



# 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**

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### **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 Wigglesworth (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.