

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION

MINUTES

Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council
held on 27 November 2012 in The Space, Level 1, Students' Union

Present:

Aaron Cooney (Open)
 Aaron McGuinness (School Rep, Nursing and Midwifery)
 Aidan Bannon (Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, MHLS)
 Aisling Gallagher (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, AHSSAHSS)
 Alexander Arrell (AHSS)
 Alexander Redpath (Postgraduate, PG)
 Amy Keegan (AHSS)
 Aoibhin McNeill (Engineering and Physical Sciences, EPS)
 Aoife Boyle (PG)
 Bobby Kane (Open)
 Brendan Reid (School Rep, Maths and Physics)
 Caoimhe McNeill (AHSS)
 Catherine Madden (School Rep, Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work)
 Cathy Corbett (EPS)
 Chloe Minish (PG)
 Christopher Smyth (EPS)
 Ciaran McKinley (PG)
 Clare Rea (MHLS)
 Connor Daly (EMC)
 Cormac Kerr (AHSS)
 Daniel Hogan (EPS)
 Derek Crosby (PG)
 Eoin McGarrity (AHSS)
 Eoin McMullan (Open)
 Fergal McFerran (Open First Year)
 Fiachra O'Maolcraoibhe (Open)
 Frank Taggart (School Rep, Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science)
 Gareth Calvert (Open First Year)
 Gary Spedding (MHLS)
 Gerard McGuigan (AHSS)
 James Surgenor (School Rep, Creative Arts)
 Jamie Pow (AHSS)
 Jason O'Neill (EMC)
 Jessica Kirk (EMC)
 Joanne O'Neill (EMC)
 Josh Duddy (EPS)
 Joshua Eves (MHLS)
 Kerrie McConnell (MHLS)
 Kevin Cassidy (MHLS)
 Khor Ching Vei [Luke] (EPS)
 Kirsten McConnell (AHSS)
 Laura Graham (MHLS)
 Leo Hacking (MHLS)
 Martin Lilly (Open)
 Matthew Hunt (School Rep, Law)
 Matthew O'Connor (AHSS)
 Meghann Ward (School Rep, Psychology)
 Neale Watson (School Rep, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering)
 Niall Bole (EPS)
 Niall McShane (EMC)
 Nicole McShane (School Rep, Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology)
 Nuala McAdams (EMC)
 Orry Robinson (EPS)
 Paul Fletcher (MHLS)
 Paul Walsh (EPS)
 Peter Agnew (EPS)
 Peter Canavan (AHSS)
 Rebecca Hall (School Rep, History and Anthropology)
 Ruairdhri McIlroy (AHSS)
 Sarah Lynn (School Rep, Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences)
 Sarah-Louise Baird (AHSS)
 Sky Aughey (Open First Year)
 Tara White (EPS)
 Tiernan McAteer (AHSS)

Tony Houston (AHSS)
Tyler McNally (AHSS)

In Attendance:

Dominic Doherty (Clerk of Council)
Damien Corridan (Deputy Clerk of Council)
Madeline Edgeworth (QUB Global Brigades Society)
Tuan Minh Huynh (QUB Vietnamese Society)
Paul Mayo (QUB Marine Biology Society)
Journalists from 'The Gown' publication
Timothy Bruce (Student)

718. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from the following Councillors:

Aidan Hughes (EMC)
Anthony McKee (Open First Year)
Eoin Deeney (PG)
Jason Sime (AHSS)
Jennifer Lau (AHSS)
Lauren Brown (Open)
Meghan Rafferty (Open)

719. MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF 5 NOVEMBER 2012

It was agreed that the minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of Monday 5 November 2012 (SUC/M/12/6) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

720. BUSINESS ARISING

720.1 There was none.

721. COMMUNICATIONS

721.1 Following a show of voting cards, Council approved the appointment of Keelin McGrogan as Returning Officer for the Student Officer Elections in March 2013.

721.2 Council noted that the Students' Union Advice Centre will host a briefing event for members of Council on Tuesday 4 December 2012 in the Anne Maguire Room, outlining the roles, responsibilities and work of the Students' Union Advice Centre.

721.3 The Union Speaker informed Council of a speaking event scheduled by the Queen's Literific and Scientific Society for Friday 30 November 2012 at which Murdo Fraser (Member of the Scottish Parliament), former Deputy Leader of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, shall be guest speaker.

721.4 Council received a brief presentation from Brian Slevin, Complaints and Appeals Administrator in the Department of Academic and Student Affairs, regarding changes to the University's academic appeals and extenuating circumstances regulations. Council noted that an information webpage, outlining these changes will be available on the Queen's Student Gateway website by 1 December 2012.

722. BYE-ELECTIONS

There were none.

723. ELECTIONS

The Chair invited nominations to the following positions:

723.1 Campaigns and Communications Committee (2 vacancies)

Rebecca Hall and Nicole McShane were duly proposed and declared elected.

723.1 Students' Union Environmental Committee (1 vacancy)

Lisa Devine and Aoibhin McNeill were duly proposed.

The candidate whose name is underlined was elected.

724. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS / RULES AMENDMENTS

724.1 Proposed Recognition of New Clubs and Societies

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

Queen's University Belfast Linfield Supporters Club
Queen's University Belfast Desi Dance Society
Queen's University Belfast Film Society
Queen's University Belfast Friends of the Earth Society
Queen's University Belfast Future Voices
Queen's University Belfast Krishna Consciousness Society
Queen's University Belfast Marine Biology Society
Queen's University Belfast Networking and Employment Society
Queen's University Belfast Vietnamese Society
Queen's University Belfast Global Brigades Society
Queen's University Belfast Academic Medicine Society

Proposer: Niall McShane (Vice President Clubs and Societies)

Secunder: Jason O'Neill (Union President)

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 Linfield Supporters Club was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

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

The proposal to recognise Queen's University Belfast Film Society was withdrawn, noting that a similar society had been approved at the Annual Business Meeting of Council on 9 May 2012.

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

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

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

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

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Networking and Employment Society was deferred to the next Statutory Meeting of Council no representative of the society was present to provide clarifications to Council.

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

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

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

725. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Report of the Union President (**SUC/P/12/33**)

Report of the Vice President Welfare (**SUC/P/12/34**)

Report of the Vice President Education (**SUC/P/12/35**)

Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity (**SUC/P/12/36**)

Report of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications (**SUC/P/12/37**)

Report of the Vice President Community (**SUC/P/12/38**)

Report of the Vice President Clubs and Societies (**SUC/P/12/39**)

725.1 Report of the Union President (SUC/P/12/33)

The Union President highlighted the following matters:

- The recent development and approval of the new Students' Union Strategic Plan 2012-15.
- The Students' Union score of 82% in question twenty three in the National Student Survey, reflecting high levels of satisfaction with the Students' Union.
- Recent redevelopment works in the Union Building, including the redevelopment of the Speakeasy Bar.

- Developments regarding increased email inbox capacity for students, noting also that this the majority of student inboxes have been migrated to a new system.
- Successful election of Course Representatives and School Representatives across the University.

In response a query from the floor, the Union President informed Council that he would provide an update to Council regarding the running costs associated with the operation of external lighting in the Union.

In response to queries from Chloe Minish (PG) and Gary Spedding (MHLS) regarding the non-attendance of the Students' Union at the NUS DEMO 2012 event, the Union President commented that, when gauging interest levels in attendance with attendance levels at the previous NUS national demonstration, which had focused on the issues of tuition fees increases, a cost-benefit case could not be made for funding transportation to London for the event. The Union President noted that the Students' Union supported NUS DEMO 2012 and had promoted the event, and the aims of the event to members.

Paper SUC/P/11/33 approved.

725.2 Report of the Vice President Welfare (SUC/P/12/34)

The Vice President highlighted the following matters:

- An increased volume of student casework added to the Vice President Welfare workload due to a staffing vacancy in the Students' Union Advice Centre.
- Developments regarding promoting mental health issues to students.
- On-going work in preparing the Students' Union NUS Green Impact submission and participation in the University's Green Week.
- Preparation work for future welfare workshops.

Matthew O'Connor (AHSS) queried if there is any work being done to develop an anti-rape and safety campaign, in light of reports of sexually motivated attacks in the South Belfast area. The Vice President responded, stating that she is willing to discuss the delivery of such a campaign with Councilors and the Education and Welfare Committee of Council.

In response to a query from Cathy Corbett (EPS) regarding the level of communication between NUS-USI and the Students' Union on the matter of an anti-rape campaign, the Vice President stated that it was her intention to liaise with NUS-USI once planning for any such campaign is underway.

Paper SUC/P/11/34 approved.

725.3 Report of the Vice President Education (SUC/P/12/35)

The Vice President highlighted the following matters:

- The successful election of all School Representatives
- The development and enhancement of Course Representatives election training.
- The provision of public speaking training to Course and School Representatives.

- Proposals by the University to modify the University's graduation schedule.

The Vice President expressed her gratitude to the Complaints and Appeals Administrator in the Department of Academic and Student Affairs providing an update to Council on changes to the University's appeals and extenuating circumstances regulations.

Paper SUC/P/11/35 approved.

725.4 Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity (SUC/P/12/36)

The Vice President highlighted the following matters:

- Successful delivery of an enhanced international student Buddy Scheme.
- A recent excursion to Stormont for international students.

Paper SUC/P/11/36 approved.

725.5 Report of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications (SUC/P/12/37)

The Vice President highlighted the following matters:

- Successful publication of the SU Handbook and Wall-planner
- The high turnout in the recent NUS-USI referendum
- On-going work on producing the SU Magazine and on developing SUTV.

Tyler McNally (AHSS), queried if the Vice President had attended the recent Defend EMA lobbying day of campaigning. The Vice President responded that he was unable to attend and he supports any effective measures taken by NUS-USI to campaign against reductions in Educational Maintenance Allowance funding.

Paper SUC/P/11/37 approved.

725.6 Report of the Vice President Community (SUC/P/12/38)

Council, noted that the Vice President, in his absence, had requested that his report be taken as read.

Paper SUC/P/11/38 approved.

725.7 Report of the Vice President Clubs and Societies (SUC/P/12/39)

The Vice President highlighted the following matters:

- Efforts to complete the Students' Union's submission to the Green Impact environmental accreditation scheme.
- Delivery of the largest two-day Freshers' Fair in the Union's history.
- Development work with new Clubs and Societies.
- Improvements in services provided by the Clubs and Societies Finance Office.
- Successful organisation by the Students' Union of events to support the University's Open Days.

In response to a query from the floor, the Vice President responded that planning is underway to deliver an extensive marketing campaign to promote involvement in clubs, societies and student activities.

Paper SUC/P/11/39 approved.

726. REPORTS FROM OTHER UNION COMMITTEES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

There were none.

727. REPORTS FROM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES.

There were none.

728. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.

There were none.

729. QUESTIONS.

There were none.

730. MOTIONS.

- 730.1 This Council notes that the Medical Biology Centre (MBC) is a 'hub' for students who study Medicine, Health and Life Sciences. This Council further notes that there are presently no ATM facilities in the MBC for science students to use.

This Council believes that students who cannot always make it to the Students' Union to access facilities such as an ATM should be provided with such a facility in the MBC.

This Council resolves that there are a sufficient number of students using the MBC on a daily basis, who are requesting an onsite ATM machine, to warrant the Executive Management Committee to identify a way to facilitate this demand.

This Council instructs the Executive Management Committee to actively lobby and seek to find a company / bank that will place an ATM that gives free cash withdrawals to students in the Medical Biology Centre.

Proposer: Gary Spedding (40046946)

Seconder: Tara Pouryahya (40076135)

Mr Spedding, moving the motion, stated that students in the MBC are at a disadvantage compared to students on the main campus, as they have to walk to the main campus to avail of ATM facilities, particularly at night.

James Surgenor, opposing the motion, stated that there was little relevance in the availability of ATM facilities in the MBC if there were no outlets in which students could spend cash in the form of notes, further stating that it would be more effective to promote use of the Queen's Easy Pay card system.

A friendly amendment by Orry Robinson was accepted by the proposer, amending the motion to close with the following paragraphs:

“This Council also notes that there are no ATM facilities accessible to students at the McClay Library. In the run up to the exam period where many students are either revising or working on dissertations, they are forced to leave the Library to make use of cash facilities elsewhere.

With twenty-four opening of the Library during exam periods and students need for cash to print revision materials, this also raises concerns for student safety.”

Paul Fletcher, speaking on the motion, stated that improving the ATM facilities has been discussed at the Students’ Union Management Board and that it would be a route by which Council could lobby for enhanced provision.

A proposal to move to the vote was agreed and the proposer of the motion waived the right to summarise. Following a show of voting cards, the motion was carried.

730.2 This Council believes that transparency with our students is of vital importance to ensure a pluralistic democratic process. This Council notes the importance of record keeping in honouring the aforementioned processes.

This Council concludes that Council Minutes of ‘on the record’ statements throughout Council sessions must be precisely kept and published in a similar style and standard of professionalism to that of HANSARD on the Students’ Union website and on other channels for all students to see and scrutinise.

This Council instructs the Executive Management Committee to ensure that minutes are published in this manner for every meeting of Council and every meeting of the Committees of Council.

Proposer: Gary Spedding (40046946)

Secunder: Rebecca Hall (40038532)

Mr. Spedding, moving the motion, stated that it was important that ordinary students know accurate details of discussions at Council to ensure that they can hold their representatives to account.

Nuala Mc Adams, opposing the motion, stated that the proposals were impractical and unworkable, particularly with regard to the operation of the Committee of Councils.

Asling Gallagher, supporting the motion, stated that the Committees of Council should receive the necessary support required to effectively report to Council and to students.

Alex Redpath, opposing the motion, stated that implementing a ‘HANSARD’-style system would have large cost and resourcing implications and would weaken the effectiveness of Council as a forum for encouraging debate and learning from ones’ mistakes, as there would be a permanent record online of all words spoken by all Councillors.

Chloe Minish, supporting the motion, stated that each committee elects a secretary who should be able to report to Council.

A proposal to proceed to the vote was accepted and following a display of voting cards, the motion was defeated.

730.3 This Council notes that, last month, a woman died 17 weeks into her pregnancy as a result of being denied an abortion. Savita Halappanavar was miscarrying and was denied a medical termination over two and a half days because the unviable foetus still had a heartbeat.

This Council also notes the great tragedy that this is for Savita's family and friends.

This Council recognises that the X case, a case ruled on by the Irish Supreme Court 20 years ago and never acted upon by Government, called for abortion if a woman's life was at risk due to pregnancy. Council further recognises that, if X case legislation was made into law, then many women in Savita's position would not be exposed to the same fate.

This Council resolves to express a message of condolence for Savita, her family and friends. This Council also agrees to send a message of support to the group 'Action on X', which actively campaigns for X case legislation in Ireland and to actively support the efforts of activists likewise fighting for abortion rights on the island of Ireland.

Proposer: Tyler McNally (40038987)

Seconder: Chloe Minish (40025090)

Tyler McNally, moving the motion, stated that this issue has been unresolved for over twenty years since the original 'X Case' court decision by the Supreme Court of Ireland giving the limited right to termination to a 14 year-old girl and failure to deal with this issue has contributed to the death of a woman in Galway, as Ireland was, as described to her husband, 'a Catholic country'.

Ciaran McKinley, opposing the motion, stated that there was, as yet, no proof that the availability of abortion services would have resulted in a different outcome to the recent tragic death in Galway and that it was undesirable that the Students' Union take a position on this as it is divisive, against the spirit of the principles of the Union, and could result in the Union being accused of slandering medical professionals.

In response to a point of information form Niall Bole noting that the focus of the motion was a tragic death, Mr McKinley responded that it was indeed a tragic death and sending a message of condolence did not require supporting an increase in the availability of abortion.

Derek Crosby, speaking on the motion, stated that he wished to make an impassioned plea for Councillors to conduct a debate on this issue in a reasoned, polite and courteous manner.

Alex Redpath, proposed an amendment to the motion, to delete the final two paragraphs from the motion, so that the motion now reads as follows:

"This Council notes that, last month, a woman died 17 weeks into her pregnancy as a result of being denied an abortion. Savita Halappanavar was miscarrying and was denied a medical termination over two and a half days because the unviable foetus still had a heartbeat.

This Council also notes the great tragedy that this is for Savita's family and friends."

Alex Redpath, moving the amendment, stated that the focus should be on uniting around a sense of compassion for the woman that has tragically died.

Tyler McNally, opposing the amendment, stated that there is no law in place to protect women in such a life threatening situation as faced by Savita Halappanavar in Galway, that she was not the first to die and she won't be the last, unless there is political pressure placed on legislators to act.

A proposal to move to the vote was agreed and the proposer of the amendment waived the right to summarise. Following a show of voting cards, the amendment was carried.

A proposal to proceed to the vote was accepted.

Alex Redpath, summarising in support, stated that it was important to Council to express compassion its sympathy for the tragic circumstances in Galway and not use the situation as a means to create a divisive Council that focused on old issues.

A display of voting cards indicated that 17 Councillors were in favour, 17 Councillors were against and 17 Councillors abstained. The motion was deemed to have fallen.

- 730.4 This Council condemns the sexist, degrading and offensive events organised and promoted by a number of Clubs and Societies at Queen's which occur contrary to the Constitution and its aims to support equality, diversity and women's rights.

Council notes, with disappointment, that an event by a University Club was allowed to take place in the Students' Union with the original title 'Yoga Hoes and Exercise Bros' on 8 November 2012, which was not changed until a student highlighted the issue.

Council urges the Executive Management Committee to provide all Clubs and Societies with guidelines on event names or themes which may be deemed inappropriate and the reasons behind this as soon as possible.

Council also urges the Executive Management Committee to prohibit all sexist events and to consider implementing a strict approval process for events in order to ensure that this does not happen in future.

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)

Seconder: Tyler McNally (40038987)

Council noted that the proposer of this motion had requested that this motion be withdrawn and not be considered by Council.

- 730.5 Council recognises that some of the abortion propaganda used by anti-choice campaigners is widely perceived as both disturbing and inappropriate across society and, furthermore, that this sort of imagery and content creates an unpleasant and oppressive atmosphere across the campus.

Council notes with concern that the women who have suffered rape, miscarriages or terminated pregnancies may be unduly affected by this imagery as it reawakens the memories of a traumatic event.

Council respects that Queen's has students of varying viewpoints and, furthermore, that students should have the freedom to express their views in a way which is respectful to others.

Council is reminded that the University is publicly accessible and is located next to schools and day care centres, and that the University has a responsibility to protect the physical and mental health of its students.

Council believes that imagery which could be seen to cause undue mental distress to students should be prohibited from University grounds, including Freshers / Refreshers Fairs, as it does not promote any cause in a compassionate manner.

Council resolves to prohibit such propaganda from being displayed at all times.

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)
Secunder: Aisling Gallagher (40055120)

Council noted that the proposer of this motion had requested that this motion be withdrawn and not be considered by Council.

- 730.6 Council notes with regret that, due to the current University academic standing guidelines, candidates running for election to student officer positions who have been absent or deferred exams, due to illness, are not permitted to run for election.

Council believes that placing these students in the same category as those who are failing deems them unsuitable candidates and is inappropriate, offensive and unfair.

Council instructs the Executive Management Committee and calls for the relevant University authorities to review the current Regulation and create a suitable policy amendment to include mitigating circumstances (physical or mental ill health), removing the prejudice against these students and permitting them to run for sabbatical elections with an end goal of removing the 'academic standing' rule altogether so that elections are fully democratic.

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)
Secunder: Tyler McNally (40038987)

Council noted that the proposer of this motion had requested that this motion be withdrawn and not be considered by Council.

731. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There was none.

732. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Union Speaker announced that the Annual Business Meeting of the 2011-12 session of the Students' Union Council shall take place on Wednesday 9 May 2012 at 6.00 p.m. in The Space, Students' Union.

Damien Corridan
Deputy Clerk to Students' Union Council