

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION

MINUTES

Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council
held on 4 December 2014 in The Space, Level 1, Students' Union

Present:

Aaron McMurray	School Rep, Maths and Physics
Adam Sage	School Rep, Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences
Aisha Sobey	AHSS
Alex Crowley	EPS
Anna-Leigh Hunter	School Rep, Modern Languages
Annalisa Misra	EPS
Ben Whittaker	School Rep, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
Breanainn Lyness	Open First Year
Brendan Corr	Open
Catherine Guy	AHSS
Cathy Corbett	PG
Chloe Patterson	EMC
Ciaran Gallagher	EMC
Colin Stevenson	EMC
Collette McAllister	AHSS
Connor Malone	PG
Conor Donnelly	AHSS
Conor Fearon	PG
Conor Flanagan	EPS
Courtenay Mercer	School Rep, History and Anthropology
Derek Crosby	PG
Diane Murdock	School Rep, EEECS
Ellie Drake	AHSS
Fahad Alawsi	MHLS
Fergal McFerran	Open (Union Speaker, in the Chair)
Gareth Somerville	EPS
Hannah Niblock	EMC
Hayley Baird	MHLS
Helen Monaghan	MHLS
Jack Steenson	School Rep, Management
James Rodgers	School Rep, GAP
Jan Sen Yu	AHSS
Jessica Simonds	School Rep, PISP
Jonathan Crawford	MHLS
Jordan McMullen	Open First Year
Kathryn Waller	AHSS
Kirk Dennison	School Rep, Psychology
Mark Benson	PG
Matthew Lowe	PG
Matthew McCallion	School Rep, Law
Molly Harrison	PG
Niall O'Neill	MHLS
Niall Robb	AHSS
Nyemahame Okwu	MHLS
Oisin Hassan	PG
Olivia Moore	School Rep, Theology
Patrick Sally	EMC
Paul Loughran	EPS
Rachel Hill	Open
Rachel Ireland	School Rep, English
Raymond Dillon	EPS
Robert Stewart	School Rep, Biological Sciences
Rudaina Farouki	MHLS
Ruth Maxwell	Open
Sarah Wright	Open
Sean Fearon	AHSS
Sky Aughey	AHSS
Sophie Stratfull	AHSS
Sophie-Anna McClintock	Open
Timothy McLean	Open

In Attendance:

Damien Corridan (Deputy Clerk of Council)
 Dominic Doherty (Clerk of Council)
 Orlaigh McIntyre (Marketing Manager)
 Kristina Mulholland (Marketing Assistant)
 Kylie Noble (The Gown)
 Paul Wyatt (The Scoop QUB – Queen's Radio)
 Morgan McKinnon-Snell (Queen's Radio)

Fergal McFerran (Union Speaker, in the Chair) welcomed all attendees to this Statutory Meeting.

931. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from the following Councillors:

Anthony McKee	AHSS
Aoibhin McNeill	EPS
Bryony Ford	MHLS
Caoimhe McNeill	EMC
Christopher Gallagher	School Rep, SPACE
Debbie Wilkinson	Open First Year
Declan Frith	AHSS
Erin Early	School Rep, Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work
Gerard McGuigan	AHSS
Jack Patterson	AHSS
Jemma Ashford	EPS
Loren McIntyre	School Rep, Nursing and Midwifery
Molly Devlin	School Rep, Pharmacy
Niall McKenna	EMC
Rebecca Kelly	School Rep, Creative Arts
Sammy Wade	AHSS
Tara Ni Mhurchu	School Rep, Education
Tiarnan McKeown	AHSS

932. MINUTES OF THE STATUTORY MEETING OF 18 NOVEMBER 2014

It was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of 18 November 2014 (SUC/M/14/5) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

933. BUSINESS ARISING

933.1 The Council noted that James Quinn (Medicine, Health and Life Sciences) and Debbie Wilkinson (Open First Year) have tendered their resignations from the Council.

933.2 Council noted that, for one-day Elections / Referenda, the hours of polling will be between 8.00 am and 8.00 pm, until further notice.

934. COMMUNICATIONS

The Council noted the following communications:

934.1 That the Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland contacted the Students' Union seeking student opinion on the legal arrangements surrounding e-cigarettes. In lieu of Council policy in this area, Councillors were asked to communicate their views on the matter to the Union President.

935. BYE-ELECTIONS

935.1 *Postgraduate Forum (three vacancies)*

Nominations have been received from Connor Malone, Oisín Hassan and Conor Fearon. The candidate whose names are underlined were elected.

936. ELECTIONS

There were none.

937. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS / RULES AMENDMENTS

937.1 Proposed Recognition of New Clubs and Societies

Council was requested to amend Rule 8, Paragraph 820 in order to recognise the following proposed Clubs and Societies:

Queen's University Belfast Coppafeel

Proposer: Rebecca Evans (13345079)
 Seconder: Eilis Moran (40077253)

Queen's University Belfast Alternative Dispute Resolution Society

Proposer: Daniel Benitez (40119694)
 Seconder: Ryan Dougal (40025539)

Queen's University Belfast Singapore Society

Proposer: Lina Yow (40050822)
 Seconder: Joanne Chiew (40117861)

Queen's University Belfast Nightingales

Proposer: Lana Cook (40112857)
 Seconder: Jordan Briggs (40104971)

Queen's University Belfast Mind Matters

Proposer: Shauna Wood (40076607)
 Seconder: James Nixon (15502074)

Queen's University International Relations and Conflict Studies Society

Proposer: Cordelia McGeown (40122598)
 Seconder: Phoebe Briggishaw (40129045)

Queen's University Belfast Hills Society

Proposer: Matthew Lappin (40106113)
 Seconder: James Dickey (40003895)

It was noted that all of the above had provided all of the stipulated documentation, which was available for inspection upon request.

A report was presented by Raymond Dillon (EPS) on behalf of the Clubs, Societies and Student Development Committee (CSSD), who has considered the Coppafeel Society application. The CSSD recommended the approval of the proposed Society, under the condition that the Society shall only utilise tasteful means of promotion.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Coppafeel Society was approved.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Alternative Dispute Resolution Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Singapore Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Nightingales Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Mind Matters Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University International Relations and Conflict Studies Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

Recognition of the Queen's University Belfast Hills Society was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

- 937.2 Proposed Removal of Constitutional Requirement for a Candidate in a Student Officer Election to pay a deposit of £30.00 – Rule 2

Rule 2

Delete 9.9.5 A candidate for a Sabbatical Executive Management Committee post shall pay a refundable deposit of £30.00 to be submitted with his/her nomination form. This deposit can be submitted in the form of a cheque;

Delete 9.9.8 A candidate shall forfeit his/her deposit if at any stage of the count his / her vote does not exceed one-sixth of the quota. Candidates who withdraw before the closure of nominations shall have their deposit returned to them.

Renumber 9.9.6 and 9.9.7 accordingly.

Proposer: Caoimhe McNeill (Vice President Equality and Diversity)
 Seconder: Sarah Wright (40002922)

Sarah Wright (Open), moving the motion, stated that the current provisions are biased against disabled students, student who, through no fault of their own, were in financial hardship and the current deposit requirement decreased participation in democracy.

Hannah Niblock (EMC), speaking in favour of the motion, stated that RON needed competition in elections.

A proposal to proceed to the vote was accepted and Ms Wright waived her right to summarise.

A display of voting cards indicated that 52 Councillors were in favour; this proposed amendment to the Constitutional Rules was therefore accepted.

- 937.3 Proposed Removal of Constitutional Requirement for a Candidate / Student Officer to be in Good Academic Standing at the Time of Election and throughout their Period of Student Office

Remove the following (Clause 14.2 of Chapter One of the Students' Union Constitution):

“They shall be registered students of the University who are in good academic standing at the time of their election and shall be registered by the University as full-time students for the academic year of their sabbatical office.”

Replace this with the following:

“They shall be registered by the University as full-time students for the academic year of their sabbatical office.”

In addition, remove the following (Constitutional Rule 4, Appendix 1, Clause 3.2):

“A Student Officer shall remain in good academic standing throughout his / her term of office.”

And renumber the current Clause 3.3 accordingly

Proposer: Sarah Wright (40002922)
 Seconder: Seán Fearon (40079053)

Sarah Wright (Open), moving the motion, stated that the current provisions are biased against disabled students, student who, through no fault of their own, became sick around exam times, or those who had to defer exams for personal reasons.

Derek Crosby (PG), speaking in favour of the motion, stated that inconsistencies in application of the definition of ‘good academic standing’ meant that it students can be prevented from running for different reasons in different Schools.

A proposal to proceed to the vote was accepted and Ms Wright waived her right to summarise.

A display of voting cards indicated that an insufficient number of Councillors were in favour; this proposed amendment to the Constitutional Rules was therefore deemed to have fallen.

938. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following Reports were considered by the Council:

Report of the Union President	SUC/P/14/28
Report of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications	SUC/P/14/29
Report of the Vice President Clubs and Societies	SUC/P/14/30
Report of the Vice President Education	SUC/P/14/31
Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity	SUC/P/14/32
Report of the Vice President Welfare	SUC/P/14/33
Report of the Vice President Community	SUC/P/14/34

938.1 The Union President highlighted the following matters when presenting his Report to the Council:

- Activities supporting the DEL Cuts campaign
- A meeting with the DEL Minister
- The DEL Minister’s commitment not to reduce student support payment levels
- Discussions with the DEL Minister’s advisors regarding changing the schedule of support payments
- A lack of commitment from the NI Executive on maintaining the current tuition fee levels.
- The impact of HE funding cuts to the University and the Students’ Union

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Union President (SUC/P/14/28) was accepted.

- 938.2 The report of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications was taken as read. Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Campaigns and Communications (SUC/P/14/29) was accepted.

- 938.3 The report of the Report of the Vice President Clubs and Societies was taken as read.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Clubs and Societies (SUC/P/14/30) was accepted.

- 938.4 The Report of the Vice President Education was taken as read.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Education (SUC/P/14/31) was accepted.

- 938.5 The Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity was taken as read.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity (SUC/P/14/32) was accepted.

- 938.6 The Report of the Report of the Vice President Welfare was taken as read.

In response to a query regarding progress on Union policy, the Vice President Welfare stated that has spoken with the Head of Student Welfare, who is sending out pregnancy related information to Schools, that information regarding homelessness has been scheduled for uploading to the Union's website and that there have been internal discussions regarding the proposed operation of a food bank in the Union.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Welfare (SUC/P/14/33) was accepted.

- 938.7 The Report of the Report of the Report of the Vice President Community was taken as read.

Following a show of voting cards, the Report of the Vice President Community (SUC/P/14/34) was accepted.

939. REPORTS FROM OTHER UNION COMMITTEES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

- 939.1 Report of the Education and Welfare Committee

Rachael Ireland (School Rep), stated that the Committee has elected a Chairperson and Secretary, that the Committee has discussed proposed changes to the academic calendar.

- 939.2 Report of the Campaigns and Communications Committee

Breanainn Lyness (Open First Year) reported that the Committee has discussed the DEL cuts issue.

- 939.3 Report of the Community, Equality and Diversity Committee

Oisín Hassan (PG) reported that the Committee had discussed the MSM blood ban and the recently approved Union policy regarding cultural appropriation.

- 939.4 Report of the Clubs Societies and Student Development Committee

Raymond Dillon (EPS) reported on a discussion regarding the Coppafeel Society proposal.

939.5 Report of the Environmental and Ethical Committee
Sophie-Anna McClintock (Open) reported that Committee had discussed the 'Hey Neighbour' initiative as part of the Green Impact Excellence programme.

939.6 Officer Review Group

Derek Crosby (PG) reported that the Group has discussed possible reconfiguration of the student officer group arising from potential funding cuts to the Students' Union.

Ciarán Gallagher (EMC) stated that there were concerns at their stage that the potential reduction in funding for the Students' Union in 2015-16 may result in there being insufficient funds to elect seven student officers at the current level of stipend.

940. REPORTS FROM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES.

There were none.

941. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.

There were none.

942. QUESTIONS.

To the Vice President Equality and Diversity

Given the Vice President Equality and Diversity's support for motions regarding the banning of 'Blurred Lines' and refusing access to the venue of those in breach of 'cultural appropriation' due to the offence that could be caused, would the VP be able to outline the criteria that must be shown to gain their support for an issue that may possibly cause offence?

Proposed: Connor Malone (40044484)
Seconded: Lorcan Gallagher (40042682)

"Quite simply, I don't have a set of criteria that issues must meet in order to gain my support.

I have been elected to fulfil constitutional obligations including having the responsibility "for the fair representation of all student groups" with particular mention to a number of under represented groups.

One of the key elements of my constitutional obligations is to "support and represent those students who face discrimination" So basically if a motion pertaining to the Equality & Diversity remit is in the best interests of those whom I am elected to represent it will gain my support.

While this question doesn't necessarily ask for justification for my support of these motions I feel it is now necessary to justify my actions. Last summer and at the beginning of the autumn semester I was contacted by a number of students calling for me to ban the song "Blurred Lines" in the SU building. A significant number of these students disclosed the fact they had been victims of rape and sexual assault and found both the lyrics of this song and the hysteria around it very triggering of their experiences.

I proposed the friendly amendment to the "cultural appropriation" motion so that all students of ethnic minorities, not just black students, felt protected by their Students' Union.

As an elected student officer I feel I have a duty to ensure the Students' Unions constitutional promise of a "safe and relaxed environment for all its members" is fulfilled and openly supporting these motions were just some ways in which I have been able to do this."

943. MOTIONS.

943.1 This Council recognises the requirement for students to arrive at lectures and tutorials punctually.

This Council believes that, in order to better facilitate this (especially with regards to students with early morning lectures), there should be a regular bus service exclusively for students between Elms Village and the main campus (i.e. the bus stop outside the Students' Union Building).

This Council instructs the Union President to liaise with the University in order to establish an hourly bus service exclusively for students from Elms Village to the main campus.

Proposed: Matthew McCallion (40134313)
Seconded: Johnny Irwin (40101330)

Matthew McCallion (School Rep), moving the motion, stated that a regular bus between Elms Village and the main campus would make attending lectures on the main campus easier.

Aisha Sobey (AHSS), opposing the motion, stated that it was an inefficient use of resources.

Sarah Wright (Open), supporting the motion, stated that it would be a great support to students, that the Union should work with the Translink Support Forum to implement the bus service and that would be of benefit to students with mobility issues.

Hayley Baird (MHLS), opposing the motion, stated that it would take two busses to be effective, that campus was a relatively close walk and that it was an efficient use of resources.

Jan Sen Yu (AHSS), speaking on the motion, queried if these would be a publically funded, or University funded, service.

Ben Whittaker (School Rep), opposing the motion, stated that attendance at lectures was a time management for students.

Conor Donnelly (AHSS), supporting the motion, stated that low cost transport for students was needed.

Kathryn Waller (AHSS), opposing the motion, stated that the local public bus services provided this service exactly.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted.

In summation, Matthew McCallion (School Rep), stated that disabled students should not be ignored that a small charge for usage could subsidise the service.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was defeated.

943.2 This Council recognises that, in many cases at present, in pelican / puffin crossings, the green indicator for pedestrians tends to flash (indicating that pedestrians already crossing may continue to cross to the other side of the road but pedestrians not

already crossing must wait) at the same time as the amber light flashes (indicating that vehicles should be prepared to move off).

This Council further recognises that some pedestrians tend to begin to cross the road even if the green indicator for pedestrians is flashing and also that some vehicles tend to move off or even speed on through the crossing whilst pedestrians have not yet completed crossing the road.

This Council believes that such a situation could pose a threat to the safety of pedestrians and that such a situation would be especially dangerous at night, in particular if pedestrians are wearing dark clothing.

This Council further notes that this problem would affect QUB students walking along the Malone Road between Elms Village and the main campus.

Therefore, this Council instructs the VP Welfare, the VP Community and the VP Campaigns and Communications to petition Belfast City Council, the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Regional Development to take the necessary measures to make pelican / puffin crossings safer through the initiation of schemes aimed at further educating the public on this problem and, in addition to this, through reforming the pelican / puffin crossing system by ensuring that the red indicator for pedestrians has come on before the amber light starts flashing.

Proposed: Matthew McCallion (40134313)
Seconded: Kathryn Waller (40077853)

Matthew McCallion (School Rep), moving the motion, stated that improving the road crossing system would make road crossing at busy areas much safer for students.

Ben Whittaker (School Rep), opposing the motion, stated that the current system has sensors in place to make the crossing as safe as possible.

A friendly amendment from Cathy Corbett was accepted, such that the final paragraph of the motion now reads:

Therefore, this Council instructs the VP Welfare, the VP Community and the VP Campaigns and Communications to petition Belfast City Council, the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Regional Development to take the necessary measures to make pelican / puffin crossings safer through the initiation of schemes aimed at further educating the public on this problem, *“as well as highlighting the need for pedestrians to wear bright clothing and not walk out in front of cars in unsafe places that don’t have a crossing, also to cyclists who should also take heed of lights,”* and, in addition to this, through reforming the pelican / puffin crossing system by ensuring that the red indicator for pedestrians has come on before the amber light starts flashing.

Hannah Niblock (EMC), speaking on the motion, stated that officers and staff could be consulted on the practicality of motions of this nature, prior to bringing them forward to Council.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted.

In summation, Matthew McCallion (School Rep), stated that the motion should be supported and that the issues raised by Councillors could be addressed.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was defeated.

- 943.3 This Council notes that students have the opportunity to further their academic abilities through organising and working with fellow students in study groups and that students are encouraged to take part in study groups.

This Council further notes that the McClay Library provides facilities to accommodate such groups in the form of study rooms.

This Council recognises that a great number of students are not making use of these facilities to their full potential and that certain problems exist regarding the booking of study rooms, e.g. students cannot book a study room more than 24 hours in advance, which especially poses a problem for students who travel home for the weekend and who attempt to book a study room for the following Monday.

This Council believes that Schools and Institutes and the McClay Library could and should do more to organise and facilitate study groups.

Therefore, this Council instructs the VP Education:

- to liaise with the Schools and Institutes in order to devise a strategy aimed at better informing students of the facilities available to them in the McClay Library and to help students to organise study groups among themselves, including helping them to set timetables, etc.; and
- to liaise with the McClay Library in order to amend their policy on booking study rooms to allow students to book study rooms more than 24 hours in advance with the possibility of requiring students to place a deposit beforehand which would then be refunded to them once they have used the study room.

Proposed: Matthew McCallion (40134313)
Seconded: Robert Stewart (40100376)

This motion was withdrawn by the proposer.

- 943.4 This Council believes that online student elections and referenda at Queen's should offer voters the option of formally 'opting out' of the voting process and instructs the Students' Union to investigate the feasibility of implementing this at the earliest opportunity.

Proposed: Aisha Sobey (40098878)
Seconded: Kathryn Waller (40077853)

Aisha Sobey (AHSS), moving the motion, stated that an option to participate, yet opt out, is available in paper-based democratic elections and should be available to those who participate in Students' Union elections and referenda.

Ciarán Gallagher (EMC), opposing the motion, stated that opting out at the start of an election period would prevent someone from participating at a later stage of the elections, if they so wished, and that not voting was enabled students to opt-out.

Hannah Niblock (EMC), speaking on the motion, queried if 'opting out' counted as a vote.

Kathryn Waller (AHSS), opposing the motion, stated that there was not 'no of the above option' for referenda.

Derek Crosby (PG), opposing the motion, stated that he would support such a motion if it applied only to referendums.

A friendly amendment from the proposer was accepted, such that the motion now reads:

This Council believes that referenda at Queen's should offer voters the option of formally 'opting out' of the voting process and instructs the Students' Union to investigate the feasibility of implementing this at the earliest opportunity.

Sarah Wright (Open), supporting the motion, stated that the amended motion will provide a voice to students who disagree with the premise of a referendum.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted.

In summation, Aisha Sobey (AHSS), stated that the motion should be supported as this would provide an opt out option to students in referendums.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was carried.

- 943.5 This Council note the transformation of Queen's Radio over the past three years, evolving from a lacklustre Society with outmoded technology and a dwindling membership into one of the largest and most diverse student groups on campus.

This Council further notes that Queen's Radio:

- has almost 200 member 'sign ups'.
- broadcasts 65+ shows each week.
- has staged successful social events in the Mandela Hall and other Students' Union venues.
- has members drawn from almost every subject at Queen's, meaning that the 'reach' of the Society is significant.
- has recently won the 'most improved society of the year' award at Queen's.

This Council accepts that Queen's Radio should be entitled to the same benefits enjoyed by student radio stations in campuses in Britain and Ireland, and should therefore be permitted to broadcast its output in its own Students' Union premises.

This Council therefore instructs the Vice President Campaigns and Communications and the Vice President Clubs and Societies to investigate the feasibility of Queen's Radio being able to broadcast throughout the Students' Union premises on a trial basis, and that student feedback be obtained in relation to this service following an appropriate period of transmission.

Proposed: Morgan McKinnon-Snell (40057015)
Seconded: Colin Stevenson (Vice President Campaigns and Communications)

Morgan McKinnon-Snell, moving the motion, stated that Queen's Radio currently streams on campus, that listenership of the station have increased steadily and incrementally and that streaming the station in the Union Building will be a great way to promote student activity to students.

Sarah Wright (Open), supporting the motion, stated that Queen's Radio has become more professional in recent years, and it was an important means of getting more people involved with the station and also raising awareness of student issues.

Brendan Corr (Open), supporting the motion, stated that the professionalism of the station was to be admired and should be supported by the Union.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted.

In summation, Morgan McKinnon-Snell, stated that the motion should be supported as this would provide a voice to students through shows such as The Scoop.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was carried.

- 943.6 This Council notes that students who receive very little formal financial education are more likely to fall into hardship during their studies. In line with the recent NUS-USI 'Pound in your Pocket' study, research has shown that information about financial support is not always clear to all students, and this leads to increased debt, poor financial wellbeing and in the worst case a detriment to mental health.

This Council further notes that the student hardship fund receives applications in excess of the funds that are available each year. Council believes that better education in relation to finances would relieve the pressure on this fund, ensuring that those who fall into hardship will stand a better chance of receiving financial help.

This Council instructs that Student Officers work to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to attend an educational talk on budgeting their finances during Freshers' Week, and that leaflets are distributed ensuring that students understand how to budget, and warning of the dangers of payday loans.

Proposed: Ruth Maxwell (40009309)
Seconded: Sarah Wright (40002922)

Ruth Maxwell (Open), moving the motion, stated that the Pound in Your Pocket research by NUS-USI has produce some statistics regarding the levels of student debt in Northern Ireland, that formal debt, overdrafts, high interest rates, short-term debt and poor financial management capability are major issues for students, and that there should be financial capability support provided to all students.

Sarah Wright (Open), supporting the motion, stated that this form of educational advice should be part of university and pre-university education, resulting in reduced levels of personal debt and better financial management overall.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted. Following a show of voting cards, the motion was clearly carried.

- 943.7 This Council notes that sanitary products are sold in the Students' Union Shop, and are a vital part of life for all students who menstruate, with an average of 22 sanitary products used per cycle and an average of 11,000 per lifetime.

This Council further notes that tampons and towels are currently taxed at a rate of 5% as a 'luxury, non-essential item' and are subject to a rate of Value Added Tax (VAT), whereas items such as Cuban cigars are not.

This Council believes that this is an unfair, unethical and unnecessary cost levied on students who menstruate, and have no other option than to use some form of sanitary product.

Council therefore instructs the Vice President Welfare to investigate the costs of offering all sanitary products at cost price and to implement this as soon as possible, as well as seeking out sustainable and organic alternatives to existing sanitary products in the Union Shop.

Council further instructs the VP Welfare to report upon his progress in this matter by the next Statutory Meeting of Council.

Proposed: Kathryn Waller (40077853)
Seconded: Ellie Drake (40076883)

Kathryn Waller (AHSS), moving the motion, detailed the physical trauma caused by menstruation and experienced by women on a monthly basis for much of their lives, noting that it was ridiculous that sanitary products were taxed at the same rate as luxury goods.

Ellie Drake (AHSS), supporting the motion, stated that sanitary products were an essential healthcare item for women and that they were unnecessarily expensive, especially for those with financial problems.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted. Following a show of voting cards, the motion was clearly carried.

- 943.8 This Council notes that students can potentially go without income for between three and five months if there is an emergency that arises through no fault of their own.

In addition, Council notes that a number of students are living in food poverty which affects their mental and physical health as well as their ability to complete their courses.

Council further notes that accessing the Student Support Fund can take up to four weeks and that there is no facility on campus to help those in immediate need.

This Council instructs the Vice President Welfare to establish a sub-committee of the Students' Union Council with the purpose of introducing and managing a student food bank at the Union before the Spring Semester starts, ensuring that clear information on the service is distributed to students and is made available on the Union's website.

Proposed: Sarah Wright (40002922)
Seconded: Oisín Hassan (40058773)

Sarah Wright (Open), moving the motion, stated that there was an immediate need to support students who, through no fault of their own, face extreme hardship and face food poverty.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted. Following a show of voting cards, the motion was clearly carried.

- 943.9 This Council notes that neither the Students' Union nor the University have a gender neutral bathroom or posters advising other students about gender identity.

Council further notes that this information and these facilities are vital in ensuring the academic progress, social inclusiveness, and sound mental health, not only for current Queen's students who identify as 'trans' but for future and visiting students.

Council instructs the VP Welfare, VP Equality and Diversity and QUB LGBT+ Society Trans Representative, alongside the Feminist Society, to work together to report on the feasibility of introducing a Gender Neutral Bathroom in the Students' Union.

Council also instructs the Students' Union to adopt a similar poster campaign as the University of Bristol LGBT+ Society – "If you're in a public bathroom and you think that a stranger's gender does not match the sign on the door, follow these steps: 1. don't worry about it, they know better than you".

Council requests that this advertising is adopted by the end of Autumn Term and that the feasibility study begun by the beginning of the Spring Term, with a timely report and recommendation to Council on a way forward.

Proposed: Sarah Wright (40002922)
Seconded: Oisín Hassan (40058773)

Sarah Wright (Open), moving the motion, stated that there is a broad spectrum of gender identification, but this is not reflected in the provision of restroom facilities in the Students' Union – an organisation which should show its support to students no matter how they identify.

Cathy Corbett (PG), opposing the motion, stated that there were more broad social issues that needed to be addressed to support gender identification, and that having gender neutral toilets would not deal with these issues, that for women, toilets were often a 'safe space' – the majority of women would not feel comfortable being in the

same bathroom as men -, and that gender neutral toilets would increase the potential for assault and harassment of women on campus.

Oisín Hassan (PG), supporting the motion, stated that it was incorrect to assume that someone who may ostensibly 'look' like a man, is in fact a man, that this just led to perpetuating gender stereotypes, that toilets are often regarded as a 'safe space' for those who do not fit within the generally interpreted view of binary gender identity, and that this motion allowed for the Union to begin a conversation with its members on the issue.

Olivia Moore (School Rep), opposing the motion, stated that this would just apply to a very small minority of people, that it would lead to unsafe toilets for women in areas where alcohol may have been consumed – harassment is still an issue for women students, and that the motion would be used for the wrong purposes by some people.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted.

In summation, Kathryn Waller (AHSS), stated that even though this is a minority issues, it is of great importance to those affected and would lead to greater acceptance of transgendered people.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was carried.

- 943.10 This Council notes that postgraduate students in the David Keir Building do not have the required computers, desk space or working environment that allows them to be comfortable in their work place.

This Council recognises that working at a laboratory bench in the corner of a busy laboratory is not only unsafe but is not appropriate for the research and writing of a PhD thesis.

This Council recognises that there is a discrepancy in provision of work spaces between those who study in the David Keir Building and those who use the rest of the University.

This Council believes that postgraduate students should be valued by their Schools and that each such student based in the Keir Building should have the right to appropriate equipment and work space to analyse data, write up and complete their thesis.

This Council requests that the Vice President Education identifies a resolution to the issue of inequality of provision for postgraduate students based in the David Keir Building.

Proposed: Cathy Corbett (40025334)
Seconded: Jonathan Irwin (40101330)

Cathy Corbett (PG), moving the motion, stated that postgraduate students in the David Keir Building do not have the required computers, desk space or working environment that allows them to be comfortable in their work place and the provision for postgraduate students in the DKB should be addressed.

Derek Crosby (PG), opposing the motion, stated that hot-desking facilities provided in the Library, the Postgraduate Centre and in Schools should be sufficient for students.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted.

In summation, Cathy Corbett (PG), stated that it was not possible for many science and engineering based students to use hot-desking facilities as they had to be near laboratory equipment .

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was carried.

- 943.11 This Council notes that the University is making amendments to the structure of the academic year and welcomes innovative and positive developments to teaching and learning at Queen's University Belfast.

Council further notes that, up to this point, the only student who has been consulted in this process is the Education Officer, who sits on a University Working Group. With this in mind, she has consulted with the School Representatives at a workshop in order to involve students more fully.

In addition, Council is aware that, at Academic Board, the Education Officer recommended that the University Working Group should consult with the School Representatives and other representatives of the student body to ensure that any and all risks are highlighted to decision makers from a student perspective, and that this proposal was agreed.

Council instructs the Education Officer to ensure that these promises are met and that a wider range of students are consulted throughout this decision making process.

Proposed: Hannah Niblock (40003332)
Seconded: Stephen McCrystall (40109651)

Hannah Niblock (EMC), moving the motion, stated that it was important that the University consulted appropriately with students regarding any proposed changes to the academic year or to the structure of assessment.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted. Following a show of voting cards, the motion was clearly carried.

- 943.12 This Council believes that the current UK minimum wage is insufficient for people with or without dependants to survive upon and that, in grim recent economic times and with increasing student poverty, it is unacceptable that Queen's University Belfast Students' Union pays their staff a salary that fails to support a basic standard of living.

This Council therefore instructs the Students' Union to pay all staff, and to ensure that all outsourced staff are paid, the UK Living Wage which is currently £7.85 per hour, in order to become an accredited Living Wage Employer with the Living Wage Foundation. This Council wishes this recommendation to be effective immediately and to be implemented in advance of the next Statutory Meeting of Council.

Proposed: Paul Loughran (40044945)
Seconded: Sarah Wright (40002922)

Paul Loughran (EPS), moving the motion, stated that the Students' Union should pay its staff the Living Wage.

Ciarán Gallagher (EMC), speaking on the motion, stated that, whilst he was supportive of the principle of introducing the minimum wage in the Union, the financial impact of introducing the Living Wage on the Union at this time should also be considered by Council.

Cathy Corbett (PG), proposing an amendment, such that the final sentence of the motion would read:

This Council wishes this recommendation to be taken to Management Board and the feasibility be looked at and a report be presented to Council.

Sarah Wright (Open), opposing the amendment, stated that at time when many students are facing food poverty, consideration of this proposal should happen immediately.

Jordan McMullen (Open First Year), supporting the amendment, stated that Council should made a decision on the Living Wage only when it has the appropriate financial information to hand.

Oisín Hassan (PG), opposing the amendment, stated that the urgency must be maintained in the motion to ensure that it is considered by the Union.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted. Following a show of voting cards, the count was tied. Following a second show of voting cards, the count was tied. The Union Speaker then voted to abstain. The amendment was therefore defeated.

Cathy Corbett (PG), opposing the motion, stated that this motion could place the Union at financial risk.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted.

In summation, Paul Loughran (EPS), stated that that would only ever be implemented if it was on the policy file.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was carried.

- 943.13 This Council notes the passing of Motion 13.10 at the Council Meeting of 18 November 2014 regarding ‘cultural appropriation’ and the refusal of service and entry of anyone who is deemed to be in breach of this.

This Council believes the term ‘cultural appropriation’ is far too vague and unclear, and that the guidelines to be given to staff to enforce this will prove impossible to be followed.

Council therefore proposes that, instead, the Vice President Equality and Diversity should deliver an awareness campaign around Halloween aimed at educating students with regard to costumes that may cause possible offence.

Council instructs that this Motion supersedes the previous motion, cited above, that was passed at the meeting of 18 November 2014.

Proposed: Connor Malone (40044484)
Seconded: Lorcan Gallagher (40042682)

This motion was withdrawn by the proposer.

A special motion was put, proposing the adjournment of Council, such that remaining business shall be considered at the next Statutory Meeting of Council. The special motion was defeated.

- 943.14 This Council notes that the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Bill, which has the intention of preventing and combating human trafficking in Northern Ireland, has recently reached the Further Consideration stage in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

This Council further notes that Clause 15 of the proposed Bill makes it a criminal offence to ‘pay for the sexual service of a person’.

This Council believes that, by combining such a provision in the legislation without the proper consideration of the information available, there is a danger of equalling consenting sex work with trafficking.

This Council further believes that such a provision is likely to push such a trade 'underground', thus placing vulnerable people further away from social or criminal justice. Council instructs the Vice President Community to oppose the inclusion of Clause 15 by lobbying Stormont representatives, including the Justice Committee.

Proposed: Chloe Patterson (40056226)

Seconded: Connor Malone (40044484)

Chloe Patterson (EMC), moving the motion, stated the changes before the Assembly would place sex workers in danger, was being driven by ideological motives by those who morally objected to those involved in sex work, without due consideration for the impact of the legislation.

Cathy Corbett (PG), opposing the motion, stated that the majority of those in Northern Ireland supported the legislation, that it would protect women by discouraging people from engaging sex workers.

Conor Malone (PG), supporting the motion, stated that sex work and human trafficking were two separate issues, which, while connected, should each be considered independently by the Assembly and that the current proposals were deemed to illogical by experts, unenforceable by the PSNI and opposed by groups such as Amnesty International and Greta.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted.

In summation, Kathryn Waller (AHSS), stated that 61% of sex workers felt the proposal would make them less safe and 2% of them wanted the proposal to be enacted, and that conflating sex work with the horrors of human trafficking was an error.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was clearly carried.

- 943.15 This Council recognises the continued discrimination and problems that are faced by the Trans* community here at Queen's and within wider society. The Trans* community face many barriers in the quest for recognition of their gender identities, and often face difficulties in meeting their basic needs as human beings. In that light, Council regrets that gender identity questions on Students' Union and University forms have been alienating and counter to the inclusive environment that students should feel a part of.

Council recognises Union of Students in Ireland (USI) policy that states that, if gender is not a necessary requirement, then questions of gender or sex should not be included on forms that students or staff are asked to complete.

Council instructs that the Vice President Equality and Diversity acts to ensure that all Students' Union forms are amended to remove gender or sexual identity questions. Furthermore, where the question is indeed necessary - such as on an Equality Monitoring Form - that the current question be amended to be entirely inclusive, and brought back to Council for approval.

Council also instructs that the Sabbatical Officers do all within their power to ensure that the University adheres to the same principle.

Proposed: Oisín Hassan (40058773)

Seconded: Seán Fearon (40079053)

Oisín Hassan (PG), moving the motion, stated that it was important in terms of trans* equality that outmoded labels of sexual and gender identity were no longer used in society.

Cathy Corbett (PG), opposing the motion, stated that just adding 'other' to a form could be viewed as being offensive to members of the trans* community.

Ciaran Gallagher (EMC), speaking on the motion, stated that he had raised this issue with the University and that there was an broader issue regarding the classification of students by the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

Collette McAllister (AHSS), supporting the motion, stated that the Union should strive for equality and inclusivity at all levels.

It was proposed to proceed immediately to the vote – this was accepted.

In summation, Oisín Hassan (PG), stated that it was not just an issue for the University, but also for the Union and for any student impacted by outdated labels.

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was carried.

944. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There was none.

945. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Union Speaker announced that the next Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council was scheduled to take place at 6.00 p.m. on Monday 9 February 2015 in The Space, Level 1, Students' Union.

DAMIEN CORRIDAN (Deputy Clerk, Students' Union Council)