

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION
MINUTES

Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council
held on 5 December 2023 in The Blue Sky Room, Level 1, Queen's Students' Union.

Present:

Aidan Moran	Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement
Amitha Simon	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Pharmacy (SPMY)
Aobh Hollywood	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Arran Ashfield	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Ashish Kandel	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Ben Friel	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Benjamin Pepperrell	Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MHLS) Postgraduate Research Faculty Representative
Beth Elder	Student Officer - Union President
Beth Noble	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Cameron Shaw	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Caroline Kirwin	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Psychology (SBS)
Chris Beaumont	Undergraduate School Representative - Social Sciences, Education and Social Work (SSESW)
Daniel Abayomi Odeyemi	Students' Union Council - International Student Representative (including INTO)
Daniel McCormack	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Chemistry & Chemical Engineering (SCHEM)
Deivydas Sakys	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Devrath Singh Rathore	Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative
Emily O'Neill	Undergraduate School Representative - School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics (SHAPP)
Ethan Crawford	Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) Postgraduate Research Faculty Representative
Ethan McBriarty	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Grace Duffy	Student Officer Education
Hazel McMorrow	Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MHLS) Undergraduate Faculty Representative
Jack Lydon	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Jamie-Lukas Campbell	Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) Postgraduate Research Representative
Jean F. Leonard	Student Association Chairperson - Student Parents' and Carers' Students' Association
Jess Hindley	Student Officer Welfare
Joel Hartley	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Joel Sheridan	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
John Brown	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Jonathan Boyd	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Kieran Minto	Student Officer Postgraduate
Leo Davies	Student Association Chairperson - Environmental Action Students' Association
Lia Obiyan	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Maria Murray	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Pharmacy (SPMY)
Megan D'Arcy	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Mathematics & Physics (SMP)
Mischa Gerrard	Student Association Chairperson - Disabled Students' Association
Nadine Curtis	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Biological Sciences (SBIO)
Niamh Bone	Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative
Niamh Mallaghan	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Mathematics & Physics (SMP)
Oliver Cunningham	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Patrina Loughran	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Nursing & Midwifery (SNAM)
Priscilla Ebenezer Robert Kennedy	Student Association Chairperson - Ethnically Diverse Students' Association
Rheannon Platman	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Róisín Costelloe	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Róisín Keenan	Student Association Chairperson - Women Students' Association
Rubina Maani	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Ryan Rogan	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Sajid Khan	Student Officer Equality & Diversity
Sinead Hosain	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Thomas McCormack	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Tiarnan Smyth	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)

Tim Chan

Undergraduate School Representative - School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science (SECS)

In Attendance:

DAMIEN CORRIDAN (CLERK OF COUNCIL)
 BARRY CRUICKSHANK (REPRESENTATION SUPPORT OFFICER)
 MATTHEW MCCALLION (UNION SPEAKER)

The Speaker of Council welcomed all attendees to the Third Statutory Meeting of the 2023-24 session of the Students' Union Council.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received for the following Councillors:

Adam Wilson	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Ben Wilson	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Law (SLAW)
Ellie McGuigan	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Emily Burke	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Jack Powell	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering (SMAE)
James Dixon	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Jason Wong	Students' Union Council - All First Year Representative
Jue Tong	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Karnika Behl	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Arts, English and Languages (SAEL)
Kelly Razey	Postgraduate School Rep - Social Sciences, Education and Social Work (SSESW)
Maria Miln	Students' Union Council - All First Year Representative
Michael Saleme	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Natural and Built Environment (SNBE)
Niall O'Hare	Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MHLS) Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative
Rebecca Verner	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**2.1 Minutes of Statutory Meeting (Annual Business Meeting) of 15 November 2023 SUC/M/23/6**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of 15 November 2023 (SUC/M/23/6) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**3.1 Policy Updates****3.1.1 Provisions for Pregnant Students & Parents**

Sajid Khan, Students' Union Students' Union and Equality Officer, updated Council that he has reached out to Students' Union Ops Team to explore the possibility of using the quiet rooms located on the second floor of the Students' Union, as breast feeding rooms for student parents.

Sajid further updated Council that he has held an initial meeting with Student Union management around the possibility of getting kids products in the Pantry, such as nappies and baby food, to help ease the burden for student parents who made be struggling. The initial conversations for both have been very positive and he will update further at the next meeting of Council.

3.2 Ruling by the Union Speaker

SUC/P/23/75

The Union Speaker has ruled that, in relation to motion 10.2 at the previous meeting of Council – "Extending Solidarity to Edinburgh University Student's Association (EUSA)":

- the number of votes in favour (15) and number of votes against (15) were equal;
- the abstentions (8) were not considered to be votes, as per the rationale detailed in a statement (SUC/P/23/75) by the Union Speaker; and
- the Union Speaker issued a casting vote on the matter against the proposal apply the convention known as Speaker Denison's Rule.

The Speaker further ruled that they would continue to apply this approach to consideration of abstention votes going forward.

COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Condolences

There were none.

4.2 National Students' Union Updates

4.2.1 Update from NUS-USI

Chloe Ferguson, the NUS-USI President gave Council an overview and update on NUS-USI, what they do, and what they are currently working on.

NUS-USI is your national union representing all university and college students in Northern Ireland. It's unique. It's one of the first organisations in Northern Ireland that was set up to work on both an all - Ireland and all – UK basis.

Being part of NUS-USI means that students' unions here take part in the democracy of the National Union of Students UK (NUS) and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), as well as forming their own authentic voice and campaigns through the Northern Ireland based NUS-USI. NUS-USI recognises something that the student movement has at its core – that we're better off when we work together. Currently 100% of students' unions in Northern Ireland are members of NUS-USI.

Over the last 2 years alone, with students' unions and students working together we had some big wins for students.

Recent wins:

- Over £40 million in support for students through the #StudentsDeserveBetter campaign. Including £500 Covid Disruption Grants which were paid directly to all full-time undergraduate students.
- In our push for the payment to be extended to all students we gained over 3500 petition signatures and secured a debate in the NI Assembly debate, winning the House's support.
- £2000 payments were made to Health & Social Care students, securing one of the asks of the Student Healthcare Heroes campaign which we run alongside QUBSU and UUSU.
- We secured the inclusion of support for students in the 10 year Mental Health Strategy, with commitment to annual funding.
- We secured Period Poverty pilots schemes at universities and colleges.
- By working with USI we secured access to Erasmus for NI students through the Irish government.
- We hosted a protest at Stormont on student housing crisis as part of the USI 'No Keys No Degrees campaign' drawing support from across the political spectrum.

Current NUS-USI campaigns:

- Cost of Survival
- Free Transport for students

4.2.2 Update from USI

James Curry, Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and Bláithín Sheehy, Vice President for Gaelge gave Council an overview and update on USI, what they do, and what they are currently working on.

USI is the national representative body for the 374,000 students in third level education on the Island of Ireland. USI are a membership organisation – our members are our affiliated Students' Unions around Ireland, North and South.

Democracy

USI is a democratic organisation. The supreme authority of the Union is Comdháil (Congress), which is representative of each affiliated students' union, apportioned according to the size of the student body in each union. Each union also sends one voting member to Comhairle Náisiúnta (National Council) – the executive body of the organisation. Issues relating to governance are delegated by the National Council to a Governance Committee. Day to day management and policy execution are delegated by USI Comdháil to an elected committee of Sabbatical student representatives called the Coiste Gnó (Executive Team).

Northern Ireland

A trilateral arrangement exists between USI, the National Union of Students in the United Kingdom and NUS-USI, the Student Movement in Northern Ireland. NUS-USI was formed in 1972 to ensure that all students in Northern Ireland could be members of the national union movement without distinction as to personal political or religious beliefs, particularly on the Northern Ireland constitutional question.

USI members

USI members are the students' unions recognised by the colleges below. Not every student body in Ireland is eligible for membership according to our constitution. We refer to our members as 'Member Organisations' or MOs'. Individual students gain their membership of USI through their membership of a local students' union. We refer to individual student members as 'Ordinary Members'.

4.3 National Conference Delegate Elections 2023-24 – Update

The Clerk of Council reported that elections to delegations for national conference took place in semester one, with nominations opening Monday 20 November and closed Thursday 30 November, 2023, with voting taking place 5 December 2023 until 7 December 2023.

Notice of these conferences were sent to Student Council, Student Reps and those on the SU Voice mailing list. Notice will also be given in Inside SU and on QSU social channels.

The Clerk of Council further updated Council that we're a member of three national unions and we work with them to make the changes on a local and national level that really matter to constituents:

- The National Union of Students of the United Kingdom (NUS)
- The Union of Students' in Ireland (USI)
- The National Union of Students – Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI)

The Clerk of Council explained that similar to our Union, they have councils and elected student officers who decide on the issues that they work on. Their councils are made up of all the member colleges' student officers and regular students who put themselves forward to work on student issues on a national level.

Delegate Entitlement

QSU is entitled to send a set number of delegates to each conference, based on the number of student members in the Union. Most students' unions on these islands attend only one national conference. As we choose to send delegates to three national union conferences, we manage budget by sending a limited number of delegates to each conference – enough to ensure we are represented.

The delegate entitlement and number of delegates we planning to send to each conference is as follows:

NUS Conference:

4 delegates are to be elected to attend this conference.

USI Conference:

6 delegates are to be elected to attend this conference.

NUS-USI Conference:

12 delegates are to be elected to attend this conference.

Student Officer Attendance:

In addition to the advertised delegate vacancies, there are a number of additional vacancies open to the Full-Time Student Officer Team:

- The Union President is elected (by default / ex-officio) to represent the Union at all three national conference.
- All Full-Time Student Officers may attend NUS-USI Conference by default.
- One additional member of the Full Time Student Officer Team may attend USI Congress by default.

4.4 Student Leader Elections 2023-24 Schedule

The Committee noted that nominations for the Student Leader Elections 2023-24 would open on the last day of term 2023. Elections would be 4 days and will take place in the first week of March 2024.

5. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS/RULE AMENDMENTS

There were none.

6. BUSINESS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Recognition of Clubs & Societies

The following applications for recognition were considered by the Standing Committee when it met on 30 November 2023:

6.1.1 QUB Data and AI Society (Society) – Academic Society

- 6.1.2 QUB Calisthenics Club (Club) – Sporting Club
- 6.1.3 QUB Oncology Society (Society) – Academic Society

Aidan Moran, Clubs and Societies Committee Chair updated Council that all applications had completed required documentation and met the criteria in the Constitution to be considered for recognition.

He further stated that The Committee considered the application and met with representatives from each group and finally noted that the Standing Committee recommends that Council formally recognise these group as an official Clubs and Society, categorised as follows:

- QUB Data and AI Society (Society)
- QUB Calisthenics Club (Club)
- QUB Oncology Society (Society)

Following a vote, the above Clubs & Societies were ratified.

7. BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION

7.1 Cost of Living Crisis – Update and Discussion

Council noted that the VP Undergraduate Education and VP Postgraduate Education, Grace Duffy and Kieran Minto attended a Rustle Group Students' Union residential in Cardiff.

Over the course of the two-day residential, hosted at Cardiff Students' Union, RGSU Sabbatical Officers introduced themselves and their respective Students' Unions, discussed and chose the RGSU priority areas for the year, prepared draft Next Steps for these priority areas, and hosted a representative from the Russell Group for a presentation and Q&A session.

The RGSU priority areas as chosen by the Sabbatical Officers are: Developing a student manifesto for the General Election to cover:

- Funding, Fees & Industrial Relations
- Cost of Living
- International Students
- Postgraduate Students.

Beth, Students' Union President further updated Council that the Students' Union Pantry has had its funding extended for the rest of this academic year and that the University is relaunching the Cost of Living focus group and she will continue to attend and update accordingly.

Council noted that the Students' Union Mental Health and Wellbeing team delivered free hot lunches and snacks to Students on 9 days over the Months of November and December and supported over 5,000 students. As well as giving out free lunches and snacks there was opportunities for students to win practical items such as hot water bottles and blankets as part of the Students' Union keep warm initiative.

Council further noted that the Student Officers and the Students' Union have been working hard to represent Students needs to the University, ensuring they understand the financial pressure everyone is experiencing.

Recent successes have included:

In 2022, we lobbied strongly for a financial intervention package that would help and support all students.

As a result the University announced it would provide:

- A cash payment to students both undergraduate and postgraduate (approximately 21,400 students) of £150. This payment was made in January 2023.
- A cash payment of £400 was made to students with a household income of less than £25k (which amounts to 3,600 students).
- An increased amount of funding in the Student Hardship Fund of £600.
- Library fines will be waived for the Academic Year 22/23.
- £47 Graduations fees were waived in December 2022 and Summer 2023.
- Disciplinary fees will be halved - a positive first step in our long-term lobbying aim of having them abolished.

In February 2023, we opened The Pantry in Partnership with the University. This is a free refill station for students, and to date it has seen over 6,000 students visit.

During Semester One of the 2022/23 Academic year, we distributed over 4,800 free breakfast in the SU and in Semester Two of the 2022/23 Academic year we also provided Free Breakfasts for two weeks across three locations on Campus, including in the SU Lounge.

Over and above this the Students' Union has been offering practical and immediate help and support:

- The Students' Union is a home from home – with lots of areas to relax, study and meet up with friends, open Mondays-Saturdays, 8am-10pm, and Sundays, 8am-6pm
- Free tea, coffee and milk is available in the SU Lounge
- Free period products in the building

The Students' Union has also been representing students by:

- Joining forces with our national students' union, NUS-USI, in their 'Cost of Survival' campaign, calling on the NI Executive to provide:
- Cost-of-Living Payment for all students in further and higher education
- Rent freeze in the private sector and purpose-built student accommodation
- Free public transport for all students, as well as fuel payments and increased mileage rates

Lobbying the NI Executive for:

- Distinct fuel bursary (£400 for students directly)
- Changes in landlords' responsibility to create energy efficient homes
- Giving you helpful tools and advice about managing your money and making savings where possible, like free access to interactive learning platform Blackbullion
- Promoting the financial support that may be available to you including:
- Foodbanks
- Student support funds
- Benefits
- Encouraging you get involved in our campaign
- Asking for your ideas/feedback as to how we can help students during this time

The Committee further noted that the OMNI mental health survey results has now been published and can be accessed on the [Students' Union website](#). The OMNI Action plan is also located on the [website](#).

7.2 2023-24 Academic Year – Emerging Issues / Concerns

7.2.1 Discussion on University Campus Events - Free vs. Paid [Pranay Agrawal]

This item was withdrawn.

7.3 Students' Union Mental Health Activity – Update

Beth Elder, Students' Union President updated Council that the Mental Health and Wellbeing team have appointed a Social Prescriber to their team, Elaine Reid. The Executive Management Committee would like to officially welcome her to the Students' Union and wish her the best of luck in her new role.

This is a new, permanent position within the University and Queen's Students' Union is one of the first unions in the UK and Ireland to appoint a Social Prescriber.

The Committee further noted that the OMNI mental health survey results has now been published and can be accessed on the [Students' Union website](#). The OMNI Action plan is also located on the [website](#).

7.4 Students' Union Strategic Plan 2020-25 – Introduction and Update

The Clerk of Council gave Council an update on the Students' Union Strategic Plan 2020-25. He further updated Council that we are currently on year 3 of the 5 year Strategic Plan, and informed councillors the full plan could be accessed on the QSU website.

7.5 Students' Union Democracy Review – Update

The Clerk of Council updated Council on the Students' Union Democracy Review, the progress that has been made so far, and some feedback so far. The Clerk of Council explained how important this feedback would be in shaping future officer teams, and the new Students' Union.

The Clerk of Council then led a discussion on the Students' Union Democracy Review getting feedback from members, which was positive and supportive of the review.

8. BYE-ELECTIONS

There were none.

9. ELECTIONS

9.1 University Governance Review – Working Group Member (1 vacancy)

Ben Friel, Beth Noble and Salim Usman were duly proposed and deemed elected.

The candidate whose name is underlined was elected

10. MOTIONS

10.1 Consent, Bystander, Handling Disclosure Training for QSU and QUB Staff

Council Notes:

- There is a significant lack of training for QSU and QUB staff in regard to Consent, Bystander, and Handling Disclosures.

Council Believes That:

- This lack of training is not acceptable. Anyone who has contact with students on such regular basis must have training. This will allow staff to be confident in handling any disclosures appropriately, in intervening in safe and appropriate ways if necessary, and being educated in consent is for the benefit of both staff and student especially as either can be the victims of harassment.
- Also, gender-based violence was noted as an emergency by this Students' Union and as such, this is a necessary and crucial next step for us to take.

- Importantly, this will ensure that topics such as consent are being normalised and implemented throughout our entire University community.

Council Resolves That:

- The SU Council will push for training on Consent to be made 'mandatory with opt out', and then training on Bystander / Handling Disclosure is to be made mandatory for staff. The latter topics will be mandatory with no opt out as they should be deemed necessary for anyone in a role of responsibility.
- This training will be delivered virtually for accessibility and feasibility reasons. A quiz will be held at the end of any/all online training to ensure active participation. Training will be delivered by a chosen organisation to be agreed upon in the near future.
- Ideally, this training will be rolled out firstly to staff in student facing roles within QSU and QUB, such as professors, tutors, full time Students' Union staff, accommodation RA's, and Students' Union officers. The training would, if possible, then be rolled out to all staff such as part-time and temporary Q-Workers.

Proposer: Róisín Keenan (Women Students' Association Chairperson)
 Seconder: Mischa Gerrard (Disabled Students' Association Chairperson)

Following a vote, this motion was carried.

10.2 Consent, Bystander and Disclosure Training for All Students' Union Positions

Council Notes:

- There is currently no mandatory consent, bystander or disclosure training for any Students' Union positions.

Council Believes:

- That any Students' Union position involves dealing with other students. As such, being trained in bystander and handling disclosures is incredibly important to minimise potential further harm done to a student in a vulnerable moment if opening up about a situation.
- Furthermore, gender-based violence is an emergency and has declared to be such. Thus, to implement this training, particularly regarding consent, is a natural next step that we must do.
- Council mandates that the SU must implement mandatory consent (with opt-out) training and bystander / handling disclosure training for all Students' Union positions (course representatives, faculty representatives, student association chairs, school representatives, etc.). Following the framework of SU Council meetings, this training will be delivered in-person.
- Although SU representatives will not be required to sit the training twice in the same academic year, this motion will ensure that all SU representatives will receive mandatory (with opt-out) consent training whether from the SU or the University. However, the mandatory bystander and handling disclosure training will remain in place regardless of the university consent training roll out.

Proposer: Evie Cawte (Student)
 Seconder: Róisín Keenan (Women Students' Association Chairperson)

Following a vote, this motion was carried.

11. REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Report of the Management Board

Beth Elder, the Students' Union President gave a verbal report of Management Board.

This report was accepted.

12. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Report of the Executive Management Committee

Beth Elder, the Students' Union President gave a verbal report of Executive Management Committee.

This report was accepted.

12.2 Report of the Union President (October 2023) SUC/P/23/63

This report was accepted.

12.3 Report of the Union President (November 2023) SUC/P/23/64

This report was accepted.

12.4 Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (Oct 2023) SUC/P/23/65

This report was accepted.

12.5 Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (Nov 2023) SUC/P/23/66

This report was accepted.

12.6 Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (October 2023) SUC/P/23/67

This report was accepted.

12.7 Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (Nov 2023) SUC/P/23/68

This report was accepted.

12.8 Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate (Oct 2023) SUC/P/23/69

This report was accepted.

12.9 Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate (November 2023) SUC/P/23/70

This report was accepted.

12.10 Report of the Student Officer Education (October 2023) SUC/P/23/71

This report was accepted.

12.11 Report of the Student Officer Education (Nov 2023) SUC/P/23/72

This report was accepted.

12.12 Report of the Student Officer Welfare (October 2023) SUC/P/23/73

This report was accepted.

12.20 Report of the Student Officer Welfare (November 2023) SUC/P/23/74

This report was accepted.

13. REPORTS FROM OTHER UNION COMMITTEES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reports for Committee meetings held between the October and November Statutory Meetings of Council shall be considered at the January meeting of Council.

14. REPORTS FROM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

There were none.

15. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

There were none.

16. QUESTIONS (TO ELECTED STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES)

There were none.

17. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

18. DATE OF FOURTH MEETING OF THE STUDENTS' UNION COUNCIL

The Fourth Meeting of the Students' Union Council 2023-24 will take place on Monday 22 January 2024, In the Blue Sky Room, in the Students' Union Building.

Agenda Items Deadline: Thursday 11 January 2224, 9.00 a.m.

Constitutional Amendments Deadline: Thursday 4 January 2024, 9.00 a.m.