

**Union of UEA Students Purpose:**

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"

**Minutes of the Student Officer Committee**

**30 January 2014**

**Summary**

---

**Key Discussions**

- Showing the Winter Olympics on TV in the Bars
- Proposal in the Referendum to abolish the GSA place on SOC
- Legal status of affiliations to external organisations
- Procedure for reviewing implementation of policies passed by Union Council

**Key Actions**

- Awareness-raising about the Winter Olympics to take place in the Bars during the first week of the Games and then the matter of a TV ban in the Bars would be put to Council.
- Scheduled a joint meeting with the GSA the following day to address the GSA's concerns and to discuss about the proposed abolition of the GSA place on SOC. Referendum to be deferred until this meeting.
- Agreed to send the matter of affiliations to external organisations to Council and to the Trustee Board for consideration.

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

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"



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

**30 January 2014**

---

### **Voting Members present:**

Daniel Delargy (Students with Disabilities Officer), Ella Gilbert (Non Portfolio Officer), 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)

#### **1119 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2014**

The minutes were agreed.

#### **1120 Matters Arising**

There were none.

#### **1121 Action Log**

R Rawle reported, on the ambiguity of referendum item, she was awaiting replies from the Constitutional Review Group. She would also be advertising the CRG to Councillors as some members of the group had recently left.

R Rawle noted she had arranged an exit interview with T Killeen. She reported that the Democracy and Representation Working Group would be meeting, for the first time, later in the day.

Chair noted that the question about not showing the Winter Olympics in the Bars had not been put to Council and he wondered how SOC wished to proceed as, normally, this would be a matter for Council but he wondered whether SOC might make a decision based on existing LGBT+ policy. SOC noted that there had been a big reaction from the wider membership over the ESSA boycott; even though this had been based on policy.

*SOC noted that the Games would start a week before Council met and agreed that there would be awareness-raising on the issue in the Bars during that week and then the matter would be put to Council.*

**1122 Officers on Livewire Union Show**

K Hirst-Jones, J Levell and J Raynes to take part, the following week.

**1123 Full Time Officer Structure Referendum**

B Foday, as DRO, noted the General meeting would take place the following Monday.

B Foday noted to L Sloan that if Proposal 1 fell and Proposal 2 passed then Proposal 2, as it was an amendment to Proposal 1, could not be adopted and this would need to be explained to voters.

SOC noted that members should be encouraged to vote on both questions.

SOC noted that there had been questions raised as to whether a two-thirds majority was needed for both proposals or whether because the second proposal was an amendment to a Constitutional Amendment it would only require a simple majority.

J Dickinson advised that there was a difference of opinion on this matter that would be needed to be settled before the count and that this should be sent to the Trustee Board for a ruling. He noted that there was the question of whether the Returning Officer might be involved as they were charged with interpretation of the election regulations or whether this was a wider constitutional matter and, thus, within the remit of the Trustees. He advised that he would be contacting the Trustees shortly.

K Hirst-Jones noted that SOC had agreed that the Part Time Structure would remain unchanged but when the proposed new structure had been published it included the abolition of the Postgraduate Part-Time Officer post.

Chair believed the assumption had been that the role would change from part time to full time.

K Hirst-Jones believed that the effect would be that the GSA would no longer be represented at SOC.

J Levell noted that SOC could still invite the GSA President SOC.

K Hirst-Jones noted that this would still mean they were not official voting members of SOC.

L Sloan argued that this problem illustrated why it would have been prudent to consult the GSA before deciding their future. She, further, noted that the consultation had always been billed as not changing the PTO structure and the new proposal had contradicted this assertion.

J Levell noted that change to the PTO structure had been in the proposal that SOC agreed at its last meeting.

K Hirst-Jones noted that SOC had only been given the new proposals a few minutes before the last meeting.

J Dickinson advised that SOC had two possible courses of action: to withdraw the Referendum or to adjust the proposals after the Referendum in conjunction with the GSA. He noted there was much work to be done in supporting the GSA's recreational and social services as well as putting in place staff support for them.

K Hirst-Jones believed the Referendum process should be paused until after the consultation with the GSA had taken place.

J Levell believed there had been plenty of opportunities for different constituencies to make their views known during the consultation and he would oppose any pause.

R Rawle noted the only reference to the abolition of the PTO position in the proposal put to the last meeting had been a reference to deleting a number of Bye-Laws, and as Officers did not have the Bye-Laws to hand they did not fully comprehend what they were voting on.

TA Ngo agreed and noted this would have affected the way she had voted.

J Dickinson advised that the PTO position was not being abolished; the proposal was that half the role would become full time whilst half would exist in the GSA; the only thing missing was the link between SOC and the GSA. He advised the latter could be easily rectified immediately after the Referendum and could be published as an intention before the voting.

L Withers Green argued that if the Referendum was cancelled and the changes did not go through for next year both PG and UG students would suffer as a result.

B Foday believed matters should be clarified before the Referendum went ahead.

J Levell suggested making a written guarantee to the GSA on the future invitation to the GSA President to sit on SOC and to take this to Council as at its next meeting.

L Sloan asked that an emergency joint meeting of SOC and the GSA Committee be called. She would not feel comfortable, herself, unless the GSA's role on SOC was written in the Constitution.

Chair thought that the matter might be easily remedied by a minor change to the proposal which would formalise an invitation to SOC for the GSA President.

K Hirst-Jones believed there needed to be a detailed discussion as to the role and the wider relationship between the GSA and UUEAS.

Chair believed that UUEAS was embarking on a set of changes and issues like this would no doubt come up during this process and could be addressed as they arose. He believed that a meeting with the GSA would be able to resolve the issue; if it could not, then a decision on the Referendum could be made after the meeting.

E Opare-Addo wondered whether it would be possible to delay the Referendum for a week in order for further consultation to take place.

J Levell noted that SOC had agreed a timetable for consultation last semester and that any delay to the Referendum would make the General Elections unworkable. He believed that minor tweaks to the structure could be made to suit everyone involved without this delay.

L Sloan believed the logical outcome of J Levell's position would be that

students would be asked to vote on a question the meaning of which SOC were unsure of.

R Knott noted the concerns over the consultation but believed the GSA had had plenty of notice to feed in their views. She noted that UUEAS was often criticised for only letting students know about decisions at the last minute and she believed that cancelling the Referendum at this stage would confirm this view and make UUEAS look ridiculous.

TA Ngo argued that UUEAS would look even worse if it, in effect, said to a hard to reach group of students: sorry we have not got time to talk to you and we are going to make a key decision on the way you are represented without consulting your Committee.

K Hirst-Jones agreed as to the time the GSA had been given but she noted the meagre resources, as a full time student and PTO, with which she had been expected to consult with all PG students. She felt that students would not think UUEAS to be a joke for taking the time to properly consider issues raised by the GSA.

R Rawle argued that the issue was not about the length of the consultation it was about the fact that the GSA had only just been made aware that the PTO post would be abolished.

SOC examined and noted the difficulties in pushing the General Election back another week due to postponing the Referendum dates.

L Sloan reiterated her call for an emergency meeting with the GSA.

R Rawle believed it perfectly possible to have a quorate joint meeting, the following day.

*SOC agreed to schedule a joint meeting with the GSA the following day to address the GSA's concerns and to discuss recommendations to the DRO as to any required changes to the Referendum. SOC noted that any decision on postponing the Referendum would be deferred until this meeting.*

**1124**

#### **UUEAS Affiliations**

R Rawle drew SOC's attention to her written report on the affiliations to external organisations, where no fees had, as yet, been paid.

J Dickinson advised that he had reviewed the affiliations and he would advise that affiliation to Stop The War would be unlawful as affiliations had to be compatible with a charity's objects and UUEAS' objects were educational and related to students as students.

He advised that it would be perfectly permissible for a group of like-minded students to form a Stop The War Society which could then, as a Society, make an affiliation.

He advised that, even without an affiliation fee being paid some affiliations might result in a legal challenge.

He advised that SOC alert Union Council to this problem and ask Council to decide a course of action.

*SOC agreed to send the matter of affiliations to external organisations to Council and to the Trustee Board for consideration.*

**1125**

#### **Policy Passed by Council (including new Code of Conduct)**

J Dickinson advised, as to the new Code of Conduct, that it was really

important, if Officers became aware of any misconduct occurring under the auspices of UUEAS, to encourage members to not try to resolve matters through social media but through the formal Code. He noted that for the first time, UUEAS would have a formal code that covered the behaviour of Full Time Officers, as well as ordinary members. He noted the Code did not cover poor political performance; it was purely about FTO's personal conduct. He advised that questions about cases that fell in between these two areas would be referred to a supervising Trustee and their decisions would be reported to Council.

B Foday, on University rents, noted the University had agreed that in future there would be some form of consultation but that they would not be changing their stance on the rent increase as they believed a 4% increase to be reasonable.

R Rawle noted the University had during the discussions asked how the Officers expected the estate to be maintained, which included refurbishing Union House, without a rent increase.

L Sloan noted, that if a member of University staff had spoken about a direct link between the rent rise and the funding of the refurbishment of Union House, she would like her disquiet recorded in the SOC minutes that money had been taken from students for the redevelopment of Union premises.

SOC noted the need for the twin track of lobbying and campaigning. SOC noted that the Relationship Agreement with the University policy was a long term one and no actions, as yet, had been taken.

SOC noted the changes to the Staff Protocol without comment.

R Rawle asked how SOC wanted to review policies for implementation; she wondered whether SOC wanted her to just bring the most recently passes policies to future meetings or did Officers want her to review the entire body of policies and recommend associated action points. She thought it best that a group of Officers did this rather than she, alone. Chair felt that individual Officers should look through the policies and identify action points.

R Rawle noted the Union Council Action Log Committee had taken on the task of identifying action points in the policies and now that the Committee had been disbanded there would be no body undertaking this task; she believed this to not be good in terms of accountability. Chair noted that a decision had not been made as to this matter; it was to be decided upon after the group, meeting to explore a decision making matrix, had reported.

Chair agreed to a suggestion from R Rawle that this left the process in limbo.

L Withers Green wondered whether SOC could simply ask the proposers of each resolution to lead on their implementation as policy.

R Rawle believed this would be fine for recently formulated policy but would be problematic for older policies.

L Sloan proposed that the Union Council Action Log Committee should meet until the decision making matrix report had been received.

Chair noted that the Committee could meet as often as they wanted.

L Sloan noted that the Committee were under the impression that SOC believed the Committee's efforts were useless and the Committee should

not meet.

R Rawle felt that it would be insulting to the Committee for SOC having told them it was not interested in the Committee's work and then to later tell them that they could meet but with the rider that SOC would not pay any attention to the Committee's recommendations; whilst SOC was still not prepared to do the work that the Committee had undertaken.

Chair disagreed with this depiction of the decision. He noted that SOC had been concerned, partly, about the constitutionality aspect and, partly, about how to best implement policy. He did not believe that anyone had expressed the view that the Committee's work had been useless or that SOC did not care about the recommendations the Committee had made.

R Rawle noted that, for her personally, it was a difficult situation as, after the discussion at SOC, she had left the matter in abeyance and simply not called any meetings of the Committee. She further noted that the Committee had often spent three hours a week trying to structure policy implementation and she was disappointed that Officers were not prepared to take over this work.

#### **1126 Any Other Business**

J Levell noted that the Activities Manager had asked that when Officers arranged events that involved Clubs and Societies they should let the Activities Team know beforehand.

T A Ngo reported that she would be organising the international celebration of the Chinese New Year in the Blue Bar for the following day. SOC noted that D Delargy would be attending NUS students with disabilities conference and that this was an entitlement and did not need to be a funding request.

L Sloan wondered what the position was with regard to Management Committee minutes as the last that SOC had received had been from 27 November and she assumed there had been meetings since as, constitutionally, the committee was required to meet every two weeks.

J Dickinson advised there had been a meeting earlier in the day and there had been another meeting prior to this; the meeting earlier in the day had failed to approve the minutes of the earlier meeting.

L Sloan noted her understanding was that unapproved minutes would come to SOC.

J Dickinson advised that his understanding was that SOC would be given a verbal update.

R Rawle noted that the understanding had been that SOC would receive both a verbal update and unapproved minutes.

J Dickinson advised that he had not realised this.

R Rawle noted there would be a protest against the Privatisation of Student Debt, an issue that would affect every student. She noted the event was on the Thursday of the following week and she urged Officers to join the protest. She noted that only one or two Officers had joined the solidarity with the UCU industrial action and she hoped for more Officer involvement in the following week's event.

#### **1127 Time, Date and Place**

At R Rawle's request, due to the timing of the Student Debt event, at the

earlier time of 4 pm, Thursday, 6 February in 1.31, Union House.