Representation & Democracy

Student Council

Thursday 28th September 2017, 6 – 8 pm, Teviot Debating Hall

AGENDA

1. Welcome

2. Accountability
   Paper A

3. Policy discussion

1. **Welcome**

Your guide to Student Council

What is Student Council?

The Student Council is the primary mechanism to discuss ideas and create Students' Association policy. It is open for all students to attend and vote, and students are actively encouraged to do so. Meetings contain the following key features:

1) You can hear and discuss Sabbatical officers' accountability reports.
2) You are given the opportunity to make speeches for either a motion or expenditure request. All members are then invited to debate on the topic and vote on its passing.

Discussion of Motions

Student Council is chaired by a trained and impartial Student Council Facilitator to ensure debate is fair and orderly, and in accordance with the Students' Associations' Safe Space Policy. The Facilitator decides the running order of the meeting, which is usually as follows:

a) Facilitator invites speeches for a motion or expenditure request (usually the proposer of the motion speaks first, or a representative on their behalf)
b) Speeches for and against amendments
c) Vote on amendments
d) Speeches against a motion or expenditure request
e) Summation
f) Questions and comments
g) Vote on motion or expenditure request

Voting

Once an issue has been adequately discussed, there will be a vote by paper ballot. Elected Student Council Members are given weighted votes of 1.5, compared to 1 for a vote from an unelected member. Additionally, only Elected Representatives can vote on expenditure requests. Please note that abstentions made at Student Council meetings will count towards the total number of votes. The table below explains the different voting outcomes:

If a Motion receives…	<33%	33-67%	67% or more
Ordinary Motion	Motion does not become Association policy	Motion is referred to **online ballot**	Motion becomes Association policy
Extraordinary Motion	Motion does not become Association policy	Motion does not become Association policy	Motion becomes Association policy

The online ballot

Student Council online ballots take the form of a secret ballot in which all members are asked to vote either for, against or abstain to an Ordinary Motion which has failed to receive enough votes at Student Council. Please note that abstentions made on the online ballot will not count towards the total number of votes.

Ballots will be posted on the Students' Association website and communicated to students within four working days after the associated Student Council meeting. Ballots will normally be open for two working days, with results being announced within two working days after the ballots close.

Online ballots will need to obtain a Quorum for motions to pass. If an Ordinary Motion(s) passes on this Quorum then it shall become Association policy, and will subsequently be published on the Students' Association website.

Safe Space Policy

Student Council meetings are run in accordance with the Students' Association's Safe Space Policy. A meeting shall be deemed to be a safe space where no-one is disadvantaged or discouraged from contributing, so long as they respect others' ability to contribute; and where the principle of equal opportunities is respected.

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Edinburgh University Students' Association Democratic Meeting Code of Conduct[1]

Introduction

The Students' Association's democratic meetings including Student Council Meetings, Committee Meetings, and General Meetings are the Student' Association's primary policy-making bodies. It is therefore vital that all students feel safe, respected, and able to fully participate.

Edinburgh University Students' Association strives to be a place where contentious topics can be debated accessibly and with consideration for the needs of all participants. However, we recognise that some topics may be particularly difficult or distressing for some members to discuss.

The purpose of this policy is to enable us to facilitate productive debate in a way which is respectful and enables all members to participate.

Code of Conduct

Attendees of democratic meetings are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which is respectful and does not disadvantage or discourage others from participating in the discussion. This includes but is not limited to:
- Allowing others to speak when called upon by the meeting facilitator.
- Refraining from behaviour that discourages others from speaking or prevents others from hearing the speaker including speaking over, interrupting, heckling, or laughing.
- Where appropriate, using content warnings to highlight – in advance – discussion of sensitive topics. This would generally take the form of "I am about to mention [insert subject here]" and should be followed by a pause to allow members to remove themselves from the meeting if they wish.
- Respecting others' experiences, even if they differ from your own.
- Refraining from utilising social media to harass or intimidate others.

Safe Space Policy

All democratic meetings are conducted under the Students' Association's Safe Space Policy. The aim of this policy is to create an environment in which all students, staff, and visitors feel welcome, respected, and able to fully participate in our events and activities. Attendees

should take care to read and understand the Safe Space Policy before participating in any democratic meeting.

It is the responsibility of the meeting facilitator to uphold the Safe Space Policy and ensure it is being implemented.

If you experience or witness an incident which you believe is in breach of the Safe Space Policy you can report it either:

- **At the time**, to a member of Students' Association staff or the meeting facilitator
- **At a later date**, by emailing complaints@eusa.ed.ac.uk

The Students' Association's Complaints Procedure is confidential and impartial. Incidents will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If an individual is found to have breached the Safe Space Policy they may face one or more of the following actions, at the discretion of Students' Association staff or the meeting facilitator:

- Verbal Warning
- Request for an Acknowledgement of Wrong-doing and Apology
- Removal from Venue

Incidents may also be referred for investigation under the Students' Association's Disciplinary Procedure or the University's Disciplinary Procedure.
If you would like to report an incident to the Police, you can access support and advice (including information on Third-Party Reporting) through the Advice Place, the Students' Association's impartial and confidential advice service.

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2. Accountability

VP Activities and Services: Kai O'Doherty

For meeting of 28/09/2017

Summary

After a busy summer of training and learning the ropes, I've made progress on most of my manifesto points, and other initiatives that are ongoing parts of the role, or ad hoc suggestions. Below are summaries of the main initiatives.

Inter-Society Collaboration

Summary	A key part of my election manifesto, and approach to Activities, has been prioritizing inter-society collaboration, whether that be joint events, skill/knowledge-sharing, or collective representation. The Activities Representatives, Skill Swap Platform, How-To Guides are other projects fall under this.
Actions	• 10 out of 14 Activities Representatives were elected in the March '17 elections! They have undergone training, and attend the first Activities Executive meeting. • The pilot version of an online skill swap platform has been launched to test and review its functionality • This platform, and the How-To Guide concept, were both launched at the Office Bearer Welcome event • Connecting our Volunteering Service better with societies already engaging in volunteering projects

	• Work with ESCA & RAG Week to expand their reach with societies • Collaborating with the Festival of Creative Learning & their bespoke funding for innovative learning projects
Next Steps	• 1-on-1 Objective-Setting meetings with the Activities Reps to further develop their year's objectives • Test and develop the Skill Swap platform, and fully launch soon • Create 2-3 How-To Guides with societies • Continuing discussions of collaboration with ESCA, RAG, and the Sports Union

Engaging with marginalized & less engaged students in Activities

Summary	Societies and volunteering provide a crucial element of social connection, personal/professional development and student voice in the Students' Association. I'm looking into barriers to access/participation for certain groups of students, looking for short- and long-term initiatives to address these barriers.
Actions	• The Students' Association acquired £10,000 towards the Activities & Sports Participation Grant, providing UK Widening Participation students with funds to cover costs of accessing Activities & Sports • Supporting the International Students' Centre in using our space/resources to continue their lounge, with views to longer-term solutions • Postgraduate engagement: supporting the relaunch of the Postgraduate Society through various Welcome Week

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	events/socials and future events; outreach for PGT & PGR Rep roles
Next Steps	- Further research into economic barriers to accessing Activities, and benchmarking solutions in other institutions to look for larger-scale solutions - Lobby the University with the International Students' Centre for more permanent support - Work closely with the Postgraduate Society, PG School Convenors, and PGT & PGR Reps to address the imbalance in postgraduate engagement in Activities and the Students' Association

Improvement of Students' Association Services

Summary	The 'Services' portion of this Sabbatical role involves seeking and enacting student feedback on our services, ranging from events to catering offering to ethical issues.
Actions	- Work with the LGBT+ Officer, Delphi, on establishing a regular LGBT+ Club Night - Meeting with the University and the architects on the new Student Centre - Food Waste: in the process of setting up a partnership with the Shrub and their Food Share initiative, to better reallocate food waste from our services - Working with the University to ensure gender-neutral bathrooms are included in all future builds, and explore how to include them in existing builds - Collaboration with the ECA Convenor and the Wee Red Bar to improve our services and support at ECA

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	• Following input from the Divinity Convenor, Stephen, Rainy Hall is having card transaction capability installed
Next Steps	• Widening student consultation on the Student Centre is in the works, and a broader consultation is planned for November • Setting up the proposals and mechanics of Shrub Food Share collaboration • Meetings are planned with University Estates re: gender neutral toilet provision

Other:

- We are launching our Social Enterprise Pilot service this semester, supporting 3 – 5 existing and new student-led social enterprise projects
- Chloe Marvin, Disabled Students' Officer, is working with us on making our venues more accessible and clarifying accessible toilet signage

VP Community: Ollie Glick

For meeting of 28/09/2017

Summary

After feeling out where my objectives had been left by our predecessors, I set about progressing them. This has gone well on the most part, and some have been waiting for students to lead and input, which can now happen!

Housing

Summary	Campaigning for more affordable housing, through a variety of avenues: Housing Co-ops, Ed uni accommodation, and Private halls, a growing issue not initially on my manifesto
Actions	- We Have been in constant discussions with the university about a halls offering which is more affordable, more accessible, and promotes social integration - Actively been identifying buildings that could become student housing co ops - As part of said strategy discussing getting the uni to have student housing co-ops ratified in housing strategy - Creating a paper and using data to highlight the issue of affordability and culture of pbsa (private halls) for students, to present to both the university and the council
Next Steps	- The ball has got a rollin on the above, the key next step is to ratify some of these discussions into legislation/strategy - Talk to student campaigns about housing issues and what we can work on together

Sustainability

Summary	Lots of issues to tackle, such the uni's and student association's food waste, increasing cycling and electric vehicles on campus, as well as challenging the university's investments in energy
Actions	- Researching and interviewing staff and management across services to get a picture of food waste process - Talking to 'foodshare' about a partnership with the student's association. - Creating actions with the SRS department to reduce uni food waste

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- Consulted with and edited the Uni 4 year transport strategy, checking that cycling and electric vehicles were increasing as petrol was decreasing
- Chloe Marvin, Disability officer, appraised the paper for accessibility and disability concerns
- Lots of discussions and board meetings have been had about the university supporting renewable energy projects

Next Steps	- Work with students and student activist groups on their goals this year relative to the university being more sustainable - Ensure the university ratifies its commitment to sustainability - Create a long term solution to reducing food waste and redistributing food

Community outreach

Summary	The new part of the role, and so the slowest off the ground, as we are creating new structures
Actions	- Our activities department have created a social enterprise pilot, which if successful will become a permanent part of our student groups, alongside volunteers and societies - Have attended several community council and neighborhood partnership meetings, with a view to involving students in community project and culture discussions - In constant discussion with university staff in charge of outreach funds and projects, ensuring students can access as much funding as possible, and that students can take ownership

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	• Strengthening links of current organizations, such as the SHRUB and sexpression, with the uni, to get them more support • Opening discussions about school volunteering and peer assisted learning going into schools
Next Steps	• Ensure the projects supported by our pilot run well • Help community organisations grow bigger across the city, and involve more students • Continue to persuade the uni to give students more chances to help the local and student community, through funding and roles • Create school outreach schemes

VP Education: Bobi Archer

For meeting of 28/09/2017

Summary

Since being elected, I've invested everything into making my manifesto happen. I've decided upon three focal points this year being; reducing the pressures of semester 1, joint-degrees and enhancing the student voice through the class representative system. There has been good progress with all three points so far, with the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee endorsing all pledges.

In regards to the other pledges in my original manifesto, we decided as a sabbatical team to focus on specific remits and issues, thus transport will be lobbied by the Vice President Community and President.

Reducing the Pressures of Semester 1

Summary	The Semester 1 examination period is shorter than that of Semester 2. Depending on the day in which the academic year falls, students are given between 3 and 7 dedicated days to prepare for the examination diet. A student may be required to prepare for 60 credits of material in this time, equating to a quarter of their degree classification, as such, some students may feel at an academic disadvantage. This can be particularly problematic for visiting students who may still adjusting to university structures and life.

Actions	1. Senate Teaching Learning Committee has approved of the following implementations
	    • Week 11 to be free of new examinable material
	    • Week 6 or 7 to be free of regular (weekly) assignments
	    • All courses to provide a structure/template of the examination if adjustments have been made and for new courses
	    • Each school to have a staff/student member who arranges activities and workshops to support students' learning and provide academic guidance
	2. Lobby the university to set out the expectations, provide adequate training and develop consistency of the PT system
	3. Work with CSE School Representatives to encourage the College to adapt the CAHSS policy of online assessments (with opt-out options where necessary)

Next Steps	1. Take the implementations from Senate Teaching Learning Committee to College levels to see how they will be implemented, and understand the reasons for not doing so 2. Attend the working group for the PT system and to lobby for mental health training, better training materials etc.

3. Attend the CAHSS policy groups for online submissions in order to understanding the policy, to encourage CSE to follow suit

Joint Degrees

Summary	Joint-degree students make up 14% of our student population, yet they are a cohort of students that is often overlooked. Although we thrive upon offering the Edinburgh Experience and flexibility to students within their degree programme we often lack the systems in place to support these students and give them any sense of belonging.

Actions	1. Lobby for each school to have a joint-degree coordinator, following the model from the School of Mathematics. They act as a first point of call and arrange events for students to meet one another on joint-degree programs 2. Consistency in deadline extensions, special circumstances and for progression hurdles to be transparent 3. A greater focus point in Teaching Programme Reviews 4. Ensure each school allocates Class Representative spaces for students on joint-degrees
Next Steps	1. Continue developments with the Dean of CAHSS, after consensus was found at Senate Teaching Learning Committee 2. Push for a joint-degree focus in all university meetings and collaborating with other sabbatical officers to do so; including Patrick and Esther with Service Excellence meetings, regarding Special Circumstances. 3. Follow up with the university to ensure that joint-degrees are on the agenda for Teaching Programme Review 4. Continue to lobby the university in regards to the new representative system

Enhancing the Student Voice through an effective Class Representative System

| Summary | The number of class representatives has increased by 143% since 2012-13, taking us from 1163 to 2808, whilst the student population has only increased by 20%. Additionally representatives are recruited with inconsistent duties across the institution, and by tutorial, class, programme and degree level. The ratios of reps to students are also inconsistent which has resulted in some schools having low levels of engagement but more support from the Students' Association because of their large numbers.

If a student has not completed the online training then they do not receive recognition on their HEAR record, so it is unlikely that the student is up taking any of the duties including student outreach, consultation and representation. The consequence of this is that students may be voicing their feedback to inactive class reps, whom are not forwarding these responses. Additionally, they are not relaying any of the feedback from staff-student meetings to students because of their absence.

With the proposed model, we would have a system that prioritized quality over quantity in-line with other Russell Group institutions, in particular ones that have high levels of student voice satisfaction in NSS*. By reducing the numbers, student representatives would receive more personal and relevant support from both the Students' Association and University to clarify the expectations of the representative role and empower them to be as engaging as possible with the student body. |

Actions	1. Lobby the university to reducing the number of class representatives, for a quality over quantity system 2. Explore the option of degree-programme level representatives, as used in some schools within Science and Engineering

	3. All schools to appoint a joint-degree representative per each year of study
	4. More personalised training and support to outline the expectations of the role. The training will have three key focuses; • How to collect representative feedback • The purpose and function of committee meetings and how to signpost to the relevant platforms • How to close the feedback loop to the students
Next Steps	1. Continue to meet with Head of Schools to discuss the proposal 2. Liaise with Charlie Jeffery and the Teaching Learning Committee to add pressure from the university to individual schools and courses 3. Relate to the NSS scores and the immediate need to enhance the Student Voice platforms

Other:

Continue to support the BME Officer with the developments of LiberatEd, and to lobby the university to invest into the BME Attainment Gap. Ensure that the Students' Association takes the lead in the Widening Participation Strategy, specifically in regards to supporting students whilst they're at the university. This extends to supporting students to apply, get in and equipping students with the skills to be successful once they leave. Lastly, but not least important, I continued Patrick Garrett's work regarding Tutors and Demonstrators and the working cap has now been raised from a hard limit of 6 hours per week to 9 hours average, per week.

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VP Welfare: Esther Dominy

Summary

Hello! Summer has been busy, we've been to a lot of training, begun to pin down our priorities for the year and there are now giant photos of us stuck up all around campus. This report summarises some of the main projects I've been working on so far, but just to provide a bit of introduction, my main focus is on improving mental health support, preventing sexual violence and harassment, and continuing lots of ongoing work around how the University supports disabled students, how the University supports parents and carers, and work around sexual health!

Mental health and wellbeing week

Summary	Mental Health and Wellbeing Week was set up in 2015 after student council voted to hold a week of events around mental health. This is the third year it has run, and this year will be held much earlier in the year in semester 1, running from the 13th-17th November.
Actions	• Begun planning over the summer, with a specific goal this year of using student groups and events in schools to reach even more students than last year. • Several events now confirmed for the week, including alpacas (who are incredibly soothing), a networking event with Lothian Bipolar, a 'meet the advisor' drop in with the Disability Service, a MP and MSP lobbying event with NUS Scotland, a chance to hear directly from the University about mental health initiatives (and ask questions) and many more! • Have managed to secure some funding from the University to help run the week, and reached out to various University

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	departments/services and the Sports Union who hopefully will also be running events. • Plans in the works for an email campaign around mental health training for Personal Tutors encouraging more schools to sign up.
Next Steps	• Now the semester has started, working with societies and elected reps to get as many events planned as possible! If you'd like to be a part of the week or run an event please please get in touch (vpwelfare@eusa.ed.ac.uk)! • Confirming some more events (like fab events planned by BME Officer Diva around BME mental health and Disabled Students Officer Chloë on self-care). • Keep reaching out to University departments to plan events for the week.

Special circumstances and extensions

Summary	There have previously been two motions passed at Student Council around improving special circumstances and extensions policies to make them more accessible to students, and in particular student parents and carers. One of my priorities this year is to help improve this system. The University is also currently looking at ways to improve special circumstances and extensions to make them more consistent and we can input into this.
Actions	• Met with Chloë Marvin, our Disabled Students Officer, with the Advice Place about her priorities for extensions and special circumstances and to hear about common issues from the Advice Place. • Met with University team responsible for work around improving these processes to express our concerns with them. Also discussed plans for student input – there will now be a series of workshops and 1-1 interviews with students.

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	• Working with the rest of the sabbs and Chloë to map out all of the problems with special circumstances and extensions across the University.
Next Steps	• Promoting workshops and interviews to students – this should have been promoted via some of our social media channels by the time of this meeting! • Chloë and I are to meet with the University again to discuss outcomes from the workshops and input directly as well.

No One Asks For It campaign and sexual harassment

Summary	One of my main priorities for this year is around preventing sexual violence and harassment – lots of my predecessors have worked on this, and last year the No One Asks For It campaign was launched as a joint campaign between us, the University and the Sports Union. We're now looking at how to further develop and relaunch the campaign, as well as other ways to improve the support the University gives to survivors.
Actions	• Met with the University about how to develop and relaunch the No One Asks For It campaign – for the past year this has focused on preventative messages, and we are now looking at relaunching this in second semester with a message around how we support survivors. • In terms of University policies on sexual violence and harassment, have met with the University and Advice Place staff to discuss how we can start to map out how processes could be improved as well as how students can input into this. • The University has also recently bought some online training for staff around how to respond to disclosures which we are able to

	access and will also be circulated to our staff in relevant positions.
Next Steps	- Looking at ways for students to input into this, as the experiences of students who have accessed these policies are obviously the most important consideration for any changes. - More work with University and Advice Place to map out current processes.

President: Patrick Kilduff (report to follow)

Edinburgh University Students' Association

Representation & Democracy

Student Council Expenditure Tracker
June 2017 - May 2018

Responsible: sabbatical officers

Description	Date approved at Student Council	Allocated budget	Spent to date	Remaining
Total at June 2017		£ 4,000.00		£ 4,000.00
Totals		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total unallocated budget		**£4,000.00**		