

# Minutes

Meeting:	Student Officer Committee
Date:	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2015
Paper:	SOC 1468
Author:	Josh Melling
Purpose:	Record of Decision Making

## Key Discussions

- Islamophobia Awareness Week
- A concise review of Welcome Week
- Policy implementation and the new formatting of the website
- Decisions taken regarding the sombrero controversy at Fresher's Fair

## Key Actions

- L McCafferty elected head of working group for Islamophobia Awareness Week
- SOC agreement the sombrero controversy discussion should be taken to Union Council
- Agreed funding for the anti-austerity national demo

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

“To enrich the life of every UEA student”

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

**1<sup>st</sup> October 2015**

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### **Voting Members present:**

Voting Members Present: C Jarvis (Chair), Tom Etheridge (Non-Portfolio Officer), Alex McCloskey (Ethical Issues Officer), Beth Smith (Women’s Officer), Jo Swo (Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer), Sam Jones (Environmental Officer), Theo Antoniou Phillips (LGBT+ Officer), Aaron Hood (Students’ with Disabilities Officer), Connor Rand (Undergraduate Education Officer), Hussam Hussein (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Paul Erasmus (Mature Students’ Officer), Liam McCafferty (Postgraduate Education Officer), Yinbo Yu (Activities & Opportunities Officer), Philippa Costello (Non-Portfolio Officer), Ting Ni (International Officer), Cameron Mellows (Non-Portfolio Officer), Jack Robinson (Non-Portfolio Officer).

### **Non-Voting Members Present:**

Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive)

### **Chair:**

Chris Jarvis (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), first part of meeting; Theo Antoniou Phillips (LGBT+ Officer), second part.

### **In attendance:**

Josh Clare (Head of Student Engagement), Tony Moore (Democracy and Governance Coordinator), Lauren Moreton (Head of Marketing and Business Development).

#### **1450 Chair Update**

Chair noted that Quality Conversations launched this week and encouraged SOC to complete their quotas.

Welcome week has been and gone, will be discussed as a later item on the agenda.

#### **1451 Attendance and Apologies**

Apologies from Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive)

**1452 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2015/Matters Arising/Action Log**

Minutes of the meeting were approved, however, spelling error of Ting Ni's name was noted, and corrected accordingly.

No other matters arising.

**1453 Departmental Presentation: Marketing and Business Development**

Presentation given by L Moreton (Head of M and D) on how the marketing department has incorporated the re-branding of the Union into the student psych.

Implementation of new social media platform 'Buffer' with a purpose to make it easier to get the message out across the organisation.

newssu is a great platform for student engagement so more emphasis on getting the officers faces and stories in there will help students know and engage with the Union.

**1454 Issue Presentations**

There were no presentations given.

**1455 Items for Discussion**

**Islamophobia Awareness Week – A discussion topic from the Ethnic Minorities Officer**

H Hussein noted they have been in contact with ISoc who are interested in setting up activities, but believes there should also be activities led by the SU. Furthermore, asked SOC whether any other officers would like to take the lead on setting up the activities.

J Swo noted they would be interested, however, believes due to not defining as Islamic they would not be able to lead the event as they have never experienced islamophobia, therefore could be controversial for someone who has never been oppressed by these factors to lead events specifically catered to combatting said oppression.

A Hood noted having any other officers leading on the event may be perceived in the wrong manner as the majority of SOC consists of white people. However, posed the suggestion of forming teams to do events so the workload is spread evenly.

L McCafferty noted islamophobia is currently one of the most prevalent forms of racism in the media, with this in mind many members of ISoc are often worried about backlash therefore sometimes want people to take a lead who do receive the same oppressive forces.

T Etheridge suggested a story based campaign of people's experiences with islamophobia and attitudes.

J Swo noted it is key that the officers use their privilege and status to speak on behalf of people who do not feel safe to do so, however, to do this there needs to be thorough dialogue with the people who are affected by islamophobia, and make it clear to everyone that officers are acting as a line of communication and not the source.

Chair noted the consensus of SOC to go ahead with events for Islamophobia Awareness Week, thus asked members of SOC to put themselves forward to start the communications with ISoc and co-ordinating activities.

L McCafferty reported current work with ISoc on PREVENT and noted there should be a working group set up with Y Yu.

L McCafferty explained that PREVENT is a government legislation on combatting extremism. Also noted SU has a policy that opposes the legislation as part of the 'No To Islamophobia On Campus' policy and it is not the duty of staff to spy on students, which could lead to Islamic students feeling isolated. The University is legally obliged to fulfil the legislation, but the SU is not however, the University have to communicate their approach with the SU therefore, will have to interpret the aforementioned policy. The Annie Grant, the Dean of Students is the designated officer of PREVENT on campus. If ISoc are approached by the University regarding PREVENT they are encouraged to use the channels of communication open to them to consult with the Union before replying.

Chair noted developing a working group of SOC to liaise with ISoc regarding the events they would like to run along with PREVENT and Islamophobia awareness.

L McCafferty noted they will set up a meeting where any officer can attend to work on said issues.

### **Welcome Week Review**

T Philips noted there was a good amount of activities within arrivals weekend, however, from a commercial perspective some

of the events felt quiet thus the money made from these will have been limited.

B Smith complimented how smoothly SOC fair ran compared to previous years.

A McCloskey reported that staff at the T-Shirt party represented the views of the Union by offering students who had inappropriate text or symbols on their T-Shirt to put a fresh one on.

C Mellows noted early evening events provided a nice alternative to club events.

C Rand noted the new refurbishment paid off in terms of the events held in Union House. However, there proved to be confusion on wristband allocations, so this can be a point of clarification for the future.

P Costello noted ticketing for next year needs to be improved as the process was a lot more stressful than it needed to be.

T Etheridge noted having an officer presence over arrival weekend helped the weekend to run smoother and get their faces known. Joining up the commercial side of Welcome Week with the charity objectives as an organisation.

A Hood reported a consensus from peers of students enjoying their time and feeling safe.

S Jones noted how successful the pots and pans sale was and the gateway allowed a lot more walk through from students.

T Ni noted events for international students were good however there were a lack of them in the bar and LCR and the communication of these were poor so turnout was limited. Reported problems with international students finding accommodation and suggests more help for future arrivals.

J Swo noted the success of Welcome Week and creating more inclusive non-alcohol orientated events. In future more PTO's at events would have been good to get their faces out their engaging with students.

L McCafferty noted the cohesiveness of the week and getting officers more involved in events as it increases profile and influences the idea that the Union is truly student-led. Noted there could be a lot more done in terms of non-commercial events.

J Robinson noted give it a go sessions worked very well and believed they could be promoted more in future.

C Jarvis noted the success of social action day and getting people involved from an early point in that type of activity is a great stepping stone for future events alike.

A Hood questioned whether there were enough non-alcohol oriented events.

Chair noted there were a lot more of these events than in previous years which shows development.

B Smith noted the timetable for officers was not clear in its demands.

C Rand noted the induction timetables were helpful however in future they should be more sensitive to time.

J Swo noted that students also reported clarity of inductions was misleading as in some situations they were scheduled for hour sessions which only took 15 minutes.

Chair suggested if SOC had any more suggestions on Welcome Week to email.

**1456**

### **Policy Implementation**

Policy pages – a presentation on the new online policy display for UUEAS from the Campaigns & Democracy Officer

C Jarvis gave a presentation on the current method in which the policies of council are presented on the Union website. The presentation went on to suggest a new display format to make it more accessible for students. Going forward if any officers have work on policies or information it is suggested to send it to staff members who will put this on the website along with the policy so students can be kept as up to date as possible on their implementation.

J Swo questioned whether there is a better format for how they are displayed on the website.

C Jarvis noted the changes suggested would not be appropriate as it is more of a historical archive of how policies are being implemented than an informational source.

J Clare noted if officers have updates on policies it may want to be included as a focal point in newssu.

S Jones questioned whether there can be a more accessible way to find policies on the website as currently navigation requires thorough searching.

## Projects, Campaigns and Policy Reports

### **Black History month update from the Ethnic Minorities Officer**

H Hussein reported there are many events happening over the month one of which is the understanding of 'What Does it Mean to be Politically Black' this involves all ethnicities so many societies will be involved. Another key event will be 'Herstory' instead of 'History' to highlight the history of black women. In order for this to be an intersectional month many societies have been involved such as Pride and FemSoc, to name two, who both have panels and a film screening. All events are hosted by different societies in order to increase engagement due to previously low attended events and in order to create more diversity. Also throughout the month Livewire will be playing more diverse music along with doing broadcasts highlighting the importance of Black History Month.

Chair congratulated H Hussein on organising such promising Black History Month events.

**Anti-Austerity Campaign Update** – an update from the Campaigns & Democracy Officer and proposal for a series of local demonstrations against cuts to maintenance grants and for free education on 21<sup>st</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October

C Jarvis noted the team working on the Anti-Austerity Campaign has met and the next meeting has been set, everyone who signed up for the Anti-Austerity demo in Manchester received an email telling them about the meeting in order to get more students involved.

Proposed local demonstrations to be organised by The Anti-Austerity team taking different action on each of the days.

C Rand questioned whether SOC will see some formal indication of the proposal.

C Jarvis noted when the working group had fleshed out the actions that will be taking place SOC will be informed however, as the next meeting of SOC will be 2 days before the first demonstration there will not be enough time to discuss the proposal.

*SOC approved the proposal*

**Cost of Living Campaign Update** – an update from the Postgraduate Education Officer

L McCafferty noted the meeting of the working group who are in the process of gathering the ideas into project plans and moving

forward from that. Noted meeting with retail and DOS in regards to the student food bank, DOS are on board with the plan and tying it into their own hardship fund. However, the plan is being held back due to lack of a slogan, noted any suggestions are welcome.

J Swo questioned whether external people will be eligible to receive help from the project.

L McCafferty noted in discussions with DOS students will receive tokens for a hamper of food. The project will not be means tested so that students have a stress free encounter. Noted the risk of students potentially abusing the system for their own gains however, it has been agreed this can be absorbed rather than putting students through a stressful and difficult situation of confrontation.

C Rand proposed whether the new found dialogue with DOS along with this campaign could express the officer's view that the current hardship fund is not being fully utilised.

L McCafferty noted this could be a talking point with DOS

**Mental Health Awareness Campaign Update** – an update from the Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer

J Swo noted wellbeing festival posters are up and is gaining traction on social media, the event will be all day and will have some great events and urges everyone to come along and get involved.

P Costello noted spelling errors on the posters.

**Save Our Union Campaign Update** – an update from the Activities and Opportunities Officer

C Jarvis noted there had been a meeting on the day where a framework for the year had been discussed.

**Transforming Education Campaign Update** – an update from the Undergraduate Education Officer

C Rand noted dialogue with officers who expressed interest which were then discussed at the working group meeting who have compiled a strategic along with long term and short term objectives which will be circulated to anyone who is interested.

**Anti-Bullying Campaign** - A proposal from the Activities & Opportunities Officer

L McCafferty notes there will be a leaflet filled with information in the advice centre. Also noted there needs to be sensitivity

regarding the wording and finally reported that there will be events held around anti-bullying week, and for officers to contact Y Yu if they want to get involved

A Hood reported potentially creating a video series about mental health with a hope that students can relate.

J Robinson noted there will be videos created around the 'Time to Change' pledge.

J Swo reported there has been high interest in the Calais drop off scheme from the local community and would like this to continue.

L McCafferty noted this may be a point of discussion for SOC as it could be in consideration for a SOC project.

S Jones noted next week is travel matters week so there will be some events being held around campus.

Chair noted some of the reports proved to be discussion worth therefore in future can they be put on to the agenda so SOC can get a gauge of how long the meeting will last.

**1458 Annual Elections Schedule/Appointment of DRO**

Deferred to next SOC meeting.

**1459 NUS Zone Conferences: Agree Attendance**

L McCafferty noted the expense of sending people to Zone Conferences is high and due to the monetary constraints of the Union the money could be spent on more productive endeavours. However, if officers want to go then the money should be spent to do so.

J Swo believed if any officers would like to go, to research first and decide for themselves whether they would benefit from the experience or not.

J Clare noted they will circulate the events list and if any of SOC would like to attend then email by Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> of October.

**1460 Management Committee Report**

L McCafferty provided a summary of the discussion had regarding the Sombrero controversy at the Management Committee. Reported difficulty of cultural appropriation / appreciation definition and how to know what fits in the category. Suggested a need for consultation with the BME caucus to help define where this line is and they should be involved in defining this rather than a group consisting mostly of white people.

L McCafferty noted Management Committee agreed that the decision taken by the officer in question was the right one and the Union will stand by that.

C Jarvis noted the policy is Operational not Council.

C Rand believed following the earlier presentation from L Moreton regarding clarity of external companies operating in Union House this should go to council to be discussed.

T Etheridge noted when future incidents occur having to wait for management committee to approve a decision may prove to be more damaging.

C Jarvis clarified the events of the said controversy and the decision making process.

A Hood apologises for the stance taken and in future will show more solidarity with decisions and officers in future.

J Swo noted a need for explaining decisions in a timelier manner in future.

C Rand reinforced the notion of clear and constant education for students on decisions and the reasons behind them.

C Jarvis noted not all feedback received from the incident have been negative, many people have stated agreement.

Chair noted key points of this discussion were educating students on decisions taken and discussion when possible with other officers before the initial decisions are made.

**1461**

### **Funding Requests**

National Demo - Free Education & Living Grants for All – A funding request from the Campaigns & Democracy Officer (see page 13)

C Jarvis noted two coaches are needed for transport to London as part of the Anti-Austerity campaign to take part in the National Demo.

A Hood questioned the accessibility of both travel and the demo for wheelchair users.

C Jarvis noted one of the coaches can be made wheelchair accessible and currently NUS are looking into the accessibility of the demo.

*SOC approved the funding request.*

**1462 Finance Update**

No update as J Dickinson was not present.

**1463 Cycle of Business**

The note the Cycle of Business for 2015-16. (See page: 14)

**1464 Any Other Business**

J Robinson noted a need for clarity on PTO's process for dealing with statements to the media.

C Jarvis noted anything regarding policy or officers should go through Head of Operations.

J Clare noted the importance of following this process in testing situations as the media will often try many methods to get the type of comment they are looking for, which this process attempts to stamp out.

**1465 Time, Date and Place of Next Meeting**

To note the next meeting will be held at 5.00 pm on Thursday 22 October in the Board Room, Union House