



Student Council

Thursday 27 September, 6-8 pm, Teviot Debating Hall

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Welcome and overview

Welcome and overview of the agenda by Amalie Sorthand, 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. President, Eleri Connick

- **Question 1 [Laura, PPLS UG Rep]:** Can you tell us more about the 'We Are Edinburgh' activities? How will it work? How will you make sure that it reflects Edinburgh's diverse student population?
- **Answer 1:** We do not do enough to celebrate the amazing students we have here at Edinburgh. For example, at 7pm tonight, a female student will be featured on our social media talking about what it is like to be a woman in STEM. Students can send in an email about a project/activity that you think everyone should know about, and we'll do a humans of New York style post to make sure everyone knows about it.
- **Question 2 [Alejandro, Biomedical Sciences UG Rep]:** How do you want students to contribute to solving the transportation problem?
- **Answer 2:** In the policy discussion portion of this meeting, come to either mine or Georgie's table to discuss it. Students can always email with any issues or ideas for how things can be improved.

Report passes 100% in favour:

Votes for	63.5
Votes Against	
Abstain	4.5

II. VP Activities & Services, Shenan Davis-Williams

- **Question 1 [Paul, Sports Union President]:** What is your favourite wrap from The Wrap Bar?



- **Answer 1:** falafel and houmous

Report passes 92.2% in favour:

Votes for	59.5
Votes Against	5
Abstain	3.5

III. VP Welfare, Kai O'Doherty

- **Question 1:** Where are the free sanitary products available on campus?
- **Answer 1:** We are currently rolling out the scheme. Sanitary products are currently available at Pollock, George Square and the Main Library, but they will be placed all across all campuses eventually.
- **Question 2 [Laura, PPLS UG Rep]:** What are the wellbeing officers? How does their role fit in with support services that already exist?
- **Answer 2:** This is part of our Peer Support and PALs Schemes. There are 15-20 pilot schemes going on in a variety of schools whereby they have a Wellbeing Officer who is specifically mental health first aid trained. It means schools will have better provisions for providing peer support.

Report passes 97.7% in favour:

Votes for	64.5
Votes Against	1.5
Abstain	2

IV. VP Education, Diva Mukherji

- **Question 1 [Chen-E, Chemistry UG Rep]:** Some of the KB lecture theatres don't have the lecture record technology yet. When will we get this?
- **Answer 1:** Lecture recording equipment is being fitted across more buildings this year, but it is a slow process. Please let me know which rooms do not have this equipment.
- **Question 2 [Daniel, Law UG Rep]:** How would you diversify vocational courses, or courses such as Scottish Law?
- **Answer 2:** We would look at diversifying those types of courses in a broader sense, e.g. how do we get kids from different backgrounds into law? I am also looking at international case studies and assessing how we can incorporate their examples into teaching practices at Edinburgh.

Report passes 97.7% in favour:

Votes for	64.5
Votes Against	1.5
Abstain	2



V. VP Community, Georgie Harris

- **Question 1 [Emily, International Students' Rep]:** My question is about the gentrification of Leith. It is being destroyed as a community, is there any movement on the University demolishing properties on Leith Walk?
- **Answer 1:** The development is going ahead regardless of whether the accommodation is run by the University or a private accommodation provider. Regardless of our personal opinions on the development the Sabbatical Officers position is that we would rather the University is involved in the development as we have a seat at the table and we can have lobbying powers on this. We think this is the most pragmatic approach we can take on this. If anyone would like to discuss this further, please come to my table during the policy discussion segment of tonight's meeting, send an email or come into the office.

Report passes 96% in favour:

Votes for	60.5
Votes Against	2.5
Abstain	5

3. Motions

i. Changing Places Toilets on Campus

- **Question 1 [Student]:** We already have accessible toilets, which serve a dual purpose as gender neutral toilets. As we have limited space on campus, it is possible that the University might choose to adapt these toilets into changing places toilets. How do we make sure that we don't have all marginalised students confined to these few toilets?
- **Answer 1:** Good point. My experience is that standard accessible toilets are not usable for those with more severe disabilities, but I wouldn't want to speak for students I can't identify with. I think HCA and KB have partial changing toilets, but they probably ran out of time and/or money before finishing them. It is possible that these toilets could be completed. A really good place for the University to build one of these toilets will be the new Students Centre.
- **Question 2 [Alic, Engineering UG Rep]:** what else can we do to make disabled students more likely to apply to the University of Edinburgh?
- **Answer 2:** Short answer- everything. Firstly, the University should end its bizarre obsession with cobbled streets in Edinburgh. But really it is everything, access issues should be at the forefront of all decisions made by the Estates Team.
- **Question 3 [Muzz, Medical Schools UG Rep]:** I think this is an excellent thing to put forward to Council. I have two suggestions. Firstly, shower chairs should be put into existing showers to make them more accessible for people with prosthetics (for example). Secondly, having buttons that can be pressed



for assistance- have you thought about ways in which assistance can be provided to people who have fallen etc?

- **Answer 3:** Another really good point. I think my motion reflects my circumstance and that is really what I can talk about. The advantage of bringing this to the University at all is that hopefully it will be a good way to get the University to confront all issues about access.
- **Question 4 [written]:** What is the University doing about this in terms of staff appointment?
- **Answer 4:** They've appointed an Accessibility Officer on the Estates Team who considers accessibility for all staff and students in buildings. There is also the Student Wellbeing Service who have already had some consultations with students about this. The University also did a thematic review of student carers last year, so some access issues are on their agenda already.
- **Answer 4 [Georgie Harris]:** Just to add to Oona's answer: Tim Thurston is in charge of accessibility. Tim is helping to promote DisabledGO within the University.
- **Question 5 [Alejandro, Biomedical Sciences UG Rep]:** Do you have information on how many students have a disability? How do we compare to other universities? Can we learn from other university best practice somehow?
- **Answer 5:** Off the top off my head, Dundee are really good at this. PAMIS (Promoting a More Inclusive Society) is based in Dundee. Manchester are also good.
- **Question 6 [Lauren, HCA UG Rep]:** Do you find it strange that things aren't already being done to alleviate access issues? Would also like to offer sympathies with your sister. No one should feel that way.
- **Answer 6:** Well I think if disability is not something you have to deal with a lot, it's not the first thing you think about. My understanding is that other students have pushed for Changing Places toilets before, but it has not manifested beyond a suggestion.
- **Question 7 [Julia, Biological Sciences UG Rep]:** Can we use this a way to come together to tackle different parts of accessibility? I think if we all come together we can have more impact.
- **Answer 7:** Yes, absolutely. Your Disabled Students' Officer is Eileen.
- **Comment 1 [Carol, Student Carers' Rep]:** I have worked with the Estates department to survey teaching spaces to find out about provisions for wheelchair use in these spaces.

Motion passes 100% in favour:

Votes for	68
Votes Against	0
Abstain	0



4. Strategic Plan Update

Led by Shay and Eleri.

5. Policy Discussion

I. President

- **KB:** more busses needed in the morning; morning bus times don't match with lecture start times; Joint honours student struggle to get back to George Square for lectures; link up societies in KB with schools; KB Gym Rocket; bus to Peffermill from KB on Weds; 9:53-10:07 worry about run to Swann etc.
- **Easter Bush:** Pollock hall leases don't take into account vet term dates; x47 good for Pollock.
- **Transport:** Medics out of pocket; no NHS shuttle bus now.
- **Landlord:** more information about the new housing laws.
- **Bike paths:** hard to find; patchy; broken paths; super dangerous.
- **Varsity buses:** comms to Res Life and Campus Ambassadors.

II. VP Activities & Services

- **Liberation Officers:** each society committee to have liberation officers – working to get more people involved but also working to make societies more inclusive.
- **Café/Bar Map:** also include their menus
- **Skills development:** workshops for mature students who have already had professional careers but are making big changes and need directions.
- **Vegetarian Options:** in all EUSA and University outlets including new ECA café.
- **Mature Students:** more awareness for mature students group – have this on Uni website.
- **Constitution:** make the constitution more accessible and refined.
- **Sensitivity training**
- **Society Schedule:** a timetable for all regular classes/events.

III. VP Welfare

- **Mental Health First Aid Training**
- **Lecture recordings**
- **Trans/Gender neutral bathrooms in KB**
- **Year Abroad support:** expectations in France re: street harassment and homophobia
- **BME awareness:** reaching out to East and South-East Asian students.
- **LGBT+ Training:** especially for academic and professional services staff.
- **Encourage more physical activity and sport**
- **Bystander Training:** online courses and crash courses in Bystander Training.
- **LGBT+ Housing**

IV. VP Education

- **Lecture recordings:** students with disabilities need them; it's good; makes it more accessible!



Representation & Democracy

- **Marking:** dyslexia – no way of telling that in essays/coursework vs. extra time/computer rooms during exams.
- **Lecture theatre spaces:** are they fit for purpose?
- **Personal tutors:** mental health training; terminology- 'academic advisors'?
- **Building stronger networks with other reps**
- **Timetabling**
- **Help with graduate school applications:** more solid support!
- **Rep relationship:** schools need to listen to reps more; minutes from SSLC's go on a blog!

V. VP Community

- **Transport:** student bus passes (could Uni buy lots of bus passes); bus to Peffermill; bike scheme- more student involvement.
- **Democracy:** absentee voting for international students; promoting how to vote for international students; promoting who is eligible to vote in what.
- **Housing:** LGBT+ housing; UG mature student accom/discount or stipend for helping find private flats; lobby council on empty homes.

Meeting close

Total number of ballots from students: **20**

Total number of ballots from elected representatives: **32**

Total number of ballots: **52**