

Minutes of a meeting of 24 October 2017

**Welcome**

Megan Croll opened the meeting, and welcomed all to the first Assembly meeting of the academic year.

**Apologies for absence and conflict of interest**

Apologies are as recorded on the attendance register (Laura Tidd, Katie Bulman).

There were no notified conflicts of interest.

**Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record

**Election of the Chair**

Eden Watkins, Ka Wong Fung, and Matthew Gibson spoke in support of their nomination.

George Walker asked candidates about their views on making Assembly a more active, discursive body.

Amelia McLoughlan asked about ensuring an accessible debate.

Matthew Gibson was duly elected Chair

**Election of the Vice-Chair**

There were no candidates in the election of the Vice-Chair.

**Election of Assembly/Committee Members**

*Open Place:* James Creer spoke in support of their nomination.

James Creer was duly elected.

*Women's/Carers Place:* Neither candidate was able to attend the hust.

Megan Haskins duly elected.

*Postgraduate Place:* Nicola Tweedy spoke in support of their nomination.

Nicola Tweedy was duly elected.

*First Year Undergraduate Place:* Antonia Barber, Anne Josephine Strobel and Ekaterina Kosheleva spoke in support of their nomination.

Antonia Barber was duly elected.

*Governance and Grants Committee (Open Place):* Weiling Tay and Will Waters spoke in support of their nomination.

Weiling Tay and Will Waters were duly elected.

*Governance and Grants Committee (Societies Place):* Maciej Matuszski, Esther Green, George Peat and Sophia Rashid in support of their nomination.

Maciej Matuszski, Esther Green and George Peat were duly elected.

*Environmental and Citizenship Committee (Open Place):* No candidates were able to attend the hust.

Dewi Humpries, Chloe Scaling and Estia Ryan were duly elected.

*Environmental and Citizenship Committee (Political and Causes Society Place):* Pippa Cameron spoke in support of their nomination.

Pippa Cameron was duly elected.

*Welfare, Equality and Diversity Committee (Open Place):* Tasnim Hassan spoke in support of their nomination.

Chloe Scaling and Tasnim Hassan were duly elected.

*Welfare, Equality and Diversity Committee (Carer's Place):* No candidate was able to attend the hust.

J Smith was duly elected.

*(Matthew Gibson took the Chair)*

### **Sharing of Officer Objectives**

*Megan Croll spoke to her objectives*

Assembly asked:

- How would the President work with Common Rooms?
  - MC committed to persuading Common Rooms of the value of working with Durham SU, and working with them as catalysts for improving the student experience.

- What was the benefit of differential fees, and would the President comment on premiums for accessible student accommodation?
  - MC agreed that a premium for accessible student accommodation was unfair, and Uni should just be able to solve this.
  - Differential fees enabled widening access, which was a good thing.
  - MC sits on differential fees group, which was considering the matter in considerable depth, but with some commendable speed.

*Charlie Walker spoke to his objectives*

Assembly asked:

- Would the work on the cost of Durham work tackle unfair College charges and misapplied bursaries?
  - Yes.
- Is it reasonable to aim to make such significant changes?
  - Yes.

*Sabrina Seel spoke to her objectives*

Assembly asked:

- What work will be done on the terms and conditions of postgraduate students that teach; will Durham SU work with trade unions?
  - SS spoke about the benefits of UCU membership, and the favourable sign-up agreements in place.
- Were there benefits of a strong student/staff network?
  - SS agreed.

*Laura Tidd sent her apologies, so her report was noted*

*Rosa Tallack spoke to her objectives*

- Assembly asked what a tenants' union would do; how would this be different to the students' union?
  - RT said that the tenants' union may be part of Durham SU, but would also likely involve other members than students; this would be looked into.

## **Motions**

### *Free Education*

Sabrina Seel and Rosa Tallack proposed the motion, and made clear that the motion did not seek to set Durham SU's policy on free education, but Part 1 of the motion sought to establish a position on a soon-to-be-held demonstration. Part 2 proposed a referendum, to establish the position of Durham students on free education.

### *On part 1*

Assembly asked whether the demonstration would have any impact, compared to the value of campaigning for change on campus?

- RT answered that she hoped it would inspire students to be part of a bigger cause.

Charlie Walker spoke in opposition to Part 1, and outlined the concerns about widening participation and access issues in Scotland, including how limits on student numbers restrict opportunity to access higher education, and distract from the important issues of student support costs; there were other battles than tuition fees.

Assembly voted and Part 1 of the motion was carried.

*On part 2*

RT and SS spoke in favour of holding a referendum, and the value of helping students determine Durham SU's position on big questions like free education.

CW spoke against by describing the other priorities for Durham students now; a referendum would be a distraction.

Amelia McLoughlan spoke about broader finance issues than tuition fees; living costs rather than admission costs determined access to higher education.

Sebastian Sanchez-Schilling spoke about the value of free education, and that his view was that free education was something to prioritise.

Assembly voted and Part 2 of the motion fell.

*Dunelm House*

Megan Croll proposed the motion, by outlining the case in the Assembly papers.

*On the amendment*

An amendment was proposed: to delete '*and the University's plans to demolish the building*'.

The proposer spoke about the legitimate need for both a new home for the students' union that was both fit for purpose and accessible, but this was not consistent with a need to demolish Dunelm House.

A speech in opposition said that it was important to have clarity; support the continued use of Dunelm House, or its disposal, but there was no value in a building without specified use.

Assembly voted and there was an equality of votes; on this basis, the amendment did not succeed.

George Walker spoke against the substantive; he agreed that Dunelm House not fit for purpose, but repeated that disposal was not linked to, or dependent on, developing a new home for Durham SU. He insisted that there was both a need to demand new space from Uni, and to preserve Dunelm House.

Assembly asked for clarification on a letter the President sent to the Minister over the summer, and MC replied that she had sent a holding letter, but had been clear not to take a view on disposal.

Assembly asked for further clarification on what 'listing' and 'immunity from listing' meant in reality. Esther Green offered her views on the technical aspects of this process.

Assembly asked for further clarification on the proposals for the Riverside estate; MC spoke about her view that the University had plans for the whole of the riverside, including Dunelm House, but that these plans were 'all or nothing'.

Assembly asked for further clarification on the timeline for campus development and a new students' union space. MC replied that she believed there would be no action sooner than 7 years in the future.

Ameila McLoughlan spoke in favour of the motion, and explained that the University will not spend time and money to make Dunelm House accessible. She said that the University's focus is on new build activity, rather than retro-fitting existing stock.

George Peat spoke about his confidence that students would get a new students' union building without Dunelm House being demolished; these were not mutually exclusive.

Esther Green spoke in favour on consultation about future, and her belief that a grant of listing limits future consideration of options.

A student spoke in favour of the responsibility to protect architectural heritage.

MC summated the motion.

Assembly voted and the motion passed.

*Naming the 17<sup>th</sup> College*

MC proposed the motion, by outlining the case in the Assembly papers.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Assembly voted and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Open Discussion**

No member entered into further open discussion.

### **Questions to Officers**

There were no further questions to Officers.

### **Update on Voter Registration Policy**

CW updated Assembly on the progress of the Voter Registration Policy.

Register of Attendance – 24 October 2017

#	tbc	Chair	
1	Megan Croll	President	Attended
2	Charlie Walker	Opportunities Officer	Attended
3	Laura Tidd	Undergraduate Academic Officer	Apologies
4	Sabrina Seel	Postgraduate Academic Officer	Attended
5	Rosa Tallack	Welfare and Liberation Officer	Attended
6	Trisette Loh for Meghan Hosch	International Students Association	Attended
7	Jess Frieze	LGBT+a	Attended
8	Amelia McLoughlin	SwDA	Attended
9	Vacant	Mature Students Association	Vacant
10	Ryan Robinson Perinchief	People of Colour Association	No Attendance or Apologies
11	tbc	Academic Affairs Committee	Vacant
12	Ed Nathan	Societies Committee	Attended
13	tbc	JCR PresComm	Attended
14	Katie Bullman	DUCK Exec	Apologies
15	tbc	MCR PresComm	Vacant
16	tbc	Governance and Grants	Vacant
17	tbc	Environmental & Citizenship	Vacant
18	tbc	WEDComm	Vacant
19	Substitute for Charlie Taylor-Kroll	Media Rep	Apologies
20	Alex Lindquist-Jones	St. Cuthberts	Attended
21	Alex Hampton	Ustinov	Attended
22	Thomas Hodgson for George Cowley	St John's	Attended
23	George Walker	Van Mildert	Attended
24	Helen Paton	St Mary's	Attended
25	George Peat	St. Chad's	Attended
26	Sebastian Sanchez-Schilling for George Stanbury	Grey	Attended
27	Rory Flynn	Hatfield	No Attendance or Apologies

28	Cliodha Hunt for Alex Price	John Snow	Attended
29	Clara Gallay	St Aidan's	Attended
30	Finlay Wojton for Shayon Banerji	Collingwood	Attended
31	Tom Henderson	St Hild & St Bede	Attended
32	Ben Rich	University College	Attended
33	Lucy Mellor	Stephenson	Attended
34	Daisy Langford for Darcy Van Eerten	Trevelyan	Attended
35	David Evans	Josephine Butler	Attended
36	Tbc	Open Position	Vacant
37	tbc	Open Position (women/carers)	Vacant
38	tbc	Open Position (postgraduate)	Vacant
39	tbc	Open Position (freshers)	Vacant
40	tbc	UG Faculty Rep – Arts and Humanities	Vacant
41	tbc	PGT Faculty Rep – Arts and Humanities	Vacant
42	tbc	PGR Faculty Rep – Arts and Humanities	Vacant
43	tbc	UG Faculty Rep – Science	Vacant
44	tbc	PGT Faculty Rep – Science	Vacant
45	tbc	PGR Faculty Rep – Science	Vacant
46	tbc	UG Faculty Rep – Social Science and Health	Vacant
47	tbc	PGT Faculty Rep – Social Science and Health	Vacant
48	tbc	PGR Faculty Rep – Social Science and Health	Vacant
Attended	Sent Apologies	No Attendance or Apologies	Not in post