



## Student Council

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018, 6-8 pm, Teviot Dining Room

### MEETING SUMMARY

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#### 1. Welcome and overview

*Welcome and overview of the agenda by Emma van Rooijen, Student Council Facilitator at Edinburgh University Students' Association.*

#### 2. Accountability

Reports from the Sabbatical Officers were given and questioned from the floor.

##### a) Report from Esther Dominy, Students' Association Vice President Welfare

- **Question 1 (from Kai O'Doherty):** can you tell us more about mental health peer support?
- **Answer 1:** this is currently about academic issues and we are hoping to make a more mental health-oriented scheme, which the University might be able to provide funding for.
- **Question 2 (from Bharat Chaturvedi):** does the sexual violence and harassment policy involve working with Resident Assistants too?
- **Answer 2:** all sorts of groups would be consulted, including reps, students, staff etc. so this would include accommodation services too.

**Report passes 94.2% in favour.**

For: 72.5 votes, Against: 4.5 votes, Abstain: 17.5 votes.

##### b) Report from Oliver Glick, Students' Association Vice President Community

- **No questions.**

**Report passes 97.9% in favour.**

For: 70 votes, Against: 1.5 votes, Abstain: 23 votes.

##### c) Report from Patrick Kilduff, Students' Association President



- **Question:** why has the town hall meeting been moved to that date since it's during vacation time?
- **Answer (from Bobi Archer):** it was moved so that it wasn't on a strike day but we hadn't noticed that it is a vacation day. If it is a holiday for the majority of students we can look at the date again.

**Report passes 88.2% in favour.**

For: 60 votes, Against: 8 votes, Abstain: 25 votes.

d) Report from Bobi Archer, Students' Association Vice President  
Education

- **Question 1 (from Geosciences Rep):** some lecturers have said that students will be examined on things that they have not been taught?
- **Answer:** I have spoken to the University and they agreed that this would not be the case, so staff will be made aware of this.
- **Question 2 (from HCA Rep):** are there provisions for students who do want to cross picket lines to study?
- **Answer 2:** it is up to students whether they cross picket lines, attendance will not be penalized during this time.
- **Question 3:** what about the lecture recording system?
- **Answer 3:** we are hoping that this will become an opt-out policy, unless an academic requests otherwise. There is a consultation out so please do respond to it [here](#).

**Report passes 99% in favour.**

For: 96 votes, Against: 1 vote, Abstain: 18.5 votes.

e) Report from Kai O'Doherty, Students' Association Vice President  
Activities & Services

- **Question 1 (from James Puchowsky):** what's the reasoning from estates to not offer any rooms? Some societies say there are rooms but they do not have access even if they would be willing to pay a small charge.
- **Answer 1:** the current issue is a lack of rooms due to expansion, although I do agree with you.
- **Question 1:** when will the policy on re-usable cups come into effect?
- **Answer 2:** we are pushing to have this in by September 2018.
- **Question 3:** on the gender-neutral toilets, there is one in the Vet School says 'unisex'?
- **Answer 3:** our guidance is to just label them as toilets.
- **Question 4 (Yohanna Fung):** what about spaces for multi-cultural societies who need spaces for food and drink – so is it possible to have more where this is allowed?



- **Answer 4:** in Student Association venues food is allowed but I will pass this on about University rooms.

**Report passes 98% in favour.**

For: 75 votes, Against: 1.5 votes, Abstain: 18 votes.

### 3. Motions

#### i. Supporting UCU strikes (Paper B)

- **Question 1 (from Kristi Knudson):** a concern I've had from a lot of students about what happens to tuition, especially for Masters students?
- **Answer 1:** there has been no decision made by the University, and is not part of this motion specifically.
- **Question 2:** could the strikes potentially continue until June?
- **Answer 2:** the vote has been on short action; however, they may continue. At this point it is only the four weeks.
- **Question 3:** this is what you're already doing, so why the need for a motion?
- **Answer 3:** there is a policy due to lapse but we also wanted to create a democratic space for discussion
- **Question 4 (from Jo-Anna Hagen):** is there an option motion that anyone at the University can sign?
- **Answer 4:** it is not currently part of the motion but something we can include.
- **Question 5 (from Chloe Marvin):** if this fails would this mean you would have to change how you engage with the strikes?
- **Statement for:** we would be able to continue supporting it personally but not as a Students' Association
- **Question 6 (Kristi Knudson):** are there any negotiations currently ongoing?
- **Answer 6:** the broader negotiations are with Universities UK, but we are not currently pro-actively engaged, which is why letters are focused on asking the Principals to go to the table.
- **Question 7 (Yohanna Fung):** if one of our classes is not cancelled but if there is a picket line, should we still cross it?
- **Answer 7:** standing in solidarity typically means not crossing the picket line, but it's up to the individual.
- **Question 8 (Rosie Hawtin):** could you give us more information in how to get involved with the strike?
- **Answer 8:** a sign up sheet will be put in the back for people to sign up and you can email [vpactivities@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:vpactivities@eusa.ed.ac.uk)
- **No statements against.**
- **Statements for:** it is important for both lecturers and students; as a student tutor our department does not want to strike but feel we



need to so that our working environments can improve; this motion gives a concrete basis for action.

**Motion passes 95.7% in favour.**

For: 88 votes, Against: 4 votes, Abstain: 5.5 votes.

ii. NUS delegation leaders and policy mandates (Paper C)

- **Question 1 (from Mary Hall):** to clarify, how is this motion amended from the motion you brought last time, and if so where are the main differences?
- **Answer 1:** the main difference is about censure for not voting in line, which has been removed.
- **Question 2 (from Paul Sinclair):** you mentioned that the previous motion has managed to improve democracy, can you give concrete examples?
- **Answer 2:** it involves helping to brief delegates and ensure their safety. In terms of the mandate, it would ensure that people vote based on views that students across the university have previously addressed in other motions.
- **Statement against:** it assumes that students across the university have a homogenous view; having a delegation leader a good thing but mandating students is an issue as it is counter-productive to the democracy of NUS.
- **Statement for:** they are conference delegates, not representatives.

**Motion goes to Online Ballot 56% in favour.**

For: 35 votes, Against: 27.5 votes, Abstain: 27.5 votes.

iii. A ban on the sale of bottled water, plastic bags and all other single-use plastics from Students' Association-run cafes, bars and shops (Paper D)

- **Question 1 (from Jo-Anna Hagen):** I think this motion is very important, but I just want to draw attention to the fact that we need more fountains?
- **Answer 1:** I did address this in the motion, about increasing access to water fountains across campus and increasing how many re-usable water bottles we sell.
- **Question 2 (Paul Chemistry):** a lot of students at KB are at University all day and may forget their re-usable one, is there anything to help these issues?
- **Answer 2:** if the water fountains are for drinking and re-filling then people could use those. Cafés could offer glasses of water.
- **Question 3:** it says water bottles will be banned, but what about other drinks in plastic?
- **Answer 3:** I didn't include it because it might be too difficult for the Students' Association to absorb.



- **Question 4 (Yohanna Fung):** what about plastic cutlery for take-away?
- **Answer 4:** wooden utensils could be used.
- **Question 5 (Luke X):** could you more tightly define 'single-use plastic'?
- **Answer 5:** any plastic that can be used only once.
- **Question 6:** do you not think that this should be taken to more students than those just in this room?
- **Answer 6:** I would agree with that, but also this room is open to anyone.
- **Question 7 (Kristi Knudson):** would it be possible to have a variety of styles of different re-usable bottles?
- **Answer 7:** I agree with that.
- **Question 8:** many re-usable bottles are still made of plastic, so how could you encourage using non-water bottles.
- **Answer 8:** we could sell metal or aluminium bottles.
- **Question 9 (Paul Sinclair):** is there anything in terms of a timeline associated with this? When would it come into effect?
- **Answer 9:** I personally think it would be best to wait until we have water fountains and go from there.
- **Question 10 (Amendment) (Jo-Anna Hagen):** also, some bio-degradable plastics are not bio-degradable?
- **Answer 10:** I agree and I did mention plant-based materials.
- **Statements against:** there is not enough detail in the motion; this will not make everything perfectly sustainable; the way this motion is framed may result in the same number of plastic bottles being bought but of non-water products therefore not reducing plastic as was the case at Sheffield Student Union. Furthermore, if the above doesn't happen it could result in a loss of £50,000 (annual profit from water bottle sales) to the Students' Association, whose funds are used to re-invest in services for students.
- **Statements for:** Association Executive has been working on water fountain schemes, so some of this is already happening; there should also be some bio-degradable cutlery and straws included for people who need it; this is something we are also considering at the Sports Union; it may not be perfect but it is the first step.

**Motion goes to Online Ballot 65.8% in favour.**

For: 63.5 votes, Against: 33 votes, Abstain: 3 votes.

#### 4. NUS Scotland Delegate Elections

Elle Glenny was elected to become a Delegate at the upcoming NUS Scotland Conference.

#### 5. Students' Association Affiliations



# Representation & Democracy

- **Question 1 (Paul Sinclair):** for the NUS membership, one of the things I've heard is that the reason pints are more expensive at the Students' Association is because we're tied into specific breweries – is this true?
- **Answer 2 (Kai O'Doherty):** being a part of NUS means that we do have access to certain producers, but this usually also means we get cheaper deals. This is also because we source locally where possible and want to offer good rates.
- **Question 2 (Paul Sinclair):** regarding the affiliation with Right to Education and Birzeit, does this not alienate one group?
- **Answer 2:** it doesn't talk about the conflict but the conditions in which education takes place.

1. Conflict-free Campus Initiative – PASSED.
2. Stop Climate Chaos – PASSED.
3. National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts – PASSED.
4. Votes at 16 – PASSED.
5. Right to Education Campaign/Friends of Birzeit University – PASSED.
6. National Union of Students – PASSED.

**Meeting close.**

**Turnout:**

Total number of ballots from students: 45

Total number of ballots from elected representatives: 28

Total number of ballots: 73