: Well Being, organising events and liaising with media over coverage

**1363 Reports on Priority Campaigns/Projects**

C Jarvis drew SOC's attention to their written report.

S Glakousaki drew attention, in regard to International Fees, that the University set its own notional rate of inflation of 3% and this varied significantly from that in the wider economy which was around 2.2%.

T Antoniou Phillips asked for clarification on 'affordable' housing.

C Jarvis clarified that the University had refused to provide an institutional definition of 'affordable'.

**1364 Decisions made by Union Council**

C Jarvis reported that the working group on the Housing Co-op had already started meetings; C Jarvis invited interested Officers to attend.

Chair noted that they had spoken to the University about the Anti-Terrorism Bill and that they had been assured that the University opposed the provisions in the Bill and that the Vice-Chancellor had added their name to a letter condemning the provisions.

J Dickinson advised that a balancing provision had been added to the Bill after debate in the Lords and this would add the duty of universities to maintain freedom of speech to counterbalance the duty to prevent the spread of terrorism. J Dickinson advised that the revised Bill was now likely to pass; although there was still some opposition from some quarters. J Dickinson characterised the compromise as a confection of positive and negative freedoms. J Dickinson noted the work that R Rawle had done last year to retain the caveat of the 'right to protest' in the University's General Regulations. J Dickinson, answering C Jarvis, advised that the NUS' position on the Bill was somewhat confused as the student movement applied a different level of sanctions against, for example, the BNP in contrast to those applied to the small group of radical Islamicist students whom the movement judged to be outside an accepted discourse.

### **1365 AOB**

D Ogunrinde noted they had submitted an emergency item: a funding request for attendance at the Standing OUT LGBTQIA Women in Leadership; the amount requested was £100 and it would come from the Liberations Budget.

S Glakousaki asked how much was left in the Liberations Budget. J Dickinson advised that about half had been spent.

C Jarvis asked for a breakdown of the current funds in all the SOC budgets and that the request be minuted.

*The Liberations Officers agreed to the funding request for attendance at Standing OUT LGBTQIA Women in Leadership.*

T Etheridge reported that there had been a 'Chav' themed event run by a Club or Society in the LCR and asked that this be investigated.

### **1366 Time, Date and Place**

5. 00 pm, 19 February in Committee Room 1, the Council Chamber.