

The Council

Wednesday 27 April 2016

7pm, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX

Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on Monday 30 November 2015 in Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX

PRESENT-in Person	A register was taken at the meeting.
PRESENT-by Proxy	Members not able to attend could nominate a Member Present-in-Person to act as their proxy. These are recorded in the register.
APOLOGIES	Members not able to attend were able to submit apologies for absence to the Secretary for reading out by the chair and acceptance.
IN ATTENDANCE	Rob Park (secretary and minutes), Jo Fried (Student Engagement & Development Manager)
OBSERVERS	A number of Ordinary Members attended the meeting.

Quorum is 13. A quorum is present (37 voters). John Lindner (Council Chair) was in the chair and opened the meeting.

Chair's Business

Commissions

1. The Council divided into three Commission meetings prior to the start of the formal meeting:
 - a. Academic Affairs and Response to Green Paper
 - b. Campus Affairs and Entertainments
 - c. Welfare and Liberation Campaigns

Welcome and Apologies

2. The Chair of Council opened the meeting and asked the Secretary to read out the list of apologies for absence and the list of nominated proxies.
3. On a point of order, the chair was asked to rule on whether a proxy nominated can be re-allocated if the member present allocated the proxy was running late. The chair ruled that the standing orders provide that the Secretary is informed in writing in advance of proxy allocation, or if a member leaves during a meeting, this can be notified to the chair. If an allocated proxy was not represented at the meeting due to a member holding the proxy running late, then the proxy could not be re-allocated unless the Secretary or chair were informed by the member appointing the proxy. The chair ruled that a suitable SMS or email would suffice from the appointing member.

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4. The Chair gave notice that a discussion on co-options and the election of vacancies would be at the end of the meeting. The election of officers of the Council would be held prior to the co-options and election of new members.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

5. The minutes from the meeting of the full Council, held in June 2015, were confirmed.
6. There were no matters arising not otherwise on the agenda.

Matters for Report

Report from Student Officers:

7. **Saba Shiraz:** spoke to her written report
 - a. Luke Nash Jones asked about the connection between Islamophobia and the Black Students Campaign/being Black. Saba responded that the majority of Muslims worldwide and in the UK defined as Black, and that the wider perception and promotion of Muslims was as black people.
 - b. Saba highlighted that Islamophobic attacks were up 300% in London.
 - c. To a question from the floor, Saba clarified that Islam is a religion and not a race.
 - d. Glen Gallogly asked about racism towards the Irish and especially Irish Catholics, and whether racism towards Catholic Irish would be incorporated into the Black students campaign events. Saba stated that the events designed to be positive promotion of black people, but if the Council wanted to run an Irish racism campaign, Saba would support this within the wider anti-racism campaign.
 - e. The Council approved the report.
8. **David Kirkman:** gave an oral report:
 - f. David stated that his main goal was to ensure an inclusive and proactive disabled campaign over the year, and that inclusivity of disability within the wider College context and planning.
 - g. David reported that there was a project between the School Deans and the Disability Committee regarding filming and recording of lectures and working towards allowing content of lectures online before they are delivered. This is about the inclusivity in teaching.
 - h. A revised Mitigating Circumstances Policy, related to mental health campaign is going through the College committees this year.
 - i. A questions was posed about the deadlines with mitigating circumstances and areas of depression – that one really doesn't necessarily recognize depression or mental anguish before an exam and therefore after the deadline for mitigating.
 - j. David explained that the current policy was aligned very much towards sick notes/fit notes, and were needed two weeks prior to the examinations so students need to 'predict' their mental health.

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- k. A question was asked from the floor about how students could engage with the disabled members campaign – David reminded Council that he was always contactable by dedicated email and that there will be two open meetings, one of which will be the disabled students AGM in the next two weeks and one in the Spring Term.
 - l. The Council approved the report.
- 9. John Warner:** submitted a written report
- m. The Council approved the report without discussion.
 - n. It was noted that the January meeting of the Council had discussed and approved a paper regarding representation at USS, and the founding of the quasi-autonomous USS Students' Association.
- 10. Richard Brinck-Johnsen:** submitted a written report
- a. Richard announced that a new Trans Officer post had been created and was filled in the recent election by Luc Sei!
 - b. Richard was relaunching the Pride Social Group.
 - c. It was reported that a gender neutral toilet was now in the main building near Lift A.
 - d. In December, NUS would be holding the first ever democratic Trans Conference and that Birkbeck would be sending a delegation. It would be held in NUS HQ on Grays Inn Road, so walking distance and low expense to the Union.
 - e. The Council approved the report
- 11. Sofiya Ahmed:** had sent apologies for being absent to the meeting and not submitted a written report.
- a. It was reported that Sofiya was recruiting students to join her new Welfare Committee, so encouraged members of Council to sign up.
 - b. A motion was proposed that in the absence of a written report, the Council delegated to the Executive Committee the duty to receive and approve a report from the Welfare Officer on her work to date and plans going forward.
 - c. The Council approved the motion unanimously.
- 12. Hana Faber:** submitted a written report
- a. Hana reported that last year little was done on women's issues as Linda was ill for a number of months. Hana reported that she has found that many women were very interested in getting involved in many issues and that includes a variety of sports.
 - b. Hana stated that sports could be very gender binary and trans-exclusive, so she had contacted NUS for advice. Hana stated that we have mixed hockey and mixed badminton available currently.
 - c. Hana proposed that in future all clubs and societies should have at least one woman on their principal committees – this would not necessarily have to be a 'reserved' place, but could be a woman elected to a common principal post e.g. treasurer, secretary or

chair.

- d. Hana reported that she had been doing lots of work on the website and encouraged people to get involved in editing and contributing to the site (photos, articles, blogs, opinions, events etc). Hana wanted to hear and promote the voice of students who, study at home and spend little time on campus.
 - e. Glen Gallogly was pleased lots of women were interested in rugby and offered to help set-up and support the women's rugby team.
 - f. On a point of order, Jon Warner asked whether the Women's Officer report should only be accountable to women.
 - g. The Chair of Council, after seeking advice and seeking guidance from the standing orders, ruled that receiving a report at the Council meeting by liberation reserved officers was a principle duty of the Council and the officers themselves chose what elements of their duties they reported to the full plenary Council meetings. The chair further rules that formal disciplinary motions, report motions and such had a procedure set out in the standing orders and other bye-laws to recognize the nature of autonomous liberation officers and committees.
 - h. The Council approved the report.
13. The Council received an oral general report on the work and meetings of the Executive Committee and that of the trustee board. It was noted that the Union as a whole is expected to return a combined surplus of over £30k in the financial year ended 31 July 2015. The consolidated budget for the Union was drafted to generate a surplus in the current year of £30k and that the Executive had increased the general fund for clubs and societies to £22k, from around £13k in 2015/16. The budget would be achieved by savings elsewhere in the expenditure line, static NUS extra card sales, small contribution for the new online clothing shop and advertising, The Trustees have been cautious in budgeting risky or unpredictable.

Matters for Decision

Policy Motions for Agreement

- 14. David Kirkman proposed that the Council resolved to go straight to the vote on policy motions #3, #5, #6, #8, #9, #12, #13 without debate.
- 15. The procedural motion was seconded by a further four Council members and the chair called a vote on the motion.
- 16. The procedural motion was approved by a clear majority.
- 17. The chair put the motions to a vote *en bloc*:
 - a. **Library Collection and Photocopying Charges**
 - b. **Better Accommodation Options for Mature and International Students**
 - c. **Lift the Age Cap on Taught Masters**
 - d. **Solar Panels to Fund a Birkbeck SU Scholarship**

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- e. **Improving the Careers Service**
 - f. **EU Referendum**
 - g. **International Students**
18. The motions were approved by the Council as policy *nemmine contradicte*.
 19. On a point of information, David Kirkman stated that those motions were pretty non-controversial and had no amendments, which was why the UCL Air Conditioning motion, which has an amendment, was not included in the bloc.
 20. Steven Hayden proposed that motions #1 and #2 were delayed to the next meeting of the Council (either ordinary meeting or an extraordinary summoned meeting).
 21. The procedural motion was seconded by a further four Council members, and the chair opened debate on the motion, followed by calling a vote:
 - a. A formal count was requested following a show of hands on the vote:
 - b. In accordance with standing orders, the procedural motion could only be voted on by members present-in-person and not members represented by a proxy.
 - c. They voted:
 - FOR: 10**
 - AGAINST: 11**
 - d. A revote on the procedural motion was requested and approved by the chair; they voted:
 - FOR: 12**
 - AGAINST: 12**
 - e. The procedural motion was not carried.
 22. Jon Warner proposed that the motions #1 and #2 were remitted to the Executive Committee for consideration. The procedural motion was not seconded in accordance with standing orders, and fell.
 23. The chair moved on with the agenda and called the proposer of Motion #1 ("Anti-racism and the Refugee Crisis") to move her motion.
 24. A procedural motion was moved by Richard Brinck-Johnsen that the Guillotine be extended; and he reminded the Council that elections to officers of the Council and Executive needed to happen.
 25. The procedural motion was seconded by a further four Council members.
 26. On the vote a total of 23 Council members cast a vote for or against, out of a Council chamber being attended by 26 voting Council members. Under standing orders, an extension to the guillotine requires an absolute majority of those present to be sustained:
 - a. They voted:
 - FOR: 14**
 - AGAINST: 9**

The quorum threshold for the vote being 14, the motion to extend the guillotine was carried.

27. Anti-racism and the Refugee Crisis:

- a. The motion was proposed by Saba Shiraz and seconded by Tom Noble.
- b. Saba Shiraz spoke to the motion.
- c. An amendment to the motion had been proposed by Luke Nash-Jones and seconded by Steven Hayden:
- d. Luke spoke in favour of the amendment and Saba spoke against. A second round of speeches saw Steven Hayden speak in favour of the amendment to the motion, followed by Tom Noble speaking against.
- e. On a point of order, Luc Sei challenged the status of the amendment as it was written in such a way to only loosely relate to the points made in the main motion.
- f. The chair ruled that the motion could have been tidier and the proposer accepted that this was his first draft of a policy but reminded the Council that it had already been proposed and rejected that the motions #1 and #2 and their amendments were delayed to a later meeting.
- g. The chair invited Saba to sum up and then called a vote on the amendment to the motion:
- h. They voted:
 - FOR: 9**
 - AGAINST: 14**
 - The motion to amend was not carried.**
- i. The guillotine fell on the motions debate and the Council moved to the special setting of elections of Council officers and Executive members.

Any Other Business

Election of the Vice-Chair of Council

28. Two candidates were duly nominated and seconded. A hustings was held and a secret ballot administered by the Acting Returning Officer:
29. They voted:
 - Re-Open Nominations: 1**
 - Tom Noble: 23**
 - Steven Hayden: 12**
 - Tom Noble was duly elected to serve as Vice-Chair of Council to November 2016**

Election of the Council Members on the Union Court

30. Seven candidates were duly nominated and seconded. The Acting Returning Officer explained that this was the first time there had been more candidates

than spaced on the Court, but there was always opportunities more than Court members to run and oversee hearings, rulings and disciplinaries.

31. The ARO proposed, with the permission of the chair, that the Council agrees to elected five and to ask the Court to co-opt the remaining two candidates, such that seven equally appointed members are serving on the Court from the Council.
32. The Council, by acclamation, agreed.

Election of the Council Members on the Executive Committee

33. Six candidates for three vacancies were duly nominated and seconded. A hustings and secret ballot was held:
34. Duly elected:

Luc Sei
Kevin Lau
Paul Tracey

The meeting closed at 10:45pm

POLICY APPROVED AT THE MEETING:

Library Collection and Photocopying Charges

COUNCIL RESOLVES 1. Student Union must pressure the library for a better collection of resources and books - we don't have enough computing books; usually they are all booked out and most are literally decades out of date which is disgraceful in the fast moving industry of computing. 2. Student Union must fight for reduced print and copy charges at the library.

Better Accommodation options for International and Mature students

COUNCIL RESOLVES 1. The Student Union must push for better accommodation options for international and mature students.

Lift the Age Cap on Taught Masters

COUNCIL RESOLVES 1. Student Union representatives to NUS must fight for Masters students of all ages to have access to a student loan for their first Master's degree, in similar style to the government support for Bachelor's students. 2. This is a worthy taxpayers expense - a person from any background can be intelligent, determined and responsible, and hence on receipt of such education, a real asset to the country.

Solar panels to fund a Birkbeck SU scholarship

COUNCIL RESOLVES 1. Investigate the feasibility of utilising roof space for solar panels - any extra money made can go towards a scholarship. The Birkbeck SU scholarship..

Improving the Careers Service

COUNCIL RESOLVES 1. This Council calls for an improvement to good quality careers advice with a view to maximising employment opportunities for graduates and current college members.

EU Referendum

COUNCIL BELIEVES 1. A referendum is coming up on the EU where people are permitted by the government to vote for and against.

COUNCIL RESOLVES 1. While we may have strong viewpoints in both the referendum on Scotland and that on the EU the potential of succession from a union in both are legal valid stances and we should show neither in speech or

printing any bias or pressure students towards one side but tolerate speakers both for and against.

International students

COUNCIL RESOLVES 1. Student Union to fund and support an International Students Convention. 2. The International Students Society should be chaired by the International Students Officer.