

## The Council

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016

8.00pm, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX – Room G15

Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016 in Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX

---

PRESENT-in Person	John B Lindner III (in the Chair), Sofiya Ahmed, Richard Brinck-Johnsen, Hana Faber, Salmaan Hassanally, Gintare Butkute, Hugh Barnard, Ryan Hebbs, Noemi Manani, Michael Johnson, Daisy Sunderaliwoam, Mita Parikh, Linda Etchart, Joshua Thomas, Mara Silua, Ben Raphael, Alexander Harding, Lydia Maedough, Mohammed Hassan, Laura Gemmell, James , Elis Gjerori, Whitney Summers, AJ Haseley, Cecila O, Konstantinos Dagkils, Tom Noble, Rory Cunningham, Bedoho Gebremeskel, Joesph Hayter, Mmukhlesur Chowdhury, and Joshi Sidhu.
-------------------	---

---

PRESENT-by Proxy	David Kirkman, Luc Sei,
------------------	-------------------------

---

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	Jo Fried (acting secretary), Kevin Lau (minutes)
---------------	--

---

OBSERVERS	A number of Ordinary Members attending the meeting
-----------	--

---

---

**Quorum is 11. A quorum is present (26 voters). John B Lindner III (Council Chair) was in the chair and opened the meeting.**

---

Chair's Business

Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair of Council, John B Lindner III took the chair and opened the meeting.
2. Apologies and proxy-appointments were read out.

---

Chair's Business

Commissions:

**3. NUS Diagnostic Reports**

- a. Hana Faber and Jo Fried explained the role of the Union.
- b. Jo explained that the liberation campaigns represented groups that had been historically excluded from education.
- c. The Chair discussed creating a community around Birkbeck through sports
- d. The Chair talked about utilising the Union website
- e. Mike Johnson asked about a dedicated sports officer. Hana said that an effort was being made to bring sports under the Union umbrella.
- f. AJ suggested to splitting the officer role of Communications and Activities Officer into two separate officer roles (Communications Officer and Activities Officer). Mike Johnson suggested a separate sports officer role.
- g. Hana said that a social space was wanted and the Union will explore how to encourage a Birkbeck atmosphere
- h. Alex Olowade said that he was busying himself around other Students' Unions around London and that the SU was lacking badly lacking in staff and resources, which it needed to represent a large student body.
- i. Jo explained that there had originally been one full time officer (President role), but that role has been split into seven part time (7/ hrs per week) roles to allow more people to get elected/ involved and to reflect the part time nature of the College at that time. She said that the 7 hrs/ week part-time model was not working as 7/ hrs was not enough for officers to do their jobs, and the SU now wanted to increase the number of hours associated with each sabbatical officer role

- j. Hana explained that the part-time union for part—time students does not reflect Birkbeck currently and that the report did not reflect this change. Part-time officers and a full-time Union did not work.
- k. Hana further raised that the Union needed to provide further resources and said to the Council to look at the Officers report.
- l. A councillor said that there were issues getting replies from emails to front of house. The Chair apologised and said that the front of house may need a re-think.
- m. There were no matters arising not otherwise on the agenda.

---

Matters for Report

Report from the Student Officers:

- 4. **Sofiya Ahmed:** spoke to her written report
  - a. AJ raised his concern that members may not have fully heard Sofiya’s report due to background noise and suggested that Sofiya repeated her report . Members highlighted that “everyone” understood and that there was no need to repeat.
  - b. Someone asked about the SU being part of People and Planet. Sofiya responded that the Union was not affiliated with the group.
  - c. Someone asked if further motions could be introduced
  - d. The Council approved the report
- 5. **Richard Brinck-Johnsen:** spoke of his written report
  - e. No questions were raised
  - f. The Council approved the report
- 6. **Hana Faber:** spoke of her written report
  - g. AJ asked about what resources were needed for the Students’ Union, as a response to Hana’s written report about the NUS Diagnostic. Hana responded that money was the major resource that the Union lacked. Hana further responded that the relationship with the College needed to improve so that the Union would be able to work with the College, rather than alongside it, and that would be beneficial for both parties.
  - h. A Councillor who described herself as an angry Northern Irish woman, asked how to conceptualise what Hana had said. Hana explained that council

passes policy and that it directly affects whatever she (and the officers do)

- i. A councillor asked about funding from the College and what the current budget (15/16). Jo Fried responded that the Union's current budget was around £300K and that 264K came from the College and roughly 30K from NUS cards, hoodies etc.
- j. The same councillor asked what the increase in the funding was for. John B Lindner III explained that the Union needed: more staff; to fund the many clubs and societies;
- k. Jo said that the Union needs two more staff members, one to support Clubs and Societies and one to work with class reps and build education policy from a grassroots level upwards.
- l. Jo explained that market research would be used to determine what students want, and from this research goals for the SU would be set and these goals (KPIs) would be embedded in the job descriptions of the staff.
- m. Mike Johnson said that budgetary forecasting was easy for sports. Jo Fried responded that the costs for sports clubs were more easily predetermined than for some other types of clubs and societies, as the number of games is set in advance. Also, the cost of running sports clubs was greater than other (non-sports) clubs and societies due to the high costs of pitch hire in London. She also said that the Cricket budget had been very clear this year and thanked Mike for that.
- n. Hana added that there was a need to standardise the clubs and societies and to ensure that all details of club and societies officers were up to date and that all the clubs and societies were to utilise the union website to help achieve this.
- o. The Council accepted this report.

**7. Questions to the Executive Committee:**

8. No questions for the Executive.

---

**Matters for Decisions**

Policy Motions for Agreement

**9. To force "Code First: Girls" to accept male students**

- a. Alex questioned whether the motion was a breach of policy.

- b. Josh spoke to the motion.
- c. The Chair informed that Josh had 30 seconds left and Josh said that he did not know he was timed. The Chair apologised and made clear in the room that the Council was timed and expected to end at 10pm prompt.
- d. Josh concluded his statement on the motion.
- e. Laura read her response against the motion.
- f. A question was asked if the 'Code First: Girls workshop' was run by the Union. Hana explained that it was run the College and that the College do host coeducational events but not with Code First.
- g. A councillor questioned whether it was hypocritical and unfair? If there was a male only society and would receive a different response? Laura responded that 65% who work for 'Code First: Girls' were male and that the organisation ensures that safe space flourishes. Laura said that there are gender imbalances that are being addressed in the forms of bursaries in certain occupations where men are underrepresented and that the coding industry was lucrative and dominated by men.
- h. A clarification was asked about the bursaries and Laura said that there are men-only bursaries for nursing at Queen's University Belfast.
- i. The Chair invited Josh to fully talk again. Josh Thomas raised his concern that he was made to sound bad because he was cut off at an inappropriate sentence due to the time constraint.
- j. The Chair calls for order when Laura and Alex interrupt Josh's speech for the motion.
- k. The Chair then called a vote on the motion:
  - i. For the motion: 6
  - ii. Against the motion: 20
  - iii. Abstentions: None
  - iv. Motion falls

#### **10. Library SMS reminders for renewals and to return books**

The Chair then called a vote on the motion:

- i. For the motion: 11
- ii. Against the motion: 7
- iii. Abstentions: None
- iv. Motion passes

#### **11. No-smoking zones around entrances to campus buildings**

- l. Ellis spoke in favour of the motion
- m. Someone questioned the point of amendments.

- n. Alex said that the College Management should build a smoking shelter to solve any issues regarding the weather. Alex went on to further say that he was a smoker, but acknowledged that it was a health hazard, and that he was trying to quit. Ellis disagreed with building a smokers' shelter and said that passive smoking was dangerous and that we smokers are not lepers. Alex responded that the shelters are to smoke at the front of the college
- o. A Councillor raised concern about the about the significance of the pollution from smoking and what was the point when there was no alternative to smoking in the front of the entrance
- p. AJ declared that he was a smoker and that there is a designated smoking area. AJ raised his concern that lots of people smoking outside the building is not good for the image of Birkbeck.
- q. A councillor said that the George Birkbeck Bar allowed smoking.
- r. Alex said that the only shelter is to smoke at the front of the college and that the Union should encourage smokers to stay away from the entrance.
- s. The Chair then called a vote on the motion:
  - i. For the motion: 20
  - ii. Against the motion: 6
  - iii. Abstentions: None
  - iv. The motion is carried onto policy

## **12. Boycott Prevent**

- t. The Chair invited Sofiya to lead the motion.
- u. Sofiya spoke in favour for the motion and that the ethnic profiling of students was a problem.
- v. A councillor who was a first year law student said that the Council may not be fully informed about the Prevent Duty and that Council should wait for more information before making a rational and informed decision.
- w. A question was put about whether the Union already had a policy on prevents and whether the Union was legally bounded to the Act.
- x. The Chair explained by passing the motion it would extend the life span of the previous policy to do with Prevent.
- y. Alex said that it was important to pass the motion and that it was a battle to make the Prevent agenda unworkable. Alex said that the pressure on Muslim

students is outrageous and that the Union should work with the NUS President on this.

- z. Ellis asked if Registry has advice and an implementation policy and whether there was a way to obtain the details, even though a Freedom of Information request.
- aa. Alex raised a point of clarification about the position of the boycott. Jo explained that that if the motion passed, it would be the executive committee that would develop and interpret the motion, and that councillors should feed as much into this as possible at Spring Council.
- bb. Sofiya explained that the Union already has policy from last year and that the resolve point 6 was important and that there was a need to get student consultation and to encourage the government to change it.
- cc. A woman raised concern about Council points 1 and 3. Sofiya responded that the UN Human Rights Committee had addressed this
- dd. The Chair then called for a vote on the motion:
  - i. For the motion: 15
  - ii. Against the motion: 0
  - iii. Abstentions: 3
  - iv. The motion is carried onto policy

### 13. Printed short courses catalogues

- ee. Hana spoke in favour of the motion.
- ff. Alex spoke in favour of the motion and that he uses the gives the catalogues out in Brixton as part of his own personal outreach.
- gg. The Chair then called for a vote on the motion:
  - i. For the motion: 20
  - ii. Against the motion: 1
  - iii. Abstentions: 1
  - iv. The motion is carried onto policy.

---

**Any other Business**

Co-options

---

**The meeting closed at 10.15pm**