

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION

MINUTES

Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council
held on 19 November 2013 in The Space, Level 1, Students' Union

Present:

Aaron Blair (School Representative – Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering)
 Aaron McGuinness (School Representative – Nursing and Midwifery)
 Aidan Bannon (Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, MHLS)
 Andrew Carruthers (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, AHSS, in the Chair)
 Anna McKinley (MHLS)
 Aoibhin McNeill (Engineering and Physical Sciences, EPS)
 Bethany Ferris (School Representative – Institute of Theology)
 Brendan Corr (Open First Year)
 Caoimhe McNeill (Executive Management Committee, EMC)
 Catherine McAteer (Open First Year)
 Cathy Corbett (Postgraduate, PG)
 Charlotte Troy (School Representative – History and Anthropology)
 Christopher Smyth (EPS)
 Ciaran Gallagher (Open)
 Clare Rea (MHLS)
 Cliona McCarney (AHSS)
 Connor Daly (EMC)
 Daniel Hogan (EPS)
 Daniel McCabe (MHLS)
 David Sands (School Representative – Psychology)
 Derek Crosby (PG)
 Eoin Deeney (EMC)
 Farah Ibrahim (AHSS)
 Faye Ni Cheallaigh (EPS)
 Fergal McFerran (Open)
 Fiachra O'Maolcraoibhe (Open)
 Fiona Edgar (School Representative – Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work)
 Jack Cong Su (MHLS)
 Jack Donnelly (Open First Year)
 James Barnes (PG / School Representative – Politics, International Studies and Philosophy)
 James Hyde (School Representative – Pharmacy)
 James Rodgers (EPS)
 Jan Sen Yu (AHSS)
 Jessica Black (MHLS / School Representative – Biological Sciences)
 Jessica Kirk (PG)
 Julia Whitehouse (AHSS)
 Karl Vidamour (AHSS)
 Kathryn Waller (AHSS)
 Katie Matthews (AHSS)
 Katie O'Hare (AHSS)
 Katie Perry (AHSS)
 Kelly Ann McAteer (AHSS)
 Laura Gemmell (EPS)
 Lauren Brown (AHSS)
 Mannix McAlister (Open First Year)
 Mark Millar (School Representative – Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology)
 Martin Lilly (EMC)
 Matthew Lowe (EPS)
 Matthew Neill (EPS)
 Megan Liddy (PG)
 Mehul Vithlani (MHLS)
 Naomh Gibson (AHSS)
 Niall Bole (EPS)
 Niall McShane (EMC)
 Niamh Marley (AHSS)
 Odhran Devlin (Open)
 Oisín Hassan (AHSS)
 Patrick Morgan (EPS)
 Paul Loughran (EPS)
 Philip Barr (Open)
 Raymond Dillon (EPS / School Representative – Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science)
 Sana Ashraf (School Representative – Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Science)
 Sarah Calderwood (PG)

Sarah Wright (Open)
Sarah-Louise Baird (EMC)
Shannon Downey (Open First Year)
Sky Aughey (Open)
Tara Pouryahya (MHLS)
Thomas Gilmour (EPS)
Tiernan McAteer (EMC)

In Attendance:

Dominic Doherty (Clerk of Council)

Andrew Carruthers (Union Speaker, in the Chair) welcomed all attendees to this Statutory Meeting.

823. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from the following Councillors:

Alana Finn (AHSS)
Barbra Mutamba (PG)
Brighdin O'Neill (MHLS)
Connor Malone (PG)
Conrad Johnston (School Representative – Chemistry and Chemical Engineering)
Helen Monaghan (MHLS)
Julia Andrade Rocha (PG)
Mark Earney (School Representative – Management)
Niall Robb (AHSS)
Samantha Rogers (AHSS)
Thomas Thompson (MHLS)

824. MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF 7 NOVEMBER 2013

It was agreed that the minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of 7 November 2013 (SUC/M/13/5) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

825. BUSINESS ARISING

There was none.

826. COMMUNICATIONS

The Council noted the following communications:

- 826.1 That the Physics and Applied Mathematics Society (PAMSOC) had decided to change its name to the Physics and Mathematics Society.
- 826.2 That the Cheerleading Society had decided to change its name to the Queen's Knights Cheerleading Club.
- 826.3 That the Trading Club and the Investment Society have merged, to become the Trading and Investment Club (QUTIC).
- 826.4 That the Finance Society and the Actuarial Society have merged, to become the Finance and Actuarial Society.
- 826.5 That the following communication had been received by the Union Speaker, regarding a previous Students' Union Council decision involving Aisling Gallagher (a former member of the Council):

Dear Andrew,

I write with regard to the decision made by Council at its Annual Business Meeting of 7 May 2013, debarring Aisling Gallagher from standing as a candidate in any national conference delegate election during the 2013-14 academic year (minute 796.8 refers).

I can confirm that legal advice received indicates that the provisions of the Students' Union Constitution do not enable the debarring of any student member who wishes to stand for national conference delegation elections, and that the above decision of Council should not therefore be enforced. Can you please communicate the above to the Council?

You might also consider whether the Standing Committee of the Council should address the matter of how delegate leaders can appropriately deal with future breaches of mandate at external conferences.

Regards.

Gordon Douglas
Students' Union Director

827. BYE-ELECTIONS

827.1 It was noted that the following Councillors had been elected to serve as full members of the Education and Welfare Committee: Jack Donnelly; Declan Frith; Matthew Hunt; James Hyde; and Katie Matthews.

827.2 It was noted that Fiona Edgar had been elected to serve as a full member of the Community, Equality and Diversity Committee.

827.3 It was noted that Thomas Gilmour had been co-opted as a non-voting member of the Clubs, Societies and Student Development Committee.

828. ELECTIONS

There were none.

829. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS / RULES AMENDMENTS

829.1 Proposed Recognition of New Clubs and Societies

Council was requested to amend Rule 8, Paragraph 820 in order to recognise the following proposed Clubs and Societies:

Queen's University Belfast Oxfam Society

Proposer: Laura Gemmell (40038935)
Secunder: Kelly Long (40092228)

Queen's University Belfast Obstetrics and Gynaecology Society

Proposer: Naomi Harvey (13642057)
Secunder: Victoria Braden (40000659)

Queen's University Belfast Electronic Music Society

Proposer: Sydney Bull (40085266)
Secunder: Matthew Teal (40085430)

The Michaela Foundation Society at Queen's University Belfast

Proposer: Kelly Loughran (40060007)
Secunder: Stephen McCrystal (40109651)

Queen's University Belfast Mugendo Kickboxing Club

Proposer: Ryan Walsh (40054756)
Secunder: Sean Donnelly (40021670)

Queen's University Belfast NI21 Society

Proposer: Brendan Corr (40107846)
Seconder: Mark Little (40105505)

Queen's University Belfast Free Project Society

Proposer: Rhian Wynne (40041934)
Seconder: Tamara Coates (40060962)

Queen's University Belfast Pro-Choice Society

Proposer: Mark Benson (29055663)
Seconder: Shauneen Conlon (40043816)

Queen's University Belfast Medical Choir Society

Proposer: Lucy Loughrey (40055122)
Seconder: Conal Corr (40054973)

Queen's University Belfast Paddlesport Club

Proposer: Dermot Watts (40078842)
Seconder: Caroline Ward (40064006)

Queen's University Belfast Crimestoppers Society

Proposer: Alicia Clarke (40041582)
Seconder: Devon Faulkner (40108928)

It was noted that all of the above had provided all of the stipulated documentation, which was available for inspection upon request.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Oxfam Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Obstetrics and Gynaecology Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Electronic Music Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Michaela Foundation Society at Queen's University Belfast approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Mugendo Kickboxing Club was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast NI21 Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Pro-Choice Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Medical Choir Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group, and subject to membership of this Society being open to all students.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Paddlesport Club was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Crimestoppers Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

In the absence of a representative from that student group, recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Free Project Society was deferred.

830. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following Reports were considered by the Council:

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|---|-------------|
| Report of the Union President | SUC/P/13/34 |
| Report of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications | SUC/P/13/35 |
| Report of the Vice President Clubs and Societies | SUC/P/13/36 |
| Report of the Vice President Community | SUC/P/13/37 |
| Report of the Vice President Education | SUC/P/13/38 |
| Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity | SUC/P/13/39 |
| Report of the Vice President Welfare | SUC/P/13/40 |

830.1 The Union President highlighted the following matters when presenting his Report to the Council:

- The Students' Union's campaign to develop and deliver a greater range of employability opportunities to student members.
- An update on the Lobbying Bill campaign.
- His involvement in the process to select the new Vice-Chancellor.
- That turnout in the recent Students' Union Council elections had been the second highest on record, beaten only by the 2012 figures.

In response to a question from Derek Crosby (PG), the Union President stated that positive feedback regarding the marketing of the recent Council elections had been received by means of emails, social media comments and face-to-face conversations.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Union President (SUC/P/13/34) was accepted.

830.2 The Vice President Campaigns and Communications highlighted the following matters when presenting his Report to the Council:

- The Students' Union's focus upon campaigning work since the beginning of the current academic year.
- Work that had been carried out in terms of lobbying the University to develop appropriate branding for the employability campaign.
- The 'Pound in Your Pocket' campaign.
- The campaign in opposition to the introduction of NHS charges for international students.
- The forthcoming launch of the new Students' Union website at the beginning of December 2013.

In response to a question from Fiachra O'Maolcraoibhe (Open), the Vice President stated that by using the term 'employability', he was essentially talking about 'student

development. Mr Daly believed that it was essential for the Students' Union to provide a range of activities to engage student members and encourage personal development via volunteering etc.

In response to a question from Derek Crosby (Postgraduate), the Vice President stated that there had been some delay in producing the new website because of the need to fully evaluate all options prior to taking a decision on 'web build', to respond to student feedback on the issue and to obtain and include all necessary content for the site prior to launch. Mr Daly stated that he had full 'sign off' authority in relation to website content and the new site was scheduled to be launched during the first week of December 2013.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications (SUC/P/13/35) was accepted.

830.3 The Vice President Clubs and Societies highlighted the following matters when presenting his Report to the Council:

- The high participation and attendance levels at the 2013 Freshers' Fair.
- The record number of stalls, attendees and membership 'sign ups' that had been generated by this event.
- That there were over 9,600 Club and Society membership 'sign ups' to date, a record number.
- That the Vice President had been elected to the national committee of the Board of Irish College Societies (BICS).
- That, for the first time, Queen's Students' Union would be hosting the annual BICS Awards in 2014.
- That training for Clubs and Societies had taken place on 9 October 2013.
- That the Campus Cup has been successfully staged and that the feasibility of a Campus League would be considered.
- Work carried out in relation to the new Students' Union website.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Clubs and Societies (SUC/P/13/36) was accepted.

830.4 The Vice President Community highlighted the following matters when presenting her Report to the Council:

- Recent student 'street clean up' activities.
- An increase in the number of 'homework clubs' from five to nine during the current academic year.
- The recent staging of a successful training event for volunteering student.
- The ongoing 'Mind Your Mood' campaign and associated activities.
- That a review of all workshops and activities would take place in the light of student feedback.
- Successful work carried out in partnership with the Rag organisation during the academic year to date.
- The recent staging of a community five-a-side football tournament.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Community (SUC/P/13/37) was accepted.

830.5 The Vice President Education highlighted the following matters when presenting his Report to the Council:

- General advice / support / representation work carried out by the Vice President.
- Training events for Course Representatives and School Representatives, delivered on a 'School by School' basis.
- National Student Survey (NSS) 2014 strategy.

- Campaign work regarding the proposed reintroduction of personal tutors at Queen's.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Education (SUC/P/13/38) was accepted.

830.6 The Vice President Equality and Diversity highlighted the following matters when presenting her Report to the Council:

- Her gratitude to all of those students and others who had assisted with the successful delivery of International Welcome Week.
- The forthcoming USI Pink Training event – Councillors were asked to contact the Vice President if they wished to volunteer their help at this event.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity (SUC/P/13/39) was accepted.

830.7 The Vice President Welfare highlighted the following matters when presenting his Report to the Council:

- Ongoing activities relating to the 'Are Ye Well' campaign.
- The 'Quit Smoking' workshop event.
- The issue of library fines – it had emerged that fines totalling approximately £30,000 had been applied to 3,100 students and that, following representations by the Vice President, notifications would automatically sent out to students once a book became overdue.
- That, in relation to recent industrial action at Queen's, the University had refused to allocate withheld strike pay to the Hardship Fund.

In response to a question from Cathy Corbett (Postgraduate), the Vice President stated that it normally took about four weeks to process an application to the University's Support Fund and that the Students' Union would be attempting to persuade the University to allocate more resources to this Fund.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Welfare (SUC/P/13/40) was accepted.

831. REPORTS FROM OTHER UNION COMMITTEES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

There were none.

832. REPORTS FROM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES.

There were none.

833. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.

There were none.

834. QUESTIONS.

To the Union President:

834.1 Does the President of the Students' Union have any declarations of gifts or hospitality to make to Council since beginning his term in office?

(Submitted Anonymously)

The Union President stated that he was unsure what level of detail was required in order to appropriately respond to this question, as hospitality could range from the

provision of 'a cup of coffee and a biscuit' upwards. Mr McShane stated that, in his role as Union President, he was invited to occasional lunches and similar, and he emphasised that he wished to be as transparent as possible in relation to such matters. He further stated that any such instances would be recorded in his formal reports to Council.

Mr McShane stated that he wished to draw particular attention to his recent attendance at a networking event for Union Presidents that had taken place at the Oxford Business School, supported by Santander Bank, which had included an invitation to the British Formula 1 Grand Prix afterwards.

To the Vice President Campaigns and Communications:

- 834.2 Could the Vice President Campaigns and Communications please outline why no communication was made to the student body from the Students' Union regarding the joint strike action between Unite, UCU and Unison on 31 October 2013, and confirm that a message of solidarity and support will be made prior to the latest strike action that has recently been announced?

(Submitted Anonymously)

The Vice President noted the significant number of questions that had been submitted for his attention and he urged all Councillors to feel free to call in and see him at any time regarding any aspect of his work on behalf of student members.

Mr Daly stated that, as a result of a proposal by himself, the Executive Management Committee (EMC) had taken an interim decision to back the industrial action of 31 October 2013. He further stated that, at tonight's Statutory Meeting, the Council would have its first opportunity to take a policy position in relation to this issue.

Mr Daly stated that, following the EMC interim decision, the Students' Union had supported and facilitated the strike action, and had issued a statement in support. He further stated that he had personally addressed a public meeting in the Snack Bar on the day of the protest and he pointed out that there was no guarantee that the University's Communications Department would have facilitated the sending of an 'all student email' in the absence of Council policy on the matter.

- 834.3 Could the Vice President Campaigns and Communications please tell this Council when the new Students' Union website will be launched?

Proposer: Fiachra O'Maolcraoibhe (40040424)
 Seconder: Megan Liddy (40008492)

The Vice President reported that it was hoped to launch the new website during the first week of December, subject to successful testing and a full proof read of content.

A supplementary question by Fiachra O'Maolcraoibhe (Open) asked whether, given that the commitment to the provision of a new website was 18 months old, the Vice President felt that he had 'failed' with regard to this project.

Mr Daly stated that the new website would have 550 pages of brand new content and was, by any measure, a large scale project. He further stated that all other options for website provision had to be properly costed and evaluated, and that it was better for student members to get the right decision, rather than a quick decision. It was Mr Daly's view that the correct course of action had been followed and would provide a high quality and lasting legacy.

- 834.4 Your constitutionally defined role includes the following responsibility:

“3.11 [He / She] shall seek to engender a campaigning spirit within the student membership and shall be the first point of contact for advice, support and direction in relation to campaigns.”

There have been two major campaigns pertaining to the Students' Union since last this Council met: the 'Save our DCs' campaign in May, and the solidarity strike with UCU (along with the various Council election campaigns).

Given that, in Council Minutes SUC-M-12-7 of last year, the VP Campaigns and Communications highlighted "the high turnout in the ... NUS-USI referendum" as evidence of his efforts in fulfilling this responsibility.

Considering the lack of wider involvement in the two recent campaigns, their lack of publicity and support from the VP Campaigns and Communications, and the decreased number of electoral candidates and voters in the recent Council elections, how does Mr Daly feel that his actions have 'engendered a campaigning spirit within the student membership'?

Proposer: Derek Crosby (40006101)
 Seconder: Kathryn Waller (40077853)

The Vice President stated that he had dealt with the 'industrial action' in his response to an earlier question. He indicated that, in relation to the Referendum issue in May 2013, he had been approached and asked to meet with a student in order to discuss his possible role in the Referendum campaign. Mr Daly stated that a meeting was arranged, but the student in question did not turn up. The Vice President emphasised that he had never refused to engage in student campaigns.

Mr Daly stated that, during the last two academic years, there had been record levels of voter and candidate participation in Council elections, and that the marketing of Students' Union activities had never been better. He further stated that he had delivered many lecture addresses to encourage such participation and he was delighted to see so many new Councillors in attendance at the meeting.

The Vice President expressed his thanks to the Marketing Team and his fellow student officers and he emphasised that everything that he did in the workplace was backed up by student feedback and research findings. He stated that the fact that 2,600 student members had responded to the annual Students' Union survey indicated that, more than ever, students wanted to have input to Union activities and wanted to shape the strategic direction of the organisation – Mr Daly believed that students were now driving the agenda for Students' Union action.

A supplementary question by Derek Crosby (Postgraduate) asked what the Vice President would be doing to address the low level of support by ordinary students for the industrial action by academic and support staff.

The Vice President stated that, at present, he does not have the authority to send out 'all student emails' and he indicated that maybe this situation could be reviewed.

834.5 Your constitutionally defined role includes the following responsibility:

“3.2: [He / She] shall act as Editor for the principal publications of the Union, including the Students' Union Handbook and the official Students' Union news media.”

This includes the SU Mag, an official publication by and on behalf of the Students' Union. It is currently November, and you have had the whole summer to ensure that this publication was ready to print in a timely manner, and yet we see no publication. Given that, before your editorship, the magazine published several times a year, how does Mr Daly plan to remedy this failure to meet his constitutionally mandated role?

Proposer: Derek Crosby (40006101)

Seconder: Kathryn Waller (40077853)

The Vice President stated that, when he came into his current role, he had been previously the Editor of 'The Gown' and the Sub-Editor of 'The Verdict' and that, during that time, no copies of the Students' Union Magazine had been published.

Mr Daly stated that the model of 'Vice President Campaigns and Communications as Editor of the SU Magazine' was clearly not working, so he had decided to re-launch the publication as a student-led project. He further stated that a new team had been appointed and he had provided a 20-page information handbook for them.

Mr Daly stated that he was aware that a series of meetings had taken place amongst the new team but it was true that the Magazine had not appeared. He accepted that the production of the publication was a difficult job and he emphasised that he had always made himself available to help and advise the team.

Mr Daly questioned whether it should still be constitutionally the role of the Vice President to edit / deliver a Students' Union publication of this nature in the digital age.

A supplementary question from Derek Crosby (Postgraduate) stated that, whilst some of us might like the Constitution to be written in a different way, it was nonetheless the current duty of the Vice President to deliver this work.

The Vice President stated that he would like to see the four copies of the Magazine that had reportedly been produced by Fiona Kidd during her year in office and he again stated that he was happy to discuss a way forward with any interested student(s).

- 834.6 Should the sabbatical officers of 2012-13 apologise to Aisling Gallagher for their disgraceful treatment of her last year?

Proposer: Kathryn Waller (40077853)
Seconder: Derek Crosby (40006101)

The Vice President stated that, whenever delegates are elected by the Students' Union membership to attend conferences in their name, there is a reasonable expectation that all such delegates should abide by the current Union policies that the Council – the governing body of the Union – has democratically passed.

Mr Daly stated that, in relation to one delegate, this course of action was not followed by one delegate, despite clear guidance and instruction, and the delegation leader (last year's Union President) had decided to suspend delegate entitlements for that individual.

Mr Daly stated that, at the next Statutory Meeting of the Council, that body had voted to debar the delegate in question from putting herself forward as a representative for the 2013-14 academic year. He further stated that everything had been done in accordance with the rules and the individual in question had fallen short of what was required from a Union representative.

A supplementary question from Kathryn Waller (AHSS) asserted that what had been decided was unconstitutional and should there not be an apology for that.

The Vice President stated that it was not his duty to apologise for the democratic decisions of the governing body of the Students' Union.

A proposal by Cathy Corbett (Postgraduate) to proceed to the next business was accepted.

The Vice President must provide a written response to all unanswered questions within five working days of the Statutory Meeting.

835. MOTIONS.

- 835.1 This Council notes that the Elmwood Building's Main Lecture Theatre was refurbished over the summer of 2013 and, whilst this development is welcomed, it is evident that there was a greater need for such work in the Elmwood Learning and Teaching Centre (ELTC) Lecture Theatre, with particular regard to the outdated seating.

This Council further notes that the Elmwood Building's Main Lecture Theatre already had individually padded seating prior to refurbishment, whilst the ELTC Lecture Theatre has long wooden benches, which are uncomfortable for students.

This Council understands that decisions regarding the prioritising of works of this nature rest with the University's Estates Department.

This Council therefore instructs the Union President to:

- (i) Contact the Estates Department in order to ascertain the basis upon which the recent works to the Elmwood Building's Main Lecture Theatre were deemed to be of a higher priority than the existing need in the ELTC Lecture Theatre, and
- (ii) Determine when the seating in the ELTC Lecture Theatre is scheduled to be upgraded, and emphasise the need for such work to be carried out at the earliest opportunity.

Proposer: Faye Ni Cheallaigh (40046684)
 Seconder: Mark Millar (40058213)

Faye Ni Cheallaigh (EPS) proposed the motion, outlining the need for this work and indicating that she had emailed the University's Estates Department on the issue but had failed to receive a reply.

Christopher Smyth (EPS), speaking against the motion, emphasised that the motion should really be considered in two parts – ascertaining the data / evidence to indicate when such a refurbishment should be carried out, and asking the Estates Department to schedule the work for this time.

Niall McShane (Union President), speaking on the motion, stated that he was disappointed that Ms Ni Cheallaigh had not received a response from the Estates Department and he vowed to investigate this as soon as possible.

Mark Millar (School Representative), speaking for the motion, stated that many students use both of these venues and the motion was simply asking for good facilities to be made available for all students in the Elmwood Building.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted.

The Proposer waived her right to summarise and, following a show of voting cards, the motion was passed.

- 835.2 This Council notes that, since topping the UK Singles Charts in June 2013, Robin Thicke's song "Blurred Lines" has attracted a lot of media attention that has portrayed it in both positive and negative light.

Council further notes that, by November 2013, approximately 20 students' unions across the UK had banned the playing of this song in all of their venues, cafés, events etc based upon the opinion that it is degrading to women and contains 'connotations about rape culture', and that SUBtv, an interactive television channel for

students' unions and universities in the United Kingdom, has removed it from their playlist for the same reasons after receiving a lot of pressure from Student Officers in various students' unions.

This Council believes that:

- There are no 'Blurred Lines' when it comes to consent.
- A students' union should be a safe place for all students.
- The language used in "Blurred Lines" can be interpreted as rape apologetics and some of the phrases can be triggers for victims of sexual abuse.
- The playing of the song is dangerous and compromises the safety of our students.

This Council proposed that this Students' Union bans the playing of the song "Blurred Lines" throughout the building, including all bar / club venues, Queen's Radio, cafés, Clubs and Societies' events, external events and within commercial outlets.

This Council further proposes that, where an external radio station is being played and "Blurred Lines" is on their playlist, the station is changed immediately.

This Council calls for this motion to take immediate effect.

Proposed: Caoimhe McNeill (40022327)
Seconded: Odhran Devlin (40082975)

Caoimhe McNeill (Vice President Equality and Diversity) proposed the motion, asking for all contributors to the debate to be respectful of all Councillors. She stated that the song in question had been the source of significant controversy, with lyrics that essentially legitimised rape culture and degraded women, whilst casually dealing with very serious and potentially life-changing issues.

Ms McNeill stated that many students at Queen's and elsewhere had experienced sexual and physical abuse on campus and, in many places, unwanted sexual attention was rife. She emphasised that such unwanted attention and abuse is not gender specific, with male students suffering also, and she believed that the Students' Union needed to proactively present itself as a 'safe space'. She stated that, whilst removing this record from Union playlists would not in itself resolve the issues highlighted, it was nonetheless a welcome starting point.

Eoin Deeney (Vice President Education), speaking against the motion, stated that passing a motion like this was not the best way to tackle the serious issues that the previous speaker had raised and he believed that the fundamental premise underpinning the motion was flawed. He believed that banning this song would create a dangerous democratic precedent.

Mr Deeney stated that there was no explicit reference to rape within the lyrics of "Blurred Lines" and it could not be overlooked that the songs had sold millions of units worldwide. He stated that this was all a matter of interpretation and international broadcasting authorities had classified the song as being fit for human consumption. He further stated that there were thousands of demeaning songs and he asked where the line should be drawn whenever the Students' Union adopts the role of a censor. He disputed whether this should be the role of the Council at all.

Mr Deeney suggested that this motion should be defeated and, instead, an alternative motion should be tabled at the next Statutory Meeting to properly address the culture that leads to rape and serious abuse.

In response to an inquiry from Derek Crosby (Postgraduate), speaking on the motion, it was noted that the lyrics of "Blurred Lines" were available at the front of the venue for any Councillor to consult.

Odhran Devlin (Secunder, Open), speaking for the motion, stated that if the Council was in favour of equal rights, it could not allow this song to continue to be played in the Students' Union. He stated that, in a so called 'student friendly' environment, the Union should not permit the playing of any songs whose lyrics run contrary to its aims and objectives.

Cathy Corbett (Postgraduate), speaking against the motion, stated that this was a very emotive issue, given that the Council was essentially being asked to participate in censorship. She asked who would be specifically responsible for changing the radio station in the Union Shop if the offending song was to be broadcast and she wondered whether a shop staff member would be held to account if he / she was too busy to get to the radio in time. She believed that the motion was unenforceable and should be opposed.

Brendan Corr (Open First Year), speaking for the motion, made reference to Mr Deeney's comment that there were thousands of songs that were demeaning in nature. He stated that this comment indicated that there was clearly a culture within society that accepted the casual degrading of half of the population and this was a strong argument in favour of taking a stand and passing the motion.

Karl Vidamour (AHSS), speaking against the motion, stated that he agreed with the views expressed by Mr Deeney and he believed that the Students' Union should not act as a censor. He stated that objectionable songs were released on a weekly basis and just because a particular song happened to be disgusting or without artistic merit, this did not mean that banning it was a progressive measure. He believed that the Council should instead concentrate upon tackling the root causes of rape and physical abuse instead.

Christopher Smyth (EPS), speaking against the motion, stated that by banning "Blurred Lines", there was a chance of inadvertently giving the song even more publicity.

Ciaran Gallagher (Open), speaking on the motion, stated that "Blurred Lines" was already an extremely well publicised song and he wondered aloud whether the work of Wagner should be banned because of his supposedly racist tendencies.

Mannix McAlister (Open First Year), speaking against the motion, expressed the hope that banning such songs were encourage greater responsibility amongst emerging songwriters and performing artists.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted.

In summary, Ms McNeill stated that she had tabled the motion in order to stimulate debate on an important issue and she thanked all speakers for their contribution. She stated that this was not a censorship issue and emphasised that she was an opponent of censorship. She indicated that, instead, this was a motion about students feeling safe in their own Students' Union and she believed that safety considerations should supersede the feelings of those who want to hear a song that can be readily accessed outside the Union.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was passed.

- 835.3 This Council notes that International Welcome Week is an integral part of the orientation that International Students receive when they first come to Queens, and that there has been a strong working relationship established between the International Student Support Office and the Students' Union in recent years as a result of the International Welcome Week programme of activities.

This Council further notes that coming to University in a new country can be particularly difficult and that international students can find the experience quite lonely and isolating.

This Council believes that International Welcome Week is a brilliant opportunity for international students to settle into the Queen's Community before semester starts, and that an important part of any study abroad experience involves integrating with the local culture and community.

This Council acknowledges that the activities that have been organised by the VP Equality and Diversity during the last few years, alongside the International Student Support Office, have received good feedback and provided a lasting impact upon the students who took part in them.

This Council proposes that Officer Review Board takes into consideration the lasting impact that the activities of international welcome week have on students and the importance of the involvement of the VP Equality and Diversity in planning and executing the activities.

This Council further proposes that the Officer Review Board considers making International Welcome Week and the activities planned in partnership with the International Student Support Office an official part of the remit of the VP Equality and Diversity.

Proposed: Caoimhe McNeill (40022327)
Seconded: Jessica Kirk (40021065)

Caoimhe McNeill (Vice President Equality and Diversity), proposing the motion, stated that the Students' Union had, in 2011-12, won the National Union of Students Equality and Diversity Award in recognition of the International Buddy Scheme and, in her view, this established activity should be formally incorporated within the constitutional remit of the Vice President Equality and Diversity.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted.

The Proposer waived her right to summarise and, following a show of voting cards, the motion was passed.

- 835.4 This Council notes that the Officer Review Group has not met in a period of at least two years, as mentioned at the Inaugural Meeting.

This Council therefore proposes that the Officer Review Group be convened with all possible haste by those with the ability to do so.

Proposed: Derek Crosby (40006101)
Seconded: Megan Liddy (40008492)

Derek Crosby (Postgraduate) formally proposed the motion.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted.

The Proposer waived his right to summarise and, following a show of voting cards, the motion was passed.

- 835.5 This Council notes that the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill published by the Government, is currently before Government.

Council further notes that:

- The Bill provides for a much broader definition of regulated activity – including all activities seen to be carried out ‘for election purposes’.
- These new definitions, as well as the proposed lower spending limits, will have a huge impact on campaigning by students’ unions.
- The Electoral Commission has noted that small organisations with a local or regional focus that are not currently affected will face significant regulatory burdens.

This Council believes that the proposals included within this bill would damage the work of this Students’ Union and other Trade Unions in the work that they deliver for their members.

Council further believes that:

- The Bill will serve to stifle campaigning by individuals and organisations, including students’ unions in the year before an election.
- The Bill will not ensure more transparency and fairness in campaigning during election periods.

This Council proposes that the Students’ Union at Queen’s campaigns against the introduction of this proposed Bill and works with NUS-USI and NUS to oppose it in its current format.

Proposer: Niall McShane (Union President)
 Seconder: Fergal McFerran (40043035)

Niall McShane (Union President), proposing the motion, reported that this Bill is currently progressing through Parliament in London. He stated that the national students’ unions were working to prevent this draft legislation becoming enacted and that he had written to local MLAs to express opposition to the proposed Bill. He further outlined the negative impacts of the legislation in its present format.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted.

The Proposer waived his right to summarise and, following a show of voting cards, the motion was passed.

835.6 This Council notes that a joint strike action at Queen’s University was called by the UCU, Unison and Unite trade Unions and took place on Thursday 31 October 2013.

This Council also notes that a further industrial action is scheduled by UCU and Unite at national level and they have indicated their intention to have further strike day on 3 December 2013.

Council is aware of the goodwill and enthusiastic assistance that UCU has given to NUS-USI and this Union in organising the campaign against tuition fees increases and education cuts, and the help that UCU will undoubtedly provide us with in the future, fighting for better education.

This Council believes that Higher Education should be properly funded and that this should include appropriate pay and conditions for academic and support staff.

Council further believes that academic and support staff play an important role in their contribution to Higher Education and the overall student experience.

It is proposed that Council extends solidarity to the strike action on staff pay and working conditions, and hopes that University staff and trade unions can come together to ensure a speedy resolution to the ongoing dispute.

Proposer: Niall McShane (Union President)
 Seconder: Connor Daly (Vice President Campaigns and Communications)

The Union President, proposing the motion, reported that the Executive Management Committee had taken an interim decision to support the industrial action that had taken place on 31 October 2013 and this Statutory Meeting represented the first opportunity for the Council to confirm that it was happy with this decision and to create policy in relation to this matter.

Mr McShane emphasised the importance of working closely with the campus trade unions in order to display solidarity whilst ensuring that any strike actions, and other actions short of a strike, had minimal or no negative impact upon student members.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted.

The Proposer waived his right to summarise and, following a show of voting cards, the motion was passed.

- 835.7 This Council notes the successful campaign against the increase in tuition fees in Northern Ireland. On 11 September 2011, the government decided to not to increase the tuition fee rate in Northern Ireland and that these would only increase in line with inflation. The tuition fee level in Northern Ireland is still on the agenda as the current decision only runs until the end of the Assembly term in 2015-16.

This Council believes that there should be an increase in the level of funding available for Higher Education in Northern Ireland to ensure that all students can benefit from the highest possible quality of education and student experience. Council also believes that the current tuition fee cap should be maintained to ensure that education is available to all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, and that a third-level education should be accessible for all and, in maintaining fees at current levels, students will continue to have access to high quality education

This Council proposes that this Students' Union should begin to work on a campaign to ensure that the government recognises the importance of affordable Higher Education in Northern Ireland. The Students' Union should also work with NUS-USI to campaign against any increase in tuition fees, to keep the current cap and to ensure that there is appropriate funding available for Higher Education in Northern Ireland.

Proposer: Niall McShane (Union President)
 Seconder: Derek Crosby (40006101)

Niall McShane (Union President), proposing the motion, reported that the Students' Union's previous policy in support of proper funding of Higher Education and in opposition to any increase in the tuition fees cap had lapsed, and it was now necessary to pass fresh policy on these issues.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted.

The Proposer waived his right to summarise and, following a show of voting cards, the motion was passed.

835.8 ***SU Council Motion on the Immigration Bill***

This Council notes that, in a bid to reduce net migration from hundreds of thousands to tens of thousands, via the Immigration Bill proposed by the government of the day, international students could potentially pay a tax of £200 to access NHS care. Considering that international students make up 75% of those subject to visa controls, it will be this group that will be affected the most.

This Council notes the detrimental impact that this Bill may have on the health and wellbeing of international students. Council further notes the very real impact that this Bill could have on every single student seeking accommodation in Northern Ireland, and that it could lead to racial profiling, as some landlords may seek to avoid a lengthy bureaucratic process.

This Council believes that the Immigration Bill is discriminatory, divisive, expensive and unworkable. This Council also believes that the UK cannot expect to boast a first-class, globally competitive Higher Education system, when the government persists on shutting the door on international students and raising barriers to affordable healthcare.

This Council proposes that this Students' Union opposes this bill.

This Council instructs the Vice President Campaigns and Communications and the Vice President Equality and Diversity to work together to stand up for international students, by investigating the Immigration Bill and campaigning alongside other students' unions and NUS-USI in opposition to the Bill.

Proposer: Connor Daly (Vice President Campaigns and Communications)
 Seconder: Caoimhe McNeill (Vice President Equality and Diversity)

Connor Daly (Vice President Campaigns and Communications), proposing the motion, outlined the detrimental impact that would be associated with the imposition of NHS charges upon international students at Queen's and elsewhere. He stressed the importance of the University being able to attract talent on a global basis, when recruiting students.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted.

The Proposer waived his right to summarise and, following a show of voting cards, the motion was passed.

835.9 ***SU Council Motion on for a QUBSU Student Support Campaign***

This Council notes that, in our Students' Union 2013 Student Experience Survey, students reported that their awareness of Students' Union Services and activities was quite high, but involvement was less so. Key priorities included: personal finance, quality of education and lack of jobs. The data suggests that more of our student members would potentially participate in our Students' Union's activities and services if they knew more about them.

This Council further notes that QUBSU survey feedback has consistently told us that the 'pound in the student pocket' remains the biggest concern for our members.

This Council believes that the Students' Union ought to campaign to make more students aware of advice and support available, and that such a campaign should also aim to educate on money management.

This Council proposes that a Students' Union Campaign should seek to promote the services available at our Advice Centre and other appropriate forms of student support to our members.

This Council instructs the Vice President Welfare and the Vice President Campaigns and Communications to work together to implement a Campaign to promote the various forms of financial support available. As well as promoting support, this Campaign should educate on money management and living on a budget.

Proposer: Connor Daly (Vice President Campaigns and Communications)
 Seconder: Tiernan McAteer (Vice President Welfare)

The Vice President Campaigns and Communications, proposing the motion, outlined the need to develop an overarching campaign, underpinned by this policy, that would resonate with student members. He outlined the key role that the Students' Union should play in terms of educating students with regard to money management issues.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted.

The Proposer waived his right to summarise and, following a show of voting cards, the motion was passed.

836. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

836.1 Cathy Corbett (Postgraduate) extended a greeting to all first-time Councillors and encouraged them to attend future meetings, submit business for the agenda and participate in debates.

836.2 Ciaran Gallagher (Open) emphasised the importance of Councillors consulting with their constituencies prior to attending Council and passing important items of business.

837. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Mr Carruthers announced that the next Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council would take place at 6.00 p.m. on Thursday 5 December 2013 in The Space, Level 1, Students' Union.

DOMINIC DOHERTY (Clerk, Students' Union Council)