



Student Council

Thursday 26 September 2019, 6-8pm, Teviot Debating Hall

Results

Accountability	Results	Percentage For:
President	Passed	98%
VP Activities & Services	Passed	97%
VP Community	Passed	98%
VP Education	Passed	100%
VP Welfare	Passed	97%

Attendance: 24 Student Representatives & 8 Students.

Total Votes: 44

1. Welcome from Facilitator, Amalie Sortland

Amalie welcomed everyone, explained the agenda for the evening, clarified some key terminology for Student Council, and reminded attendees of the Code of Conduct and Safe Space Policy.

2. Accountability

Amalie notes that this is your chance to hear what the Sabbatical Officers (Sabbs) have been working on and to ask questions about their work. This is about ensuring that the Sabbs are being effective in their roles. However, this is not the only opportunity for students to ask the Sabbs questions. You can email, call or pop into the Students' Association office anytime.

a. Andrew Wilson, President: see [Paper A](#) for full report

Q: Jordan Dowd, Political Activities Representative: Can we have more details on the logistics of how the drugs testing kits will work? When, where and how can people get them?

A: I have a meeting next week to sort the logistics. Provisionally, they will be available through Advice Place so that people can get a kit as well as impartial advice. EUSA have agreed to do pilot scheme.

Q: On the subject of raising profile of sabbatical officers and student representatives as a whole, where can we find details of how EUSA plan to reach out to students, particularly first years?



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A: We have a very broad approach to this. During welcome week the sabbatical officers were out engaging first years. We were all heavily engaged and attended various events, allowing us to foster a relationship when they first come to university. We need to sustain this throughout the year, and ideas of how to do this are welcome.

Q: Gethin Binns, Law Undergraduate Representative: On the subject of students as change makers, how are students meant to develop confidence and participate when student representatives don't have access to the accounts they are supposed to scrutinise?

A: In terms of accounts, they are on the EUSA website if you want to scrutinise them. The financial situation of EUSA as charity is scrutinised by the Board of Trustees.

Q: Gethin Binns, Law Undergraduate Representative: If the general accounts of EUSA are scrutinised by trustees, when they are not elected, why does EUSA have the belief that students have right to participate in democracy? Why do elected reps not have access to the accounts?

A: Five Sabbatical Officers sit on the board and they are elected so they can hold other board members to account. You can apply to be a trustee: there are four student trustees and three external trustees on the board. Please feel free to bring a motion to student council if you wish to change this structure.

Q: Gethin Binns, Law Undergraduate Representative: There are five elected board members, and seven not elected – is that correct? Would you agree that this is not democratic?

A: Those numbers are correct. I'm happy to chat about this after. EUSA is a charity. The board of trustees used to be elected and now aren't, which was decided democratically by students, so you're more than welcome to submit motion to change it back.

Voting Breakdown	For	Against	Abstain
President Accountability	43	0	1

President Report Passes with 98%.

b. Beth Fellows, VP Activities and Services: see [Paper A](#) for full report

Q: Tumi Akeke, Volunteering Representative: With regards to #WeAreEdinburgh, how does it work? I understand that you can submit a photo with the hashtag but I don't feel connected to it because I don't know when it happens. How can I feel part of the hashtag?



A: This started last year and I think it's great, and I'm trying to raise the profile of the hashtag. I've made an annual plan based on themes; for example, October is black history month so we have content from the BME community and the African and Caribbean society. In January we will get in touch with volunteering for that theme. The posts go up on Instagram every two weeks on a Thursday. We have tried to do it so anyone who feels that they or a friend should be featured can contact us via email to get involved. We want students to shape how it looks and reach out to more communities in Edinburgh to show the whole spread of the whole university.

Q: Mickey Ferguson, History, Classics and Archaeology Undergraduate Representative: In terms of the intramural sports teams within schools, especially for HCA, this may not be feasible as we may not be able to have a whole team to compete against other schools?

A: I'm still figuring out how to flesh it out. HCA have amazing societies with a big profile. I think that the schools are big enough to fund intramural teams. It's important to take pride in being part of a community, and I think schools competing against each other to win a cup to have in their school building would really build community.

Q: Katie MacDonald, Sports Union: With regards to having Wednesday afternoons off, how feasible is it that this will happen in next couple of years?

A: A survey will go out very soon. It is feasible but students need to know that there would be more teaching on Friday afternoons as a result. This will affect a low percentage of students but this equates to quite a large number people who will be affected, if this was taken forward.

Q: Can you confirm if EUSA will liaise with Residence Life to engage first years in #TakeTen?

A: Great idea! I have already liaised with library to suggest people look at the exhibits in the library to take ten minutes away from their work and away from screens.

Voting Breakdown	For	Against	Abstain
VP Activities & Services Accountability	42.5	0	1.5

VP Activities & Services Report Passes with 97%.

c. Rosheen Wallace, VP Community: see [Paper A](#) for full report

Q: Rosie Taylor, LGBT Officer: The KB shuttle bus continued this year with caveats, but what now for students who are disabled, who need to use the service, who can't afford travel?



A: During summer I attended regular meetings with transport team to discuss the university's plans to change the shuttle bus service to subsidised Ridacards for all students. They said it wasn't going to be ready this year, so has been delayed for a year based on these conversations. The university will organise student consultations on bus services and I think its import to get a range of students involved: students who use buses in general, not just the KB shuttle bus.

Q: Elaina Benson, Mature Students Representative: There is currently no accommodation for undergraduate mature students. Have you considered this and can we work on it together?

A: I fully recognise that this is an issue. I welcome input from mature students on issues facing mature students.

Q: Jordan Dowd, Political Activities Representative: I'm not sure if this is publicly available knowledge but is there concrete plan for expansion for housing? How many units is the university seeking to add?

A: That's where we feed into residential strategy. There's an upcoming accommodation project at Peppermill and this is a conversation that we are involved in.

Voting Breakdown	For	Against	Abstain
VP Community	43	0	1

VP Community Report Passes with 98%.

d. Stephanie Vallancey, VP Education: see [Paper A](#) for full report

Q: Tumi Akeke, Volunteering Representative: Course marks are available before assignments, but can they be clearer? From personal experience they need to be clearer and explain more.

A: There are five different marking schemes which are inconsistent throughout schools and courses. I want to work on consistency so you are completely aware of what you will be marked on.

Q: On the topic of feedback, it varies from class to class. How can we make it more consistent? How can we ensure feedback is given in enough time for it to be helpful?

A: I want to make feedback more consistent and constructive for staff and students. I think it should focus on enhancing, continuing, and developing, not changing everything. It should emphasise sustainable change, not just small tweaks.



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Q: Regarding course cost transparency, are you also planning on securing funding to help students with hidden costs? I'm worried that otherwise it will put students off applying as many are already struggling to afford university.

A: Providing an additional grant has happened at another university, but I'm not sure how feasible it is just now. Fees are already there so we need to just make prospective students aware of what will happen once they get here. A grant would be great to make things fully accessible.

Q: Currently the university plans to release the exam timetable in week seven. Do you have any comments on work done so far to push this forward to week five or six?

A: The pushback from the university has been that until week two people change courses, so they need the extra time for exam timetabling. There is an IT problem in ensuring that there are no clashes. I've been talking to the university about improving IT but also about switching to alternative forms of assessment.

Q: Rebecca Rees, Geoscience Undergraduate Representative: What do you plan to do with school representatives this year?

A: This will vary by school; for example, hidden course costs are more prevalent in certain schools so we would welcome help from representatives on this. I'm really keen to support representatives to participate.

Q: Rosie Taylor, LGBT Officer: There are courses where I have specifically had to ask for gender neutral pronouns in handbooks, emails and things. Can we have wider guidance from EUSA?

A: Great idea, I will take this forward!

Voting Breakdown	For	Against	Abstain
VP Education	44	0	0

VP Education Report Passes with 100%.

e. Oona Miller, VP Welfare: see [Paper A](#) for full report

Q: Mickey Ferguson, History, Classics and Archaeology Undergraduate Representative: You mentioned reporting building faults; the HCA lift has been broken for two years on and off. During festival it didn't get fixed despite how much time there was, it only got fixed yesterday. How will your system prevent the fact that people are ignoring the issues in buildings?

A: I am aware of the ridiculous HCA lift. I have developed good relationship with Estates Department, who work on accessibility. I also sit on a disability access board where the lift has been brought up. Unfortunately I don't make decisions on where



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money is spent when there are lots of problems across the university. There is £15million of funding for board, which they can spend on areas of priority over a period of four years. This includes what we call 'small works,' things like getting better lifts, dropping kerbs, and these sorts of things are on the agenda.

Q: Tumi Akeke, Volunteering Representative: How are you working towards inclusion for working class, low income, first generation to attend university, care experienced and estranged students? University scholarship are limited, for example to people from Scotland, Africa, and UK. This is not really bridging the gap. How are you pushing to tackle elitism and build inclusivity?

A: You maybe haven't seen but there's an event next Tuesday (Tue 01 October 2019, 17:00-18:30, Lounge Bar at Teviot Row House) called 'Tacking Elitism.' It's a meeting for students to come along and hear what I have in mind but also to create network of students lead its own activity. It should be a self-mobilising group who tackle issues such as how the university identifies low income students. I don't want to set the agenda, I want to facilitate so come along on Tuesday and get involved!

Q: Just a note about funding, the university is constantly changing scholarship arrangements for students from a low income background. Every time they change it, they don't apply it on a retrospective basis. For example, first years from the same financial background as me could receive a higher bursary in 2021, but mine wouldn't change, so older students lose out. Will you change this to benefit continuing students?

A: This is something to raise with Recruitment, Admissions, and Finance. The nuances complex, so let's chat later if that's ok!

Q: Daniel Mutia, International Students' Representative: On building inclusivity, I have received complaints. Inclusivity should include inclusive opportunities. Part time job adverts for EUSA consistently say that you need a UK passport to apply, which excludes non-UK students. What is your perspective on what will be done? It has been a problem for two years; there should be fairness in how student applications are assessed.

A: This is really important and I agree with you, but it also sounds challenging. Just a reminder that if you're being passed complaints from other students you can get in touch any time and Sabbatical Officers can continue the conversations higher up. I want to pursue this but when we have some more time as I'm not confident on all the issues right now. If you want to pick this up, I'd totally happy to.

Voting Breakdown	For	Against	Abstain
VP Welfare	42.5	0	1.5

VP Welfare Report Passes with 97%.



Students voted and were reminded to place their ballot paper in the box before they leave.

3. Mock Motion

Amalie explained that as there had been no Motions submitted, attendees would run through a Mock Motion to familiarise themselves with the running order for a Motion Debate.

Attendees participated in small table discussions about an old motion and then practised running the motion in full.

4. Any Other Business

a. Shout Outs

Grace Fisher, Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator: Sabbatical Officers have lots of different things to get involved in or provide feedback on. I will be at the front with a sign-up sheet, so come and see me at the end if you're interested in any of the following: transport, accommodation, course costs, personal tutoring, the Botanical Gardens, Wednesday afternoons.

Kirsty Munro, Divinity Undergraduate School Representative: There's a new café in new college and it's a social bite café, which is a charity which helps with homelessness. It has good food good prices so please come along if you can!

Rosie Taylor, LGBT Officer: There is not much information around that at Kings Buildings there is new appointment in student experience, who will be looking at drop in feedback events on the Personal Tutor system, student support, and accessibility. They can be found around Kings Buildings offering sweets in exchange for feedback look out for them or come chat to me about it!

b. Representative ID photos

Grace Fisher, Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator: For those that are representatives, you will be getting a photo card which provides discounts at different places. Here are the dates for your diaries to pop into the Representation and Democracy Hub and have your photo taken: Tuesday 1st Oct 16:30-17:30; Wednesday 2nd Oct 12:00-13:00; Friday 4th Oct 13:00-14:00.

Amalie thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the event.