

1. To create positive change in matters relating to the education of UEA students
by effectively representing their collective views.



Minutes of the Student Officer Committee

27 September 2012

Summary

Key Discussions

- FTOs presence at International Arrivals
- Officers' influence on PCP during GOATing
- Religious Activities in Union House
- Election to Liberations Sub-Committees
- Deposits for Clubs, Societies and Peer Support Groups to use the Hive
- Implementation of SOC Scrutiny Space policy

Key Actions

- M Myles elected Chair
- Decision over CU 'quiet room' to be revisited at future meeting
- Officers' hoodies to be ordered immediately after elections
- Organization of Officers' timetables at International Arrivals to be borne in mind for next year's arrangements
- Accessible summary of Priority Campaigns to be made available online and on noticeboard in the Hive
- Officers to be able to promote particular campaigns within the poll in the context of promotion of the poll as a whole
- Formal endorsement of revised LGBT+ Report to be considered at next meeting
- Giant poster for Club President's to sign Sports Charter on Homophobia to be produced
- if only Officers come forward to serve on the Liberations Campaigns Committees, they can be deemed to be, in effect, the Committee and can, therefore, delegate their powers to their Campaign Group
- Campaign's Sub-Committees to be formed for each of the six Priority Campaigns
- B Foday elected to serve on the Joint Consultation and Negotiating Committee
- Decision in principle to send coaches to the TUC 20 October demo
- Deposits for Clubs, Societies and Peer Support Groups to use the Hive removed for trial period
- Student Officer Action Plan formally adopted

- J Levell appointed SOC Social Secretary

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Voting Members present:

Joe Levell (Finance Officer), Jess Lewis (Non-Portfolio Officer), Abbi Forsyth (Non-Portfolio Officer), Bintu Foday (Non-Portfolio Officer), E Fallows (Non Portfolio Officer), Josh Bowker (Academic Officer), Sam Clark (Community and Student Rights Officer).

Non-Voting Members present:

Yousef Baboul (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Richard Laverick (LGBT Officer), Rosie Rawle (Ethical Issues Officer), Benjamin Brown (Environment Officer), T Gilder-Smith (Women's Officer), T Killeen (Mature Students Officer), John Taylor (Post Graduate Officer).

In attendance:

T Moore (Representation Support Worker).

Chair

Matthew Myles (Communications Officer).

Apologies for absence

Derek Bowden (Chief Executive), Astrid Heidemann Simonson (International Officer),

659 Election of Chair

M Myles and J Bowker put themselves forward for the role. M Myles believed he would be able to bring the expertise gained as a FTO, the previous year, to the work of Chair. J Bowker stated that he did not particularly want to serve as Chair but he believed there should be an election for such an important position. SOC elected M Myles as Chair.

660 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June

The minutes of the 7 June meeting were agreed.

661 Action Log

SOC noted the completed actions. R Rawle noted she was in discussions about the commissioning of the Green Success banner.

Chair noted, on the closure of the Islamic Centre, he had spoken to Nigel Norris, the PVC Academic, who had informed him that the University wished to consult with both UUEAS and the student representatives of all the faith based groups on campus. Chair asked that if any Officers knew of any faith groups without a formal representative to contact him. Chair agreed to J Taylor's suggestion that the GSA be formally included in the consultations. Chair noted he would be liaising with the Ethnic Minorities Officer as to working with faith based groups.

On the liaison with the Christian Union over provision of a 'quiet room' during Welcome Week, J Revell reported the CU had approached ENTS who had asked that the facility be supported by both first aid and security personnel; he noted that provision of the latter would prove a problem for the CU. Chair noted that he had been absent at the meeting when the original decision had been made; he had reservations about allowing the CU to provide this facility and asked that SOC revisit this decision, later in the present meeting or at a future date.

Action

On the completed actions, J Taylor asked that, in future, Officers' personalized hoodies be ordered earlier so that they would arrive before the start of term to enable Officers to wear them for Arrivals. Chair noted that, in future, they would be ordered immediately after the elections in March.

Action

Chair noted the Future Action Log and commented that the Class and Module Choice might be slotted into future GOATING topics but he raised the possibility that it might be found that GOATING was the wrong medium to investigate this issue.

662 Matters Arising

There were no other matters arising.

663 Items for Tweeting and Items for Videoing

B Brown – 'On Ya Bike'

J Taylor – a video showing students directions to the Grad Bar

R Laverick – LGBT Survey

R Rawle – World Café

E Fallows – two videos, one on the work of FTOs and one on that of PTOs (he asked that Officers contact him to arrange input)

B Foday – recruitment of student representatives

Action

664 What We Have Been Doing Blogs

J Taylor believed that it had not been an FTO priority to be at International Arrivals; he thought this was mistaken in that it was highly desirable to have a friendly, welcoming Officer presence to greet new international students.

Chair thought that it, actually, had been a priority: he noted that

there had been a continuous presence of FTOs and PTOs.

J Taylor appreciated the presence of those who attended but noted that there were 16 members of SOC, in all, and a larger attendance would have been beneficial.

T Killeen agreed but thought that this should not be taken as personal criticism of the FTOs but as a critique of the organisation of the FTOs' timetable which had left them with other commitments which precluded them from focusing fully on greeting arriving international students. He asked that, in future, FTOs' diaries be kept clear and for PTOs to be fully informed of the timing of international arrival events. Chair stressed that these events had been an FTO priority with, at least, one FTO having been present for all of them. However, the above concerns would be noted in order to shape future planning.

Action

665 GOATing Topics

Chair noted that GOAT stood for 'go out and talk' and that, although last year it had been a fixed SOC agenda item, it had often not been implemented. He noted that the FTOs had designed a draft plan of topics so that publicity material and timetables could be drawn up to aid Officers.

He proposed a discussion of the GOATing to support the Priority Campaigns Poll. He noted that six PCs had been identified at residential training: Better Student Representation, Exam Feedback, Attendance Monitoring, Sustainable Investment, Go Greener and Fees and Cuts.

Chair noted that the FTOs had concluded that last year's formal approach with online only voting had not been a success and they proposed a more informal approach for this year with the goal being a demonstration of UUEAS as a campaigning organisation. Students would be able to vote physically by putting tokens in a tub to register their support for a particular campaign: they would be able to vote as many times as they wished and for as many campaigns as they wanted so as to encourage members to become involved.

Chair noted that the FTOs had identified 21 hours when they would be free to devote to the PCP. He noted that PTOs might sign up to accompany a FTO as well as GOAT by themselves.

J Lewis asked whether Officers would be free to promote a particular campaign during their GOATing on the PCP.

S Clark believed that as this would not be an official poll Officers should be free to promote their favoured campaign.

J Taylor disagreed and argued that all the campaigns were important and the members should be left free of any influence in favour of one or other campaign. He was worried that new students might be alienated if particular campaigns were promoted vociferously.

S Clark thought that this underestimated new students' ability to think intelligently about the issues.

J Bowker argued that this should be the case for FTOs but that PTOs were mandated to campaign on particular issues and should therefore be free to promote particular campaigns.

S Clark noted the goal of the PCP was to get members involved and

that, if Officers were passionate about particular campaigns, they should be able to let this be known. Whatever the results of the poll, UUEAS would still be campaigning on all these issues: the PCP should be an educational exercise.

T Gilder-Smith believed it would be counter-productive to restrict Officers' passion for a cause: the point was to get members to vote not how they voted.

T Killeen asked that an accessible summary of the campaigns should be made available to Officers and members.

Chair noted that this had been included in e-Rabbit and would be made available through online media.

B Brown asked that a summary should be placed on a noticeboard in the Hive.

SOC agreed that an online briefing summarising the details of the campaigns would be produced for PTOs, the following week.

Chair noted that the FTOs' GOATing timetable would be posted on the SOC Facebook page.

Action

SOC agreed that the focus of the PCP GOATing would be to emphasise UUEAS as a campaigning organisation.

Chair noted that it would be appropriate for Officers to campaign for a particular option but advised that they should bear in mind the overall objects of the exercise.

Action

666 LGBT Survey and Report

R Laverick reported that the survey would be finishing the next week and had a goal of 200 respondents.

He noted that the report used figures obtained from the University that showed there were 643 students who self-defined as LGB or other and 1,313 who preferred not to answer about their sexuality; he believed it could be assumed that a proportion of these would be LGBT.

R Laverick requested that SOC formally endorsed the body and recommendations of the report.

He noted that the report was quite extensive; this reflected the fact that UUEAS was far behind other SUs in this area.

He highlighted the controversy that might arise from one of the recommendations that all members of SOC should have voting rights. He emphasised the need for a review of how Liberations Sub-Committees are formed in order to remove obstacles to Officers' work and members' involvement.

On facilities, he noted the importance of gender neutral toilets; he realised that it would be costly to introduce these immediately but this could be done incrementally. He emphasised that provision of gender neutral facilities was about increasing choice.

He noted the problems for the LGBT community concerning campaigns in that Pride was not and should not be a campaigning group.

He hoped to improve regional networking and hoped to tie this in with the proposed East Anglia Students Assembly that had been part of a

UUEAS policy passed the previous year.

R Laverick noted that appended to the Report were a set of draft policies to take to Council and he urged any Officers who wished to second them at Council to contact him.

He noted that there would be some changes made to the text of the report reflecting the results of the survey but emphasised that nothing would be added, there would only be possible excisions,

Chair thanked R Laverick for his work on the survey and report. SOC agreed that Officers would make a detailed study of the report, R Laverick would make any changes reflecting the results of the survey and that a formal endorsement of the revised report would be made at the next meeting of SOC.

Action

667 Sports Charter on Homophobia

J Levell noted that SOC had asked that this be included in the Committee Information Packs that had been sent out. He reported that the Charter had not been included in the packs. This had been because the FTOs after consultation with UUEAS staff had decided that this would not be the appropriate place for the Charter as it would run counter to the key policy of provision of equal opportunities for all members.

He reported that, with the agreement of the LGBT Officer, a poster sized A2 version of the Charter would be taken to Club Presidents to sign: UUEAS would then have a big, visual document in support of the Charter to use as a campaigns tool.

S Clark asked that the poster have the names of all the Clubs so that if any Club did not sign its absence would be apparent on the poster. SOC endorsed the action and the production of the poster.

Action

668 Structure of Liberations Campaigns Committees

R Laverick noted that, concerning the discussion at the last meeting, it was clear that Appendix H of the Constitution required members of the LGBT Committee to be elected at an open meeting. He believed that this set up so much red tape to make, in practice, formation of a Committee extremely difficult. His ideal solution would be to say that the Pride Committee was the LGBT Committee as its members had already been elected by the same community.

T Killen believed that the stipulations in the Constitution were for an ideal world and did not reflect the realities of how to get members involved in campaigns. He found it odd that there should be a constitutional requirement for open meetings to elect Committee members when there were no similar requirements for other bodies including SOC.

J Taylor argued that there was an anomaly in that was no Committee for Postgraduates.

R Laverick noted that he would be proposing changes to be incorporated in the Constitutional Review.

Chair noted he could envisage a situation where only the LGBT Officer came forward to sit on the Committee and that there would, at the

same time, a group of campaigners; so, in effect the Campaign Committee would consist of, solely, the Officer.

Chair noted that all the above matters would be addressed in the Constitutional Review which he hoped would make matters like these subject to By Laws which could easily be amended by Council. SOC agreed that, if only Officers came forward to serve on the Liberations Campaigns Committees, they would be deemed to be, in effect, the Committee and would, therefore, be able to delegate their powers to their Campaign Group.

Action

669 Formation of Campaign Sub-Committees

Chair noted that these differed from the Liberation Campaigns Committees in that they were not sub-committees of SOC.

He believed that SOC should choose the campaigns in the PCP and form Committees to service them.

SOC agreed to the allocation of sub-committees for the six campaigns in the PCP. Chair will circulate an online form for Officers to sign up for individual campaign sub-committees.

Chair noted that reports from campaign sub-committees would be a standard SOC agenda item.

Action

670 Finance and Budgets

Chair noted that R Rawle had already used the Officer funding request guidelines and he believed they would make the process easier for Officers.

SOC noted the report from the Finance Manager concerning Elections, Conferences, Campaigns and Liberations budgets.

671 NUS Zone Conferences

Chair noted that the FTOs were already signed up to attend and he asked PTOs interested to sign up; he noted that registration closed on 5 October.

The following Officers asked to be registered:

J Lewis – HE

B Foday – Soc/Cit

R Laverick – Welfare

E Fallows – Union Development

672 Member of the Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee

B Foday, R Laverick and J Lewis expressed their interest in this position. SOC elected B Foday to serve in this position.

Action

673 TUC Demo on 20 October and possible industrial action by UEA Unison

J Lewis noted that the 20 October demo appeared set to be a huge mobilisation and would be in favour of Fund Our Future and against austerity, government cuts and privatisation.

Chair believed SOC's role should be to promote the demo and provide transport for members to London.

Chair noted that SOC should indicate how many coaches should be sent so that they might be booked within the coming week. SOC agreed that Officers would research how many students might like to attend and then make a decision at the next meeting as to how many coaches to send. Students would be asked to sign up at the Box Office to help SOC estimate numbers.

Action

Chair noted that the demo could be promoted during the PCP GOATing.

S Clark worried about overloading members with differing messages. Chair noted that if students expressed an interest in Fees and Cuts this would be a natural fit with promotion of the demo.

J Bowker suggested liaising with NUCA and City College as the NUS were not promoting the march.

Chair noted that they would have to make a financial contribution as it would be *ultra vires* to allow non-members to use UUEAS' resources.

On the possible industrial action by UEA Unison, Chair noted that UUEAS had policy to support specifically the UCU and that other campus unions were not mentioned

T Moore advised that he would update SOC at a future meeting on the results of the ballot and any possible industrial action.

674 Charging Societies and Clubs for Use of the Hive

Chair noted that there had been an extensive debate in Management Committee on the requirement for Societies to place a deposit of £350 if they wanted to use the Hive with the bar. He would recommend that SOC should allow Societies to book the Hive for free with no deposit required, on a trial basis with a review after three months.

J Levell noted that the argument against this was that it cost UUEAS to open the bar and staffing costs needed to be covered. He realised that £350 was a large amount for Societies to cover and, he noted, that there had been a suggestion that the bar be run cost neutrally and that the deposit would just cover the costs of two bar staff which would be about £50, this would be returned once the £50 had been made through bar sales. He noted also that for events in the Hive there were drinks already available downstairs in the bar and in the vending machines.

R Rawle noted she had run events and been told that the event would have to make £350 and, if that were not to be reached, her organisation would have to fund half the shortfall. She felt that a problem arose with too many staff being booked for too many hours for Societies' requirements.

Chair noted that UUEAS staff had informed him that the least amount of money over the entire year that a Society had made back was £40 which meant a loss of £5 to UUEAS. He concluded, therefore, that whenever a Society booked the Hive with a bar it was unlikely that UUEAS would lose money. He noted that both the Bars and ENTS

Managers were confident of this.

R Laverick thought that Peer Support Groups with lack of access to funds were particularly disadvantaged: Pride had had to cancel their Icebreaker because they could not afford the deposit.

S Clark noted he had originally favoured a £50 deposit but he now believed that the Hive with the bar should be bookable for the members with no deposit but he thought that there should be a minimum requirement of twenty people.

J Taylor believed that attention should be paid to the staffing requirements for particular events and the idea that it would be free should be restricted to a certain number of bar staff required.

J Taylor agreed to Chair's suggestion that bookings should be free so long as the number of staff required was stipulated.

T Killeen suggesting liaising with ENTS to draw up a schedule of how many bar staff would be required for different numbers of people attending and that if Societies did not reach the number of people expected then they should be liable for the shortfall.

Chair thought that this should exclude Peer Support Groups due to their lack of access to funds.

R Laverick noted that there was the issue and cost implication of some events requiring security provision.

J Levell confirmed that if organisers required an event to be private it would need security and that this would be a requirement for events with over a 100 attendees.

S Clark suggested a booking form with a tick box to say that a minimum of 20 people would attend and the bar should be open and a separate tick box to request security.

T Gilder-Smith suggested there should be a caveat on the form for Peer Support Groups.

SOG agreed that Clubs, Societies and Peer Support Groups be allowed to book the Hive with the bar and security for free but with the caveat that they would be required to fill in a booking form stipulating the number of people expected and whether security would be required. The form would make clear that if the numbers are not reached any resulting shortfall would be the responsibility of those making the booking. There would be a trial period to begin the next day and to last until the end of the semester.

Action

J Levell reported that another social space would be available with the introduction of the option to book booths in the bars on LCR nights.

675 Strategic Priorities

Due to time constraints, discussion of this item was postponed to a future meeting.

676 Student Officer Action Plan

SOC formally adopted the updated plan.

677 Management Minutes

SOC received the minutes of the Management Committee meetings of 11 May, 23 May, 30 May, 27 June, 9 July, 23 July, 6 August, 13 August and 29 August without comment.

678 Any Other Business

SOC appointed J Levell as a social secretary to SOC for the year to take charge of **Fun**.

R Rawle noted that the details of her funding request had changed because of an unforeseen increase in the license fee for the film 'Age of Stupid': the funding request would now be for £150.

She noted that there would be workshop and the outside film show would be powered by bicycle.

J Taylor reported that a student of Islamic faith had discovered that the University Press Release on the closure of the Islamic Centre had been misleading. The Press Release had stated that the temporary planning permission for the Centre "expired this September". The student had since discovered that the actual date of expiry in Norwich Council was 11 October.

J Taylor asked that this discrepancy be minuted.

Action

J Bowker noted in a policy review he had come across a policy called SOC Scrutiny Space and he asked for an update on the implementation of this policy.

T Moore advised that the group had never met.

J Bowker believed that this group would aid Council's ability to effectively scrutinise SOC's actions; he thought it disappointing that the group had never met.

Chair noted that a SOC report was made to each Council and that all SOC minutes were available on the web immediately after approval for Councillors to scrutinise.

Chair argued that this was just a Committee formed to do what Councillors would be doing anyway. He noted that FTOs were always available to talk to Councillors about any concerns they had of items in the SOC minutes.

T Gilder-Smith argued that the Committee would add a layer of transparency, the need for which, she argued, had been demonstrated by the investigation into Men's Rugby Club's complaint.

J Bowker argued that Councillors meeting as a group would be able to effectively scrutinise SOC's actions more effectively than individuals meeting with FTOs.

J Levell argued that the group should be put in place: it was informal and it would add to transparency. He believed it to be almost a token gesture but a, nevertheless, important gesture.

S Clark suggested that one FTO might be available for a certain time before Council to help with the Scrutiny Space.

R Rawle suggested it might be easier to make clear in Council that FTOs were available informally for their actions to be scrutinised.

Chair recommended that the policy be recommended for lapse but that in Council, Officers should discuss, as Councillors, better ways to scrutinise SOC's actions.

J Taylor noted that the way he was represented as a member of SOC was in the minutes approved by SOC as a body. He argued that the minutes were the only way of holding Officers to account and that anything that was not included in the minutes was irrelevant. SOC agreed that accountability and the level of scrutiny was a matter for future debate in Council.

679 Time, Date and Place of Next Meeting

SOC decided that, although it would not be ideal to have a meeting almost immediately before a Trustee Board meeting, due to agenda time constraints, it would have to meet on Thursday.

Therefore, the next meeting will be at 5 pm on Thursday, 4 October.