

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION

MINUTES

Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council
held on 20 March 2014 in The Space, Level 1, Students' Union

Present:

Aaron Blair (School Representative – Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering)
Aaron McGuinness (School Representative – Nursing and Midwifery)
Andrew Carruthers (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, AHSS, in the Chair)
Caoimhe McNeill (Executive Management Committee, EMC)
Cathy Corbett (Postgraduate, PG)
Chantelle Frampton (School Representative – English)
Charlotte Troy (School Representative – History and Anthropology)
Christopher Smyth (Engineering and Physical Sciences, EPS)
Ciaran Gallagher (Open)
Clare Rea (Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, MHLS)
Cliona McCarney (AHSS)
Connor Malone (PG)
Conrad Johnston (School Representative – Chemistry and Chemical Engineering)
Derek Crosby (PG)
Fiachra O'Maolcraoibhe (Open)
Fiona Edgar (School Representative – Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work)
Helen Monaghan (Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, MHLS)
James Barnes (PG / School Representative – Politics, International Studies and Philosophy)
Jessica Black (MHLS / School Representative – Biological Sciences)
Julia Whitehouse (AHSS)
Kathryn Waller (AHSS)
Katie Matthews (AHSS)
Lauren Brown (AHSS)
Mannix McAlister (Open First Year)
Niall Bole (EPS)
Niall McShane (EMC)
Niall Robb (AHSS)
Niamh Marley (AHSS)
Odhran Devlin (Open)
Paul Loughran (EPS)
Sana Ashraf (School Representative – Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences)
Sarah Wright (Open)
Shannon Downey (Open First Year)
Sky Aughey (Open)
Thomas Gilmour (EPS)
Tiernan McAteer (EMC)

In Attendance:

Ben Christman
Dominic Doherty (Clerk of Council)
Ivanka Antova
Niamh Ferguson (Social Media Support Officer)
Kristina Mulholland (Marketing Assistant)
Kylie Noble (The Gown)

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

868. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from the following Councillors:

Barbra Mutamba (Postgraduate, PG)
Bethany Ferris (School Representative – Institute of Theology)
Brendan Corr (Open First Year)
Connor Daly (Executive Management Committee, EMC)
David Sands (School Representative – Psychology)
Eoin Deeney (EMC)
Eoin Donnelly (School Representative – Law)

Fergal McFerran (Open)
Jack Donnelly (Open First Year)
Julia Andrade Rocha (PG)
Martin Lilly (EMC)
Matthew Lowe (Engineering and Physical Sciences, EPS)
Samantha Rogers (AHSS)
Sammy Wade (AHSS)
Sarah-Louise Baird (EMC)
Tara Pouryahya (Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, MHLS)

869. MINUTES OF THE STATUTORY MEETING OF 5 DECEMBER 2013

Minute 866.1

It was noted that Katie Matthews (AHSS) had asked to be added to the Consultative Group to consider the possible future development of the Students' Union premises.

Incorporating the above amendment, it was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of 10 February 2014 (SUC/M/14/1) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

870. BUSINESS ARISING

There was none.

871. COMMUNICATIONS

The Council noted the following communications:

871.1 That there would be a 'Marie Curie Shop Challenge' fundraising activity on 3 April 2014, and that a 'pre challenge' event would take place in the Students' Union's Enterprise Unit on 24 March 2014.

871.2 The Union President offered clarification with regard to the two motions on the agenda relating to industrial action by staff, stating that these motions had different emphases, thereby offering the Council a range of policy options.

872. BYE-ELECTIONS

872.1 Kathryn Waller (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) was elected to serve on the Students' Union Management Board, following the resignation of Niall Bole.

873. ELECTIONS

There were none.

874. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS / RULES AMENDMENTS

874.1 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 Underwater Hockey Club

Proposer: Elisabeth Gall (40091601)
Secunder: Paul Rice (40128923)

Queen's University Belfast Management Society

Proposer: Niamh Scullion (40111964)
Secunder: Rachael Moore (40107099)

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 Underwater Hockey Club was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group, involving the use of an entertaining video presentation.

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

874.2 Proposed Amendment of the current Constitutional remit of the Vice President Equality and Diversity (Rule 4, Section 8)

This item was not considered as half of the elected membership of the Council was not present.

875. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following Reports were considered by the Council:

Report of the Union President	SUC/P/14/8
Report of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications	SUC/P/14/9
Report of the Vice President Clubs and Societies	SUC/P/14/10
Report of the Vice President Community	SUC/P/14/11
Report of the Vice President Education	SUC/P/14/12
Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity	SUC/P/14/13
Report of the Vice President Welfare	SUC/P/14/14

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

- Mr McShane offered his congratulations to those who had been successful at the recent Student Officer Elections.
- The high response from Queen's students in relation to the NUS-USI 'Pound in Your Pocket' survey.
- His participation in the 'Run 4 Rag' initiative, reporting that there would be a fundraising coffee morning event on 28 March 2014.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Union President (SUC/P/14/8) was accepted.

875.2 In the absence of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications, consideration of paper SUC/P/14/9 was deferred.

875.3 In the absence of the Vice President Clubs and Societies, consideration of paper SUC/P/14/10 was deferred.

875.4 The Report of the Vice President Community (paper SUC/P/14/11) was accepted in the absence of Ms Baird.

875.5 In the absence of the Vice President Education, consideration of paper SUC/P/14/12 was deferred.

875.6 The Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity (SUC/P/14/13) was accepted.

875.7 The Vice President Welfare highlighted the following matter when presenting his Report to the Council:

- The Vice President thanked everyone who had contributed to the successful Rag Apprentice event.

In response to a question from Sarah Wright (Open), Mr McAteer stated that he had met with Orla Russell (Queen's Finance Department) regarding the motion passed at the last Statutory Meeting (minute 865.1 refers).

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Welfare (SUC/P/14/14) was accepted.

876. REPORTS FROM OTHER UNION COMMITTEES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

There were none.

877. REPORTS FROM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES.

There were none.

878. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.

There were none.

879. QUESTIONS.

To the *Union President*.

879.1 How much did the 'Super Seven' advertising campaign cost to produce and roll out?

Proposer: Kathryn Waller (40077853)
Seconder: Niall Robb (40084325)

The Union President confirmed that the total cost of this marketing campaign had been £1,826.50 plus VAT.

In a supplementary question, Ms Waller asked whether, in light of the number of candidates who had stood for the officer elections, it was the view of Mr McShane that this had represented worthwhile expenditure. The Union President pointed out that money would have been spent to promote the elections regardless of whether or not this particular approach had been adopted and he added that the total marketing expenditure for the 2014 student officer elections had been comparable with previous years. Mr McShane stated that, despite the fact that some people had vocally expressed their dislike of the 'Super 7' initiative, the voting turnout had been similar to that of 2012 and 2013, despite the low number of candidates.

879.2 What progress has been made on the motion backed by Council in December to take action against Facebook pages with QUB in the title, posing as official QUB pages? This is asked with mention to the use of the page QUB Jobs, named in the original motion, publically promoting independent election candidates and the page 'QUB Freshers' promoting the ticket 'Breaking Thru' in this month's elections. To those not paying close attention, it could appear that these candidates were backed by QUB. What is being done to put the motion into practice as Council mandated?

Proposer: Niall Robb (40084325)
Seconder: Kathryn Waller (40077853)

The Union President stated that he had contacted the University's Information Services Department to investigate whether current Queen's policies could address this matter. He reported that the University had a Social Media Policy and also

monitored all sites and pages using the University's name, formally requesting removal of such sites and pages where the bringing of disrepute to the institution could be demonstrated. In relation to the pages cited within the question, Mr McShane stated that he had asked that these be removed and it was his understanding that the University would be contacting Facebook and other providers regarding this request.

There was no supplementary question.

To the Vice President Clubs and Societies:

- 879.3 The Refreshers' Fair was nothing short of a disaster. Many in attendance remarked to me that there were more people manning stalls than visited to sign up to clubs and societies. Why was this and how can this be remedied next time?

Proposer: Niall Robb (40084325)
 Seconder: Kathryn Waller (40077853)

The Vice President Clubs and Societies was not present at this Statutory Meeting and was therefore constitutionally obliged to provide a written response to this question within five days.

- 879.4 As a condition of using the online sign-up at Freshers' and Refreshers' Fairs, the heads of Clubs and Societies were told at Clubs and Societies Training that we would get our members details within a week. After the Freshers' Fair, it actually took 13 days to get emailed our list. Although Refreshers' was poorly attended, many Clubs still signed up a few members – however, a month on, many Clubs and Societies that I have spoken to are yet to have lists of their members sent to them. Why has there been such a delay each time and when will Clubs get the information they need?

Proposer: Niall Robb (40084325)
 Seconder: Kathryn Waller (40077853)

The Vice President Clubs and Societies was not present at this Statutory Meeting and was therefore constitutionally obliged to provide a written response to this question within five days.

To the Vice President Education:

- 879.5 It has been the experience of a number of Course Representatives in some Schools that there has been little communication between the Union and themselves since the initial training session in the winter semester. While support has been forthcoming from School Representatives and liaison staff within the respective Schools, some course representatives would like to see the Union taking a more proactive role in supporting them in their roles. What is the VP Education doing to ensure that Course Representatives are receiving any support they need, along with any refresher training sessions so as they can provide the best representation?

Proposer: James Barnes (40038762)
 Seconder: Connor Malone (40044484)

The Vice President Education was not present at this Statutory Meeting and was therefore constitutionally obliged to provide a written response to this question within five days.

880. MOTIONS.

- 880.1 **Students' Union Referendum**

Council proposes that a Referendum be staged on Thursday 15 May 2014, in order to ratify those amendments to the Students' Union Constitution and its Rules that have been approved by the Council during its 2013-14 session.

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

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted. Following a show of voting cards, the motion was clearly passed.

880.2 **Students' Union Election Regulations**

This Council notes that, during the election period of 2014, there was an unusually low number of candidates who put themselves forward for the 'Super 7' election campaign. The reasons for this are manifold; however, this Council believes the perceived dominance of certain groupings that have historically stood together is a major factor.

This Council is in favour of a fairer election process and as a result deemed fit to institute a number of proposals that will hopefully limit the power of such groupings:

- 1- All candidates will be expected to inform the Union if they intend to run as a ticket or grouping. A grouping is deemed to be in existence if any of the following criteria are met
 - Candidates endorse any other candidate on election material.
 - Candidates share a coordinator who organises canvassing, advertising or any other election related activity.
 - Candidates use materials that share common themes or branding.
 - Candidates engage in activities non-union sanctioned that could reasonably be considered to be a joint effort.

All decisions regarding the above are made at the discretion of the election supervisor. Failure to state that a candidate will be running in a ticket will result in funding being withdrawn and their candidacy rescinded. Appeals can be heard via an Election Court.

If running in a ticket, due to the shared nature of spending and so called 'pooling' of resources, tickets will receive less funding than candidates who run independently. Calculate the amount each candidate would receive individually as a total then reduce the amount using the following scale

25% if two candidates run
 33% if three candidates run
 50% if four or more candidates run

If a member is deemed to be a member of a ticket but has not declared as such, an Election Court will determine if the ticket was implicit in the scheme. If not, the ticket is not affected – however, if so, the entire ticket will be penalised by withdrawal of funding and their candidacy rescinded.

Neither candidates nor tickets may ever attempt to replicate the identity of popular events, organisations, TV shows, films or anything that may construed as anything except an election campaign.

Use of social media is strictly limited to alteration of one personal page and one 'Like' page. The changing of existing Facebook pages names in order to promote a candidacy is strictly prohibited and any breaches of this policy must be investigated. An Election Court will decide who was responsible for the breach and has the power to remove candidacy or to remove any perceived benefit from the breach, up to and including removing votes. Note that the person responsible for the breach may not be the benefactor.

After the election, candidates may continue to use their 'Like' page but may not use it in subsequent elections.

No ticket or individual may solicit help from anyone who is not a student at Queen's. Neither may they pay any individual for any services rendered except for printing and associated costs.

Proposer: Chris Smyth (40060508)
 Secorder: Sky Aughey (40079675)

Chris Smyth (EPS), proposing the motion, indicated that he wished for the motion to be considered in 'parts' and that its purpose was to get a sense of the will of Council prior to bringing forward Constitutional Amendments to update the current election regulations. Mr Smyth believed that the presence of well resourced 'tickets' (or 'slates') removed the competitive element that was necessary for meaningful elections and he felt that the measures proposed went some way to redressing this unsatisfactory situation. It was agreed that the motion would be voted on in four parts, namely:

Part One – dealing with the definition of a 'ticket' and the proposed imposition of group restrictions and penalties.

Part Two – dealing with the misappropriation of old ideas from popular culture and media.

Part Three – dealing with the misuse of social media and, in particular, the misappropriation of Facebook pages, websites and similar that were originally created for a different purpose.

Part Four – dealing with the prohibition of 'non students' from assisting candidates.

Derek Crosby (Postgraduate), opposing the motion, stated that he appreciated the sentiment behind the proposals but questioned Mr Smyth's approach to the issue. He believed that constitutional reform was required and that the presence of tickets constrained democracy. Mr Crosby stated that attempting to restrict the themes that underpinned election campaigns was too restrictive and impossible to police, and he did not believe that it was fair to, for example, prevent a candidate's brother or sister from handing out leaflets on election day.

Cathy Corbett (Postgraduate), speaking in favour, stated that the motion should be passed in its entirety and a working group formed to identify the necessary Constitutional Amendments to enable the proposed actions.

Sarah Wright (Open), speaking against the motion, stated that it was difficult to be original and imaginative in terms of campaign designs and themes, but she agreed that the ability of candidates to spend additional group funds on election materials reduced the likelihood of a level playing field for everyone.

Niall McShane (Union President), speaking on the motion, indicated that election candidates at Dublin City University Students' Union were permitted to spend an additional 300 Euros apiece on election materials.

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

Chris Smyth, summarising, urged Councillors to support all parts of the motion to inform the production of effective Constitutional Amendments.

Following a show of voting cards, Part One was defeated, Part Two was defeated, Part Three was approved and Part Four was defeated.

- 880.3 This Council instructs the Union President to research and inform us how much the Bill Clinton visit cost the University from student-paid funds - a visit that students were unable to avail of. The University has cut numerous student awards and scholarships due to cost-cutting measures blamed on the current economic crisis, and this is a worrying precedent that the University is becoming a corporation, worried more about its public image than their actual students.

Proposer: Paul Loughran (40044945)
 Seconder: Cliona McCarney (40079596)

Paul Loughran (EPS), proposing the motion, stated that the motion was self-explanatory and represented a worrying precedent.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted. Following a show of voting cards, the motion was clearly passed.

- 880.4 Council notes that Westminster's proposals to sell off the student loan book to a private company are exceptionally worrying.

Council notes that the government's plans to privatise the student loan book are short term in their thinking and will negatively affect not only current students but also many graduates. The government has already begun the process having sold off mortgage style loans taken out pre-1998 in November.

Council notes that there is much cause for concern as if the loan book is sold to make it attractive to a private buyer, sweeteners will be offered. The most drastic of which the Guardian revealed through acquiring a confidential report being lifting the cap on interest between loans taken out between 1998 and 2012.

Council notes that this will likely result in students paying back much more, for much longer – potentially paying back student debt until the end of their lives.

Council opposes the selloff of our student loans and mandates the student officers for the academic year 2014-15 to play an active part in opposing the selloff. Council mandates that the team will look into the legality of the selloff regards if it is under the full control of Westminster, or if Stormont has power to resist. Council mandates student officers to lobby the relevant elected representatives and to carry out at least one day of activism a term to raise awareness within the student body, taking the form of protest and petition signing.

Proposer: Kathryn Waller (40077853)
 Seconder: Niall Robb (40084325)

Kathryn Waller (AHSS), proposing the motion, stated that this was a motion to raise awareness of this important issue and to instruct the Students' Union to oppose the proposed sell-off.

Cathy Corbett (Postgraduate), speaking on the motion, wondered what kind of 'sweeteners' would be offered in order to enable the smooth progress of this deal. She also asked what stage this process was currently at in Westminster.

Sarah Wright (Open), speaking in favour of the motion, stated that this was an extremely important matter that would set a dangerous precedent. Ms Wright noted that the current terms and conditions governing student loan arrangements might be amended to the detriment of students and graduates following a change in ownership of the operation.

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

Kathryn Waller, summarising, stated that this matter was still at the proposal stage so could be realistically opposed.

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

880.5 **Students' Union support for QUB RAG**

Council notes that QUB RAG (Raise & Give) is the official, student-led charitable fundraising body of Queen's University Students' Union.

Council also notes that RAG is constitutionally part of the Students' Union but not a Club or Society. Further, Council notes that only in Constitutional Rule 4 [Pages 47 & 48] is the relationship between RAG and the Students' Union formalised by a physical relationship with the Vice-President Community.

Council recognises that in recent years the RAG Committee have worked extensively to develop RAG's capacity to deliver a comprehensive calendar of diverse fundraising and profile-raising activities.

Council believes that it is in the best interests of the Students' Union to secure RAG's strategic development and that this could be done by ensuring that it provides adequate staff support.

Council notes that in the previous academic year QUB RAG was responsible for overseeing fundraising activities that resulted in a total of over £109,000. Council also notes that the local charities championed by QUB RAG each year are democratically elected by the student body.

Council therefore mandates the current Vice-President Community to convene a meeting with the RAG Committee and the Deputy Director of the Students' Union before the end of this academic year to link RAG to a member of Union staff or department to ensure that the activities of RAG are safeguarded in the long term and to determine what that staff support should look like – the outcome of which should be reported to the Inaugural Meeting of the Students' Union Council during its 2014/15 sitting.

Proposer: Fergal McFerran (40043035)
 Seconder: Sarah-Louise Board (Vice President Community)

This motion was deferred, as neither the Proposer nor the Seconder was present.

880.6 Council notes that the tone and language in stories published by the Belfast Telegraph such as 'Topless Feminist at Stormont' (10 March 2014) and 'Sleaze for fees' (12 March 2014) has been sensationalist, sexist and crass. Council should be aware that these views have been expressed to members of council in person and on social media.

Council notes that the free Belfast Telegraph in the SU Shop makes it one of the most widely read publications on campus and that the SU should use this position to demand better reporting from the Belfast Telegraph.

Council believes that the recent stories in the Belfast Telegraph, such as those outlined above, have been disappointing and as such does not agree with the language or tone of these articles.

Council proposes that an open letter is sent by the Executive Management Committee as soon as possible but no later than 27 March 2014, to the Belfast Telegraph expressing the SU's disappointment in their journalism and a demand for less sexist reporting. The Council proposes that this letter is made public for the

student body and wider community to see the Students Union standing against sexism being pedalled by this newspaper, distributed for free on campus.

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)
 Seconder: Niall Robb (40084325)

Sarah Wright (Open), proposing the motion, condemned the salacious reporting style of the Belfast Telegraph and called upon the Students' Union to express its disapproval by writing to the Editor of the newspaper.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted. Following a show of voting cards, the motion was clearly passed.

- 880.7 A proposal from Derek Crosby (Postgraduate), seconded by Ciaran Gallagher (Open), to suspend standing orders to consider the Rag motion (see 880.5 above) was agreed.

The motion in question was formally moved by Mr Crosby, a proposal to proceed to the vote was accepted and, following a show of voting cards, the motion was clearly passed.

Standing orders were reinstated.

- 880.8 This Council condemns the recent actions of the University in regards to the privatisation of the speech of former US President Bill Clinton at the opening of a new department at Queen's University named in his honour. Ahead of his visit, President Clinton stressed the economic importance of developing a new generation of leaders in Northern Ireland and providing young people with innovative skills to equip them for the challenges ahead.

This Council believes that this message was lost upon the University who decided these words should not be heard by all, but by the highest bidder who could afford the tens of thousands of pounds charged for a table at the speech. Council notes the fact that only one University student was allowed to attend this opening despite the Institute being advertised for the betterment of Queen's students.

Proposer: Cliona McCarney (40079596)
 Seconder: Paul Loughran (40044945)

Cliona McCarney (AHSS), proposing the motion, condemned the fact that whilst the creation of this Institute was ostensibly for the benefit of students, only one student had actually been invited to the opening event. She stated that it had been reported that tables for the event had been sold for fees up to £10,000, and that such a blatantly corporate approach was frankly an embarrassment to Queen's. Ms McCarney stated that it was vitally important for the Council to send a clear message to the University that something like this should never be permitted to happen again.

It was proposed to proceed to the vote – this was accepted. Following a show of voting cards, the motion was clearly passed.

- 880.9 This Council notes that further to strike action at Queen's University by the UCU in recent months, a marking boycott is set to take place with effect from 28 April 2014, if the dispute over pay is not resolved in the meantime.

Council believes that Higher Education should be properly funded and 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.

Council extends solidarity to the marking boycott action and hopes that University staff and trade unions can come together to ensure a speedy resolution to the ongoing dispute.

Proposer: Niall McShane (15216071)
 Seconder: Connor Daly (13075071)

Niall McShane (Union President), proposing the motion, stated that this proposal would lend formal Students' Union support to the marking boycott from 28 April 2014. He stated that, whilst Council had previously approved a more general motion of support for industrial action, this new motion was more specific. Mr McShane noted that, of course, it was also necessary for the Union to remain in regular contact with the University and the trade unions in order to minimise any negative impacts upon the student membership arising from the forthcoming industrial action.

Cathy Corbett (Postgraduate), speaking on the motion, asked what the average salary of a lecturer was and how much higher this was than the average working wage.

Ivanka Antova (Student Member), speaking in favour of the motion, stated that she was a student and a member of the UCU campus trade union. She stated that University staff members were being used as pawns and that lecturers did not wish to see a marking boycott adversely impacting upon students. She believed that there was much tension within the Schools and that this boycott was being undertaken as a last resort following a failure from employers to seriously engage with the negotiation process. Ms Antova added that lecturers would be losing significant income as a result of this action and she cited the injustice of the University attempting to proactively divide students and staff on this matter. She urged Council to put the immediate short term inconvenience to students into context and to consider the 'big picture'.

Odhran Devlin (Open), opposing the motion, stated that students should not be used as leverage in this dispute.

Niall McShane, on a point of information, stated that an agreed statement would be issued by NUS-USI to UCEA (the employers' representative body).

Ben Christman (Student Member), supporting the motion, stated that he was supporting this motion in order to prevent the marking boycott from going ahead. He stated that the Higher Education pay dispute had been ongoing for a significant period of time and that the University's threats to deduct pay were illegal and were tantamount to bullying. Mr Christman pointed out that Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights protected the right to freedom of association, including membership of trade unions, and he emphasised that any threat to withhold pay should be publicly condemned as an affront to the primacy of law. He stated that universities should be bastions of democracy and that the legalities surrounding this dispute transcended the other considerations. Mr Christman stated that he wished to appeal to students' self-interest and he believed that supporting the industrial action made sense from a legal and ethical viewpoint. He said that a Council decision in favour of the motion could help to bring the employers back to the negotiating table and thus prevent the boycott from escalating.

Aaron McGuinness (School Representative), opposing the motion, stated that NHS workers had received no incremental pay award at all and he simply disagreed with the content of the motion.

Niall Robb (AHSS), speaking in favour, stated that students could not affect the NHS staff's current pay conditions but they could make an impact in relation to this situation by showing solidarity with staff colleagues on campus.

Tiernan McAteer (Vice President Welfare), opposing the motion, believed that most students would not want this industrial action to take place, and it was his view that students were being used as pawns.

Chris Smyth (EPS), speaking on the motion, noted that the UCU trade union would, on a national basis, be taking legal action against any institution that withheld pay from staff members participating in the dispute.

Fiachra O'Maolcraoibhe (Open), supporting the motion, stated that students were campus educational partners at Queen's and should stand in solidarity to support staff colleagues and to protect the quality of the academic student experience.

Caoimhe McNeill (Vice President Equality and Diversity), opposing the motion, stated that whilst she was 100% behind the calls for a fair pay settlement, the proposed marking boycott represented a step too far. She believed that the impact of this action would be wholly upon students, rather than management.

Shannon Downey (Open First Year), speaking on the motion, called for a clarification on the likely timeframe of the proposed industrial action.

Sarah Wright (Open), speaking in favour of the motion, called for Council to support staff colleagues and she questioned where the additional tuition fees income had been spent, as there had been no recent significant improvement in terms of pay. She stated that universities should pay their staff properly and she believed that the bullying tactics of Queen's management were 'disgusting'.

Kathryn Waller (AHSS), speaking on the motion, noted that the Vice-Chancellor had been awarded a healthy pay increase for 2014.

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

Niall McShane, summarising, thanked everyone for their contributions to the debate and stated that passing this motion would mean that the Students' Union fully supported the right of University staff to carry out the proposed industrial action from 28 April 2014.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was passed (For 17, Against 14 and Abstentions 1).

- 880.10 This Council notes that further to strike action at Queen's University by the UCU in recent months, a marking boycott is set to take place with effect from 28 April 2014, if the dispute over pay is not resolved in the meantime.

Council believes that Higher Education should be properly funded and 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.

Council calls on UCU to call off the marking boycott action and hopes that University staff and trade unions can come together to ensure a speedy resolution to the ongoing dispute.

Proposer: Niall McShane (15216071)
 Seconder: Connor Daly (13075071)

This motion was withdrawn.

881. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

881.1 An attempt by Cathy Corbett (Postgraduate) to suspend standing orders to propose the creation of a working group to consider electoral reform was defeated.

881.2 Council noted that Aisling Gallagher (Student Member) would be standing for the 'bloc of 15' at the forthcoming National Union of Students (NUS) Conference.

881.3 Council noted that the NUS-USI 'Homes Fit for Study' research exercise was being launched on 20 March 2014.

882. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Union Speaker announced that the next Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council was scheduled to take place at 6.00 p.m. on Monday 28 April 2014 in The Space, Level 1, Students' Union.

DOMINIC DOHERTY (Clerk, Students' Union Council)