

**Durham Students' Union  
Assembly Agenda**

Thursday, 8 February 2018– 19:00, ER142

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Paper</b>
19:00-19:01	A. Welcome	Chair	
19:01-19:03	B. Apologies for absence and Conflicts of interest	Chair	
19:03-19:05	C. Minutes of the meeting on 7 December	Chair	UA/1718/017
19:05-19:30	D. Update on Officer Work	Student Officers	UA/1718/019
<b>Items for Discussion</b>			
19:30 - 19:45	F. NUS Motion: Actual Action on Mental Health	Darcy Van Eerten	UA/1718/020
19:45 - 20:00	G. NUS Motion: Tenants' Unions: Getting Organised for Decent Housing	George Walker	UA/1718/021
20:00 - 20:15	H. NUS Motion: Potential low-income students at our best universities	Dominic Wood	UA/1718/022
20:15-20:30	I. NUS Motion: Non-binary inclusivity in delegations	Alexandra Thomas	UA/1718/023
20:30 – 20:45	J. Motion: Students' Union Reps Committee	George Walker	UA/1718/024
<b>Any Other Business</b>			
20:45-21:00	L. Questions to Officers		

**Announce:**

Next meeting will be 13 March 2018, ER201

Agenda closes (so papers must be in) 2 March at 17:00.

Assembly attendance - 07 December 2017

#	<b>Matt Gibson</b>	<b>Chair</b>	Present
1	<b>Megan Croll</b>	<b>President</b>	Present
2	<b>Charlie Walker</b>	<b>Opportunities Officer</b>	Present
3	<b>Laura Tidd</b>	<b>Undergraduate Academic Officer</b>	Apologies
4	<b>Sabrina Seel</b>	<b>Postgraduate Academic Officer</b>	Apologies
5	<b>Rosa Tallack</b>	<b>Welfare and Liberation Officer</b>	Present
6	<b>Meghan Hosch</b>	<b>International Students Association</b>	No apologies
7	<b>Alexandra Thomas</b>	<b>LGBT+a</b>	Present
8	<b>Amelia McLoughlan</b>	<b>SwDA</b>	Present
9	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Mature Students Association</b>	Vacant
10	<b>Ryan Robinson Perinchief</b>	<b>People of Colour Association</b>	No apologies
11	<b>Ed Nathan</b>	<b>Societies Committee</b>	Present
12	<b>James Bowmer</b>	<b>JCR PresComm</b>	Present
13	<b>Katie Bullman</b>	<b>DUCK Exec</b>	Present
14	<b>Justin Beese</b>	<b>MCR PresComm</b>	Apologies
15	<b>Esther Green</b>	<b>Governance and Grants</b>	Present
16	<b>Dewi Humphries</b>	<b>Environmental &amp; Citizenship</b>	No apologies
17	<b>Tasnim Hassan</b>	<b>WED Comm</b>	No apologies
18	<b>Charlie Taylor-Kroll</b>	<b>Media Rep</b>	No apologies
19	<b>Alex Lindquist-Jones</b>	<b>St. Cuthberts</b>	No apologies
20	<b>Alex Hampton</b>	<b>Ustinov</b>	Present
21	<b>George Cowley</b>	<b>St John's</b>	Present
22	<b>George Walker</b>	<b>Van Mildert</b>	Present
23	<b>Helen Paton</b>	<b>St Mary's</b>	Present
24	<b>George Peat</b>	<b>St. Chad's</b>	Present
25	<b>George Stanbury</b>	<b>Grey</b>	Present
26	<b>Rory Flynn</b>	<b>Hatfield</b>	Present
27	<b>Alex Price</b>	<b>John Snow</b>	Present
28	<b>Clara Gally</b>	<b>St Aidan's</b>	Present
29	<b>Shayon Banerji</b>	<b>Collingwood</b>	Present
30	<b>Tom Henderson</b>	<b>St Hild &amp; St Bede</b>	Present
31	<b>Ben Rich</b>	<b>University College</b>	Present
32	<b>Lucy Mellor</b>	<b>Stephenson</b>	Present
33	<b>Darcy Van Eerten</b>	<b>Trevelyan</b>	Present
34	<b>David Evans</b>	<b>Josephine Butler</b>	Present
35	<b>James Creer</b>	<b>Open Position</b>	Present
36	<b>Meg Haskins</b>	<b>Open Position (women/carers)</b>	Present
37	<b>Nicola Tweedy</b>	<b>Open Position (postgraduate)</b>	Apologies
38	<b>Antonia Barber</b>	<b>Open Position (freshers)</b>	Present
39	<b>tbc</b>	<b>UG Faculty Rep – Arts and Humanities</b>	Vacant
40	<b>tbc</b>	<b>PGT Faculty Rep – Arts and Humanities</b>	Vacant
41	<b>tbc</b>	<b>PGR Faculty Rep – Arts and Humanities</b>	Vacant

<b>42</b>	<b>tbc</b>	<b>UG Faculty Rep – Science</b>	Vacant
<b>43</b>	<b>tbc</b>	<b>PGT Faculty Rep – Science</b>	Vacant
<b>44</b>	<b>tbc</b>	<b>PGR Faculty Rep – Science</b>	Vacant
<b>45</b>	<b>tbc</b>	<b>UG Faculty Rep – Social Science and Health</b>	Vacant
<b>46</b>	<b>tbc</b>	<b>PGT Faculty Rep – Social Science and Health</b>	Vacant
<b>47</b>	<b>tbc</b>	<b>PGR Faculty Rep – Social Science and Health</b>	Vacant

## **Assembly minutes – Thursday 7 December 2017**

Matt Gibson welcomed everybody to the meeting and announced the apologies that had been pre-submitted.

### **Minutes**

Approved.

### **Election of a Vice-Chair**

Antonia Barber spoke in favour of her candidacy for Vice Chair of Assembly. There were no questions.

Votes for - 26

Votes against - 0

Antonia Barber was elected.

### **Annual policy review**

Esther Green spoke regarding the lapsing policy and the recommendations that Governance and Grants Committee had recommended.

Alex Hampton asked whether the exam feedback motion would require all exams to receive feedback. Esther Green stated that this was simply voting to renew or refer policies to the appropriate officer or committee.

Votes for - 26

Votes against - 1

Abstentions – 0

The recommendations of Governance and Grants committee were approved.

### **Updates on Officers work**

#### **President**

Megan Croll updated on her work.

Q. James Creer asked about a tool for becoming an independent charity, James asked whether this was something students asked for. Megan said that it had been discussed by JCR Pres Comm for the last few years.

Q. Darcy Van Eerten asked about how Megan was taking the RippedOff campaign when SFAAG had not paid attention to it. Megan said she would carry on mobilising the campaign and sharing the postcards online before delivering them to key decision makers.

Q. James Creer asked why the SU was organising against SFAAG when it was generally supportive of students last year. Megan explained that year that the fee setting had been moved to UEC last year which will not happen again so it was important that SFAAG remain supportive.

### **Opportunities Officer**

Charlie Walker updated on his work.

There were no questions.

### **Welfare and Liberation Officer**

Rosa reported on her work.

Q. Darcy Van Eerten said that there had been a concern in her college about the rationale for creating a Women's Association. Rosa explained that it was not about numbers and it was about women having less power in society and within the university.

Q. David Evans asked for more clarification of why the university had initially said no to a rent guarantor scheme. Rosa stated they had vaguely said legal issues but other universities had them so was not concerned about this.

### **Questions to Officers**

Q. Clara Gallay asked for SFAAG update, Megan Croll said that nothing was related to accommodation fees but bench fees were discussed.

Q. George Walker asked whether the Union had a stance for the reported *Palatinate* reports regarding University staffing restructure. Megan explained that there was no official stance but they understand that voluntary severance is happening again and want to ensure that it is not detrimental to the student experience. They have also noticed that university morale is low.

Q. George Stanbury asked whether there is a plan to document the wording of RippedOff postcards. Megan said yes.

Q. James Creer asked for a justification about why accommodation fees have risen but they also are cutting staff roles. Megan said that the University needs a renovation because of years of neglect but it too much is happening too quickly.

### **Grant Ratification**

Esther Green reported on what Governance and Grants Committee had allocated to student groups. Assembly was asked to vote on whether to ratify the decision.

Q. Ed Nathan why some societies appear to have been given more money than it appeared. Esther explained that it was that their application was unclear and that was what they had requested.

Q. Thomas Henderson asked the disparity of why some were awarded full, partial or nothing. Esther explained it was based on the quality of application.

Votes for – 25

Votes against – 0

Abstentions = 1

**Motion: Free and Accessible Menstruation**

Matthew Gibson explained that a friendly amendment had been submitted. Rosa explained that in Assembly resolves 3, it mandates SU staff which cannot happen so it should be modified to say 'relevant SU officers.

The proposer of the motion explained that the research that the FREEdAM campaign had undertaken.

No member spoke against the motion.

The proposer waved a summation speech.

Votes for – 27

Votes against – 0

Abstentions – 0

**Ratification of a Trans Association**

Luke Armitage proposed the ratification of Trans Association.

A member asked whether LGBT+ Association would continue to have the T in the acronym. Luke said it would.

Thomas Henderson asked whether it could get constitutionally problematic if a student chooses to be on the exec of both. Luke said they did not envision this to be an issue.

No member spoke against the motion.

Matthew Gibson explained that Assembly were not ratifying the constitution and the campaigns plan, merely just the creation of the Association.

Votes for – 27

Votes against – 0

Abstentions - 0

Matthew Gibson adjourned the meeting.

TO: Assembly  
FROM: Megan Croll, President  
RE: President's Report

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Below sets out the work being done on my objectives, pursuant to my remit, and work done pursuant to policies passed by Assembly.

***Work done on my objectives:***

Accommodation fees: The #rippedoff campaign is steadily evolving this term. We have had around 900 postcards returned from colleges, detailing reasons why students are dissatisfied with the cost of College Accommodation. This is part of the new aspect of the campaign, Postcards to Corbridge. So far, these have been shared on social media and used for a campaign video, in which the JCR Presidents read out the contents of a few postcards. The video is currently being edited and will be shared very soon. I intend to deliver the postcards to Stuart Corbridge (Vice Chancellor) and Owen Adams (PVC Colleges and Student Experience) very shortly. We have also updated the poster graphics from last year, reflecting the new cost of college accommodation, and more college specific posters are currently in the process of being designed.

Common Rooms: The background research and review of the DSO framework is moving forward and we hope to have some analysis and conclusions drafted by the end of February. Work on the toolkit for Common Rooms to become independent charities is also progressing, and I should have a first draft of this ready for JCR and MCR Prescomm by the end of this term. I am hoping to have the framework ready in time for the handover period to my successor and the 2018/19 JCR/MCR presidents.

Student Consultation: Progress is also being made with regard to my student consultation priority. The Student Consultation Framework (which is a document created by the SU and worked on by Mille Tanner and Alice Dee over the past two years) was reviewed internally and updated. The framework outlines specific consultation steps to be taken by the University, depending on the level of impact that a decision will have on the lives of students, and aims to create a level of consistency with regard to consultation across the University. The framework was taken to JCR Prescomm last week for their input and will be taken to MCR Prescomm at their next meeting. I am also currently in discussion with members of the University about the best and most efficient way to get the framework implemented into University policy and will be looking to make that happen this term.

***Work done because my remit requires me:***

Senate – The majority of papers were closed for this. The terms of reference for sub-committees were approved. A University-wide campaign to encourage more University staff to become school governors, in keeping with the University's Access Agreement, was also discussed.

Council – More closed papers. Council will have happened by the time I present this at Assembly so I'll update orally on anything I'm allowed to.

Elections - The SU Officer elections nomination period was on from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> January. I have been chatting to potential candidates about my role and why it is so great to be the SU President!

Differential Pricing Working Group – I am still pushing forward with the idea of differential pricing for College Accommodation at University Committee level. Members of the working group undertook site visits to two colleges to look at comparable rooms last month. There are lots of factors to be considered, including the upcoming catering package changes, which is why this matter is taking quite a lot of time to move forward with. I am, however, pushing for the group to agree a timeline. We've hit a couple of stumbling blocks in terms of much of the purpose-built accommodation being too similar to justify differentiating prices, but we're still investigating what can be done here. May have an oral update on this by the date of Assembly.

University & Colleges Union (UCU) Vote – I have been working with Union staff to create a statement in reaction to the UCU's decision to take strike action next month over changes to their pensions. Charlie and I also met with Durham University's UCU representative and I am confident that the needs of students are of great consideration for the strike organisers. We will continue to work with UCU and the University to make sure students are communicated with and are given a chance to share their opinions on any actions that may impact them.

Mount Oswald and the 17<sup>th</sup> College – I have been working closely with the University on the designs and community aspects of the new colleges which are all progressing nicely.

Student Behaviour Clinic – The SU were invited to be part of a focus group arranged by the PVC Colleges & Student Experience which was also attended by a large number of college staff. We discussed the behaviour culture in Durham and how we can better liaise with the community. It was a really productive session and hopefully the outcomes will be extremely positive for all that reside in Durham.

River Safety – This area of work has perhaps not been as prevalent in recent months, however is still vitally important. I attended a joint meeting with the Police, Fire & Rescue Service and the Council this week, in which we updated on work being done to ensure students and the local community continue to be safe around the river.

Local History/Miners Event - Following the events of Trevs Rugby last term, we realised the importance of educating the student body on local history, and have decided to hold an event about local history and how Durham students can celebrate it. We'll be welcoming Ross Forbes, Chair of the Miner's Association and Roberta Blackman-Woods, MP for Durham City to share their experiences and ideas of how students can work together to celebrate the rich history of the area where we attend University and live. I will also be speaking at the event which is being held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March in Kingsgate.

***Work mandated through democratic processes (i.e. Assembly passed policy):***

Accommodation Fees – The #rippedoff campaign update is as above. I have also arranged to have a meeting with the PVC Colleges & Student Experience, Chief Financial Officer, and potentially the Vice Chancellor if necessary, in May to have a preliminary meeting about the setting of accommodation fees. This will enable a lot of in-depth discussions to be had before the annual meeting at the end of the year, which will hopefully lead to more productive outcomes.

Divestment – A report on Divestment is going to the Council meeting at the start of February, hopefully it will pass!



TO: Assembly  
FROM: Laura Tidd, Undergraduate Academic Officer

Laura returned from an extended period of sick leave last week, and due to ongoing health issues will have a phased return to work, currently working three days a week. The SU's processes for absence have meant that the team have been able to continue much of the work within her remit in her absence and will provide support as she moves these forward during her return - thank you to the students, both Officers and other Academic reps who've helped out with this

***Work done on my objectives***

Scholarship and Support for Asylum Seekers: A draft proposal for a scholarship has now been produced, and is being finalised now before being presented to the University. This priority fits in with other annual work which is undertaken in partnership with the University, which we hope will help it to achieve a resolution faster.

More study space and sustainability: The upcoming Academic Forum on 13 Feb will look to discuss study space(s) across the University, to find out in more detail what students currently think of the spaces in their departments, colleges, and the Library. This is complimented by work in my new role on the recently established Teaching and Learning sub-committee of Education Committee, which examines teaching spaces across the University.

TO: Assembly  
FROM: Charlie Walker, Opportunities Officer  
RE: Opportunities Officer Report

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Below sets out the work being done on my objectives, pursuant to my remit, and work done pursuant to policies passed by Assembly.

**Work done on my objectives:**

Mobilise student knowledge and passion to strategically tackle problems: By the time you read this the Activist Academy will have happened (31<sup>st</sup> January) and I'll be reflecting on where we go next with campaigns training and active citizenship, and supporting an action plan on homelessness in County Durham.

Increase access to amazing opportunities by streamlining processes: Research is underway to identify which policies and procedures apply to our Student Groups and recommendations will then be made on their suitability. I look forward to speaking to the University about this very soon.

Transparency and fairness of Durham's extra-curricular fees: Research on extra-curricular fees is still ongoing, and I look forward to sharing it with students later this term. We are also currently reviewing those internal Student Groups that have large reserves and arranging meeting to discuss how they can utilise these funds to further their aims and the interests of their members.

**Work done because my remit requires me:**

I met with the University and County Council to discuss automatic voter registration. Both were supportive of the principle but there is some more research to be done on the legal and operational requirements of the Sheffield model. I will continue to pursue this work with the University and Council, and look to support college-based voter registration events.

I attended a university meeting on student behaviour with Megan and Rosa. We pushed for a focus on cultural change in response to some of the incidents reported on last term.

Planning for Societies Forum and Media Forum is underway with the Societies Chair and Media Rep, and I look forward to co-chairing each of those meetings on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of February.

Grants Committee made Ordinary grants last term and continues to deal with special grant applications as they arise.

I sat on the first University Senate Wider Student Experience Committee with Rosa. University Senate created this committee alongside the Education and Research committees. We believe that this a positive move towards the university viewing the student experience as a core part of its responsibilities alongside education and research.

**Other projects:**

Living Wage: Finance Committee of the Durham SU Board of Trustees will receive a report on the Living Wage this month on including the living wage in the 2018/19 budget expectations.

#TheLastStraw: Straws are no longer part of the standard offer in our bar, although they are still available on request. I will continue to look for changes to make our commercial offering more environmentally sustainable.

Representatives from DUCK and Societies Committee met with our solicitors to review student group governance last term. This term the working groups will receive recommendations from the solicitors on where we can make improvements to student group governance.

I am excited that the new Durham Award is close to going out to initial consultation with student leaders.

TO: Assembly  
FROM: Sabrina Seel, PG Academic Officer  
RE: Officer Report

***Work done on my objectives***

Postgraduate Voice: Planning for the first PG Forum is now well underway, which will be taking place on 20 February in Kingsgate, where we will be discussing PG Supervision with guest speaker Professor Douglas Halliday from the Physics department.

PG Supervision, Induction Framework: The survey into PGR supervision went out to the PG community just after Christmas, and has so far had a strong response, with many respondents writing large amounts about their experiences of supervision.

PG Mental Health: Further data has since been sent across by the Counselling service, and that is being added to the picture before additional surveys are conducted.

***Work done because my remit requires me:***

Council attendance– Council covers a huge variety of items, but importantly at the most recent meeting, Megan delivered a report on the SU’s activities during the last term, including further work on Accommodation fees and some of my work on PGR Supervision.

Senate attendance – Discussions have included the restructuring of the committees reporting to Senate to enable clearer discussions on both Academic and Student Experience issues, an examination of links with local schools and an introduction to the new Pro-Vice Chancellor Global, Professor Claire O’Malley.

Education Committee attendance – Among other things, Education Committee has discussed recent graduate employability data, revised procedures for the commissioning of new programmes, and a detailed breakdown of each Faculty’s NSS reports.

Research Committee attendance – One item of particular interest which Research Committee discussed was the proposed adoption of the Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier (ORCID) system, which will enable researchers, including research students, to both reliably and clearly track, as well as identify, their work.

Library provision – Various projects with the library, such as study spaces and resources, are ongoing and more focus groups for PGRs are planned. The reading list survey undertaken last term provided very useful data that the library can work with to ensure the right resources are available for PGTs. Overall, there are four different committees for the library (Library Users, Library Steering Group, Library Catering and Study Space, and Monthly Meetings with the Deputy Librarian), which include PGRs, PGTs and University staff.

Student voice – At an informal event myself, Megan, Charlie and a number of the academic reps discussed the University's strategy, buildings, timetabling and a variety of other issues with the PVC Education, Professor Alan Houston.

TO: Assembly  
FROM: Rosa Tallack, Welfare and Liberation Officer  
RE: Officer Report

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Below sets out the work being done on my objectives, pursuant to my remit, and work done pursuant to policies passed by Assembly.

***Work done on my objectives:***

Outstanding Student Support: Last term I recruited peer supporters across common rooms and Associations to log peer support contacts. We have now collected this anonymised data and are in the process of analysing it to establish trends and gain a clearer picture of the types of issues that are being brought to peer supporters, in order to help us develop the most effective and relevant training possible. In the next couple of weeks, I also hope to have tea and cake with welfare officers from across all the colleges and Associations to chat to them about how they see their role as a peer supporter; what they think the training should focus on/cover; the key challenges they have experienced, and more. The qualitative survey that looks to garner feedback on peer and professional support services has is now live. I am planning Welfare Forum on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February (save the date!), which will be a chance for us to regroup, and feed back on what we have found out from the research (support contact logs; survey; peer supporter teas). This evening will be a vitally important part of the development of a student vision statement for support and wellbeing – and in turn – in lobbying the University to develop a wellbeing strategy. I have also given feedback to the University on their Development, Support and Wellbeing Statement of Purpose.

I met with the Counselling Service to gain a better understanding around waiting times and quality of service. While this is an ongoing effort for better transparency and improved support, the Counselling Service is now offering a new feedback form, and is also going to be updating us on their participation with Heads of University Counselling Services (HUCS) to develop national benchmarking for Universities.

Housing: I visited Edinburgh in January and met with their University and Students' Association to find out more about their Rent Guarantor Scheme. The trip was extremely useful and the evidence we gathered from the meetings (which asserts rent guarantor schemes as being both low-risk and low-cost) form a key part of the research report I will present to UEC in the coming weeks, alongside evidence from other institutions. I spoke to the Vice Chancellor about my findings from the trip and the response from him has so far been extremely positive.

The Tenants' Union had a stall at Refreshers' Fair to encourage students to share their housing horror stories, sign a Homes Fit For Habitation petition, and sign up to be involved with the group. The first open meeting, to elect a Chair, External Affairs Officer and Communications Officer, was held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February.

Women's Voices: I have been working hard on continuing to develop Pincident (the online tool to pin incidents of assault/harassment, as well as bystander intervention on a map) ahead of its launch campaign. I have presented the tool to the University's Sexual Violence and Misconduct Operations

Group for the second time, having reflected on useful feedback from the first time I took it to SVMOG, and will shortly be meeting with the police to discuss the launch of the tool.

The SU has been promoting the Revolt Sexual Assault nationwide survey which will give us invaluable data that we lack. I hope this will enable campaigns to be targeted where the data tells us they will be most effective.

I have decided to call for an internal review of SU processes for dealing with incidences of Sexual Violence and Misconduct.

The Women's Association constitution is currently being drafted after meeting with students that are interested in setting up the Association. We'll be holding a meeting with all interested students next week to begin planning initial events and campaigns. They are aiming to submit the plans for ratification for the Assembly meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March.

***Work done because my remit requires me:***

- I reignited links with the Claypath and University Medical Group: I attended the Patient Participation Group and am in conversation with the General Manager of the Practice about how we can ensure student voices are heard more clearly.
- I met with DASH, Durham Action on Single Housing, to talk about working with them to issue advice to students on what to do if they see someone sleeping on the streets.
- I attended the first WSE (Wider Student Experience) committee: a brand new committee!
- I attended City Safety Group, Durham University Residents' Forum, Institutional Athena SWAN Committee and continued work on the new, temporary Faith Facility at Grey College (due for completion in April)
- I presented my priorities/insight so far alongside LGBT+a, DPOCA and SwDA at the Diversity and Equality Advisory Group.

***Work mandated through democratic processes (i.e. Assembly passed policy):***

Equality and Diversity: I have been working with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the University to help shape the language for new policies on Gender Identity as well as Trans and Intersex Inclusion. I have been working to arrange representation from liberation groups in counselling service decisions/changes, as well as the University's upcoming vision for development, support and wellbeing. I am also involved with the implementation of new faith space on campus and working to ensure that the voices of students who will use these spaces are heard in the design phases.

Zero Tolerance: Sexual Harassment: See above ('Women's Voices')

A Union that Cares: We've had some students come forward who would like to restart the Mature Students' Association. While many mature students don't care for children or other dependents, a disproportionate number of mature students when compared to their 'non-mature' counterparts. I have ensured that we have funding available for the group to get started and hold child-friendly events. Carers Week will be held on the 11<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> of June, so I've contacted our WEDComm Carers Rep to see how we can mark this.

Transforming Durham SU: We have a new Trans Association – amazing!

See above ('Equality and Diversity'): work on gender identity/trans and intersex inclusion policies with the University. This includes work on ensuring students have the correct pronouns on records

and documentation. There are plans to support the Trans Association's plans for non-binary awareness week which is to be held at the end of February.

Rent Guarantor Scheme: Good progress! See above ('Housing')

Free and Accessible Menstruation: I am working with the Union's commercial team around the provision of sanitary bins in the men's toilets and the possibility of access to sanitary products from the SU which will be discussed at a future meeting of the Union's commercial development group. I also intend to facilitate a conversation regarding sanitary products within colleges at the next WEDComm meeting.

Faith Space Policy: Faith spaces now fall under the new Wider Student Experience Committee. As a part of the estates plan, the creation of faith spaces has been marked as a high priority by the committee. I will be working closely with the committee and with faith groups to ensure that students who are using these spaces are heard during the design phase. I have continued to be closely involved in the development of the plans for the Grey College Faith Facility, working to ensure the Islamic Society are heard in these meetings.

## **NUS Conference policy submission**

Proposer: Darcy Van Eerten

### **Durham Students' Union Notes**

1. That NUS National Conference is taking place on 25-27 March, with motions deadline on 9 February. As a member, Durham Students' Union can submit up to 1400 words, with no single motion being more than 600 words.

### **Durham Students' Union Believes**

1. That the attached motion is in line with our current policies, is necessary and is 366 words long.

### **Durham Students' Union Resolves**

1. To send the attached motion (Actual Action on Student Mental Health) to NUS National Conference 2018.

## **Actual Action on Student Mental Health**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. Campaigns for mental health awareness have significantly changed the conversation about mental health in the past ten years;
2. These campaigns and other factors such as increased pressure at university and increasing financial stress have resulted in an increase in students seeking help for mental health issues;
3. Student-led organisations in Students' Unions, colleges, welfare teams, and charities such as Nightline have had to bear the brunt of mental health support;
4. This often comes at the cost of the volunteers' mental health;
5. Training provided to these students is currently limited to active listening techniques and mental health first aid;
6. Those suffering from long term conditions need professional help from accredited counsellors and therapists;
7. These professionals are overbooked and understaffed, with an underfunded NHS that provides mental health support proportional to the population of the area, and not the demographics;
8. 29% of students are estimated to face some form of psychological distress whilst at university (Benwick et al. 2008)
9. Universities and colleges do not have a universal standard of mental health care;
10. Excessive administration involved in setting up appointments by phone and email actively worsens mental health conditions.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. Anyone who resides in the UK can only be registered at one GP surgery at a time;
2. If students register with a GP whilst at University, they are then unable to access the care they need when they return home, often with difficulties registering as a temporary resident;
3. Home GPs often are not familiar with the mental stress of University and College;
4. Switching GPs is difficult when taking time off school,

5. Students can be discouraged from returning to university at the prospect of having to go through the registration process again.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. That the Vice President Welfare lobby government to propose a change to expand registration to two GP locations, one for term time and one out of term time;
2. To develop in collaboration with universities and colleges a national standard of care on mental health issues within Higher Education;
3. To lobby government to ensure that NHS mental health provisions adequately reflect the demographics of university regions.

References:

Benwick, B. M., Gill, J., Mulhern, B. J., Barkham, M. & Hill, A. J. *Using electronic surveying to assess psychological distress within the UK university student population: a multi-site pilot investigation*, E-Journal of Applied Psychology 4, 1 - 5 (2008).

**NUS Conference policy submission**

Proposer: George Walker

**Durham Students' Union Notes**

1. That NUS National Conference is taking place on 25-27 March, with motions deadline on 9 February. As a member, Durham Students' Union can submit up to 1400 words, with no single motion being more than 600 words.

**Durham Students' Union Believes**

1. That the attached motion is in line with our current policies, is necessary and is 549 words long.

**Durham Students' Union Resolves**

1. To send the attached motion (Tenants' Unions: Get Organised for Decent Housing) to NUS National Conference 2018.

**Tenants' Unions: Get Organised for Decent Housing****Conference Believes**

1. That young people in the UK are facing a national housing crisis.
2. That everybody has the right to housing that is of a decent standard and affordable.
3. 1.3 million privately rented properties are failing the government's decent homes standard and 6 in 10 UK renters experiencing damp, mould, leaks, gas & electrical hazards or infestations within a 12 month period.<sup>1</sup>
4. In 2014, NUS' 'Homes Fit for Study' Report found that 76% of students had experienced at least one issue with the condition of their rented home, with 52% having felt uncomfortably cold in their home and 53% having experienced delays with repairs being carried out.
5. Despite poor conditions, rents continue to be too expensive, with polling from ComRes showing that 39% of those in private rented accommodation have cut back on heating in order to make rent payments, whilst a third have cut back on food.<sup>2</sup>
6. Overall, an estimated 338,000 under-35s are thought to be renting properties hazardous to health.<sup>3</sup>
7. In 2015 there were more than 50,000 complaints made to local Councils about housing. Of those, only 14,000 were investigated, and action was eventually taken in less than 1000 cases.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> English Housing Survey 2016-17 and Shelter 2014 Safe and Decent Homes Report

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.generationrent.org/heating\\_eating\\_or\\_paying\\_rent](http://www.generationrent.org/heating_eating_or_paying_rent)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jan/28/hundreds-of-thousands-living-in-squalid-rented-homes-in-england>

<sup>4</sup> <https://acorntheunion.org.uk/project/rogue-landlord-crackdown/>

8. That local authorities must do more to use their powers to sanction landlords who fail to provide acceptable conditions for their tenants.
9. That University accommodation also often fails to offer the value and quality students deserve to expect.
10. A recent Freedom of Information Request showed that 17,300 students have fallen into rent arrears whilst in University accommodation in the past year, a rise of 16%.<sup>5</sup>

### **Conference Further Believes**

11. That in order to tackle the national housing crisis, students must organise collectively for better quality and more affordable housing both in the private rented sector and in University Halls.
12. In 2015, students at UCL received more than £100,000 in compensation after campaigning against unacceptable conditions in University accommodation.<sup>6</sup>
13. Creating Tenants' Unions is an effective way of allowing both students and local residents to work together to campaign for the housing that they deserve.
14. Tenants' Unions have already been established in places such as Sheffield, Bristol, Newcastle and Durham, with students often helping to play a leading role in these organizations.
15. The creation of a network of Tenants' Unions across the country could help to shift the balance of power towards renters, allowing them to demand better conditions and have their rights respected.

### **Conference Resolves**

16. To encourage Students' Unions to set up Tenants' Unions for students and local residents in their area.
17. To work with organisations such as ACORN, Generation Rent and Shelter to provide the appropriate guidance, training and resources to students wishing to establish Tenants' Unions and grassroots housing campaigns in their areas.
18. To help Students' Unions lobby their local authorities to use their powers to crackdown on rogue landlords
19. To lobby at a national level for more resources for local authorities to regulate the private rented sector and for stronger rights and protections for tenants.
20. To continue to push for affordable University halls, with 25% of a university's halls costing no more than 50% of the maximum maintenance loan.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/jan/20/17000-uk-students-university-accommodation-rent-arrears-debt>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/ucl-pay-ps100k-compensation-students-over-rat-infested-accommodation#survey-answer>

**NUS Conference policy submission**

Proposer: Dominic Wood

**Durham Students' Union Notes**

1. That NUS National Conference is taking place on 25-27 March, with motions deadline on 9 February. As a member, Durham Students' Union can submit up to 1400 words, with no single motion being more than 600 words.

**Durham Students' Union Believes**

1. That the attached motion is in line with our current policies, is necessary and is 272 words long.

**Durham Students' Union Resolves**

1. To send the attached motion (Potential low-income students at our best universities) to NUS National Conference 2018.

## Potential low-income students at our best universities

### Conference Believes:

1. That there is still a significant difference in the number of individuals going to elite universities from low-income families.
2. In 2016, seven of our 24 best universities admitted fewer student from deprived families, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. They were Oxford, Cambridge, Exeter, Durham, Imperial College, Glasgow and Queen's University, Belfast.<sup>1</sup>
3. That some universities continue to shrug off the problem of socio-economic diversity, despite years of continued pressure to consider more individuals from varied backgrounds.<sup>2</sup>
4. That increased diversity is good for student experience and desired by a large cohort of students.

### Conference Further Believes:

1. One of the obstacles to better socio-economic diversity in Higher Education is the terminology around "*student loans*".<sup>3</sup>
2. The Student Loan system is imperfect but, it is a political reality, and that working to make it more inviting to students of all backgrounds will be beneficial for socio-economic diversity in Higher Education in the future.

### Conference Resolves:

1. To assign funds to lobby government for a change of name for "*student loans*" to a less daunting term, such as "*graduate contribution*".
2. To set up a National body where successful students act as role models to enter schools and make university desirable as well as attainable for low socio-economic backgrounds, fostering greater national collaboration on this issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency, Accessed 29.01.18, <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis>

<sup>2</sup> R Garner, "Number of poor students attending UK's leading universities falls despite millions spent to encourage them to apply", *The Independent*, 18/2/16  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/number-of-poor-students-attending-uks-leading-universities-falls-despite-millions-spent-to-encourage-a6879771.html>

<sup>3</sup> K. Declercq & F. Verboven, "Socio-economic status and enrolment in higher education: do costs matter?" *Education Economics* Vol. 23, Iss. 5, 2015

## **NUS Conference policy submission**

Proposer: Alexandra Thomas

### **Durham Students' Union Notes**

1. That NUS National Conference is taking place on 25-27 March, with motions deadline on 9 February. As a member, Durham Students' Union can submit up to 1400 words, with no single motion being more than 600 words.

### **Durham Students' Union Believes**

1. That the attached motion is in line with our current policies, is necessary and is 151 words long.

### **Durham Students' Union Resolves**

1. To send the attached motion (Non-Binary Inclusivity in Delegations) to NUS National Conference 2018.

### **Non-Binary Inclusivity in Delegations**

#### **Conference Believes**

1. Current rules state that 50% of a delegation, rounded down, must self-define as women.
2. Gender is not binary, and should not be separated into "women" and "not women".
3. Some non-binary individuals include man and/or woman in their identity, and some do not.

#### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. Non-binary individuals shouldn't be grouped with women or men automatically, unless they specifically include such in their identity.
2. It is important that Delegations are representative of all gender identities, including nonbinary ones.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. Replace Rule 333 under Appointment of Delegates, of the Articles of Association & Rules with:
  - a. "No more than 50% of a delegation to National Conference, rounded up, may self define as the same gender identity. Where a union is only entitled to send one delegate, the union's free observer place must be taken by someone who self defines as a different gender identity"

## **Proposal for the Creation of the Students' Union Reps Committee**

**Proposer: George Walker**

### **Assembly Notes:**

1. For the last two years, Students' Union Reps have held informal meetings with the SU President, SU staff and other SU Officers to receive updates on the work of the SU and provide feedback from Colleges
2. At present, neither the Students' Union Reps or the SU President are mandated to organise and attend these meetings as part of their roles, and meetings can take place at irregular intervals
3. Currently these meetings do not have any clear Chair who is responsible for guiding discussion and managing meetings

### **Assembly Believes:**

4. It is important that Students' Union Reps are aware of SU activities, so that they are able to effectively relay information to their Colleges and hold SU Officers accountable
5. Given Durham's College system, it is important that SU activities, such as campaigns and events, take into account the views of students across Durham's colleges. This can help make such activities as effective as possible in achieving their aims
6. That Students' Union Reps should play a greater role in representing students at a University-wide level
7. That the creation of a formal committee would help to build upon the existing relationship between the Students' Union and College Reps, as well as enhancing the role of Students' Union Reps regarding representation and scrutiny of SU activities

### **Assembly Resolves:**

8. To add the following to Appendix E1: Committee and Forum Membership and Objectives of the Union standing orders:

### **Committee**

Students' Union Reps Committee

### **Objectives**

To provide a forum for feedback to the SU from common room exec and students via Students' Union Reps

To scrutinise and contribute to the effectiveness of SU campaigns and events using feedback from Common Rooms

To provide a forum for the SU President and relevant Officers to update Students' Union Reps regarding the activities of the SU and University-wide issues

To nominate Students' Union Reps to represent students on relevant University Working Groups

To support Students' Union Reps in the drafting of relevant policy for Assembly

To set priorities for Students' Union Reps to collectively work towards throughout the year d  
to monitor progress towards these goals

**Membership**

Students' Union Reps

President

**Meetings**

At least twice a term

**Chair**

Elected by and from the membership of the committee excluding the President