

Union of UEA Students Purpose:

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"



Minutes of the Student Officer Committee

16 January 2014

Summary

Key Discussions

- Guest speakers at Council
- Actions requested by Council
- Relationship between Union Council Action Log Committee and SOC
- Full Time Officer structure consultation
- Students' Awareness of the Referendum Process
- Planning for Winter Olympics Campaign
- Officer Participation in the Livewire Union Show
- Student Accommodation rent levels
- The closure of UEA London

Key Actions

- Noted resignation of T Killeen, as Mature Students Officer and agreed that there would be not enough time to hold a By Election before the General Election
- Election of Chair and Deputy Chair to be held at next meeting
- Sub-Committee formed to design a matrix for UUEAS decision making, included in the matrix will be where the mandating of Officers on policy implementation would be situated
- Confirmed J Levell' leadership of the Full Time Officer structure consultation

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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), Emma Silk (Environment Officer), Freddie Meade (Non-Portfolio Officer), Tu An Ngo (International Officer), Holly Staynor (LGBT+ Officer), Sebastian Bachelier (Non Portfolio Officer), Lauren Sloan (Ethical Issues Officer), Rachel Knott (Women's Officer), Joe Levell (Finance Officer).

Non-voting Member

Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive).

Chair

Joe Raynes (Non Portfolio Officer).

In attendance:

Tony Moore (Representation Support Worker)

Apologies:

Eunice Opare-Addo (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Daniel Delargy (Students with Disabilities Officer).

Chair noted the resignation of T Killeen, Mature Students Officer. SOC agreed that there would be not enough time to hold a By Election before the General Elections. SOC noted that, in the interim, an informal committee would work towards supporting mature students with upcoming welcome events and that an exit interview would be conducted with T Killeen.

1098 The Role of Chair and Deputy Chair and meetings' timetable

J Raynes noted he would be happy to continue as Chair but noted the resignation of T Killeen meant there would have to be an election for

Deputy Chair.

L Sloan noted that SOC had agreed to review the position of Chair at a point six weeks into the last semester but this had not happened; she, therefore, asked that an election be held.

SOC agreed that elections for Chair and Deputy Chair would be held at the next meeting.

SOC agreed to the Chair's suggestion that, on a trial basis, it would not hold a formal meeting in the weeks when Council was due to meet but would hold informal meetings where Officers would review the Council agenda and the SOC Report to Council.

1099 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2013

The minutes were agreed.

1100 Action Log

Student reps on academic appeals panels: L Withers Green noted that this would be discussed at a future date when the University working group on Chapter 9 of the Quality Assurance Code met. In view of this, Chair asked that this item be deleted from the Log.

Ethical Banking: R Rawle noted she would hope to have this ready for the February meeting of Council.

Personal Campaign Cards: J Levell noted he would find out the costs.

Personal Campaign Budgets: Chair noted he would draft a paper for the next meeting.

Guest speakers at Union Council: R Rawle noted she would be discussing this with the Chair of Council.

1101 Matters Arising

There were none.

1102 Actions Required by Union Council

Chair noted that the Union Council Action Log Committee (UCALC) had not met so the Secretary to SOC had drawn up a digest of actions required by Council from his draft minutes of Council.

R Rawle noted she would follow up the payment of subscriptions to organisations that UUEAS had affiliated to.

L Withers Green confirmed that a formal complaint had been made to the police that their prior knowledge of plans for an attempt to steal the cash machine from Union House had not been shared with UUEAS.

R Rawle noted that discussions on the changes to the General Regulations were on-going and that members of ET would be invited to the third Council of the semester; as the first meeting already had guest speakers and the second meeting would be looking at policy for NUS National Conference. She noted that the power to invite guest speakers lay with the Chair of Council.

L Sloan noted there had been a number of speakers invited to Council and noted her belief that SOC had agreed that guest speakers should be invited to separate events and not to meetings of Council; she further believed that NUS policy discussions should take place in a separate meeting. Chair noted that SOC had not agreed to this but had agreed to discuss with the matter with the Chair of Council.

J Dickinson advised that the Chair of Council had agreed to a full discussion of policy for the NUS National Conference at the second meeting of Council.

Chair noted that Officers concerns would be raised in the discussions with the Chair of Council.

J Dickinson advised that the report on implementation of the Zero Tolerance policy would need to wait until the proposed Code of Conduct had been approved and some of the Bye-Laws had been amended.

L Withers Green noted, as to Students as Partners, that she would be presenting a paper at the Learning and Teaching day amongst other initiatives but she believed this matter was central to what she did and that it informed every interaction she had with the University; in view of this, she believed, it would be difficult to present a discrete plan as requested by Council. She noted she would speak to Council about the matter.

B Foday noted that the police had been informed about the policy as to restrictions on the police entering Union House.

1103 Relationship between SOC and the Union Council Action Log Committee (UCALC)

Chair noted there had been a concern raised that as Officers were elected to implement policy that UCALC might be deemed unconstitutional. He believed that the workings of UCALC took up a lot of SOC's time and there was no specific policy outlining its remit.

Chair believed one possible course would be for UCALC to continue to function as presently but that SOC would have the power to put policies on its agenda that it was felt SOC should discuss.

R Rawle noted she had requested to the Chair of Council that new policy proposals should name specific Officers of whom specific actions were required. She believed this would greatly aid SOC in its ability to report on the progress of policy implementation.

L Sloan agreed that this would be helpful. On the role of UCALC, she believed this to be purely the creation of an action log and that it had no political role, whatsoever. She noted that any Officer could attend UCALC meetings.

L Withers Green believed the question of ownership to be relevant in that it would be more productive and empowering if individual Officers interpreted policies by themselves.

Chair noted that the Secretary's draft of actions required by Council had appeared to have worked well and might be adopted.

J Dickinson advised that there were two separate tasks under discussion: an administrative task and an interpretative one. He advised that the Secretary would be able to perform the administrative task of preparing a log but that it was standard practice in the student movement for mandated Officers, themselves, to interpret any actions required of them.

L Sloan noted that UCALC had been set up because of the massive backlog of policies that had not been actioned. She believed it to be concerned entirely with administration and not with interpretation.

R Rawle noted that UCALC had been formed as she had felt that, she alone, could not undertake the vast amount of work involved in recording policy implementation.

R Rawle suggested that UCALC's work might be incorporated into SOC meetings and that the policy log and deadlines would be set within SOC. Chair noted that this had been a long discussion and that the matter would have to be left for the time being.

Note: later, in the meeting, this matter was referred to the new committee established to formulate a decision making matrix for UUEAS.

1104 Full Time Officer Structure Consultation

J Levell noted his belief that his ownership of the leadership of the consultation had been taken away from him, last semester, as other Officers had believed that he had been acting against their wishes. He noted that because of the issues over leadership the consultation had been stalled somewhat. However, he drew attention to the plan he had circulated and believed that the process was still on track. He drew attention to two problems. Firstly, he thought it important for SOC to affirm its confidence in his leadership of the consultation. Secondly, part of the consultation process was that Liberations Officers were meant to be conducting focus groups with their constituents and these had not taken place.

SOC agreed to support J Levell's continued leadership of the consultation. SOC agreed that break-out focus groups run by PTOs would be held at the forthcoming General Meeting.

SOC agreed to hold a meeting after Council, on 24 January, to consider the results of the consultation and the informal discussion at Council, to set the questions and to call the Referendum.

Action

1105 Students' Awareness of the Referendum Process

SOC noted there had been an extremely poor turn-out for the General Meeting on the 'Blurred Lines' Referendum but the numbers of students who had actually voted had been high; SOC concluded, therefore, that students' awareness of the process, itself, was not problematic.

1106 UUEAS Decision Making Matrix

SOC agreed that a committee would be formed to devise a matrix to clarify what kind of questions would be decided by which parts of UUEAS governance structure. SOC agreed that L Sloan would be the lead Officer supported by J Raynes and by T Moore as staff member. Chair and Deputy Chair of Council would be invited to take part.

1107 Planning for Winter Olympics Campaign

H Staynor noted the campaign would tie in with the following month's LGBT History Month. She noted that 5,000 rainbow stickers had been ordered and UUEAS sports teams would be asked to wear them when they play in February. She noted the campaign was to raise awareness about the Putin regime's anti-gay policies and the climate of homophobia in Russia and to show solidarity with LGBT athletes competing in the Games.

SOC agreed to E Gilbert's suggestion that the campaign be extended to include Derby Day.

SOC noted that UUEAS staff would be asked to wear the stickers.

SOC noted F Meade's question as to whether the Games would be shown on the TVs in the Bars and noted this matter would be brought to Council.

Action

1108 Officer Participation in the Livewire Union Show

SOC noted receipt of R Attfield's letter in which he urged Officers to take part in the Show. Chair noted this was an excellent opportunity for Officers to communicate with the membership.

R Rawle noted the present slot clashed with Officers on Tour and that, for this term, SOC should ensure that these did not clash.

SOC agreed to Livewire's suggestion and that they would decide at each SOC meeting which Officers would be appearing on the Show.

Action

1109 Management Committee Minutes

SOC received the minutes without comment.

1110 Any Other Business

B Foday asked the Chief Executive to brief SOC on recent developments concerning the setting of rents by the University for student accommodation.

J Dickinson advised that he and the Finance Officer, along with a representative from the GSA, had attended a briefing by the University on accommodation rent levels for the following year. He noted this had been a briefing and not a consultation. He noted a further cause for concern was that the briefing had been in confidence and he believed this to show a level of mistrust by one particular part of the University. He noted there had been some assurances given that in future there would be some sort of consultation. On the substantive issues, he reported that the arguments made by the University as to the future rent levels had been focused on the needs of the institution rather than those of students. He noted what would be of deep concern to UUEAS was that there had been no link made whatsoever between the University's rent setting strategy and its widening participation strategy. He noted that he would draft a briefing document for the FTOs who had indicated that they would take the matter to Council for a political decision to be made as to future action.

SOC agreed that a motion would be drafted by the FTOs the following day and circulated to Officers.

Action

R Rawle noted that UUEAS minutes on the website went back five years and that to migrate these to the new website would take a large amount of staff time.

SOC agreed that only minutes covering the last two years would be migrated and that older minutes would be made available on request.

R Rawle reported that she and Nerea Rosa-Barros, the regional organiser on Get the Vote Out, had had a hugely inspiring meeting with the President of NUA. She noted that UUEAS would be taking part in National

Voter Registration Day and would have a target of registering 2,000 voters. She noted this would be in Norwich on 5 February and there would be a big push to involve volunteers. She noted there would be weekly organising meetings that Officers were welcome to attend.

B Foday reported that the following week was Well Being Week and Give It a Go Week.

SOC noted the closure by the University of UEA London.

J Dickinson advised that UUEAS had been holding discussion with the University over how those students affected by the closure would be compensated, moved to appropriate alternative universities or offered assistance to move to Norwich. He noted the latter might involve free accommodation or travel and help with moving costs.

J Levell noted the FTOs had visited London and he had had Skype conversations with the London students. He noted that many of the students would be coming to Norwich on 29 January.

T A Ngo voiced her particular concerns for those international students affected.

1111 Time, Date and Place

Chair noted there would be an informal meeting before Council on Thursday at 5 pm. He noted he would survey Officers as to the best time for the formal meeting on 24 January concerning the Full Time Officer structure referendum.