

## **Union of UEA Students Purpose:**

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"

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

(Notes compiled by the Secretary from audio recording)

**4 December 2014**

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### **KEY DECISIONS**

- Clarified wording of action for the Free Education Demo
  - Agreed Student Led Teaching Award Proposal
  - Agreed to the formation of the PG Referendum Working Group with additions to the personnel
  - Agreed Campaign Budget Spending Requests
  - Agreed to send a letter of solidarity to Warwick SU over the events surrounding the student occupation at Warwick
  - Statement to be drafted for SOC to condemn comments made on social media concerning the postponement of a debate involving UKIP
  - Action to be taken to improve presentation on the website of PTOs' activities and campaigns
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### **Voting Members present:**

Liz Cody (Non Portfolio Officer), Josh Wilson (Ethical issues Officer), Liam McCafferty (PG Education Officer), Freddie Redfern (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Tom Etheridge (Non Portfolio Officer), Theo Antoniou Phillips (Non Portfolio Officer), Connor Rand (UG Education Officer), S Glakousaki (International Officer), Iain Goddard (Environment Officer)

### **Chair**

Chris Jarvis (Campaigns and Democracy Officer)

### **In attendance:**

Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive), Josh Clare (Head of Student Engagement), Lynne Simpkin (Head of Student Opportunities, James Heywood (Sports Development Coordinator)

### **Apologies:**

Tony Moore (Democracy and Governance Coordinator), Holly Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer) Yinbo Yu (Activities and Opportunities Officer), Dan Wrigglesworth (LGBT+ Officer), Dolly Ogunrinde (Women's Officer), Max Levene (Students with Disabilities Officer), Tom Southerden (Non Portfolio Officer), John Taylor (Mature Students' Officer), Oliver Steward (Postgraduate Officer).

### **1319 Departmental Presentation: Opportunities**

L Simpkin and J Heywood outlined developments in their department.

Responding to a question as to whether there was a specific strategy at increasing the involvement of part-time students in sport, J Heywood noted there was not a specific strategy in place but this was an area that the Officers might look into.

J Heywood noted that D Wrigglesworth was looking into rainbow laces to promote Out In Sport.

### **1320 Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 November**

The minutes were approved.

### **1321 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 November**

SOC debated what the wording of the action determined concerning the Free Education Demo had been. SO resolved through a vote that the wording had been to *"not send coaches to the demo"* rather than, as minuted *"remove support from"*. The minutes were approved.

### **1322 Action Log**

There were no comments.

### **1323 Union Council Policy Implementation Review**

There were no comments.

### **1324 Student Led Teaching Award Proposal**

L McCafferty thought it would be useful to know what academics thought about the proposal as it might have a polarising effect.

C Jarvis noted that the UCU supported it as it highlighted best practice.

*SOC agreed the proposal.*

### **1325 Postgraduate Referendum**

L McCafferty noted that the situation with regard to the Postgraduate Referendum was somewhat anomalous as the referendum rules covered all student referenda and this referendum would be for solely PG students. LM noted that in order to address this issue, the PG Referendum would be indicative with a set of rules fitting a restricted franchise. LM noted a working group would be set up to examine these issues and he would recommend that the working group should consist of: himself, O Steward (President of the GSA) and J Taylor as someone who had been involved in the initial discussions and who had asked to be part of the group.

C Rand thought it would be appropriate for the Campaigns and Democracy Officer to be part of the group.

C Jarvis agreed to serve on the group and suggested that it would be appropriate for D Hall, the Chair of the Democratic Procedures Committee, to be invited to join. CJ Noted that Mr Hall was also Secretary of the GSA and this would be helpful to the group.

L McCafferty noted that the group would endeavour to complete their work as early as possible in the New Year for two reasons: it would be not good to have the Referendum too close in time to the SU elections and that all the work around the PG student space referenced the Referendum and the sooner this could start the sooner improvements to PG services could be delivered.

*SOC agreed to the formation of the Referendum Working Group with the above additions to the personnel.*

### **1326 Campaign Budget Spending Requests**

L McCafferty thought there was a need to clarify the budgets with PTOs having access to the funding pot.

*SOC approved the spending requests.*

### **1327 Officer Go Round/Report**

L McCafferty: PTES data, UKIP debate, co-ordinating response to PG loans, nursing students' winter event

S Glakousaki: organising spring semester event, working with DOS on cultural awareness week and end of year workshop

J Wilson: attended Free Education demo on campus and in London, World Café, chaired Ethical Steering Group

I Goddard: Ethical Steering Group, ENV stall, lights in the square, Carbon Reduction meeting

T Antoniou Phillips: Transgender Awareness week, World Aids Day, LGBT training for Nightline

C Rand: Trustee work on UKIP meeting, students studying abroad review, assessment and feedback, radical teaching space, name of School on degree certificate, QAA, lab coats costs

L Cody: UKIP issue – noted had not had much information and had not known of decision, liaising with Bars over late payment of wages

T Etheridge: media law training, stalls, demo, trustee work

Chair: University Council, Defend Education Campaign, Ethical Steering Group, University have now signed up to Workers Rights Consortium.

### **1328 Reports on Priority Campaigns/Projects**

Chair: Campus launch of Unison's Living Wage, disappointing attendance; pushing for SU involvement.

Chair: meeting with the Head of Accommodation to push on the lack of coherence between the University's pricing strategy and its widening participation agenda. Chair noted Officers were welcome to join the campaign's working group.

### **1329 Any Other Business**

L McCafferty reported there had been a nationwide series of occupations by students to draw attention to the marketisation of education. LC reported that the one at Warwick had caused concern as the university had called in the police and the police actions captured on video appeared to be heavy-handed. LC noted the police actions had exacerbated the situation and led to more demonstrations. LC noted that other students' unions from across the country had been sending messages of solidarity to Warwick SU.

Chair suggested delegating the writing of a letter of solidarity to an individual Officer.

*C Rand agreed to draft the letter and to post it on the SOC page for approval.*

L McCafferty reported that there had been somewhat of a social media backlash directed at the statement LC had issued about UKIP. LC noted that a potentially libellous blog including a personal attack had been posted and that senior UKIP figures had also posted comments. LC wondered if it would be more appropriate for SOC, as a whole, to respond with a statement rather than an individual Officer.

L Cody thought that some of the comments had been horrendous. LC noted that constituents had asked about what had been going on but, because there had been no consultation between the FTOs and PTOs, LC had been unable to help them. LC believed that, despite the time constraints involved it would have been helpful if the FTOs had informed the rest of SOC about developments.

C Rand believed that it was unfortunate that the postponement of the event because of proper procedures not being followed had been twisted to fit UKIP's narrative of a conspiracy by a liberal elite at a university. CR noted, in response to LC, the time pressures involved and the need to respond quickly.

Chair noted that when Management Committee took decisions on matters such as this where SOC would have to answer for those decisions, L McCafferty, as Chair of Management, should send an immediate briefing to SOC. Chair noted, on a related issue, that SOC was meant to approve the minutes of Management Committee but was yet to receive any for the current term.

L McCafferty argued in relation to any SOC statement that it should draw attention to the fact that senior UK figures had commented favourably on the blog which had made offensive allusions to LC's ethnicity.

L Cody agreed and that the comments had been absolutely unacceptable.

*SOC agreed that a SU staff member would be delegated to draft a statement which would then be discussed by SOC prior to publication.*

T Etheridge asked as to previous discussions on raising the profile of PTOs and what this might involve.

L Cody noted one idea had been for PTOs to conduct monthly open forums on campus whilst another had been to hold a 'Union Week' which would focus on one overarching campaign.

I Goddard noted a constituent had wanted to know what IG had been doing as an Officer and had looked on the website which only showed IG's name and email address and nothing else.

J Wilson noted that Officers' actions were in the Council minutes but agreed that they could be in a PTO specific area of the website.

Chair noted that he would be meeting with SU staff to discuss how SU policy and campaigns could be better presented on the website and PTOs campaigns and activities would be part of this.

I Goddard asked if the proposed actions mapped out at an earlier informal meeting of Officers had been brought to SOC as he noted some such as a circulation of a SU staff who's who had not been actioned.

Chair noted that these had come to an earlier SOC meetings and that those actions which required some time and development would be brought to SOC in the spring semester.

**1330 Time, Date and Place of Next Meeting**

At a time, date and place to be confirmed.

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