

## Durham Students' Union Assembly Minutes

**Date:** 23 November 2016

**Time:** 19:00

**Location:** CG93

### Attendance

Members present	28	Members absent	8
Members who sent apologies	2	Members not yet elected	4

**Chair:** Andy Corkhill

### The following staff members were in attendance:

Christine Stretesky (Director of Governance & Compliance), Nick Glover (Policy Manager), Georgi Lambert (Marketing Manager), Mike Potter (Engagement Facilitator), Laura Wilkinson (Executive Assistant)

### Welcome

The Chair welcomed members of assembly and announced that the motion to call for a referendum had been withdrawn and therefore had been removed from the agenda.

### Apologies

The Chair listed the apologies that had been received prior to the meeting (see table following the minutes).

### Conflict of Interest

The Chair asked for notification of conflict of interest before the meeting began; none were received.

### Vote on NUS National Ballot

The Academic Affairs Officer (LW) introduced the topic explaining that at NUS national conference a motion was passed to boycott the National Student Survey (NSS). Some people felt that the decision was not considered enough and are asking that NUS conduct a risk assessment and equality impact assessment. She asked assembly members to consider and debate the Union's position on the National Ballot question "Should NUS conduct and publish a risk assessment and equality impact assessment before finalising the NSS boycott/sabotage action?"

A member of Assembly asked if there was a timescale for making this decision and LW advised that the deadline for voting was 08 December 2016. The President (AD) informed members that NUS have things in place to be able to conduct the risk assessment quickly if that should be the result of the vote.

The Chair asked if any members of Assembly would like give an opposing speech. Harry Cross argued that it was atypical for a union to be asked to release publicly a detailed list of risks associated with a form of action it had committed to undertake. Moreover, the original motion passed at NUS Conference calling for the NSS boycott mandated the relevant NUS Officer (Sorana Vieru, VPHE) to consider the impact of the exact strategy adopted on different students, workers and unions. The same officer is willing to support individual unions in this regard and unions are not obliged to support the boycott should they have specific concerns. Harry Cross argued furthermore that some of the individuals who had triggered the ballot were opposed to the NSS boycott and were making specific demands for risk and equality impact assessments to add prohibitive costs to the boycott (potentially in the thousands of pounds), in order eventually to undermine both the boycott and NUS officer responsible for coordinating it.

The President spoke in favour explaining that the policy was large and very confusing at conference and part of a much bigger motion which had frustrated some delegates from other Union's. The President stated that the entire officer team had supported calls for the National Ballot and explained

that Durham is in quite a safe position in that the block grant and league table position wouldn't be affected by it their NSS score, but it would affect other students' unions a lot and we should not stand in their way. She advised that she felt the risk assessment and equality impact assessment wouldn't do any harm and it would give people more information.

The Chair asked members to vote on the question.

For: 24

Against: 1

Abstain: 1

Assembly members voted in favour of NUS of the Union supporting the request that NUS conduct and publish a risk assessment and equality impact assessment.

**Motion: Higher Education Reforms Policy**

The Academic Affairs Officer presented the motion, explaining that she had tried to create it so it was specific to Durham. She stated that she felt the policy would make a positive impact. Harry Cross asked for some amendments to be made in point 3, these were accepted.

Chris Waters asked LW what forums this would be taken to at the University and LW advised that TEF was on next week's Senate agenda so if the policy passed today she would take it there. She also stated that would focus on working with the PVC of Education and Academic Registrar.

Stella Alexandrova stated that the University are likely to be as difficult with tuition fees as they were with rising accommodation fees, and asked how LW would be able to prevent the University increasing tuition fees by inflation as the rise in accommodation fees shows that the if the University have the option to charge more that they will.

LW explained that AD is currently looking at getting a consultation framework in place to ensure that the University don't just inform us of decisions last minute when it is too late to do anything about it.

AD explained that the Union and the University now had a standardised approach for deciding accommodation fees and this would have to be tailored for tuition fees. As tuition fees are a national issue, AD re-affirmed the need to work with NUS and for the student officers to focus on widening participation activities on campus e.g. access agreements.

A member of assembly mentioned that the policy states 'SU Officers will be involved...' and asked what exactly this would entail? LW advised that the Officers would be working in partnership with the University regarding where the money goes, whereas in the past this has not happened. She advised that she would like to see student representatives directing the work.

The Chair asked members to vote on the motion.

For: 25

Against: 1

Abstain: 0

The motion was passed by Assembly members.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 19:30 and announced that the next meeting would be on 6 December 2016, 19:00 in room CG93. The agenda closes on 25 November at 17:00.

#	Andy Corkhill	Chair	
1	Alice Dee	President	
2	Kara-Jane Senior	Activities	
3	Lisa Whiting	Academic Affairs	
4	Audrey Allas for Adam Jarvis	Development	
5	Jo Gower	Community	
6	Adeline Chow	ISA	
7	Fred Banks for Ted Coward	LGBT+a	
8	Courtney Cliffe	SwDA	
9	James Colville	Mature Students Association	
10	Anna Greenall	Academic Affairs Committee	
11	VACANT	Societies Committee	
12	Beccy Hodson for Megan Croll	JCR PresComm	
13	Bethany Fleming	DUCK Exec	
14	Abi Steed	MCR PresComm	
15	Charles Walker	Governance and Grants	
16	VACANT	Environmental & Citizenship	
17	Rosa Tallack	WEDComm	
18	Craig Bateman	Media Rep	
19	Mitchell Langcaster-James	St. Cuthberts	
20	Thomas Addinall-Biddulph	Ustinov	
21	Will Waters	St John's	
22	George Walker	Van Mildert	
23	Tom Harwood	St Mary's	
24	Harriet Barsham	St. Chad's	
25	Nicola Tweedy	Grey	
26	Meghan Hosch	Hatfield	
27	Jazz Beard for Kennedy Round	John Snow	
28	Luke Hollander	St Aidan's	
29	Chris Waters	Collingwood	
30	Kieran Laurie	St Hild & St Bede	
31	Pippa Prevost-Jones for Laura Doherty	University College	
32	James Creer	Stephenson	
33	Stella Elena Alexandrova	Trevelyan	
34	Rachel Meyer	Josephine Butler	
35	Harry Cross	Open Position	
36	Johan Seidenfaden	Open Position	
37	Dominic Birch	Open Position	
38	VACANT	Open Position (freshers)	
39	Dominic Robson	UG Academic Rep	
40	Hannah Britt	PGR Academic Rep	
41	VACANT	PGT Academic Rep	
Attended	Sent Apologies	No Attendance or Apologies	Not in post

