

Ulster University Students' Union

Student Council Minutes (Unconfirmed)

A Meeting of the Student Council was held on the Belfast Campus on Tuesday 24th November 2015 at 5.30 PM.

Present:

Chair and Deputy:

Andrew McFadden **Chair**

Anne Sheridan **Deputy Chair**

Officers:

Colum Mackey **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, Alexandra Colhoun, Anthony Mullen, Arthur Caulfield, Ashleigh Donnan, Caitriona Breaw, Caoimhe Moreland, Catriona Doyle, Daniel Reynolds, Danielle Roberts, Dylan Cumbo, Ellen McGuinness, Esther Twieg, Fearghal O Haire, James McGrane, , Jessica Lee, Jordan McCullough, Josie Nistler, Joy Goodhall, Jude Doherty, Kate Millar, Katie Ramsbottom, Kevin mcStravock, Laura Rogers, Lorna Loughran, Mataya Maggio, , Ryan Smith, Samuel Montieth, Sofia Heikkinen, Vikki Lutton.

In Attendance:

Avril Honan (Student Engagement Manager), Emmett Mullally (General Manager), Clodagh Kennedy (Finance Manager)

Apologies:

Gillian Bell **Sports President**, Adrianna Mullen, , Amy Hamilton, Aodhan Benson, Becky Brennan, Christopher McCabe, Christie McGlennan, Christine Campbell, Christopher Stewart, Ciara Gribben, Conor, McFeely, Daniel Loughins, Darren O'Neill, Deborah Ferry, Eamonn McLaughlin, Eimear Blaney Emma Vallely, Eoghan Mullan, Gemma Brown, Hannah Rooney, Jamie Shaw, Jay Burbank, Johnston Crothers, Karl Hagen, Kyle Coolidge, Lauren Cosby, Mark Bell, Niamh Connolly, Oisín Craig, Odhran Ruiseil, Oliver McKee, Sarah McNeice Stephen Ruddy, Tiffany Agnew, Stephen Aitken (Democracy Coordinator),

15.30 UUSU ACCOUNTS

(This item has been moved to the top of the agenda due to the late start of Council.)

Clodagh Kennedy, UUSU Finance Manager, presented a summary of the audited accounts for the year ending 31 July 2015. She noted that the full audited accounts would be going to the next meeting of the UUSU Trustee Board.

Noted:

- Income was £1.2million, which included an additional allowance from the University to pay for increased pension costs;
- Voluntary redundancy scheme in 2014-15 increased the payroll costs;
- Deficit of £47,000 – had budgeted for a loss of £15,000 and in the previous year there was a loss of £7000. Ms Kennedy noted that whilst UUSU is not a profit making organisation, it does need to break even and surpluses would be re-invested in student services;
- The figures for the current year, ending 31 October, look reasonably positive however second semester is usually quieter for the commercial outlets. However UUSU is still budgeted to break even in 2015/16.

The Finance Manager explained that the Jordanstown shop had been closed at the end of the 2015 academic year as it was making a loss.

The Finance Manager was asked where cuts could be made to ensure the organisation continues to be financially stable, for example would more shops or bars be closed. Ms Kennedy explained that the bars are separate commercial entities which are governed by the Bar Site Committees. The UUSU Trustee Board manages the main accounts. Further noted that if the redundancies had not taken place in 14/15 UUSU would have made a small profit.

A Councillor asked if the facilities in the Greater Belfast Development would increase the profitability of the commercial services. Council was informed that the facilities which will be owned and operated by UUSU are still uncertain and discussions are ongoing with the University to resolve this.

15.31 MINUTES

Approved

15.32 PRESIDENTS' COMMUNICATIONS

UUSU President, Colum Mackey, provided a verbal update of activities and campaigns on behalf of all of the Officer team.

Noted that:

- Since the last meeting of Council Officers have met with the DEL Minister, Stephen Farry MLA, to discuss issues within Higher Education. Since this meeting UUSU have been informed that the Minister will be presenting to the HE Committee at Stormont, it is hoped that the feedback provided by Officers will be referred to;
- UUSU President will travel to Westminster next month to meet with MP's to discuss the need to invest in HE and the impact divestment has had thus far;
- UUSU Sport President brought policy on gender neutral toilets which we are progressing.

Noted that the team have organised the following campaigns and events:

- Sexual assault on campus seminars, in conjunction with the Transitional Justice Institute, have been organised for Coleraine and Jordanstown campuses: Councillors encouraged to check the UUSU Facebook page or Twitter to register attendance;
- Women in Leadership workshops are also happening on each campus next week, again Councillors encouraged to look at UUSU social media to reserve a space;
- Mental Health Awareness Week will take place in Week 11, with an 'Exam Stress' campaign being launched in Week 12 and continuing into the exam period;
- Suicide awareness training has been delivered to students on the Coleraine and Magee campuses;
- 'We are International' campaign has been held which included language classes, international chocolate tasting and getting people to think about how they are internationalised;
- Celebrated Diwali on Coleraine and Jordanstown campuses, which included henna tattoos and evening entertainment;
- The Vice President Campaigns and Communication has been working in a 'No War' campaign.

Further noted:

- Congratulation passed to the Marketing Society who raised £1323 for Children in Need this year;
- Meetings have been ongoing with the Vice Chancellor in relation to Students' Union space and facilities in the new Belfast Campus.

POLICIES

15.32 VP Campaigns and Communications changed to VP Equality Officer

VP Campaigns and Communications proposed their policy to revise this Student Officer post.

They noted a need for the Equality post to run specific campaigns for the following groups of students:

- Women
- BME Students
- LGBT
- Students with Disabilities

This would also be in addition to the current campaigns which are currently facilitated by the current post.

He also noted the specific constitution amendments required (supplied as an appendix to the Policy), in particular he noted that the post would only be open to students who identified within one of the above groups.

A number of Councillors came forward to speak for and against the motion.

Speaker 1 for the motion noted that many other Students' Unions have a full time equality post and this helped to fight inequalities that some students face: which may be seen or unseen.

He further noted that UUSU does not have specific societies for each of these groups and a post of this nature may help students from these groups feel more included and represented.

UUSU President, Colum Mackey spoke against the motion. He noted that whilst he was in support of equality and a post of this nature, that his opposition was based on the fact that UUSU had a cycle of strategic planning and a change of this nature should fit into this. He informed Council that the process for a new plan begins in January 2016 and a review of the sabbatical roles should be included in this.

Speaker 2 for the motion noted that he was supporting this motion because many other Students' Unions had an equality post and UUSU was abnormal in not having one. He stated that the post would campaign for minorities.

Speaker 2 against the motion presented his thoughts. He stated that the policy ignored religious minorities and that it was fundamentally flawed and undemocratic by excluding certain groups of students from being able to run for the position.

A Point of Information from the floor noted that religions were not included as these groups were based upon the NUS UK liberation groups.

Speaker 3 for the motion noted that UUSU needed an Equality Officer and it would more effectively represent students if they had one.

Speaker 3 against the motion believed that you did not need to be from a particular group to empathise with them and campaign on their behalf.

Speaker 4 for the motion stated that the officer need to self define as one of these groups because of intersectionality: which is about lived experience and empowerment. They stated that a CIS white man could not speak for someone from a liberation group, and that people from within these groups will empathise with each other because of their own lived experiences of discrimination.

Further noted that whilst a review was in the pipeline, this would not happen in time for the next elections and the post would be delayed.

Speaker 4 against the motion believed that this motion could claim to be for equal rights whilst it sought to exclude some students from running for the role.

Speaker 5 for the motion spoke of her lived experience as a woman and the discrimination she faced, and examples of others. She noted the need for a specific post to campaign on these issues and against discrimination and the inequality faced by these groups.

Speaker 5 against the motion (VP Jordanstown) noted that she did not believe you needed to be part of these groups to campaign against inequality. She further noted that all Officers currently attend equality training and sessions provided by the national unions. She also spoke of the vital role with the Campaigns and Communications Officer had in the team. Lastly, she noted that it was difficult to

engage students to run for the position of Student Officer and by setting rules around who could stand would be adding another barrier to this.

Speaker 6 for the motion (VP C&C) noted that the strategic plan was coming, but that this needed to be introduced more quickly to support students and show how it could work.

Speaker 6 against the motion (VP Coleraine) stated that you could be an ally for these groups, without belonging to them. Outlined her role in fighting for equality this year and again noted the training sessions which she has attended with the Officer team.

Speaker 7 against the motion noted that many more groups than just those listed could be discriminated against.

Speaker 8 against the motion (VP Magee) would like the change to be carried out properly, after the full review. He also noted that other multi campus Unions do not have this role – because of the structure it is not always possible to have this.

Speaker 9 against the motion finished the debate by noting that he would like committees of students to deal with equality issues, and not to leave it to one person.

The Chair moved the motion to a vote:

For: 8

Against:25

The Motion failed to carry.

15.33 #Mybodymyrights Policy

The proposer for the motion noted that this is an Amnesty International campaign which asks for abortion to be available only in the cases of rape, incest or late foetal abnormality. This is the minimum policy which brings Northern Ireland up to the international human rights law.

Speaker 1 for the motion explained that late foetal abnormality is when both lives are at risk and abortion is the safest option for both.

Speaker 2 for the motion noted that this is already NUS USI policy, and he wished to campaign to support national campaigns and therefore required the support of Council.

Speaker 1 against the motion questioned whether the human rights of the baby should also be considered, she noted that a baby has a heartbeat 3 weeks from conception and the rights of the child should also be considered.

Speaker 3 for the motion stated that Northern Ireland is still part of the UK, but is the only area not to have access to abortion – this policy only asks for the minimum legal rights to ensure women's safety.

Speaker 2 against the motion noted that he believed there were other options for women who, such as adoption.

Speaker 4 for the motion stated her support for this policy which campaigned for a woman's right to safety.

Speaker 5 for the motion reiterated that this policy was only for limited situations when a child or mother's life is in danger and the options noted by the earlier speaker may not be appropriate.

Speaker 6 for the motion gave an example of a woman and baby in the Republic of Ireland who died recently due to foetal abnormality, and the law forbade medical staff from intervening. Noted that the death of the mother could have been prevented if this law change had been in place.

Motion moved to a vote:

For: 30

Against: 5

15.34 Campus Nurse

The proposer (VP Magee) introduced the policy and gave the background: a Student Support review and restructure two years ago led to the removal of the nurses on campus. Students are expected to register with a local GP, however many students commute and still need to register at home, he further noted that even those who live in Derry for holidays still go home more often so it is still not practical. When students are ill there is no help on campus and they need to waste class time going to A&E or wait for the GP out of hour's service.

Whilst Carecall has been effective for students with mental health issues, students still were missing out on the support on campus for physical ailments.

Speaker 1 for the motion noted her personal experience of living in halls on the Coleraine campus and how a friend had no access to medical care and they were unsure of where to go. A campus nurse would have been beneficial in this instance.

Speaker 2 for, also from Coleraine, stated his support for this motion and stated it would be beneficial to students.

Speaker 3 for the motion stated that they were from Belfast but studied in Magee and they had to travel when they were going to get sick to make sure they could visit their GP.

Speaker 4 for the motion, also from Magee, stated their support for the campaign and reiterated the need for it.

Speaker 5 for the motion, noted that she is an international student and transport can be difficult, especially if you are unsure of the area. Noted international students tend to be more campus orientated and this service would help them feel safer here.

Motion moved to a vote:

Passed unanimously.

15.35 Public Transport

The Proposer, Ashley Donnan, noted that she would like UUSU to campaign for cheaper transport for students. It is currently an added expense that many cannot afford and there is no specific discount for students.

Speaker 1 against the motion suggested that this policy was an overreaction, and compared it to similar journeys in the UK and noted that students here actually did have cheap transport.

Speaker 1 for the motion countered this by stating that it is not about a comparison, it is the current experience of students which matters and that currently her monthly transport costs are currently higher than her average monthly income from her student loan.

Speaker 2 noted that I depended on which country you carried out the comparison with. In Australia, for example, public transport is much more affordable.

Speaker 3 for the motion also noted that his monthly outgoings go mainly to transport, and not things such as art supplies which would help him on his course.

Speaker 4 for the motion noted that different options of cards and discounts could be advertised more widely.

Speaker 5 for the motion acknowledged that multi journey or monthly tickets can be less expensive, but that the upfront cost of these is difficult to cover.

There was a brief adjournment to the meeting whilst members formulated amendments to the policy.

The following amendments were submitted to the Clerk of Council:

1. Campaign for travel bursaries or free travel for students
2. Campaign for the Y-Link card to be extended to students over 24
3. Campaign for subsidized cross-border travel for commuting students
4. Lobby against the privatisation of public transport in Northern Ireland.

The Chair notified Council of the proposed amendments and ruled that 1 – 3 would be dealt with in one vote, and the 4th was deemed to be a substantive policy and was referred back to the Councillor for further consideration.

The amendments were put to the floor for a vote:

Passed unanimously.

The substantive motion was then put to the floor for a vote:

Passed unanimously.

15.36 CCTV Policy

The Proposer, Vikki Lutton, presented her motion. She noted that there is a high occurrence of criminal activity outside of the Belfast campus and that CCTV would both deter criminals, and also provide a record of evidence when incidents did occur.

Speaker 1 for the motion pointed to the CCTV cameras within the lecture and noted that if they can be inside looking at the students who have come through the turnstiles, then why could they not have some extra to catch criminals outside of Campus.

Speak 2 for the motion noted that Buoys Park is intimidating for students and many stay on campus until 12am and it is particularly frightening at night time.

A Councillor asked for a Point of Information: Would these be funded by the University of the Council?

The Proposer felt that the University should do this.

An amendment was received by the Clerk of Council, which was accepted by the Chair.

1. To lobby the University for increased CCTV on all University campuses and in particular outside of UUSU Storage rooms.

Speaker for the amendment noted that there had been an incident of theft from the UUSU store on the Belfast Campus and extra security was required inside as well as outside.

The amendment was put to a vote:

Passed unanimously.

The substantive motion was then put to the floor for a vote:

Passed unanimously.

15.37 First Aiders

The Proposer of the motion (Esther Twieg) presented the motion to Council and noted that someone trained in First Aid can save lives by reacting with short notice and help people to recover. This motion aims to help the student body and increase health and safety.

Speaker 1 for the motion gave his support to the idea and noted that it is a short course which he has attended and that it is very useful to have, he believes it would make sense to have as many people as possible on campus to assist in emergency situations.

Speaker 1 against the motion argued that each department already had a number of designated staff for this role and additional information was just required to know about who this is.

POI: the Proposer was asked if that had an estimate of the cost. This information was not available however they believed St John's Ambulance would be able to provide this – possibly for free. It was also suggested that some students may already hold this qualification and a register should be developed and publicised.

Speaker 2 against the motion believed that this should be open to all students.

POI: the motion does specify this.

Speaker 2 for the motion shared his experience of already volunteering with St John's ambulance and stressed the importance of first aid and how it can save lives.

Speaker 3 shared a personal experience of giving and receiving first aid and supported rolling out this training to as many people as possible on campus.

Several amendments were suggested.

Chair delayed the vote as a number of amendments have been suggested.

15.38 Diabetes Motion

The proposer (Vikki Lutton) explained that the purpose of this motion was to raise awareness of the condition, and what to do in an emergency.

POI: what will the cost of the sessions be to the Union? Proposer noted that this would be around £17.

Speaker 1 against stated that it is his belief that administering insulin in an epipen without a prescription would be illegal.

This could not be clarified at the meeting. Procedural motion J was submitted to the Clerk of Council which was accepted by the Chair.

The Procedural Motion was put to the floor for a vote:

For: 26

Against: 1

The motion will now be deferred until the next meeting, to be submitted with clarification of the legal position.

15.39 First Aid Motion – Amendments

Amendment 1:

Remove the clause 'including an eppy pen for people with allergies and or Diabetes' from Council Resolves

For: 29

Against: 0

Amendment 2:

A register of already accredited (with at least BTEC Level) First Aiders, both staff and students, is compiled and publicly displayed in prominent areas;

For: Unanimous

Amendment 3:

Sports Clubs and Societies should be reminded that St John's ambulance is available to be availed of for their events

For: Unanimous

The substantive motion was then put to a vote:

For: Unanimous

15.40 Epipen Motion

The Proposer of the motion (Vikki Lutton) noted that there are many people who have allergies who are not even aware.

A speaker from the floor proposed a Procedural motion J, as again there were legal ambiguities surrounding non-qualified people.

Vote for the Procedural Motion –

For: Unanimous

AOB

15.41 The Chair closed the official business of Council. Asked if there was any other business.

Councillor Cumbo asked a question to the Sports President to be passed on: Asked how Coleraine soccer team were able to afford new kits? (noted in her report) He asked if any help or support was available for the Magee soccer club – either from the Sports Union or through help to secure sponsorship.

15.42 An emergency motion was submitted to the Clerk in relation to proposed cuts by Westminster to bursaries for nurses in the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

Council voted unanimously to accept the motion.

Motion moved immediately to vote:

For: Unanimous.

15.43 Thanks from the floor to the Chair and Vice Chair for their outstanding first Council in their role *spontaneous applause*

15.44 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

2nd February 2015.