

# MINUTES

## General Meeting/Education Zone

### November 16, 2017



A meeting of the Students' Union General Meeting/Education Zone was held on **November 16, 2017** from **5:00pm** in **Lecture Theatre B4**.

#### IN ATTENDANCE

1.1	<u>Members Present</u>		
	Astrid Smalbroek	<b>AS</b>	Union President
	Matt Adie	<b>MA</b>	VP Education
	Rebecca Blair	<b>RB</b>	Sports President
	Rachel Bradshaw	<b>RBr</b>	Communities Officer and Equalities Officer (Women)
	AJ Mukhia	<b>AM</b>	Clubs and Societies Officer
	Ilona Kater	<b>IK</b>	Environment and Ethics Officer
	Gill Thayne	<b>GT</b>	Health Promotions Officer
	Kelsey Blemings	<b>KB</b>	Sports Union Communications Officer
	Joshua Muirhead	<b>JM</b>	NUS Delegate
	Amy Beveridge	<b>AB</b>	Media Officer
	Kieran Turner	<b>KT</b>	Housing Officer

*For all other attendees, an attendance list is available upon request.*

1.2	<u>In Attendance</u>		
1.3	<u>Observers</u>		
	Audrey-Clare Burns	<b>ACB</b>	Chief Executive, Students' Union
	Amy Eberlin	<b>AE</b>	Democracy and Research Coordinator
1.4	<u>Apologies</u>		
	Jamie Grant	<b>JG</b>	VP Communities
1.5	<u>Absent without Apologies</u>		

#### MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Minutes from the previous GM were proposed by Rachel Bradshaw (RBr) and seconded by AJ Mukhia (AM). GM Minutes were **passed**. No minutes arising.

#### CHALLENGES TO ORDER OF PAPER

No challenges to the order of papers.

#### DATES TO NOTE

#### ELECTIONS & RESIGNATIONS

#### REPORTS / PRESENTATIONS

- |     |                 |  |
|-----|-----------------|--|
| 7.1 | Union President |  |
|-----|-----------------|--|
- Working hard on SU Strategic Plan, holding consultations for this. Fill out the Big Union Survey!
  - Student Wellbeing Survey – fill it out.
  - Atrium Redevelopment Project – additional wide student consultation in the Atrium in the future
  - All four Equalities Officers have been elected and will be running a campaign during Refreshers on anti-racism and anti-homophobia

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- Transport with Jamie – planning to collect more student data on transport, check out your student portal for more on this
- Speak Your Mind Campaign
- Feminism 101 Workshop of November 30<sup>th</sup> – focuses on ways to have more activism on campus

#### 7.2 VP Education

- Last EdZone, we canvased the issues that students were having with their learning experience. Since then, we've been able to secure:
  - New visualiser for A5
  - Canvas gives out confirmation notifications – the University has agreed that proof that you've received this notification can serve as proof that you've submitted an assignment
  - Will be providing staff with more training on Canvas over the summer to deal with teething issues
  - Student feedback is being fed into ideas about accessibility and breadth of the Canvas mobile app content, ie. the inclusion of course outlines in the app
  - The Canvas team will be working, over December, to provide more online training content for students
- Canvas
- Quality Enhancement Theme

#### 7.3 VP Communities

- Community Outreach – The Year of the Young Person
- Action Plan for Sustainability
- Club Development through VP Tea

#### 7.4 Sports President

- BUCS – 11<sup>th</sup> Place
- Healthy Body, Healthy Mind: Wellbeing Info Talk, SMHFA Training, Wellbeing Wednesdays
- Stirling Big Wednesday on January 31<sup>st</sup> – Kick Off of Rainbow Laces Campaign
- 5K A Day – get involved!

## DISCUSSION AND DECISION TOPICS

### 8.1 Save Our Students' Union Motion

**AS:** Our first motion of the day is the Save Our Students' Union Motion. Stuart, would you like to introduce your motion?

**Stuart McLuckie (SM):** Hi everyone. Before I start, I want to thank Astrid for the help that she's given me and everyone, who outwith the last meeting, gave me support and have given me great enthusiasm to keep going. (SM reads and explains motion. If you would like to re-read the motion, it can be requested from the Students' Union.) The essential point is that we're allowing the Union to define what they mean by 'direct student interest'. What I actually want there to be is some kind of standard by which anyone who proposes a policy, or who proposes that the Union as a whole supports a certain movement or group, that there has to be some kind of standard there that they can say 'Yes, we do support this group.' I do respect and am inspired by the work of the LGBT Society, GEM, Fair Rent Campaign and Mental Health Campaigns and want to see them continue. Those things that effect those groups will not be changed by this motion and that is just to clear it up for those who are rightfully concerned. Thank you for listening to me and hope that you consider supporting my motion.

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**AS:** Would anyone like to speak against the motion?

(**Note:** recording paused on request of student)

**Dave Keenan (DK):** CND is not a partisan movement. As stated in the Education Act 1994, Students' Unions are not partisan organisations and this Union has never been partisan. It is our responsibility to defend student interests. I understand SM's feelings, but this is a representative democracy. Neutrality is ambiguous and, as it relates to this motion, its meaning in relation to the Students' Union is also ambiguous. For people who don't understand the motion or its context, I ask you to abstain.

**AS:** Student just spoke and that will be reflected in the minutes. Stuart?

**SM:** Thank you, Dave, for offering your opinion there. We all do really appreciate it and I personally respect your choice and your right to do what you want to do in that situation. (*Notes the personal attacks from the previous year and asks that people refrain from them this year*) A couple of points, the issue of partisanship, with reference to the CND, the problem that I have is that the CND has an opinion on a certain policy proposal. The CND, as an external organisation, can do that, but what we're specifically talking about here and there's a very big mix of student opinion on that issue. My point is that for such a partisan issue, where there is such a clear difference of opinion within the student community, should the Students' Union actually take a stance on that, further promoting a division within the student body? Additionally, I have said, in the motion, that there should be a strict definition for what 'the student interest' means and allowing the Union to do that itself by use of the criteria in the core policies. On top of that, Dave mentioned that the Students' Union, itself, has political interests, and I agree with that, to the extent that they are the students' interests. I believe that people should be free to debate issues and take partisanship, but that they should not use the Union as a puppet for their particular point of view. Essentially, political interests are strictly defined. There will be no repeal of any current motions that are already passed within the Union. That will be your decision. So, I hope that everyone can express their viewpoint freely, openly and without intimidation. Thank you.

**AS:** OK, does anyone want to speak against the motion?

**Ciaran Hunter (CH):** If no motions are going to be rescinded through this proposal and students will still make a democratic decision about what is deemed to be a 'student issue', then what is the point of this motion? Rather than take away the ability of students to put forward these ideas, to take away that freedom if you like, why don't we maintain this opportunity for students to put forward ideas which can be rejected or accepted by the majority of students?

**AS:** Thank you, Kieran. Does anyone want to respond to that point?

**SM:** The point of the motion is that we have a problem where a motion was passed four years ago, stating that the Union officially supported the CND, so the status quo is that anyone can make a motion without any peer-review or standards of what student interest are. The problem was clear last year, when people tried to use the democratic process to address or ameliorate those ideas. There were people who made a minority of others, with differing ideas, feel unsafe by slandering them with lies. This was never addressed and differentiated from policy. What I actually want to do is to impose a standard by which motions are judged, in writing or through a statement the authors need to justify why they think their motion should go ahead. I think that the democratically-elected officials will be more responsible for their actions, as to whether a motion is put forward, or not go ahead. It doesn't remove any freedoms at all.

**Monica Dudley (MD):** I just wanted to make the point that this is the standard that is currently in place, this process right here. If you don't think that's good enough, then that's something that you

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should address, but you're using the current process to do it. If that's not a good enough standard, then what are we doing?

**Alasdair Duncan (AD):** You're arguing that author's need to justify why a motion should be put forward, isn't that just writing a motion? This process already exists.

**CH:** This democratic process is in itself a peer review.

**Ryan Peteranna (RP):** The fundamental problem of the motion is that it creates a Catch-22 dilemma in that, if you endorse a position of neutrality, you are, by the same token, opposing positions where political injustices arise.

**Prentice Baines (PB):** In the case of changes to the core policy, will that be reflected in the motion? Would it still be relevant with a change to the core policy?

**MA:** Just to clarify on that point, whenever a new policy is posed to the core policy, it would come to a GM. Just for a point of procedure.

**RP:** What Stuart implied was that this motion would address intimidation of people with a minority viewpoint, but I don't believe that this motion will do anything constructive to address that issue. I'm not of the opinion that this motion is conducive to anything that the Students' Union is intended to achieve.

**MT O'Donnell (MO):** If it's not effecting LGBT or anything like that, then what groups is it effecting?

**SM:** The build up to this motion is, in and itself, the reason that it needs to be passed. This motion is a symbol of what happens when a person comes up and presents an opinion that might be in the minority and against the perceived wisdom of the Union, this is what happens. What's already happened has happened. Outside the LGBT+, Fair Rent, Mental Health, Wellbeing, etc., hasn't resulted in anyone feeling left out. The existence of the CND policy, outwith student politics, recognises that the opinion, stated in that piece of policy, to be more relevant or more correct than those of other students. It creates an ideological divided community. The intent of the proposed motion is that we agree that standards need to be met, where if we are endorsing particular groups or ideologies, that it is made clear that it is relevant to the student interest. I disagree that it doesn't address any of these concerns. I think that it's perfect, well balanced. It creates a perfect gap for those who want to see the Union continue to pursue activism and those that want to see some kind of redress for what happened last year.

**AS:** We are now putting the motion to a vote.

For: 78; Against: 44; Abstain: 42. **Motion Passed.**

8.2 Fairtrade Motion

**Ilona Kater (IK):** Hello. (*Reads the motion*)

**AS:** Thank you. Would anyone like to speak against this motion? Questions?

**Q:** How will this effect pricing? How much is pricing expected to increase?

**AS:** There shouldn't be a pricing increase.

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**Q:** Only 5% of fair trade profits actually go to producers, is this taken account by this motion in any way shape or form?

**IK:** Fairtrade is by no means a perfect standard, but this ensures that the University increases its standards and helps people in the global south. It's definitely an improvement from what currently exists and will hopefully encourage that University to continue to improve its ethical standards.

**Comment:** For the people who want higher standards, there are places on campus where you can get them. However, if we made everywhere meet those highest standards, students wouldn't like it. We've seen that last year when we started to only have vegetarian options in Venue. Students started complaining that it was against their rights. We need to find a middle ground and I think what Ilona has proposed does a good job of that.

**Q:** As an additional point, maybe, as a University, we should seek to do business with companies who have a proven track record of passing fair profits onto the producers? Personally, I'm not aware of any of these business, but maybe there are some coming along? Could add a point of striving, as a university to do this.

**IK:** If you currently go to the Green and Blue space, there are a number of products from businesses with proven track records of working with women's rights and Fairtrade, and there is also food in their from local producers.

**Q:** Does the policy take into account Fairtrade issues within the UK, itself? Such as fair prices for farmer's in the milk industry?

**IK:** To be honest, I'm not sure.

**AS:** We'll take it to a vote.

For: 131; Against: 8; Abstain: 29. **Motion Passed.**

8.3 Surveying the Student Experience: What's working, what's not?

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Motion on Schedules

**AS:** Adam, would you like to speak for your motion?

**Adam Petrie (AP):** I'll try to keep this very short and sweet. Basically, my motion is a response to the past meeting. Currently, if any challenge to the order of meeting is presented to the Chair of the Meeting, it is up to the Chair alone to pass that suggestion. This can lead to confusion and misuse. My motion proposes that an addition is made to Schedule 5 that any challenge be put to a vote for all members in attendance. It has been suggested that 2.4 is not the best place for it, as it will effect all meetings not just general meetings. Could I propose an amendment to shift the proposal instead to Section 10? The result would be the same.

**AS:** There won't need to be an amendment, but if it passes, we will make a note of the shift to Section 10. Is there anyone who wants to speak against?

**DK:** It's more of a general comment. I wanted to make a comment that every Ordinary Member has the right to propose an amendment, and this is a regular occurrence in every other democratic organisation. There were no shenanigans or monkey business last GM. We could have had a debate on the amendment and the actual motion itself, but Stuart decided to move the motion to a later date.

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**AP:** My problem was not with the amendment, but with the way that you deliberately crushed Stuart's motion with it.

**AS:** Are there any other comments?

**Joe Deans (JD):** Hi everyone, Joe. I'm not always at these GM's because of the neutrality motion. I'm fed up of coming here because we can't have a discussion about a motion. Now, when we've finally had that discussion about the motion, we're having a discussion about how we can't have a discussion about the motion. Can we just have these discussions, so I don't have to keep coming back to these meetings, then can we not have discussions like this.

**AD:** I echo the comments of Joe. You've proposed it, it's been passed, can we be done with it now.

**AP:** I wholeheartedly agree, but that is often hopes and dreams. Some people seek to derail these discussions and this motion is intended to safeguard against it.

For: 92; Against: 2; Abstain: 50. **Motion Passed.**

#### DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 Sports Zone Meeting – Thursday, November 23, 2017 in LTB4 from 5PM

#### RESERVED BUSINESS