



Student Council

Thursday 28 March, 6-8 pm, Lecture Theatre 5, Appleton Tower.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Welcome and overview

Welcome and overview of the agenda by Amalie Sortland, Student Council Facilitator at Edinburgh University Students' Association.

2. Accountability

Reports from the Sabbatical Officers were given, and questions were taken from the floor.

I. VP Welfare – Kai O'Doherty

Kai sent their apologies for this month's Student Council meeting. If you have any questions about Kai's work report, please email them at vpwelfare@eusa.ed.ac.uk.

Report passes **98.3% in favour**:

Votes for	88.5
Votes Against	1.5
Abstain	8

II. President – Eleri Connick

Eleri sent her apologies for this month's Student Council meeting. If you have any questions about Eleri's work report, please email her at president@eusa.ed.ac.uk.

Report passes **83.5% in favour**:

Votes for	68.5
Votes Against	13.5
Abstain	13.5

III. VP Community – Georgie Harris

- **Question 1 [Patrick]: What has been your favourite part of the year?**
- **Answer 1:** It was ages ago now, but Welcome Week was truly a highlight. I went to Pollock Halls to speak to the freshers who were moving in, and it was just a lovely, energetic atmosphere experience! Also when I got to know the rest of the sabbatical team, and that was special too.



- **Question 2 [Shay, Vice President Activities and Services]:** Who is your favourite Sabb?
- **Answer 2:** Kai, not because they're my favorite, but I think we should give them a round of applause for introducing the first Trans and Non-Binary elected Officer for next academic year. I think that's amazing.

Report passes **98.3% in favour:**

Votes for	85.5
Votes Against	1.5
Abstain	10.5

IV. VP Education – Diva Mukherji

- **Question 1: Please can you just finish off your last point about Peer Support?**
- **Answer 1:** Yes, so regarding Peer support, we're developing a more coherent strategy for the programme, and looking at ways in which it can be more embedded in the curriculum.
- **Question 2 [Isabella, BME Officer]:** Do you have any advice for next year's representatives?
- **Answer 2:** I think the main thing is to remind yourself that you're better than everyone. Especially when you're working with the University, where it can be quite intimidating and you can feel a bit like imposter. It's important to remember that you're the best, and surround yourself with people who remind you of that.

Report passes **96.6% in favour:**

Votes for	85.5
Votes Against	3
Abstain	9

V. VP Activities and Services: Shenan Davis-Williams

- **No questions were asked.**

Report passes **98.2% in favour:**

Votes for	84
Votes Against	1.5
Abstain	10

3. Motions

I. KB Community Garden

- **Question 1 [Andrew Wilson]:** I really like this motion. My only question is about the University rejecting your idea previously. What excuse did they give?



- **Answer 1:** They are afraid that the project will be abandoned once we graduate, so they don't want to commit to something for there to be no support for it in a few years' time. This, of course, isn't the case as there are lots of students and staff members who are passionate about the project.
- **Question 2 [Rosie Taylor]:** This has had a lot of support from student and staff. Can you tell us a bit more about the staff and University departments which have expressed support for the project so far?
- **Answer 2:** Yes of course. We also want to stress that not only is the proposed garden for wellbeing and community fostering, but also will have education purposes. We have therefore been working with tutors from different departments to ascertain how the garden can be used to enhance learning. Plant Science have been particularly helpful. Other people we have been talking to include the SRS department and the SRUC.
- **Question 3 [Emily]:** What is the scale of your project and where it is going to be in KB?
- **Answer 3:** Because the first proposal got rejected, we want to start very small. We have proposed three places, one in front of the library, and two on the edges of the campus. We hope to get at least one of three accepted. In the long term we hope to work with the diversity department to increase green spaces. I don't know how many of you have seen the University's long term building plan, but they plan to build pretty much everywhere with little green spaces, which is no good.
- **Summation:** We want a garden. It's going to be great. Ya'll should support it. It can be pretty dreary down in KB so it would be great to have a garden for us to gather round in. Plants some vegetables. So yeah, please support this motion.

Motion passes **99% in favour:**

Votes for	95
Votes Against	1
Abstain	5.5

II. Remembering the Holocaust

- **Question 1 [Oona]:** This isn't a question, I just wanted to say well done for bringing this forward because it's really important.
- **Answer 1:** Thank you.
- **Question 2 [Brendan Tam, HCA PG Rep]:** It's a really important motion. Will the events include other genocides not mentioned in the motion, such as the Armenian genocide?
- **Answer 2:** The ones listed in the motion are the ones found on the Holocaust Memorial Trust website, which is an organisation which does great work in this area. I think it is important to commemorate all genocides, and I apologise if I have missed something off which you believe deserves to be there.
- **Question 3 [Isabella, BME Officer] :** This is really great motion, it is very meticulous. I am surprised and a little shocked that the Students' Association didn't do anything to mark the day. What kind of events were you hoping would be put on?
- **Answer 3:** I wanted to leave this open. I was hoping that the Students' Association could come up with an event in conjunction with the Jewish Society, or the relevant society (where applicable) if other genocides are also being commemorated. The Students' Association have put on great events before, and I trust that they will come up with something appropriate.



- **Summation:** Thank you for supporting this motion. I think it's a fantastic way to promote tolerance across all religions and ethnicities.

Motion passes **100% in favour:**

Votes for	95.5
Votes Against	0
Abstain	4

III. Support the Extinction Rebellion and Declare a Climate Emergency

- **Question 1:** Can you explain a bit more about what the Extinction Rebellion is?
- **Answer 1:** Extinction Rebellion is a movement born out the civil disobedience network called Rising Up. It is currently holding a peaceful, non-violent rebellion to fight for radical policies that address climate change. The Extinction Rebellion claims that the government is acting illegally by breaking the social contract by refusing to act on the pressing climate issues. The emphasis is on civil disobedience as history as shown this is an effective means of communicating with the government when there are errors in their policies.
- **Question 2: [Catriona]:** I agree that climate change is a huge issue. My concern is about civilian disobedience - is that relevant in this century? Should we as the Students' Association affiliate with such a drastic society? I think education is at the heart of change, and climate issues could be tackled by actually educating people on how to live sustainably.
- **Answer 2:** I agree that education is a fundamental aspect of tackling climate change, and I hope someone brings a motion here about climate change education. We, however, believe that really radical action needs to happen, and that needs to be achieved by non-violent action.
- **Question 3 [Rosie Taylor]:** I think it's a really interesting way of tackling the issue. If I understand correctly, Extinction Rebellion is decentralised at its very core. How can we assure that actions that are taken in other cities which have active Extinction Rebellion groups don't contravene the values and aims of the Students' Association?
- **Answer 3:** That is a very valid question. We are asking for the Students' Association to support the aims only. We are very much not in favour of violence, and that is outside of the code of the Extinction Rebellion. The Extinction Rebellion has an established set of principles and values which set out the aims of movement, which specify that only non-violent strategies should be used. If a branch of Extinction Rebellion in London or Sheffield for example, does something to contravene those principles and aims, then they would not be considered as acting in the aims of the movement and therefore would not be supported by the Students' Association.
- **Question 4 [Fiona, ECA Rep]:** Are you looking for the Students' Association to run a campaign or to do any lobbying on behalf on the Extinction Rebellion?
- **Answer 5:** We are hoping that if we run campaigns that the Students' Association will help us publicise them. The main think we are looking for from the Students' Association however is a published written statement that says that they support the aims of the Rebellion. This would be following Manchester Students' Union. I think that creating a network of institutions such as Universities and Students' Associations which have given vocal support to the movement is very powerful, and it sends a strong message to local and national societies. In the future it would be



great for the Students' Association to run campaigns in line with the Rebellion, but initially this is about publishing a statement of support. It is a symbolic action.

- **Speech against:** I feel there is so many political groups that are trying to tackle this issue. How do we choose which one to support? Shouldn't the Students' Association just publish a statement that says that they support groups tackling climate change, rather than siding with one radical organisation?
- **Speech for:** I think the key point is because climate change is an extreme emergency, we need extreme action to tackle it. I support it because it's such a large environmental movement. It is our generation which will be the first to feel the effects of climate change. Some students aren't aware of just how grave the situation is, and I think by us voting to pass this motion, more awareness will be created both on campus and in the local community.
- **Speech against [Kathal]:** I think that students recognise that climate change is a problem, but I think this is the wrong way to go about it. I think [Extinction] Rebellion is too extreme. Jail isn't the answer, education is. This isn't a social issue, it's a scientific issue.
- **Speech for:** With the bureaucracy of Brexit, it's important that things like climate change aren't pushed aside. By passing this motion, the Students' Association will be joining a large network of people who refuse to let this issue get lost. It's about taking a stand. It's about saving our environment.
- **Speech against [Alison]:** I think it should be amended about recognising climate change, rather than focusing on one particular group. I agree that the methods employed by Extinction Rebellion are not conducive to the ethos of the Student's Association.
- **Speech for:** Climate change is a social problem, not just a scientific one. As was mention in the earlier motion about KB Community Garden, sustainability and climate change are not features of this University's strategic plan, and so by passing this motion we will be sending a very strong message to the University that they need to do better in reducing their carbon imprint. I think at the moment they have said they want to reduce their carbon imprint by 2050, and that's just not good enough.
- **Summation:** This is not about taking sides - we're all on the same side, we're all trying to survive a ridiculously awful situation which will affect us in our life time. I hope you can support this motion. I want to be on the right side of history.

Motion passes **75% in favour:**

Votes for	69
Votes Against	23
Abstain	17.5

4. Expenditure Request

IV. Material Support for Trans/Non-Binary Students

- **Question 1 [Fiona, HCA]:** thank you for this motion. How you plan to spread the word about the motion so that students from all campuses know it is available?
- **Answer 1:** Natasha our lovely LGBT+ Officer actually put this motion through so I am not 100% sure on the details, but it will definitely get out. The trans community is quite strong here, we all know



each other, so I think word will spread very quickly. It can also be added to the LGBT+ Newsletter if there is any left going out this semester. It will definitely go through all PrideSoc communications.

- **Question 2 [Rosie Taylor]:** This isn't a question but just wanted to say how brilliant I think this is. It's a good way for the Students' Association to put their money where their mouth is.
- **Question 3 [Alejandro]:** How will you decide whose claim gets chosen? Is there a selection process? What is defined as reasonable price?
- **Answer 3:** Good question. Last year it worked on a first come first serve basis, so I'm sure that the same will apply this year until the money runs out. Similarly, last year orders were measured on a case by case basis when it came to reasonable price, I imagine it'd be the same this year. I agree that it should be as transparent a process as possible.
- **Question 3:** Will there be separate access for Medical and Vet schools?
- **Answer 3:** I don't know, that's a good question. Last year I believe the pick-up point was in Potterrow but I don't see any reason in theory why we couldn't have pick up points elsewhere, or even have the products mailed directly to the recipients. This is something I will look into.
- **Summation:** I really think you should support this expenditure request. It will have a significant effect on trans people's lives, particularly in the current political climate! If we don't vote to spend the remaining Student Council budget on this, then it will literally just sit in the pot and do nothing, so there is literally no reason for you not to vote for this.

Motion passes **97.1% in favour:**

Votes for	49.5
Votes Against	1.5
Abstain	1.5

5. Affiliations

- **Question 1:** What is Friends of Birzeit University?
- **Answer 2:** It's a scheme which supports the right to education in Palestine and is engaged in advocacy for academic freedom.
- **Summation:** I would say that you should vote to stay affiliated with all these organisations. If there is one or two that you think we should disaffiliate from, then I'd recommend bringing a separate motion to the first Student Council next year about it.

Affiliations pass **93.9% in favour:**

Votes for	77
Votes Against	5
Abstain	10

Meeting close.

Total number of ballots from students: 57

Total number of ballots from elected representatives: 35

Total number of ballots: 92