



Student Council

Thursday 23rd November 2017, 6-8 pm, Teviot Debating Hall

MEETING SUMMARY

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 Kai O'Doherty, Students' Association Vice President Activities and Services (video)

- **Question 1 (from Part-time Students' Rep):** is there a timeframe for trying to change the toilets?
- **Answer 1 (from Patrick Kilduff + Hannah Deacon):** it's a rolling process to find appropriate toilets that can be converted.
- **Question 2 (from Paul Sinclair):** have you been in contact with the university about making facilities in Appleton gender-neutral since it is being redeveloped?
- **Answer 2 (from Patrick Kilduff):** Kai has been in contact and is sure that this will be the same for Appleton. Will get in touch with Kai.

Report Passes 89% in favour.

For: 48.5 votes, Against: 6 votes, Abstain: 2.5 votes.

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

- **Question 1:** are there any measures put in place to raise awareness about housing scams and ways to address it?
- **Answer 1:** discussed looking at having a task-force to identify poor landlords and working with a website to rate your landlord. Support is available from the Advice Place.
- **Question 2 (from Part-Time Students' Rep):** the timetable for the shuttlebus has not been updated.
- **Answer 2:** thank you for raising that, I will look into it.



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- **Question 3:** What has the response from the Council been regarding transport to satellite campuses in terms of cycling to Little France and Western general?
- **Answer 3:** they have said that the council would need more evidence and persuasion, requiring a longer campaign.

Report Passes 100% in favour.

For: 53 votes, Against: 0 votes, Abstain: 4 votes.

c) Report from Patrick Kilduff, Students' Association President

- **Question 1 (from Dance Music and Theatre Activities):** are there plans for those whose birthdays are not in the school year? Can there be a discount?
- **Answer 1:** unfortunately, my birthday is also out-with the academic year too. We recognise that not everyone will benefit from the new policy but it would be difficult to implement for everyone who has a birthday outwith the academic year.
- **Question 2 (from UG Math Rep):** how much will the free big cheese cost the Students' Association?
- **Answer 2:** very good question – the running number per week is about £800-£1000 (raw numbers) but could see an increase in the people it brings.
- **Question 3 (from UG HCA Rep):** does the cap include halls in UNITE buildings?
- **Answer 3:** it includes all university accommodation apart from one in Holyrood i.e. includes 10,000 beds and excludes 800. The university did not recognise PG and raise these, but we have maintained parity and reasonability across both levels.
- **Question 4 (from UG Vet School Rep):** is there a move to align accommodation dates with Vet school dates?
- **Answer 4:** we have not yet had discussed this, also those living at Pollock who are not getting meals but we are going to raise this at the next meeting.

Report Passes 94.4% in favour.

For: 51 votes, Against: 3 votes, Abstain: 3 votes.

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

- **Question 1 (Iona):** what are your concrete plans for expanding on how special circumstances will be dealt with?
- **Answer 1:** increased consistency across schools, an easier process for students in terms of flexibility in needing evidence e.g. provisional acceptance, self-certified extensions, more opportunities to submit, better digital systems etc. Happy to discuss this and get feedback.



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- **Question 2 (from PG Vet School Rep):** there were no events organized over Mental Health and Well-being Week at Easter Bush, we have our own mental health initiative planned, so what can we do?
- **Answer 2:** we would love to support this in any way possible. **Bobi Archer** added to this and said she is talking to the Vet School Council to work on how the Students' Association and University can support with funding.
- **Question 3 (Volunteering Rep):** for PT mental health training, does this include anything to do with helping international students e.g. suggesting places to go, problems with home-sickness and cultural issues?
- **Answer 3:** the training for PTs is not meant to deal with specific problems but is about signposting to the right place, but that is an important issue.
- **Question 4 (from UG Engineering School Rep):** would it be more appropriate to stagger Mental Health and Well-being Week over different weeks at different campuses?
- **Answer 4:** I think there was an advantage in everyone knowing that it was happening. However, I think that's a good point and if you think that is a good way to do it and push it beyond weeks then that is a good idea.

Report Passes 88.6% in favour.

For: 46.5 votes, Against: 6 votes, Abstain: 4.5 votes.

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

- **Question 1 (from DMT Activities Rep):** on the process of rewarding class reps, you do not get recognition unless you write a blog post or make a blog – what do you think of this system?
- **Answer 1:** this year, the only compulsory element is completion of the online training and filling in the questionnaire at the end of your role.
- **Question 2 (from PG ECA Rep):** can there be something to improve the awareness of the class rep role and its expectations? Can this be done through proper elections?
- **Answer 2:** there were 2800 reps last year, but we are hoping to reduce the numbers to a manageable amount going forward so that we can give them better support and so that they can build better connections with School Reps. St Andrews have the election model for schools and this is something we're looking at.
- **Question 3 (from UG Business School Rep):** they now have programme reps instead of class reps, which a lot of people are not aware of because of the change to the current system – is there a way to monitor if lectures promote the change?



- **Answer 3:** I think when we have a more consistent recruitment rep we can really tailor communications but as it is still left to schools in how they appoint them. This has been done very quickly but I will be sitting down to reflect on this with schools.
- **Question 4 (from UG Business School Rep):** what are the numbers of actual students physically residing in Edinburgh?
- **Answer 4:** I'm not entirely sure but I do know that there are 3,000 distance learners but this also requires proportionate expansion or it takes away resource.
- **Question 5 (from UG Vet School Rep):** we found that lecturers did not understand the recording system and we're working with students from different years to help them.
- **Answer 5:** the University actually has set this up but I'm concerned it was not set up at certain schools so I will look into this.
- **Question 6 (from Chack):** how could expansion be suspended? How much influence does the Students' Association have over expansion of students?
- **Answer 6:** for the numbers, this would require a good research project that we could advocate to do. In terms of power as a Students' Association, we can do a lot because we have a new Principal coming in. **Patrick Kilduff** added that as a technical answer: in 2014, we had 33,500 students and now we have 39,000.
- **Question 7 (HCA School Rep):** would you be happy to work with schools individually to account for unique systems that can develop in each school?
- **Answer 7:** the focus is on getting consistency, but we do want to focus on making the system work for school reps and that it is covered for all schools, programmes and degrees.
- **Question 8 (from PGR Rep):** will PG reps have access to reach PG students?
- **Answer 8:** there are laws changing about data protection, so I can't give you a concrete answer right now but this can be followed up.

Report Passes 95.6% in favour.

For: 54.5 votes, Against: 2.5 votes, Abstain: 0 votes.

3. **Policy Update**

- **Guarantor Scheme Revisions:** secured provisional guarantees for students before they go out flat-hunting. This has been changed on the website and will be advertised more and if there is increased uptake more will be added.
- **Expenditure request for ERCC survivor booklet:** it will be printed over the next few weeks and will be delivered to the counselling



services and across schools. **Question from PG Taught Rep** about whether these can be put in Student Halls – Esther will look into this.

4. Motions

a) Towards a smoke-free university

Introduction: the motion is not to take away the right to decide, but to help people to make informed decisions and to protect individuals from second-hand smoke.

- **Question 1 (from Hannah Deacon):** are you proposing an entirely smoke-free campus or just to introduce smoke-free areas? Could you not make sheltered smoking areas?
- **Answer 1:** it is to introduce smoke-free areas, for the last point it is up to the university.
- **Question 2 (from Volunteering Rep):** does this include accommodation sites?
- **Answer 2:** yes it would.
- **Question 3 (from Patrick Kilduff):** what do you mean about re-evaluating the no-smoking policy – do you want the University to expand it or deal better with infractions?
- **Answer 3:** I think they should review the policy to see if there is more that they can do, but while doing so within the law.

Statements against:

- **Hannah Deacon:** against the motion as it is now – it requires more specificity, needs to account for mental health.
- **Mathematics Rep:** my issue is not about the idea of it, but what it is – I don't think it does anything. If the Student Council wants to move forward it must be re-evaluated.
- **ECA PG Rep:** my concern is that this is not giving a voice to all the people that smoke across the university, and the title is too radical.
- **PGR Rep:** as a social policy student, I would like to see less people smoking, but the main rationale seems to be on helping them make an informed definition but I am concerned about how this can be accomplished. The motion needs to be reviewed.

Statements for:

- **Volunteering Rep:** as an asthmatic my symptoms have increased after arriving in the UK, and I support this motion in the aspect of it that some peoples' choice to smoke shouldn't affect others.
- **David Ryan:** what I liked about this motion is that it is starting a conversation, and part of an incremental process.



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- **Nicolas:** need to improve the issues of accessibility and affordability when it comes to smoking, and the policy tackles this well. Regarding the title, the Scottish Government is working towards a 'smoke-free generation'.
- **Motion proposer (Maddie Payne):** clarified the title (as above) and that reviewing the policy is a good step to start with.

Motion goes to online ballot – For: 60.2%, Against: 39.8%
For: 31 votes, Against: 20.5 votes, Abstain: 5.5 votes.

5. Events

What is the funding in the Student Partnership Agreement for?

Funding of £500 for staff and student proposals on any of the three themes: 'student voice', 'academic support' and 'promoting positive health and well-being'.

The Sports Union will also be running a series of events over the revision period related to mental health and well-being.

6. Questions and Comments

What option between For, Against and Abstain would be appropriate if you would like to amend a motion? There was an amendment period but this has passed. If it passes, it cannot be amended. If it fails it can be re-proposed.

Meeting close.

Turnout:

Total number of ballots from students: 9

Total number of ballots from elected representatives: 32

Total number of ballots: 41