

All Student Members Meeting Minute - May 2020

1) Welcome & Introductions

The Chair (WW) introduced the meeting, and noted that Jenny Barnes was in attendance as the Clerk to take, minute and James Brooks was present to provide clarification on business matters as the Chief Executive of the Union.

WW outlined how the meeting would work including how people could raise questions/comments in the chat bar, but should keep microphones muted.

WW noted that despite our governance not allowing electronic meetings, the charity commission have relaxed rules around this at the present time, due to Covid-19, to ensure that meetings can still take place.

WW noted that we had 116 members present so we would not be able to vote to make policy in this meeting but can vote to take items to referendum.

2) Minutes

WW noted that the minutes of the previous meeting were in the 'files' folder in the Teams meeting, and on the SU website. Members were asked to object to the minutes by commenting in the chat bar.

No objections received.

Minutes approved

3) Matters arising

WW noted the matters arising from the previous meeting:

- a) The proposal for the amendment of the Student Leader roles was passed and taken forward
- b) The meeting approved a referendum for leaving or remaining in NUS which took place.

4) Proposals & Petitions

WW handed over to Emma Blackburn (VPWC) to present a proposal for a Housing Accreditation Scheme.

Questions:

Question - Hannah Barr: A problem is see arising with HAS is it's long-term ability of this scheme. Will it be something that operates more than just over your leadership? Will this be protected once you are gone as Officer Emma? How would you propose this being protected?

Answer – EB – This is something that the next Executive committee will have to decide as to its priority next year, but it is very important to students, so I believe it should be a priority.

Question- Sophie Yeaman: What are your ideas on how they will be assessed to get “accreditation”?

Answer – EB – That is more operational, so it will need to be fleshed out if this gets passed.

Question- Elliot Luke: Excuse me if I missed it in your proposal, but what cost would there be to landlords themselves? Many smaller landlords are great, but would not buy into the scheme due to the cost.

Answer – EB – This will depend on the next Executive Committee depending on what they want to spend money, but I agree, the smaller landlords are important.

Question: Jamie Smith: Does the proposed scheme exclusively target HMOs or would it expand to include all accommodation occupied by students. I.e. independent private rent agreements

Answer – EB – We would target it towards HMOs initially due to the large number of students in HMOs. We would need to test it first, but then after that there is no reason it can't be expanded into independent providers.

Question- Bradley Allsop: Have you thought about how this fits with Cribadvisor?

Answer – EB – We have met with Crib Advisor lots. It's a great idea and supports students to give feedback, and it would be good to be able to do something, as the SU, and emulate the student feedback element.

Question: Sophie Yeoman – So would all housing agents be given automatic accreditation and then get stripped of it if they do negative things or will they have to work towards accreditation?

Answer – EB- The future Exec will need to decide on specifics. However, I think we would ask housing agents to work towards the accreditations as otherwise we could be in the same position as we are in now.

Question: Lucy Krogdahl - It's it a possibility that we could partner with crib-advisor and share the information they already have on Lincoln housing?

Answer – EB – Again, this is one for the future Executive Team, and could be brought back to a future all student members meeting. But we have been talking to crib advisor a lot.

Question: Callum Roper – is it problematic for the SU to run an accreditation scheme but have advertising space for Iconic on its homepage?

Answer – EB – The advertising on our homepage is not done through student leaders, it is done through our operational side, and is not something the exec work directly on. Advertising contracts change each year and would have to be done on a different basis

Question: Lydia Gallyer- A concern from quite a few is that privately owned student accommodation complexes do not provide a recycling system (even uni owned complexes have only recently introduced this over the last few years). Could this be one of the standards they have to meet (or is this asking for too much).

Answer – EB – That's a great idea. It should definitely should involve things like recycling and energy consumption. Really good idea.

Question: Rhys Davies- Some letting agencies may have really good houses that they rent in good condition, but some are awful. How would we ensure that an accredited agency doesn't have these bad homes (probably over time this is)

Answer – EB – With the spot checks they would be random and we would not want to allow landlords to pick which houses they show

Question: Who will be in charge of all of the spot checks? In the proposal you say the accommodation team no longer visit the private rented houses. Will these checks be only ran out by the accommodation Team or will there be additional help along side them as they already have to manage multiple university owned student accommodations?

Answer – EB – The Union would run the accreditation scheme, and all the spot checks would be through our own resources

Further questions which there was not time to answer:

Garry Clawson - Can the SU join the current scheme and implement these proposals?

Bailey Marchant - Would there be a warning system for accommodation which isn't up to scratch? Or would they be struck off the scheme straight away if the spot check found problems

WW asked if anyone wanted to speak against taking the proposal to referendum.
No against speech.

WW asked if anyone wanted to speak on abstaining from voting.
No abstain speech.

Passed by assent.

Action: Referendum to take place on a Housing Accreditation Scheme

AOB

What should the SU Prioritise?:

WW handed over to Cassie Coakley (SU President) to speak on this.

CC noted:

Key things students had previously asked for were grass pitches and solar panels
CC explained how many SU staff were furloughed, the SU finances and that we were going to make a loss of £200k in LSUT, therefore can't put as much back into the student experience.

Students Noted:

Sophie Yeaman - The push on improving mental health services and support, including campaigns needs to be continued. It's so important and will be so needed once all the students come back in September as this pandemic has affected everyone.

CC- thank you, I agree.

Bradley Allsop: I think advice services will be vital for students at this time

CC - absolutely

Bradley -advice services

Liam Madden - Sports and societies , finding a way that these can still happen

CC- safety is the main priority so we just need to just wait for the government, and follow the guidance.

Alex Saunders - can we make sure that the SU continues to represent its students?

CC – absolutely, it is what we are here to do.

Lewis Duke- Making sure that the university makes sure that lectures in the new year are actually accessible

CC – hold on to this point as it will come into the next question

Callum Gibson- Advice centre/ wellbeing

CC- totally agree

Ioana – Camelia Martin - Issues of employ-ability will be such a big worry for many students... so providing advice for that

CC – I totally understand how you feel, I am in the same boat.

Alice Buckner- mental health alongside sports and societies to try to combat loneliness and isolation with quarantine and social distancing

CC – yes, totally agree

Bailey Marchant - Things that will bring all students together such as socially distanced film nights in the engine shed. Anything that will make students feel like part of the Union

CC – that's a great idea

Lydia Gallyer – Barnett - Agree with sports and society. Great thing about uni is you can have a set of friends from your course, living place and then also sports and societies

CC – totally agree, students want to be together

Annabelle Phipps – prioritising mental health and wellbeing support for staff as well as students

CC – yes, mental health is really important

Talia Adams – Things that help students keep in contact as that is what a lot of people will struggle with! I think the SU could be key for keeping the social side of things going even if it is digitally!

CC – yes, we want to help students keep in contact

Katy Hartley – I absolutely agree with everything said above, i think priorities should include support for students who are going to be massively affected by the later term time and as a result later student finance payments. I've got friends who are going to massively struggle to pay rent and survive.

CC- really good feedback, we are pressing the University about this.

Rebecca – Communicating with activities as soon as plans are in place so that they can start planning their year out
Also releasing this info to committees before the rest of the students

CC – we will let committees know as soon as we have plans

Oluwaseaun Alaba – I think its important that the SU holds the University to account to ensure that students are not being ripped off for paying 9 grand a year, especially considering its likely most teaching would be online

CC – thanks for this feedback. We meet with the University every week to take stuff back to the University.

Elliot luke – Perhaps leaning towards things, such as sports and societies, which the university does not offer alternatives for. Wellbeing is important, but the university does offer such things. Collaboration seems important here.

CC – totally agree

Oluwaseaun Alaba – i think the SU could maybe do more to help third years progressing on to employment in our current climate

CC – yes, completely agree

Millicent Horne - Making sure education services are still accessible to students through the university. With the library closing this will have a massive affect on people's grades, especially where books aren't digitised. Also, make sure that students know the options open to them for when they aren't performing their best, e.g. safety net in the new academic year If still needed.

C – totally agree

Rhiannon James - Would there be any way to incorporate activities such as volunteering (while staying safe of course) to help students feel involved and active when returning after lockdown? Could boost mental health if students feel they are making a positive difference?

C - Yes but need to be in line with the government advice, and ensure we are doing this safely as that is the priority

Charlotte Creasey - advice for students on how to stay financially stable between now and the start of uni as trying to get a job during this time is hard and this could have a massive impact on students mental health

CC – at the moment we are pushing the University's hardship funds. We may need to promote this more.

Riley Wade - It's more important than ever now I think to promote women's and LGBT+ issues, obviously Pride has been cancelled, and a lot of people don't have that outlet anymore - a lot of people are in uncomfortable living situations right now, so knowing that your SU is there for you in that regard is massive.

CC – really good feedback, thank you

Yannick - Most students come to university for their degree, but myself and many friends are worried if everything is online, society weekly meet ups and events cancelled, unable to visit people etc.... we would not want to be at uni especially if we are paying 9 grand to sit in my room. So would be nice to know all plans and options in place over the next few months otherwise i know a lot of people want to defer.

CC – The key point here is that the University are never going to tell you to defer. If you want to defer, we will represent you, support you and let you know what we can through our communications.

Lucy Krogdahl - Ensuring we create online events to help students mental health and combat loneliness, but also ensuring we have educational provision in place so students grades aren't affected by virtual learning

CC– definitely

Ioana – Camelia Martin - Agreed with the comments about the online lectures and keeping the Uni accountable, there isn't much information on what will occur, how people can defer etc and the support we will get with this new method of teaching

CC – if it is something you need to do, we will support that

Hannah Barr - This does not cost anything or necessarily change anything. But as this crisis has made many feel chaotic, if clarity would be prioritised - that to me is very important. Clarity on what will be prioritised. But, also what will be absent next term. The clarity and the honesty would be extremely grounding for many students.

CC – we need to save about 1/3 of our funds. It is hard, but we obviously do need to prioritise.

What lessons should the SU and University learn from Covid-19?

CC delivered a presentation on what the University and Students' Union had been doing:

Amy Lewis - Maintaining feedback schemes for courses such as course reps to keep communication open

CC – Absolutely but course reps are difficult at the moment due to not being physically on campus.

Jiachen Liu - I think its important for the campaigns group continuing representing all groups of students, and academic representation to continue listen to students' feedback on online teaching and learning.

CC- completely agree

Lydia Gallyer- Barnett- Not a high priority but it would be nice for the current third years in April next year (the new graduation date) to have something extra happening (but I am aware that usually there is a big grad party on the Friday to finish of the week anyway - would be great if this still goes ahead at least!)

Callum Gibson - Is it possible for the SU to offer online live or recorded work shops? example, careers and employability related, arts and craft, online team exercises for new people to meet?

Rebecca Sharp - The Uni has shown that they can provide lectures online, Will this mean that online lectures will continue to be available after COVID? We have often be told that lecturers don't have to provide online lectures to students when teaching in person as it isn't stated in their contracts. Online lectures can be helpful for those who have to miss lectures for other experiences or for mental health opportunities.

GP – The contracts has always been the issue, lecturers don't have to share recordings and content, as it could be stolen. Academics have got on board with it during this period. Now they are available across the University this is so much easier to push through. Depending on what is happening next year, trying to push this through is so important.

Natasha Kirchin - Contact and support during online learning has been varied across courses and even within courses. As a psychology student, I personally received a lot of support from one of my tutors, however I know that a friend of mine on the same courses received virtually no support. There needs to be a way to ensure consistency among courses and lecturers so that no one student is disadvantaged during online learning.

CC– We are getting the information from different schools which GP has done. If you have any information like that, send to Georgia Petts

Lewis Duke - Our lecturers have gotten away with not giving lectures, or when doing them having their camera off which mean no lip reading can take place and with poor sound quality

CC- Accessibility is key, we need to push the University more

Rhys Davies - It's been great seeing that the SU has adapted to the current situation with the online awards and recognising our students, online 8/10 Swans plus the regular FB livestreams.

CC – thank you

Alex Saunders - mine has been shocking. I've had lecturers that said one thing and did another. I had 4 classes this semester and one 1 had regular support. the rest was hit and miss. one of my classes, for example, promised a lecture recording and that never materilised. I am a first year. I dont come under the saftey net, not do I get progress to date due to how my course works. I have had limited support. I fought to get an extension which took awhile but happened after they didnt know how the process worked and i had to tell

them how. I've missed out on my practical learning and it sucks also; the assessment was replaced with something completely different to the original learning outcomes.

CC– Email Advice and Georgia, and we will try and get it sorted out

Oluwasean Alaba - considering its going to be online based teaching but lets be honest this is providing the same service as the Open university which is cheaper. I dont agree that they're able to justify charging 9.25k a year considering our library doesnt provide a sufficient amount of textbooks for my course in particular

CC- Great question. In regards to the charging of money, it's actually government decision and the University can't change it. The University don't decide and we don't decide so we are going to have to see.

Charlotte Creasey -I'm understanding the later academic start but is a month pushed back going to benefit us as students? if lectures are still going to be online why aren't we starting in September?

CC-The University are doing it from a safety perspective, hoping restrictions will be lifted. CC can talk to University about why it is October.

William Evans - If online teaching continues, I believe that school reps and course reps are key to communicating with students and this link between them and academic stuff needs to be consolidated before october so that the plan is in place so people feel relaxed about starting back in October

CC – yes, reps are so important

Miles Halley - The later term start wasn't emailed out to students instead we were expected to just find it. This was poor communication to existing students

CC- I know what happened here. The University sent out an email, but unfortunately there was a system error which mean that someone leaked the information before students received the email. It wasn't meant to happen that way. The University weren't purposefully keeping students in the dark.

James Morrison - My society has run 9 weekly events since teaching moved online, but this has been without much guidance from activities on what we can and can't do. Will there be updated guidance and support for societies and sports that can still run?

CC – we can absolutely get some guidance for activities

Chandani Holliday - The university has done a really bad job at teaching online. I have spoken to a few different courses who haven't received any live or recorded online lectures. Instead they have issued lectures with extra notes and that is it. There have also been quite a few lecturers not replying to emails either. I think removes quality of the teaching at the

university. Moreover, there are some courses that require more practical experience than what has been provided and no alternatives have been offered

CC – we are noting these. We will get back to everyone who raises feedback and try and help with the issues.

Lauren Martin - SU wise has been very useful still representing students during this time and working really hard to provide support and representation for all students. However uni wise it is very varied and communication will vary between courses and I definitely agree consistency should be placed at least as a basis level for every lecture to meet etc. I know on my count personally in life sciences we have had a lack of adequate resources which I know I feel has affected this last term of learning and if it was to continue at the poor rate it would be end up being detrimental to education prospects

CC – again, we will get back to everyone and try and help them with these issues.

Zoe Hoy - a lot of lecturers have been reusing recorded lectures from previous years meaning the content hasn't been updated. Another issue with recorded lectures are the accessibility. unless they have subtitles or a transcript they are not fully accessible.

CC - CC – again, we will get back to everyone and try and help them with these issues. Accessibility is really important.

Lewis Duke - our course rep also doesn't talk to us - he only talks to his friends so he doesn't actually take our issues to our school.

CC – if your rep isn't good, please let Georgia know.

Garry Clawson - I saw several students drop through the net as attendance was not taken. Follow up with students was difficult and knowing if engagement was maintained was hard to measure. An opportunity for improvement is students being followed up to make sure they are OK and coping well. Normally this would be done if attendance was low. We need something like this in place.

CC – thanks for the feedback

Grace Tompkins - Online teaching is also compromised by network strength coming and going

CC - CC – thanks for the feedback

Miles Hally - Obviously with social distancing practical elements were just completely abandoned. this cannot continue to happen and an alternative safe way need to be found.

CC - CC – thanks for the feedback

Feedback that didn't get answered in the meeting:

Ioana- Camelia Martin: Judging by the lack of consistency on courses, and online teaching being good on some courses and really bad on others, if online teaching continues there needs to be a lot more guidance on how our fees are being used. Online lectures will need to be worth the fees - however I can say for my course they were pretty great, switching to online lectures very quickly and offering support and frequent feedback through emails

Yannick Bhatt: This is repeating and supporting what others are saying, the university keeps saying the Uni has supplied sufficient online teaching. My course only had a week and a half of teaching left when lock down hit so my course has not experienced any online teaching so how are we meant to give feedback... And money is the big issue! This quality that is provided is not worth 9 grand.

Joseph Fitzgerald: I am not sure if this has been something that's come up on other courses but for engineering 1st and 2nd years have zero safety net as our exams are all at the end of the year and many feel that the current situation is not being taken into account in regards to overall grades

Bradley Allsop: Some of these issues are national in nature, such as fees, national hardship funds - now we're not in NUS, how is our SU helping tackle those national problems?

Natasha Kirchin: One of the biggest issues with online teaching right now is the accessibility of the library. Many courses use texts which are not digitised and hopefully the university could look into a way of getting these book to people where possible (i.e. I know a few universities allow you to request a book be sent to you to use at home). Obviously there are issues with this but is something that could be looked into to ensure that everyone has access to the resources they need.

Emma Grabowski- Skinner: I feel like students would benefit from ALL library books being made available online. It's so incredibly difficult to write essays with trying to find books on so many different places, getting free trials or paying for subscriptions for websites to access the resources that are free with library access

Aidan Mcloughlin: The lecturers down at Holbeach campus have been excellent at online learning during this however I feel this is due to them being more used to teaching online lectures - could it be possible for the main campus and other courses to learn from them to carry out efficient online learning for the next academic year?

Daniel Coady: as a 2nd year my course has had no indication on how or what our diss should involve i have spoken to people on other courses and they have had full modules based towards it whereas my course has had nothing

What would you like to see next year if remote learning continues:

CC presented the question

Amelia Cullen: From a school of chemistry POV we need more tutorial style questions as usually we would do these in lectures, however the online lectures tend to miss out these questions as they just go over lecture slides

Iona- Camelia Martin - A lot more support for placements - there are people who have picked their course FOR their placement year opportunity... Would like a lot more support for those students who may have lost their placement position and advice on how they can be helped with gaining this work experience

Natashca Kirchin - My course hasn't had any online live lectures, there's been pre-recorded lectures from last year but it's hard to ask questions and get clarification from prerecorded lectures. If online learning continues next year there definitely needs to be more live lectures!

Lucy Krogdahl - We need an increased level of digitised books for students. Personally my course (biomed) had brilliant online teaching using collaborate including revision q&a sessions but we missed out on digitised books and our practical learning which is key to our course

Rhiannon James - Definitely agree with having live lectures and seminars, with them being saved as well

Chandani Holliday - All online sessions should be online so the university experience is kept as close to normal as possible. Also using the same platform. And as above they should be able to be saved and looked back on later.

Garry Clawson - Personal tutors should be available online as well as academic contact hours.

Zoe Hoy - would like to see more online books and resources that can be downloaded.

Alex Saunders - as a Isfm student and course rep, we need more consistency in how it happens. maybe use one platform instead of three (teams, blackboard and panopto) for lectures.

Kelsey Mason -Next year I'd definitely like more live lectures so that the sense of routine is sustained. Also, live lectures would be a massive upgrade from the past few weeks where we have simply had previous years lectures uploaded or just a powerpoint uploaded to blackboard

Emma Grabowski - I completely agree with Alex. We have been using way too many platforms and some have had so many issues

Garry Clawson - urgency hours should also be available online rather than face-to-face meetings only.

Grace Tompkins - One of our tutors used collaborate with recording - excellent

Natasha Kirchin - We definitely need a system to try and identify those students who are falling behind and may be struggling (i.e. those not attending lectures are usually contacted so a system where by students are contacted if they aren't accessing blackboard, for example, could be beneficial)

Lauren Martin - As a first year biomed student I feel they should have more consistency across all years across the school as opposed to providing most content for other years yes we aren't as important but we do need more adequate learning for all years so our learning isn't affected. So definitely feel live lectures are needed for all years

Rhiannon James - Regular contact from personal tutors, especially during the beginning of the new year with online teaching

Holly Armitage - Would it be better to increase the 15 working day assignment grade and feedback so lecturers have less pressure and can give more thorough feedback and students have less stricter expectations of these dates?

Ciara Watson - There still needs to be a socially distanced study spaces available for students. Some students do not have positive study spaces at home.

Amy Lewis - Tutorials on a platform such as this in teams where questions can be asked as we go along as standard would be useful

Millicent Horne - If you could liaise with archives on campus and in Lincoln that History students would usually visit, e.g. MACE archive. If you could talk to these teams to see how their resources could be more accessible during this pandemic, this would be very helpful!

Grace Tompkins - i'm finding difficulty studying in home space - can't we book study spaces somewhere in uni???

Bye-Laws:

WW handed over to CC to present the bye-law changes

BA raised a point of order that you could not vote on AOB. WW noted that we could not vote anyway as there are not enough people here. This is a discussion.

BA asked to speak on the mic against the bye-laws. WW did not allow this as it is not being voted on, so no one should be speaking 'for and against' things. This is a discussion. We have not allowed others to speak on the mic, so we need to keep it fair.

Callum Roper - If the SU does take a side as we saw with the NUS referendum it greatly advantages that side and disadvantages the other. \\

Seth Goddard: Why is proposed Byelaw change 8.11 included when this act [the Union, with consent from the Trustee Board] included when it was so historically unpopular? The unpopularity had real, negative consequences including a toxic democratic environment and personal attacks on SU officers in online public forums. Do you agree that the inclusion of 8.11 is an oversight and that this should be replaced with a neutrality clause offering the privileges of mass emails and SU venue advertisements to both sides of the referendum in the interests of fairness?

CC – We have taken legal advice on this, and solicitors are telling the Trustee Board that it is the correct thing to do, as you cannot not allow the Trustee Board to grant the organisation permission to take a stance, around something which affects the union as a company.

Chandani Holliday - the SU's opinion should be to represent the students opinion. as you said earlier 'it would not matter about anything else as long as we [the SU] are supporting our students" therefore taking a side before hearing the student voice is clearly not representing the students

Hannah Barr - I think the issue here that Bradley and Seth are pointing to is that the SU having a stance on issues would create a power imbalance, as the non-SU based stance would not have the monetary power that you do, as well as less time to make their stance strong.

CC – showed the legal advice from solicitors

Other comments there was not time to respond to:

Chandani Holliday: the SU should provide an unbiased view providing facts for both sides in any referendum. In order for students to make an informed decision

Seth Goddard: The rest of the bye-law is stellar. This one part is just disappointing because it feels like a step back. What is the problem with making the SU institutionally neutral?

Callum Roper: The SU is well placed to be able to support both sides I would rather see a byelaw amendment that protects that and ensures in referendums the SU is facilitating a balanced debate.

Alex Saunders: why wasn't this in the documents?

CC – because this came in last minute

Bradley Allsop - Really unfair to give bias to the proposer via speaking rights

If the trustees or officers want to share a view in a referendum as trustees that's fine - that's not the same as using union resources for one side or saying the 'union' has a stance - the whole point of a referendum is to decide the union stance, saying it already has 1 before the vote makes no sense - all of us are the SU, not just the trustees.

Some unions may do this but its very rare.

Large numbers of students were against this during the last ref, and during the focus groups.

Not sure why legal advice is relevant - we're not suggesting its illegal

Chandani Holliday: It is not about legality. It is about student representation

Callum Roper: its more a question of morality over legality

Riley Wade: It ought to be the case that the SU is democratic, as has been said the SU has power and organisation over individual campaigners. By having an opinion in referendums, the SU (which represents students) is, by expressing its official opinion, perhaps unintentionally, presenting that opinion as the student opinion.

Seth Goddard: Do you not think that this situation, where we need to pass a new housing policy and amend byelaws in a time of crisis , is an example of why we ought to consider reducing quoracy [say to 75 or 80] so that we can have a responsive Union Democracy when we need it? Would an SUGgestion be the best way to do this?

Bradley Allsop : Wow, ignoring my chat comment too

WW – I did not ignore your comment Bradley, the meeting ends at 3pm, and it is now 3pm, so I am closing the meeting.

Close of Meeting