

**Union of UEA Students Purpose:**

"To enrich the life of every UEA student"



**Minutes of the Student Officer Committee**

**27 February 2014**

**Summary**

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**Key Discussions**

- Block Grant strategy and tactics
- Whether to support the UCU's marking boycott

**Key Actions**

- SOC agreed to support the UCU's industrial action that would include a marking boycott

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### **Voting Members present:**

Ella Gilbert (Non Portfolio Officer), Rosie Rawle (Communications Officer), Kimberley Hirst-Jones (Postgraduate Officer), Tu An Ngo (International Officer), Sebastian Bachelier (Non Portfolio Officer), Lauren Sloan (Ethical Issues Officer), H Staynor (LGBT+ Officer), Freddie Meade (Non Portfolio Officer), Bintu Foday (Community and Student Rights Officer), Joe Levell (Finance Officer), Emma Silk (Environment Officer), Rachel Knott (Women's Officer), Eunice Opare-Addo (Black & Ethnic Minorities Officer), D Delargy (Students with Disabilities Officer).

### **Non-voting Member**

Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive).

### **Chair**

Joe Raynes (Non Portfolio Officer).

### **In attendance:**

Tony Moore (Representation Support Worker). B Brown, C Corkery, C Jarvis, A Robertson, H Davies, H Baker and C Cliff joined the meeting for the discussions over the Block Grant.

### **Apologies:**

L Withers Green (Academic Officer).

### **1150 Block Grant Committee**

Officers were joined by members of Union Council for the second open meeting of the Block Grant Committee in which the campaign's objects and tactics were discussed and outlined

### **1151 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2014**

The minutes were agreed.

**1152 Matters Arising**

There were none.

**1153 Action Log**

R Rawle reported, on the **ambiguity of questions in Referendums**, the CRG had met and would be making recommendations to Council one of which would be a briefing on how to write a question that was not leading.

R Rawle noted she had not, as yet conducted an exit interview with the former **Mature Students Officer**.

SOC noted that ENTS had been informed that any police presence in Union House must be included in the Events Reports.

**1154 Officers on Livewire Union Show**

To appear next week: J Raynes and R Knott.

**1155 UCU Industrial Action: Marking Boycott**

Chair noted that the proposed action might lead to marks being withheld from students at the end of the academic and might delay students from graduating. He noted that UUEAS had policy in support of the UCU but this had been over a pensions' dispute and the action taken by the UCU had been far less painful for students than the current, proposed action. He felt that SOC needed to work out where it stood and what, if any, actions should be taken.

H Staynor argued that, whatever action was contemplated, students needed to be informed urgently as she noted that students on campus were already aware of the issue and were asking for information.

F Meade felt it was important not to allow HE management to drive a wedge between students and staff.

J Levell noted that, if SOC agreed to support the action, Officers should be ready for students holding them to account for any delays in graduation.

J Dickinson confirmed to L Sloan that the NUS were in support of the UCU's action but in he advised that in terms of a political position, it was more beneficial if individual students' unions gave the NUS a lead.

R Rawle noted she had stood in the early morning cold on seven separate occasions shoulder to shoulder with UCU members and that UUEAS had stood by the UCU for justifiable reasons and it would not be right to abandon that support just because the situation was about to become more difficult. She noted UUEAS wanted what was best for students and for staff and this had to include fair pay for academic staff.

Chair asked if the possibility of withholding research rather than marking had been raised with the UCU.

J Dickinson advised it had, repeatedly, but that it had proved impossible to gain UCU's members approval for this option.

F Meade believed it important that if any blame was voiced by students over delays in graduating, this should be aimed at HE management rather than UCU members.

E Gilbert argued it would be important to work with the UCU for the best, long term outcome for students.

J Levell believed that the problems would come when students came to

the Advice Centre and voiced a criticism such as: 'you are meant to represent me but you are people who are stopping me from graduating.' H Staynor asked what the risk was as to the dispute not being settled and the boycott taking place.

J Dickinson advised that this would be difficult to gauge; he believed the UCU members would be quite solid in support of the action but there might be divisions within the employers group which might presage a settlement.

L Sloan argued it was important that university management and not UCU members should be apportioned the blame for any possible problems for students.

R Rawle noted that other SUs were being proactive and asking reps to ask their students to write in to their universities in support of their coming to a settlement with the UCU.

Chair believed the worst option would be for SOC to take no action, either way and he proposed to take a formal vote as to whether SOC agreed to support the UCU's proposed action.

*SOC agreed to support the UCU's industrial action by 11 votes for with 2 abstentions.*

*SOC agreed that R Rawle would write a resolution to bring to Union Council and that the industrial action would be an agenda item at the next SOC meeting.*

#### **1156 Elections**

R Rawle noted she would be asking Officers to each do a short video explaining their roles for the election publicity. She asked Officers to encourage students to run for their particular positions.

#### **1157 Go Global**

B Foday reported that the events so far had been very successful and that the Go Global Party would be taking place the following day. She noted the benefits of having a specific Go Global Week rather than a series of events.

#### **1158 Council Action Log**

R Rawle noted she had posted the updated Log on Facebook.

J Levell reported he would be chasing up the formation of the Commercial Services Users' Group and the actions required as to the Boards of the Subsidiary Companies would go ahead as planned.

R Knott noted she would set up the arrangements for Zero Tolerance training for the new bar staff took over at Easter for her successor to implement.

On the Time to Change to pledge, B Foday noted she would arrange a meeting with DOS.

On No Platform for Unethical Policies, R Rawle noted there were actions that needed to be taken.

B Foday noted that she was planning two big Officers On Tour event at IMTO and the Edith Cavell as well as elections events.

R Rawle noted, on the Rethinking Democracy Group as to how to make Council better and more accessible, she would like to have another

meeting.

B Foday noted that she had written to Norfolk police informing them of the police in Union House policy.

Chair noted he would be monitoring the position with regard to the government and its contract with ATOS as this might affect UUEAS policy.

SOC noted that individual Officers might write to their MPs with their concerns as to ATOS. Chair noted he would write on behalf of SOC.

R Rawle noted that the actions on University Rents should be a future SOC agenda item.

#### **1160 Officers' End Game**

Chair noted that, due to time constraints, this item would be deferred to another meeting.

#### **1159 Officer Go Round**

R Rawle: Elections publicity, Block Grant campaign, Student Loans and Fossil Free

E Gilbert : union work with UUEAS student staff

J Levell: elections and the successful submission of a bid for funding for a media hub that has made the shortlist for the £50,000 Alumni Annual Fund

E Silk: Fossil Free, Go Green and the successful screening of the file, Just Do It!

R Knott: International Women's Day and attendance at Lad Culture' Summit

F Meade: Block Grant, Marketisation of HE Teach-in in Cambridge

K Hirst-Jones: elections and GSA elections, organising three live gigs including the PG music band in the Grad Bar and PG Drama in the LCR which would be in collaboration with the Astronomy Society and trying to get funding for an extra court for badminton

Chair: elections, writing policy

S Bachelier: elections

L Sloan: a talk on a non-hierarchical workers' co-op

E Opare-Addo: Elections and Go Global

H Staynor: Continuing LGBT+ History Month

T A Ngo: Go Global and formulation a Fixed Fee for International Students campaign

D Delargy: organising attendance at NUS conference and organising a focus group before the conference.

#### **1161 Management Committee Minutes**

SOC received the minutes of the meeting of 25 February without comment and noted the Annual Survey data accompanying the minutes would be considered at another meeting.

#### **1162 Any Other Business**

B Foday thanked Officers who had attended the inaugural Inter-Faith Day and hoped her successor would continue with this event.

R Rawle noted she would be organising another 'Red Box' protest on the Privatisation of Student Debt to coincide with Budget Day.

**1163**

**Time, Date and Place**

5 pm, Thursday, 13 March in a venue to be confirmed.