

## **Union of UEA Students Purpose:**

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"



## **Minutes of the Student Officer Committee**

**24 January 2014**

### **Summary**

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### **Key Discussions**

- Results of Full Time Officer Structure Consultation and calling of Referendum

### **Key Actions**

- Agreed to add Diversity to the proposed Welfare and Community Officer title
- Agreed to drop 'Internal Affairs' to the proposed Campaigns and Democracy Officer title
- Agreed that, in the proposal, an individual Officer should take lead democratic responsibility for commercial services as opposed to the responsibility being allocated jointly to all Officers
- Agreed that only Postgraduate students would be allowed to stand in the proposed PG Education Officer elections
- Agreed that only Undergraduate students would be allowed to stand in the proposed UG Education Officer elections
- Agreed to the concept of a Democratic Procedures Committee to be included in the Referendum
- Accept the overall proposals on the Referendum with the above changes included

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### **Voting Members present:**

Eunice Opare-Addo (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Bintu Foday (Community and Student Rights Officer), Louise Withers Green (Academic Officer), Rosie Rawle (Communications Officer), Kimberley Hirst-Jones (Postgraduate Officer), Emma Silk (Environment Officer), Tu An Ngo (International 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:**

Ella Gilbert (Non Portfolio Officer), Holly Staynor (LGBT+ Officer), Daniel Delargy (Students with Disabilities Officer), Freddie Meade (Non-Portfolio Officer),

### **1112 Election of Chair and Deputy Chair**

SOC elected J Raynes as Chair and L Withers Green election for the remainder of the academic year.

SOC noted the new amendment to the Constituency which stipulated that Councillors who missed two Council meetings and Officers who missed three SOC meetings would be liable to dismissal.

Chair asked that members who were due to miss a meeting should send their formal apologies prior to the meeting.

### **1113 Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2013**

The minutes were agreed.

**1114 Matters Arising**

There were none.

**1115 Officers on Livewire Union Show**

J Levell and T A Ngo to take part, the following week.

**1117 Any Other Business**

B Foday noted that the Go Global committee had chosen three charities, Street Children, Wateraid and Alzheimer's, to be part of a best charity poll to raise awareness and funds.

B Foday reported from the Faith Committee that the Inter-Faith Day would take place on 28 February with events to be held in the Square.

SOC agreed that the Officer Report template that had been used for Council had been useful.

R Rawle reported that National Voter Registration Day would be taking place on 28 February and that UUEAS would be working with City College and NUA and she would be looking for volunteer support on the day.

R Rawle reported that on 5 February there would be actions in protest at the privatisation by the UK government of student debt.

TA Ngo noted that the following week would see the start of the Chinese New Year and she would be raising awareness of the event around the campus.

**1116 Results of Full Time Officer Structure Consultation and calling of Referendum**

J Levell circulated a Report on the Consultation and the General Meeting with proposals for the Referendum which he noted would recommend that there be two questions: the first as to whether to change the FTO structure and the second as whether UUEAS should have a President. He also noted that the proposals included the formation of a Democratic Procedures Committee to scrutinise UUEAS democracy and governance with members elected for two year terms. He noted that these posts would be open to students who were graduating as they would be able to serve on the Committee as alumni and that he would clarify this in the final draft.

J Levell noted T A Ngo's question as to whether the words 'internal affairs' should be in the Campaigns and Democracy Officer title as this might be misleading. J Levell thought this would be useful as the 'go to ' Officer who students could contact if they were dissatisfied with any UUEAS services.

SOC discussed various alternative role titles, including 'Campaigns, Democracy and Services'.

*SOC agreed that the phrase 'internal affairs' would be inappropriate for this role's title as they believed it had not been a concern expressed in the consultation.*

*SOC voted by 6 votes to 5 against to have the role title as, simply, Campaigns and Democracy Officer.*

*SOC agreed to B Foday's suggestion that main contact with the NUS be removed from the Campaigns and Democracy Officer's role description.*

SOC discussed the role specification for the Campaigns and Democracy Officer post and whether this involved a leadership function as to campaigns and its responsibilities for the commercial services and the budget and whether the latter should be an individual or a collective responsibility.

*SOC agreed, by 6 votes to 5 votes, that an individual Officer should take lead democratic responsibility for commercial services as opposed to the responsibility being allocated jointly to all Officers.*

TA Ngo asked that 'Diversity' be added to the Welfare and Community Officer role title as it would be a recognisable word for her constituents. SOC discussed whether it would be advisable to have a staff member responsible for diversity issues and whether there should be a reserved place on the FTO team.

TA Ngo reported on the difficulties she had encountered trying to engage international students in the consultation process.

*SOC agreed by a large majority to add the word 'Diversity' to the Welfare and Community Officer role title.*

On the Postgraduate Education Officer, SOC noted that the 1 July start date might be inappropriate and that research students should be highlighted as an integral part of the Officer's constituency.

SOC considered whether to place restrictions on the ability to stand and to vote in the UG and PG Education Officer elections.

S Bachelier noted that, if the franchise were to be restricted, he would be unable to vote for the PG Education Officer who would be taking decisions on matters which would affect all students.

J Levell believed it to be important that PG students as a group got to choose their own representative.

SOC discussed the anomalous position of PGCE students.

*SOC agreed, with one abstention, that only Postgraduate students would be allowed to stand in the PG Education Officer elections.*

*SOC agreed that only Undergraduate students would be allowed to stand in the UG Education Officer elections.*

R Rawle argued, as to the Democratic Procedures Committee, that there were many different committees functioning and that an overarching committee might stifle the diverse and inclusive nature of these contributions.

J Levell believed it important that members would be directly elected to scrutinise UUEAS' democracy and think innovatively about the Constitution.

L Sloan noted that Council had only recently created a Committee of experts to advise on the Constitution and that this was an apolitical body and she was concerned about its relationship with the proposed Procedures Committee. She thought it strange that this experiment would be abandoned without the Committee ever being allowed to function.

R Rawle noted her concern that the new Committee might undermine the powers of Council.

L Withers Green believed it to be apparent that not all students trusted Council as a representative body.

*SOC agreed, by 7 votes for, two against with 1 abstention, to the concept of a Democratic Procedures Committee; that its meetings would be open, that its members would be elected by the generality of students and FTOs and Trustees would not be allowed to stand for election to the Committee.*

SOC discussed the matter as to whether there should be a separate question on whether UUEAS should have a lead officer.

Chair noted that the task was to conduct a referendum that reflected the findings of the consultation which had shown that students wanted a presidential style role but were split over what to call it.

L Sloan noted that it was up to the DRO to set the Referendum questions but she asked that her concerns be noted that the recommendations would mean that the questions were leading and that extraneous information would be included.

B Foday confirmed to SOC that she would endeavour to ensure that there would be no leading questions in the Referendum.

R Rawle argued that within the consultation there had been two possibilities adumbrated: a leadership role and a flat structure with an Officer given responsibility for union affairs.

J Levell believed that these two possibilities were included in the Report.

R Rawle believed the word 'President' should be deleted from any recommendation on the Referendum question and be replaced by 'Union Affairs'.

J Levell noted that a President need not be seen as permanent; there might be a constitutional guarantee that a review would be held in say two years in the future.

L Sloan noted that, to her, it sounded pretty fucking permanent.

J Dickinson advised that there was a danger if one titled a role, that involved some mode of leadership, as 'Union Affairs' one might be misleading the electorate.

Chair suggested moving to a vote on the overall proposals submitted by the Finance Officer.

*SOC agreed, by 7 votes for with two against, to accept the overall proposals with any changes agreed to earlier in the evening to be included*

**1118**

**Time, Date and Place**

5 pm, Thursday, 30 January in Room 1.31, Union House.