

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION

MINUTES

Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council
held on 14 January 2020 in Queen's Students' Union.

Present:

Adam McKenna	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Aidan Moran	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Axelle Larue	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Bella Bella	School Representative - School of Chemistry & Chemical Engineering (SCHEM)
Charlotte Nolan-Browne	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Ciarán O'Brien	Executive Management Committee - VP Welfare
Connor Veighey	Executive Management Committee - Union President
Dyuti Das	School Representative - School of Pharmacy (SPMY)
Eden Baker	School Representative - School of Nursing & Midwifery (SNAM)
Ellen Fearon	Executive Management Committee - VP Student Activities
Elliot Beever	Executive Management Committee - LGBT+ Officer
Emily Bond	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Gift Sotonye-Frank	Executive Management Committee - VP Postgraduate
Grian Ní Dhaimhín	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Hamsavani Rajeswaren	Executive Management Committee - VP Equality & Diversity
Hannah Orr	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Hayley Donnelly	School Representative - School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences (SMED)
Holly Huddleston	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Jack Powell	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Jacob Kyle	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Jamie Waring	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Jason Bunting	Executive Management Committee - VP Education
Jessica Lawrence	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
John Ewing	Students' Union Council - All First Year Representative
Jonathan Davis	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Katie McCleary	School Representative - Social Sciences, Education and Social Work (SSESW)
Kit Penlington	Executive Management Committee - Trans Students' Officer
Lauren Bailey	Executive Management Committee - Postgraduate Taught Officer
Mark Hamilton	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Nathan Horbury	Students' Union Council - All Student Representative
Neville Cobbe	School Representative - Institute of Theology (ITHEO)
Olivia Fletcher	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Pdraig Quinn	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Peter McMurray	Executive Management Committee - Medicine, Health & Life Sciences (MHLS) Faculty Officer
Rebecca Russell	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Sandisiwe Nyanda	Students' Union Council - International Student Representative (including INTO)
Sean-Diarmuid Kelliher	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Sultan Abbas Shajahan Sait	Executive Management Committee - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer
Tiffany Gracias	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Adam McKenna	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Aidan Moran	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Axelle Larue	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Bella Bella	School Representative - School of Chemistry & Chemical Engineering (SCHEM)
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Emily Bond	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Gift Sotonye-Frank	Executive Management Committee - VP Postgraduate
Grian Ní Dhaimhín	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Hamsavani Rajeswaren	Executive Management Committee - VP Equality & Diversity

In Attendance:

Damien Corridan (Clerk Of Council)
 Kristina Connolly (Deputy Clerk Of Council)
 Ciaran Higgins (Students' Union Director)

The Council Speaker welcomed all attendees to the fourth Meeting of the 2019-20 of the Students' Union Council.

1. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from the following Councillors:

Aodhán Ó'Baoill	Executive Management Committee - Irish Language Officer
Calum Irvine	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Collins Akor	Executive Management Committee - Postgraduate Research Officer
David Griffith	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Emma Quin	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Jan Carson	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Lauren Connell	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 Statutory Meeting of 2 December 2019 (SUC/M/19/7)

The following amendments were asked to be made to the minutes:

Students' Union Response to Decriminalisation of Abortion in Northern Ireland

Change:

"Councillor [School Rep] Eden Baker speaks against the motion. She states that on behalf of the School of Nursing and Midwifery, every woman should have a say over her body and fertility. As a progressive Students' Union, we cannot disagree with healthcare professionals who believe that abortion isn't a criminal act."

To:

"Councillor [School Rep] Eden Baker speaks against the motion. She states that in lieu of consulting with the students she represents due to not receiving the Agenda in time, she is using position statements from the two medical bodies, Royal College of Nursing and Royal College of Midwives, which outline that every woman should have a say over her body and fertility. As a progressive Students' Union, we cannot disagree with healthcare professionals who believe that abortion isn't a criminal act."

It was agreed that once this amend was made, the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of 2 Dec 2019 (SUC/M/19/7) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were none.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Council Membership – Update

The Council noted the following resignations, including those deemed to have resigned, from the Council:

Adam Aicken	Executive Management Committee - Student Carers' Officer
Amber Gillespie	Executive Management Committee - Mature Students' Officer
Ashley Kane	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative

Aoibhinn Graham	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Conall Keenan-Reilly	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Debrup Chakraborty	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Emman Sohail	Executive Management Committee - Student Parents' Officer
Orla Corr	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Paul McCarron	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Peter Smyth	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Samuel Connor	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Virendra Ramesh Rao Ghorpade	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative

4.2 Executive Management Committee – Bye-Election Results

The Council noted that:

A Bye-Election was held on Thursday 5 December 2019 to fill vacancies in the following posts:

- International Students' Officer
- Women Students' Officer
- Disabled Students' Officer

The following Students were deemed to be elected:

- International Students' Officer: Adam Farhan
- Women Students' Officer: Hannah Orr
- Disabled Students' Officer: No nominations received

Nominations have opened for the Student Officer Elections 2020, the successful candidate in the Disabled Students' Officer election can assume the role on election in order to fill the existing vacancy.

4.3 Students' Union Referendum (December 2019) – Results

Council noted that the amendments to the Constitution approved at the December 2019 Statutory Meeting of Council were considered by the Student membership by means of Referendum held on Thursday 5 December 2019. All amendments received a greater number of votes in favour than against and were therefore deemed to have been carried.

4.4 Constitutional Amendments (December 2019) – Update

Council noted that the amendments to the Constitution approved at the December 2019 Statutory Meeting of Council were, subsequent to successful ratification by means of Referendum, were considered, and approved by the University Senate at its meeting of Tuesday 17 December 2019.

These amendments were deemed to have taken effect from Wednesday 18 December 2019.

The Students' Union will work, over the coming weeks and months, to amend internal processes and procedures to reflect the approved amendments.

The Student Officer Elections 2020 shall incorporate all of the amendments to the composition of the Executive Management Committee and to the Election Rules.

4.5 Student Officer Elections 2020

Council noted that nominations are open for the Student Officer Elections 2020, with nominations closing at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday 5 February 2020.

Polling shall take place on Monday 24 February and Tuesday 25 February 2020 via the Students' Union website.

Elections shall take place for the following Sabbatical Officer positions:

- Students' Union President
- Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement
- Student Officer Education
- Student Officer Equality & Diversity
- Student Officer Postgraduate
- Student Officer Welfare

Elections shall take place for the following Non-Sabbatical Officer positions:

- Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Students' Officer
- Disabled Students' Officer
- Environmental Officer
- International Students' Officer
- Irish Language Officer
- LGBT+ Students' Officer
- Mature and Part-Time Students' Officer
- Student Parents' and Carers' Officer
- Trans Students' Officer
- Women Students' Officer

All Councillors were encouraged to consider standing for election.

Council further noted that elections for the following Non-Sabbatical posts will take place in March 2020:

- Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Representative
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Faculty Representative
- Medicine, Health and Life Sciences Faculty Representative

Council noted that elections for the following Non-Sabbatical posts will take place in October 2020:

- Part-Time Postgraduate Research Officer
- Part-Time Postgraduate Taught Officer

4.6 National Conference Delegate Elections – Update

Council noted that nominations shall open for the following national union conferences on Wednesday 15 January 2020:

- NUS Conference 2020 (4 vacancies)
- NUS-USI Conference 2020 (6 vacancies)
- USI Congress 2020 (7 vacancies)

Nominations shall close on Friday 31 January 2020, 5.00 p.m.

A £40 deposit is required with each nomination.

Polling shall take place on Thursday 6 February 2020, 8.00 a.m. – 8.00 p.m. on the Students' Union website.

The details of the national conferences are as follows:

- USI Congress: Monday 6 April – Friday 10 April 2020. Location: Co. Mayo.
- NUS Conference: Tuesday 31 March – Thursday 2 April 2020. Location: ACC, Liverpool.

- NUS-USI Conference: 21 – 22 April 2020. Location: White Horse Hotel, Derry-Londonderry.

4.7 Scrutiny Committee – Bye-Elections

The Council noted that there are two vacancies on the recently constituted Scrutiny Committee of Council. Councillors may nominate themselves for these posts by emailing the Student Voice team by 9.00 a.m. on Monday 20 January 2019.

A motion to suspend standing orders and move to Agenda Point 10.4 was submitted.

After a show of voting cards this motion to suspend standing orders passes.

10.4 **Opposition to the University’s new Chancellor Appointee**

This Council notes:

- The appointment of Hillary Rodham Clinton as the new Chancellor of Queen’s University Belfast
- Rodham Clinton in 2018 received an honorary degree from the university for her “outstanding contribution to peace and reconciliation.”

This Council recognises its live policies:

- Policy 1.03 “Asylum Seekers and Access to Education” through which council agreed to support the needs of those seeking asylum in Belfast, particularly higher education.
- Policy 1.14 “Decolonising Education” that seeks to challenge the marketisation of higher education that disproportionately affects students of colour, fights for free education and the democratisation of higher education.
- Policy 6.05 “Establishing a campaign to make QUB a University of Sanctuary” which works to create a safe environment for those fleeing war, violence, political persecution, poverty, discrimination and marginalisation.
- Policy 8.22 “Justice and Human Rights for Palestine” where council supported “That the Palestinian people are entitled to the same human rights, dignity of person, self-determination, security and parity of esteem as other peoples in the world today” and the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign.
- Policy 8.29 “Support the Campaign to Decriminalise Sex Work” that supports students engaged in sex work, decriminalisation and challenges the practice of criminalising those engaged in this work.

This Council also recognises:

- Student protests against Rodham Clinton’s honorary degree in 2018.

This Council understands:

- That Rodham Clinton “conflated sex work with human trafficking and failed to acknowledge that anti-trafficking efforts often criminalize the most vulnerable populations in America: women of colour, undocumented people, trans people, and single parents.” (<https://www.redumbrellafund.org/feminism-supports-sex-workers-rights/>)
- Rodham Clinton had implemented inherently racist and inhumane policies regarding South Americans seeking asylum and migrating to the US. As a Senator voting in favour of the Secure Fences Act 2006 to build more walls across the US’s southern borders, while also discussing further barriers during primaries in her latest presidential run.

- Rodham Clinton, as Secretary of State in the Obama registration, is known to have used drone strikes to attack its foreign “enemies”, killing many civilians. The White House released a figure of 116 civilians, while human rights organisations have rightly challenged this.
- Rodham Clinton, in her run for President, also fell short when it came to her policies on higher education funding as she does not support free education for all.
- In 2015, Rodham Clinton wrote a letter, with her Presidential campaign logo as its heading, to billionaire Haim Saban stating that “we need to make countering BDS a priority. (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2158218-hillary-clintons-letter-to-haim-saban-against-bds.html>)

This Council believes:

- In her actions as a Senator, Secretary of State, First Lady and a Presidential candidate, Hillary Rodham Clinton has indicated that her values and the values of this Union are not the same.

Therefore, this Council:

- Opposes the appointment of Hillary Rodham Clinton as Chancellor of Queen’s University Belfast.
- Mandates the Union President to write to the Vice-Chancellor stating the Students’ Union’s official opposition to Rodham Clinton’s appointment.
- Mandates the Officer Board of this Students’ Union to boycott meetings, receptions and other events with Rodham Clinton and support student-led demonstrations against her appointment and presence at university events.
- Calls for the Officer Board to lobby the University to provide a student-wide referendum on those taking up the Chancellorship in future.

Proposer: Grian Ní Dhaimhín (Student)
Seconder: Aidan Moran (Student)

Grian Ní Dhaimhín, Proposer, moved the motion by summarising the details outlined above.

Amendments were submitted and accepted/approved and the motion now reads as follows:

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This Council recognises its live policies:

- Policy 1.03 “Asylum Seekers and Access to Education” through which council agreed to support the needs of those seeking asylum in Belfast, particularly higher education.
- Policy 1.14 “Decolonising Education” that seeks to challenge the marketisation of higher education that disproportionately affects students of colour, fights for free education and the democratisation of higher education.
- Policy 6.05 “Establishing a campaign to make QUB a University of Sanctuary” which works to create a safe environment for those fleeing war, violence, political persecution, poverty, discrimination and marginalisation.

- Policy 8.22 “Justice and Human Rights for Palestine” where council supported “That the Palestinian people are entitled to the same human rights, dignity of person, self-determination, security and parity of esteem as other peoples in the world today” and the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign.
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- Rodham Clinton, as Secretary of State in the Obama registration, is known to have used drone strikes to attack its foreign “enemies”, killing many civilians. The White House released a figure of 116 civilians, while human rights organisations have rightly challenged this.
- Rodham Clinton, in her run for President, also fell short when it came to her policies on higher education funding as she does not support free education for all.
- In 2015, Rodham Clinton wrote a letter, with her Presidential campaign logo as its heading, to billionaire Haim Saban stating that “we need to make countering BDS a priority.” (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2158218-hillary-clintons-letter-to-haim-saban-against-bds.html>)

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- Mandates the Union President to write to the Vice-Chancellor stating the Students’ Union’s official opposition to Rodham Clinton’s appointment.
- Mandates the Officer Board of this Students’ Union to boycott meetings, receptions and other events with Rodham Clinton – with the exception of Graduations – and support student-led demonstrations against her appointment and presence at university events.
- Calls for the Officer Board to lobby the University to provide a student-wide referendum on those taking up the Chancellorship in future.

Proposer: Grian Ni Dhaimhín (Student)
Secunder: Aidan Moran (Student)

After a period of debate, a motion to vote was submitted.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion to vote passes.

Following a secret ballot, the motion passes.

A motion to suspend standing orders and move to Agenda Point 10.1 was submitted.

After a show of voting cards this motion to suspend standing orders passes.

10.1 **Mental Health Charter**

This proposal is supported by a number of additional reference papers.

- The University Mental Health Charter (Full Charter) (SUC/P/20/1)
- The University Mental Health Charter (Charter Summary) (SUC/P/20/2)
- Charter Information Leaflet Text (SUC/P/20/3)

Council notes:

There has been great political, public and professional concern in recent years about student mental health. In the past year QUBSU has undertaken a significant survey into student mental health (OMNI) and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has launched a Student Mental Health team.

Current figures state that each year in Britain an estimated one in four adults will experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem, though only 230 of every 300 will actually visit their GP (NHS England data)

A 2013 major NUS survey with 1,093 students discussing mental health on behalf of the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) showed: - 78 percent of respondents said they believe they have experienced mental health problems in the last year, (whether diagnosed or undiagnosed). - 87 per cent have felt stress; 77 per cent have suffered anxiety; and, 69 percent have felt depressed in the last year. - 33 per cent have had suicidal thoughts – around double the figure (17%) for the general population. Of respondents who did not identify as heterosexual, 55% reported suicidal thoughts. Results from our own OMNI survey are awaited but likely to show similar findings.

Data from the Office for Students has demonstrated that students experiencing mental illness are more likely to withdraw from university, to underperform academically and are less likely to secure higher level employment or go on to post-graduate study. Most significantly, it is estimated that in 2017/18, 95 students took their own lives across the UK.

There has been great political, public and professional concern in recent years about student mental health. The mental wellbeing reported by university students is among the lowest across the population and the sector has seen a dramatic rise in help-seeking, with some institutions reporting that one in four of their students are either being seen or are waiting to be seen by the university counselling service (IPPR, 2017). Whilst further research is required, experts have connected this to a range of academic, social and financial pressures. While much of the focus of concern has been directed towards undergraduate students, recent research has moved attention towards the whole university community. Studies suggest that the mental health of many post-graduate students may also be poor, with elements of their university life, such as supervision, identity, preparation and belonging, being highlighted as important for mental health.

Mental health is a critical factor in student and staff retention and success. Universities, as a community setting, present an opportunity to change people's health outcomes for

life. As well as responding to illness, we need to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the university community.

Student Minds have put together a Mental Health Charter (see papers SUC/P/20/1 – Full Charter; SUC/P/20/2 – Charter Summary, SUC/P/20/3 – Charter Information Leaflet Text) in order to help universities work to improve mental health in an evidence based manner that is flexible and adaptable to local situations and is not merely a checklist but which leans heavily on quality improvement and shared learning principles.

The Charter focuses on four domains – Learn, Support, Live, Work. Each domain is broken down into a number of themes with an explanation of the issues currently faced that affect student mental health and wellbeing, along with suggestions of strategies for improvement and principles of best practice.

Student Minds have been working to improve the mental health and wellbeing of students and university communities since 2008. They now work with over 120 universities across the UK, supported by national research, policy and campaigning work. They have worked with advisors including Professor Jo Smith (Chartered Clinical Psychologist, member of The Alliance for Student Led Wellbeing), Gareth Hughes (Psychotherapist and Research Lead for Student Wellbeing at the University of Derby), Professor Janet Treasure PhD FRCP MRCPsych OBE (psychiatrist), Dr Dominique Thompson (GP, Director of University of Bristol Students' Health Service 2010-17), Dr Denise Meyer (Chartered Counselling Psychologist), Stuart Read (Community Programmes Manager at Mind), Dr Katharine Rimes (clinical psychologist, Academic Director in Clinical Psychology King's College London). The Charter is being developed in partnership with Universities UK, National Union of Students, the Office for Students, SMaRteN and AMOSSHE and supported by key stakeholders in the Department of Education. The UPP Foundation and the Office for Students have provided funding for the Charter and support the ongoing governance of the project.

This charter covers a broad range of points that will allow universities to reflect on current practice and highlight opportunities for enhancement. It offers the incentive universities need to go beyond baseline requirements and invest time and resources into driving ongoing improvement and developing good practice. It also provides a mechanism for identifying and disseminating examples of effective practice to facilitate sector-wide learning. It will be supported by an Award Scheme, a voluntary scheme that will assess universities progress against the principles of good practice within the Charter, supporting participating universities to identify opportunities for improvement, as well as recognising and rewarding example of excellent practice.

Council believes:

The new Student Minds Mental Health Charter is a meaningful scheme designed to improve outcomes for all students and ensure universities understand what good practice looks like in improving mental health and wellbeing. The Charter will be an important tool to support cultural change in universities, improve wellbeing outcomes for students, university staff and their local communities and ensure mental health does not fall off the Higher Education policy agenda.

Given that we have previously identified Student Mental health as a significant issue, and it is important that is tackled in an evidence based manner with learning shared across the sector it would be of great benefit to QUBSU to sign up to this national charter at an early stage and work towards achieving accreditation status via the Award Scheme.

Given that this Charter is a national initiative with significant backing it will carry substantial prestige and is likely to attract interest from many universities. Given the good work we have already done to make improvements to student and staff mental health it is therefore important we sign up to the Charter in order to ensure our efforts receive the recognition they deserve, and to ensure as a University that QUB does not

become complacent but continues to seek to improve how it handles mental health and well-being and is able to take advantage of shared learning from other universities across the UK.

Council mandates:

- Queen’s University Students Union signing up to the Student Minds Mental Health Charter
- The Executive Management Committee to apply to the Charter Award Scheme as a candidate for the 2020 pilot, and if unsuccessful to sign up when the full national roll-out launches
- Working with Senate, Faculty Boards and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Student Mental Health Team to ensure there is cross-spectrum support for our efforts to achieve Charter Award status

Proposer: Peter McMurray (MHLS Faculty Officer)
Seconder: Hayley Donnelly (School Representative)

Peter McMurray, Proposer, moved the motion by summarising the details outlined above.

A motion to vote was submitted.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion to vote passes.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion passes.

A motion to resume standing orders was submitted.

After a show of voting cards this motion to resume standing orders passes.

5. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS/RULES AMENDMENTS

5.1 **An amendment to introduce an additional Non-Sabbatical Student Officer post to be called “Mental Health Officer”**

Council Notes:

1. Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community. (World Health Organisation definition)
2. Current figures state that each year in Britain an estimated one in four adults will experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem, though only 230 of every 300 will actually visit their GP (NHS England data)
3. Mental health problems can affect the way you think, feel and behave. They affect around one in four people in Britain and range from common mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, to more rare problems such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.
4. A 2016 Time to Change survey of over 7,000 people living with mental health issues found that 64% were feeling isolated, 61% worthless and 60% ashamed of their condition. They explained they felt this way because of the stigma and discrimination they regularly face.
5. In a 2009 report, it was found that women were almost twice as likely as men to suffer an anxiety disorder in England. However, the 2014 figures released by

- the Office for National Statistics show there were 6,122 suicides recorded in the UK. While 24% of these were female, 76% were male.
6. In England, a survey discovered that those who registered with the NHS who described themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual were two to three times more likely to report having emotional or psychological problems compared with those who described themselves as heterosexual.
 7. A 2008 study that explored the association between social/economic factors, economic status, mental problems and ethnicity, discovered that among adults between the ages of 16 and 64, Black African and Black Caribbean groups typically had double the chance of experiencing psychotic disorders compared with White British groups. The same results were found when observing different socio-economic statuses.
 8. The definition of mental health as a disability is recognised in UK law as: 'A mental health condition is considered a disability if it has a long-term effect on your normal day to day activity. This is defined under the Equality Act 2010. Your condition is long term if it lasts, or is likely to last 12 months. 'Normal day to day activity' is defined as something you do regularly in a normal day. For example, using a computer, working set times or interacting with people'.
 9. A 2013 major NUS survey with 1,093 students discussing mental health on behalf of the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) showed: - 78 percent of respondents said they believe they have experienced mental health problems in the last year, (whether diagnosed or undiagnosed). - 87 per cent have felt stress; - 77 per cent have suffered anxiety; and, - 69 percent have felt depressed in the last year. - 33 per cent have had suicidal thoughts – around double the figure (17%) for the general population. Of respondents who did not identify as heterosexual, 55% reported suicidal thoughts. Results from our own OMNI survey are awaited but likely to show similar findings.
 10. In the 2013 survey students identified course deadlines (65%), exams (54%) and financial difficulties (47%) amongst the main triggers of mental distress. A 2017 NUS report into student mental health was written following a roundtable, and it identified the main drivers of poor mental health for students included social media, sexuality, college workload and poor Careers Information, Advice and Guidance.
 11. In the 2013 survey, problems with access and awareness of support services were recognised with: - 54% of respondents who reported having experiencing mental health problems said they did not seek support; - A third said that they did not know where to get mental health support from their college or university if they needed it; - 40% reported being nervous about the support they would receive from their institution. The 2017 roundtable concluded that many students struggle to access mental health support because there are still huge amounts of stigma, shame and discrimination surrounding mental health. Cuts to funding and long waiting lists were also identified as a barrier to accessing support.
 12. In the 2013 survey, the NUS found that 58% of students who experienced mental distress told their friends, compared to 48% who told their family members. 15% who told their GP and 10% who sought support from their university's counselling services.

Queen's Students Union's has had an active focus in recent years on raising awareness about mental health, encouraging open discussion, attempting to reduce stigma, and improve mental health support for students at Queen's University. This is worked towards by the VP Welfare, Students Voice team, and the OMNI project.

In recent years, the elected officers have strived to put mental health as the forefront of their campaigns. Unfortunately, at times in recent years the part time Disability Officer post has remained vacant.

Council Believes:

1. Creating a Mental Health part time officer will help to further enhance mental health as an important issue, which should be treated specifically and alongside the activities of the existing disabilities officer to support those with physical, learning and mental disabilities. It would also help break stigma around mental health.
2. The position will show the students' union recognises mental health as an issue not specifically defined to a set group of people, but a larger concern that has the potential to affect everyone, at any point, through the course of any member of the student body's degree at Queen's University.

This position will be essential in ensuring we work towards achieving Mental Health Charter endorsement. By signing up to the Student Minds University National Mental Health Charter there will be work needed to co-ordinate the services our union already provides and ensure they meet or exceed the requirements of the Charter.

3. The Mental Health campaign officer will ensure the Disabilities Service team and the Part Time Officer for Disabled students (when post is filled) can also give priority and focus to other campaigns in key areas such as physical and learning disabilities, as well as coordinating efforts on that of mental health. This would essentially be similar to that of the LGBT+ association which has two campaign officers to give a form of devolved representation to trans members within the LGBT community, alongside the operations of the LGBT officer. The requirements of the Student Minds Mental Health Charter will require a significant amount of work and for this to land on the Disability officer would risk either it not being given the time and focus it needs, or other vital aspects of their role being neglected.
4. This position would guarantee consistency within Queen's Students Union's focus on mental health which would be vital in the event that a future VP Welfare chose to focus on other areas of student wellbeing.
5. The function of this position would work towards:
 - Aiding the VP Welfare in coordinating campaigns and events surrounding mental health
 - Working with the full-time elected officers to help to feedback views and concerns from the student body to the union as a whole in a more immediate manner than is allowed by large surveys such as the OMNI survey
 - Collaborating with other student groups such as Student Voice, wellbeing champions, nightline team and all other part-time officers to keep a strong open dialogue between the different groups, ensuring strong communication and coordination of resources.
 - Ensuring the union works closely with different mental health charities in various national and local campaigns and keeping good awareness of the support these charities offer.
 - Working to co-ordinate strategies with the university alongside the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and voluntary sector organisations in order to ensure we not only meet but aim to exceed the requirements of participation in the Mental Health Charter Award Scheme
 - Providing a face for Queen's Student Union's mental health operations allowing it to take a forefront in student discussion and be a vital representative of Queen's existing and future efforts to support student's mental wellbeing, including carrying out the work of implementing changes in response to the OMNI survey.

Council Further Believes:

1. Creating this position helps Queen's Students' Union to continue in working towards improving the representation and support for students who come across a mental health issue during their time at university. Students are not always aware of support services, nervous to seek support and more likely to turn to a friend first, it is more crucial than ever that the union continues to work towards breaking down any barriers which prevent students from seeking help.
2. Creating this position would put Queen's amongst the forefront of universities who have begun to lead the way in appointing Part Time Mental Health officers, including Cardiff, Glasgow, Derby, Roehampton Swansea and Leeds Trinity universities; as well as Gloucestershire University (as part of Disability officer title – Disability and Mental Health experience officer)
3. The position will provide students with a representative who actively engages with mental health throughout the academic year, working alongside the union support structures and the many other student groups to advance the unity in efforts to tackle mental health. We recognise that while awareness weeks or events are helpful there is a need for year-round action and input to help tackle the mental health crisis.
4. This will show the students' union as continuing to innovate the ways it represents and supports those with mental health issues, ensuring that all student issues can be effectively represented and tackled by Queen's Student's Union. It would also serve to help support staff feel better equipped to help students who they notice to be struggling

Council Resolves:

1. To create another part-time officer alongside the Disabilities officer, as the "Mental Health Officer". This officer will represent those who suffer from mental health as a focused remit in their job, as well as the broader liberation campaigns aimed at disabilities as a whole. They will work closely with the Disabilities officer, relevant student groups and VP welfare. Their aim would be to raise awareness about mental health amongst the student body and to encourage open discussion that can reduce stigma surrounding mental health. This will work towards building a strong supportive environment at Queen's University for all student's mental wellbeing and disabilities. They will work as an advocate for QUB's participation in the Student Minds Mental Health Charter Award Scheme.
2. For the Students' Union to consult with various figureheads including the Belfast Trust University Mental Health team as to the precise nature and function of this role, ensuring that it works within its current structures and is relevant in advancing the Union's efforts in achieving its aims.
3. For the elected officer team to create an adequate job description to ensure that while this position is open to as broad a field of student candidates as possible that the elected part-time officer has the relevant skills necessary for the role.
4. To amend the constitution in order to facilitate this role.

Constitutional Amendment - Part Time Mental Health Officer

An amendment to introduce an additional Non-Sabbatical Student Officer post to be called "Mental Health Officer"

INSERT (into Rule 4, 1.1.2, The Executive Management Committee) and renumber accordingly:

Mental Health Officer

INSERT the following new section (into Rule 4) and number / renumber clauses accordingly:

THE MENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

They:

Shall represent the interests of Students experiencing mental health issues to the Executive Management Committee and to the University Authorities, and shall campaign on issues that impact upon the student experience of these Students.

Shall be responsible for liaison with organisations, both external and internal to the University, which are relevant to student mental health.

Shall partner with the Disabled Students' Officer to support on broader mental health liberation campaigns for disabled students.

Shall work closely with the Disabled Students' Officer, relevant student groups, the Belfast Trust student mental health team and the Vice President Welfare.

Shall work to raise awareness about mental health amongst the student body and to encourage open discussion that can reduce stigma surrounding mental health, working to build a strong supportive environment within the University for all those experiencing mental health issues, including disabled students.

Shall work as an advocate for the University's participation in the Student Minds Mental Health Charter Award Scheme and help roll out evidence-based programmes based on student feedback.

Shall be concerned with general issues relating to the mental health of students including but not limited to resilience training, drug awareness schemes and improving student access to counselling services.

Shall be a voting member of the Students' Union Council and the Executive Management Committee.

DELETE (from Rule 2, Clause 9.3 - ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE)

The Executive Management Committee Non-Sabbatical posts of Environmental Officer, Irish Language Officer and Student Parents' and Carers' Officer shall be elected in the second semester by a cross campus ballot, as in Council elections.

REPLACE with the following:

The Executive Management Committee Non-Sabbatical posts of Environmental Officer, Irish Language Officer, Mental Health Officer and Student Parents' and Carers' Officer shall be elected in the second semester by a cross campus ballot, as in Council elections.

Enabling motion to rename, reorder and renumber Constitutional clauses, and remove invalid references, as appropriate, to reflect the amendments approved by Council.

This motion shall be deemed to have been moved, and approved if any Constitutional amendment at this meeting is moved and carried.

“This Council empowers the Clerk of Council to rename, reorder and renumber Constitutional clauses, and remove invalid references, as appropriate, to reflect the amendments approved by the Statutory Meeting of Council held on 14 January 2020.”

Proposer: Peter McMurray (MHLS Faculty Officer)
Seconder: Hayley Donnelly (School Representative)

Peter McMurray, Proposer, moved the amendment by summarising the detail outlined above.

The following salient points were made for the amendment:

- Many other Students’ Unions have created a role of Part-Time Mental Health Student Officer
- Students feel more comfortable approaching their peers
- If a student puts themselves forward for the role, they are deciding that they are able for the role
- Having this as a Part-Time Student Officer will help to break the stigma around Mental Health as it is getting the message out there and visibly so

The following salient points were made against the amendment:

- Having this position would open up the Part-Time Student Officer to a lot of safeguarding issues
- A Part-Time Student shouldn’t be expected to undergo the amount of training or indeed work that this role would require
- It would be better for a fully trained Staff Member to be brought in for this purpose
- Technical issues like things such as their email address being: su.mentalhealth@qub.ac.uk would mean that the Part-Time Student Officer would receive lots of emails from students presenting themselves with mental health issues which would be very distressing
- Experience with the Peer Mentor programme shows the danger of advice being given out of empathy when in actual fact they should just be signposting to other services
- Having this Part-Time Student Officer may give the University a reason to palm off their responsibilities and the work they have to do just because we have a position like this

A motion to vote was submitted.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion to vote was passes.

Following a show of voting cards, the Council voted as follows:

For: 15
Against: 19
Abstentions: 0

The constitutional amendment falls.

6 Business for Consideration

6.1 Recognition of Clubs & Societies

There were none

6.2 Summary of Clubs & Societies Investigation

The Clerk of Council, detailed the outcome of an investigation into the QUB BMSA Society and the consequent penalties imposed on the Society.

The Executive Management Committee (EMC), at its meeting of 4 December 2020 considered a report detailing an investigation a booklet published by the QUB BMSA Society. The investigation considered a range of issues, primarily that material in the publication was mocking various groups, identities, and individuals, which was inconsistent with the values of the Students' Union and of the BMSA.

The BMSA Committee accepted the findings of the investigation and the subsequent penalties imposed on the Society arising from the investigation.

The final penalties imposed on the QUB BMSA Society, are as follows:

[Note: "CSC" refers to the Clubs and Societies Coordinator]

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 *The executive committee of the BMSA Society shall be required to attend an in-person debriefing and re-training session with the CSC. Failure to meet this requirement in a timely manner may result in the Society being placed under suspension.*
- 6.2 *The Society shall receive a written warning which outlines the relevant conduct policies and behavioural expectations which apply to their activities and publications. This warning will remain on record until the end of the 2020/21 academic year.*
- 6.3 *Until the end of the 2020/21 academic year, all publications created by the Society must be approved by the CSC before they are printed and/or shared online. This includes booklets, posters, flyers etc.*
- 6.4 *The booklet under investigation must be wholly retired and must not be re-distributed, in part or in full, at any stage in the future. Any alternative publication must be pre-approved by the CSC as in **6.3** above.*

7. Business for Discussion

7.1 Academic Year Calendar Change – Update (VP Education)

Jason Bunting, Student Officer Education updated Council that feedback from students included:

- Bunching of deadlines - all moving to week 11 and 12
- Often only 24 hours between deadlines
- Class tests have been introduced, which are just exams but without any provisions for those that have access needs

Jason went on to outline how Queen's has agreed to work in partnerships with the Students' Union in order to improve this.

Jason explains that he is running Focus Groups to understand what students want from a new Academic Year Calendar, and that this change should be led and decided by students rather than Queen's. He asks Councillors to get involved in these groups and to spread the word amongst their students.

8. Bye-Elections

There are none

9. Elections

There are none

10. Motions10.2 **Hong Kong Society Request for Support**

The following communication was received from the QUB Hong Kong Society in relation to protests and civic activism in Hong Kong:

Dear Members of Student Council,

We are a group of Hong Kong students in QUB. 2019 has been a tough year for Hong Kong since there have been many severe conflicts between the Hong Kong Police Force and the protesters. Lots of protesters or even innocent by-standers suffered from police brutality and state-sanctioned triad violence. More than 6000 protesters have been arrested, with cases of first-aiders and journalists getting shot in the eye and losing their vision reported; we also saw police shooting protesters with live rounds at nearly point-blank range in extreme cases. Many Hong Kong students at QUB are deeply pained about the situation back home. We would like do our part in this movement through presenting facts to our fellow students and raising their awareness on the humanitarian crisis in Hong Kong, thus garnering support for "Support Democracy in Hong Kong" campaign.

To ensure the safety of Hong Kong students in our peaceful campaign on campus, we hope the Students' Union can express concerns on the suppression faced by Hong Kong people in our democratic movement, both back home and abroad. There are lots of reports that Hong Kong university students involved in similar campaigns in the UK, Canada and Australia saw their booths and posters vandalized, while some were threatened or even assaulted by others holding a different view towards their campaigns. These actions must not be tolerated in civilized societies since everyone has freedom of expression; it is ridiculous that Hong Kong students and their sympathizers participating in peaceful rallies and campaigns have to live under constant fear about lack of personal safety, imposed by barbaric bullies who aim to silence dissidents. This is something we certainly do not want to see at QUB, because it is students' basic right to live our university life without any fear of suppression when we openly discuss an issue of great moral importance.

We believe a mutual understanding between the Students' Union and us on our goals can prevent uncivilized hate actions and promote a liberal environment. It is also hoped that the Students' Union will help us seek support from the University on delivering appropriate consequences towards acts against freedom of expression, shall there be any in the course of the campaign. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Best regards,
QUB Hong Kong Society

Proposer: Kwok Hoi Chun (QUB Hong Kong Society)
Seconder: Wong Tsz Yeung (QUB Hong Kong Society)

Nicole Lee, Secretary of the Hong Kong Society and Proposer, moved the motion by summarising the above points.

Friendly amendments were submitted and accepted, so the motion now reads as follows:

Hong Kong Society Request for Support

Dear Members of Student Council,

We are a group of Hong Kong students in QUB. 2019 has been a tough year for Hong Kong since there have been many severe conflicts between the Hong Kong Police Force and the protesters. Lots of protesters or even innocent by-standers suffered from police brutality and state-sanctioned triad violence. More than 6000 protestors have been arrested, with cases of first-aiders and journalists getting shot in the eye and losing their vision reported; we also saw police shooting protesters with live rounds at nearly point-blank range in extreme cases. Many Hong Kong students at QUB are deeply pained about the situation back home. We would like do our part in this movement through presenting facts to our fellow students and raising their awareness on the humanitarian crisis in Hong Kong, thus garnering support for "Support Democracy in Hong Kong" campaign.

To ensure the safety of Hong Kong students in our peaceful campaign on campus, we hope the Students' Union can express concerns on the suppression faced by Hong Kong people in our democratic movement, both back home and abroad. There are lots of reports that Hong Kong university students involved in similar campaigns in the UK, Canada and Australia saw their booths and posters vandalized, while some were threatened or even assaulted by others holding a different view towards their campaigns. These actions must not be tolerated in civilized societies since everyone has freedom of expression; it is ridiculous that Hong Kong students and their sympathizers participating in peaceful rallies and campaigns have to live under constant fear about lack of personal safety, imposed by barbaric bullies who aim to silence dissidents. This is something we certainly do not want to see at QUB, because it is students' basic right to live our university life without any fear of suppression when we openly discuss an issue of great moral importance.

We believe a mutual understanding between the Students' Union and us on our goals can prevent uncivilized hate actions and promote a liberal environment. The Students' Union reaffirms its belief that every student deserves the freedom to express their political views. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Best regards,
QUB Hong Kong Society

Proposer: Kwok Hoi Chun (QUB Hong Kong Society)
Seconder: Wong Tsz Yeung (QUB Hong Kong Society)

A motion to vote was submitted.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion to vote passes.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion passes.

10.3 **Universal Gym Membership**

Council notes:

1. That various universities across the country including Trinity, UCD, NUIG and UCC give universal gym membership to their students. Said memberships are paid via the students' contribution fees. This policy even expands to low income students exempt from paying contribution fees.
2. That 37% and 27.5% of adults in the North of Ireland are obese and overweight respectively. These figures have been on an upward trend since the DoH began its annual Health Survey in 2011. These are the highest figures in Ireland.
3. In 2012 a DOH study found that obesity alone costs the taxpayer £370 million a year.
4. That people from a working-class background are three times more likely to be obese and overweight.
5. That exercise plays a major role in combating our obesity epidemic
6. Exercise has additional benefits to mental health by helping relive stress and help combat depression.
7. That the removal of universal gym membership in IT Tralee lead to a 25% decrease in students availing of the gym in Tralee's Sport's Complex.
8. PEC peak time membership for students costs £25.50 per a month, while off peak time membership costs £16.50 per a month.
9. That students residing in QUB accommodation currently avail of off-peak PEC membership.

Council believes:

1. That current pricing of gym membership only adds to the monthly costs of students adding to economic anxiety.
2. The current pricing of gym membership is exclusionary to students from a working-class background.
3. The current scenario in which QUB accommodation residents can avail of off-peak PEC membership creates a two-tiered system which is fundamentally unfair
4. That universal gym membership for students paid for via our tuition fees would see an increase in the number of students attending the PEC.
5. The universal PEC membership would be beneficial the physical and mental health of the student body.

Council Mandates:

1. That the SU executive lobbies the PEC and the University to establish universal peak time PEC membership to all students which is paid for via our tuition fees.
2. That the Welfare Officer releases a press statement and sends an email to all students detailing the SU's support for universal PEC membership for students.

Proposer: Seán-Diarmuid Kelliher (Student)
Seconder: Konstantine-Luka Kenzic (Student)

Seán-Diarmuid Kelliher, Proposer, moved the motion by summarising the above points.

Friendly amendments were submitted and accepted, so the motion now reads as follows:

Universal Gym Membership

Council notes:

1. That various universities across the country including Trinity, UCD and UCC give universal gym membership to their students. Said memberships are paid via the students' contribution fees. This policy even expands to low income students exempt from paying contribution fees.
2. That 37% and 27.5% of adults in the North of Ireland are obese and overweight respectively. These figures have been on an upward trend since the DoH began its annual Health Survey in 2011. These are the highest figures in Ireland.
3. In 2012 a DOH study found that obesity alone costs the taxpayer £370 million a year.
4. That people from a working-class background are three times more likely to be obese and overweight.
5. That exercise plays a major role in combating our obesity epidemic
6. Exercise has additional benefits to mental health by helping relive stress and help combat depression.
7. That the removal of universal gym membership in IT Tralee lead to a 25% decrease in students availing of the gym in Tralee's Sport's Complex.
8. PEC peak time membership for students costs £25.50 per a month, while off peak time membership costs £16.50 per a month.
9. That students residing in QUB accommodation currently avail of off-peak PEC membership.

Council believes:

1. That current pricing of gym membership only adds to the monthly costs of students adding to economic anxiety.
2. The current pricing of gym membership is exclusionary to students from a working-class background.
3. The current scenario in which QUB accommodation residents can avail of off-peak PEC membership creates a two-tiered system which is fundamentally unfair
4. The universal PEC membership would be beneficial the physical and mental health of the student body.

Council Mandates:

1. That the Students' Union executive lobbies the PEC and the University to establish universal peak time PEC membership to all students.
2. That the Union President and Welfare Officer raise this issue directly with the Head of Queen's Sport and with the Director of Student Plus.
3. That the Union's position regarding support for universal PEC membership is effectively communicated to all students and the public via its channels.
4. That the Students' Union executive lobbies the University to work in partnership with PEC and other local gyms to deliver this in a cost effective manner and ensure there is capacity for the increased number of students likely to avail of this with no reduction in services offered.

Proposer: Seán-Diarmuid Kelliher (Student)
Seconder: Konstantine-Luka Kenzic (Student)

A motion to vote was submitted.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion to vote passes.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion passes.

10.5 **Solidarity with Indian Students protesting against Hindutva**

Council Notes:

- India's ruling majority headed by the right wing nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) & Prime Minister Modi adheres to the ideology of Hindutva which states that India belongs to only Hindu's and anyone else is an 'infiltrator' in the country.
- Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is a bill which amends the Indian Citizenship law to provide citizenship to religious minorities but excludes Muslims and Sri Lankan Tamils from the process.
- The bill violates the secular principles of the Indian constitution as faith cannot be made a condition of citizenship and technically makes Indian Muslims as second-class citizens.
- The government has further proposed to implement National Register for Citizens (NRC) which is very closely interlinked to the CAA. This is a citizen's register, the government first plans to offer citizenships to persecuted minorities apart from Muslims. Anyone not in the list shall be put into detention centres.

Council Further Notes:

- In Aug 2019, the BJP majority government voted to revoke Article 370 which gave autonomy to Kashmir, a Muslim-majority state, between Pakistan and India. Since then, the state-sponsored Hindutva regime has seen police brutality against innocent civilians, an internet shut down and house arrests of key Kashmiri leaders.
- Kashmir's internet blackout has now lasted more than 150 days, the longest ever in a democracy, and has severely impacted people's lives, jobs and the local economy.
- Students have been at the forefront of fighting this across India, their voices have been stifled and are facing violence as a result.
- Police brutality carried out at protests in December and against the students of public universities (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Aligarh Muslim University & Jamia University).
- Most recent one, being JNU where students & teachers were attacked by masked Nationalist mobs by an outfit related to the BJP/Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) combined under the lens of the State Police.

Council mandates:

- The Students' Union to stand in solidarity with Indian students, Indian citizens & members of the diaspora fighting the BJP's Hindutva agenda and the implementation of CAA & NRC.
- To reaffirm the SU's anti- fascist stance through standing against the state-sponsored violence against Kashmiri Muslims and the unconstitutional implementation of CAA & NRC to create a Hindu State.
- For the VP Equality & Diversity and the International Officer to engage in actions of solidarity to support anti-CAA/NRC action.

Proposed By: Hamsavani Rajeswaren (Vice President Equality & Diversity)
Seconded By: Mohammed Abdul Salam (Student)

Mohammed Abdul Salam, Secunder, moves the motion by summarising the above points.

A motion to vote was submitted.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion to vote passes.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion passes.

11. Report of the Management Board and Recommendations
There was none.
12. Report of the Executive Management Committee and Recommendations
- 12.1 Report of the Executive Management Committee
Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.
- 12.2 Report of the Union President (July-Oct 2019) SUC/P/19/15
Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.
- 12.3 Report of the Union President (Nov-Dec 2019) SUC/P/20/4
Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.
- 12.4 Report of the Vice President Activities (July-Oct 2019) SUC/P/19/19
Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.
- 12.5 Report of the Vice President Activities (Nov-Dec 2019) SUC/P/20/5
Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.
- 12.6 Report of the Vice President Education (July-Oct 2019) SUC/P/19/16
Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.
- 12.7 Report of the Vice President Education (Nov-Dec 2019) SUC/P/20/6
Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.
- 12.8 Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity (July-Oct 2019) SUC/P/19/17
Peter McMurray, MHLS Faculty Officer made a Point of Order that this Report was submitted outside the required timeframe.
Vice President Equality & Diversity made an appeal to Council.
A motion to vote was called.
Following a show of voting cards, the motion to vote passes.
Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.
- 12.9 Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity (Nov-Dec 2019)
Peter McMurray, MHLS Faculty Officer made a Point of Order that this Report was submitted outside the required timeframe.
Vice President Equality & Diversity made an appeal to Council.
A motion to vote was called.
Following a show of voting cards, the motion to vote passes.
Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.
- 12.10 Report of the Vice President Postgraduate (July-Oct 2019) SUC/P/19/18

Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.

- 12.11 Report of the Vice President Postgraduate (Nov-Dec 2019) SUC/P/20/7

Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.

- 12.12 Report of the Vice President Welfare (July-Oct 2019) SUC/P/19/20

Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.

- 12.13 Report of the Vice President Welfare (Nov-Dec 2019) SUC/P/20/8

Following a show of voting cards, the Report was accepted.

13. Reports from other Union Committees and Recommendations

Report of the Standing Committee

There was none.

Report of the Environmental and Ethical Committee

There was none.

14. Reports from University Committees

There was none.

15. Constitutional Questions

There was none.

16. Questions (to Elected Student Representatives)

16.1 *To the Students' Union President*

Could you please update on any responses that have been received yet from the letter sent to political leaders regarding the current healthcare situation and the impact on nursing students?

Proposer: Peter McMurray (MHLS Faculty Officer)

Union President explained that he has sent a letter to Party Leaders and has received one response from the DUP. He will send this on to Peter and going forward will send to the Proposer and Seconder of Motions and also to EMC. He further stated that the situation has now changed with Stormont up and running again so this will impact how we will go forward with this policy as we have a Health Minister now.

16.2 *To the Vice President Equality & Diversity*

Could you please outline, under your briefing as equality and diversity officer to represent the diverse views of the entire student body, in what ways the views of the many pro-life students we have on campus were considered and reflected in any response to the NIO Abortion Consultation that was submitted on behalf of the Students Union, particularly given that the neutrality vote at the last council showed a significant (over one third) minority of Council members to be in favour of a neutral position?

Proposer: Peter McMurray (MHLS Faculty Officer)

Vice President Equality & Diversity stated that the response written reflected the policy of the Union. She further stated that there was an opportunity for members of the public to submit responses personally, but our response was to reflect that of our policy.

16.3 *To the Vice President Equality & Diversity*

Given you have a mandate to represent all students, making sure every student is treated equally and fairly, and promoting greater cultural understanding, and given we have a QUB Conservative and Unionist Society and a Democratic Unionist Society could you please explain to members of those societies how they can feel they are going to be treated equally and fairly when on social media you advocate people "kick the Tories OUT", you talk about "voting the Tories and DUP out!" with punch-fist emojis, and you post "Emma Little Pengelly is cancelled, Hun, byeeee"?

Proposer: Peter McMurray (MHLS Faculty Officer)

Vice President Equality & Diversity stated that her personal views are no secret and that she has been vocal about them since before she was elected in post. She further stated that Students' Unions promote freedom of expression, are shared spaces not neutral spaces and although she doesn't agree with the views that these groups hold, she respects that they exist and have their views too.

17. Any Other Competent Business

There was none.

18. Date of Next Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council

Speaker Jennifer Lawrence announced that the next Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council would take place on Tuesday 4 February 2020 at 6.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Belfast City Hall. Councillors are asked to make their own travel arrangements to this venue.

She also announced that a half-hour tour of Belfast City Hall had been booked for Councillors beginning promptly at 5.30 p.m. where a maximum of 50 persons can attend.

Councillors will be provided with a ticket for the tour on arrival, on a first-come, first-served, basis. It was advised that Councillors wishing to attend the tour arrive well in advance of 5.30 p.m.

Kristina Connolly (Deputy Clerk, Students' Union Council)