

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION

MINUTES

Annual Business Meeting of the Students' Union Council
held on 2 May 2017 in The Space, Level 1, Students' Union

Present:

ANDREW FLETCHER	EPS
ANTHONY FLYNN	EPS
ASHLEY JONES	Open First Year
CAMERON MACINTYRE	School Representative
CHRIS LENEGHAN	Executive Management Committee
CIARAN CUNNINGHAM	Executive Management Committee
CONOR LEE	School Representative
DANIEL CALLAGHAN	EPS
DANIEL O'CONNOR	Executive Management Committee
EMMA MCERLEAN	School Representative
EMMA-JANE FAULKNER	Executive Management Committee
EMMA SHAW	Executive Management Committee
FAISAL KADIRI	School Representative
HAMSAVANI RAJESWAREN	Executive Management Committee
JAMES VERNER	EPS
JESSICA ELDER	Executive Management Committee
KANG ZHENG TAO (JASON KANG)	School Representative
KIRSTY WALLACE	School Representative
LAHIRU ELVITIGALA	Executive Management Committee
LAURA CORNER	Executive Management Committee
LUCY GAULT	School Representative
MATTHEW MCCALLION	AHSS
NIAMH O'HARE	EPS
OLIVIA POTTER-HUGHES	Open First Year
PAUL LOUGHRAN	Executive Management Committee
RACHEL IRELAND	PG
RACHEL WATTERS	Open
REECE PRICE	EPS
RICHARD GARLAND	AHSS
ROBERT STEWERT	School Representative
SARA MCDOWELL	MHLS
SEÁN FEARON	Executive Management Committee
STEPHEN MCCRYSTALL	Executive Management Committee
TIARNÁN HEANEY	Executive Management Committee

In Attendance:

Kate Nicholl (Deputy Clerk of Council)
Damien Corridan (Clerk of Council)

Matthew McCallion (Deputy Speaker, in the Chair) welcomed all attendees to this Annual Business Meeting.

1. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were noted in the record.

2. MINUTES OF THE STATUTORY MEETING OF 6 April 2017

It was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of 6 April 2017 (SUC/M/17/3) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3. BUSINESS ARISING

There was none.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 The Council was addressed by Owen Reidy (Assistant General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and head of the Northern Ireland Office of ICTU) on the issues of workers' rights and collective organising.

4.2 Students' Union Redevelopment - Update

It was noted that a business case proposal is being prepared for consideration by the University.

4.3 Council Membership – Update

The Council noted the current membership numbers of the Council.

4.4 National Students' Unions – Update

The Union President provided an overview of the Union's attendance at the various national union conferences.

4.5 Referendum Notification – Thursday 11 May 2017

Council noted that a Referendum was scheduled to shall take place, via Queen's Online, on Thursday 11 May 2017, with polling taking place between 8.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m., for the purpose of ratifying those amendments to the Students' Union Constitution and its Rules that have been approved by the Students' Union Council during its 2016-17 session.

4.6 Society Constitution Amendments (for note)

The Council noted that the Alternate Dispute Resolution Society had made minor amendments to its constitution.

5. Bye-Elections

There were none.

6. Elections

There were none.

7. Constitutional Amendments / Rule Amendments

7.1 Proposed Recognition of New Clubs and Societies

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

7.1.1 Erasmus Student Network Society

Proposer: Kirsty McKinty (Student)
Secunder: Lydia Kerr (Student)

7.1.2 Integrated Society

Proposer: Néidín Hendron (Student)
Secunder: Stuart Irwin (Student)

7.1.3 QUB FLARE Society

Proposer: Sarah Clendinning (Student)
Secunder: Pearce Nicholl (Student)

Recognition of the proposed Societies was approved following appropriate discussion and some minor clarifications by a representative of this group.

7.2 Amendments Relating to Elections

An amendment to require an email notification to be sent to all students for all elections to the Council, the Executive Management Committee and to the national conferences.

Insert the following (to Rule 3, Clause 1 – Authorised Noticeboards and Polling Areas) and renumber accordingly:

“Email notification to all students (for the purpose of notification of elections to the Council, the Executive Management Committee and to the national conferences).”

An amendment to the Election Rules to clarify that elections are to be conducted in a free and fair manner.

Council Notes the following existing clause (Rule 2, Clauses 1.1, 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3):

“All elections to the Council and the Executive Management Committee and all elections to committees and delegations which are elected by the Council, shall be:

- 1.1.1 held only during normal teaching weeks;
- 1.1.2 by secret ballot;
- 1.1.3 conducted by the single transferable vote system of proportional representation according to the provisions of this Rule.”

Replace “.” with “;” in (Rule 2, Clause 1.1.3)

Insert the following (into Rule 2 after Clause 1.1.3) and renumber accordingly:

“conducted in a free and fair manner.”

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clauses 9.28):

“Candidates shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their campaign is conducted in an appropriate manner (including canvassers acting on their behalf), regardless of which medium is being utilised. Any candidate or supporter failing to comply with the instructions contained within Rule 2 Section 9 may be subject to disciplinary action under the University’s Student Conduct Regulations.”

Replace with the following:

“Candidates shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their campaign is conducted in an appropriate manner (including canvassers acting on their behalf), regardless of which medium is being utilised. Candidates should not undertake campaigning activity which others could not also reasonably undertake. Any candidate or supporter failing to comply with the instructions contained within Rule 2 Section 9 may be subject to disciplinary action under the University’s Student Conduct Regulations.”

An amendment to remove the requirement for the Returning Officer to submit to Council a detailed list of potential punishments for breaching Election Rules.

Council Notes the following existing clause (Rule 2, Clause 9.36):

“Any candidate or their canvassers who breach any Election Rule will be given a warning by the Returning Officer. If the Rule is broken a second time or another Rule is breached, the candidate will forfeit their nomination. If the candidate is running on a

ticket, then the ticket will receive a warning in place of the candidate. Further breaches will result in the entire team being disqualified. Appeals can be made to the Election Court.”

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clauses 9.35):

“The Returning Officer shall be the sole arbitrator in all matters relating to the election. They shall liaise with members of the Council and relevant University and Union staff to draft a document that details the penalties that will be applied for specific breaches of Rules and any questionable conduct. This document should be presented to the Council at the Inaugural Meeting every two years and, once accepted, can be circulated to all students, and specifically to election candidates upon receipt of their nomination.”

Replace with the following:

“The Returning Officer shall be the sole arbitrator in all matters relating to the election.”

An amendment to amend the restriction on the use of Union ‘equipment’ during election / referendum campaigns to include Union ‘resources’. Remove the reference to telephone calls, but allow the Returning Officer to make a determination on what resources may be used.

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clauses 9.32):

“Students’ Union equipment must not be used in any way in the furtherance of an Election campaign. The only exception to this rule is that the Returning Officer may at their discretion allow each candidate access to a telephone to receive incoming telephone calls and / or to make outgoing telephone calls.”

Replace with the following:

“Students’ Union equipment and resources must not be used in any way in the furtherance of an Election campaign. The Returning Officer may at their discretion, with the approval of the Director of the Students’ Union, make specified Union resources available to each candidate.”

An amendment to remove the detailed arrangements for Candidate Question Time to enable the Returning Officer to increase engagement with the event based on feedback from participants.

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clauses 9.6 and 9.7):

“The Returning Officer shall organise a ‘question time’ event for an Executive Management Committee Election for each full-time position between the close of nominations and the time of the election. At such an event, all duly nominated candidates may attend. Written questions, tabled with the Returning Officer for this purpose before the event, shall be put to the candidates in alphabetical order; the second question shall then be put firstly to the person who is second in alphabetical order, and the person who answered the opening question first shall answer this question last; and so on.”

“At the ‘question time’ event for an Executive Management Committee Election for each full-time position, each duly nominated candidate may speak on their own behalf for a maximum of two minutes before questions are answered. The Returning Officer may, at their discretion, permit the proposer or seconder of a candidate to speak on behalf of a candidate who is unable to attend the meeting.”

Replace with the following:

“The Returning Officer shall organise at least one ‘question time’ event for an Executive Management Committee Election for each full-time position between the close of nominations and the time of the election. At such an event, all duly nominated candidates may attend / participate. The Returning Officer may, at their discretion, permit the proposer or seconder of a candidate to participate on behalf of that candidate.”

An amendment to allow the Returning Officer, at their discretion, to accept nomination forms and election materials electronically.

Insert the following (after Rule 8, Clause 8.11) and renumber accordingly:

“Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the Returning Officer may, at their discretion, accept electronic submission of Election Nomination Forms and election materials.”

Insert the following (after Rule 8, Clause 9.10) and renumber accordingly:

“Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the Returning Officer may, at their discretion, accept electronic submission of Election Nomination Forms and election materials.”

An amendment to empower the Returning Officer to adjudicate on complaints and election irregularities, with the Election Court acting as a ‘court of appeal’.

Insert the following (after Rule 8, 11.2) and renumber accordingly:

“An Election (or Referendum or Plebiscite) Petition shall only be valid if its purpose is to challenge or appeal a decision of the Returning Officer, or if there is valid reason that prevented the irregularity being presented to the Returning Officer for a ruling prior to the close of polling.”

An amendment to allow the Returning Officer to determine the deadline for the withdrawal of nominations.

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clause 8.11):

“A candidate may withdraw from an Election in any constituency of the Council providing that a written declaration of their intention and bearing their signature be lodged with the Returning Officer or an assistant authorised by the Returning Officer before the close of nominations for the relevant election.”

Replace with the following:

“A candidate may withdraw from an Election in any constituency of the Council providing that a written declaration of their intention and bearing their signature be lodged with the Returning Officer or an assistant authorised by the Returning Officer before a deadline determined by the Returning Officer.”

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clause 9.10):

“A candidate may withdraw from any Executive Management Committee Election provided that a written declaration of their intention, bearing their signature, be lodged with the Returning Officer (or an assistant authorised by the Returning Officer) before the close of nominations for the Executive Management Committee Election.”

Replace with the following:

“A candidate may withdraw from any Executive Management Committee Election provided that a written declaration of their intention, bearing their signature, be lodged with the Returning Officer (or an assistant authorised by the Returning Officer) before a deadline determined by the Returning Officer.”

An amendment to the School Representative Constituency to provide for School Representatives for all Schools and Institutes in which students are enrolled.

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clause 9.9):

“There shall be a School Representative constituency whose membership shall be a School Representative from each School and both the Institute of Theology and the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, elected by the Students of each School / Institute, as defined by University Regulations. All Students as defined in the Constitution shall be entitled to offer themselves as candidates and exercise the right to vote for the position of School Representative. There shall be a maximum of 22 seats in this constituency.”

Replace with the following:

“There shall be a School Representative constituency whose membership shall be a School Representative from each School and Institute in which students are enrolled, elected by the Students of each School / Institute, as defined by University Regulations. All Students as defined in the Constitution shall be entitled to offer themselves as candidates and exercise the right to vote for the position of School Representative.”

Amendment to allow the Returning Officer to specify the election regulations regarding polling areas, areas of valid campaigning, guidance for voters, validity of votes, counting of votes and other operational matters for all electronic elections.

Insert the following (after Rule 2, Clause 1.7) and number accordingly:

“As the sole arbitrator in all matters relating to the election, the Returning Officer may issue regulations and rulings concerning polling areas, areas of valid campaigning, guidance for voters, the validity of votes, the process for the counting of votes and other operational matters for all elections conducted using electronic voting.”

Amendment to remove the detail of the nomination forms from the Constitution, to allow the Returning Officer to issue an authorised form with the required information.

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clause 8.10.1):

“A Nomination Form for an Election to the Students’ Union Council shall be a document officially issued by the Returning Officer and shall be of the following format:

THE COUNCIL OF THE STUDENTS’ UNION
Nomination Form

Session to

Constituency

Full Name of Candidate (Block Capitals)

Address

Faculty

Student Number.....

I acknowledge that an Election Court may be called to consider any alleged irregularity regarding this election and it may, at its discretion, declare the election null and void.
 I agree to co-operate fully with any Election Court, including appearing before it if necessary.

Signature of Candidate

Signed (Returning Officer)

Replace with the following:

“A Nomination Form for an Election to the Students’ Union Council shall be a document officially issued by the Returning Officer.”

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clause 9.9):

“A Nomination Form for an Election to the Executive Management Committee shall be a document officially issued by the Returning Officer and shall be of the following format:

NOMINATION FORM FOR EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ELECTION

Session to

Executive Management Committee Post

Full Name of Candidate (Capitals)

Name by which candidate is usually known (if different)

Address

.....

Union Membership Card Number

Faculty Stage

.....

Signature of Candidate

The candidate must be in good academic standing.
 We, the undersigned, do hereby nominate the above named person, as a candidate for the election to the above mentioned Executive Management Committee position.

Full Name of Proposer (Capitals)

Signature of Proposer

Union Membership Card Number

Faculty Stage

Full Name of Seconder (Capitals)

Signature of Seconder

Union Membership Card Number

Faculty Stage

Received by the Returning Officer on the day of 20

Signed (Returning Officer)

Replace with the following:

“A Nomination Form for an Election to the Executive Management Committee shall be a document officially issued by the Returning Officer.”

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clause 9.9):

“Nomination Forms shall be of similar format to those used in Executive Management Committee Elections and must be accompanied with a deposit of £40, which will be refunded after attendance at Conference. (2007 is the base year for this amount which will increase annually by the rate of RPI).”

Replace with the following:

“A Nomination Form for a Delegation Election shall be a document officially issued by the Returning Officer. A nomination will only be valid on the payment of a deposit of £40, which will be refunded after attendance at Conference. (2007 is the base year for this amount which will increase annually by the rate of RPI).”

Proposer: Stephen McCrystall (Vice President Equality & Diversity)

Seconder: Seán Fearon (Union President)

7.3 Amendments Relating to Council

An amendment to create three Faculty Representative student positions to be elected by students from the faculties, to represent students at a faculty level in Queen’s.**Insert the following (into Rule 2 after Clause 8.6) and renumber accordingly:**

“There shall be a Faculty Representative constituency whose membership shall be a Faculty Representative from each Faculty of the University, elected by the Students of each Faculty, as defined by University Regulations. All Students as defined in the Constitution shall be entitled to offer themselves as candidates and exercise the right to vote for the position of Faculty Representative. There shall be a maximum of one seat for each Faculty in this constituency.

Proposer: Oisín Hassan (Vice President Education)

Seconder: Seán Fearon (Union President)

An amendment to limit the number of Councillors elected to Council constituencies to reflect the changes approved during the meeting of Council.**Remove the following (from Rule 2 Clause 8.2):**

“The total membership of the Council shall be 112.”

Replace with the following:

“The total membership of the Council, elected from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Engineering and Physical Sciences, Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, Postgraduate, < INSERT INTERNATIONAL IF APPROVED,>, < INSERT FACULTY IF APPROVED,> Open and Open First Year constituencies shall be <112 <+3 – IF INTERNATIONAL IS APPROVED> <+3 – IF FACULTY IS APPROVED>.”

Proposer: Oisín Hassan (Vice President Education)

Seconder: Seán Fearon (Union President)

An amendment to enable the scheduling of Council meetings evenly throughout the entire academic year, as is reasonably possible, taking into account holiday periods and the academic calendar.**Remove the following (from Rule 1 Clause 1.4) and renumber accordingly:**

“There shall be an Inaugural Meeting of the Council in November which will take place between the Council elections and the November Statutory Meeting.”

Replace with the following:

“There shall be an Inaugural Meeting of the Council which will take place between the Council elections and the first Statutory Meeting of the academic year.”

Remove the following (Rule 1, Clause 1.7):

“There shall be one Statutory Meeting of the Council in each of the following months – November, December, February, March, April and May (the Annual Business Meeting).”

Replace with the following:

“There shall be three Statutory Meetings of the Council convened each of the first and second semesters. Each meeting shall be scheduled such that the meetings are regularly spaced throughout the academic year. The final meeting shall also be known as the Annual Business Meeting.

An amendment to allow elections by Council to Committees of Council, to University Committees and other committees to be conducted electronically, at the discretion of the Returning Officer.

Insert the following (into Rule 1 after Clause 1.5) and renumber accordingly:

Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, any of the elections to the Committees of Council and representatives for University Committees may be conducted electronically, at the discretion of the Returning Officer, with polling taking place no later than the date of the first Statutory Meeting of Council.

An amendment to decrease, from three meetings to two, the number of meetings that may be missed by a Councillor before being deemed to have resigned from Council. To include an allowance for ‘exceptional circumstances’ (such as illness) and valid academic commitments.

Remove the following (from Rule 1, Clause 3.1):

“A Councillor shall also be deemed to have vacated their seat on the Council if the Councillor fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Council.”

Replace with the following:

“A Councillor shall also be deemed to have vacated their seat on the Council if the Councillor fails to attend two consecutive meetings of the Council.”

Remove the following (Rule 4, Appendix 1, Clause 12.4):

“A Student Officer who fails to attend three meetings of the Council shall normally be deemed to have resigned their post as a member of the Executive Management Committee.”

Replace with the following:

“A Student Officer who fails to attend two meetings of the Council shall normally be deemed to have resigned their post as a member of the Executive Management Committee.”

Remove the following (Rule 5, Clause 1.17):

“Any Council member who fails to attend three meetings of a Committee, having submitted apologies, shall be deemed to have resigned their seat. Any such decision shall be communicated to the Union Speaker at the earliest possible opportunity by the Chair of the Committee in question, and shall be communicated to the Council at

the next Statutory Meeting. The Councillor in question has the right to appeal such a decision to the Council.”

Replace with the following:

“Any Council member who fails to attend three meetings of a Committee, having submitted apologies, shall be deemed to have resigned their seat. Any such decision shall be communicated to the Union Speaker at the earliest possible opportunity by the Chair of the Committee in question, and shall be communicated to the Council at the next Statutory Meeting. The Councillor in question has the right to appeal such a decision to the Council. A Councillor may be exempted from attendance at Council meeting if they can provide evidence of valid exceptional circumstances or valid academic commitments that may prevent their attendance.”

An amendment to limit the number of Council constituencies to which a student member can stand to two constituencies.

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clause 8.10):

“No Student may seek election for a constituency of which they are not an elector. No Student may represent more than one constituency on the Council.”

Replace with the following:

“No Student may seek election for a constituency of which they are not an elector. No Student may seek election in more than two constituencies of which they are an elector. No Student may represent more than one constituency on the Council.”

An amendment to remove the requirement for a seconder when proposing motions, questions or other Council business.

Remove the following (Rule 7, Clause 1.6.1): Tabled Motions

“The notice of a motion shall bear the names of the Proposer and the Secunder, being the names by which those Students are officially known to the University, along with their student numbers. The motion must be submitted in writing to the Clerk to the Students’ Union Council at least five clear days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) before the date of the meeting at which it is to be discussed;”

Replace with the following:

“The notice of a motion shall bear the name of the Proposer, being the name by which that Student is officially known to the University, along with their student number. The motion must be submitted in writing to the Clerk to the Students’ Union Council at least five clear days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) before the date of the meeting at which it is to be discussed;”

Remove the following (Rule 7, Clause 1.8.1): Tabled Questions

“The notice of a question shall bear the names of the Proposer and the Secunder, being the names by which those Students are officially known to the University, along with their student numbers. The question must be submitted in writing to the Clerk to the Students’ Union at least five clear days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) before the meeting at which it is to be raised. The maximum number of questions tabled for any Council meeting by a Student Member shall be five.”

Replace with the following:

“The notice of a question shall bear the name of the Proposer, being the name by which that Student is officially known to the University, along with their student number. The question must be submitted in writing to the Clerk to the Students’ Union at least five clear days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) before the meeting at which it is to be raised. The maximum number of questions tabled for any Council meeting by a Student Member shall be five.”

Remove the following (Rule 7, Clause 1.8.4): Tabled Questions

“Notwithstanding the provisions contained within 1.8.1, any Proposer and / or Secunder of a tabled question may request that their name shall not be published. In such circumstances, the Union Speaker shall read out the tabled question and the right to any supplementary question shall be waived.”

Replace with the following:

“Notwithstanding the provisions contained within 1.8.1, any Proposer of a tabled question may request that their name shall not be published. In such circumstances,

the Union Speaker shall read out the tabled question and the right to any supplementary question shall be waived.”

An amendment increase the membership of the Standing Committee to include ten elected members of Council.

An amendment to give the Standing Committee responsibility for making recommendations to Council on the following: Election Rule reviews, reviewing the efficiency of Council, reviewing the coherence of constitutional amendments, reviewing the relevance and effectiveness of current constitutional provisions; making recommendations on any reports to be put before the Council; to consider progress on Union policy.

Remove the following (to Rule 5, Section 3 – The Standing Committee)

3. THE STANDING COMMITTEE

- 3.1 The remit of the Standing Committee, as delegated by the Council, will be:
- 3.1.1 To review and recommend procedural change in order to assist the efficient operation of the Council;
 - 3.1.2 To review the existing election regulations and to bring forward proposed changes for approval by the Council; and
 - 3.1.3 To receive reports from the Election Working Group.
- 3.2 The membership of the Standing Committee shall be the Chairs of the standing Committees of the Council, the Union Speaker and the Clerk of Council.

Replace with the following:

3. THE STANDING COMMITTEE

- 3.1 The remit of the Standing Committee, as delegated by the Council, will be:
- 3.1.1 To review and recommend procedural change in order to assist the efficient operation of the Council;
 - 3.1.2 To review the existing election regulations and to bring forward proposed changes for approval by the Council;
 - 3.1.3 To receive reports from the Election Working Group;
 - 3.1.4 To make recommendations on the constitutionally consistency of proposed constitutional amendments;
 - 3.1.5 To review and make recommendations on the relevance and effectiveness of current constitutional provisions;
 - 3.1.6 To make recommendations on any reports to be put before Council;
 - 3.1.7 To consider progress on Union policy.
- 3.2 The membership of the Standing Committee shall be the ten elected members, the Union President, the Chairs of the standing Committees of the Council, the Union Speaker and the Clerk of Council, all with voting rights.

Proposer: Stephen McCrystal (Vice President Equality & Diversity)
 Secunder: Seán Fearon (Union President)

- 7.4 Amendment to the Election of Part-Time Student Officers

An amendment to enable some part-time student officer constituency elections to take place in semester two instead of semester one.

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clause 9.3):

“The Executive Management Committee Non-Sabbatical posts of Environmental and Ethical Trading Officer, Student Carers’ Officer and Student Parents’ Officer shall be elected in the first semester by a cross campus ballot, as in Council elections.”

Replace with the following:

“The Executive Management Committee Non-Sabbatical posts of Environmental and Ethical Trading Officer, Student Carers’ Officer and Student Parents’ Officer shall be elected in the second semester by a cross campus ballot, as in Council elections.”

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clause 9.4):

“The Executive Management Committee Non-Sabbatical posts of International Students’ Officer, Mature Students’ Officer, Part-Time Students’ Officer, Postgraduate Research Officer and Postgraduate Taught Officer shall be elected by means of a standard cross campus ballot of the qualifying electorate, as in Council elections. Candidates and voters in these elections shall, where possible, be defined by the relevant University student classification system as being members of the constituency in which they are standing and / or voting.”

Replace with the following:

“The Executive Management Committee Non-Sabbatical posts of Postgraduate Research Officer and Postgraduate Taught Officer shall be elected in the first semester by means of a standard cross campus ballot of the qualifying electorate, as in Council elections. The Executive Management Committee Non-Sabbatical posts of International Students’ Officer, Mature Students’ Officer and Part-Time Students’ Officer shall be elected in the second semester by means of a standard cross campus ballot of the qualifying electorate, as in Council elections.”

Remove the following from Rule 2, Clause 9.5 (Liberation Posts): “first semester”

Replace with the following: “second semester”

Remove the following (from Rule 4, Appendix 1, Section 2 ‘Term of Office’):

“A Non-Sabbatical Student Officer shall hold their post from the first working day following their election, until the day of the election of their successor.”

Replace with the following:

“The Postgraduate Research Officer and Postgraduate Taught Officer shall hold their posts from the first working day following their election, until the day of the election of their successor. All other Non-Sabbatical Student Officers shall hold their post from the first working day of July in the year in which they were elected, until the last working day of June in the following year.”

INSERT RULE 11: TRANSITIONARY ARRANGEMENTS

1. NON-SABBATICAL STUDENT OFFICERS

- 1.1 For the 2017-18 academic-year all elections to the Executive Management Committee Non-Sabbatical Posts shall take place in the first semester.
- 1.2 A Non-Sabbatical Student Officer elected under these provisions shall hold their post from the first working day following their election until the last working day of June in the following year.
- 1.3 These transitory arrangements shall have no standing from the first working day of July 2018 and shall be expunged from the Constitution on the first working day of July 2018.

Proposer: Stephen McCrystal (Vice President Equality & Diversity)
 Seconder: Jessica Elder (Vice President Welfare)

7.5 Amendments to the Committees of Council

An amendment to establish a Committee of Council with responsibility for academic and quality assurance issues with membership comprising the academic representatives on Council.

Insert as Rule 5, Section 4 and renumber existing clauses accordingly:

4. THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The remit of the Academic Affairs Committee, as delegated by the Council, will be:
 - 4.1.1. To address education, quality assurance and academic-related issues.
- 4.2 The membership of the Academic Affairs Committee shall be the members of the School Representative constituency <AND FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE CONSTITUENCY IF APPROVED> of Council with voting rights. The Vice President Education shall act as Chair of the Committee with a casting vote. The Committee shall elect a secretary from amongst its membership.
- 4.3 The elected representatives of Council to Academic Board may be in attendance without voting rights.
- 4.4 Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the Committee shall meet on at least three occasions in semester one and three occasions in semester two.

Insert into Rule 5, Clause 1.1: List of Committees

“Academic Affairs Committee”

Remove the following (from Rule 5, Clause 1.9):

“Student Councillors elected to the University Committee positions of Senate and Academic Council may attend (without voting rights) the following Committees of Council:

Education and Welfare Committee
 Campaigns and Communications Committee
 Community, Equality and Diversity Committee
 Student Activities Committee
 Environmental and Ethical Committee”

Replace with the following:

“Student Councillors elected to the University Committee positions of Senate and Academic Council may attend (without voting rights) the following Committees of Council:

Academic Affairs Committee
 Education and Welfare Committee
 Campaigns and Communications Committee
 Community, Equality and Diversity Committee

Student Activities Committee
Environmental and Ethical Committee”

An amendment to remove education activities from the remit of the Education and Welfare Committee.

Remove from Insert into Rule 5, Clause 1.1: List of Committees

“Education and Welfare Committee”

Replace with the following:

“Welfare Committee”

Remove the following (from Rule 5, Clause 1.9):

“Education and Welfare Committee”

Replace with the following:

“Welfare Committee”

Remove Rule 5, Section 4:

4. THE EDUCATION AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The remit of the Education and Welfare Committee, as delegated by the Council, will be:
 - 4.1.1 To address education issues;
 - 4.1.2 To address welfare issues.
- 4.2 The membership of the Education and Welfare Committee shall be fifteen elected members (including the Chair) with voting rights. The Vice President Education and the Vice President Welfare shall be required to be in attendance without voting rights.
- 4.3 The following Non-Sabbatical Officers shall also be required to be in attendance without voting rights:
 - Disabled Students’ Officer
 - Mature Students’ Officer
 - Part-Time Students’ Officer
 - Postgraduate Research Officer
 - Postgraduate Taught Officer
 - Student Carers’ Officer
 - Student Parents’ Officer

Replace with the following:

4. THE WELFARE COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The remit of the Welfare Committee, as delegated by the Council, will be:
 - 4.1.1 To address welfare issues.
- 4.2 The membership of the Welfare Committee shall be fifteen elected members (including the Chair) with voting rights. The Vice President Welfare shall act as Chair of the Committee with a casting vote. The Committee shall elect a secretary from amongst its membership.
- 4.3 The Non-Sabbatical Officers may also be attendance without voting rights.

Proposer: Oisín Hassan (Vice President Education)
Seconder: Jessica Elder (Vice President Welfare)

An amendment to enable Sabbatical Student Officers to chair Committees of Council and to state that all Non-Sabbatical Student Officers may be in attendance at certain Committees of Council.

Remove from Rule 5, Section 5: THE CAMPAIGNS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

- 5.2 The membership of the Campaigns and Communications Committee shall be ten elected members (including the Chair) with voting rights. The Union President shall be required to be in attendance without voting rights. In addition, each organisation of SU Media shall nominate one member to sit on this Committee without voting rights.
- 5.3 All Non-Sabbatical Officers are also be required to be in attendance without voting rights.

Replace with the following:

- 5.2 The membership of the Campaigns and Communications Committee shall be ten elected members with voting rights. The Union President shall act as Chair of the Committee with a casting vote. The Committee shall elect a secretary from amongst its membership.
- 5.3 The Non-Sabbatical Officers may also be attendance without voting rights.

Remove from Rule 5, Section 6: THE COMMUNITY, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

- 6.2 The membership of the Community, Equality and Diversity Committee shall be fourteen elected members with voting rights. In addition, the Rag organisation shall also nominate one member to sit on this Committee with voting rights. The Vice President Equality and Diversity shall be required to be in attendance without voting rights.
- 6.3 The following Non-Sabbatical Officers shall also be required to be in attendance without voting rights:

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer
Disabled Students' Officer
International Students' Officer
LGBT+ Officer
Mature Students' Officer
Women Students' Officer

Replace with the following:

- 6.2 The membership of the Community, Equality and Diversity Committee shall be fourteen elected members with voting rights. In addition, the Rag organisation shall also nominate one member to sit on this Committee with voting rights. The Vice President Equality and Diversity shall act as Chair of the Committee with a casting vote. The Committee shall elect a secretary from amongst its membership.
- 6.3 The Non-Sabbatical Officers may also be attendance without voting rights.

Remove from Rule 5, Section 7: THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

- 7.2 The membership of the Student Activities Committee shall be ten elected members (including the Chair) with voting rights. The Vice President Student Activities shall be required to be in attendance without voting rights.

Replace with the following:

- 7.2 The membership of the Student Activities Committee shall be ten elected members) with voting rights. The Vice President Student Activities shall act as Chair of the Committee with a casting vote. The Committee shall elect a secretary from amongst its membership.

Proposer: Stephen McCrystall (Vice President Equality & Diversity)
 Seconder: Seán Fearon (Union President)

7.6 Administrative Amendments

Amendment of the Constitution to incorporate the provisions of the revised University Charter and Statutes (11 February 2015)

Replace the following (in Clause 2 of Chapter One of the Students' Union Constitution):

"Chapter XXV" with "Chapter XXI".

Replace the following (in Clause 3 of Chapter One of the Students' Union Constitution):

"Chapter XXV" with "Chapter XXI".

Replace the following (in Clause 9.1 of Chapter One of the Students' Union Constitution):

"Chapter XXV" with "Chapter XXI".

Replace the following (in Clause 12.1 of Rule 4, Appendix 1, of the Students' Union Constitution):

"Chapter XXV" with "Chapter XXI".

Replace the following (in Clause 1.2 of Rule 1, of the Students' Union Constitution):

"University Statute XXV" with "University Statute XXI".

Insert a new paragraph (after Clause 3.9.4 of Chapter One of the Students' Union Constitution) referring to the Aims and Objectives of the Union:

"It is recognised that these functions may be amended/superseded by subsequent Students' Union Councils."

Replace Chapter One, Annex 1, of the Students' Union Constitution with the following:

Relevant Excerpts from the University Charter and Statutes

1. Article 16 of the Charter of the University provides that:

There shall be an organisation of students of the University whose constitution, powers and functions shall be prescribed by the Statutes.
2. Chapter XXI of the Statutes sets out the role and responsibilities of the Students' Union as follows:
 - 2.1 There shall be an organisation of students within the University to be known as the Students' Union which shall elect from its own number a Union Council, hereinafter to be known as "the Council".
 - 2.2 The students of the University for this purpose shall be the Sabbatical Officers and those, whether graduates or undergraduates, who have registered and are pursuing systematic courses of study leading to a University degree, diploma, certificate or other approved award, as shall be prescribed by Regulations made by the Senate from time to time.
 - 2.3 Subject to these Statutes, the Constitution of the Students' Union shall be prescribed by Regulations made by the Senate following consultation with the Council, which shall take account of the views of the membership of the Students' Union.

- 2.4 The Council shall consist of a President and such other officers and members elected from among the members of the Students' Union in such manner as the students may determine by Rules to be made by the Council after consultation with the membership of the Students' Union and with the approval of the Senate. The Rules shall not be altered except with the approval of the Senate.
- 2.5 The functions of the Council shall be:
- (a) To promote the general and particular interests of its members and to represent them in all matters affecting their interests both to the University and to persons and bodies outside the University;
 - (b) To promote equality of opportunity and a safe and relaxed environment for all its members;
 - (c) To support a range of student societies in the University and to provide competitively priced entertainments in a safe environment;
 - (d) To represent the interests of its members in the arrangements made for the provision of commercial services, which will be staffed wherever practical by its members, for the benefit of its members;
 - (e) To promote unity of spirit among its members and to enhance relations between its members and the members of other institutions of higher education and the entire community;
 - (f) To communicate with all other organisations with whom the Union maintains contact for the attainment of these objects;
 - (g) To formulate policy and deliver strategy on student matters;
 - (h) To raise awareness in relation to issues arising as a result of the Union's representational role;
 - (i) To promote the interests of its members in relation to:
 - freedom from harassment or intimidation;
 - reasonable access to funds/finance in accordance with the Students' Union Constitutional Rules;
 - the opportunity to participate in Union elections and activities;
 - the opportunity of freedom of expression, the right of assembly and association and the right to participate in associations (subject in the case of University societies to Chapter 4 of the Students' Union Constitution) and subject to compliance with the law properly relating to the right to freedom of expression and the right to the freedom of peaceful assembly.

It is recognised that these functions may be amended/superseded by subsequent Students' Union Councils.

- 2.6 The Council shall be entitled to make representation to the Senate on any matter affecting the interests of the students.
- 2.7 Subject to the provisions of these Statutes and to any Regulations or Resolutions of the Senate, the Council, having consulted the membership of the Students' Union, may regulate its own procedure, appoint its own committees and officers, and the Council, its committees and officers may exercise such powers and additional functions as the Senate may approve or delegate to them.

Amendment of the Constitution to correct a typographic error (in Clause 1.1.2 of Rule 4):

Replace “NON-SABBATICAL POST” with “NON-SABBATICAL POSTS”

An amendment to add relevant references to the National Union of Students – Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI) in the Constitution where there are existing references to the National Union of Students and the Union of Students’ in Ireland.

Remove the following (Constitution, Chapter Two – Affiliation, 1.3):

“Affiliations to the National Union of Students and the Union of Students in Ireland should be reviewed at least once every three years, by means of a Union Referendum, the procedures of which shall be governed by the Rules pertaining to Elections.”

Replace with the following:

“Affiliations to the National Union of Students (NUS), the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and the National Union of Students - Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI) should be reviewed at least once every three years, by means of a Union Referendum, the procedures of which shall be governed by the Rules pertaining to Elections.”

Remove the following (Rule 2, Clause 10 – HEADING, 10.1, 10.2):

10. CONFERENCE DELEGATION ELECTIONS

National Union of Students (NUS) and Union of Students in Ireland (USI)

“Delegates to NUS Conference and USI Congress shall be elected by cross campus ballot as in the Council Elections.”

“One delegate to NUS Conference and two delegates to USI Congress may be appointed ex-officio.”

Replace with the following and renumber existing clauses accordingly:

10. CONFERENCE DELEGATION ELECTIONS

National Union of Students (NUS), Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and National Union of Students - Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI)

“Delegates to NUS Conference, NUS-USI Conference and USI Congress shall be elected by cross campus ballot as in the Council Elections.”

“One delegate to NUS Conference may be appointed ex-officio.”

“Five delegates to NUS-USI Conference may be appointed ex-officio.”

“Two delegates to USI Congress may be appointed ex-officio.”

Remove the following (Rule 4 – Executive Management Committee Clause 2.17):

THE UNION PRESIDENT

“Shall, on behalf of the Students’ Union, liaise with the National Union of Students (NUS), the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and the Aldwych Group.”

Replace with the following:

THE UNION PRESIDENT

“Shall, on behalf of the Students’ Union, liaise with the National Union of Students (NUS), the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), the National Union of Students - Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI) and the Aldwych Group.”

Amendment to allow for some increased flexibility in the format of the Agenda for Council meetings and for Committees of Council.

Remove the following (Rule 7, Clause 1.5.4):

“The order of business shall be as follows:”

Replace with the following:

“The order of business shall normally be as follows:”

Proposer: Stephen McCrystal (Vice President Equality & Diversity)
Seconder: Seán Fearon (Union President)

7.7 Amendments to the BAME Students' Officer post

An amendment to rename Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Officer to Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Officer.**Remove the following (from Rule 2, Clause 9.5):**

"Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer"

Replace with the following:

"Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Students' Officer"

Remove the following (from Rule 4, Clause 1.1.2 (b)):

"Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer"

Replace with the following:

"Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Students' Officer"

Remove the following (from Rule 4, Section 8):

"BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC STUDENTS' OFFICER"

Replace with the following:

"BLACK, ASIAN AND ETHNIC MINORITY STUDENTS' OFFICER"

Remove the following (from Rule 5, Clause 6.3):

"Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer"

Replace with the following:

"Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Students' Officer"

An amendment for the Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Officer to be the Chairperson of the Ethnic Minority Ambassador Programme.**Remove the following (Rule 4, Clause 8.4):**

Shall encourage greater involvement of Students from an Ethnic Minority background in Union affairs.

Replace with the following:

Shall encourage greater involvement of Students from an Ethnic Minority background in Union affairs. This includes, but is not limited to, being Chairperson of the Ethnic Minority Ambassador Programme.

Proposer: Lahiru Elvitigala (BAME Officer)

Seconder: Mudra Kumar (Student / Secretary of BAME Ambassador Programme)

7.8 Amendments Relating to Union General Meetings (UGMs)

An amendment to reduce the number of students required to approve a mandatory policy at a Union General Meeting (UGM) from 10% to a number that meets the maximum capacity of large venue in the Union (i.e. 3% of the membership – approximately 750 students)**Remove the following (Constitutional Rule 2, Clauses 2.13, 2.13.1 and 2.16):**

“A decision relating to the policy of the Students’ Union taken at a UGM and voted upon with the exception of the Constitution and its associated Rules:

By at least 10% of the Student Membership shall be mandatory and binding, if more than 50% of the above Students vote in favour of the policy.”

“A quorate UGM attended by less than 10% of the Student Membership shall have powers of recommendation which shall be advisory only.”

Replace with the following clauses and renumber existing clauses accordingly:

“A decision relating to the policy of the Students’ Union taken at a UGM and voted upon with the exception of the Constitution and its associated Rules, by at least 3% of the Student Membership shall be mandatory and binding, if more than 50% of the above Students vote in favour of the policy.”

“A quorate UGM attended by less than 3% of the Student Membership shall have powers of recommendation which shall be advisory only.”

Proposer: Stephen McCrystall (Vice President Equality & Diversity)

Seconder: Seán Fearon (Union President)

7.9 Enabling Motion

Enabling motion to rename, reorder and renumber Constitutional clauses, and remove invalid references, as appropriate, to reflect the amendments approved by Council.

This motion shall be deemed to have been moved, and approved if any Constitutional amendment at this meeting is moved and carried.

Constitutional Amendment Motion:

“This Council empowers the Clerk of Council to rename, reorder and renumber Constitutional clauses, and remove invalid references, as appropriate, to reflect the amendments approved by the Annual Business Meeting of Council, held on 2 May 2016.”

Proposer: Stephen McCrystall (Vice President Equality & Diversity)

Seconder: Seán Fearon (Union President)

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

8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following Reports were considered by the Council:

8.1	Annual Report of the Union President	SUC/P/17/20
8.2	Annual Report of the Vice President Education	SUC/P/17/21
8.3	Annual Report of the Vice President Equality and Diversity	SUC/P/17/22
8.4	Annual Report of the Vice President Student Activities	SUC/P/17/23
8.5	Annual Report of the Vice President Welfare	SUC/P/17/24
8.6	Annual Report of the International Students’ Officer	SUC/P/17/25
8.7	Annual Report of the Disabled Students’ Officer	SUC/P/17/26

Reports 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4 were not received within the timeframe stipulated by the Rule and were therefore deemed automatically rejected by Council.

Following an appeal from the relevant officers and a show of voting cards, Council agreed to consider the tabled reports.

Following a show of voting cards for each report, the above reports were accepted.

9. REPORTS FROM OTHER UNION COMMITTEES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

- 9.1 Annual Report of the Education and Welfare Committee
There was none.
- 9.2 Annual Report of the Campaigns and Communications Committee
There was none.
- 9.3 Annual Report of the Community, Equality and Diversity Committee
There was none.
- 9.4 Annual Report of the Clubs Societies and Student Development Committee
There was none.
- 9.5 Annual Report of the Environmental and Ethical Committee
There was none.
- 9.6 Report of the Students' Union Charity Forum
There was none.
- 9.7 Report of the Far Trade Steering Group
There was none.
10. REPORTS FROM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES.
There were none.
11. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.
There were none.
12. QUESTIONS.
There were none.
13. OBJECTIONS TO POLCY LAPSE
- 13.1 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.01)

Ensure that student representatives are appropriately consulted regarding proposed changes to assessment processes and to the academic year

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.

13.2 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.03)

Access to online learning resources

Council notes that, at present, the University has no policy regarding the availability of online learning resources, such as lecture slides, notes etc.

Council believes that, in order to enhance the student learning experience, students should be provided with lecture slides / notes via Queen's Online Learning (QOL) at least 24 hours in advance of the lecture, with the exception of guest lecturers / speakers.

Council therefore instructs the Vice President Education to work with the University and individual Schools to create a policy on the availability of online learning resources.

13.3 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.05)

Creation of University-wide feedback policy

This Council notes that the University does not have any current policy on feedback provision for assessed work.

This Council believes that there needs to be a minimum standard regarding feedback provisions across all Schools and Institutes of the University.

This Council instructs the VP Education:

1. To lobby the University to conduct a study on feedback provisions;
2. To liaise with the Schools and Institutes in order to establish a minimum standard regarding feedback provisions, including (but not limited to) the following:
 - a. ensuring that all submitted assessments must receive some form of feedback;
 - b. ensuring that all students must receive individual feedback;
 - c. ensuring that feedback must be more than just a mark; and
 - d. bringing an end to inconsistent feedback.

This Council further instructs the Union President and the VP Education to conduct a feasibility study into putting the above into practice.

13.5 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.08)

Disabled Students' Needs during Examination Periods

Council notes with grave concern that disabled students have been unable to have their needs assessments altered as their condition changes or worsens, primarily prior to examination periods.

Council notes that hospitalised disabled students have been unable to make requests for assignments in lieu of examinations to reflect their worsening condition and change in needs.

Council believes that the University has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students throughout their time at Queen's.

Council instructs the Disabled Students' Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer to liaise with Disability Services to ensure that Disabled Students needs are met throughout the year, including during assessment periods and that changes can be made successfully throughout the academic year.

In addition, Council instructs the Equality and Diversity Officer to provide an update at the next meeting of Council as to the results of communication with Disability Services.

13.6 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.12)

Access to University

This Council notes that University is not for everyone but for those who have the ability and ambition, they should be enabled. This Council firmly believes that access to university should not be limited because of where you live or what your parents

earn. Access to university can and should be widened, especially within target, low participation groups.

Currently the two universities within Northern Ireland have small widening participation units. This council calls on the DEL minister to ensure that, should efficiencies need to be made to the Higher Education sector, that these units are protected. This Council believes he must ensure that the most vulnerable get a fair chance at attending university.

The Council mandates the EMC to make representation to NUS-USI and the Vice-Chancellor to pursue this issue further.

The Council requests that a letter be written to the DEL minister regarding this issue and that widening participation be included in our response to DEL.

The Council further requests the President writes to all the Chief Executives of the 11 Councils in Northern Ireland and advise that they include access into University as part of their community plan and to engage with QUB's and UU's Widening Participation Units as part of that process.

13.7 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.13)

Examination hall conditions

This Council notes the importance of providing comfortable conditions in areas where students are taking examinations.

Council recognises that optimum conditions are not being met in some examination halls on campus, including the Whitla Hall, where many of the desks are either wobbly or too small and the clock is not large enough for all students in the hall to be able to see the time.

Council recognises the stressfulness of the examinations period in itself and wishes to ensure that this is not made more difficult by external factors. Therefore, Council instructs the Vice President Education to liaise with the relevant University authorities to endeavour to improve these conditions.

13.8 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.14)

Postgraduate taught class size

Council is aware that smaller (in contrast to those provided at undergraduate study) classes and subject specificity are an essential element of postgraduate taught education at Queen's. Council is aware that the university is currently gaining information from schools on whether postgraduate taught classes consist of 12 students or less. Council therefore condemns any decisions by the university to cut or merge PGT courses based on the number of students enrolled as this will result in a detrimental effect on the student experience and thus the quality of education received.

13.9 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.16)

Improving academic student representation

This Council believes that the SSCCs and PQACs are essential to furthering quality education, service delivery and communication within the University. This Council notes the invaluable work that the course and school reps do and wishes to encourage them further in this role.

The Council commends the job that Hannah Niblock has done in supporting, training and developing the course reps system. This Council believes that she could receive more support from the University in delivering and co-ordinating the support for course reps.

This Council notes the progress that has been made on Queen's SSCC and PQAC system over the past 5 years. However there is still very significant work to be done on the course reps system. It further notes with concern that many schools are in breach of the University SSCC and PQAC policy and regulations passed by the university in 2011. This must change, and the University must from the top ensure the full implementation of its policy is a priority.

This Council does therefore, evoke its right to have the issue of SSCCs tabled at the Senate meeting. This Council mandates the VP Education to make a traffic light spreadsheet detailing the areas in which all the schools are in breach, in keeping with the regulations and where there is no known information. This Council requests that the University makes this spreadsheet available to all senators in advance of the meeting.

This Council mandates its representatives on University committees and all officers to make clear that this is a strategic priority that the University needs to fulfil the obligations it signed up to and provide the necessary support to enable this.

The Council also mandates the Union to support NUS-USI in their attempt to create a SPARQ equivalent in Northern Ireland.

13.10 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.18)

Earlier Availability of Teaching Timetables

This Conference recognises how stressful the process of registering for classes at the beginning of each year can be for students. This Conference also notes that one way to make the process of QGIS simpler is to ensure class schedules are made available to students before the registration process begins so students can pre plan. However some courses do not make this information available before the registration process.

This Council calls upon the Vice President for Education to lobby the University to ensure courses make lecture and tutorial times available for students prior to registration and informs students of the availability of this information.

13.11 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.20)

Protecting Democracy in Academia

Council recognises that recent Government proposals to limit the ability of academics to use their research to critique government policy if they receive state funding came into effect on May 1st.

Council further recognises that this is the latest in a number of governmental reforms (such as reduced opposition party spending money and the charity sectors 'Gagging Bill') that have limited the scope of various sections of society to be able to provide the public with the information needed to judge the effectiveness of the Government.

Council believes that democracy depends on the ability of a variety of sections of society to be able to use their specialities and knowledge to be able to inform public debate, and that academia in particular relies on this freedom to be able to flourish. Council further believes that this latest proposal by the government undermines both academia and this country's democracy.

Council therefore condemns this latest restriction of academic freedom by the UK government, council stands in solidarity with any academics that are hampered by the new rules and mandates the incoming sabbatical team to publicly oppose and campaign against this policy, and to include the democratic deficit in academia in future campaigns on and considerations of the future of Higher Education.

13.12 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.21)

Save Our Schools

This Council instructs the Executive Management Committee to make representation on its behalf to University Senate, that the 'Size and Shape Review' be suspended and opened to consultation with students and staff across the Institution.

13.13 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 1.22)

Alternative Assessments

This Council notes that a number of students with disabilities undertake Alternative Assessments in place of examinations.

This Council further notes that the general teaching plan for a great number of modules fails to properly accommodate and cater for students undertaking Alternative Assessments, especially when taking into account the pace of the teaching plan and the amount of coursework to be completed.

This Council believes that every student should have an equal opportunity to achieve their full academic potential in a manner best suited to their needs.

This Council therefore mandates the Vice President Education, the Vice President Equality and Diversity and the Disabled Students' Officer to liaise with Disability Services, the Schools and Institutes and other applicable bodies and persons to research and determine a solution to this issue and to report to this Council on any progress made.

13.14 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 2.03)

Oppose any increase in tuition fees for students in NI for the next five years and campaign for publicly funded higher education

Council believes that the University may be considering increasing tuition fees to fill the funding gap, which will have a devastating impact on marginalised students and those from deprived backgrounds.

Council instructs the Student Officer Team, alongside NUS-USI, to oppose all increases in tuition fees for NI students, GB students and international students for the next five years and to advocate for additional funding to be sought from the public sector.

13.15 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 2.04)

Proper funding for Higher Education

Council notes that Northern Ireland does not have a properly funded higher education system.

Council believes:

- That education is fundamental to the creation of a fairer society.
- That access to education is a right, not a privilege, and should be accessible to all.
- That access to higher education should be based on academic merit and the academic potential of the individual.
- That the ability to pay for tuition should not be a barrier education.

This Union resolves to:

- Campaign vigorously against any increase in the current tuition fee cap and any cuts to public funding of higher education, in Northern Ireland.
- Make adequate public funding for higher education a key theme in the forthcoming Assembly Elections.
- Promote the benefits to society of a well-funded higher education system.
- Seek commitments from all political parties in Northern Ireland to a minimum spend on higher education and a freeze on tuition fees over the mandate of the next NI Assembly.
- Research and promote discussion on alternative methods of using public funds to support higher education, to provide an alternative to the current discourse where tuition fees are advocated as the only model to fund higher education.

13.16 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 2.08)

Council Condemns Unnecessary Cuts by Queen's University

Council notes that the results of a recent FOI request have revealed that Queen's University has introduced cuts to its budget of almost twice the amount the reduced funding from Stormont would require. This has led to job losses, academic or otherwise, and possible course closures and mergers that are simply unnecessary. Council refutes that an ambition to pursue 'Vision 2020' is a legitimate reason for ideologically driven budget cuts.

Council believes that universities should not be run like businesses or for profit, instead they should aim to foster a public good, academic excellence, critical thinking skills, a social conscience and the broadest and best education possible to its students. Council also believes that important decisions regarding the future direction of higher education at Queen's should be driven by students and their needs, not by corporate concerns.

Council therefore condemns the decision by Queen's to introduce unnecessary and damaging budget cuts and calls upon the university to provide to Council and the student body a more detailed justification as to why staff, courses and student support continue to suffer to bolster a marketisation agenda.

13.17 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 3.01)

Campaign for removal of MSM blood ban in NI

Council notes the following:

- The lifetime ban on donating blood from Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) that has been in place in Northern Ireland since its introduction in the UK in the 1980s.
- The blood ban in the rest of the UK has since been lowered to 12 months in 2011.
- The High Court case from October 2013 that ruled the Northern Irish 'Blood Ban' as irrational and held that the then Health Minister was in breach of his ministerial code by failing to take the issue before the Stormont Executive.

Council believes that:

- The Northern Irish MSM Blood Ban is discriminatory against members of the LGBT+ Community.
- The 922 signatures collected to date in a petition by the VP Equality and Diversity shows that there is a strong condemnation of the 'Blood Ban'.

Council proposes:

- That the VP Equality and Diversity organises a campaign calling for the removal of the MSM Blood Ban in Northern Ireland and lobbies the Northern Ireland Health Minister calling for the MSM Blood Ban to be lifted.

13.18 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 3.03)

LGBTQ Visibility

This Council recognises that the LGBTQ community in Northern Ireland is one which continues to suffer distinct discrimination, prejudice and injustice in today's society and that we as a democratically elected, representative organisation for the Student body should ensure that LGBTQ students feel welcome, safe and secure in their Union.

Council notes that an increase in progressive imagery in and around the Union building may contribute to creating a more positive and inclusive environment for the University's LGBTQ community and so calls on the VP for Equality and Diversity, in collaboration with the LGBT+ Officer, to work towards providing this safe space for our students.

13.19 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 3.06)

Cuts to Carecall Counselling

This Council notes:

- This Council notes the good work that the counselling service, Carecall provides for QUB students alongside other University wellbeing services and the SU Advice Centre.

- Council also notes that with the increasing awareness of mental health services, poor mental health alongside the stresses of University life are recognised by students and therefore a student is more likely to access help.
- Requests for counselling and access to the University Wellbeing team are increasing each year.
- That the University cut counselling sessions were cut earlier this year from six sessions to four and as of March this year, counselling at QUB has been cut further so that only a set amount of sessions may be provided to students per month. This has led to a waiting time of three days to six weeks.

This Council Believes:

- Student welfare is becoming a privilege at this university and not a right.
- The cuts to higher education have directly impacted on student wellbeing.
- That this is an issue imposed on the University Wellbeing team, not on which they have asked for.

This Council Mandates:

- The Vice President Welfare to lobby and demand an increase in funding for student counselling and wellbeing services.
- That in the interim, during exam time there will be an emergency fund allocated so that students may access counselling during an incredibly stressful time within an appropriate timeframe.

13.20 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 4.01)

Increased engagement with underrepresented students

This Council endorses the measures outlined in paper SUC/P/13/50 and instructs the Executive Management Committee to implement this proposal at the earliest opportunity.

A copy of the paper SUC/P/13/50 may be requested by contacting the Students' Union.

13.21 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 4.04)

Women in leadership in the Union

This Council notes the serious lack of representation of women in leadership positions across society and believes that this is something that needs to improve.

Council notes the excellent work that is being done by our three national unions in promoting leadership in underrepresented groups of students.

Council commends the officer boards of NUS-USI, NUS and USI for focusing on promoting Women in Leadership and particularly commends the intersectionality aspect that these campaigns have taken.

Council believes that these campaigns have successfully led to a more diverse range of candidates and officers elected to our national unions.

Council believes that it is important that our sabbatical officer team is reflective of the diverse nature of our student body.

Council instructs the Executive Management Committee to prioritise diversifying the sabbatical elections and work on breaking down the barriers to elections that exists for underrepresented groups, particularly women, lgbt+ students and international students.

Council also instructs the Executive Management Committee to facilitate an environment where these groups can come together to share their experiences and contribute to the discussion of breaking down the barriers to elections.

13.22 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 4.08)

Queen's University Belfast Students' Union Autonomy

Council notes that the University has the power to overturn democratic decisions made by the Students' Union Council, as seen by the decision to overturn the

removal of the Academic Standing Rule endorsed by Council in the last academic year.

Council recognises that the relationship between Queen's University and the Students' Union is unique in comparison to the autonomous relationship between these institutions in the UK and Ireland.

Council endorses an autonomous Students' Union and instructs the Executive Management Committee to liaise with NUS-USI, MLAs and other authorities to ensure that the Students' Union become independent from the University within the next five years.

13.23 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 7.01)

Supporting and Valuing International Students

This Council notes QUB's internationalisation strategy as laid out in Vision 2020. Council recognises the fact that this core document impacts the entire strategy for the University in the years ahead, while also noting that this 'vision' had absolutely no input from students.

Council believes that the current internationalisation strategy at Queen's is based on an exploitative drive to increase cash flow from the higher tuition fees that international students can be charged. Considering the stance of this Union on tuition fees, especially at the time of an Assembly Election campaign in which we are insisting that the fee cap should not be lifted, we believe that international students should not be charged extortionate tuition. International students are important in our drive to become a diverse place of learning, and should be treated with the utmost respect which is currently lacking at an institutional level. Council condemns the current internationalisation strategy at QUB and across the Higher Education sector as not only exploitative, but inherently bigoted.

The Students' Union resolves to challenge the University's current attempt to "recruit" international students in order to increase funding, while putting in place no additional support for these students who often face different needs and issues. This Union values our international students and staff, and affirms to ensure that they are considered not as 'cash cows', but as integral to diversification, learning, research, and societal change.

This Council instructs the Vice President Equality & Diversity, alongside the International Students' Officer, to lobby the University on the impact of their current strategy, to demand that support services are increased across the University to reflect the changing needs of our student population, and to ensure that the University commits further staff and monetary support to international Welcome programmes and integration efforts. While this Council also instructs all members of the Executive Management Committee to ensure that in their day-to-day work of representation, committees, and campaigns, that the issues of supporting our international students is to the forefront.

13.24 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 7.01)

Guarantor Support for international Students

Council notes that:

- Returning International Students prefer living in privately owned accommodation for the following reasons:
 - Economical Value (cost-effective)
 - Accessibility to frequently used services and places of personal interests (for eg. School of study, 24hr Shops, PEC, Pubs etc)
 - Communal living with friends of mutual endeavours
 - General freedom (for example: last check-in time for friends 11:00 pm, Elms)
- Normally leasing a private accommodation requires a UK based Guarantor, which most international students find difficult to arrange.

- This immediately reduces the number of choices of agencies\landlord and locations available to students.
- Moreover, many landlords and agencies exploit this opportunity and demand at least six-month's (if not full) rent plus the deposit payable upfront.
- Some demand payment of double deposit etc.
- Many students end up paying more than usual to these landlord and letting agencies to secure accommodation.
- While this is convenient to some students others find it difficult to arrange. However, the main limitation is that it puts students at a financial threat allowing the landlords an upper-hand in dealing with queries.
- Some landlords/agencies do not respond to or even completely ignore queries or issues raised by the tenants. This raises unnecessary worry and welfare issues amongst students.

Council resolves that:

- The University should act as a guarantor for international students or to install such a scheme for international students.
- This provides financial freedom to students who otherwise find it difficult to arrange upfront payment. This ensures financial safety, security and wellbeing of our international students.
- In return, all students must pay their rent promptly as per the contract demands.
- This is a common practise by many Universities in the UK.

13.25 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 8.08)

Disclosure of University Investments

This Council calls upon Queen's University Belfast to publically disclose information concerning the details of the investments made using QUB's endowment funds. In particular, we call for the public disclosure of:

- A list of the companies which Queen's is currently invested in;
- The amount currently invested in each company; and
- The annual returns being made on each investment.

13.26 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 8.10)

Organise mental health training for students

This Council notes that the number of students registered with disability services due to mental health problems is rising every year.

This Council proposes that the student officers look into the feasibility of providing Mental Health First Aid training for students, in partnership with Aware Defeat Depression or a similar organisation.

This Council requests that the Vice President Welfare provides a verbal report on progress at the next Statutory Meeting of Council.

13.27 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 8.11)

Equal Marriage

This Council recognises the importance of the institution of marriage to many people across our campus and our society. This Council further recognizes that members of the LGBT+ community are not afforded the right to Equal Marriage before the law in Northern Ireland. This is despite the fact that:

- A majority (53 to 52) of Northern Irish MLAs voted to legalise Equal Marriage.
- An Ipsos MORI poll found that 68% of people in Northern Ireland supported Equal Marriage.

- Northern Ireland is the only part of these islands not to support Equal Marriage.

This Council believes:

- That no individual should face discrimination based on their sexual orientation.
- That marrying someone you love is a human right.
- That adequate room has been made for religious freedom in existing marriage equality legislation and proposed motions.

This Council therefore:

- Congratulates the Republic of Ireland for the Referendum victory for Equal Marriage and recognises the campaigning efforts of the student movement to achieve this monumental outcome.
- Welcomes the judicial review into the absence of Equal Marriage in Northern Ireland.
- Supports the student effort to campaign for Equal Marriage to be legalised in Northern Ireland.

13.28 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 8.12)

Disabled Parking at the Students' Union

Council notes that there is one designated spot for disabled drivers beside the Students' Union, along Elmwood Avenue.

Council believes that there should be increased access for Disabled Students' to the Students' Union.

Council instructs the Vice President Equality and Diversity, alongside the Disabled Students' Officer, to liaise with the Roads Service and any other authority to vastly increase the number of disabled parking spaces in Elmwood Avenue and to report to Council at the next meeting on any progress made in this regard.

13.29 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 8.15)

Freedom of Information

Council recognises the importance of Freedom of Information requests in the work of campaigners both within and outside of the student movement and their vital role in holding public institutions (including Queens University) providing information to the general population.

Council notes with concern the proposals of the Conservative Government in Westminster to introduce a charge for Freedom of Information requests, which will make gathering information more difficult for campaigners who do not have the financial backing of large political or media institutions.

Council therefore condemns these proposals and instructs the full-time student officers to lobby local politicians to oppose this restriction of information to the public.

13.30 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 8.16)

Living wage for Queen's students

This Council recognises that the significant financial pressure that is put on students can often be mitigated with an adequate wage through part-time work.

Council instructs VP for Campaigns and Communications to lobby the University to provide the living wage at a minimum as set by the living wage foundation at a rate of £8.25 per hour (to be increased in line with inflation) to students employed through the OnCampus jobs scheme to ensure that students are only doing fair work for a decent wage that they are able to live on.

Council further calls for efforts to be made to ensure that all employees of the University are guaranteed to be paid at least the living wage of £8.25 per hour (to be increased in line with inflation).

13.31 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 8.17)

Marijuana Regulation

This Council recognizes that the so-called 'war on drugs' has been an abject failure in preventing drug addiction, reducing crime, and limiting the availability of drugs.

This Council also recognises the significant social and economic benefits enjoyed by areas of the United States, Uruguay and other nations that have legalised marijuana, with appropriate and necessary age restrictions and distribution regulations. Council also recognises the progress made in addressing addiction and associated social problems by countries such as Portugal which have decriminalised substances classified as illicit in the UK.

This Council, therefore, supports the legalisation of marijuana as a state produced, regulated and administered good, for both medicinal and recreational use.

13.32 OBJECTION BY RICHARD GARLAND (Policy File Reference 8.18)

Integrated Education

Council notes with concern that nearly 20 years since the Good Friday Agreement, 93% of young people are still being educated in a system of segregation in Northern Ireland.

Council believes that Northern Ireland's politicians have failed in their responsibility to "facilitate and encourage integrated education"; a responsibility they signed up to in the Good Friday Agreement and one that was ratified by the vast majority of people both North and South.

Council notes that the Assembly appears to be substituting its legislative requirement to work towards integration with a "separate but equal" approach through so-called shared education. Council believes that this model sustains division and is unacceptable in a society where we should be pushing towards equality, inclusivity and mutual understanding.

Council believes that while young people remain segregated and contentious issues remain unresolved; tensions will continue to simmer and ultimately the peace process itself could be at risk contributed to by segregated education. Council maintains that this situation cannot be allowed to continue.

Council instructs the Students Union President, VP Equality and Diversity, and VP Campaigns and Communications to campaign and lobby the Assembly resolutely to move away from this "shared education" approach towards a genuinely shared future through a singly publically funded integrated education system in NI.

13.33 OBJECTION BY JASON Z. T. KANG (Policy File Reference 8.19)

A Breastfeeding Friendly Union

This Council aims to provide an open and inclusive environment for all. This includes those with children. This Council therefore instructs the Students' Union to adopt a breastfeeding friendly policy.

Council notes with concern that upon publication of the 2013 second semester examination timetable a number of students across campus appear to have examinations with unacceptably short time between them.

Council firmly believes that Students must be given appropriate decompression time (breathing room) between examinations as students can become stressed if there is an inadequate time for different sets of revision to commence.

Council further believes that an adequate time period between examinations must be a minimum of 48 hours for all students.

Council resolves that the Executive Management Committee be instructed to lobby the university as a matter of urgency to have examination timetables adequately reflect the needs of students on campus who require a space of at least 48 hours between examination sittings.

A proposal that all of the remaining policies, for which an objection has been lodged, should be considered as a bloc was passed by Council.

Following a display of voting cards, all of the policies that were scheduled to lapse were clearly carried. These policies shall now be scheduled to lapse at the Annual Business Meeting in May 2018.

14. Motions

14.1 **Establishing a Food Cooperative**

This Council recognises that a key part of student welfare is ensuring that students have access to affordable, fresh food.

This Council also recognises that there is limited availability of affordable fresh produce around the Queen's area for students.

This Council therefore instructs the Part-Time Environmental and Ethical Trading Officer to explore the feasibility of creating a food co-operative that would be hosted at Queen's SU on a monthly basis.

Proposer: Eugene Tinnelly (Environmental and Ethical Trading Officer)
 Seconder: Paul Loughran (Student Officer Activities)

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

14.2 **Supporting Students Living Costs**

Council notes:

- There are a variety of reasons students may be entitled to Maintenance Loan Only. Students studying a three year course are generally entitled to four years of Student Finance, allowing them one repeat year as a result. Students who change course, or drop out only to resume studies later in life, along with those who suffer from medical conditions, disabilities or other compelling personal reasons, may use up their entitlement and be left in a position where they are entitled to Maintenance Loan Only.

Council recognises:

- Students who are entitled to Maintenance Loan Only may suffer from extreme hardship as a result. The Maintenance Loan itself does not even cover full tuition fee costs and leaves students with nothing to live on for the remainder of the year. Such students do not generally qualify for benefits, and support fund arrangements do not make a significant difference.
- This hardship is not made easier by the University expecting students to make tuition fee instalments before students even receive their student loan payments.
- This hardship can be particularly difficult for those students from low-income backgrounds and those suffering from medical conditions, disabilities and other compelling circumstances.

Council believes:

- No human being, student or otherwise, should be expected to live on nothing for an entire year.

Council mandates:

- The President, VP Equality & Diversity, VP Welfare and VP Education to lobby government to ensure that all students are provided with a basic income that will be sufficient to meet their basic needs.

- The President, VP Equality & Diversity, VP Welfare and VP Education to lobby the University to ensure students who receive Maintenance Loan Only no longer have to make tuition fee instalments prior to receiving their student loan payments, and to increase support fund payments to such students.

Proposer: Richard Garland (Student)
 Seconder: Mark Preston (Student)

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

14.3 **Enable International Students to Sit August Examinations in Their Home Countries**

This Council recognises:

- That international students at QUB who have examinations during the August period can only sit these papers by travelling back to Belfast during August.
- That this requirement for international students to travel all the way back to Belfast earlier, just to sit for their papers in August, can be a huge disruption to them and their family in terms of costs and convenience.
- That the lack of an alternative for international students at QUB to sit for their August papers outside the UK will not only put the current international students at QUB in a highly difficult position, but also poses a significant deterrent for potential international students to apply to study at QUB in the future.

This Council notes:

- That there is no specific reason as to why international students at QUB cannot have the alternative of taking their resit papers in their respective home countries.
- That other Russell Group universities across the UK have provisions for making arrangements with the British Council and/or the British Embassy for international students to sit for their examinations in August outside the UK, simultaneously with the exams held in the main campus in the UK. Examples of these institutions include, amongst others, the University of Leeds, the University of Liverpool, and the University of Sheffield.
- That international students at QUB should also have the alternative of being able to sit for their August papers at a relevant British Council Office or the British Embassy outside the UK.

This Council mandates:

- That the University should make arrangements with the relevant bodies such as the British Council to enable the international students at QUB to sit for their written examinations during the August period overseas, to relieve the difficulties currently faced by the international students at QUB by having to travel all the way back to Belfast to do so.
- That the QUBSU Executive Management Committee, including but not limited to: The SU VP Education and the International Officer, assist in addressing these issues.

Proposer: Jason Z. T. Kang (Student)
 Seconder: Hamsavani Rejeswaren (International Students' Officer)

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

14.4 **A More Representative Students' Union**

Council recognises:

- The full-time Student Officer positions are important positions in terms of student representation. It is important they reflect the diverse student population from which they are elected.

- The positions are also paid positions giving students valuable work-experience. It is therefore of utmost importance that they are elected in a fair and equitable manner, for both ethical and legal reasons.
- There are many groups who regularly suffer from lack of representation in the five available positions. The current electoral system for the full-time officer positions is not representative.
- This lack of representation may extend to some of the part-time Student Officer positions.

Council believes:

- The electoral system for Student Officer positions must be changed to one which provides students from all backgrounds with a fair chance.
- While our current system may have some practical benefit, this practical benefit is not and should not be treated as insurmountably more important than the practical benefit of having a fair, equitable and representative system.

Council mandates:

- The SU Management Board must create a working group to address the issue.
- This working group should invite representations from different groups within the University, including but not limited to religious groups, international students, disabled students, female students, LGBT students, political groups and independents.
- These representations should be given due consideration, with care taken to avoid ignoring minority viewpoints and to work towards a consensus where possible.
- Legal advice should be sought if necessary to ensure a fair and equitable solution is upheld.
- SU Management Board must report back to Student Council by December 2017.

Proposer: Richard Garland (Student)

Seconder: Mark Preston (Student)

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

14.5 **Xenophobia**

The Council notes that:

- The current political conversation in the light of Brexit, and the recently called snap General Election has been marked with deeply toxic debate around immigration and racial minorities.
- The current British government and establishment is institutionally racist in its policies and campaigns, by targeting and blaming people of colour (PoC) and immigrants for the economic crises and austerity- and this is despite xenophobia being illegal in UK.
- These policies and campaigns not only adopt a racist rhetoric, but also legitimise and normalise it, creating a climate that has made outward racism acceptable.
- By blaming immigrants and PoC for the failures and shortcomings of the government, alongside running Brexit campaigns fuelled with bigotry and racist rhetoric, the government is directly responsible for encouraging the resurgence of facism and white extremism terrorising PoC.

The Council recognises that:

- This 'normalisation' of being openly casually racist has spread even amongst young adults and has made university campuses unsafe around the UK.

- There have been several instances - that have been raised - of international and/or ethnic minority students in QUB who have had racial slurs thrown at them in and outside the classroom, leaving students feeling unsafe in even academic spaces.
- Reports of racist hate crimes around the University area, especially in the Holylands, have been constantly increasing over the past few years, especially in view of the growing Romanian community in the area.

The Council mandates:

- That the Students' Union adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach to racism, discrimination and hate crime.
- To actively campaign to mobilise and educate the student body against racism and xenophobia.
- That the Executive Management Committee, including but not limited to the VP Student Activities, VP Equality & Diversity and the BAME Officer - ensure all students, but especially ethnic minorities, have equal access to all aspects of university life in an environment free of discrimination, harassment and intimidation.

Proposer: Hamsavani Rajeswaren (International Students' Officer)

Seconder: Lahiru Elvitigala (BAME Students' Officer)

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

14.6 **QUB Solidarity with Refugees**

Council notes that:

- The definition of a refugee is: a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.
- Since the start of the brutal Syrian civil war, more than four million people have been displaced, contributing in large measure to a global refugee crisis.
- These are people fleeing war, persecution and oppression in desperate circumstances facing the threats of a perilous journey to relative safety in unfriendly and unwelcoming European countries.
- The language used by politicians towards refugees has grown increasingly toxic and racist.
- Despite the severity of the crisis, the UK government has only agreed to accept 20,000 refugees over the next five years.
- This is a dereliction of moral duty and the government should and must commit to taking more refugees than the current plan dictates.
- QUBSU can have a major role in maintaining public interest in this crisis.
- Local councils can offer to take refugees.

Council further recognises that:

- The University has already aided in ways through the scholarship programme for refugees.
- QUBSU has already provided much support to societies campaigning on the issue of the refugee crisis and has taken an active leadership role within the local community in forming a response to the crisis.
- There is a grassroots desire among students for further activism on the refugee crisis and greater action taken by the SU would be welcomed.
- Students can play an effective and important role in helping to welcome refugees by, for example, delivering English lessons and providing sports opportunities.

Council resolves that:

- The SU should re-affirm its desire to provide a welcome and safe environment for refugees in the local community and for refugee students at QUB.

- The SU should adopt an official policy of solidarity with and support for refugees and their rights.
- The SU should work to apply greater pressure on the devolved government and/or the Westminster government to accept more refugees and create a more welcoming environment for refugees.
- The SU should apply political pressure to town councils to offer to take more refugees.
- The SU should provide active support to societies which campaign on issues of refugee rights by supporting demonstrations and working to co-ordinate the efforts of these societies.
- The SU should work with the University to continue and expand the refugee scholarship programme currently in its first year at QUB.

Proposer: Jason Bunting (Student)

Seconder: Hamsavani Rajeswaren (International Students' Officer)

This motion was withdrawn.

15. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

15.1 Sean Fearon, on behalf of the Council, expressed thanks to the Union Speaker, the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk.

15.2 The Union Speaker formally closed the 2016-17 session of the Council, thanking all for their contributions and wishing everyone the best of wishes for the examinations and the summer vacation period.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Union Speaker announced that the Inaugural Meeting of the Students' Union Council is scheduled to take place at 6.00 p.m. on Thursday 2 November 2017 in The Space, Level 1, Students' Union.

DAMIEN CORRIDAN (Clerk, Students' Union Council)