Representation & Democracy

Student Council

Thursday 22ⁿᵈ March 2018, 6-8 pm, Teviot Debating Hall

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 Bobi Archer, Students' Association Vice President Education

   - **No questions.**

   Report passes 100% in favour.
   For: 90 votes, Against: 0 votes, Abstain: 6 votes.

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

   - **No questions.**

   Report passes 90.4% in favour.
   For: 66 votes, Against: 7 vote, Abstain: 13 votes.

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

   - **Question (from Tom Wrench, HCA UG Rep):** a few students have come in saying they cannot achieve discounts on their keep cup if they are not branded by the university?
   - **Answer:** We will start a discussion and look at changing this policy and introduce some new initiatives, for example looking at a keep cup giveaway.

   Report passes 97.9% in favour.
   For: 70.5 votes, Against: 1.5 votes, Abstain: 14 votes.

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

- **No questions.**

Report passes 84.9% in favour.
For: 62 votes, Against: 11 votes, Abstain: 13 votes.

e) Report from Patrick Kilduff, Students' Association President

- **Question (from Tom Wrench, HCA UG Rep):** what is the Students' Association position on the occupation at the Gordon Aikman lecture theatre and its impact on students?
- **Answer 1:** We protect the rights of students who are impacted, but we fully support the right to peaceful protest.
- **Question 2 (Georgina Harris, LLC UG Rep):** what has been the highlight of your year?
- **Answer 2:** The renaming of the Gordon Aikman lecture theatre, because it demonstrated the impact we can have on change at the university.

Report passes 95.8% in favour.
For: 68 votes, Against: 3 votes, Abstain: 15 votes.

3. **Motions**

i. Material Support for Trans/Non-Binary Students (expenditure request) (Paper B)

- **No questions.**
- **Statements for:** it's important to have these resources because not having them can affect our mental health and ability to engage with academic work, has been successful when it has been done before.
- **No statements against.**

Expenditure request passes 93.8% in favour. Student Council vote to approve this funding from the 2017-18 budget.
For: 45 votes, Against: 3 votes, Abstain: 3 votes.

ii. Supporting the Scottish Irish Abortion Rights Campaign (expenditure request) (Paper C)

- **Question 2 (from Stephen Dolan, Divinity UG Rep):** is the Students' Association allowed to take a side in the referendum?
- **Answer 2 (from Esther Dominy and Patrick Kilduff):** The point of Student Council is to let students decide what policies and expenditure requests to pursue, if the policy is already in line with what we support as a Students' Association.

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- **Statement for:** £200 doesn't seem like a lot but lack of funding is a current problem, so this would make a big difference, and the group is also really organised and makes a lot of difference already.
- **No statements against.**

Expenditure request passes 93.5% in favour. Student Council vote to approve this funding from the 2017-18 budget.
For: 43.5 votes, Against: 3 votes, Abstain: 4.5 votes.

iii.   UCU Strike Solidarity (expenditure request) (Paper D)

- **Question 1 (from Caitlyn Hainsworth, Dance Music and Theatre Activities Rep):** what practical things can still be achieved since the picket lines have ended?
- **Answer 1:** if the physical picket lines return then the expenditure will be useful, but there is a wide range of things that students can access to support the strike with materials items.
- **Question 2 (Alex):** I have a question about the potential upcoming strike action and the impact this could have on students. Should we vote on continuing support, allocate this funding to reimburse people etc.?
- **Answer 2:** since this is the last Student Council we cannot vote on it again, and the strike action does not intend to impact students, instead targeting senior management staff and administrative processes so that exam periods are not affected, although this has not been confirmed.
- **Question 3 (from Sid, Medical School UG Rep):** if an agreement is reached and the full £1500 is not spent, then what happens?
- **Answer 3:** only what is spent will be used. If nothing is spent the £1500 will not go anywhere, but the same will happen if the expenditure request is not passed.
- **Question 4 (from Ruby):** how will the money be allocated, what about disabled students affected by the strike action?
- **Answer 4:** it will go towards students supporting the strike, but we are also lobbying the university to have staff salaries to go into hardship funding which will help these students. If there are examples to be shared please email Bobi VPeducation@eusa.ed.ac.uk
- **Statements for:** as a UCU member and postgrad tutor the support from the Students' Association are helpful, but the University also needs to react, which this money will help; this could help win the strike.
- **No statements against.**

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Expenditure request passes 96.9% in favour. Student Council vote to approve this funding from the 2017-18 budget.
For: 46.5 votes, Against: 1.5 votes, Abstain: 3 votes.

iv.   Allow all members to contribute to the running of their societies (Paper E)

- **Question 1 (from Adrian):** what exactly constitutes bearing office? Does this exclude all kinds of voluntary work e.g. an open committee position?
- **Answer 1:** there is a clause included that holding office is not included, but the meaning of this is unclear. Non-students can participate and help, but they cannot be elected.
- **Question 2 (from Sophie):** what does student-led mean?
- **Answer 2:** societies must be student-led, and non-students could not be President, Treasurer or Secretary or go over 75% of the membership. We do want to allow non-students to participate as fully as possible.
- **Statements for:** for societies that foster a sense of community, this would stop student groups without strong communities to engage; societies should be able to choose if they want to include it instead of it being mandated; students from other universities should be included to ensure collaboration; it would allow non-students to fill positions that are left empty in smaller societies; some other Students' Associations allow it.
- **Statements against:** letting students be involved in political societies would have an influence on something that is for students; the Activities Executive discussed this and did not pass non-student committee members; from an educational perspective we would limit options for students because this goes on HEAR recognition instead of giving it to members of the community; in some academic societies lecturers are members; non-students can still vote, but only students should be committee members; having non-members can decrease student voice that could end up prioritised over students.

Motion goes to Online Ballot 50.3% in favour.
For: 41 votes, Against: 40.5 votes, Abstain: 12.5 votes.

v.   Ensuring clearer election rules regarding society involvement (Paper F)

- **Question 1 (from Stephen Dolan, Divinity UG Rep):** regarding societies to publicise who they're endorsing, does it not run the risk of how many societies you can get on their side?
- **Answer 1:** registering the endorsements is simply for the Students' Association to be able to follow this up. A lot of universities have done away with society endorsements but this is too big a step to take right now.
- **Question 2 (from Andrew):** you mentioned back-door endorsements and any examples you have?

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- **Answer 2:** I would prefer not to give clear examples, this is more about giving everyone a clear chance in the future, mostly it was because of the confusion during elections which can be clarified for future candidates.
- **Question 3 (from Eleri):** is this for both public and/or private groups or Facebook pages?
- **Answer 3:** as someone who is in a private group this is the only options, and endorsing can be public. The registering is not for advertising but ensuring that all candidates can be aware and make good use of their time. This is not to set the election rules but to review them.
- **Question 4 (from Caitlyn Hainsworth, Dance Music and Theatre Activities Rep):** what are the current rules?
- **Answer 4:** there aren't that man in relation to societies – the only ones are about using society finances.
- **Question 5 (from Esther Dominy):** what other policies does this seek to prohibit?
- **Answer 5:** mostly about not using society budgets that are not currently addressed, material support, requiring societies members to go out and campaign for a candidate. I know this has not occurred but should not be required by societies either.
- **Statements for:** making it clear would decrease loopholes that could influence votes; having it on a candidate page would increase transparency in support.
- **Statements against:** registering endorsements does not seem to be beneficial in any way and could encourage voting on popularity than policies; this could add more work and bureaucracy for societies.

Motion goes to Online Ballot 62.1% in favour.
For: 50 votes, Against: 30.5 votes, Abstain: 11.5 votes.

vi. I'm in admin hell, get me out of here: support for Liberation Officers (Paper G)

- **No questions.**
- **Statements for:** it would help us continue the work we currently do while decreasing the pressure.
- **No statements against.**

Motion passes 94.4% in favour.
For: 75.5 votes, Against: 4.5 votes, Abstain: 7.5 votes.

vii. Support Widening Participation (Paper H)

- **No questions, and no statements for or against.**

Motion passes 96.4% in favour.
For: 80.5 votes, Against: 3 votes, Abstain: 7 votes.

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viii.   <u>Supporting Student Carers (Paper I)</u>

- **No questions.**
- **Statement for:** it is really important that we continue to support this through the Students' Association since it is due to lapse; having policies like this give the Students' Association weight to have discussions with the university.
- **No statements against.**

Motion passes 100% in favour.
For: 81 votes, Against: 0 votes, Abstain: 5.5 votes.

ix.   <u>NUS delegation leaders and policy mandates (Paper J)</u>

- **Question 1 (from Andrew):** why is this being brought forward a third time, and since NUS Scotland has already occurred did not having this policy have an impact?
- **Answer 1:** students have the right to change their mind and it was just shy of quorate. NUS UK Conference has not yet occurred and is more controversial.
- **Question 2 (from Carol Hayward, Student Carers' Rep):** why has the delegation leader aspect part of the same motion?
- **Answer 2:** part of the delegation leader's role is to inform delegates about existing policy.
- **Question 3:** what is a delegate and the role of a delegate?
- **Answer 3:** a delegate is someone who has been sent to represent the views of the student body, not present their own views.

Amendment:

- **Question 1:** why was point 4 on not mandating students not taken out?
- **Answer 1:** it is reasonable for all students to be aware of the policy, but they should not be required to act in favour of it.
- **Question 2 (Alejandro):** if it is a substantial majority should they not be mandated?
- **Answer 2:** in these cases, delegates should not be mandated either way as individuals are able to take stances on controversial issues.
- **Statement for:** we should have a delegation leader, but candidates do not know what will be discussed at NUS so forcing them to vote a certain way is unfair. Although it has failed twice, the role of delegation leader is important so that is why the motion has been amended to include only this.
- **Statement against:** for views to be properly presented they must be mandated to express them – there is provision for students to

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have different views; having 8 delegates is not representative of 35,000 students.

<u>At this point, the amendment to remove policy mandates was passed by a simple show of hands.</u>

Motion goes to Online Ballot 64.7% in favour.
For: 43 votes, Against: 23.5 votes, Abstain: 20 votes.

Meeting close.

Turnout:
Total number of ballots from students: 48
Total number of ballots from elected representatives: 32
Total number of ballots: 80

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