



Date: Monday 14 November 2022
Time: 18:30 – 20:30
Venue: Bentham House LG10 Lecture Room, Bentham House

Union Executive Minutes

Chair: Deniz Akinci, Union Affairs Officer

Members:	P	AP	AB
Daria Duda for Angel Ma, LGBTQ+ Officer	X		
Angela Escobar Brown, Elected Officer From EZ	X		
Callie Yoo, BME Students' Officer	X		
Chiamaka Agu & Demetri Alvanis, Elected Officer From AZ	X		
Deniz Akinci, Union Affairs Officer, Chair	X		
Hamza Ahmed, Education Officer	X		
Harper Taylor-Hanson, Trans Officer	X		
Manon Simmons & Sasha Green, Women's Officer (Job Share)	X		
Mary McHarg, Activities & Engagement Officer	X		
Nick Miao, Elected Officer From WCZ	X		
Oluseyi (Seyi) A Osibamowo, Equity & Inclusion Officer	X		
Umair Mehmood, Welfare & Community Officer	X		
Vaania Kapoor Achuthan, Sustainability Officer	X		

In Attendance:
Jeff Saddington-Wiltshire, Representation and Democracy Manager
Samira Lily Chowdhury, Democracy Assistant, minutes
Simon To, Director of Policy Governance and Advocacy
Guy Stepney, Head of Marketing & Communications
John Dubber, Chief Executive
Rachel Lim; Maheem Imran, Student Trustees

1. Preliminary Matters - Welcome and Introductions

Chair welcomes members to the meeting.

2. Matters for Approval - Approval of minutes from the last meeting

Attendees approved the minutes from the last meeting.

3. Matters for Approval - Follow up on action points from previous meeting

No actions to be followed up

4. Matters for Approval - Members of Trustee Board Committees

The Representation and Democracy Manager explained the voting process for electing Trustee Board Committee members.

Nick Miao is elected to sit on the Governance Committee.

Kerem Isik and Adrien Jouis are elected to sit on the Risk and Audit Committee.

Hamna Malik, Julia Wojciechowska, Alice McNally and Nick Miao are elected to sit on the Finance Committee.

5. Matters for Approval - Industrial Action Referendum

Referendum Question and Options

Chief Executive explains the voting process for the Industrial Action Referendum. He states that the Industrial Action Referendum paper sets out structured options for the members of Union Exec to vote on.

Activities & Engagement Officer states that the referendum question should not include a neutral option, as they argue that voting neutral would be equivalent to voting for opposing the strikes. Chief Executive responds to this point, stating that neutral does not necessarily mean the same for against, as the options would produce different action points for the Student Union's comms.

Equity & Inclusion Officer agrees with Activities & Engagement Officer and states that she prefers the 2nd option: the wording of the referendum question should just be 'yes' or 'no' and not include a neutral option.

Activities & Engagement Officer raises the point that nationwide referendums do not include a neutral option.

Sustainability Officer states that in case students do not understand the issue they are voting on, a short explanation should be provided.

Representation and Democracy Manager explains the STV voting system used in SU elections, where voters rank their choices from most preferable to least could be utilised for the referendum if a neutral option were to be included.

Elected Officer from WCZ argues that these referendums have been occurring too frequently, as the last SU referendum on strikes was only in January. He argues that too many referendums on strikes would trivialise the issue at hand, stating that it undermines the Union's commitment to previous referendum results. Activities & Engagement Officer responds to this point, stating that the last SU referendum was specifically worded to apply only to the last round of strikes. Member responds to Elected Officer from WCZ, stating that the student body changes every year, so new cohorts should get a chance to vote on this issue.

A Student Observer argues that neutral is not the same as voting against supporting the strikes, stating that neutral is a rightful choice on its own and students should be given this option.

The Welfare & Community Officer agrees that there should be a neutral option, arguing that some students may be conflicted, as they may support the strikes but also be worried about losing out on their education.

A Student Observer states that a neutral stance would allow more students' voices to be heard. They also state that not having a neutral stance would be to misrepresent students' voices, and that omitting a neutral stance would repeat the mistakes of last year, where the methodology of the referendum was criticised.

The Equity & Inclusion Officer states that position vs action is an important distinction that needs to be made. Activities & Engagement Officer agrees, stating that there needs to be clarity between decision and action as students need to know exactly what outcome each option would manifest.

The Sustainability Officer states that to prevent referendum fatigue, perhaps referendum results on the strikes could be made into permanent policy that the next Union Executive could reverse. However, Director of Policy Governance and Advocacy states that referendum is the highest level of policymaking and thus only a referendum can undo a referendum's result.

The Trans Officer states that a neutral option may not be necessary, as only 2% students voted to abstain during the last referendum. However, member responds to Trans Officer's point, stating that the options of neutral and abstaining should not be conflated.

Action Taken

Attendees voted for the referendum question to read: "What position should the Students' Union take in relation to the UCU industrial action planned for the 2022-23 academic year?".

Attendees voted to remove the neutral option from the referendum question. This vote was passed by 7 votes to 6.

An affirmative vote was also taken by attendees to remove the timeframe from the referendum question.

Communications Plan

Attendees debated the proposed communications plan for engaging students on this issue.

Chief Executive responds to concerns that the Union's comms will not be neutral, stating that the Union will only communicate balanced and impartial information concerning industrial action and the Union's stance.

Attendees raised concerns over the tight timeline of the proposed communications plan. The Representation and Democracy Manager stated that other Students' Unions around the country are choosing to hold referendums on whether to support the strikes, and that they are also having problems with the tight timeline.

Attendees debated whether the referendum voting period should be extended and whether it should take place over a weekend to maximise voter turnout. The Head of Marketing and

Communication stated that from his experience, when voting takes place over a weekend, turnout is typically low. He also states that LSE holds their Sabbatical officer elections voting period over 2 days and they typically get high voter turnout. The Representation and Democracy Manager states that for the referendum to be binding, 5% of the electorate needs to vote. Activities & Engagement Officer proposes the Union sends communications alerting students to the vote on Wednesday 16th November, and that the open meeting should be pushed back to Thursday 17th November, voting should be opened Monday 21st November at 9am to close Wednesday evening, to announce results on Wednesday evening.

Equities & Inclusion Officer argues that there is no damage done if voting opens over the weekend and that many students have told her that they would prefer for voting to close at 5pm rather than at midday.

Activities & Engagement Officer states that they prefer that information about the strikes should be released before the strikes take place.

Activities & Engagement Officer changes their proposal, **proposing the Union sends communications alerting students to the vote on Wednesday 16th November, and that the open meeting should be pushed back to Thursday 17th November, voting should be opened Thursday just after the open meeting and close on Wednesday 23th November.**

Attendees vote to change the currently communications timeline to the one mentioned above.

6. Policy Proposals for Ratification – Active Bystander and Consent Training

Union Executive Officer postpones and defers this to the next Union Executive meeting, due to time constraints.

7. Policy Proposals for Ratification - Produce posters detailing emergency helplines and other support services to be put in toilet cubicles

Union Executive Officer postpones and defers this to the next Union Executive meeting, due to time constraints.

8. Policy Proposals for Ratification - Mature & Part-time Students' Officer should be a member of the Activities Zone, Education Zone and Union Executive

Union Executive Officer postpones and defers this to the next Union Executive meeting, due to time constraints.

9. Matters for Discussion - Updates from and into the Board of Trustees

Union Executive Officer postpones and defers this to the next Union Executive meeting, due to time constraints.

10. Matters for Information - Minutes from AZ2201

Members approve minutes.

11. Matters for Information - Minutes from EZ2201

Members approve minutes.

12. Matters for Information - Minutes from WCZ2201

Members approve minutes.

13. AOB

There is no other business.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Deniz Akinci, Union Affairs Officer
Signature:	Deniz Akinci
Date:	25/11/2022