

**ULSTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION STUDENT EXECUTIVE
Minutes of meeting held on 26th May 2017 in Belfast**

PRESENT:-

Colum Mackey (President), Micky Quigg (VP Campaigns and Communication), Conán Meehan (VP Belfast), Ben Johnston (VP Magee), Kevin McStravock (VP Coleraine)

IN ATTENDANCE:-

Stuart Cannell (Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator), Avril Honan (Student Engagement Manager)

APOLOGIES:-

Karen McKilllop (Marketing Manager), Emmett Mullally (General Manager), James O'Mullan (Sports President), Hannah Rooney (VP Jordanstown)

1. MINUTES

The minutes were approved from the last two meetings.

2. MATTERS ARISING

Surprise packages in the Library toilets

This was received very well throughout all the campuses (this was not done on the Belfast Campus). On one campus the package of goods in the 'men's' toilets were stolen.

Summary of Puppy Rooms

This was received very well throughout all the campuses (this was not done on the Belfast Campus). This received significant media attention with the Vice-President Jordanstown appearing on the evening news on UTV.

Creating video to outline successes of each Student Officer

Vice-President Campaigns and Communications is currently editing these videos and they will be published in due course.

NUS-USI Regional Council

Vice-President Coleraine, VP Campaigns and Communications and Vice-President Jordanstown attended. Gary Spedding also attended and discussed several points that came from him and were not endorsed by UUSU. The meeting focused on practical elements of how conference was run and changes that could be made going forwards.

Traffic light system for policies

The President stated that this was currently happening and the Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator was working with the Student Officers to highlight the outcomes of each policy to ensure that the incoming Student Officers can see what still needs to be done.

3. PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

The President announced this would be the last Student Executive and thanked the whole team for their support and hard work throughout this academic year.

The President stated there is a showing of The View happening if anyone wishes to attend on Thursday 1st June. It will be held in St. Georges Market at around 19:00.

4. UPDATE FROM QAA STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

The Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator gave an update from the previous Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Student Advisory Board. This is a board that the Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator sits on to discuss current and relevant issues facing the higher education sector.

Issues that were discussed include contract cheating and the development of degree apprenticeships.

The Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator informed Student Executive that contract cheating is the terminology given when a student purchases new work from a person or organisation. This is technically not illegal, however, will still fall under disciplinary and plagiarism procedures within a university or college. There is research being carried out by QAA and the National Union of Students (NUS) that will be published in September 2017. UUSU will need to keep a close eye on how this develops as it may have huge implications within assessment strategies in the future.

The President stated that a student within UUSU recently had been accused of this and it is very difficult for a course team to do anything about it.

Degree apprenticeships are becoming an ever more popular model of delivering higher education to students. Issues that may be presented through this model is that students may not legally be covered by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), and thus will have limited power to complain about the teaching on their course or any other issues that may arise. Further to this, as these students will be at university or college via their employer, this may have significant issues in regards to student engagement as they aren't the 'average' student.

This new group of students will most likely be a hard-to-reach group that will need attention. An adverse effect may be a drop in post-degree employment programmes as big companies could explore degree apprenticeships as an alternative method to recruit students and keep them in-house for longer. It was noted that in a recent article in The Times newspaper, it was stated that companies are losing graduate students faster and it may actually be costing the companies money to maintain the graduate programmes.

It was further stated that the QAA will be working with Student Unions in the lead up to the designated quality body being selected under the Office for Students (OfS). This process will approximately commence in the autumn and a decision made in early spring.

5. UPDATE FROM STUDENT ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE

Vice-President Coleraine went to Birmingham to the Student Engagement Conference. It was noted that a speaker from Hull University Students' Union had highlighted their governance review, carried out internally. They consulted with students and put together an alternative Student Officer structure that was faculty-based rather than portfolio-based. This was ultimately defeated by a referendum due to a small minority running a successful campaign. It was noted that the current Student Officers were for this change and the team behind the campaign were generally engaged students.

A representative from Newcastle University spoke about the TEF. It was stated that they steered the university away from the TEF by highlight their learning and teaching awards as an example of what excellent teaching is and means to students. A report was created around this and will be send to the Academic Coordinator within UUSU to further exploration.

Vice-President Coleraine noted that this was an extremely worthwhile conference and there is a RAISE conference held in September. Hopefully some Student Officers will be able to attend.

6. ART SHOP AND DEGREE SHOW

The degree show opens on Friday 2nd June from 6pm onwards. The commercial unit on the ground floor will be opening on this evening as the new Art Shop.

The President stated that the Art Shop will be open for the two weeks proceeding the opening and assistance would be needed from the Student Officers to cover some of the rota.

At this point the President left the meeting and the duties of Chair was passed to the Vice-President Campaigns and Communications.

7. FRESHERS

The Student Engagement Manager introduced the hand-out that was presented in regards to Fresher's. On each campus the main thing will be new will be 'Talk to SU'. This will be resourced by the university in the Coleraine campus, however, will be resourced by UUSU on every other campus. Any freebies that we give out will be on the tables and will not be presented to students in a bag. Students will be given a card in which they will need to collect stamps in order to get bigger freebies. They will be able to get stamps from talking to societies, clubs and UUSU staff etc. One big issue is that there is no one significant person who is coordinating this initiative, however, the Student Activity Coordinators are working with the university.

The initial budget is £4,000 for the four campuses, however, this is not going to be split equally across the four campuses.

Student Officers confirmed that they accepted that it was not practical to split this equally for a number of reasons, such as, student numbers, support from the Coleraine bar and students sharing events between the Belfast and Jordanstown campus.

Vice-President Coleraine asked if there was any issue in having food in Buoy Park (outside the Belfast campus). The Student Engagement Manager stated that she is unsure, however, as this is council property it should be ok. Vice-President Coleraine insisted that there was an ice-cream van.

The Student Engagement Manager stated that it is still unconfirmed if any of the marketing materials would come out of the £4,000 budget.

The Student Engagement Manager stated that we need to be very careful in ensuring that we distinguish UUSU from the university as this may be extremely confusing for new students. Any printed material should be co-branded and it would not be the normal corporate university brand.

The Student Executive were extremely enthusiastic in these initiatives and stated they would work with the Student Engagement Team and all relevant parties in the university to ensure its success. It was noted that there was a meeting on Monday 29th May with the university to further discuss fresher's and the welcome week, specifically for the Coleraine campus.

The paper that was presented to Student Executive was confirmed and agreed by the Student Officers and they spoke very positively about the direction of travel.

8. TEF ANNOUCMENT RESULTS

The Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator informed Student Executive of the publication of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) results. Due to the general election this was pushed back slightly. Providers will receive their results on Monday 12th June, with an embargo imposed until Tuesday 13th June. It is expected that the results will be published to the wider public on Wednesday 14th June.

HEFCE will be holding a lessons learnt project over the Summer to take on the feedback from the sector and develop the TEF for the next round of submissions. This may result in a slight change of methodology and/or award.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Every one wished the Vice-President Belfast, Vice-President Campaigns and Communications and the President all the best and their service and contribution was extremely appreciated. Because of their work and effort, UUSU has become a more enjoyable organisation to work in and a better organisation for the students.

The Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator informed Student Executive that he is currently updating the win's list through reading the Student Officer reports and collecting various other information. An email will be sent out so that Student Officers can highlight wins that they have achieved throughout the second semester.

10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be scheduled for the end of June and in which the incoming Student Officers will be invited.