

Minutes

Meeting of: Scottish Executive Committee

Location: NUS Scotland office, 1 Papermill Wynd, McDonald Road, Edinburgh EH7 4QL

Date and time: Friday 23 January at 10:00.

Members present: Jodie Waite (Chair), Shuwanna Aaron, Heather Armstrong, Titi Farukuoye, Jeroen van Herk, Manish Katri, Liam McCabe (Skype), Lainey McKinley, Jenna Mitchell, Zeyad Rashad (phone-part), Holly Scrimgeour, Elena Semple, Leo

Apologies: Yasmine Adam, Diarmuid Cowan, Luke Humberstone

Absent: Gemma Jones

In attendance: Karen Brown (Clerk), Jenny Lees, Katie Gowing (Item 3.7)

1. Introduction and administration

1.1 Welcome and apologies –

JW welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies of YA, DC and LH. ZR would joining the meeting at 1 pm. JW also advised that there would be a change to the running order of the agenda to give priority to items 3.1 and 3.3.

1.2 Minutes of previous meeting–

The minutes of the meeting on 17 January 2018 were approved subject to the following amendment requested by JvH:

Item 3.2:

JvH expressed deep concerns as to whether the commitment of £5 million investment would cover the costs to implement the recommendations of the Student Support Review. JvH was also concerned whether the Budget for Better Campaign reflected on the demands of summer support and FE entitlement which the wider student movement have expressed over the years and at Zones Conference. JvH asked in particular if the Budget for Better Campaign would include summer support and FE entitlement, and asked why new student support is focused on just six months of 'living wage' rather than a whole year.

LH stated that Summer Support was going to be in place and that the new proposals (A New Social Contract for Students) also covered FE entitlement. LH also stated that more specific demands cannot be raised in the Budget for Better campaign until the Scottish Government comes back with a formal response to the A New Social Contract For Students report.

LMcC joined the meeting at this point.



1.3 Actions and matters arising

Actions from the previous meeting were noted with the following highlighted for completion:

- Item 2.4 – Other reports. Action carried over from January meeting:
 - LMcC and LH to meet with UCU to discuss working more closely with them to represent students who teach.
 - HA to discuss with LH what other unions to target which represent students who teach in colleges.
- Item 3.3 – Student Homelessness: ES to circulate email to all SEC to request ideas for helping homeless students into education.

2. Accountability

2.1 President Report

The report was taken as read. In the absence of LH, it was agreed to forward questions for him to respond to on his return. The following questions were raised:

- Student support review:
 - When does LH think the recommendations taken forward will happen?
 - Does he need any more experiences for mental health charter?
 - How often had LH met with Shirley Ann Somerville and did he have a statement from her – i.e. an official response from SG on the Student Support Review report and the Budget for Better Campaign?
- Meeting with Scottish Government on 30 January about progress on the response to Student Support Review:
 - the detail in the report says that the meeting was with 5 civil servants, however will there be a meeting with Ministers.
- Write up on 1 March for Student Mental Health Charter:
 - Will it be sent to SEC first so that they can add comments?

JW clarified that she was the lead Officer for NUS Scotland conference planning as she is not standing for re-election. As LH is re-standing, he is not involved in these meetings. JW added that she is looking for feedback.

The report was approved.

2.2 Vice President (Education) Report

The report was taken as read.

JW explained that this was a reduced report due to her having had the flu. All her committee meetings and a lot of other activity had also taken place last week which were too late to meet the report deadline. The following was highlighted in response to questions:

- UK Quality Code: JW explained that she had tried to have engagement with Amity but they were very busy. A response had been sent to the consultation to express unhappiness with Amity being on the same page, but JW will catch up with the QAA and other stakeholders, as well as Amity.
- NUS Scotland Conference: In response to a query from LS, JW advised that she is keen to have a speaker from the Trans Network and was in conversation with SPC about this. LS agreed to discuss this further with JW offline. JW asked all SEC members, particularly Liberation officers, to

contact her to discuss potential speakers and workshops in order to make the conference as accessible as possible.

- Membership engagement update -An intervention of JW and others in the University of Strathclyde Students' Association elections issue has resulted in 18 female candidates standing in its elections.
- Apprentices: JW confirmed that Scottish apprentices' motions have been written and issued. She clarified that because of governance, apprentices do not have individual voting rights and have to go through their colleges. Issues raised at the event include to have a specific union in Scotland. JW also confirmed that apprentices will not now get voting rights within NUS UK until 2020.

Action: LS to discuss offline with JW having a speaker from the Trans Network at the NUS Scotland conference

Action: All SEC members, particularly Liberation officers, to contact JW to discuss potential speakers and workshops in order to make the NUS Scotland conference as accessible as possible.

The report was approved.

2.3 Vice President (Communities) report

The report was taken as read.

The following was raised in response to questions:

- Sex for rent: ES confirmed that this issue and criminalisation of sex work were separate issues and there was no conflict with the work being done by SA as Women's Officer in the latter area. Responses gathered from universities and colleges regarding the issue of sex for rent had shown that there were no reported cases, however lines of communication with Stuart McMillan MSP were being kept open to continue this preventative measure.
- Travel concerns and issues: HA raised a point of information that Josh Kenney, MSYP for Renfrewshire North & West had met alone with McGill's buses, despite HA and the acting president of UWS offering to meet with them too. It was felt that not enough had been done on his part to tackle issues with other transport operators affecting students at UWS. ES advised that she was battling the same transport issues with First Bus at Forth Valley College. Youth parliamentarians and the student movement can do good together and she will take HA's comments on board in order to push together in a united front.

ES confirmed that she had attended the Budget for Better event at Forth Valley College in both her capacity as staff member and Vice President (Communities).

The report was approved

2.4 Other Reports

LS reported that a response had been issued to the Review of Gender Recognition Act 2014 consultation. The deadline is 5 pm Thursday 1 March 2018 and LS will send out a message to encourage other students/NUS Scotland to response.

MK reported that he had given a talk at the Scottish Parliament about international students. Housing was a big issue at this meeting.

SA reported that the recent Women of Colour Brunch had been very successful. The event had sold out but there were a lot of no-shows on the day despite

attendance reminders being issued and this is something to be looked at for the future.

LS and SA reported on the recent Tackling Trans Misogyny event in Aberdeen which had been very successful. The next Gender Action Plan would be issued on 20 March 2018. There was no indication yet of a budget but a working group has been set up for the sharing of best-practice, looking at what is going on in universities and colleges and what might be needed in the future. There was talk of a government-funded campaign, though this was on-going and there would be a meeting in the next couple of days. Also discussed at the event was how apprentices would be safeguarded, gender based violence, the impact on mental health and strategies to combat this and the unique needs of individuals.

Business

3.1 Communications within SEC

LS introduced this item, pointing out that he had asked for it to be added to the agenda as a result of recent miscommunication among SEC members and to ensure that it was discussed by all together at the meeting. Much, he felt, was due to the fact that not everyone is being involved in conversations and that it would be good to have guidelines written down.

A full discussion took place covering the following points:

- Means of communication

The point was made that emails were a useful means of communication between meetings where there were often time constraints for discussion and to come to consensus on issues. However extending conversations by this means where decisions had to be made had not recently proved to be constructive, resulting in long email chains devoid of context and tone which had been misconstrued by some. Some members, however, made the point that emails and other written communications were useful in busy jobs and where there is little time for phone calls. Others felt that members should be speaking more to each other either face to face or by phone.

The timing of sending emails for debate and discussion was also raised, particularly at weekends with some members considering this to be their free time in a busy workload and others feeling that there should be no time frame for sending and responding to emails.

- Transparency

Consensus was that whatever the conversation, there was a need for transparency in communication between members outside of meetings going forwards and that any issues raised between individuals should be brought to meetings for discussion by all members. This would also help avoid any feelings of divisiveness.

- Deadlines for decisions

It was pointed out and agreed that deadlines set for Fridays and Mondays were not reasonable and that going forward, they would be set for mid-week instead to give time for response.

- Mindfulness in treatment of others

Consensus was that there was a need for members to be mindful in their communications with each other, to work more collaboratively and be more

approachable, to try to keep in touch with one another out with meetings and to acknowledge that there will be disagreements and differences of opinions.

In closing the discussion, the following actions going forward were agreed:

Actions:

- **SEC members to make the effort to communicate with each other more.**
- **For transparency, officers to include relevant meetings with other SEC members in their officer reports.**
- **Regular catch ups to take place with all officers including liberation officers.**
- **All to be mindful about mediums used, who hasn't been spoken to much and the time of communications.**
- **Deadlines for action/response to be shifted from Fridays and Mondays to mid-week.**
- **Code of conduct for SEC to be an action for next year's NUS Scotland President.**

3.2 Keep Erasmus Plus

JW provided the following overview of the Keep Erasmus+ campaign. NUS Scotland has been asked to join as a partner organisation to support the campaign and SEC members are being asked to approve this. It is a UK-wide campaign asking the UK government to commit to maintaining participation in the Erasmus+ programme after Brexit and is being co-ordinated by YouthLink Scotland. The campaign has received media attention and currently has the support of 18 MSPs and MPs, including Shirley-Anne Somerville. The campaign is collecting case studies from those who have benefitted from Erasmus+. JW advised that NUS UK, Young Scot, the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) are already partners.

Members **approved** NUS Scotland becoming a partner in the campaign.

3.3 NUS Scotland Conference – Motions and Amendments to the Rules

Amendments to the Rules

These were discussed in full with the following highlighted:

- Motion A: *Only 3 motions each? Clear off*

It was agreed that there should still be a limit, but rather than 3 motions, there should be 5. HA to submit the amendment to the amendment.

Action: HA to submit amendment to Motion A

- Motion D: *Changing Vice President (Education) to Deputy President*

(SA chaired the meeting for this discussion)

The point was made by JW that the change of job title would more accurately reflect the actual duties of the post. The remit would not change as there is an education aspect in all the duties of the post. However, the issue came about as the current name has suggested to some external stakeholders that the post-holder focuses solely on education.

Full decision arose on the issue with the following points raised:

- Relationship between deputy and president: There is a risk that the President could give the more unpleasant tasks to the Deputy President because the post would be less remit-focused.
- NUS Wales has a DP with the same remit as the NUS Scotland VP (Education).
- The name change would not create further hierarchy as it already exists. Perhaps there is a separate issue to create a flatter structure
- Concern of a gender imbalance with the President always being male and the Deputy President female.
- If the role is beyond education, there is a need to change the role not just the name. A name change confuses things unless bits of the 3 full-time officer structure is changed too. Changing the names of the VP officers means there would be no named roles directly relating to campaigns. We should go to the NUS UK conference and ask for funding to change the existing structure first.

Following discussion, it was agreed that as there was no consensus among SEC and the amendment could not be withdrawn or changed as it is a published document, that it would go to the NUS Scotland conference for conference to decide.

Action: Motion D to be submitted unchanged to the NUS Scotland conference for decision

(LMcK left the meeting at this point and ZR joined by telephone)

- Motion E – *Changing the name of VP (Communities) to Welfare Officer*

It was agreed that as this too should go to conference for decision.

Action: Motion E to be submitted unchanged to the NUS Scotland conference for decision.

Motions

After discussion, the following amendments to motions were **agreed**,

Motion 6: DSA for FE

- **DSA to be spelt out in full**

Motion 15: Keep Fighting Climate Change

- **JW to write amendment on behalf of SEC**
- **More resolves to be added to make it more Scotland specific**
- **'the big six' to be changed to 'all energy companies'**
- **To replace 2nd point in 'Conference resolves' section to reflect Scotland looking at fuel poverty issues**

3.4 NUS Scotland Conference update

The deadline for registration is 1 March and it was agreed that an email would be circulated to all SEC members to remind them to register. HA confirmed that she would not be attending due to having booked a holiday which clashed with the date.

SEC members were asked to show leadership and positive behavior at the conference, especially to new delegates, to be mindful not to dominate when speaking on motions and to encourage everyone to stand for elections.

Also discussed was an after party after the conference. ES stated that she has spoken to Stirling University Union who are keen to host one. JW also agreed to ask whether a deal could be arranged with the conference venue regarding pricing for hospitality.

Jenny Lees also agreed to check who to report bad conduct to - whether it should be the President or Linda Somerville if a general complaint and if to do with elections to the returning officer.

Action: JW to enquire about a hospitality pricing deal at NUS Scotland conference venue.

Action: Jenny Lees to check who to report bad conduct to at NUS Scotland conference

3.5 UCU Strike

JW provided an update. NUS Scotland was standing in solidarity with UCU, taking the standpoint that universities should be negotiating with academic staff on pensions. JW had appeared on Radio Scotland and SA had appeared at a rally in Glasgow as well as given a virtual speech at Aberdeen University. All information regarding strike action is on the UCU website. There were regional strikes not just at individual institutions.

There was discussion about the negative impact on students - for those who pay fees and whether deadlines would be extended. JW confirmed that she had sent a JISC email to student associations and unions and agreed to follow it up to see if they required further support.

Action: JW to follow up her email to student associations and unions to see if they require further support regarding impact of UCU strikes

3.6 Mental Health Charter

JW provided an overview. On 1 March, University Mental Health Day, NUS Scotland will launch a Charter for Student Rights on Mental Health. This is one of LH's priority areas of work for the year. At the Gathering and Zone Conference, members had the opportunity to feed into these rights. Case studies across the ten areas were still being sought, so members were asked to promote this and share the Charter on social media on 1 March. All were asked to message LH by Tuesday 27 February if they wished to get involved.

Action: All SEC to message LH by 27 February if they wished to get involved in the launch of the Charter for Student Rights on Mental Health on 1 March 2018.

3.7 Think Positive update

Katie Gowing (KG) gave a presentation which provided an overview of the two projects under the Think Positive umbrella -Healthy Body Healthy Mind and Student Mental Health Agreements

The following was highlighted

- Access to resources: – The Think Positive website includes top ten tips such as self-management and resources and freebies for institutions to engage with students such as stress balls and eye masks
- Survey for institutions to undertake: to get them to know their demographics and to identify where further areas of education might be needed.

KG acknowledged that for institutions that already have 3-4 stars, it can be difficult to encourage them to take part. One way is to establish areas they find challenging – e.g. a sporting aspect in an institution where there are not many sporting facilities. Scotland Student Sport and Ash Scotland work with institutions and give them feedback for future planning.

KG confirmed that the submissions for the Student Mental Health awards in May 2018 would be marked by a panel individually and collectively, with written feedback given to the institutions.

3.8 Budget for Better Campaign

JW provided an oral update: On 21 February, the Scottish Government (SG) finalised its Budget for 2018-19. Good news from the budget is the ongoing commitment to free tuition with protection for college and university budgets. There were other positives in the Budget that should not be taken for granted, such as the investment in teaching grants to ensure that courses are properly funded. The downside, however, is that the broken student support system remains untouched.

The SG Budget was a sorely missed opportunity to address the issues in the Budget for Better campaign. SG has yet to set out its response to the Student Support Review and until it has, the campaign will continue in its aim to get a bold and ambitious response from SG. SEC members were asked for their support in the campaign by committing to meeting with their MSPs between now and the end of March to discuss what would like to be seen in the Government response to the Review either by going to their surgeries or inviting them to campus. Also suggested was buddying with other institutions in members' regions, including non-affiliated ones. Both ES and LMCC indicated that they had already met with MSPs in their areas

3.9 Liberation/Sections Conference

Members were reminded to promote these conferences in terms of registering for them and submitting motions. Members were also pointed towards the timetables available on the Liberation Conferences' webpages.

4 AOB

HA made a suggestion for future meetings to have papers for items which stated their purpose and desired outcome. These would be particularly useful for those members who cannot attend a meeting.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 8 May 2018