

UUSU SC 15 15

Ulster University Students' Union

Student Council Minutes (Unconfirmed)

A Meeting of the Student Council was held on the Coleraine Campus on Tuesday 27th October 2015 at 5.30 PM.

Present:

Officers:

Colum Mackey **President (Acting Chair)**,
Gillian Bell **Sports President**
Elliot Lyness **VP Campaigns and Communications**
Micky Quigg **VP Magee**
Emma Bonner **VP Coleraine**
Kellie Murnion **VP Jordanstown**
Conan Meehan **VP Belfast**

Councillors:

Ami Cobane, Andrew McFadden, Anne Sheridan, Anthony Mullen, Arthur Caulfield, Ashleigh Donnan, Caitriona Breaw, Caoimhe Moreland, Catriona Doyle, Christie McGlennan, Christine Campbell, , Daniel Reynolds, Danielle Roberts, Dylan Cumbo, Eimear Blaney, Ellen McGuinness, Eoghan Mullan, Esther Twieg, Fearghal O Haire, James McGrane, Jamie Shaw, Jay Burbank, Jessica Lee, Jordan McCullough, Josie Nistler, Joy Goodhall, Jude Doherty, Karl Hagen, Kate Millar, Katie Ramsbottom, Kevin mcStravock, Laura Rogers, Lorna Loughran, Mataya Maggio, Odhran Ruiseil, Oliver McKee, Ryan Smith, Samuel Montieth, Sarah McNeice, Vikki Lutton.

In Attendance:

Stephen Aitken (Democracy Coordinator), Avril Honan (Student Engagement Manager), Emmett Mullally (General Manager), Lakshay Singhal.

Apologies:

Adrianna Mullen, Alexandra Colhoun, Amy Hamilton, Aodhan Benson, Becky Brennan, Christopher McCabe, Christopher Stewart, Ciara Gribben, Conor, McFeely, Daniel Loughins, Darren O'Neill, Deborah Ferry, Eamonn McLaughlin, Emma Vallely, Gemma Brown, Hannah Rooney, Johnston Crothers, Kyle Coolidge, Lauren Cosby, Mark Bell, Niamh Connolly, Oisin Craig, Sofia Heikkinen, Stephen Ruddy, Tiffany Agnew.

MINUTES

15.1 Quorum Count:

The Clerk notified the Chair that the meeting was quorate and could continue. Chair noted this.

15.2 Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The Chair notified Council that there were no previous minutes from this Council as this was the first meeting of the Council this semester. The Council was also notified that for future meetings this is where previous meetings minutes would be approved or changes identified.

15.3: Matters Arising:

The Chair notified Council that there were no previous minutes from this Council as this was the first meeting of the Council in this structure. The Council was also notified that for future meetings this is where anything that was to be actioned or arose from the previous meeting would be updated and/or notified.

15.4 Presidents Communications:

The President began by welcoming and congratulating all the Councillors to the first Council of the year and also on their election to their positions. They then introduced the rest of the Student Executive to the Councillors and notified Council that there would be individual reports from them later in the meeting.

The Council were also notified that Avril Honan UUSU Student Engagement Manager and Emmett Mullally UUSU General Manager were in attendance also.

The President notified Council that they were looking forward to the year ahead and updated Council on the work to date so far by the Student Executive with key highlights being the work involved in the very successful Fresher's weeks, and also recruitment and training of Course and Senior Reps.

The Council was then notified of upcoming meetings between the President and the new Vice Chancellor Paddy Nixon. The discussions will focus on the cuts and the effect this will have on students.

The Chair updated Council on the current cuts that are affecting the University and noted the "Big Conversation" that DEL are currently carrying out in relation to the Higher Education sector and its associated funding. As part of this the President along with VP Magee, VP Campaigns and Communications and VP Jordanstown presented on behalf of UUSU to a Stormont Select Committee.

The President also notified Council on upcoming campaigns that included:

Sexual Assault/Harassment Campaign, Mental Health Campaign, Hidden Course Costs Campaign, Women in Leadership Campaign, Internationalisation Campaign and also a Mental Health Awareness Campaign.

More Information on these would follow as and when the campaigns begin.

15.5 (i+ii) Elections of Chair and Deputy Chair

The Chair gave the floor to Stephen Aitken UUSU Democracy Coordinator who explained the process and the rationale of the Chair Election and that each Councillor had received a Ballot Paper. There

was a secret ballot and as such person with the highest vote tally would be Chair with the second highest becoming Deputy Chair.

The Democracy Coordinator asked for interested candidates to come forward and deliver a short speech on why the Council should elect them. The Candidates were:

- Kevin McStravock
- Anne Sheridan
- Jordan McCullagh
- Lorna Loughran
- Fearghal O Haire
- Andrew McFadden
- Jay Burbank

After the first count Andrew McFadden was elected as Chair of Council. There was a tie for second place between Anne Sheridan and Jordan McCullagh. These two candidates were given another minute each and the secret ballot was held again after which Anne Sheridan was elected Deputy Chair.

Elected: Andrew McFadden (Chair), Anne Sheridan (Deputy Chair).

15.6 NUS/USI President Communications:

The Council noted that UUSU were holding a referendum on NUS/USI affiliation on the 3rd of November, as such the President of NUS/USI Fergal McFerran had requested to speak on behalf of the work that NUS/USI carries out on behalf of students in Northern Ireland and why he believes UUSU should remain part of the National Union.

Council noted this communication.

15.7 Audited Accounts 14-15

Deferred until the next meeting.

15.8 Ratification of External Trustee

The Council approved unanimously the ratification of UUSU's new External Trustee Robert Stewart.

15.9 Society Affiliations

Several societies were presented to Council for full affiliation with UUSU:

- **SPAM Society** were seeking affiliation on Magee Campus, a representative of the society, Caoimhe Moreland spoke on behalf of the society. Council also noted the affiliation documents that were submitted. There were no speakers against and the society affiliation was passed with a majority.

- **FACTS Society** were seeking affiliation on the Magee Campus, Council noted the affiliation documents that were submitted. There were no speakers against and the society affiliation was passed with a majority.
- **Magee for Me Society** were seeking affiliation on the Magee Campus, Council noted the affiliation documents that were submitted. There were no speakers against and the society affiliation was passed with a majority.
- **Pioneer/Non-drinker Society** were seeking affiliation on the Magee Campus. After review of the affiliation documents that were submitted there were questions on the identity of the committee as the documents were missing information relating to some members of the committee.

Two Council members also spoke against the society affiliation stating that they believed other societies already provide the types of activities that this society seeks to offer.

The Council deferred a decision on affiliation and requested more information from the society before a decision on affiliation could take place.

- **Magee Camera Club Society** were seeking affiliation on the Magee Campus, Council noted the affiliation documents that were submitted. There were no speakers against and the society affiliation was passed with a majority.
- **TLC Society** were seeking affiliation on the Coleraine Campus, Council noted the affiliation documents that were submitted. There was a representative from the society who stated to Council that it would be beneficial to affiliate this society as it will bring related but separate courses and their respective students together in an official UUSU society.

There were no speakers against and the society affiliation was passed with a majority.

- **Optometry Society** were seeking affiliation on the Coleraine Campus, Council noted the affiliation documents that were submitted. There was a representative from the society who stated to council that it would be beneficial to affiliate this society as it will bring the students from the course together.

There were no speakers against and the society affiliation was passed with a majority.

- **Pole-dancing Society** were seeking affiliation on the Jordanstown Campus, Council noted the affiliation documents that were submitted.

A Councillor questioned where would the society practice?

Council was notified that the committee have off campus facilities organised already as they compete at a national level and it is envisaged that they will run the society in these facilities.

Council also questioned whether the society would be open to all genders or single sex. Council were notified that it would be open to all genders.

There were no speakers against and the society affiliation was passed with a majority.

- **UUB Creatives Society** were seeking affiliation on the Belfast Campus, Council noted the affiliation documents that were submitted. There were no speakers against and the society affiliation was passed with a majority.

15.10 Student Executive Reports

The Chair opened this section to comment and question from Council to the Executive on the submitted Reports.

No questions, Council noted the reports.

15.11 President Reports:

The Chair opened this section to comment and question from Council to the President on the submitted Reports.

No questions submitted, Council noted the reports.

15.12 Sport President Reports:

The Chair opened this section to comment and question from Council to the Sports President on the submitted Reports.

No questions submitted, Council noted the reports.

15.13 VP Campaigns and Communications Reports:

The Chair opened this section to comment and question from Council to the VP Campaigns and Communications on the submitted Reports.

No questions submitted, Council noted the reports.

15.14 VP Belfast Reports:

The Chair opened this section to comment and question from Council to the VP Belfast on the submitted Reports.

No questions submitted, Council noted the reports.

15.15 VP Coleraine Reports:

The Chair opened this section to comment and question from Council to the VP Coleraine on the submitted Reports.

No questions submitted, Council noted the reports.

15.16 VP Jordanstown Reports:

The Chair opened this section to comment and question from Council to the VP Jordanstown on the submitted Reports.

No questions submitted, Council noted the reports.

15.17 VP Magee Reports:

The Chair opened this section to comment and question from Council to the VP Magee on the submitted Reports.

No questions submitted, Council noted the reports.

15.18 Sports Open Campus Meeting Reports:

The Chair opened this section to comment and question from Council on the submitted Reports.

No questions submitted, Council noted the reports.

15.19 Society Forum Reports:

The Chair opened this section to comment and question from Council on the submitted Reports.

The Chair was notified that there was an inaccuracy in the Belfast Society Minutes:

Jessica Snoddy and Rebecca from the Link Society were present, this was not reflected in the minutes.

Council noted the reports and the amendments.

15.20 Refugee Support Mandate Policy:

The Chair called the proposer of the paper (VP Campaigns and Communications) to the floor. The VP then outlined to Council the main points and rationale for this paper to Council. The main point was that UUSU should support those in need. At the end of the speech it was opened up to Council for comment.

A call for further speakers either for or against was asked but since there were none the motion was put to a vote which passed with a majority.

To Be Actioned:

The Executive shall be given the Student Body's Mandate to campaign and advocate for Refugees fleeing conflict or natural disaster and to campaign for an end to all armed conflicts both presently and in the future.

15.21 Free Education Policy:

The Chair vacated the position for this motion as they were the proposer of the policy. VP Belfast became acting Chair for this agenda point.

The proposer (UUSU President) outlined the main points of this paper and its rationale to the Council. They stated their main aim that Higher Education should be free to all.

VP Magee also spoke for:

They outlined that UUSU and UU has an obligation to protect our students and wider community. The issue of fees is affecting many current and prospective students and can lead to issues such as poor mental health. Achieving this policy would help protect our students.

A Councillor also spoke for:

They stated that this policy should be passed though they highlighted that the main root of the issue was the budget cuts that originate from Westminster and that work should be done to combat these also.

There were no speakers against and no questions:

The motion was put to a vote which passed with a majority.

The VP Belfast vacated the Chair which was filled by the President.

To Be Actioned:

A mandate has been given to the Student Executive to lobby the Stormont Executive and to lobby the university, to adopt a stance advocating, for free higher education

BREAK:

A short break was held.

At the resumption of the Council another quorum check was held in which the meeting was still quorate and could continue.

15.22 Student Manifesto Policy:

The chair called the Proposer of this policy to the floor for this agenda point.

The Proposer (VP Campaigns and Communications) outlined the main points and rationale for the policy. The main point was to create a document that could list where each politician stood on specific issues important to students.

The Proposer was asked would this be political party opinions and independent politician's opinions. The proposer replied that it would be two fold; it would highlight the party lines, and also each independent MLA's stance. It would also highlight what issues would be allowed to go to a "Free Vote".

A Council member rose to speak for:

The Councillor stated they were speaking for the motion as it is really important to know where politicians stand on individual policies that are important to students. It is hard without something like what is suggested in the policy to see past the "Tribal Politics" of Stormont. This can be used in conjunction with "Generation Vote" and that it is important to use the student voice.

There were no more speakers for or against and the Proposer summed up their policy by adding that it would also be an invaluable tool for lobbying politicians.

It was put to a vote by Council which passed with a majority.

To Be Actioned:

The Executive shall work to produce a Student Manifesto, detailing MLA's and Parties stance on key issues.

15.23 Library Opening Hours Policy

The Chair requested the Proposer (VP Jordanstown) to take the floor:

The Proposer outlined the key points and rationale for this policy.

There were no further speakers for or against. There were a number of questions for Council on this motion:

A Councillor asked would this policy be only for exam/peak times and or all year round?

The Proposer replied that it would only be for peak times as after a meeting with the Library Manager there are staff contracts, security costs and also previous studies, trials so if policy is successful it would only be for exam/peak times.

The Proposer was asked whether this policy was only to apply to the Jordanstown Campus or would it be for all 4 campuses.

Council was notified that other campus already had 24 hour library opening times during peak periods.

Council noted a clarification that this was not the case as this was only the computing labs and not the libraries themselves.

The Proposer stated that they would apply this policy to all 4 campuses.

There were no more speakers for or against .

It was put to a vote by Council which passed with a majority.

To Be Actioned:

UUSU shall lobby that the library should open until midnight to facilitate those who require a quiet study room to better their study.

Alternatively, if the extension of the library hours is unachievable, then I propose that we open more 24hour study rooms with no computers.

15.24 Gender Recognition, Respect and Access Policy:

The Chair called the Proposer (Sports President) to the floor.

The Proposer outlined their main points and rationale for this policy.

There two speakers for:

One Councillor stated that in their current workplace they have Gender Neutral toilets which helps remove the gender divide, generate safe, inclusive places that will also help people in transition.

Another mentioned that this policy would not necessitate a large logistical or infrastructure change so would be realistically be easily implemented and achieved for a huge gain in promoting positive self-identity and inclusiveness.

There were no speakers against.

Council questioned is there a need for this policy. The Proposer replied that there is a large amount of people who don't self-define in terms binary gender or are transgender, and the lack of gender neutral facilities is an issue.

A Point of Information was raised that this would be all facilities, it would be created in some of the facilities to create a space if inclusiveness and safety.

The motion was put to a vote in which it passed with a majority.

To Be Actioned:

UUSU will lobby the University that some toilets on campus should be converted to gender neutral toilets, which can be as simple as changing signage.

The Students Union should do this for all their campus facilities that they have control over and lobby the University for Gender Neutral Facilities to be provided on each campus.

That, with the support from the Students' Union, the University should allow students to self-determine their gender.

15.25 Women in Leadership Policy:

The Chair asked the Proposer (VP Jordanstown) to the floor.

The Proposer outlined the main points and rationale for this paper.

There was one further speaker for:

The Speaker for the motion stated that a Women in Leadership workshop will go a long way to helping rebalance the divide that exists in politics and other leadership roles in terms of gender equality. In Stormont at present there is roughly only a 80%-20% split in favour of males. By creating workshops and starting at the Student level this will begin to feed into other areas and address the inequality.

The Proposer was asked whether this would only be open to males who would wish to join the campaign to volunteer.

The Proposer replied that this policy was not for a campaign but for a series of one day workshops.

In reply to this response Council sought clarification on whether this was a sexist or positive discrimination stance.

In response the Proposer denied that this was sexist and stated that the current gender inequality was sexist and these workshops would be used to fight against the current inequality and help address the gender imbalance by encouraging and supporting more women into leadership roles.

There were no speakers against.

The motion was put to a vote in which it passed with a majority.

To Be Actioned:

UUSU shall run a WIL programme in December Week 11 on the Belfast Campus for Belfast and Jordanstown students, and one in Magee for Magee and Coleraine students.

15.26 Hidden Course Costs Policy:

The Chair asked the Proposer (VP Belfast) to the floor.

The Proposer outlined the key points and rationale for this policy.

The Council also heard from other Councillors who spoke in favour of the motion, some of the key points and examples raised were:

- Hidden costs in optometry, nearly £1500 in equipment fees,
- Students needing to purchase the Adobe software suite which could be in the hundreds of pounds.
- Vaccinations must be obtained and paid for even if you had them previous to a course starting.
- Part-time and/or Distance Learners do not receive the same amount of funding so clear and precise breakdowns of costs available in prospectuses are essential.

The Proposer was questioned as to where these “Hidden Fees” will be specified.

In response the Proposer stated that all fees should be listed in the prospectus and any extra fees that cannot be defined still be included as:

“Extra fees and costs will be required as part of this course”

There were no further questions or speakers.

The motion was put to a vote and passed with a majority.

To Be Actioned:

UUSU Student Executive shall lobby the university to specify and make transparent any additional costs that may be incurred within a mode of study (mandatory, necessarily incurred & optional), to be detailed within all university course promotional material and documentation, including the university course prospectus.

15.27 Part Time Officer Policy

A Procedural Motion was submitted to defer this motion and vote to the next Council meeting. The Council passed this with a majority vote.

Policy deferred until next Council on the 24th November 2015.

15.28 Campus Car Parking Policy:

The Chair requested the Proposer (VP Coleraine) to the floor.

The Proposer set out their main points and rationale for this policy.

A Councillor spoke for the motion stating that this motion is needed as Mon-Thu it is difficult to find a space while the reserved spaces are hardly fully utilized.

There were no further speakers for or against though a question around the clamp fines were submitted by Council.

Council asked does the entire fine from clamping go to facilities or is it re-invested into the University?

The Proposer replied that they had requested this information and at present some of the money is invested into the University's hardship fund. They are awaiting clarification on where the rest of the money goes and will update Council when they are in possession of that information.

There were no further questions or speakers.

The motion was put to a vote and passed with a majority.

To Be Actioned:

The Executive of UUSU will ask the university at the next UUSU/UU forum to remove reserved parking for dignitaries and prioritise students paying to attend the university and not those being paid.

15.29 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Council were notified that the next meeting will be the 24th November at the Belfast Campus.

Action Points:

- **The Executive shall be given the Student Body's Mandate to campaign and advocate for Refugees fleeing conflict or natural disaster and to campaign for an end to all armed conflicts both presently and in the future.**
- **A mandate has been given to the Student Executive to lobby the Stormont Executive and to lobby the university, to adopt a stance advocating, for free higher education**
- **The Executive shall work to produce a Student Manifesto, detailing MLA's and Parties stance on key issues.**
- **UUSU shall lobby that the library should open until midnight to facilitate those who require a quiet study room to better their study. Alternatively, if the extension of the**

library hours is unachievable, then I propose that we open more 24hour study rooms with no computers.

- UUSU will lobby the University that some toilets on campus should be converted to gender neutral toilets, which can be as simple as changing signage.
- The Students Union should do this for all their campus facilities that they have control over and lobby the University for Gender Neutral Facilities to be provided on each campus.
- That, with the support from the Students' Union, the University should allow students to self-determine their gender.
- UUSU shall run a WIL programme in December Week 11 on the Belfast Campus for Belfast and Jordanstown students, and one in Magee for Magee and Coleraine students.
- UUSU Student Executive shall lobby the university to specify and make transparent any additional costs that may be incurred within a mode of study (mandatory, necessarily incurred & optional), to be detailed within all university course promotional material and documentation, including the university course prospectus.
- The Executive of UUSU will ask the university at the next UUSU/UU forum to remove reserved parking for dignitaries and prioritise students paying to attend the university and not those being paid.

