# MINUTES

# General Meeting

# 07/10/2021

There will be a meeting of the Students’ Union General Meeting on **Thursday 7th October 2021** from **5:00pm via Microsoft Teams.**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

* 1. Members Present

Nela Cadinanos Gonzalez NG Union President

Calum Brown CB VP Education

Sophie Charlton SC Sports President

Alyson MacKay AM VP Communities

Ordinary Members OM

* 1. In Attendance

1.3 Observers

Rosamund Vickers RV Democracy and Representation Coordinator

Elaine Shepard ES Activities and Volunteer Coordinator

* 1. Apologies

1.5 Absent without Apologies

**MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**CHALLENGES TO ORDER OF PAPER**

**DATES TO NOTE**

5.1 Black History Month – October

5.3 Stirling Climate Festival – 11th - 17th October

5.4 Equalities Zone – 14th October

5.5 Stir-lympics – 18th-19th October\*

5.6 She Can, She Will – 18th - 22nd October

5.7 Education Zone – 21st October

5.8 COP26 - 31st October – 12th November

5.9 Movember

\*dates TBC

**Elections & Resignations**

6.1 Union By-Elections

- Nominations close 8th October at 12pm (GMT)

- Voting opens 18th October at 9am (GMT) and closes 19th October 6:15pm (GMT)

- Results announced 19th October at 7:30pm (GMT)

6.2 Elections Committee Election (x3)

Candidates – Aaron Caulfield, Olivia Wray, Lina Imam Ahamed Rifai, Nootan Ranga Nayak

Elected - Aaron Caulfield, Olivia Wray, Lina Imam Ahamed Rifai

**REPORTS / PRESENTATIONS**

7.1 Union President

NG Recently attended a Q&A session with the Minister for Higher and Further Education and highlighted the importance of giving funding to universities and students’ unions to continue promoting health and well-being and this is a priority for us as a Students’ Union. Welcomed Matt Crilly, NUS Scotland President, to the Stirling campus and discussed the key issues facing students. Matt is currently in conversations with the Scottish government regarding housing, with housing issues affecting many Stirling students. Continually monitoring and working with the University on the return to in-person teaching. Worked with fellow students to discuss making the University of Stirling an official University of Sanctuary, engaging with Neville Wyle as Deputy Principal who is in support of the project. Alongside fellow sabbaticals, undertaking ongoing support on the joint strategies that we currently have between the Union and University: Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Race, Equality and Anti-Racism Strategy. Participated in recruitment of the new Dean for the Social Sciences Faculty. Collaborating with Nisa, Womens Officer to increase the visibility of international languages within the Union and University, as well as the Gaelic society to increase visibility of the Gaelic language on campus. Collaborating with Esme, the Health and Well-being Officer, to develop a series of events, focused on well-being. The Union has secured consultation on the university sustainability plan to ensure more ambitious targets are set. We also conducted a meeting with the President of the Environmental Enterprise society and the University Careers and Employability service to discuss how sustainability is embedded within their services.

7.2 VP Education

CB Conducting work on the University academic integrity and misconduct policy, working with the Union advocacy team and members of staff in the university to contribute to improvements within the policy. Notable changes are the right for students to attend misconduct meetings individually rather than being in the same meeting with all parties accused, and changes to the stance on contract cheating when there are multiple accused at same time. In addition to this, within the next couple of weeks there will be a campaign to highlight the dangers of contract cheating to students. Another achievement for the Students’ Union and students was negotiating with the University for the removal of fees for the University Quarantine Hotel. It has been great to see so many people back on campus, but also great to see those still utilizing their online option. The return to in-person teaching and blended learning this has been the longest ongoing piece of work. Currently the stance is 1-meter social distancing when possible in public spaces, and for teaching we have class sizes limited to a maximum of 50 people, but this can vary to room to room for smaller classrooms. Working with Information Services on multiple fronts on aspects related to returning the library to full capacity. Currently in consultation with Information Services and Esme our Health and Well-being officer to expand the wellbeing space.

Have tours of the new Campus Central buildings, with Nela and I members of the Campus Central Fit Out Group, as well as the Campus Central Inclusion and Accessibility Group where disabled students are informing us of different needs that they have in relation to the new development. Also working on the idea of a time capsule as part of the new campus buildings.

The new cohort of faculty officers, both undergraduate and postgraduate has been hired and in training. Also, glad to see the module reps and the programme reps are in place across the university and being engaging really well so far. The NSS results came in June, with the key points being that the university had overall response rate of 74% compared to the sector average of 69%, and overall satisfaction within the university is 80.76% compared to 86.85% last year. Particularly notable is that only 32% so students felt that the university taken sufficient steps to support their mental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the University and Union are actively working on how to improve this. Finally, a formal letter was submitted to the Academic Registrar at the University to open discussions about potential amendments to Ordinance Two.

7.3 VP Communities

AM There was a massive turnout at the Freshers Clubs and Societies fares, a huge congratulations and a really good effort from every single club and society. Following that we had our Give It A Go's and everything went fairly smoothly, and many new people have been able to join different clubs and societies. We have now over 70 clubs and societies in the communities zone. If you wish to set up your own club or society, please visit the Union website or contact myself or Elaine Shepard. Working directly with Police Scotland to report anti transgender flyers found on campus, an update will be provided later in this meeting regarding this.

Working with Nela on the ongoing collaborative sustainability plan with the university, and so far, we've managed to get them to bring forward their carbon neutral goal by five years. Working on the promotion on support of the NUS Decolonise Education campaign, more information can be found on the Union website. We've been working with the Afro Caribbean Society to help support Black History Month, they have a lot of events scheduled so please check these out. The Union has arranged an art collection celebrating black creators, which is now up in the Union main hall. Working in ongoing collaboration with our Disability Officer Lewis Shaw as well as a previous Officer regarding accessibility in within the Union. Sophie, the Sports President, and I are working a lot on a training and accreditation system that the committees of our societies and sports clubs will be able to take part in to better inform them on various aspects. Recently attended a report released by the charity Emily Test around gender based violence and their research findings to gather information regarding our approach to consent training and our approach to consent on campus to ensure that we not only keep everyone safe, but that we educate everyone on how to keep themselves safe and on how to keep others around us safe. We held our first Communities Zone meeting and elected members to the Communities Zone Executive Committee. Last, working with the Part Time Officers within the communities zone on various campaigns and projects which are coming up.

7.4 Sports President

SC We hosted a successful Sports Bazaar event during Freshers week, with clubs putting in an incredible effort to recruit new members and we have had to increase extra training to accommodate the large number of sign-ups. We have also had students interested in starting several new clubs, so if you are interested is creating a sports clubs please get in contact. BUCS Wednesdays are back and we've had a lot of success so far, congratulations to all who have taken part. It is great to have a sport back on campus and hopefully we keep getting the good results coming in. Met with Stirling Movember ambassadors and we're starting to pull plants together for a Movember campaign during the month of November. Working with Juliette, the Sports Union Communications Officer, on their campaign to spotlight and highlight different people within our sports union. During October, as it is Black History Month, we would love black athletes to take part and we'd love to interview you. We also have the She can, She will campaign which celebrates women in sport at the end of October. Tash, Sports Union Participation Officer, and I will also be hosting our Stirlympics event on the 18th and 19th of October, which consists of fun games for all. We'd love for all the different communities to get involved from across the University. Working to develop the tier two programs for competitive and elite sports, to help support them and their coaches through the year. We also held our first Sports Zone meeting and elected the Sports Zone Executive Committee members. Toured the new sports facilities with Lewis, the Disabled Officer, to identify if there were any accessibility issues, thank you to Lewis for this.

**DISCUSSION AND DECISION TOPICS**

8.1 Postgraduate Engagement (Repeal) Motion

For – 44

Against – 3

Abstain – 13

8.2 Students’ Union Against Ableism Motion

For – 67

Against – 1

Abstain – 3

8.3 University of Sanctuary Motion, plus accompanying Proposal document

For – 64

Against – 2

Abstain – 7

8.4 Printed Publicity Motion

Vote was not quorate, therefore the motion is not valid.

8.5 Anti-Transgender leaflets on campus – Update

AM At the beginning of semester leaflets and stickers placed around our campus which contained information which was anti-transgender. We wanted to make you aware of this because we have reported it to Police Scotland they have advised that if anyone discovers any of these leaflets to take them and hand them into the Union office as they are being collated as evidence to be given the police. This is not saying that people cannot have a difference of opinion, and as a Union and University we want the university to be an open place for discussion and for learning, but that should not under any circumstances put anyone’s rights or ability to live as who they are at jeopardy. We support our transgender students and staff. We believe that transgender people deserve every equal opportunity that every other person has, and this is something that is covered in the Union ED&I policy. This again is not saying that we cannot have open debates. For example, should a student or student movement wish to arise supporting any particular movement, the Union is not going to stop that unless it tries to put anyone in our student community at risk, tries to belittle them or tries to take away any of their rights. If you wish to find out more information you can contact the Students’ Union, University or Police Scotland. Finally, we would like to make it really clear to all of our transgender students and staff that we see you, we hear you, you're valid, and we're here for you.

**RESERVED BUSINESS**

No reserved business.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

10.1 CZEC Election – Lay Members

Candidate – Petra Jarosova

Elected – Petra Jarosova

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

9.1 General Meeting and Communities Zone 11th November 2021 at 5pm via Microsoft teams.