

Queen's University Belfast Students' Union

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the Statutory Meeting of 20 March 2014
2. Business Arising
3. Communications

3.1. **Appeal:** Seat on Council. Faye Ní Cheallaigh (EPS)

3.2. A Referendum shall take place, via Queen's Online, on Thursday 15 May 2015, with polling taking place between 7.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.

The purpose of this Referendum shall be:

To ratify those amendments to the Students' Union Constitution and its Rules that have been approved by the Students' Union Council during its 2013-14 session, and

To consider a Referendum motion regarding the provision of security services at the Students' Union.

4. Bye-Elections
5. Elections
6. Constitutional Amendments / Rule Amendments

6.1. **Amend:** Paragraph 820 as follows, to include:

6.1.1. Queen's University Belfast Guide Dogs Society

Proposer: Jonathan Mehaffey (40108000)

Secunder: Fionnuala Magee (40080784)

Please note that the proposed amendment to Rule 4 Section 8 that was not considered by the Council at its Statutory Meeting of 20 March 2014 will be considered now. The proposed amendment is below (item 6.2):

6.2. To amend the current Constitutional remit of the Vice President, Equality and Diversity (Rule 4, Section 8):

Insert the following:

8.9 Shall, in partnership with the University's International Student Support Office, be responsible for the delivery of a programme of student-focused events as part of the annual International Welcome Week.

Renumber the current 8.9 and 8.10, as 8.10 and 8.11 respectively.

Proposer: Connor Malone (Member of the SU Officer Review Group)

Secunder: Barbra Mutamba (Member of the SU Officer Review Group)

6.3. **Amend:** Rule 2. Insert: 9.33 and renumber as appropriate:

Any candidate or their canvassers who breach any election rule will be given a warning by the Returning Officer. If the rule is broken a second time or another rule is breached, the candidate will forfeit their nomination. If the candidate is running on a

ticket, then the ticket will receive a warning in place of the candidate. Further breaches will result in the entire team being disqualified. Appeals can be made to the Election Court.

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)
Seconder: Julia Andrade Rocha (40089397)

6.4. **Amend:** Rule 2. Insert: 9.21 and renumber as appropriate:

No candidate will be permitted to name or include a picture of any other candidate on his/her election material, including online election material.

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)
Seconder: Ciaran Gallagher (40007379)

6.5. **Amend:** Rule 2. Delete 9.9.5 and replace with:

A candidate for a Sabbatical Executive Management Committee post shall pay a refundable deposit of £30.00 to be submitted with his/her nomination form. This deposit can be submitted in the form of a cheque.

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)
Seconder: Ciaran Gallagher (40007379)

6.6. **Amend:** Rule 2. Delete 9.9.6 and replace with:

All leaflets, hand-outs and other printed Election material issued by the candidate or on his/her behalf in the furtherance of their campaign must be printed by the Students' Union only. All forms of Election campaign material must be authorised by the Returning Officer. No other materials will be permitted to be used or any further expense incurred by any candidate above those materials outlined in 9.20.

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

6.7. **Amend:** Rule 2. Delete 9.10 and replace with:

On or before the twenty eighth day before the date on which an Election to the Executive Management Committee is to be held, the Returning Officer shall post notices on authorised noticeboards as listed in Rule 3 declaring:-

9.10.1. The Executive Management Committee post to be filled

9.10.2. The dates and times for closure of nominations and withdrawals of nominations

9.10.3. The dates, times and places of polling for each Election

9.10.4. The dates and times for the handing in and out of Election material

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)
Seconder: Fiachra O'Maolcraoibhe (40040424)

6.8. **Amend: Rule 2.** Delete 9.20 and replace with:

Candidates for Sabbatical posts shall be entitled to the following printed Election material provided by the Union:

- 3 x A0 Colour Posters
- 400 x A3 Posters (one-sided)
- 1500 x A4 Manifestos (double-sided, four pages – one A3 sheet folded in half)
- 1500 x A5 Flyers (double-sided)
- 1 x colour T-shirt with candidates branding (front and back)

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)

Secunder: Sean Fearon (40079053)

6.9. **Amend Chapter 1.** Delete 14.2:

They shall be registered students of the University who are in good academic standing at the time of their election and shall be registered by the University as full-time students for the academic year of their sabbatical office

Amend Rule 4. Appendix 1. Delete 3.2:

A Student Officer shall remain in good academic standing throughout his / her term of office.

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)

Secunder: Niall Robb (40084325)

6.10. **Amend Rule 2.** Replace 11.4 with:

In considering an Election (or Referendum or Plebiscite) Petition, the Election (or Referendum or Plebiscite) Court shall consider whether the alleged irregularity has, or may have occurred and the Court shall, at its discretion, declare the Election (or Referendum or Plebiscite) valid or invalid, disqualify a candidate prior to or following an election if they or their canvassers are found to have breached election rules whether it is perceived that the outcome of the election would have been affected or not. The Court may also, at its discretion, invoke the University's Student Conduct Regulations against any Student whom the Court believes to be guilty of misconduct.

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)

Secunder: Oisin Hassan (40058773)

7. Report of the Executive Management Committee and Recommendations

Report of the Union President
Annual Report of the Union President

Report of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications
Annual Report of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications

Report of the Vice President Clubs and Societies
Annual Report of the Vice President Clubs and Societies

Report of the Vice President Community
Annual Report of the Vice President Community

Report of the Vice President Education
Annual Report of the Vice President Education

Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity
Annual Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity

Report of the Vice President Welfare
Annual Report of the Vice President Welfare

8. Reports from other Union Committees and Recommendations

There are none. Verbal Reports only.

9. Reports from University Committees

There are none. Verbal Reports only.

10. Constitutional Questions

There are none.

11. Questions

To the Union President:

- 11.1. Given that you were Delegate leader to USI Congress, we would like to ask how well you feel the delegation represented QUB students at the congress. We would also like to ask which members of the delegation who were still at conference were present for the QUBSU emergency motion on the final day of Conference.

Proposed: Niall Robb (40084325)
Seconded: Kathryn Waller (40077853)

- 11.2. Given that you were Delegate leader to NUS Conference, how well do you feel the delegation represented QUB students at the conference? Also, could you please tell council one thing which you learned at NUS Conference, which you will use to improve your role going forward.

Proposed: Niall Robb (40084325)
Seconded: Kathryn Waller (40077853)

- 11.3. Could you explain to Council why the letter to the Belfast Telegraph which council requested you send was 15 days late?

Proposed: Niall Robb (40084325)
Seconded: Sarah Wright (40002922)

To the Vice President Campaigns and Communications:

- 11.4. Although you didn't attend USI or NUS Conference as a delegate, there were a number of campaigns and campaign positions decided. Which are you most interested in campaigning on in QUBSU?

Proposed: Niall Robb 40084325
Seconded: Kathryn Waller 40077853

12. Motions

- 12.1. Council notes there is inconsistent and incomplete information being offered to pregnant QUB students by QUB Schools and Departments.

Female GB students are unaware that signing up with a GP in Northern Ireland removes their right to automatic free NHS services back in GB.

Students may be unaware of legislation regarding abortion in Northern Ireland.

There is considerable confusion within the Students' Union welfare system over what information can be offered to pregnant students under the current policy of neutrality.

Council mandates that specific guidelines to be sent to all schools and staff members on where to direct students seeking advice regarding pregnancy and all the options available to them.

In line with a policy of neutrality, non-directive information, such as that offered by the Family Planning Association (FPA), to be provided by QUBSU, advice centre staff and any agency employed by QUBSU to offer advice to students regarding pregnancy. Such information to include literature on additional funding for student parents, exceptional circumstances forms and counselling services. FPA literature to be available on campus as a source of information.

Proposer: Kathryn Waller (40077853)
Seconder: Naomh Gibson (40079040)

- 12.2. Council notes that the Poppy Appeal is a politically charged and necessarily divisive initiative given the nature of local politics. This Council recognizes that the Student's Union is an inclusive and neutral space for all students at Queen's University and therefore must offer a politically neutral environment regarding issues of the past to avoid offence and a sense of exclusion.

This Council, therefore, instructs the VP Equality & Diversity and the Union President to end the sale of poppies in the Student's Union to provide an end to political sponsorship of the Poppy Appeal, in the name of peace, inclusivity and progressivism.

Proposer: Seán Fearon (40079053)
Seconder: Kellyann McAteer (40060501)

- 12.3. Council notes although there are potentially many factors which could have affected the abysmal number of candidates in this year's Sabbatical Officer Elections, one widely accepted factor is mistrust in our current democratic model. This mistrust not only manifested itself in the low candidate turnout, but also in the record high turnout for Re-Open Nominations (c. 930 in six out of seven elections)

That although the Council has previously attempted to remedy this unfortunate situation, its well-intentioned attempts have met with frustration, thereby maintaining the unfortunate status-quo.

Council believes that unless this situation is remedied, the number and diversity of candidates standing in elections will continue to decline, thus reducing the effective mandate of all elected officers.

Council mandates the Union President to invite the National Union of Students Strategic Support Unit to perform a Democratic Review of the structures surrounding the annual Student Officer elections. This review would be free of charge and would provide feedback on the union's democratic processes based on interviews with students and staff.

Council also mandates that all of the Student Officers should secure, before the end of the semester, the pledge of the relevant figures (the Vice-Chancellor of the University and the Chief Executive Officer of the Students' Union) to formally invite the Strategic Support Unit to perform the review.

Council also mandates that the Union President should propose to amend the constitution in any and all ways suggested by the Review.

Proposer: Derek Crosby (40006101)
Seconder: Ciaran Gallagher (40007379)

- 12.4. The following motion will take place in the form of a secret ballot.

Council understands that the issue of reproductive rights is a somewhat controversial topic worldwide.

Council further understands that the policy of the Union on this highly conscientious topic should be decided directly by the collective will of the whole student body, rather than by a tiny minority of Councillors whilst maintaining that all students should be free to promote their opinion on this issue through Societies, Clubs and Pressure Groups.

Council hereby proposes that a Referendum on the issue of reproductive rights be held on Thursday 15th May 2014.

The wording of this referendum shall be:

"Should QUBSU adopt a Pro-Choice position on the issue of reproductive rights?"

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

13. Policy Lapse

- 13.1. ***Written objections to the lapse of the following policy have been received from Matthew Lowe (40046426)***

Council notes with concern that upon publication of the 2013 second semester examination timetable a number of students across campus appear to have examinations with unacceptably short time between them.

Council firmly believes that Students must be given appropriate decompression time (breathing room) between examinations as students can become stressed if there is an inadequate time for different sets of revision to commence.

Council further believes that an adequate time period between examinations must be a minimum of 48 hours for all students.

Council resolves that the Executive Management Committee be instructed to lobby the university as a matter of urgency to have examination timetables adequately reflect the needs of students on campus who require a space of at least 48 hours between examination sittings.

Council further resolves that students should be given access to draft timetables far earlier and be consulted with in conjunction with the Students' Union and the University staff in order to allow changes to be suggested in an adequate time frame.

14. Any Other Competent Business

15. Date of the next Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council.

The next Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council will take place in the new academic term. Have a great summer.