



## General Meeting

*Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 6 – 6.30 pm, Teviot Debating Hall*

### MEETING SUMMARY

There was a General Meeting to consider a Special Resolution to effect the outcome of some items from last year's all member Referendum (specifically an additional sabbatical officer and appointed Trustees).

General Meeting motions/special resolutions pass if there are 200 votes in favour or a two-thirds majority of votes in favour, whichever is greater. There is no weighted voting for Student Council elected representatives in General Meeting motions.

**Special resolution passes:** For: 256, Against: 8

## Student Council

*Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 6.30 – 8 pm, Teviot Debating Hall*

### MEETING SUMMARY

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#### Overview

<u>Motion</u>	<u>Result</u>
Special circumstances review	Passed
Nap pods and rest facilities	Passed
Representing Student Voices in the council elections	Passed
Representing Student Voices in the council elections (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.

- Report from Jess Husbands, Students' Association Vice President Societies & Activities
  - **Question 1:** From the women's convener. Can we have a general update on whether the fifth sabbatical officer and the liberation conveners will be paid next year?
  - **Answer 1:** Fifth sabbatical officer will be paid if special resolution to implement the changes at passes at General Meeting. Struggling to get the budget for liberation conveners for next year – currently in the process of assessing the budget for what can be managed.
  - **Question 2:** If the schools have ideas for mental health and wellbeing week, would the students' association be interested in them.
  - **Answer 2:** Yes definitely, please contact Jess via email or Facebook and feed in.

**Report Passes:** For: 91, Against: 0, Abstain: 0

- Report from Patrick Garratt, Students' Association Vice President Academic Affairs
  - **Question 1:** Regarding year abroad concerns, BME group don't feel particularly supported especially regarding political environmental right now. There are no-go areas for BME students, restricting their options to go abroad.
  - **Answer 2:** Will be looking into this, talking to international convener and BME convener.
  - **Question 2:** Disabled students also feel underrepresented when going abroad, and that they are left behind. Particularly in other countries where attitudes towards disabilities are less supportive.
  - **Answer 2:** Difficult for Edinburgh to get in contact when students are far abroad. Focussing on mental health classes - in Japanese studies 4th years are talking to second years about their experiences in the year abroad. Working now with school of LLC and Japanese classes to roll these out. Working with the counselling service as well for students on their year abroad. Creating a new handbook on mental health issues for students to contact staff at University of Edinburgh, particularly for European universities where the cultures are more aligned.

**Report Passes:** For: 91, Against: 0, Abstain: 0

- Report by Jenna Kelly, Students' Association Vice President Services



- **Question 1:** Curious on the definition of 'affordable housing'.
- **Answer 1:** This year gathered a list of university housing – there are 16 price bands currently, and attempts have been to narrow it down to three price bands, with the aim to bring a bracket for 'less than affordable'. Affordable means under £4000 for UG, under £5000 for PG because they have 51 week leases.

**Report Passes:** For: 91, Against: 0, Abstain: 0

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

- **No questions**

**Report Passes:** For: 91, Against: 0, Abstain: 0

### 3. Motions

#### i) Special circumstances review

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

1. Have the University review Special Circumstances policy to:
  - a) Take into account unique circumstances which impact upon student carers which adversely affects their performance in an assessment, or resulted in non-attendance or a non-submission for a scheduled assessment.
  - b) Take into account unique circumstances which impact upon student parents which adversely affects their performance in an assessment, or resulted in non-attendance or a non-submission for a scheduled assessment.
  - c) Reflect changes in Extension forms so as not to focus on the individual, making it clear that familial and caring responsibilities can impact upon academic performance.
  - d) Reflect changes in Late Penalty Waiver forms so as not to focus on the individual, making it clear that familial and caring responsibilities can impact upon academic performance.
  - e) Reflect changes in Special Circumstances so as not to focus on the individual, making it clear that familial and caring responsibilities can impact upon academic performance.

Discussion of motion:

1. Speech in favour: Students live very busy lives, but this is far worse for student parents and carers, who have additional responsibilities. There



are not enough facilities, and no improvements can be made until there are statistics on how many parents and carers there are. It is not clear in the university's special circumstances review regarding circumstances for parents and carers.

2. Question: Why doesn't the university take into account the circumstances of parents and carers? Answer: At the moment, student parents and carers do not make up a huge proportion of university students, but this proportion is increasing. If this motion passes, it will give extra weight when the Students' Association goes to the university with demands for recognition. It is the university's responsibility to gather the data, so Jess (VPSA) is going to the university with these demands. It is not the law for universities to collect data on this, only certain demographics.
3. Comment: At a meeting with student parents and carers, the issue was raised that only some schools accept the special circumstances of parents and carers, but not all. This demonstrates the importance of passing the motion
4. Comment: Please go to the advice place if you have further input, as they are currently writing a report on the issue.

No opposing speaker.

**Motion Passed:** For: 99, Against: 0, Abstain: 3

## ii. Nap pods and rest facilities

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

1. We are looking for endorsement from the Students Association, then to take the proposal forward to a round table discussion with the university's Commercial Services Department.

Discussion of motion:

1. Speech for: Speaking on behalf of the Buchanan institute. Naps and rests over the day have been proven by various studies to be beneficial to student wellbeing. The presence of nap pods and rest facilities has proven to be successful in University of California Berkeley and University of Manchester. Survey at Edinburgh of 1500 students with overwhelming support for nap pods and rest facilities. Based on this evidence, would like to propose a pilot project with these facilities based on central campus on Kings' Buildings, and to see whether these prove successful. This vote is about finding out whether there is support to go forwards, for a round table with the university.
2. Question: How has the success of the scheme been measured in University of California Berkeley and University of Manchester? Answer: Students and staff were both interviewed, but also the



continued use of these pods and the university's continued support.  
Another question: Will this be just at KB and central campus?

3. Answer: For the initial considerations, it would go to KB and central campus due to the majority of students being based there, but this will hopefully be expanded to other campuses. This would be a positive extension.
4. Another question: Anyone using the nap pod would have to clean the nap pod afterwards, and restrict people who are sick from using it. How practical is this going to be? Also, the budget is large and could you not find a cheaper alternative?
5. Answer: It is not too much of a burden to ask students to wipe down afterwards, and sick students are advised not to go to lectures – it is already done. Secondly, the price is based on the projects at University of California Berkeley and University of Manchester, but we are open to other suggestions of different models.
6. Another question: 18-30,000 per pod is a lot of money. Assuming the plan doesn't work out is there any way this money can be recovered?
7. Answer: This money wouldn't be a hard limit, assuming the motion passes we will hope to negotiate a more favourable cost. Looking into cheaper models.
8. Summation: The number of students at the university and the vast support for the project shows this would be a useful project to rally behind and we hope the students' association will support it.

No opposing speaker.

**Motion goes to online ballot:** For: 48.5, Against: 36, Abstain: 7

**Motion passes at online ballot:** For: 1,616, Against: 286, Abstain: 11

- **Representing Student Voices in the council elections (and expenditure request with same title)**

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

- The Students' Association will launch a campaign around the forthcoming Edinburgh City Council elections in May 2017, with the aim lobbying current and prospective councillors and political party representatives to commit to supporting certain student Asks (outlined below) should they be elected.
- We will mandate the Students' Association to include the following in its list of Asks:
  - That councillors impose rent pressure zones in areas of central Edinburgh with a high number of student inhabitants, in order to make rents more affordable.
  - That councillors assist in ensuring that organisations which provide support for survivors of sexual abuse and violence, such as the Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre, are better funded.



- That councillors work with the police department and local pubs, clubs and bars to encourage all staff to receive training on how to combat sexual harassment, and to allocate the necessary financial and human resources to make this happen.
- Sabbatical Officers and the External Campaigns Committee will take a lead on advancing this campaign.
- The External Campaigns Committee will produce a survey asking students what other issues they would like the Students' Association to campaign on during the council elections. Issues arising from this survey could be raised at a future Student Council, in order to be included within the Students' Association's list of Asks.
- We will work with Class Reps and Schools Reps to disseminate this survey and information about the council elections to their students.
- The Students' Association will use its online platforms, including its website and social media platforms, to promote the council elections to students and encourage students to register to vote.
- We will work with the Students' Association to collaborate with the student associations and student unions of other universities and colleges within Edinburgh in order to collectively advance the goals of this campaign.
- (*From expenditure request only*) Student Council will allocate £400 to promoting student Asks within the council elections and encouraging students to register to vote. The breakdown of how this money will be spent is as follows:
  - 1 Railings Banner (if displaying a banner is approved by the University) - £100
  - 3 Kappas (or 'pledge signs') - £25
  - 100 A3 Posters - £25
  - 1000 A6 Flyers - £50
  - 1 Pop Up Banner - £60
  - Online Promotion - £50
  - Contingency - £90

## Discussion of motion:

- For: Presenting on behalf of the external campaigns committee. Usually during the local council elections, the Students' Association does campaigning. This motion is to ensure the continuity of this, and bring the local elections to students – encouraging students to vote. Lobbying local councillors on student issues, one about the private rental sector (rent pressure zones), second on funding for organisations which support survivors of sexual assault, third is for more training for clubs and bars around the city to meet concerns of sexual harassment. As part of this will also be launching a consultation on other student issues to be campaigned upon. The final part of this is the expenditure request is for promotional materials.



4. Question: If the Students' Association already provides material on the elections, what is the extra money going towards?
5. Answer: There is an exact cost breakdown on the back page: banners for railings, posters, flyers, online promotions.

**Motion passed:** For: 73, Against: 1, Abstain: 10

**Expenditure request passed:** For: 33, Against: 8, Abstain: 2

▪ **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: 76, Against: 1.5, Abstain: 9

**Meeting close.**

**Turnout:**

Total number of ballots from students: 28

Total number of ballots from elected representatives: 43

Total number of ballots: 71