

agenda

Meeting:	Student Officer Committee
Date:	Thursday 18 th September 2014
Time:	5.30 pm
Location:	Queens Building 0.08
Code	SOC 1237

Starred items are for noting and will not usually be open for discussion unless a prior request is placed with the Chair.

- 1237 Election of Chair and Deputy Chair**
- 1238 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June**
(See pages 3-9)
- 1239 Matters Arising**
- 1240 Action Log**
(See page 10)
- 1241 Cycle of Business**
To consider and approve. (See page 11)
- 1242 Union Elections' Timetable**
To consider and approve. (See page 12)
- 1243 Departmental Presentation: Strategy Update**
- 1244 Election to Commercial Board**
To elect a Part-Time Officer to serve on the Boards of SUS Ltd and the Waterfront Ltd.
- 1245 Priority Campaigns and Projects**
To review and approve.
- 1246 Priority Campaign Working Groups**
A discussion topic from the PG Education Officer.
- 1247 Funding Request for coach to Diversity Festival on 27th September**
A discussion topic from the PG Education Officer.

- 1248 Policy Implementation**
A proposal from the Campaigns and Democracy Officer. (See pages 13-16)
- 1249 Transforming the Postgraduate Student Experience at UEA**
A proposal from the PG Education Officer. (See pages 17-20)
- 1250 Officer Go Around/Reports**
- 1251 Reports on Priority Campaigns/Projects**
- 1252 Departmental Find and Fix Feedback**
(See pages 21-24)
- 1253* Management Committee Minutes**
The minutes of the meetings held on 8 July, 22 July, 4 August and 1 September are available at <http://uea.unioncloud.org/main-menu/your-union/governance/management-committee>
- 1254 Any Other Business**
- 1255 Time, Date and Place of Next Meeting**
To note the next meeting will be held at 5.30 pm on 2 October at a venue to be confirmed.

Minutes

Subject:	Student Officer Committee Minutes
Date:	Thursday, 5 June 2014
Paper:	SOC1125

Key Discussions

- Whether to accept money from Santander bank to fund summer internship
- Lobbying of MPs over DSA cuts
- FTO attendance at University Council and Senate
- Process of the appointment of staff member responsible for providing postgraduate activities
- Endorsement of statement from We are Norwich

Key Actions

- Funding of £50 agreed for attendance at National People's Assembly
- Agreed to not accept the funding from Santander for an intern and to seek to provide summer activities for students with internal UUEAS' funding
- University to be asked to provide a third place for FTOs on University Council

Union of UEA Students Purpose:

“To enrich the life of every UEA student”

Minutes of the Student Officer Committee

5 June 2014

Voting Members present:

Stela Glakousaki (International Officer), Freddie Redfern (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Tom Etheridge (Non Portfolio Officer), Liz Cody (Non Portfolio Officer), Rosie Rawle (Communications Officer), Iain Goddard (Environment Officer), Theo Antoniou Phillips (Non Portfolio Officer), Louise Withers Green (Academic Officer), Oliver Steward (Postgraduate Officer), Josh Wilson (Ethical issues Officer), Joe Levell (Finance Officer), Dolly Ogunrinde (Women’s Officer).

Officers Elect present:

Chris Jarvis (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), H Staynor (Welfare, Community & Diversity) Officer)

Chair

Dan Wrigglesworth (LGBT+ Officer)

Non-Voting Members present:

J Dickinson (Chief Executive)

In attendance:

A Robertson (Union Councillor), Tony Moore (Representation Support Worker), T Cunningham (Deputy Chief Executive)

Apologies:

Tom Southerden (Non Portfolio Officer), Max Levene (Students with Disabilities Officer), John Taylor (Mature Students Officer), Liam McCafferty (PG Education Officer elect), Bintu Foday (Community and Student Rights Officer).

SOC noted that the minutes of the 22 May meeting were as yet unavailable.

1225 Matters Arising
There were none.

1226 Action Log
Received without comment.

1227 Peoples’ Assembly
R Rawle commented that the local branch of the Peoples’ Assembly had been a supportive partner organisation for UUEAS and that this event was the national meeting of networks from across the country. She believed

the £50 to send members to the event would be money well spent as the event would provide training and networking opportunities for activists for the coming year.

There were no objections to the funding request.

1228/29 Santander/Employment of Student Intern

J Dickinson advised that Santander, a retail bank, were running a scheme to majority-fund graduate interns for small to medium businesses and UUEAS might make use of the scheme to help organise activities for students who were still on campus during the summer. He asked for a political decision from SOC as to whether to accept this funding; he noted there would be no direct advertising of Santander's financial products: the scheme was part of the bank's corporate social responsibility drive.

R Rawle noted that UUEAS had run an Ethical Banking campaign for several years which had included a refusal by Union Council to allow UUEAS to take part in NatWest's corporate sponsorship scheme for sports' clubs. She believed that Santander's investment policy with regard to fossil fuel extraction, tax avoidance and the arms' trade were inimical to UUEAS' policy and values.

C Jarvis, with permission from the Chair, noted that Santander had been the subject of demonstrations against its labour policy in Spain, its home country, because it had cut a large number of jobs and outsourced them to a company that prevented workers from joining trade unions.

R Rawle noted the Santander offer was different from that of NatWest, as there was no overt advertising involved, and that SOC would have to make a decision based on principle.

J Levell noted he was inclined to take Santander's money even though some of their policies could be viewed as reprehensible because it could be of benefit to UUEAS' members and without any advertising it would bring little benefit to Santander. He believed there was no specific policy against accepting the money.

C Jarvis, with permission from the Chair, argued that accepting the money would technically breach the Ethical Banking, the No Platform for Unethical Companies and the Fair Pay Campus policies.

J Levell believed that Coca Cola, for instance, could be viewed as falling within the remit of these policies yet it still received promotion by UUEAS.

T Etheridge believed that as Santander would receive no direct benefit it would be proper for UUEAS to accept the funding. He noted that one of UUEAS' values was to enrich students' lives and the money would help to achieve this.

J Dickinson advised, in reply to a query as to how much money would be involved, that he did not know the exact figure but it would be the equivalent of the Living Wage rate for one worker for twelve weeks.

J Wilson believed that, even if the funding did not involve a large amount of money, there would be an argument against setting a precedent and accepting the money. He believed that SOC should reject the funding as acceptance would undermine the credibility of future campaigns.

T Antoniou Phillips believed that UUEAS sold many products around which there were ethical issues; he was disturbed by the fact that UUEAS still sold Russian vodka even though it was the subject of boycotts protesting at the Russian government's record on gay rights.

Chair stated that as there would be no advertising and there would be benefits to students he would be inclined to accept the funding.

C Jarvis, with permission from the Chair, agreed with this analysis but noted that the Tax Avoidance policy explicitly noted the commercial impossibility of taking action on all unethical practices but mandated SOC to take action over specific practices.

L Withers Green noted that the debate had raised the question of what could be done to provide activities for students on campus during the summer and how this should be funded.

O Steward wondered how his constituents, the postgraduate sector, would be affected by any decision.

J Levell thought postgraduates would be affected as many of them would be on campus during the summer.

C Jarvis, with permission from the Chair, proposed that SOC should turn down the funding offer from Santander but allocate £3,000 to fund activities during the summer.

SOC voted to not accept the funding from Santander and voted to seek to provide summer activities for students with internal UUEAS' funding.

1230 DSA Cuts

R Rawle reported that UUEAS, along with other HE and FE unions, had lobbied Ms Chloe Smith, the Norwich North MP, and would be asking Ms Smith to sign an Early Day Motion against the cuts.

R Rawle noted that UUEAS and the other unions had set up a social media group to coordinate activities against the cuts. She noted that they would be lobbying Mr Simon Wright, the Norwich South MP, on the following day.

J Levell noted his belief that Mr Wright had shown a marked disengagement with regard to student issues.

SOC discussed in further detail tactics for lobbying current MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates.

1231 Rent Rise Lobby

R Rawle noted that there would be a demonstration outside University Council on 30 June which would be publicised on social media.

1232 Full Time Officer Attendance at University Council

R Rawle noted that there would be a meeting of University Council the day after the present FTOs' term of office ended; she noted the plan would be for the present incumbents to attend as observers.

L Withers Green noted that the FTOs were currently reviewing the structure of UUEAS' representation on University Committees. She noted that within the new FTO structure it was not immediately obvious which Officers should attend Senate and University Council and the possibility had been raised that this should be decided by a vote in SOC.

J Levell suggested that the two Education Officers should, along with the GSA President, attend Senate, the highest academic body; whilst UEAS should ask for an extra place on Council, the highest non-academic body, this would mean the other three FTOs would attend Council.

SOC agreed that the Finance Officer would make a request to the Chair

of University Council for an extra place for UUEAS Officers. If the University's agreement was not forthcoming, the decision as to which of the three non-academic FTOs would take the two places would be made by SOC through an online election.

1233 Management Minutes

SOC received the minutes of the meetings of 20 May and 3 June without comment.

J Dickinson advised that he would show SOC the latest plans for the refurbishment work on Union House after the meeting.

L Withers Green noted her sadness that one of the more fantastical suggestions, a roof garden named after a senior University staff member, would not form part of the refurbishment plans.

1234 Officer Go Round

F Redfern: liaising with the International Officer over International Arrivals
O Steward: liaising with the UUEAS Chief Executive over the future relationship with the GSA; attending the Equal Opportunities Committee to discuss the possibility of having a GSA Equal Opportunities Officer and talking to constituents

S Glakousaki: working on International Arrivals; arranging meetings with the Dean of Students Office; she noted she would be producing a map for new international students to show them where to buy everyday essentials and she thought it would be useful if UUEAS provided new international students with short guided tours of Norwich; she thought it would be also useful if UUEAS were to provide an information package specifically for new international students (J Dickinson advised that these suggestions would sit exactly within the remit of the new Welcome Week Coordinator)

D Ogunrinde: attendance at Trustee Board meeting and Trustee training; discussions with the organiser of Operation Beautiful

L Withers Green: working on recruitment of the new layer within the student representation structure, the rep organisers; she noted the organisers would receive bursaries of £150 a semester and the goal would be for them to become genuine educational change makers; (SOC discussed the possibility of the organisers having places on University Council and J Dickinson advised that he would investigate the constitutional ramifications of this); she noted that punitive attendance monitoring was now back on the University's agenda under the guise of pastoral care and she would be working with the UCU to oppose this move

J Wilson: planning communications

R Rawle: organising DSA public meeting; compiling resources for activism and campaigns training

L Cody: meeting with students who were concerned about a 20% discrepancy between seminar groups on marks for course work, she noted that she had lobbied the relevant School's Director of Teaching and they had amended the marks by 4% which was not enough to affect the negative impact on the students' potential degree classification; she hoped that what would come out of the episode would be that students would be more aware of the fact that they could appeal against marks

and that there would be a more standardised level of marking across seminar groups

I Goddard: working on Reduce, Reuse, Recycle; preliminary discussion on planning the World Café event

J Levell: Commercial Companies Board meetings; DSA lobbying, interviewing for Head of Venues Management; appraisals for senior managers; liaising with Societies over equipment needs for the Media Hub

T Antoniou Phillips: further correspondence with the University as to the future of the MUS building; liaising between Dharma Society and the Multi-Faith Centre as to the Society's facilities' requirements; Trustee Board

T Etheridge: working with Livewire as to Welcome Week information

D Wrigglesworth: liaising with the Ethnic Minorities Officer as to campaigning.

1235

Any Other Business

O Steward noted that he had met with constituents and one of them had made a complaint concerning the appointment by UUEAS of a staff member, part of whose role was to organise activities for postgraduate students. He noted that his constituent approved of the appointment but objected to the fact that there had been no consultation with the GSA prior to or during the recruitment stage. He asked as to the proper procedure for his constituent to make their complaint.

J Dickinson advised that before a complaint was made it might be useful for Mr Steward's constituent to know the circumstances that led to the appointment. J Dickinson briefed SOC on the circumstances; SOC noted that the briefing was covered by the Staff Protocol. O Steward noted he would convey the results of the briefing to his constituent.

SOC noted that the new worker with responsibility for PG activities and the PG Education Officer would meet with the GSA.

O Steward noted the difficulties he had had with the GSA email account; J Dickinson advised that he should discuss this matter with the Deputy Chief Executive.

C Jarvis noted he had been approached by We Are Norwich, the group that had been formed, the previous year, to oppose a march through the city by the English Defence League. He noted that the group had issued a statement concerning the rise of UKIP and UKIP's success in the elections to the European Parliament and that the group had asked UUEAS to endorse the statement. He circulated copies of the statement and read the text to the meeting.

J Dickinson advised that some of the actions called for in the statement were beyond UUEAS' powers as a charity because they strayed into the area of party politics. He advised that he would meet with C Jarvis to parse the text of the statement to make it acceptable for UUEAS and other charities.

J Wilson noted that part of his manifesto was to provide reasonably priced cycle helmets and he wondered whether this should be done directly by UUEAS or in partnership with the University.

SOC agreed that this could be promoted by University Security.

J Dickinson advised that this and similar items should be brought to Residential Training so that UUEAS staff would be able to work on them during the summer.

1236 **Time, Date and Place**
To be confirmed.

SOC ACTION LOG (Internal Process)

Date Commissioned	Action Required	Status	Assigned To:	Date to be actioned by:
8 May 14	Student staff to be consulted on 0 Hours Contracts	Consultations to be held with student staff in new academic year	Jim	End of October
5 June 14	University to be asked for an extra Officer place on University Council; vote to be held at to which Officer attends if no extra place available	Agreed extra place on Senate instead	Joe	First meeting autumn
5 June 14	Constitutionality of reserved places on Union Council for Rep Organisers to be investigated	With DPC for review	Jim	First meeting autumn
5 June 14	We are Norwich statement for UUEAS endorsement to be revised to comply with charity law	Done	Jim	First meeting autumn

SOC Proposed Cycle of Business

Each Meeting:

- Review resolutions from Council and allocate responsibilities
- Action Log
- Officer Go Around/Reports
- Reports on Priority Campaigns/Projects

Semester One	
Week 0	Departmental Presentation: Strategy Update Allocation of Campaign Budgets (Initial) Review & Approve Priority Campaigns and Projects Election to Commercial Board General Election Strategy
Week 2	Departmental Presentation: Ents Annual Elections Schedule Appointment of DRO Zone Conferences: Agree Attendance Review of Welcome Week
Week 4	Departmental Presentation: Advice Union House 2015: Consultation
Week 5	Departmental Presentation: Engagement & Education Finance Update
Week 7	Departmental Presentation: Comms Reports from Zone Conferences
Week 8	Departmental Presentation: Retail NUS National Conference Delegate Leader Election
Week 11	Departmental Presentation: Opportunities (Clubs/Socs) Finance Update
Semester Two	
Week 1	Departmental Presentation: Venues (Bars/Coffee) Finance: Estimates Steering Discussion
Week 3	Departmental Presentation: Housing
Week 5	Departmental Presentation: Waterfront
Week 7	Departmental Presentation: Engagement & Education Finance: Estimates 15-16 Proposal
Week 9	Departmental Presentation: Opportunities (Volunteering & Enterprise)
Week 11	Departmental Presentation: Review (Find and Fix)

Election Dates 2014/15 Proposal

- Education and Engagement Unit to “run” the elections
- Operations Unit to provide support in terms of admin, communications and marketing
- DRO will be Tony Moore
- RO is to be determined. Josh will investigate this based on the policy passed at council.

Autumn Semester Elections

These will elect the NUS delegates, Liberations conference delegates and student members of the Commercial Boards.

Proposed timeline:

Nominations Open	Monday 13 th October (wk 4)
Nominations Close	Friday 24 th October (wk 5)
Training	w/c 27 th October (wk 6)
Manifesto Deadline	Friday 31 st October noon (wk 6)
Campaigning Opens	Monday 3 rd November noon (wk 7)
Voting Opens	Wednesday 5 th November noon (wk 7)
Voting Closes	Friday 7 th November noon (wk 7)

Spring Semester Elections

These will elect Full Time and Part Time Officers as well as members for the Democratic Procedures Committee.

Proposed timeline:

Nominations Open	Monday 19 th January (wk 2)
Nominations Close	Friday 20 th February (wk 6)
Training	w/c 23 rd February (wk 7)
Manifesto Deadline	Friday 27 th February noon (wk 7)
Campaigning Opens	Monday 2 nd March noon (wk 8)
Voting Opens	Wednesday 4 th March noon (wk 8)
Voting Closes	Monday 9 th March noon (wk 9)

This timeline means that the letters to potential candidates from current members of the Student Officer Committee should be circulated in week 11 of autumn semester (w/c 1st December).

Policy Implementation

What is the problem?

At present, it is unclear as to the precise method through which we should implement policy. The existing structures place power of setting policy with Union Council and the implementation of that policy with SOC. The constitutional explanation of SOC's remit is found in byelaw 1.27 and is as follows:

1.27 The Student Officer Committee shall be responsible for:

1.27.1 representation and campaigning work;

1.27.2 the implementation and interpretation of Union Policy;

1.27.3 coordinating action requested by Union Council;

1.27.4 reviewing the minutes of the Management Committee;

1.27.5 any other duties set out in the Constitution or these Bye-

Laws

What is clear from this is that policy interpretation and implementation lies in the hands of SOC. However, this does not address a series of questions that arise from this:

1. When is it appropriate for SOC as a whole to discuss and take decisions on policy?
2. When is it appropriate for individual officers to act on the back of policy?
3. When is it appropriate for Management Committee/ the Full Time Officers to take decisions without SOC?
4. When is it appropriate for decisions to be taken informally online by SOC outside of a meeting?
5. How should we act in response to policies that exist in precedent?¹

These particular questions have been raised this year by officers, both part time and full time, and the answers are unclear due to a lack of historical precedent that offers a satisfactory response. Potentially, this can cause a level of confusion among officers about what they can and cannot do in their day to day work and what SOC can expect to input into.

Two extremes of how this problem could manifest are firstly that every decision or action related to policy taken by any officer must first be taken through SOC to discuss whether it is a fair and accurate interpretation of policy, and secondly that individual officers never take matters in which they are acting on behalf of policy mandates through SOC. While the former is impractical, the latter is undesirable. One offers maximum input from SOC and offers a consensus based approach, but could never feasibly be implemented, while the other allows individual officers to act on policy that is within their role description and relevant mandate but removes committee based decision making. Clearly, there is a balance to be struck somewhere in the middle here, and this should ideally not be done in an arbitrary manner.

The tension that exists is between what decisions should to be taken by SOC as a whole, and what is better suited to be taken by individual officers. Is it appropriate for an

¹ This is a question that needs addressing in light of changes that were made this year to policy lapse, and so is new problem.

individual officer, or a group of officers, to, **when meeting with members of the University staff, make arguments and statements regarding Union policy** without first consulting with SOC? Is it appropriate for individual officers to give **statements to the press, whether campus based or otherwise**, on matters of policy without first consulting SOC? Is it appropriate for **policy statements to be written and released** without the consultation of SOC? Is it appropriate for **decisions of policy implementation to be made in an informal setting** (such as a facebook group), where no minutes are taken and where some officers may not be able to participate in a discussion? **Does this differ if we are looking at policy in precedent** rather than active policy? If it is the case that the answer to any or all the above questions is 'sometimes', the further question that follows from this is 'when?'

This paper will seek to tease some of these issues out and work to find possible solutions.

What has happened in the past?

The historical precedent is unclear. The role of individual officers, SOC and Management Committee has not been effectively established in previous years. This has consequently raised similar issues to those we have seen over the past month, for example over the Members Only policy. Previously, the Management Committee of UUEAS has been deemed to be able to take decisions in lieu of SOC between meetings and when SOC is unable to meet. Evidently, this is a point of contention.

Additionally, from previous years, individual officers have tended to act off the back of policy that relates to their particular job mandate largely independently. This has meant that the role of SOC as a body in its entirety has been small with regards to the interpretation and implementation, but instead individual members of SOC would take these decisions. Consequently, on receipt of a policy passed through council, individual officers or groups of officers have taken the actions required from this and enacted it, ordinarily without active discussion through SOC. Not only has this led to elements of SOC as a body not feeling adequately included in the decision making process, it has also historically led to a dearth of activity on some areas of policy, as SOC as a body has had a lesser role in delegating tasks to other officers, and the onus has been placed on individuals to take up tasks as they come through.

As a result of this, a number of different mechanisms have previously been attempted to alleviate these problems. These have included having a specific sub-committee of council to delegate specific actions to individual officers, an action-log listing all policy and their actions and resolves and a smaller, crisis action log for actions that were overdue. The assessment from last year's officers was that none of these methods of interpreting and implementing policy were ideal, each having a variety of drawbacks in spite of their benefits.

What has been proposed for the forthcoming year already?

In discussions that have taken place between Full Time Officers, we are proposing that we introduce a new system for looking at policy, incorporating elements of previously attempted processes.

This would consist of policy being brought to SOC as a whole once it has passed for the purpose of discussion and the delegation of tasks to officers. From this, a more in depth discussion will take place within mentor groups, where strategic task setting will take place

and officers can be given support in the work that they are doing. In short, therefore, policy, once passed, will come to SOC, officers will be given responsibility over it and then will set specific actions within the smaller mentor groups. This should provide an efficient mechanism through which policy can be implemented, ensuring that SOC has a broad overview of and opportunity to feed in to what is being done, while giving individual officers ownership over their own work, and removing the laborious task setting process from the formal meeting setting of SOC.

What does this fail to address?

While this process would seek to tackle the problem associated with policy not being implemented as and when it is passed, it does not deal with the problem of how old policy is implemented, how SOC and individual officers should respond to events that are covered by existing policy, or how we should view the role of policy that is in precedent, rather than active. These issues are at the crux of the debates that have been occurring over the last few weeks.

How can we solve these issues?

The starting principle from which we should base our policy implementation process and strategy should be that SOC as a whole should have the first say in relation to interpretation and implementation in all instances, *except where there is a specific justification as to why this should not be the case*. The latter clause of this underlying principle should be viewed in particular in relation to when a situation has changed, when an event occurs that requires a response in relation to policy, or when an issue that was previously addressed through the implementation of policy becomes a live issue again. There are a number of instances where this may be as such. For example, when a matter is time-sensitive, at periods when SOC is unable to meet, and when officers are in meetings or are required to give statements of policy can be deemed to be occasions on which it would not be practical for SOC to be the first point of discussion.

Consequently, when an issue arises in relation to policy that is either time-sensitive, to the extent that a decision ought to be taken prior to the next meeting of SOC, or else occurs at a time when SOC is unable to meet (ie. Over Summer, through the Christmas/Easter break), such a decision should be taken through a minuted discussion of the Management Committee. This is not to say that consultation with SOC prior to a decision being made shouldn't take place, but instead that a formal discussion and vote be held within a minuted meeting. The purpose of this would be to firstly ensure that proper and accessible discussion is able to take place, while also ensuring that officers can be held accountable for the decision.

In some instances, this will not be possible, and individual officers will have to make judgement calls on what is the appropriate interpretation of the policy. This should be done within the framework originally set by SOC, or within the broad parameters set out in the policy.

What Implications does this have for the Facebook group?

Concerns have been raised by this year's SOC about whether it is appropriate to rely on the Facebook group for decision making purposes. What has become apparent is that use of the Facebook group has been limited to some members of SOC and not others, with many not participating in discussions, at least not in all instances. This means that certain voices are

not being heard in debates around policy, and additionally that these discussions are not accessible to all members of our committee.

Due to this, it should be viewed as preferable that *no policy decisions are made through the SOC Facebook group*. Instead, the Facebook group should be seen as a forum for contacting officers between meetings, requests for help with specific projects and discussing initial ideas for what UUEAS can do. This would have the effect of firstly removing the lengthy discussions of how we should interpret policy from the Facebook group and secondly ensuring that any decisions on policy are made in a public forum that is minuted so that students can hold their Officers to account.

What about policy precedent?

As this is a new element of our policy process for this year that hasn't yet been fully fleshed out, there is a lack of clarity and agreement between officers over how we should respond to policy precedent and what role it should play in the work that we do. It is recommended that as a result of this, a detailed discussion and decision take place through the Democratic Procedures Committee.

Summary of recommendations:

- New policies will come to SOC for discussion and task delegation once they have been passed by council
- More specific strategic task setting and monitoring will take place in the smaller mentor groups
- As with new policy, old policy should be implemented on the same basis; that SOC as a whole should be the first point of discussion on interpretation and implementation, unless there is a specific justification as to why this should not be the case, such as time-sensitivity or an issue occurring at a time when SOC is unable to meet.
- In instances where a decision cannot be taken by all of SOC, decisions should be taken through a minuted meeting of Management Committee
- The Facebook group should not be a place for the discussion of policy interpretation and implementation, and instead should be a place where officers can be contacted between meetings and for officers to ask for support on projects they are running
- That the issue of policy precedent be referred to the DPC.

Transforming the Graduate Student Experience at UEA

Introduction

UEA is a good university with a good reputation for its “student experience”. It consistently does very well in the NSS and last year came top in the THE student experience survey. However both the indicators in use and the overall perception of the situation on campus is that there is a focus towards undergraduates and their experience/needs. This proposal seeks to address this issue.

The Situation

UUEAS is a large registered charity with two trading subsidiaries and a turnover of £8m. It however is widely perceived to not be interested in Graduate Students, with its leadership positions dominated by undergrads and its social activity dominated by them.

For some years a separately constituted Graduate Students Association has existed. It is a small unincorporated charity exempt from registration. It has both a representational function and a social function, and a poorly maintained bar which is operated on its behalf by UUEAS under a management agreement.

The Problems

- The GSA is very poorly funded for the activity it carries out- just £5k a year comes in from grant funding and nothing is contributed by the Grad Bar one management costs are taken into account.
- Few students believe that either the GSA or the Union act as effective representative bodies.
- GSA volunteers have to spend considerable time “running” the GSA as an organisation, reducing the time they can spend on direct activity for the benefit of PG students.
- As a legally separate organisation, the GSA bears administrative costs (ie insurance) that other groups that are federated into the union do not bear (ie Concrete)
- The University is currently recognising and regulating two students' unions- the GSA “counts” as a students under the Education Act 1994, and would be keen to reduce this to one, believing that the union's wider infrastructure should be supporting the functions that the GSA carries out.

The Past Year

Over the past year the union has been engaged in an internal reform process designed to improve its internal underpinning functions- management, HR, IT, Finance and infrastructure. With this process almost complete in coming months the union will be focussed on its formal strategic objectives. These have been summarised as follows:

Advocacy: "We've got your back"

- We represent and campaign to give students power over their education
- We help students to help other students
- We sort (and prevent) students' problems with help, advice and support

Opportunities: "Beyond your degree"

- The best range of student sports and societies in the UK, no argument
- Opportunities to learn skills, make friends and become more employable
- Student employment that's fun, well paid and transformative

Enterprise: "We own this"

- Student bars, cafes and lounges- where everybody knows your name
- Housing for students- the most student focussed in Norwich
- A student run shop- things you want, prices you need

As of August 2014 it holds a formal lease on Union House with an expectation that it will keep up the facilities within.

In addition this year:

- The Union has taken on staff designed to support PG activity
- The Union is intending to redevelop union house and has earmarked an area for Graduate Students
- The union has split the previously overworked academic officer position into PG and UG

Basic principles

- That a strategy for the representation of Graduate Students should be in place.
- That dedicated social and recreational activity should be arranged for Graduate Students.
- That activity for Graduate Students should be led by them wherever possible, with autonomous organisation of Graduate Students enshrined constitutionally.
- That all groups of students on campus should be able to benefit from the underpinning infrastructure that the union has to offer.

Feedback from Students

During August 2014 the Union worked with the GSA to undertake a consultation with students on "Building a PG Community on Campus". Over 100 students took part and fed in detailed comments about both the proposed new Graduate Centre in Union House and the nature of activities and services that should be put on for PG students.

In relation to the **Graduate Centre**:

- There is strong support for retaining a Graduate focussed Licensed bar, but a need for it to be improved/refurbished
- The bulk of respondents would also like this to work as a daytime/coffee focussed space
- Many respondents would like to see the space incorporate a quiet "Study Lounge" with individual and small group flexible space

- A number of respondents would like to see self serve kitchen facilities introduced
- A number of respondents would like to see bookable rooms

In relation to Graduate focussed **Services**:

- The centre acting as a hub of information and first point of contact for university services is mentioned by a number of students
- Advertisement - physical advertisement - of ongoing research events on campus.
- Several respondents mention a printer service
- A number mention a substantial trips programme
- A number mention the space acting as a centralised centre for PG PPD information

In relation to **Events** and **Social Activity**:

- As above a number mention a substantial trips programme
- PG sport is valued but many would like to see PG societies or related activity
- Most would like to see some cross university formal socials around themes
- A number mention events with an Academic Theme- for example where students might present their research

In relation to **Challenges**:

- There are a number of Organisation and Management issues inside faculties that are clearly not being addressed currently
- Most respondents identify a lack of social life and sense of community, coupled with a clear sense of isolation for many
- A sense of "chaos" and lack of joined up thinking when attempt[ing] to ask a question or resolve a problem
- A number of respondents raise pastoral/welfare issues that they feel are ignored or not properly supported

Addressing Students' Feedback

As a result of the feedback we are proposing the following:

1. The **Graduate Students' Centre** will be housed inside Union House and will be operated by the Union under leadership from PG students who will provide reps for a Graduate Centre Management Group. It will feature dedicated social learning facilities, bookable space and some office space for use by Union and University services focussed on postgraduates. Legal responsibility for liability and development will rest with the union, ensuring the facilities are part of the union's wider ongoing investment plan.
2. A **Graduate Assembly** will be established within the legal framework of the union with a specific remit of coordinating the representation of Graduate Students. With staff support provided by the union, it will direct the work of a committee headed up by the Postgraduate Education Officer and will support Graduate Reps and Committees across the University in their representative function. It will provide Graduate reps on University bodies and committees and will advocate for the rights of postgraduate students across the university. It will also be able to make policy recommendations to Union Council. A similarly constituted body for Undergraduates will also exist.

3. The **Graduate Students' Association** will merge into the legal framework of the union with a social and recreational function. With staff support and a budget provided by the union, it will coordinate a programme of trips, social, society and sporting activity focussed around Graduate Students both within schools and across the university. Legal responsibility for liability and insurance will rest with the union, freeing up GSA volunteers to focus on activities. The GSA will have its own budget and will be able to retain funds within a restricted fund within the charitable operation.

4. On a wider basis the Union's central representative body (the council) will also be reformed to create more dedicated spaces for PG students. In addition each of the unions other functions- advice, opportunities, live music etc will all be expected to develop a **Graduate Students' Strategy** in conjunction with reps from the GSA and GSC. This will ensure that these services develop in line with the needs and expectations of Graduate Students.

Conclusion

There is still considerable detail to be worked out within this proposal with structures, timelines and constitutional matters to be determined. However at this stage we are seeking feedback on the proposals at a principal level. We believe that as outlined they represent both a solution to identified problem and a clear way in which the union can approach transforming the PG experience in the future for the better.

Student Officer Committee

UUEAS Services- Post Its

Comms & Web (Chloe)

- Video channel for the website- It's on our list of things to work on
- Use student media as a comms outlet – Plans in place
- Use social media for receiving as well as giving info – we do this already but will be better now there is 3 of us and a student staff member available too
- Why are SOC actions/ decisions not easily accessible/ advertised? This is something I discussed with Rosie and Chris during handover – Our team will be given a “key decisions” document like Tony produces after council then we could feature them online and during MML
- Our branding is atrocious- on it
- Free courses provided by the Union on basic web development/ content management – on it/in plan
- Put campaigns on the front page of the website. – on it/in plan
- A knowledge of how soc works and why - on it/in plan
- Key campaigns recognised – on it/in plan
- Several different websites- all poor. – on it/in plan
- Why isn't the website used more by students? The analytics module has only just been launched – Simon is going on training for it on 24/07
- Peer support groups could have pages on the website that is easy to find – George is working on the whole opportunities section over the summer
- Why aren't the student media groups on the website? (Livewire, Concrete, UEA:TV) George is working on the whole opportunities section over the summer
- Live music society and drama soc performances/ events should be advertised on the website and social media. George is working on the whole opportunities section over the summer
- Union app: events, staff, officers. We're working with Yinbo and NUS on this

Advice Centre (Lucy)

- Better provision for mental health advice. “requiring more discussion” –This requires specialist training. The trained MH advisors are based in DOS. Some staff in the AC do already have MHFA training and the rest are going on this course in the summer. Strategy being developed.
- A more open space where students would feel more comfortable approaching. We are moving to a shared reception with UH which will provide a more open space, and because so many things are done from here, a student approaching the reception desk would not be identifiable as ‘using the AC’. That said, we do also need to create a confidential space for those who require privacy.
- Why do DOS and the advice centre overlap on so many things? - “Requiring more discussion” – I don't think that we do. I would be interested to hear what areas of overlap there are so we can look at how and what we offer to students to avoid confusion. The only real area of potential overlap that I'm aware of is financial and in general the types of advice offered are different i.e. we deal with benefits, SFE, debt and DOS administer funds such as ALF.
- Why don't more students know to go to the advice centre?
- “I didn't even know there was an advice centre”.
- Better advertising for the services of the advice centre. For these 3 points we now have an information strategy and so I hope that this will play a part in reducing these problems. We are working on getting the message out there in a more relevant way. This is a key area to develop. We are looking to become more proactive in the way that the service is offered and I hope that this will increase people's awareness of us i.e. they don't find out about us at the point they have a problem. They are aware before.

The Shop (Wendy)

- Should be better stocked, especially over exam time. New replenishment process going live after new shelving goes in, this will result in vastly reduced out-of-stock items
- Improve energy efficiency. This needs to be properly addressed, lighting in particular needs to be reviewed and put onto timers
- They should still sell the cheap crisps. We are selling big bags for £1 and we have some in the simply value range
- Lower the veg scales- short people find it hard to reach. These are moving to behind the till
- An ethical labelling system that people understand. on it/in plan
- It takes too long to be served. An extra two tills are being put in as well as a queueing system
- A loyalty points scheme. In the new academic year you will be able to get a 10% discount on Co-Op items with your NUS card
- Why is it so expensive? We are currently running with the RRP's of Coop; in the new academic year there will be a number of promotions running every week to provide much better value. Additionally when we increase the shelving (over the next few weeks) we'll be able to increase the product ranges to include more value options
- Self-service should include cash payments. This costs £18,000 per till to implement; it was deemed to be not cost-effective and we have opted to put in extra staffed tills
- The night hatch should stay open during holidays for international/ post-grad students. This is trialling at the moment and the aim is to open throughout the year
- Less packaging for the food we sell. We will investigate this
- Shelves should be stacked more often- too many empty spaces. We are putting in extra shelving and we are putting in place an automated replenishment system similar to the big retailers in order to ensure full shelves at all times
- Sound system. The music license is too expensive
- Why doesn't the shop stay open for longer? See above
- Self-service tills are inaccessible. See above
- Keep shop/ night hatch open after LCRs. This already happens
- More shelves for HOT food. Bakery extended over summer
- Rewards for shopping ethically. This is a complex scheme which would conflict with the NUS Extra loyalty card scheme; we are instead working to stock more ethically sourced produce

The Hive (Matt)

- Should be open longer- 5pm is too early. We are moving to an 8pm finish in the new academic year
- Table tennis should be available later/ all day (even pre-LCR nights). This will be deliverable when we have the refurb
- Decent drinks/ better coffee New coffee brand UNIO will deliver better products and service
- Should promote the Hive as a space for student-run activities and events. There will be more areas available to students as bookable space throughout Union House via an online booking system post-refurb
- More sofa chairs/ more comfortable seating. This will happen with the refurb
- Improve energy efficiency. We are removing all neons and replacing bulbs with LED where possible
- There should be a feedback mailbox. We take feedback via the website, through SOC and from the student officers
- More lighting in the Hive. refurb
- Faster service. Unio
- There should be a more welcoming feel to the Hive. Unio training
- Different sizes of drink should be available. Unio
- The area should not go dark/ close at 4:45. See above
- Why aren't there more alcohol-free events? This is a major consideration of the Social Enterprise department and a deciding factor in making the Hive alcohol free with a new coffee shop
- Why isn't the free space above the Hive advertised? This needs to be addressed and will be marketed to students post-refurb
- Better stalls for society-run sales/ events. on it/in plan

LCR (Matt/Paul)

- More seating. This is being reviewed as part of the refurb
- People should understand/ have better gender-neutral toilets. As above
- Make the LCR a 'chill-out' area during the day. The use of the LCR is being reviewed as part of the refurb with the view that it should be available for quiet study during the day
- No pissing in the sinks/ more toilet checks by security (or toilet attendants). We can do this
- The toilets smell. on it/in plan
- It should look better. refurb
- Female bouncers should check the girls' toilets. This is already the case; please report any incidents of male security in the female toilets
- A vote for Tuesday LCR themes- could be a fun vote with prizes. This can be done
- The LCR is too hot. Ventilation is being addressed in the refurb
- A separate bar for soft drinks. This is not immediately possible due to space restrictions but on list for refurb
- There should be a ramp to the dance floor. This is being fixed
- #Tuesdays... Just no. Changed brand
- More international drinks (raki, avak etc). the product line up is significantly increasing over the next year
- Fewer queues outside- people with tickets could use a different door. New entry system going live in new academic year which will greatly reduce queueing times
- Better music. We are always open to feedback and we are looking to diversify our music output over the next year
- Non-alcoholic cocktails should be available. This can be done
- More non-alcohol socials/ events. This is a major part of the SE strategy
- More bands that students want to see live. We are increasing the live music offer at both LCR and Waterfront
- More international music (English language if they must, but a broader variety) as above
- LCR live Twitterfeed (tweet song requests, on-the-spot drinks deals at the bar, selfies, flirts...) we are currently working on this for the coming academic year

The Pub (Matt)

- Design some efficient seating. a student led project to refurb the pub has begun
- Serve premium alcohol (single malt...) whole product range under review and we will be vastly increasing the range available to customers
- The pub should stay open longer. Opening hours are being increased to include out of term and we will open as long as the license and demand allows
- Advertise live music performed by students. We are putting together student led live music sessions, this will start in the new academic year
- Always serve in a glass during the day. We are sometimes prevented from doing so due to certain events on campus; we also have to sell in plastic when guests are taking them into the square
- Use recycled cups. We are moving to corn starch compostable cups in the new academic year
- Livewire should be played. This is currently played in the Hive and therefore is a point of difference from the bar
- Bar recruitment is complicated and there is a lack of feedback. The process has been simplified and automated and it is unrealistic to give feedback given the large number of applicants
- The quizmaster should be paid more for his amazing quiz. Hmmm
- The service should be faster. All team have now undergone induction training and productivity and product knowledge training is scheduled for the new academic year
- The Union pub should have a smart phone app. We are currently looking at options for this
- More international drinks (raki, avak, etc). we will be increasing the product range considerably
- The bar staff should be better trained in how to make and serve different drinks. See above
- Happy hour. We are looking at several new promotions for the coming academic year
- A wider variety of sports on screen/ watch 2 fixtures at once. We can look into this
- The image needs upgrading/ sign is awful. refurb

- The bar staff should be able to remember more than one drink. Training – see above
- The bar staff should be trained to spot sexual harassment. This is being addressed at all levels
- Lack of seating/ poorly designed space. refurb
- The bar should not run out of alcohol. We now have a par-level ordering system which will prevent this from happening again
- Why don't they do cocktails all the time? This is being addressed
- Why are benches at the back where people smoke so disgusting? This is being addressed in the refurb but I will get the team to look after them better in the meantime
- It feels too dingy in the daytime.refurb
- Non-alcoholic cocktails for non-alcoholic drinkers.see above
- The Blue Bar should do more theme nights/ events (karaoke, Jazz night, etc)we are increasing the number of events over the next year
- Put some actual seats in the Red Bar. refurb

Clubs & Societies (Lynne)

- Why don't we make grant requests easier and make the grant pot bigger?
- The grant request process was made harder due to officer and student feedback, that it was too easy the previous year, and a flawed process. We made it too difficult this year, and have reviewed. It will now be a similar process to last year except:
- All finance officers will attend finance training that will include applying for grants.
- The sub-committee and Katy will be on hand to answer queries and talk to groups about their requests.
- There will be an example grant request form available on the website so people can see how one should be filled in.
- Fair sponsorship, e.g. £20000 for powerboating two years ago, £400 for ISS. Powerboat become a club 3 years ago now, and the decision was that of Union Council.
- Regarding making it fairer, that is why we have the grant process, in order to make it fair, you need the process to ask questions.
- Clubs do get much more funding than Societies, but couldn't run their clubs without it.
- There is more money in the budget for societies this year- but we need to decide what this will be spent on- discussion with SOC with proposals from our dept.
- Ask societies what training they want. We have the feedback from the questionnaire and last year's training. Happy to discuss the proposed training with SOC.
- Give Peer Support Group committees training? Yes this needs to be done. They need to join in the general training but also have specific training such as Vulnerable adults, Mental health awareness and so on. To discuss with new member of staff responsible for them.
- SOCWEB does not work as a model. Too true! New website hopefully will work.
- Why isn't student media advertised on the website? Should have lots of links on new website, and feeds into certain pages.
- Why is SAM so expensive/ why do you have to pay on trips abroad? Because sport is so expensive! Don't always have to pay on trips abroad- down to the club and whether they insist people are members of their club. Also, trips are still cheap, and this is more needed income for them.
- More funding needed. Agreed. Where from? There is some more in the budget. We also now have more staff (Sayeed) and Katy may have a bit more time, so we are hoping with extra staff support we can aid socs to find own funding with our help.
- Support and push student media. I agree, Katy will have media in her remit from now on. We have the Annual fund money for new equipment, and they will have a new central hub where they will all work. As mentioned before, I intend them to have their feeds on our website and to use them more, particularly for reporting on club and society events.
- Sports and societies should work together, go out together- derby's etc. Agreed- media socs all went to Derby day this year and did a fantastic job. Open to suggestions on how you think we could do this more.

EMERGENCY ITEM

Staff Mentors for Student

Josh Clare (Head of Student Engagement)



Officers

Staff within Students' Union bring a great deal of experience which has a direct benefit to our political leaders. Leading an organisation is no easy task and providing dedicated staff mentors to student officers is commonplace within the Student Movement.

A number of staff members have previously held positions within other Unions and organisations which would provide useful advice and support to officers wishing to achieve their potential in their year in office.

Proposal:

It is therefore proposed a system of mentorship is developed by the Head of Student Engagement whereby all officers are supported by a dedicated member of Union staff. It is suggested that Full Time Officers are supported by both a "professional" and "personal" mentor (one close to their area of work and one at a distance). Part Time Officers will be supported by one Union staff member in addition to the Full Time Officer who they have already been assigned.

The role of these staff mentors would be to aid officers in developing their work across the year, developing their skillsets and also acting as a signpost to point them to the correct person within the Union to support their work. It is envisaged that mentors would meet monthly with their mentees on a 1-2-1 basis and be available in the interim to offer support either via email or in person. Clear guidelines will be created to ensure that all participants know what they can expect from this scheme and training for both mentors and mentees.

Proposed mentor are set out below:

Officer	Role	Professional Mentor	Personal Mentor
Yinbo Yu	Activities & Opportunities	Lynne Simpkin	Jo Spiro
Chris Jarvis	Campaigns & Democracy	Josh Clare	Toby Cunningham
Holly Staynor	Welfare, Community & Diversity	Louise Goux-Wirth	Josh Clare
Connor Rand	Undergraduate Education	Juliette Cule	Jim Dickinson
Liam McCafferty	Postgraduate Education	David Messling	Alex Wyatt
Tom Southerden	Non Portfolio Officer	David Messling	
Theo Antoniou-Phillips	Non Portfolio Officer	David Messling	
Tom Etheridge	Non Portfolio Officer	Josh Clare	
Lizzie Cody	Non Portfolio Officer	Tony Moore	
Iain Goddard	Environment Officer	Tony Moore	
Josh Wilson	Ethical Issues Officer	Tony Moore	
Daniel Wrigglesworth	LGBT+ Officer	Louise Goux-Wirth	
Oliver Steward	Postgraduate Officer/ President of the Graduate Students'	Josh Clare	

	Association	
Freddie Redfern	Ethnic Minorities Officer	Louise Goux-Wirth
Styliani Glakousaki	International Officer	Juliette Cule
Dolly Ogunrinde	Women's Officer	Louise Goux-Wirth
Max Levene	Students with Disabilities Officer	Juliette Cule
John Taylor	Mature Students Officer	Tony Moore

Suggested Action:

That SOC approve the proposal to implement staff mentors for all office roles within UUEAS.