

**Union of UEA Students Purpose:**

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"

**Minutes of the Student Officer Committee**

**14 November 2013**

**Summary**

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**Key Discussions**

- Wording of referendum question on banning 'Blurred Lines'
- Members leaving UUEAS events with alcohol
- UCU industrial action
- Individual Campaigns budgets

**Key Actions**

- Calling of referendums to be referred to Constitutional Review Group
- Attendance at four Conferences approved
- New policy on industrial action by campus trade unions to be taken to December meeting of Council
- Proposal that individual Campaigns' Budgets be allocated to each Officer to be brought to next meeting

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## Minutes of the Student Officer Committee

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### Voting Members present:

Ella Gilbert (Non Portfolio Officer), Eunice Opare-Addo (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Lauren Sloan (Ethical Issues Officer), Rosie Rawle (Communications Officer), Emma Silk (Environment Officer), Holly Staynor (LGBT+ Officer), Rachel Knott (Women's Officer), Kimberley Hirst-Jones (Postgraduate Officer), Trevor Killeen (Mature Students Officer), Sebastian Bachelier (Non Portfolio Officer), Louise Withers Green (Academic Officer), Bintu Foday (Community and Student Rights Officer), Tu An Ngo (International Officer), Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive).

### Chair

Joe Raynes (Non Portfolio Officer).

### In attendance:

Tony Moore (Representation Support Worker)

### Apologies:

Joe Levell (Finance Officer), Freddie Meade (Non-Portfolio Officer), Daniel Delargy (Students with Disabilities Officer).

### 1043 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2013

The minutes were agreed.

### 1044 Action Log

**Ethical Banking:** R Rawle noted this was not, at present, an urgent matter as no Clubs or Societies had applied for NatWest or HSBC funding. She noted she would bring a new policy proposal to Council by the end of term. She reported that the FTOs had examined the ramifications of the change of ownership of the Coop Bank after the acquisition of a majority shareholding in the bank by a group of hedge funds. She noted that UUEAS would be examining alternatives to the Coop, such as Triodos, and also of diversifying the provision of banking services to UUEAS.

**NUS Connect:** R Rawle noted she would email a reminder to Officers

and then this item would be taken out of the Log.  
*SOC agreed that uncompleted actions would be re-actioned.*

**1045 Matters Arising**

L Withers Green noted she had 12 members signed up for the Course Reps Conference and, with the uncertainty over numbers, she would be going ahead with the Meal Deal option for refreshments.

**1046 Attendance at Shared Planet**

E Silk reported that the Communications Officer, the Ethical Issues Officer and herself had attended the People and Planet Conference which had provided them with excellent activist training.

R Rawle noted the event had been very useful training for the upcoming launch of the Fossil Free Campaign.

*SOC agreed the funding of £69 for the Officers' attendance at the conference.*

**1049 Referendum Planning Campaign**

As B Foday would be leaving the meeting early, SOC agreed to move this item up the agenda.

R Rawle reported that the Council Action Log Sub-Committee had raised concerns as to whether the wording, 'Should UUEAS ban the playing of 'Blurred Lines' on its premises, on the grounds of student safety' might be deemed a leading question and, also, they had wanted to know who would be running the 'Yes' and the 'No' campaigns.

B Foday noted that the question had already been published and the aim had been to reproduce the spirit of the resolution.

SOC noted that there was a constitutional problem in that, in setting the question, one had to both reflect the spirit of the policy proposal and avoid setting a leading question.

J Dickinson advised that Council had referred the whole policy proposal to referendum and not, just, the Resolves. He advised that members had a right to vote on what they believed as well as what they wanted to do.

L Sloan agreed but she felt Council had not understood this distinction during the debate. J Dickinson agreed and noted he would advise that the procedural motion, to put a question to a referendum, should be examined by the Constitutional Review Group.

H Staynor argued that the current question was ambiguous in that one might want the song banned on other grounds, apart from student safety.

T A Ngo thought that for a lot of international students the nuances of language would make the current wording a leading question.

L Sloan stressed how strongly she felt about the possibility of putting a leading question to referendum. She suggested that the matter be sent back to Council for clarification.

SOC heard differing opinions as to whether Council understood that it was sending the whole policy proposal to referendum or just the question of whether or not the song should be banned.

J Dickinson advised that SOC as a body could refer the matter to

Council but that the time constraints as to running the campaign and campaign training should be kept in mind.

SOC concluded that it had other campaigning priorities than spending time revisiting the specific referendum question but that the constitutional problem that had been highlighted should be investigated.

SOC noted B Foday's earlier report that the leader of the 'No' campaign had not been nominated, as yet, the leader of the 'Yes' campaign was R Knott and that the General Meeting would take place on the first Monday of the campaigning.

*SOC agreed to L Sloan's suggestion that the problems that had been discussed as to future referendums be referred to the Constitutional Review Group. SOC agreed that the wording of the 'Blurred Lines' referendum would remain and the R Rawle would report on the matter to Council in the Action Log Sub-Committee Report.*

#### **Action**

### **1048 Policy Passed by Union Council on 7 November**

Chair noted that the Council Action Log Sub-Committee had asked SOC to specifically consider the actions in Resolves 3 of Policy 1418. R Rawle noted that the Resolves, basically, asked for better reporting from SOC in order to increase accountability. She emphasised the importance of SOC having a joint reporting strategy. She showed SOC the report template derived from NUS; she believed that this should form the basis of Officers' report to Council on long term objectives whilst more immediate short term actions could be tweeted and relevant ones incorporated into the Report.

J Dickinson advised that the goal would be to combine increased transparency with good, concise reporting.

R Rawle demonstrated how to use the Officers' twitter account.

R Rawle noted she would be happy to take responsibility for the coordination and production of the report. She noted that Officers would still report their activities to SOC at meetings whilst, between meetings they would let each everyone know what they were doing via Twitter.

*SOC agreed to adopt the Report template and for the immediate start of reporting via Twitter and that the first Report in the new format would be made to the December meeting of Council.*

*SOC agreed to R Rawle's suggestion that the relevant recommended action points from the Council Action Log Sub-Committee be integrated into the SOC Action Log.*

#### **Action**

### **1050 Management Committee Minutes**

SOC noted receipt of the minutes of the meeting held on 29 October. Chair noted these were not, as yet, in the requested format.

R Rawle noted that what had been decided was that the FTOs would talk through Management Committee's decisions and that the unapproved minutes would be made available to SOC immediately

they were produced so that there would be no time lag as to SOC's awareness of key decisions taken.

J Dickinson advised that UUEAS' trading figures would henceforth be included in the Management Committee papers so that Officers would have up to date access.

J Dickinson advised that Management Committee had received a detailed presentation from NUS on NUS Digital's provision of web services. He noted there had been short reports on the Megashop and the catering review. On the initial findings of the What If? Consultation, he noted that an overwhelming response had been a call for more seating in Union House with a significant number asking for the retention of the Grad Bar. He noted he would circulate the detailed findings to Officers.

J Dickinson reported that the Committee had commissioned him to undertake a review of UUEAS' finance functions, partly in light of the Finance Manager's resignation, to look at all aspects of the financial operations.

He noted that a key piece of ENTS equipment had broken and although the cost of its replacement was extra budgetary, the ENTS Manager had been asked to, despite this extra capital expenditure, remain within the budget target.

On the confidential items, he advised that many of these, once time had passed, would not need to remain confidential and he would hope to make them available to SOC, on a twice a term basis.

R Rawle believed that, in cases of a closure of services, it would be useful prior to decisions being taken to know the views of Officers, particularly those of Liberations Officers, whose constituents might be affected.

## **1051 Any Other Business**

T A Ngo noted she had some funding requests to make.

She noted the first that she and E Opare-Addo wished to attend the NUS Black Women's Conference and they would like an ordinary member to also attend. She noted she would only need funding for herself and the ordinary member and that she, herself, would not need accommodation. She asked therefore for total funding of £122 for the ordinary member to come out the Campaigns Budget £147 for the Officers to come from the Training Budget.

*SOC agreed to the combined funding of £269.*

T A Ngo asked for funding to attend the International Student Experience Development Day, the Women in Leadership Conference and the Black Women's Conference for a cost of £204 in total.

*SOC agreed to T A Ngo's attendance at the above events with the money to come from the Training Budget.*

J Dickinson advised that he had visited Kent University students' union and had spoken to their ENTS department. He noted that Kent's licence had been put at risk over the issue of allowing members to leave their events with alcohol. He believed it important to ensure that members did not take alcohol with them when leaving UUEAS events. He noted this might cause some complaints to be raised by students via social media. He noted that the change in policy would be

implemented with sensitivity and phased in gradually over a period of weeks. He advised that the issue of students drinking in the Square on a sunny day was a different matter and that UUEAS would be applying for the Square to become a licensed area.

R Rawle reported that UCU would be taking further industrial action on 5 December and she hoped to have a strong student presence on the picket line.

J Dickinson advised that it was apparent that the University employers were intransigent and that there was the prospect of protracted industrial action that might involve UCU members refusing to mark students' work and this would pose difficulties for the student movement.

*SOC agreed that a clear up to date policy proposal as to industrial action on campus would be brought to the 5 December meeting.*

### **Action**

R Rawle reported that Officers on Tour had gone well and she was working on improving the accompanying presentational material. However, she apologised to E Gilbert who had been kept waiting by other Officers for a considerable period of time at the Edith Cavell. SOC congratulated the Academic Officer on the breakthroughs over exam timetables timetabling.

R Rawle reported that the BBC 'Today' programme were looking for UEA students to talk about their attitudes to personal debt and she would be publicising this opportunity to members.

R Knott reported she would be organising a boycott the 'Sun' protest outside WH Smith's in the city.

T A Ngo suggested it would be very useful if Officers' were provided with business cards. Officers agreed this would help professionalise SOC's profile with, at the Chair's suggestion, the cards to be called: 'Campaign Cards'.

*SOC agreed to ask J Levell to investigate the cost of personalised cards for Officers.*

### **Action**

R Knott reported that she would, in the near future, be re-establishing the Safe Sex stall in the corridor by the Grad Bar; the stall had been closed since an incident involving visitors to campus who had punctured many of the condoms.

#### **1052 Time, Date and Place of Next Meeting**

4 pm, Thursday 21 November in the Board Room with the Chief Executive to report on decisions reached by the Trustee Board at its meeting on 16 November.

#### **1047 Informal Meeting of SOC on Tuesday 12 November**

H Staynor delivered her report on the discussions which had looked at the structure of SOC and its meetings, the balance between formal and informal meetings, funding requests and budgets.

Chair noted that, as to budgets, if the money left in the Campaigns budget was divided up and allocated to individual Officers it would

come to £450 per head. He suggested that each Officer would take charge over their own budget which would mean SOC meetings would not be taken up with individual funding requests.

*SOC noted that there were not Officers present to properly make this decision and that formal approval would be sought at the next meeting.*

*SOC agreed that the format of meetings would be discussed at the next meeting.*

**Action**