

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

9 May 2013

Summary

Key Discussions

- Dates for the Priority Campaigns Poll
- Theme nights in the LCR
- Alternatives to the NUS

Key Actions

- Decisions over placement of charity collection boxes in Union House to be made by Senior Managers
- Priority Campaigns Poll to commence on 30 September and a 'Closing Event' to be held on Tuesday 8 October
- Framework procedure for disciplinary action on repeat offender in the LCR agreed - Bars Manager to draft a set of punishments, clarifications and definitions to be brought back to SOC.
- PVC Academic invited to future meeting
- A set of guidelines on theme nights for use by ENTS to be drafted and ENTS to be asked to submit a list of proposed theme nights for approval before they were advertised to students
- Discussion on what Officers feel they need in terms of support from NUS to be held at Residential Training

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by effectively representing their collective views.



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Voting Members present:

Emma Silk (Environment Officer), Ella Gilbert (Non Portfolio Officer), Joe Raynes (Non Portfolio Officer), Rachel Knott (Women's Officer), Freddie Meade (Non-Portfolio Officer), Sam Clark (Community and Student Rights Officer), Matthew Myles (Communications Officer), Sebastian Bachelier (Non Portfolio Officer), Joe Levell (Finance Officer), Josh Bowker (Academic Officer), Kimberley Hirst-Jones (Postgraduate Officer), Eunice Opare-Addo (Ethnic Minorities Officer).

Chair

Tu An Ngo (International Officer).

In attendance:

Tony Moore (Representation Support Worker), R Rawle (Communications Officer Elect).

Apologies:

Holly Staynor (LGBT+ Officer), Daniel Delargy (Students with Disabilities Officer), Lauren Sloan (Ethical Issues Officer), Trevor Killeen (Mature Students Officer).

949 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2013

The minutes were agreed.

950 Action Log

Chair noted the completed actions.

J Levell noted he had had difficulties uploading details and sizes for **T-shirts and hoodies** and thought it would be easier for Officers to go to the Post Office and try out sizes themselves.

S Clark reported he had almost finished the **Strategic Plan** with just a few minor changes to be made.

M Myles noted that he would be completing the final draft of the **Impact Report**, the next day.

R Rawle, with permission from the Chair, noted that the meeting with the Investment Society over the **withdrawal from the ESSA scheme** should be taken out of the Log as a new Society Committee had been elected.

M Myles noted, on **charity collection boxes in Union House** that, this item had been on the Log for some time as there had been no policy formulated. He reported he had spoken to Senior Managers who had asked for autonomy over decision making in this matter as each department had different positions. For example, he noted that the bars felt that if they allowed one collection box they would have to agree to any request so they did not allow any boxes; whilst in the shops student staff placed boxes from the charities in which they were involved. Officers expressed no strong feelings on this matter and SOC agreed that any decisions should be taken by the Senior Managers.

Action

951 Matters Arising

There were none.

952 Priority Campaigns Poll

Chair noted that a decision had been deferred as to the timing of the Launch Event in order to consider how to include postgraduate students who would be arriving on campus later than undergraduates.

M Myles noted a decision would have to be made at the current meeting due to the upcoming design deadline for the Handbook. SOC discussed the possibility of pushing back the PCP to later in the traditional autumn semester.

M Myles suggested there could be a radical rethink and the PCP could be held at the end of the academic year.

J Levell argued that one of the key aims of the PCP was to let new students know that UUEAS was a campaigning organisation and to gauge opinion as well as providing momentum for all the campaigns. SOC rejected M Myles' suggestion.

J Levell suggested that rather than a Launch Event, a Results Event might be held, to raise awareness of the campaigns, in the week commencing 7 October. He also thought it worth considering running the poll over two weeks.

K Hirst-Jones stressed the importance of including PG students as they already missed out on Soc Mart and Sports Mart.

S Clark argued the importance of having the poll near the start of term to set UUEAS' priorities for the year and to help build a case to put to the University that students supported the winning campaign.

J Bowker noted it would be impossible to find a time that was ideal for every student and that SOC should choose the time when the poll would have the biggest impact.

Chair suggested starting the PCP in the week commencing 30 September and closing the poll in the week commencing 7 October so that PG and non-traditional students might take part.

SOC agreed that the PCP would commence on 30 September and that there would be 'Closing Event' on Tuesday 8 October.

SOC agreed that a final name for the 'Closing Event' would be decided by R Rawle and M Myles for inclusion in the Handbook.

Action

953 Disciplinary Procedure for Repeat Offenders

S Clark that there was, at present, no formal procedure for dealing with repeat troublemakers at LCR nights and he recommended the proposed draft, based on that from Essex Students' Union. He noted the problems over managing this issue were exacerbated by the University's refusal to share data on students for disciplinary procedures.

SOC agreed to adopt the proposed framework procedure and agreed to ask the Bars Manager to draft a set of punishments, clarifications and definitions to be brought back to SOC.

S Clark confirmed that once the procedure was in place it would be displayed as a poster in the Hive.

Action

954 University's Funding of the Union

M Myles reported that Nigel Norris, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Academic, had toured Union House earlier in the day and the FTOs had pointed out the areas of the building in need of refurbishment, especially in ENTS where UUEAS was now competing with venues in the city which had state of the art facilities for visiting acts.

M Myles noted that the Assistant Registrar had wondered whether SOC would like the PVC to attend a meeting of SOC to discuss University funding.

SOC asked that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Academic be invited to a future meeting.

Action

M Myles reported that he had been contacted by the University Press Office who had been concerned about an article on the funding of UUEAS, published in the *Independent* newspaper, and the title of a Blog that UUEAS had placed on its own website. M Myles noted that he had met with a senior member of University staff and he believed he had allayed the University's concerns over the recent press coverage of any link between UUEAS' funding and the future student experience.

M Myles noted he had, at the meeting, outlined the dangers posed by the likely anger of students in the coming year when they learnt of cuts to the activities available to them because of a lack of funding. He had also noted that if the University rejected the proposed changes to the Constitution and the imposition of student-only LCR nights were to prove problematic then these factors, when combined with a perceived lack of funding as well as the University's refusal to share data, could, when taken together, seriously impact on the relationship between UUEAS and University.

955 Management Committee Minutes

SOC received the minutes of the meetings of 22, 24 and 29 April.

M Myles noted that, given the extra money from the University for the website and some building refurbishment, there might be some flexibility as to funds for student services but, given the deficit, this was

just a possibility. He asked that PTOs interested in the budget allocations discuss this with the FTOs.

956 **Any Other Business**

Officers congratulated the Chair on the delicious individual cheesecakes she had made for the meeting.

F Meade noted that there was an **upcoming themed night at the LCR titled 'Chavs and Emos'** which he believed to be inappropriate as it would be ridiculing two minority, marginalised groups in society and he wondered whether there was any action SOC might take on this matter and whether SOC had any control over which themes ENTS decided to run.

S Clark thought it was too late to take action in this particular case as tickets and publicity material had already been produced but he thought SOC could make their views known for the future.

R Knott noted that the theme had been chosen by students through the ENTS Facebook page and that it was a re-run of an event that had proved to be popular.

J Levell wondered whether SOC would want to end all comparative themed nights; he noted that there had recently been a 'Flashy versus Trashy' event and ones modelled on the television shows *Made In Chelsea* and *The Only Way is Essex* which revolved around class stereotypes based on the rich upper class and the aspirational working class. He wondered whether the debate was about taking any sub-group in society or whether the issue was specifically about the two groups: Chavs and Emos.

R Knott noted that some of the comparative themed nights such as 'Action Man and Barbie' could be subverted with irony but she felt this would be impossible with Chavs and Emos.

E Gilbert argued that the yardstick for whether to allow a theme was whether some students would find it offensive.

M Myles wondered whether the debate should be as to whether marginalised and under-represented groups in society should be ridiculed as entertainment whereas the ridicule of powerful groups in society might be deemed to be a relatively healthy activity.

R Rawle, with permission from the Chair, wondered whether it would be useful for SOC to devise a set of guidelines for ENTS to use in the future.

M Myles believed that ENTS would find this to be really useful.

F Meade argued that this should include the commoditisation of individuals' sexuality as well the ridiculing of marginalised groups.

J Levell noted that UUEAS had taken action on the former issue and that 'Pimps and 'Hos' was no longer an acceptable theme.

R Knott noted that there had been concerns expressed over the 'Traffic Light' LCR where green clothing denoted that the wearer was sexually available and that it was felt by some students that this negated the need for consent.

R Rawle, with permission from the Chair, suggested that any guidelines might be extended to a general policy on any adverts that were placed in Union House.

J Raynes wondered whether it would be better to decide on each event on a case by case basis rather than having a rigid policy. SOC agreed that a set of guidelines for use by ENTS would be drafted and that ENTS would be asked to submit a list of proposed theme nights for approval before they were advertised to students. S Clark took responsibility for drafting the guidelines with Officers to send him their suggestions.

Action

R Rawle, with permission from the Chair, reported that NUS were currently running a £5 million funded **initiative for green student-led projects**. Each project would be for two years and would be eligible for between £50,000 and £100,000 in funding. She noted that UUEAS would be applying and the FTOs would welcome suggestions from Officers. She noted that one of the ideas would be a Green Hub which might be situated in one of the vacant properties in the Street and which would include a Bike Coop, a Food Coop, Vegbox, a bookshop and workshops. Alternatively, if no premises were available then she thought the funding might be used to employ an Activism Coordinator to support green projects and campaigns.

F Meade noted that there was a proposed national conference organised by student activists to discuss **alternatives to the NUS**. He wondered whether SOC would consider sending delegates to this event.

J Levell believed this would not be worthwhile. He believed the proposal originated from the broad left grouping at NUS National Conference and which were a minority in most students' unions. He thought there was no viable alternative to the NUS in terms of both political and financial power. He noted that the financial benefits of staying in NUS were significant for UUEAS and that NUS provided vital support in terms of training, information and advice.

M Myles believed that sending representatives along to a discussion about what students wanted from a national organisation would be very helpful in terms of a critique of NUS.

J Levell believed that it would be worthwhile for Officers to have this discussion about what they would want from NUS within SOC and that it might be held during residential training.

R Rawle, with permission from the Chair, argued that as a PTO, last year, she had received little support from NUS.

J Levell noted that NUS National Conference had passed policy to directly support PTOs.

J Levell asked that he be tasked in the Action Log with organising the discussion during Residential Training.

Action

J Levell noted that J Raynes would be taking his place on the meeting of the panel of the Annual Fund to decide on the awarding of grants across the University.

5 pm, Thursday 16 May in the Student Officer Centre and the Board Room.