

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

29 November 2012

Summary

Key Discussions

- Arrangements for Tweeting
- Election Planning Process
- ESSA Grants Scheme
- Overall implementation of UUEAS policy
- Policies that mandate certain Officers rather than SOC to take actions
- Management Committee minutes

Key Actions

- Return to old system for tweeting agreed
- Funding request of £400 for LGBT Newsletter agreed
- Agreed, in principle, to move election dates back, report on cost implications requested
- Question of RBS funding of ESSA Grant Scheme to be taken to Council
- Policy Review Day to be arranged at start of next semester
- Use of Zero Tolerance 'fox' to be discontinued
- FTOs asked to take care in approval of Management Committee minutes especially when employment matters are concerned
- Asked for report on plans for Activities Hub

Union of UEA Students Mission 2009-13

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Voting Members present:

Bintu Foday (Non-Portfolio Officer), Jess Lewis (Non-Portfolio Officer), Eliot Fallows (Non Portfolio Officer), Sam Clark (Community and Student Rights Officer), Joe Levell (Finance Officer), Abbi Forsyth (Non Portfolio Officer), Rosie Rawle (Ethical Issues Officer),

Non-Voting Members present:

Kim Jenkins (Students with Disabilities Officer), Tess Gilder-Smith (Women's Officer), John Taylor (Post Graduate Officer), D Bowden (Chief Executive).

In attendance:

Tony Moore (Representation Support Worker).

Chair

Richard Laverick (LGBT Officer).

Apologies

Josh Bowker (Academic Officer), Matthew Myles (Communications Officer), Benjamin Brown (Environment Officer), Trevor Killeen (Mature Students Officer), Astrid Heidemann Simonson (International Officer).

Chair noted that SOC would be following, for this and future meetings, the procedure as passed by Union Council on 22 November, that if matters were decided by a vote, all Officers should be entitled to vote.

774 Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November

D Bowden advised that UUEAS had been misspelt as 'UUUEAS' on one occasion; with this change the minutes of the 22 November meeting were agreed.

775 Action Log

SOC noted the completed actions and actions still to be completed. E Fallows reported, on the current election, that the target turnout was

350 and, currently, 110 votes online and 30 paper ballots had been cast.

J Levell reported, on funding for away events for Societies, that there would be no extra money available for funding but that no cap had been imposed, either. He noted that grant requests would be considered by Societies Council.

J Levell noted he would be contacting NUCA and City College as to the draft letter to Liam Burns, NUS President, that would express concerns over the planning and organisation of the National Demo and contain recommendations any future demos.

SOC agreed to postpone consideration of the Go Green Guide in the Welcome Pack until the Communications Officer returned from holiday.

S Clark noted there had been no progress on the actions over LGBT History Month.

Chair noted that T Killeen had contacted him to say that he could not get an adequate signal for a Skype presence at the meeting.

776 Matters Arising

There were none.

777 Student Officer Action Plan Update

SOC noted that J Bowker would be responsible for updating the plan, in M Myles' absence and noted completed actions from R Rawle on the banner drop and B Foday on the UEA London Careers Fair.

778 Items for Tweeting and Items for Videoing

J Taylor – Nominations open for GSA and Mature Students Forum
R Rawle – Get Fractious Demo, Food Coop and Critical Mass cycling action

Action

S Clark asked that Officers should come to the Office to tweet as only 4 users could be using Hootsuite at the same time and it could, also, be ensured that the right format was employed.

R Rawle thought it ridiculous to have to be physically present in the Office to tweet and negated the whole point of the exercise.

SOC agreed to return to the previous system and that Officers would send items for tweeting to J Levell in M Myles' absence.

Action

779 What We Have Been Doing Diaries

Chair noted that these had been late in being updated to the Facebook page. There were no comments.

780 GOATing Topics

S Clark suggested Housing as the next topic. He noted the massive interest in the pop-up housing events.

SOC agreed that Housing would be the next week's GOATing topic with S Clark to prepare a short briefing to include times of future pop-up events.

Action

781 LGBT Newsletter

Chair noted that he was waiting to hear the result of a funding bid of £1,000 he had made to an external charity, Vinspired; so he might not need the funds in the present request to SOC. However, as a fail-safe, he asked for funding for 500 copies to be inserted into 4 editions of Concrete.

SOC agreed the funding request of £400.

Action

782 Approval of Dates for General Election

J Levell noted new proposed dates had been posted on the SOC Facebook page, with only one extra day of campaigning added, which he believed would have a minimal impact on those students taking part.

S Clark noted that these dates had been dictated by what had been placed in the Handbook. He noted that he had only been invited to one Election Planning Meeting, the last one. J Levell noted that he had been invited to only some meetings. S Clark noted that he wished he had known about the dates earlier as he believed elections held so early would reduce turnout. He further noted that nominations would only be open for ten days whilst, in the past, they had been open for six weeks. He believed the decision on the elections had been a poor one and there was a need to formalise the election planning process.

J Levell noted that M Myles had placed the dates on Facebook because there were time constraints imposed by the need to send material off to meet print deadlines. J Levell believed this decision to have been disappointing.

R Rawle wondered why it had not been made clear to SOC at its last meeting that a print deadline was imminent.

D Bowden advised that he was not aware of the exact reasons for going to print but he believed the feasibility and cost implications of moving the election dates could be looked at because the end of January was not ideal.

S Clark noted there were the implications of extra staff time and the availability of the LCR but he believed SOC should seriously consider changing the dates, if possible.

B Foday believed that the present Officers would need to ensure that a robust election planning process would be in place for the next academic year.

J Lewis argued that SOC should not be put off changing the dates because of the extra staff work implications as Officers would be perfectly willing to take on the extra work.

E Fallows asked that working students who had booked time off for the elections should be told of any change.

SOC agreed that it be noted in the Action Log that election dates for 2013-4 would be an agenda item for the last SOC of 2012-3.

SOC agreed, in principle, that the election dates be moved back.

SOC agreed that D Bowden would report back to the next meeting

with the details of the financial, facility availability and staff resource implications of moving the election dates.

Action

783 RBS ESSA Grant Scheme

R Rawle noted that UUEAS had policy against doing business with RBS but she did not want to take money away from Societies that were enjoying the benefits of the ESSA scheme which was funded by RBS. She wondered whether the publicity for the scheme might be kept to a minimum as there was an argument that UUEAS should take money from a big company if it benefited UUEAS members.

J Levell agreed and noted that the publicity could mention just ESSA and not advertise the NatWest part of the branding.

Chair noted that the exact wording of UUEAS policy should be consulted. After consulting the policy, SOC noted that it 'boycotted' RBS. Chair suggested that could be taken to mean boycotting RBS' services not its outreach activities.

J Taylor believed that the spirit of the policy would preclude any involvement with RBS. He noted the danger of UUEAS' principles being compromised as RBS would, effectively, be allowed to buy its way out of a boycott.

J Levell suggested contacting all Society Presidents to apologise for the earlier publicity and to ask them for their opinions on how the policy should be interpreted.

J Lewis believed the policy to be ambiguous and suggested that the matter should be considered by Union Council.

J Levell noted he would research the financial details of the ESSA scheme.

SOC agreed that this matter would be raised as part of the SOC Report to the 6 December meeting of Union Council.

Action

784 Overview of Current Environmental Policies

R Rawle noted, over Policy Lapse, she had looked at 23 different policies which mandated her to do a wide range of actions. She noted that the policies were well thought out and constructed. However, at no point in the handover, had Officers been briefed on policies and the actions they were mandated to take.

S Clark agreed and noted that the way the policies were grouped was unsatisfactory; he believed that this would be addressed in the Constitutional Review. He suggested that the PTOs might meet with the FTOs to discuss policy implementation.

R Rawle noted that M Myles had taken the Resolves of policies and had added them, where action was needed, to SOAP. She wondered whether other Officers had been informed of this.

S Clark suggested that a Policy Review session could be organised for interested Officers.

R Rawle noted that Council had just voted to keep a range of policies but she wondered what the point was if they were not reviewed for actions to be taken.

SOC agreed to hold a Policy Review Day at the start of the next

semester that would divide policy into areas of responsibility. The session would feed forward into the Constitutional Review and Officer Handover and would provide short, easy to read accounts for the website on what had been accomplished in which policy areas.

Action

785 Zero Tolerance Fox

T Gilder-Smith believed the current publicity material, the 'fox', looked like a gimmick and made abuse and sexual harassment a lighter tone than was inappropriate.

S Clark that, if there was a re-brand, UUEAS would be able to use existing NUS material.

SOC agreed that the continued use of the 'fox' was inappropriate and that new campaign materials would be investigated.

Action

786 Campaign Sub-Committee Updates

There were none.

787 Budget and Spending Update

J Levell noted that he would look into the Chair's query over the expense of attendance at Zone Conferences.

Action

788 Review of Decisions made by Union Council and of actions to be taken for the meeting of 6 December

Chair noted that he had liaised with UUEAS staff on the cost of gender neutral toilets and they were a lot higher than he expected. However, he believed that the present toilet facilities would need updating soon and then the policy could start to be implemented. He noted another alternative in that the present Women's Toilet on the first floor could be converted into a campaigns' storeroom and the current male toilets could be upgraded to become gender neutral. He further noted that the University had security staff trained to be aware of LGBT issues and UUEAS would need to train its own staff in this area, in the long term.

On 3 O'clock deadlines, SOC delegated the Resolves to J Bowker as an action point.

On the Block Grant, Chair noted that this raised the question of whether Council could or should mandate particular Officers; he believed this matter needed to be clarified.

J Taylor asked if the proposal for an increase in the Block Grant was linked to any proposed services to members.

J Levell noted that what he hoped for from the University was a non-caveated increase. He noted UUEAS' strategy was to draft a costed Strategic Plan but that he hoped for increase would not be linked to specific projects.

J Lewis noted that, originally, the motion had been quite specific but after discussions with the FTOs it had been deliberately made somewhat more general.

J Levell believed that the document mandated in the policy to SOC

should more be a matter for the Trustees and he asked for D Bowden's advice on this matter.

D Bowden advised that he could produce a document for Resolves 1 and that Resolves 3 should be part of the Trustee Report to Union Council.

SOC delegated D Bowden to produce a report, mindful of the Staff Protocol, to Union Council outlining where expenditure had been reduced whilst the SOC Report would fulfil the requirements of Resolves 3.

SOC noted that B Brown was working on the Green Energy policy.

Action

789 Management Committee Minutes

Chair noted that, in the item on the Travel Shop, the minutes were unclear. He noted that this was a public document and could be read by the staff member involved. He also noted his worries if the matter was brought before any employment tribunal the minutes would be queried as to whether they were a true and accurate record. He asked that the Committee take care when approving minutes.

J Taylor expressed his serious concerns on this matter

D Bowden advised that the minutes were inaccurate.

Chair noted his concerns over the Activities Hub that the PTOs had not been consulted and he believed that this showed a lack of transparency and he asked that it be discussed at a future SOC.

SOC agreed to a proposal that the Membership Services Manager would provide a briefing on the proposed changes.

Action

790 Any Other Business

T Gilder-Smith noted that she was helping with the creation of a Peer Support Group to tackle domestic abuse and she asked for help in finding a Council representative for the group.

SOC agreed that, in the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair, B Foday would deliver the SOC Report to the next meeting of Union Council and would chair the next meeting of SOC

S Clark noted he had been approached by an ex-member about the promotion of a programme of events to promote awareness of trade unions amongst young people and students.

SOC asked S Clark to bring this matter back as a formal agenda item.

Action

J Taylor reported that planning permission for the Islamic Centre had now been extended to June 2014.

791 Time, Date and Place of Next Meeting

5 pm, 6 December in the Board Room.