

**Durham Students' Union
Assembly Minutes**

Tuesday, 7 February 2017– 19:00, ER201

Chair: Andy Corkhill

Observing: Christine Stretesky (Director of Governance and Compliance), Gary Hughes (Chief Executive), Georgina Lambert (Marketing Manager), Mike Potter (Campaigns Coordinator), and Shelley McCormack (Director of Engagement).

Apologies: No apologies.

Welcome

Andy Corkhill welcomed Assembly members to the meeting.

Apologies for absence and conflicts of interest

There were no apologies for the meeting.

Minutes of the last meetings

Harry Cross stated that the previous minutes implied that he asked who could vote for Welfare and Liberation Officer but in fact he asked who could stand. The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2016 were approved.

Update on Officer Work

Alice Dee discussed the progress of her objectives. Accommodation fee discussions are happening next week. Elections nominations have closed, student officers are not directly involved in the administration of the elections this year but she has been told that candidate numbers are good. Alice then gave a further update on the sexual violence town halls meetings which came about as a result of the media coverage. Town hall meetings were held yesterday at Durham City and at Queens on Thursday. James Creer stated he believed that Alice's objective around Queens's transition to be revised to encompass better engagement with Queens. James stated that union emails are very Durham-centric. Alice agreed that the SU still needed to have an atmosphere at QC for the next 18 months during the transition period to Durham City.

Harry Cross asked about the facilities for the new Mount Oswald colleges. Alice has explained that so far the procurement process is simply finding the tenders and that planning is not that far along yet.

Chris Waters commended the work of the President in regard to sexual violence and asked for her support in condemning the University's previous work on this. Alice agreed that it had been poor but had created a springboard to start a positive dialogue regarding sexual violence.

Jo Gower explained that she had been absent from work due to illness and discussed her future plans.

Lisa Whiting explained the progress of her objectives. Lisa explained that a PGR forum will be held tomorrow (08 February) supporting the work that she is doing regarding PGR contracts with the PGR faculty reps. Lisa also discussed a study space strategy with the library. Lisa gave a further update regarding proposed exam timetable changes and stated 5800 responses had been received to the survey. Johan Seidenfeden asked for a brief overview of the review. Lisa stated that students had said all four aspects had been stated as important. Thom Addinall-Biddulph asked why the survey had been only targeted to undergraduate students when it still applied to PGT students and had implications for PGR students. Lisa explained that there would be consultation prior before submission to senate. Chris Waters asked about the University's reasoning for the proposed changes. Lisa explained that it was related to a large variety of module choices and for disabled students to avoid multiple exams in one day. Courtney Cliffe asked whether there was an intention to consult directly with Students with Disabilities Association. Lisa stated she would meet with the association to discuss.

Adam Jarvis gave an update on the progress of his objectives. Adam explained that after Media Forum last night, he was investigating more support for people who wanted a career in the media sector. Adam explains the Take the Lead programme which is a more accessible version of the Leadership Development Scheme is getting lots of interest from prospective applicants. Adam also stated that he'll be attending the Maiden Castle steering group on Thursday. Courtney Cliffe asked whether he had considered designing training to get disabled students into work.

Harriet Barsham asked whether the Leadership Development Programmes will still run when the Development Officer role does not exist. Adam said staff would run the LDP from next year. Megan Croll asked how the employability work would filter down through the JCRs in regards to the new Durham award. Adam said it would not be directly related but they would feed into it.

Kara-Jane Senior gave an update on the progress of her objectives. Kara explained that some early insights into the participation survey that 90% of the 1100 respondents had identified a barrier and a report would be released soon. Kieran Laurie asked about the later motion and whether Wednesday afternoons came up high but Kara said it did not explicitly ask but this may come out in the impact survey. Harriet asked for some examples of barriers – Kara listed time, financial, distance, part-time students and students who have caring responsibilities and students not feeling like they fit in.

Update: Champagne Society

Alice Dee stated that Champagne Society had passed the probation that Assembly had placed them under. Alice stated that the Union had worked really closely with the staff team and the police during the planning of their winter ball. Alice stated that the society had passed their probation. James said although they had been removed from probation could the Union provide best practice for student groups who had planned good largescale events. Alice said this would be a part of Kara's objective regarding society governance.

Union Strategy – Presentation

Alice Dee gave an update on the upcoming Union strategy explaining the reason for why the Union was rewriting their strategy. Alice explained the draft vision, mission and values. Alice stated that she would circulate these by email. Alice stated that students would be consulted through forums and subcommittees.

Luke Hollander asked what the strategy would practically translate into. Alice stated that the strategy would form outcomes, the mission, vision and values would underpin the ethos of the organisation. Nicola Tweedy asked how wider students would be consulted. Alice said that any students would have an opportunity to comment but they also wanted to ensure that key student stakeholders that are involved. Alice said that innovative ways to get wider engagement would be welcomed.

New Societies Ratification

Katie Jelpke stated that Societies Committee was proposing to ratify the following four societies:

- Pakistan Society
- Friends of Fiji
- Bangra Society
- Mixed Martial Arts

Kieran Laurie asked about the distinction between DUCK and Friends of Fiji. Katie explained that Friends of Fiji was not explicitly a fundraising group.

Tom Harwood asked about the progress of Port Society, Katie explained that as there is currently a wine society it would be debated at the next meeting.

Vote for: 35

Vote against: 0

Vote to abstain: 0

These four societies officially became societies of Durham Students' Union.

Motion: Policy on Reading Week

Krish Mehta outlined his motion. Tom Harwood asked what type of research the motion is calling to do. Krish Mehta said about asking students about the viability of reading weeks. Harry Cross stated that as there had been lots of concern regarding lengthening terms of exams and the costs associated with this. Krish stated that reading weeks would prevent mental health. When asked about who would conduct the research, Krish stated that research would be done by the Academic Affairs Officer and the Course Reps. Rosa Tallack asked Krish whether research had been done at other Universities that showed that reading weeks improved mental health. Krish stated that Cambridge had done some work on this work. Gina Cuomo stated that there was concern regarding reading weeks would not prevent mental health as it would mean longer terms and that more consultation should be done with disabled students first. Krish stated that the policy would mandate the research. Courtney Cliffe stated that if disabled students are unable to work during reading weeks, it may increase mental health issues because of the expectations to do more reading.

Megan Croll asked whether it not be an appropriate time discusses lengthening the term as that would have knock on effects which is important due to the discussion around exam periods. Krish Mehta stated that the work and research around the motion had begun in November so the research should still be conducted. Dominic Robson stated that he believed that the research should be conducted now to avoid having to change the academic timeframe again in such a short period of time, if reading weeks were to be adopted. Harriet Barsham asked what the action would be after the research is done. Krish stated that if the research stated that reading weeks would be a positive thing – another motion would mandate the Academic Affairs Officer to lobby for reading weeks. Nicola Tweedy asked if departments could have discretion as whether to have reading weeks. Krish stated that he did not believe this would work in practice and it would have to be a blanket policy.

Gina Cuomo asked whether an amendment could be added to specifically to consult with welfare, equality and diversity committee, staff and students. Krish agreed and this was amended in the meeting.

Megan Croll opposed the motion because of the reasons that had been discussed before. Megan stated about the implications regarding mental health and while research was done at Cambridge, Reading Weeks were not implemented.

Ted Coward stated that they did not believe that departmental reading weeks would be useful because Durham is a collegiate university. Johan Seidenfeden stated that reading weeks would be beneficial for all courses.

Harry Cross stated that this research may stretch the work of the Academic Affairs Officer. Harry stated that a reading week and a work week are very different things and the motion is not clear enough regarding what it would be. Thom Addinall-Biddulph stated that the research would be useful to have and reaffirmed that if the academic timeframe was changing – this should be a key consideration now to avoid it being changed soon.

Vote for motion as amended: 17

Vote against motion as amended: 14

Abstentions: 4

The motion passed and therefore became policy of Durham Students' Union.

Motion: Policy for NUS National Conference HE Bill & Widening Participation

Andy Corkhill stated that NUS rules meant that policies submitted to NUS National Conference had to be submitted through the Union's democratic structures. Kate McIntosh outlined the proposals within the motion. Chris Waters asked whether the motion would make NUS have a specific reason to fight the HE bill. Kate explained that students from lower-income backgrounds would be impacted more so the motion aimed to address this. Kate explained that at the moment, NUS opposed the bill outright but this should be at the forefront.

Gina Cuomo clarified which NUS Officers would be mandated; Kate stated that it would be the Vice President Higher Education but Andy Corkhill explained that this could not be amended in the meeting. Gina stated that another Union could amend this to reflect it after submission to NUS Conference. Will Waters asked whether if this motion passed, would NUS still oppose the HE Bill? Kate stated that it would.

Vote for motion to be submitted to NUS National Conference: 31
Vote against motion to be submitted to NUS National Conference: 0
Abstentions: 2

The motion passed and will be submitted to NUS National Conference on behalf of Durham Students' Union.

Motion: Keep Wednesday Afternoon Free

Harry Cross explained the motion and the reasoning why it is required at Durham due to the estate masterplan proposals. Harry stated that this would be proactive as the University may be forced to have lectures later due to capacity reasons.

Vote for motion to be approved: 32
Vote against motion to be approved: 0
Abstentions: 1

The motion passed and became policy of Durham Students' Union.

Motion: Fossil Fuels

Alice Dee explained that the policy had been referred to her for review by Governance and Grants Committee. Alice has reviewed the policy and recommended renewing the policy.

There was a minor amendment from the Chair of Governance and Grants Committee to change 'Ethical and Environmental Committee' and 'Environmental and Citizenship Committee'.

There was no opposition

Vote to approve policy as amended: 32
Vote to reject policy: 0
Abstentions: 0

The motion passed and the policy continues to be policy for Durham Students' Union.

Motion: Principles of Student Engagement

Alice Dee explained that the policy had been referred to her for review by Governance and Grants Committee. Alice is recommending renewing the policy while work is done regarding operationalising the principles.

There were no questions or opposition.

Vote to approve policy: 32
Vote to reject policy: 0
Abstentions: 0

Questions to Officers

There were no questions.

Board of Trustees – minutes

The minutes of the trustee board dated 27 October 2016 were circulated for information.

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