



Student Council

Thursday 2nd February 2017, 6-8 pm, Teviot Debating Hall

MEETING SUMMARY

Overview

<u>Motion</u>	<u>Result</u>
Making Universities More Inclusive of People of Colour (Motion to NUS Scotland Conference)	Passed at online ballot
Our Ability but not our Money – Financial Assurances to International Students in Need (Motion to NUS Scotland Conference)	Passed
Brexit - A Way Forward	Passed
Supporting the right to choose	Passed
World Autism Awareness Day	Passed
Edinburgh University Students' Association Supports Gaelic	Passed
Making special circumstances more accessible	Passed
Fund feminist street art on campus (Expenditure Request)	Passed
Allocate £1500 to Sexcetra (Expenditure Request)	Passed

1. Welcome and overview

Welcome and overview of the agenda by Jude Sabha, Student Council Facilitator at Edinburgh University Students' Association. Overview of changes to democracy regulations as a result of the democracy review.

2. Accountability

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

a) Report from Jess Husbands, Students' Association Vice President Societies & Activities

- **No questions.**

Report Passes: For: 87, Against: 2.5, Abstain: 11

b) Report from Patrick Garratt, Students' Association Vice President Academic Affairs

- **No questions.**



Report Passes: For: 89, Against: 2.5, Abstain: 11

c) Report by Jenna Kelly, Students' Association Vice President Services

- **Question:** Regarding clarification on where the £3 minimum spend applies.
- **Answer:** The students' association outlets now have no minimum card spend, but university outlets still have a £5 minimum charge.

Report Passes: For: 89, Against: 2.5, Abstain: 11

d) Report from Alec Edgecliffe-Johnson, Students' Association President

- **Question 1:** Could you elaborate on the 24/7 library?
- **Answer 1:** It starts on March 20th, and will be a much safer space to work all night.
- **Question 2:** Regarding coursework load and student mental health.
- **Answer 2:** the University's new student mental health strategy will be covering this and hoping to address it in the long term.

Report Passes: For: 86, Against: 3.5, Abstain: 11

3. Motions

i) **Making Universities More Inclusive of People of Colour (Motion to NUS Scotland Conference)**

Motion request (extracted from motion for background information purposes):



1. Lobby universities to be more inclusive of people of colour in two areas:
 - a. In curriculums
 - i. Making curriculums more diverse - specifically inclusive of people of colour.
 - ii. Lobby universities to create an interdisciplinary course about race relations in humanities departments.
 - iii. State the importance of all university departments and colleges to provide courses based on race, ethnicity, non-white scholars, and/or non-English speaking countries.
 - iv. Lobby universities to increase representation of people of colour in reading lists in humanities subjects.
 - v. Lobby universities to make it a requirement to include people of colour scholars when designing new courses in humanities.
 - b. In the teaching body
 - i. Lobby universities to make the teaching body and student services more inclusive of people of colour.
 - ii. Lobby universities to increase the number of non-white tutors, lecturers, professors and senior officials.
 - iii. Lobby universities to include a quota for the number of academics that are people of colour teaching courses. This should be directly related to the course being taught, i.e. Black Studies should be organised and taught mostly by people of colour.
 - iv. Lobby universities to make it a requirement for academic staffs to undergo 'Implicit Bias' training, as well as further training to combat racism and microaggressions with the classroom environment.

Discussion of motion:

- Speech for: Universities are still not diverse places for staff or students, and the literature is still traditionally white. We should lobby the university to make the curriculum and the staffing more inclusive of people of colour, including providing a new interdisciplinary course on race relations, implicit bias training for staff, and greater representation of people of colour within the staff and student services.
- Question: Regarding quotas on university staffing. Concerns that this would go against the pre-existing university equality framework.
- Answer: Coming at this from a perspective that needs to see more Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff. It is not necessarily about a quota but about employing more people of colour in certain disciplines.

No opposing speaker.



Motion goes to online ballot: For: 78, Against: 18.5, Abstain: 23

Motion passes at online ballot: For: 421, Against: 51, Abstain: 2

ii) **Our Ability but not our Money – Financial Assurances to International Students in Need (Motion to NUS Scotland Conference)**

Motion request (extracted from motion for background information purposes):

1. To submit a motion to the NUS including the following:
 - a. Conference Resolves:
 - i. To reaffirm that education to all students, regardless of where they are come, should not be treated as a business.
 - ii. To lobby universities and colleges to provide more accesses to scholarships and bursaries to international students.
 - iii. To urge the Scottish Government to provide tuition fee and living expense assurances to international students with financial difficulties.
 - iv. To set out a target of which 3% of international students should have accesses to Government's, universities' or colleges' assurances to address their financial difficulties by the time this motion lapses.
 - v. To facilitate, in a long term, an accessible ability-based education to international students.

Discussion of motion:

1. Speech for: The university is making a lot of money from international fees. There is a compromise on student equality, as it is being judged far more on who can pay than by academic ability. As education is a public good, we should be arguing for more financial assistance to international students.
2. Comment: This motion is not only about social justice and being inclusive, it is also about making Scotland a more global country, to attract more international students in a time of protectionism in both the US and Europe.

No opposing speaker.

Motion passed: For: 109, Against: 2.5, Abstain: 10

iii) **Brexit - A Way Forward**



Motion request (extracted from motion for background information purposes):

1. Edinburgh University Students' Association and its representatives should work to lobby the Scottish and UK governments in whatever way possible to accomplish the following:
 - a. Fee and funding status - The Scottish Government should provide a guarantee that it will fund EU-domiciled entrants who start studying in Scotland between 2018-19 and for the duration of their course.
 - i. We welcome the Scottish Government's guarantee to continue to fund EU-domiciled entrants for the 2017-18 academic year, and call for a decision on the funding status of entrants for 2018-19 to be made by spring 2017 to enable universities to provide accurate advice and guidance to potential students.
 - ii. We strongly urge the Scottish Government to provide certainty that EU students starting their course at any point prior to the UK leaving the EU will continue to be funded under current arrangements for the duration of their course, even where this continues beyond the UK's potential exit from the EU.
 - iii. Without this certainty in the short term then there is a great risk that the number of EU students choosing to study in Scotland will decrease and this would have consequences for local economies and jobs, and be detrimental to society and education. EU students generated £414.1m for the economy and 3743 jobs in Scotland.
 - b. Immigration Status - The UK Government should make an urgent decision on the post-Brexit immigration status of EU students who want to start studying at Scottish universities after the time that the UK officially leaves the EU.
 - i. It is crucial that the UK Government makes a decision as soon as possible on the immigration status of students from the EU who wish to start courses in Scotland after the UK has left the EU. Only then can institutions and students start planning appropriately for any effects of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.
 - ii. EU students make up 9.3% of the undergraduate and postgraduate population in Scotland's universities, and they make up a higher proportion of postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students in Scotland than they do at undergraduate level. As such, a decrease in their numbers due to changes in immigration status potentially poses a challenge to the viability of certain courses.
 - iii. Changes in immigration status would also have a detrimental effect on Scotland's economy, which could



- lose out on highly skilled EU graduates who currently are able to remain in Scotland and work after their studies.
- c. Exchange and Mobility - The UK Government should seek continued access to Erasmus funding or establish an alternative scheme.
 - i. Around 1,600 Scottish students used ERASMUS in 2014-15 to study abroad, and the number of students from Scottish institutions taking part in Erasmus increased by 50% between 2007-08 to 2014-15.
 - ii. Student mobility provides a range of benefits to individual students and institutions. Living and studying in another country broadens students' outlook and provides them with valuable cultural and social experiences, which make them more employable. Graduates with global outlooks are beneficial to society and to employers.
 - iii. The Erasmus scheme is open to non-EU members but it is linked to freedom of movement and as such, this must form part of the Brexit settlement. Without funding for study exchanges this experience will become unaffordable to most students and this will be a loss to education, society and the economy.
 - d. Post Study Work Visa - The UK Government should introduce a scheme, which provides international students with the opportunity to remain in the UK and work after completing their studies.
 - i. There is a concern that the number of students from the EU coming to study in Scotland will decline significantly after Brexit if they face international student fees, no loan facility to pay these and tougher visa restrictions.
 - ii. Under current arrangements, EU graduates can stay and work in Scotland and help meet demand for high skills and contribute to the economy. Stricter visa rules introduced over the last few years have already made the UK less appealing to talented international students.
 - iii. There is a consensus in Scottish education and politics that a post-study work visa should be reintroduced in Scotland. If there is any restriction on the mobility of EU students post-Brexit then the need for Scotland to have a visa scheme that makes it an attractive destination for talented students will be even more important.
 - iv. As well as being of benefit to education, it would also help to address Scotland's aging population, help to meet demand for high skills and contribute to the economy.

Discussion of motion:

- Speech for: In a time of great uncertainty it would be nice for the students' association to have a plan of action. These aims will



provide the students' association with a core set of goals that it can work to achieve.

- Comment: Erasmus year is an integral part of students' degrees. The students' association must ensure Erasmus funding is still available for students otherwise Edinburgh may lose its reputation as a world class university.

Motion passed: For: 111.5, Against: 1, Abstain: 5

iv) Supporting the right to choose

Motion request (extracted from motion for background information purposes):

1. Affirm Edinburgh University Students' Association's pro-choice position, supporting the right of those seeking an abortion to make decisions about their own bodies
2. Support the belief that all those seeking an abortion in the UK are entitled to free, safe and legal abortion, regardless of geographical location or ability to pay
3. Support campaigns to oppose any restrictions to current rights and access to abortion
4. Support campaigns to make access to, and experience of, abortion fairer for those who decide not to continue a pregnancy
5. Ensure that independently of the Students' Association's stance on this or any issue, all students who are pregnant and wish to access free, impartial and non-directional advice are able to do so through the Advice Place

Discussion of motion:

- Speech for: This is an organisation dedicated to supporting the rights of all students to choose what happens in their lives and in their bodies. This policy is not about being pro or anti-abortion, but about giving students a choice, and giving them impartial advice for making that choice.
- Question: Regarding clarification on point number 4 on access to clinics. Does this mean supporting organisations who help those outside abortion clinics? Answer: There is a lot of talk about supporting buffer zones around clinics.

Motion passed: For: 115.5, Against: 4, Abstain: 6.5

v) World Autism Awareness Day

Motion request (extracted from motion for background information purposes):



1. Light Teviot – and any other Students' Association building possible – up blue every 2nd April to raise awareness for World Autism Awareness Day
2. Turn off the music in all Students' Association buildings every 2nd April to raise awareness of accessibility issues faced by hypersensitive autistic students
3. Release a statement outlining why we are taking these actions and encouraging the university and other buildings in Edinburgh to do the same
4. Put up posters in Students' Association buildings on the 2nd April explaining why the actions have been taken, to raise awareness and provoke discussion

Discussion of motion:

- Speech for: This is to generate awareness about World Autism Awareness Day, through lighting up Teviot blue on the 2nd April, turning the music off at venues, and putting up posters in students' association buildings.

Motion passed: For: 113, Against: 2.5, Abstain: 4.5

vi) Edinburgh University Students' Association Supports Gaelic

Motion request (extracted from motion for background information purposes):

1. Develop a bilingual English/Gaelic Edinburgh University Students' Association logo (giving equal prominence to both languages) to replace at the nearest opportunity the current monolingual logo in key positions (principal signage, website header, printed matter cover pages, screens, headed paper, merchandise etc.), and optionally wherever else space allows. If feasible, also develop a monolingual Gaelic logo for use in potential future Gaelic-only communication.
2. Develop and make publicly available a plan and timescale for the replacement of key signage in Students' Association venues with bilingual signage in consultation with the University's Gaelic Officer.
3. During the annual week-long Edinburgh Gaelic Festival (which is led and developed by the University), include Gaelic-language music on the playlist for Students' Association venues.
4. Identify specific contexts that can be used as vehicles to use, promote, celebrate and normalise Gaelic (e.g. printed matter and events relating to the Highlands, whisky, Highland/cèilidh dancing etc.) and take appropriate action to ensure these are being exploited to this end.



5. Continually work on identifying opportunities for incorporating Gaelic into general communication.
6. Continue to offer opportunities for use and acquisition of Gaelic.
7. Declare and acknowledge in appropriate channels that Edinburgh University Students' Association supports the aim of securing Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect with English, as per the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

Discussion of motion:

- Speech for: The majority of the student body do believe we should adopt and support Gaelic. The students' association should replace existing signage and developing a bilingual logo that would be on the website and across all commercial outlets. This should not be too much of a cost to the students' association as they have recently replaced their logo. The association could also introduce Gaelic music to its venues.
- Question: What percentage of the Scottish population actually speaks Gaelic? Answer: Not very much at the moment, but there needs to be some element of reintroduction. Fighting for minority language rights is just as important as fighting for minority rights.
- Question: The students' association just spent quite a lot of money on a new logo, so for practical reasons is this really plausible? Answer: This is not a redesign of the logo, it is simply an amendment to the existing work that has been done.
- Comment: This is about celebrating Scotland's diversity and its heritage, and the signs were getting replaced anyway.
- Comment: On the cost, Gaelic contributes £150 million to the national economy, but is woefully underfunded.
- Comment: Maybe the cost is too high but if we make Gaelic signs for all the main buildings on campus, this would not cost too much.
- Summation: This motion simply makes the students' association catch up with what the university is already doing, and it is a very important thing to do.

Motion passed: For: 82.5, Against: 17.5, Abstain: 14

vii) Making special circumstances more accessible

Motion request (extracted from motion for background information purposes):

1. Lobby the university to review their special circumstances processes to be more accessible and less punitive for students that are already struggling.



2. Lobby to adjust the current system so that students with pre-existing conditions known to the University do not have the burden of proving worsening condition.
3. Lobby the university to provide students with the results of their application before deadlines and exams to prevent heightening of any stress and agitation.

Discussion of motion:

- Speech for: This motion will make our university a more fair and accessible place to study, by ensuring that the special circumstances processes are more accessible and less punitive. The current system falls short in providing proper help and support, and making special circumstances applications is a very difficult process. It leads to unnecessary periods of further distress.
- Comment: There are very reliable student support officers in the school of economics that have helped me in the past. Other schools don't have this situation and I would add that every school should have one student support officer for supporting special circumstances applications.
- Comment: I would urge everyone to vote for this from personal experience. The university has made this a long drawn-out process and I did not find out until several months later regarding the outcome of my application.
- Comment: I have a friend who wanted to interrupt their studies for one year to start a business but the school did not let them do that because there were no problems with their health. We should also support entrepreneurship.
- Comment: My experience with special circumstances is similar, it is a long drawn out process with lots of interruptions. If 80-90% of people support it, this will send a strong signal of support.
- Summation: Thank you everyone for commenting and thank you to Patrick.

Motion passed: For: 117, Against: 0, Abstain: 3

viii) Fund feminist street art on campus (Expenditure Request)

Motion request (extracted from motion for background information purposes):

1. Give £700 to the Edinburgh University Students' Association's Women's Liberation Group to help fund the flight costs for members of the Feminist Street Art Collective: Vienna to come to Edinburgh and hold street art workshops with women students and students of marginalised genders.



Discussion of motion:

- Speech for: Members of the Feminist Street Art Collective: Vienna are coming to Edinburgh to hold street art workshops on campus for women and non-binary students. We need £700 to ensure the workshops are free for students from all backgrounds.
- Comment: It is good that this also affects Kings' Buildings, and we should remember it when putting motions forward.
- Comment: Thanks for putting this project forward, and for different approaches for liberation. Beyond supporting this I encourage people to go back to their schools and spread the word.
- Summation: Please vote for this motion. Also, shout out for a survival support consultation coming up.

Motion passed: For: 25, Against: 10.5, Abstain: 6

ix) Allocate £1500 to Sexcetra (Expenditure Request)

Motion request (extracted from motion for background information purposes):

1. Student Council will allocate £1500 to supporting Sexcetra (Title subject to change!)
2. These funds will go towards marketing of the week's events and payment for speakers. Any unspent funds will be reimbursed

Discussion of motion:

- Speech for: We want to run a sexual health awareness week at the end of March that empowers students to make informed decisions. We would really appreciate the funding towards materials and marketing, and any money would be returned to student council. We have had a lot of past successes with events.
- Question: It is quite a lot of money and could you provide a breakdown of the funds? Answer: The money for funding is split between organisations, it also goes to the advice place and societies. We hope to get external speakers as well. Any unspent money will go back in the pot.
- Comment: Remaining money from the NUS demo will be going back to the budget as well.
- Comment: This will affect so many students and it is the best use of student council budget money.
- Comment: Student council money often doesn't get spent and we only have two councils left, so now is a good time to spend it.
- Summation: It will reach a lot of students so please vote!



Motion passed: For: 30, Against: 6, Abstain: 1.5

4. Societies Council Report.

Before each meeting of Student Council, Societies Council produce a report detailing any new societies which require approval. These societies will already have been approved by Societies Council who have assessed if they are distinct from any existing societies, can demonstrate there's a demand for their group, and have a sustainable committee structure in place. This Student Council vote formalises the societies as members of the Students' Association.

Societies Council Report Approved: For: 75, Against: 2.5, Abstain: 17.5

Meeting close.

Turnout:

Total number of ballots from students:

Total number of ballots from elected representatives:

Total number of ballots: