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 Community – Georgie Harris

   • Question 1 [Muzz, Edinburgh Med Schools UG Rep]: In your accountability report you mention that you are looking for comments and experiences with street assist. Can you clarify what kind of experiences you are wanting to hear about? I currently volunteer with them, is that something you’d like to hear about for example?

   • Answer 1: Street assist is a voluntary scheme that provides welfare and first-aid assistance in Edinburgh. It is run by student volunteers. I’m open to hearing any experience people I’ve heard from that, so if you are a volunteer, or have used the service please contact me by either speaking to me tonight, sending me an email or coming to the office in Potterrow.

   Report passes 100% in favour:

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   II. VP Education – Diva Mukherji

   • Question 1 [Laura, PPLS UG Rep]: My question is about the lecture recording policy. I understand that the new policy is supposed to start in time for semester 2, however, I was recently in one of our schools building and saw a poster advising staff how to opt out of recording lectures. I was confused because I thought that they wouldn’t be able to do that anymore, so you can you clarify how the new policy is going to be different to the one which is currently in place?

   • Answer 1: Yes of course. Currently it is an opt-in system, so lecturers would have to go to special lengths to get lectures recorded. But from next semester they are all automatically opted in, so if a lecturer does not want to have their teaching recording be that for personally or pedagogical reasons, they will have to specifically opt out and go through a long procedure to do so, which will hopefully act as a deterrent to them all just opting out.

   • Question 2: I see you got some actions in your paper regarding special circumstances. Can you tell us where you are with that?
Answer 2: Great question. Special circumstances system is something students have continually asked to be made more accessible and consistent throughout the University. The current proposal is in the process of being discussed at various committees is one that we (the Students’ Association) have fed into and we are happy with. It is more efficient and more consistent. It has passed at a senate committee but there are more committees that it needs to be approved at. Hopefully it will be something that will be implemented over the next year or so, but unfortunately it is a very long process.

Report passes 100% in favour:

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III. VP Welfare - Kai O’Doherty

Question 1 [Andrew]: This afternoon Labour MP Lloyd Russell-Moyle made history in the Commons by revealing he is HIV positive. What is the Students’ Association doing to mark World Aids Day?

Answer 1: Thanks for bringing this up. For those who don’t know, World AIDs Day is 1st December, and is day to raise awareness of HIV, show support for those living with HIV and remember those who have died due to AIDS-related illnesses. I know a couple of societies are doing events to mark the day, which includes free HIV testing. And of course, Teviot will be going up in red.

Question 2 [Fiona, Edinburgh College of Art UG Rep]: I thought Mental Health and Wellbeing Week was really great, but those sorts of events shouldn’t be limited to just one week in the year. Will stuff like free yoga continue for the rest of the year?

Answer 2: Yes that is one of Eleri’s projects. She’s not here tonight but my understanding is that it will continue next semester. I agree that Mental Health is something which should be talked about all the time. My vision is that there will be a mental health officer in each school that will be dedicated to supporting students.

Question 3 [Isabella, BME Liberation Officer]: Thank you for your work on the #NoExcuse campaign so far. I was wondering what information is given to freshers about consent about during matriculation?

Answer 3: Great question. My answer to my knowledge is that nothing specific happens in matriculation that teaches first years about consent. The University has various streams linked to this, and one of them is about changing culture. As part of the culture change stream, there has been bystander training alongside other training sessions. I agree that first years need to be more specifically targeted and educated about consent. At my former University we achieved a cascade system of training, so it is possible. If anyone wants to run to be VP Welfare next year to look at how this can be implemented, then please talk to me about this.

Report passes 100% in favour:

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IV. VP Activities and Services - Shenan Davis-Williams
- **Question 1 [Alex, International and Multicultural Activities Reps]:** Not having 24 hour food services in the Library is a concern for students, especially during the exam period when students typically spend long days or nights studying there. Is this something that can be looked into?

  **Answer 1:** This is not something which has been brought to my attention by students, so thank you for asking about this. The library café is not Students’ Association owned, so it wouldn’t be a case of me making the arrangements for the outlet to be open, but instead lobbying the University to ask for this change. If this is something you’re interested in, please speak to me later as I can certainly do this on behalf of the students.

- **Question 2 [Emily, Part-time Students’ Rep]:** It is clear from yours, and the other Sabbatical Officer’s accountability reports, that you’re all doing lots of great things for students, but I’m worried that students don’t get to see all this work. What have you been doing to improve the communication the Students’ Association and its members?

  **Answer 2:** That is one of the struggles of my role specifically I think. I’ve been trying to use my social media more to communicate that it is the Students’ Association who does this work, and makes these changes for students. I’m aware that more work needs to be done about this, and we are making an exciting announcement soon which I hope will help students recognise when it is the Students’ Association who has put on an event, or has influenced change on something. But if anyone has any ideas about how the Students’ Association can improve the ways they communicate to students then please let me know!

- **Question 3:** what is the new mascot?

  **Answer 3:** basically we decided to get a mascot which was supposed to launch last night but will be launched next weekend instead. The Students’ Association used to have a mascot several years ago, and we’ve decided to bring it back. The mascot will be a moose called Dusty which will help students promote events and boost the Students’ Associations work. I guess this also answer the question that came before. We’d love to hear what you think about Dusty when he is finally revealed.

Report passes **100 %** in favour:

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V. **President – Eleri Connick**

Apologies were received from Students’ Association President Eleri for tonight’s meeting. Diva, Vice President Education, gave a short overview Eleri’s work report on her behalf.

**Diva:** One of the big things that Eleri has been working on is the way that the financial department communicates to students, so she has been working on this. Free Yoga will continue next semester. She has also been working with the University about how they can communicate with students in general.

- **Question 1 [Andrew]:** What initiatives are going to be put in place so that we have a sabbatical team which is as diverse as the current team? I.e. how are you going to make sure that we don’t end up with representatives which are male and pale?

  **Answer 1:** we will be a lot of doing outreach with the liberation groups, to make sure they feel able and supported to run. Everyone please run for them, any student is eligible to apply. We want to make sure that we get enough engagement with all the campaigns. The Students’ Association will be running a variety of training sessions for students on how to run campaigns and write manifestos, which we hope will make it seem less intimidating to run.

Report passes **94.4%** in favour:
3. Motions

I. Take a stand against Transphobia on our campus

The proposal submitter was not present at Council, and so attendees were offered the opportunity to make a speech in favour.

- **Elliot, trans-nonbinary intersect for Pride Soc:** I’m not sure how many of you are aware about the recent transphobia stickers and graffiti that have been appearing on campus. The perpetrators are particularly targeting women’s toilets which is very upsetting. It is making the campus feel unsafe. The action from the University has been unsatisfactory. The people culpable for this transphobia have not been caught or reprimanded which sends a very negative message to all students. The message the University is sending to students is that this hate crime is acceptable behaviour, and to trans students, the University is effectively saying that they are not cared for, and shouldn’t feel welcome on our campus.

- **Andrew:** I think it is extremely important motion considering the circumstances. I hope it is sends a strong message to the University leadership who seem to be endorsing transphobia on campus.

- **Summation given by Elliot:** Please vote for this motion to help trans students feel safe at the University of Edinburgh.

Motion passes 98.1% in favour:

| Votes for | 78.5 |
| Votes Against | 1.5 |
| Abstain | 4 |

II. Hot Water device in KB Campus Library

- **Speech for [Xiaxu]:** Currently students who study at Kings’ Buildings don’t have any provision at the moment for getting hot water. This is particularly a problem at the weekends when no outlet is open, so we cannot even buy tea or coffee to help us concentrate. I have heard from many people on my course that having a hot water point would greatly help them when studying.

- **No questions or comments.**

Motion passes 100% in favour:

| Votes for | 81.5 |
| Votes Against | 0 |
| Abstain | 2.5 |

III. Support PostStudyWorkVisaNow Campaign

- **Question 1 [Alex international rep]:** I would love to stay here. If my understanding of the immigration policy is correct, then length of residency needed before being eligible to apply for citizenship is 5 years. So is part of the reason why the government stopped the visa because they...
don’t want to encourage lots of international students to apply for citizenship, or is just that they are not bothered about missing out on an amazing talent pool?

- **Answer 1:** I don’t know unfortunately. The motive behind me asking you all to support this campaign is that I believe that international students should be treated fairly, and get a chance to go for opportunities which will make them stand out to employers.

- **Question 2:** I would just like to add as an international student, getting to the UK in the first place is very hard. I love it here but I’ve got to admit that you don’t receive the friendliest welcome here from the immigration officers. I just want to say that I hope that everyone realises this, and that as international students we are just like you in hoping to get as much out of our education as possible.

- **Speech for [MSc Student]:** I just wanted to elaborate on the response to the question about the immigration and the Post Study Work Visa. If the student visa isn’t extended but you want to stay and work in the UK after graduation, you don’t have very much time to get a sponsor for you visa. Plus, to be entitled to the visa you have to earn over £30,000 per year, which for a new graduate just isn’t likely. By extending the student visa even by just a year, it would allow recent graduates to get their foot in the door and get some experience before returning home.

- **Speech for: [Laura PPLS Rep]:** I wanted to also reiterate a comment about immigration and how they’re not very nice. I recently became a British citizen, and through the process I was treated as if I was the worst person in the world that has ever existed. I feel like supporting this campaign is the least we can do for our peers. This is a good thing.

- **Summation:** please vote for this movement. Glasgow and Strathclyde Student Associations have passed this, and we are also taking this to London to get their support. If Scotland is strong on this, I hope that England and Wales will follow this.

Motion passes **98.8%** in favour:

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### IV. PostStudyWorkVisaNow Expenditure Request

- **Question 1 [Andrew]:** I’ve got a few questions. First of all, if this is an NUS Scotland campaign, could they not help you supplement the money towards running this campaign? Secondly, this fund is for activities at Edinburgh University but you speak about using the money to help campaigns at other Scottish Universities and in London. Lastly, the Students’ Association offers rooms that can be booked by students for free, so I am wondering what the requested £150 for room hire is actually for?

- **Answer 1:** We’ve calculated the budget based on a campaign that will last for the rest of the year. In terms of your question about NUS Scotland, PostStudyWorkVisaNow is still an independent campaign and so we cannot get any funding from them. The venue costs referred to in the expenditure request would cover refreshments like tea and coffee. There will be multiple events across the year to try and get support for this campaign, so that is why we have requested the £1000.

- **Question 2:** I think this is great campaign, but second the concern about the fund being used to support campaigns at other universities. To clarify, would the money allocated to this form the
fund, if you’re successful, be used just for activities at the University of Edinburgh, or at universities across Scotland?

- **Answer 2**: The money would be spent getting support at the University of Edinburgh. We are trying to get Students’ Associations across Scotland to support this. Glasgow and Aberdeen have already passed it, and the students running the campaign at these Universities have already got their own budgets from their Associations to campaign with.

- **Question 3 [Lauren, HCA PG REP]**: Are there any alternative funding sources, or is this a campaign that has no money whatsoever?

- **Answer 3**: It is a campaign started by full time students. It is student led, and we don’t really have any budget at all, so this funding is really crucial to our success. We will also be making requests from NUS Scotland to help fund this project as well.

- **Speech for [Alex, International and Multicultural Activities Rep]**: I would strongly ask you all to vote for it. We are all students, and in contributing the £1000 necessary to get the campaign off the ground, we will be really helping our peers both here in Edinburgh and across the UK. It will really help international students make the most of their degrees. Also, if the money from the budget isn’t spent, it could be the case that the amount allocated to Student Council is reduced for next year, so we need to demonstrate that we are prepared to spend the money on effective campaigns and projects.

- **Summation**: Yes in reference to that last point, last year the budget was £6,000 and it has already been cut to £4,000. By allocating the campaign £1000, it sends a clear message to the University that this something that Edinburgh students want. I cannot emphasise enough how much of a difference this will make to the international student experience. I urge you to pass these motions so we can make it a reality.

Motion passes 90% in favour:

| Votes for | 54 |
| Votes Against | 6 |
| Abstain | 9 |

4. **Extraordinary Motion**

I. **Representing Trans and Non-Binary Students**

- **Question 1 [Eliot]**: I didn’t understand why it was necessary initially. However, transphobia is evidently rife on campus. The response from the Students’ Association has been great – especially from Kai [VP Welfare] who rightly says that constantly acting as spokesperson for trans and non-binary students is not what he was elected to do. It is unfair to put people like Kai under pressure to advocate for trans rights amongst everything else that falls under their remit. I strongly favour this motion.

- **Question 2**: I’m massively in favour this. I don’t think that there is enough back from up University in terms of making trans and non-binary students feel welcome on campus, or support the rights of marginalised students. I think the liberation officers do a fantastic job with the resources they have, and I think more should be done to support the emotional labour involved in them representing students. Don’t you think that before we make this change by introducing a new officer that we should wait for the University to start taking liberation issues seriously?

- **Answer 2**: The Students’ Association does give a lot of support to the liberation officers, but you’re right that there is a lot of emotional labour involved in the job. In terms of waiting for the University, I think we would be waiting a long time. The Students’ Association is always first to
bring these issues to the University and I would worry that if we wait for them it would never happen. There is no University level committee that deals with diversity issues about from Athena Swan.

- **Question 3 [Georgie, VP Community]**: I do not identify as trans or non-binary, but I can attest to the level of work that Kai puts in to these issues. I urge all cis-gender members to vote for this. There is so much transphobic abuse. Literally everyday stickers are being removed from campus, so this isn’t an issue which is going to go away on its own.
- **Question 4**: The Athena Swan was amended in 2015 to include supporting trans people specifically. If the University isn’t doing that then we should held them accountable to that, and remind them what they signed up for.
- **Answer 4**: I agree that we should hold the University to account in terms of their levels of engagement with these schemes, but I would also question how effective these schemes actually are, and they are only for staff members. I won’t get into that though.
- **Summation**: This is what the Students’ Association is here for. We fight to help marginalised students on campus. It won’t change everything or solve all the issues that trans and non-binary students face, but it is a great starting point for working on them. I’d be happy and proud to leave my job this year if I knew that these rights will continue to be fought for. Please vote for this.

Motion passes 98.8% in favour:

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**Meeting close**

Total number of ballots from students: 46
Total number of ballots from elected representatives: 15
Total number of ballots: 61