

Meeting:	Student Officer Committee
Date:	Thursday 21 May 2015
Time:	5.00 pm
Location:	Committee Room 1, the Council House
Code	SOC 1424

- 1424 Statements from the Chair**
- 1425 Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2015**
(See pages 3-7)
- 1426 Matters Arising/Action Log**
(See page 8)
- 1427 Election of Chair and Deputy Chair**
- 1428 Election of Student Trustees**
Two Officer Trustees to be elected from and by the Part Time Officers to serve on the Trustee Board.
- 1429 Election of two Non-Executive Directors of the Charity's subsidiary companies.**
Two Non-Executive Directors to be elected from the Part Time Officers.
- 1430 Social Policy Review**
(See pages 9-10)
- 1431 Welcome Week**
Officer feed-in of ideas to enhance the student experience during Welcome Week.
- 1432 Anti-Austerity Banner**
A funding request from the PG Education Officer. (See page 11)
- 1433 HE Landscape after the General Election**
A discussion topic from the Chief Executive.
- 1434 NUS Delegation Reports**
(See pages 12-17)
- 1435 Officer Go Around/Reports**
- 1436 Reports on Priority Campaigns/Projects Any Other Business**

1437

Time, Date and Place of Next Meeting

To note the next meeting will be held at 5.00 pm on 17 September in Committee Room 1, the Council House.

Minutes

Subject:	Student Officer Committee Minutes
Date:	Thursday, 30 April 2015
Paper:	SOC 1425
Author:	Tony Moore
Purpose:	Record of decision making

Key Discussions

- Welcome Week
- General Meetings and referendum rules

Key Actions

- Agreed £350 for material for the General Election night party
- Welcome Week suggestions to be brought to next meeting

Union of UEA Students Purpose:

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"

Minutes of the Student Officer Committee

30 April 2015

Voting Members present:

Aaron Hood (Students with Disabilities Officer), Chris Jarvis (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), Connor Rand (UG Education Officer), Yinbo Yu (Activities and Opportunities Officer), Hussam Hussein (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Alex McCloskey (Ethical issues Officer), Liam McCafferty (PG Education Officer), Cameron Mellowes (Non Portfolio Officer), Philippa Costello (Non Portfolio Officer), Theo Antoniou Phillips (LGBT+ Officer), Sam Jones (Environment Officer), Tom Etheridge (Non Portfolio Officer)

Chair

Holly Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer)

Non-Voting Member present:

Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive)

In attendance:

Josh Clare (Head of Student Engagement), Tony Moore (Democracy and Governance Coordinator), Victoria Cook (Enterprise and Activities Coordinator)

Apologies:

Ting Ni (International Officer), Jack Robinson (Non Portfolio Officer)

1412 Departmental Presentation: Enterprise and Volunteering

V Cook gave a detailed presentation on her work facilitating enterprise and volunteering opportunities for students. VC noted her belief that enterprise did not, always, involve commerce but was central to any activity that needed drive and enthusiasm to succeed.

A Hood wondered whether the Real Ale Society would be able to put on a beer festival in Union House. VC noted that this would be a matter for bars management to agree but was something she would certainly be happy to help facilitate.

1413 Statements from the Chair

There were none.

1414 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2015

The minutes of the meeting were approved.

1415 Matters Arising/Action Log

H Hussein asked as to the situation with regard to the referendum on the job title for the Ethnic Minorities Officer post.

J Clare advised that the general meeting called as part of the referendum process had not been quorate; so the referendum would not go ahead.

C Jarvis noted he would be bringing a proposal to Council in the autumn to change the referendum rules which would take away the need to hold a quorate general meeting and which would allow different groups, including Liberations Groups, to hold their own referendums on policy issues.

J Clare further advised that no candidates had come forward to stand for election to the Democratic Procedures Committee. JC advised that the DPC elections should be held together with those for Council in a single coherent bloc.

L McCafferty thought there might be a need to review how DPC members were elected as it might prove difficult to attract candidates for cross-campus ballots and it might make sense for them to be elected by Council or by caucuses.

Chair had to leave at this point and her place was taken by C Jarvis, the Deputy Chair.

1416 Social Policy Review

This item was withdrawn.

1417 Scrutiny Panels

This item was withdrawn.

1418 Budget update with totals

SOC noted that there was an under-spend across the amalgamated budgets.

J Clare advised that the budget request and approval system would be streamlined in time for the coming academic year.

1419 General Election Night

SOC agreed the funding request of £350 for publicity material for the election event.

Chair confirmed that the Red Bar would open if there was an overspill of people wanting to attend and that there would be a range of non-alcoholic drinks available.

1420 Welcome Week

J Dickinson advised that initial planning work had begun and would be reported to the 21 May SOC meeting which would provide Officers with an opportunity to feed into the plans for the non-commercial offer. JD asked as to Officers initial thoughts as to what had not worked the previous year.

H Hussein: most events had occurred in September and were missed by the majority of PG students starting in October; L McCafferty noted there had been some work on this the previous year but there would be a more comprehensive set of events in place for PG students this coming year as well as for MED and nursing students.

J Dickinson noted Y Yu's request that the student staff Welcome Week Coordinator's Report for the previous year be circulated.

J Dickinson noted the importance of the, possibly, imminent move to a full Welcome Week for the great majority of the University as a result of the cut in the length of the exam period.

T Etheridge: more aggressive SU social media marketing to stymie the influence of counterfeit social media. Free food taster events to introduce new students to the SU and Union House.

A Hood: some students had fallen victim to bogus entry schemes for city night clubs during the previous Welcome Week. Possibility of Gaming Tournament.

C Mellowes: Part Time Job Fair.

S Jones: Cycling Promotion Day, possibility of tying in with bike auction.

J Dickinson advised that Management Committee had formulated four key purposes for Welcome Week and he would circulate these to SOC.

Deputy Chair noted he would email SOC to ask for further ideas to bring to the 21 May meeting.

1421 Officer Go Around/Reports

L McCafferty: presented PG Student Experience Report to the University, working on issues concerning large group of international PG students in NBS.

Y Yu: developing internationalise strategy, analysing student staff recruitment feedback.

T Etheridge: Society Awards shortlisting.

S Jones: discussing with the University expansion of the Sustainability Network to include student groups.

T Antoniou Phillips: coordinating's Pride's support for a LGBT+ group in HMP Bure, working on response to the University's refusal to fly the Rainbow Flag.

C Rand: lobbying for individual exam feedback, accessibility of University committees for student reps, recognition of hidden course costs.

A McCloskey: Officer handover.

A Hood: Officer handover, working on think tank initiative for mental health, working on VC's commitment to more mental health resources.

C Mellowes: researching SU campaigns on bus fares, benchmarking against Leeds SU's successful campaign.

J Dickinson advised that the annual round of negotiations between the University and First Buses was due to take place by 1 June and representations should be made before then.

H Hussein: following up on halal and kosher food provision, preparing survey on what events students want featured in Black History Month.

C Jarvis: support for the Fossil Free campaign gaining pledged support from around 100 UEA academics.

1422 Reports on Priority Campaigns/Projects/AOB

- Green standard for insulation of property on Home Let
- Hidden Course Costs Report sent to the University
- Parliamentary candidates signed up to oppose DSA Cuts
- Working closely with Unison to gain the Living Wage across the University
- PG Employment Charter adopted

L McCafferty asked for a report to be made to SOC from NUS National Conference. Deputy Chair noted he would contact all the delegates and bring a report to the 21 May meeting.

1423 Time, Date and Place

5 pm., Thursday 21 May in Committee Room 1, the Council House.

SOC Action Log for 21 May 15

Date Commissioned	Action Required	Status	Assigned To:	Date to be actioned by:
16 October 14	Public statement to be made on DSA Cuts in collaboration with NUA and City College	Liaising with University over joint declaration with NUA/City	Holly, Aaron, Chris	Nov 14
26 February 15	Proposed amendment on the Referendum Bye-Laws to be brought Council.	To be brought to Council	Chris	16 Apr 15
12 March 15	Referendum on change of Ethnic Minorities Officer job title	Referendum called, General Meeting failed to meet quorum	Josh	End of May
23 April 15	Key Performance Indicators of Policy Implementation to be discussed at residential training	For residential training	Josh/Chris	June
23 April 15	Working Group of PTOs to be set up to work with the Campaigns and Democracy Officer on planning for Policy 1712 (Caucuses and Assemblies) and to report back at residential training	For residential training	Chris	June
30 April 15	NUS Delegate Report to be brought to SOC	Agenda Item	Chris	21 May

Ongoing Actions

Date Commissioned	Action Required	Status	Assigned To:	Date :
5 June 14/2 October/23 Oct	Constitutionality of reserved places on Union Council for Rep Organisers to be investigated	Proposal to brought to SOC from Student Engagement	Chris	
16 October 14	University to be lobbied over student accommodation in city centre	Lobbying continuing	Holly	
26 February 15	Officers to, in future, submit short written reports on policy implementation to be included in the SOC agenda papers	Ongoing	All	

Social Policy Review March 2015

Purpose:

The Advice Service saw 833 students in the 2013/14 Academic Year. This is 5.62% of the population at UEA. These students tend to be seen on a one to one basis and often the issue that the student is facing is one that is being experienced by many others.

The Education and Engagement Team (E&E) was established in the summer of 2014. This team offer support to those students who work in representing their peers, through Counsellors, Faculty Convenors, Course Reps etc. They also have a dedicated member of staff that is responsible for Research, Policy and Projects coordinator. This team will often hear about issues that are affecting large groups of students.

The Advice and Education and Engagement Team form the Advocacy Department in the Union. It is important that the issues that are experienced by students are addressed so that the matter is resolved for all students and not just on a case by case basis.

This is the procedure to use if someone from E&E, Advice, or the Officer team feels that a certain issue should become a social policy item.

Method:

Items will be discussed at a monthly social policy meeting held on the first Monday (TBC) of each month.

Attendees can include advisers + officers + faculty convenors + rep coordinators, relevant Union staff

The group will then decide if the particular issue should become a defined social policy item, i.e.

- is there a potential to affect large groups of people
- is there evidence of consistent bad practice
- is there evidence of poor policy implementation, etc.

The group should work out together which issues they want to take forward, using their knowledge of what takes place within UEA and nationally.

The group will review the social policy issues at the end of each semester and at the end of the academic year, to consider whether progress has been made and if further work needs to be done.

Example form for recording issues:

Social Policy Agenda item (Date, Number) SP 1/- 3/15		Raised by:	Status: (Current, Suspended, Completed)		
Action points					
Date				Member	Date completed
March 5th				XY	
Ongoing Developments					
Date	(meeting, emails, minutes etc)				
March 7th	Email				

Project/Campaign Title: Banner

Amount of money requested: £150

Budget requested from: General Campaigns

Details of project (500 words max)

The union does not currently have a banner that fits with the recent re-brand. This request is to order a union-branded banner for the upcoming anti-austerity demonstration on June the 20th.

How will this benefit our members? (300 words max)

The union has traditionally taken a banner on demonstration which it supports. This is effective way of showing support for causes that students care about.

Number of members directly benefited: ALL

Number of members benefited by extension: ALL

How will you ensure this benefits hard to reach/liberation/underrepresented groups? (300 words max)

Banners help make demonstrations more accessible, as they provide a visible congregating point for students who are travelling together from UEA. Generally speaking they make it easier to keep students together and ensure that they are safe.

Liam McCafferty (PG Education Officer)

NUS Conference Delegation Report 2015

Report from Amy Rust (UUEAS Delegate)

This was my first NUS event I had ever attend- and it definitely lived up to its reputation! I was nervous for weeks leading up to the journey to Liverpool. Every time someone asked me to "Are you excited for Conference?" I normally replied with a murmur which could only suggest indifference. Once off the train, I spent three days in this strange democratic bubble which was equally inaccessible as it was impressive. In between drinking lots of extortionately expensive tea, some really important motions were debated, the outcomes of which will impact students up and down the country. I was really proud to represent our student union and vote biased on the policy you passed through Union Council. I must add, contrary to NUS organisers, UEA is not in the Midlands...

There was so much going on during and after conference, it was hard to identify the best events to go to. I attended three fringes (workshops) during the designated breaks, which luckily were all serving free food. These fringes consisted of a central theme and provided a space for students to debate the issues relating to that theme. Surprisingly, the most interesting fringe I found was discussing apprenticeships and apprentices within the student movement. I have family and close friends undertaking apprenticeships but I never properly considered the problems students face try to earn and learn at the same time. Throughout the three days, I networked with students from across the country, learning about other student unions and the great initiatives they have in light of higher education cuts.

The key moment of conference for me, and one which I will not easily forget, was Robin Ferguson giving a speech on better provision for students with learning disabilities. In his speech, he spoke about the difficulties he faced having down syndrome as a further education student. Robin reminded me, and everyone in the room why the student movement is so important. Forgetting the egos and petty point scoring, students like Robin have benefited from the changes our student movement created. If someone told you they didn't cry after his speech, they lied.

It was a shame that conference only managed to pass one Union Development motion. Thankfully, all leftover motions for each of the zones were sent to the National Executive Council to be debated there. Union Development might not be the most glamorous or gritty zone, however for most students, their club and societies are at the heart of their university experience. I would have liked to spend more time addressing these issues at a national level so I hope NUS can work on that for next year.

To my shame, anonymity was something I did not quite reconsigned before conference, as in I didn't know each liberation zone of NUS holds anonymity from the central body. Motion 705, calling for a full-time paid trans officer, was the climax of conference.

The debate was extremely tense, especially as the NUS LGBT+ campaign voted down this motion at their conference only a few months earlier. My personal view on the subject was as follows: as a white cisgender female, it's not my place to speak on what support trans identifying people do and don't need. I voted for the motion because trans students at UEA shouldn't have a delegation that doesn't represent them.

Reflecting on my experience of conference, it was anything but perfect. Nonetheless, NUS is working. A new generation of students are looking to NUS to represent them in face of the challenges they face in the next five years. I would strongly encourage more students to stand for delegation or to get involved in NUS campaigns. Students have chosen a new direction for NUS, which has begun a new discussion on who and how NUS should operate, and one in which I hope UEA plays a key role.

Report from Chris Jarvis (UUEAS Delegate, Campaigns and Democracy Officer)

Outside of what you will already have learnt from the front page of Concrete (that Connor and I disagree on a few things), this year's National Conference saw NUS move in a positive direction.

Although as is always the case, substantial chunks of the process was riddled with procedural wrangling and factionalism, Conference was largely a continuation along the trajectory we saw the organisation set upon last year. NUS reiterated and consolidated its policy of supporting Free Education. This is a point of particular significance, given that, unlike UEA's stance on Higher Education funding being for many years one which favoured the financial burden being lifted from the student and placed on the state, NUS has instead supported a Graduate Tax.

This matters, not because of some abstract ideological battle, or for one political grouping one-upping the other, but because it means that the people who are arguing to government ministers and policy makers on behalf of students are

now mandated to argue for and organise in support of an education system that is free from all fees and debt, whether direct or through the back door.

On top of this, it should therefore be welcomed that progressive candidates won the vast majority of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential positions elected by national Conference. The positions of VP-Welfare, VP-Society & Citizenship, VP-Further Education and VP-Higher Education are now held by students who support the abolition of tuition fees, clear action from Student Unions, Universities and government to deal with the humanitarian crisis in Palestine as well as having a proven track record of organising for change on their campuses, including winning victories on issues as varied as the Living Wage for staff at their institutions to resisting cuts to courses and youth services.

Cumulatively, this all means that NUS is set on the most progressive path it has been on for years.

Unfortunately, it wasn't all rosy. The two eternally-at-war left wing factions, National Campaign Against Fees & Cuts and the Student Broad Left again demonstrated their inability to come together to effectively inspire and mobilise students. Both groups held separate fringe meetings on the same topic, at different times in different rooms. NCAFC's meeting was notable for being a sea of white faces, and SBL's for the lack of people who actually made it to the room.

Similarly, the irony of the successes of the Conference was summarised in the closing debate, the discussion of the creation of a full time Trans* officer to sit on the NUS NEC. In spite of a caucus of trans students earlier this year unanimously supporting the position, first the LGBT conference, and then NUS Conference failed to gain the support of the required 2/3rds of delegates (despite a majority voting in favour of the motion).

By and large, though, the conference was positive, as was the fact that UUEAS sent and past policy for the first time in year, courtesy of both Connor's and Holly's motion. Additionally, all delegates (when they were on conference floor for the debate) voted in line with Union policy on every single issue, meaning that they have effectively represented the views of our student body as articulated by Union Council. The exception to this is that the motion on the Trans officer was held by secret ballot, so I have literally no idea how our delegates voted and neither will any of the students that sent delegates to represent them.

Report from Connor Rand (UUEAS Delegate, UG Education Officer)

Before the start of Conference I attended the briefing session with Chris Jarvis about policy mandates. I also posted the motions document on social media, made myself available at a pre-arranged time in Unio and had some limited

feedback from students on both Conference in general and Conference motions. The order of zones was the Priority Zone, followed by Education, Welfare, Union Development, Society and Citizenship and finally the Annual General Meeting.

I had only attended NUS National Conference once before, in 2013-2014, and on that occasion I was not a delegate, so I enjoyed a host of new experiences! The start of Conference, including an address from outgoing NUS President Toni Pearce, was very much focussed on the General Election, and 'A New Politics for the Next Generation' passed with amendments. From an entirely biased perspective the Education Zone was my favourite. There were some fantastic motions passed, focussing on vocational education, Further Education, Postgraduate Research and the black attainment gap. I spoke on the motion we had submitted 'Students aren't consumers but they do have rights', which had passed through Union Council. I believe it is the first motion we have proposed to be heard at a National Conference for some time. My speech, broadly as delivered, is below:

"Conference,

A course being radically changed after a student has started. The type of assessments or amount their worth being changed during a module. Fees being hiked up whilst a student is on a course. All practises we should find unfair and abhorrent, making it hard for students to plan and succeed. All signs of exploitative institutions. But unfortunately, all things many of us will have come across. According to the consumers association "Which?", around half of the 142 institutions surveyed used terms that allowed them to change the content and location of courses, even when such changes could have been prevented. One in five Universities used terms and conditions which likely breached Contractual Regulations and were potentially unlawful, including Aston University, King's College London and the University of Leicester, whilst only one, the University of York, was seen as example of best practise. We are of course, right to say, in one voice, loudly and proudly, no to the idea of students as passive consumers in an education system delivered to them rather than co-created with them. But such a view should never prevent us from arguing for basic student rights, too often touted as privileges or special. We should empower students to be as powerful as the well-funded and defensive institutions they face, through any means we can."

It passed very comfortably, with nobody speaking against. Conference voted comfortably not to boycott the National Student Survey, a result that recognised some of the inherent flaws and problems with the survey but the importance of it in helping to drive change. Our next motion, 'Bad organisation and management makes for a bad student experience', was also heard and passed comfortably.

In the other zones there were a few notable moments. In Welfare our amendment on hardship funds passed, with many motions and amendments broadly on housing (including representation of students in private halls and the role of guarantors). A motion on student financial support, submitted by York, Kent, Bath, Reading and others passed, which acted 'To reaffirm our commitment to targeting support at those most in need' as a national movement. An amendment that passed into a racism motion, on fighting anti-Semitism, passed, although unfortunately and quite shockingly not unanimously. In Union Development the main motion concerned 'Student's Unions reimagined for the common good', whilst in Society and Citizenship Zone the main motion was about citizenship and sex and relationships education. A motion was also passed to which resolved 'To campaign for the UK to remain a member of the EU in any EU referendum'. At the AGM, Andy Westwood, who has extensive knowledge of the HE sector, was narrowly accepted as a new External Trustee. I also enjoyed the social aspects of Conference – it was great to catch-up with friends at the 'Backing Brooks' Party and elsewhere.

Looking at the reports from each of the Zones it was clear that a lot of good work had been done over the course of the year, from the campaign to save the AS-level, to work on voter registration, to radical interventions in HE teaching and learning, to the Officer Development review and so on. In terms of elections, I ran for Block of 15, on an education platform, looking at the sort of issues I'd been elected on here, but unfortunately lost out on transfer votes in the last round to Jordan Kenny, President of Bath Student's Union (and an excellent Officer). Thankfully, some great people were elected, including Rachel Holland, President of Leicester Student's Union, to Block of 15 and Richard Brooks as the new Vice-President Union Development. In many of the other elections there was some slightly surprising results. As NUS moves forward it is vital that it remains relevant, outward-facing and focussed on true student concerns and issues, including everyday academic concerns. NUS also needs to do much more to make Conference truly accessible and support all those with access needs. At times because of the long days and other issues many students, especially disabled students, felt uncomfortable and I hope this is a priority for NUS in the future.

Report from Holly Staynor, UUEAS Delegate, Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer

I'd say that conference went well for UEA- all policies that were submitted to conference, minus a few that we didn't get to which were sent to NEC, passed or fell in line with our policy line here. Most delegates worked really hard, attending all motions debate, elections and fringes. The fringes I attended were:

- The Federation of Islamic Student Societies on the dangers of the new 'anti-extremism bill'- in line with union policy passed earlier this year
- 'Free Education' by the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts
- A great one with some great speakers arranged by the national International Students Officer on the immigration 'crisis'
- Fossil Free

Another highlight were the elections- a load of great officers and committee members got elected who are definitely going to make some good progress in re-thinking an increasingly irrelevant, bureaucratic and ineffective NUS. Unfortunately, despite a generally successful conference, there were a few disappointments- funding for a full time trans officer fell, meaning it'll have to wait another year, and the accessibility of conference floor was pretty poor, with a lot of shouting and aggressive heckling on the floor and online.

All in all though, it was one of the most informative and engaging NUS events I've been to in the last three years. My recommendation for next year would be to make sure we are submitting as many motions and candidates for officer and committee positions as possible.
