

Minutes

Subject:	Student Officer Committee Minutes
Date:	Thursday, 26 February 2015
Paper:	SOC 1394

Key Discussions

- Unavailability of Management Committee minutes
- Campaign Budgets
- Media Centre Consultation
- Implementation of new policies passed by Council

Key Actions

- Management Committee minutes be provided in future and that older minutes be made available through a web link
- Future campaign funding requests to be made to the Head of Education and Engagement
- Updated set of campaign budgets to be brought to future meeting
- Chair to design a budget priority setting exercise
- Agreed retrospective funding request for Palestine Solidarity Campaign events
- Chair to convene meeting with the Media Executive concerning the closure of the Media Centre
- Chair and L McCafferty would meet to work out the staff support for implementation of specific new policies
- Officers to submit short written reports on policy implementation to be included in the SOC agenda papers
- Signage in the Shop to display information on product boycotts.

Union of UEA Students Purpose:

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"

Minutes of the Student Officer Committee

26 February 2015

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), Tom Etheridge (Non Portfolio Officer), Theo Antoniou Phillips (Non Portfolio Officer), Dan Wrigglesworth (LGBT+ Officer), Connor Rand (UG Education Officer), Tom Southerden (Non Portfolio Officer), Liz Cody (Non Portfolio Officer).

Chair

Holly Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer)

Non-Voting Member present:

In attendance:

Tony Moore (Democracy and Governance Coordinator), Toby Cunningham (Deputy Chief Executive).

Apologies:

Freddie Redfern (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Yinbo Yu (Activities and Opportunities Officer), S Glakousaki (International Officer), Iain Goddard (Environment Officer), Josh Clare (Head of Student Engagement), Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive), John Taylor (Mature Students' Officer), David Hall (Postgraduate Officer).

Departmental Presentation: Engagement and Education

Chair noted that the Head of Education and Engagement was absent due to DRO duties and this item would be postponed.

1380 Statements from the Chair

Chair reported that several Officers had queried the absence of Management Committee minutes from SOC agendas. Chair apologised

and noted that this matter had been brought to the Chief Executive's attention.

SOC asked that Management Committee minutes be provided in future and that older minutes be made available through a web link.

1381 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2014

The delayed minutes of this meeting were approved.

1382 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2015

The minutes were approved.

1383 Matters Arising

There were none.

1384 Action Log

- Chair reported trying to contact NUA and City College Officers about the DSA letter without success and would go ahead with the letter anyway and they could endorse it at a later date;
- Chair noted the trans exclusion issue would be taken to LGBT+ Conference;
- Chair reported no 'wish list' budget proposals had been received
- Chair noted there was a brief campaigns budget outline later in the agenda papers but that the Chief Executive had been asked to provide a more thorough breakdown and this would be provided at a future meeting.

SOC agreed that a compilation of funding requests for campaign budget spending would be made through an examination of previous minutes.

SOC agreed that future campaign funding requests would be made to the Head of Education and Engagement who would authorise and record them.

1385 Financial Estimates 15-16 Proposal

T Cunningham made a detailed presentation of the financial situation and noted that for the current year the SU was £100, 000 off budget. T Cunningham noted the key area of charitable activity:

- Student support
- Student Media
- Opportunities and activities
- Sports

T Cunningham advised that, if there were not adequate funds to go forward in the above areas, a political decision would have to be made as to allocation of resources. T Cunningham noted that management would need to know which would be the Officers' key priority areas of activities.

C Jarvis questioned the characterisation of rising utility costs as beyond the SU's control as there was a substantial number of energy efficient measures that the SU was currently not undertaking which, if implemented, would drastically reduce costs.

T Cunningham noted significant savings had been made and that this issue would continue to be addressed.

C Jarvis questioned what impact any move for the University to take over safety and security would have on VMS as a huge part of VMS' contract involved these services.

T Cunningham advised that the proposal would be for the University to provide expert support to enable SU staff to undertake these tasks in the 'daytime' economy whilst VMS provided a similar level of support for the 'night-time' economy.

Chair wondered as to the timescale for budget formulation.

T Cunningham advised the FTOs would be attending a meeting with the University in the near future and at that meeting they would get an indication of the University's position as to negotiations and this would then enable the process to be started.

Chair asked if management would need a steer from SOC at the present meeting as to essential areas of activity for setting the budget priorities.

T Cunningham advised that Officers should work at the next SOC meeting to set their priorities to allow the Board to make an informed decision if there were to be any need for any cuts.

SOC agreed the Chair would design a priority setting exercise for the next meeting.

C Jarvis wondered whether management had factored in any move to impose a minimum price on alcohol after the General Election and any effect this might have on wet sales.

T Cunningham advised that management believed because of the likely price level there would be little impact and that, as to wet sales, the focus would be to dramatically improve service and consequent spend per head.

1386 Campaigns Budgets Update

Chair noted that, in general, there were significant funds left in both the Priority and General Campaigns budgets but that the figures were somewhat out of date and overstated how much remained.

Chair noted that, as mentioned earlier, management were aware of the problem with the presentation of the budgets and updated versions would be produced.

C Jarvis noted that most of the delay in updating the figures had been due to the Finance Department not having been given receipts and invoices for spending that had been approved at SOC. He believed that figures should be presented on a weekly basis.

SOC noted that an updated set of campaign budgets would be brought to a future meeting.

1387 Funding for the UEA Palestine Solidarity Campaign

C Jarvis noted that this was a request to reimburse the campaign for the spending on a series of events the previous week. C Jarvis noted the original request had been on the agenda of the inquorate meeting of 12 February. C Jarvis reported that the Campaign's events had been well attended.

SOC agreed the retrospective funding request without comment.

1388 Media Centre Consultation

Chair drew SOC's attention to T Etheridge's written paper. Chair noted that a major refurbishment of the building would be starting in the near future and that a portion of the building that included the Media Centre would be out of use for several months. Chair noted the matter had been under discussion at Management Committee for some time.

T Etheridge clarified that the media societies had only discovered what was proposed when they went online a very short time before the scheduled closure. T Etheridge noted what had disturbed the societies had been the lack of prior information, notice or even any consultation about what the new media space would look like. T Etheridge believed that decisions had been made after consultation with just one person and that this was not the way decisions concerning three societies should be made in a democratic organisation. T Etheridge noted the problems the societies would have with room booking.

L McCafferty noted that the timeline for the refurbishment had been, very much, driven by the University and the need for contractors to clear asbestos from the building; and further noted that the FTOs had been unaware of the timing for a long period. L McCafferty acknowledged that once the FTOs had known, then, communications with the societies could have been better.

C Jarvis noted there had been no flexibility over the commencement of the work; only as to which part of the building where work would, initially, begin.

T Etheridge noted the difficulties but expressed extreme disappointment with the lack of consultation. T Etheridge noted that, as the societies were unaware of the timescale, volunteers had been setting up equipment a previous weekend and that, because of the lack of communication, all the volunteers' work would go to waste. T Etheridge noted Concrete's disquiet, as to safeguarding their editorial independence, at the proposed move to the main office.

In summary, T Etheridge noted the societies' concerns about where the decisions had been made and the total lack of communication.

L McCafferty apologised for any perceived lack of consultation and wondered whether there had been a problem as to the SU's communication with the media collective.

T Cunningham advised that the SU should have made much clearer that from around Easter time the part of the building containing the Media Centre's would be out of use. T Cunningham believed the lack of clarity had been caused by the SU having such short notice from the contractors as to dates.

T Cunningham apologised that there had, apparently, been no communication about the closing off of bookable spaces.

Chair asked if T Etheridge believed all the societies' concerns had been addressed in the discussion.

T Etheridge believed it would be helpful for SU management and the Media Executive to have a meeting to discuss and try to resolve the issues that the media societies had raised.

SOC agreed that the Chair and L McCafferty, the Chair of Management Committee would arrange to meet with the Media Executive as soon as possible.

Chair noted that communication on this matter had not been good and apologised on behalf of Management Committee.

1389 Decisions made by Union Council

Officers divided into groups to work on policy implementation.

SOC agreed that Chair and L McCafferty would meet to work out the staff support for implementation of specific policies.

SOC agreed that C Jarvis and J Wilson would form a sub-group to work on the Fairtrade University and Dodgy Sugar policy that would report back to SOC.

SOC agreed that Officers would, in future, submit short written reports on policy implementation to be included in the SOC agenda papers. SOC agreed to C Jarvis's request that, in these reports, FTOs should not include activities that were part of their job specific duties and should focus on hard policy implementation.

Officers discussed implementation of the 12 February policies.

C Jarvis reported that a student who believed that product boycotts should be sent to referendum had started a petition to this effect concerning the recent boycott of the Star, Tate and Lyle and Starbucks. C Jarvis noted that, now that petitions could be submitted via the website, there was a need to decide how long a web based petition was regarded as 'live'.

SOC agreed that C Jarvis would bring a proposed amendment on the

Referendum Bye-Laws to Council.

Chair noted as to the product boycotts that there should be some publicity to the boycotts and communication as to why they were in place.

SOC agreed that there would be some signage in the Shop as to information on the boycotts.

Chair noted the results of the group suggestions would be written up and circulated to Officers.

1390 Officer Go Round/Reports

Chair asked that Officers email any actions they wished to be included in the Report to Council.

1391 Reports on Priority Campaigns/Projects/AOB

C Jarvis reported that the Unison Living Wage Campaign was going strong and had 700 signatures on the postcards to the VC and that a big event was planned for 14 April.

1392 Time, Date and Place

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