

Union of UEA Students Purpose:

“To enrich the life of every UEA student”



Minutes of the Student Officer Committee

12 December 2013

Summary

Key Discussions

- Heard report on timeline for consultation and referendum on a possible new Full Time Officer structure
- Heard report from DRO on 'Blurred Lines' referendum and NUS Delegate elections
- Relationship between Union Council Action Log Committee and SOC

Key Actions

- B Foday elected as DRO for the General Election
- Proposal for the allocation of Campaigns Budgets for 2014-15 accepted in principle
- Open sub-committee to be established on Block Grant strategy
- Relationship between Union Council Action Log Committee and SOC to be considered at first meeting of next term

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Voting Members present:

Bintu Foday (Community and Student Rights Officer), Louise Withers Green (Academic Officer), Rosie Rawle (Communications Officer), Kimberley Hirst-Jones (Postgraduate Officer), Ella Gilbert (Non Portfolio Officer), Eunice Opare-Addo (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Emma Silk (Environment Officer), Daniel Delargy (Students with Disabilities Officer), Freddie Meade (Non-Portfolio Officer), Tu An Ngo (International Officer), Holly Staynor (LGBT+ Officer), Trevor Killeen (Mature Students Officer).

Non-voting Member

Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive).

Chair

Joe Raynes (Non Portfolio Officer).

In attendance:

Tony Moore (Representation Support Worker)

Apologies:

Sebastian Bachelier (Non Portfolio Officer), Lauren Sloan (Ethical Issues Officer), Rachel Knott (Women's Officer), Joe Levell (Finance Officer).

1088 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2013

The minutes were agreed.

1089 Action Log

Democracy and Representation Review Working Group: Chair noted this issue had been raised at the last meeting of Council. R Rawle reported she had no updates but she would be setting up a formative meeting for the start of the next term. SOC agreed this would be added to the log.

Personal Campaign Budgets: Chair apologised that he had not drafted the paper but that he would have this ready for the next meeting.

1090 Matters Arising

T Killeen reported as to the revised timetable for the consultation and referendum on the FTO restructuring proposal. He noted that each of the Liberations Officers would be asked to take responsibility for convening a focus group between 6 January and 20 January and that these would be followed by an open plenary meeting on 20 January. He asked that Officers try to engage students from hard to reach groups with little history of involvement in UUEAS. He noted Officers' views would be sought at the 16 January SOC meeting and that the consultation's results would be presented to Council on 23 January and the referendum would be called on 24 January.

1091 Elections

B Foday was elected, under the STV system, as DRO for the General Election.

1092 Cops Off Campus

F Meade noted that the funding request had been reduced to £50. He reported that the event had been a powerful, largely peaceful protest with an encouragingly strong presence of female students. He noted that three UUEAS members had attended. SOC agreed the funding request.

1093 Allocation of Campaigns Budgets

J Dickinson drew attention to his advisory paper with its proposals as to the next year's budget.

He noted that, from previous discussions, there had been a sense that there was confusion as to the boundaries between the Training and the Campaigns Budgets and there was a desire to give Officers some but not total autonomy as to their own budgets whilst maintaining accountability. He noted the lack of a planning culture for the funding of attendance at events and the constraints within the Constitution that required that certain Officers attended certain events. He noted that, in comparison with other SUs, the overall campaigns and training budgets were astonishingly small.

He noted his proposal would be that the Officer Training Budget would not be set at an arbitrary figure based on past precedent but would be based on an analysis and plan of actual training needs. He proposed creating a Conferences and Events budget for automatic use under the plan. In addition, he proposed separate budgets for events that arose, attendance at which had been mandated by Council, and a separate Priority Campaigns budget alongside a separate Liberations, Equality and Diversity budget that would also support the Equal Opportunities Review which would, in future, take place annually.

R Rawle noted there was provision, at present, for ordinary members to apply for campaign funding but this facility was rarely used; she argued that this should be encouraged.

Chair noted that this would be covered by the provision for funding for ad hoc events and the fact that ordinary members were able to request campaign funding should be more widely publicised.

SOC formally agreed to accept, in principle, the Chief Executive's budget

recommendations.

Action

1094 Emergency Motion: Revised FAQ Report to Council

Chair noted this was on the agenda as the motion mandated SOC to set up an open sub-committee of Council to create a Block Grant strategy. SOC received an emergency paper from the Finance Officer on the implementation of the motion's Resolves. SOC agreed that Resolves 1 would be dealt with by Management Committee and that the open sub-committee would be facilitated by the Finance Officer and F Meade (Non Portfolio Officer).

Action

1095 Management Committee Minutes

SOC received the minutes of the 11 November meeting.
R Rawle noted the exciting development that UUEAS had opted for NUS Digital as the new web services provider.
R Rawle asked for an update on the Coffee/Catering exercise.
J Dickinson advised that this was a joint, non-binding, consultation with the University concerning the provision of food and hot beverages on campus; that bids had been tendered for the consultation and a contactor had just been appointed to undertake it.

1096 Any Other Business

E Gilbert reported that the Bike Coop event had been inspirational and that UUEAS would be receiving bike support in the future.
B Foday apologised that, as DRO, she had not presented a formal Election Report to SOC. She reported that 2,397 votes had been cast in the combined NUS Delegate elections and the 'Blurred Lines' referendum. She noted that R Knott, E Foster, D Wigglesworth, and E Folan were elected as NUS delegates and the PG Representative elected was L Francis. B Foday noted that the ban on playing the song 'Blurred Lines' in UUEAS premises was rejected with 75% of votes and 25% of votes for. She noted that she had struggled as DRO because of the lack of staff support but she noted she had received assurances that this would be in place for the General Election.
R Rawle asked for SOC's opinion as to how the Union Council Action Log Committee (UCALC) had been functioning. She noted that UCALC was, currently, an open committee of volunteers from Council. She noted she was conscious that the Committee had been making detailed policy implementation requests of individual Officers and she felt it might be desirable if SOC had more involvement in the Committee's work. She noted that there were practical considerations to bear in mind as UCALC's work was quite detailed and time consuming. She thought there might be three possible solutions: Officers might attend UCALC meetings, the work of UCALC might be subsumed as it was into SOC meetings or be subsumed in a less detailed format into SOC meetings.
L Withers Green believed it important that UCALC had ownership of UCALC's work.
E Gilbert thought that UCALC's work might be undertaken online, collaboratively in a live, updatable document.

T Killeen believed that SOC found itself hard-pressed to complete its existing business and that he was unsure that it would be an appropriate use of SOC's time to attempt to also undertake the work of UCALC. He noted that Officers had been welcome to attend the UCALC meetings but that, apart from the Chair, R Rawle, L Sloan and himself, nobody had attended. He doubted whether Officers were prepared to devote extra time in SOC meetings and that UCALC, as it presently functioned, achieved concrete results. He believed that if Officers were concerned about 'ownership' then they should attend the UCALC meetings.

L Wither Green noted that she had had a complaint from a student that their policy, which had been approved by Council, had not been actioned because, they felt that, UCALC members had not taken the policy seriously.

R Rawle noted that UCALC only delegated responsibility for actions; it was not involved in implementation of policy.

Chair asked as to what procedure had been followed the previous year. T Killeen noted there had been no procedure and he believed this was a huge problem as nobody had then been tasked with policy implementation and a whole raft of policies had consequently been left un-actioned.

R Rawle believed a way forward might be for UCALC to be responsible for a detailed analysis of new policies and to break them down into required actions and that these should then be brought to SOC as recommendations which would be discussed and then approved by SOC.

T Killeen reiterated his doubts that Officers would be prepared to spend extra time on policy implementation in SOC meetings and voiced his doubts that Officers actually read the Council Action Log each week.

Chair noted that the meeting would have to close as it was time for the joint meeting with the Trustees to commence; he noted that the relationship between SOC and UCALC would be further considered at the next SOC meeting.

1097

Time, Date and Place

5 pm, Thursday 16 January in the Board Room.