

Durham Students' Union Assembly Agenda

Please note Assembly will start promptly at 18:30.

Thursday 20 June 2019 – 18:30, PCL048

Time	Subject	Who	Paper
18:30	A. Welcome	Chair	
18:30	B. Minutes of the meeting on	Chair	UA/1819/37
18:33	March 12		
18:33	C. Apologies for absence and	Chair	
18:35	conflicts of interest		
Officer Updates			
18:35	D. Officer Updates	Officers	UA/1819/38
18:55			
Governance Matters			
18:55	E. Officers members of UEC	George Walker	UA/1819/39
19:00			
19:00	F. Trustees Update	George Walker	UA/1819/40
19:05			
19:05	G. Course Representatives	Saul Cahill	UA/1819/42
19:10	Reform Proposal		
19:10	H. Durham SU Election Rules	George Walker	UA/1819/43
19:20			
19:20	I. Elections of Assembly &	Chair	UA/1819/44
19:35	Committee positions		
Access Break			
Motions			
19:45	J. Value for Money	George Walker	UA/1819/45
19:50	(Core SU Position)		
19:50	K. Access to a Durham Education	Saul Cahill	UA/1819/46
19:55	(Core SU Position)	Zoe Haylock	
19:55	L. Student Workers in Teaching	David Evans	UA/1819/47
20:00	and Assessment (Core SU Position)		
20:00	M. Support access to free,	Chelsea Lowdon	UA/1819/48
20:10	safe and legal abortions		
20:10	N. Academic Student Representation	David Evans	UA/1819/49
20:15	(Core SU Position)		

20:15	O. Good Quality Student Housing	Meg Haskins	UA/1819/50
20:20	(Core SU Position)		
20:20	P. Durham Green New Deal	Tom Pymer	UA/1819/51
20:30			
20:30	Q. Mo Mowlam	Tom Pymer	UA/1819/52
20:40			

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Assembly minutes: 12 March 2019

Item A: Welcome

TLC opened fourth assembly meeting and explained that there was no microphone available. They gave thanks to AB for chairing last meeting.

TLC introduced the ten procedural motions, as proposed in the November 2018 Assembly meeting. Ted invited members to see GH to discuss proposing procedural motions.

A member asked when they can speak to GH. TLC confirmed it can be at any time during Assembly meeting.

Item B: Minutes of the meeting on 31 January

TLC asked for amendments to minutes from last meeting. No amendments. Minutes approved.

Item C: Apologies for absence and conflicts of interest

TLC stated that DUCK send their apologies and asked for any conflicts of interest to be declared. No conflicts of interest of agenda items were declared.

Item D: Policy Making Presentation

GW presented SU policy positions. GW explained motivations for introducing policy positions as being helpful as all officer cohorts currently have to 'start from scratch'. GW wants to work with assembly to produce core positions on key student issues.

GW stated that Assembly doesn't have the capacity to pass policies on everything. Lots of policies are based on governance etc, which makes people question what the core DSU beliefs are. The aim is that the policy positions will make the views of DSU more transparent.

GW stated that the policy positions will be easily accessible and will contain no 'jargon'. These will relate to the 'big picture', and will not be associated with detail or individual implementation or specific events.

GW went through some FAQs:

- Policy positions can be proposed by anyone, not just officers
- Policy positions can be changed and reviewed by officers and assembly, and will expire after two years and will be reviewed, renewed and lapsed like other policies
- They are based on a Scandinavian model

GW asked for any questions. No questions were asked.

Item E: Officer Updates

GW

Community Engagement strategy: GW stated that this is in the initial stages, and that he has spoken with other SUs, and will develop this idea further over the coming months.

PVC Colleges: GW stated that the contract has not quite been signed yet. This should be coming out over the coming days.

Strike Fund: GW stated that the outcome of poll and paper taken to PVC education, and to University's Exec Committee, who are broadly happy. GW explained that this matter is moving forward, and that the funding will be released soon, but that he will keep members updated.

Referendum: GW explained that this was short by 39 votes. The Board of Trustees met and decided that there will be no more referendums this year, as there is no need for any urgent changes for now.

MH

Standardised training: MH stated that she has received the go-ahead from the University for a programme of training for welfare officers. MH also talked about Mental Health First Aid training, and that the plan is that MCR officers will get this when they are elected.

BAME and diversity in University Counselling Service: MH stated that two new mental health advisors have been appointed.

Strike Fund Money: MH stated that part of this money will go into appointing a new Personal Wellbeing Practitioner in the University Counselling Service.

Student safety: MH stated that Pincident is being looked at, with new materials being produced this month with clearer messaging. MH talked about a bespoke Active Bystander course that will be rolled out to all student leaders.

Rate Your Landlord: MH has worked to produce a student-facing report on housing, and will soon be visiting Leeds University Union to discuss their Rate Your Landlord scheme.

Durham University Rent Guarantor Scheme: MH stated that she is pushing the University to push this project to the next stage.

Lifts in SU: MH stated that she had met with Disability Support and SwDA, and that four options were given. It was decided that a new manufacturer will install brand new platform lift for the building, for which funding needs to be secured, but that the University are behind this.

MH stated that further updates can be read in MH's report.

SC

Race in Higher Education: SC stated that he is developing guidance for departments on liberating the curriculum. SC explained that he is chasing the PVC for Education and will be holding consultation groups with students.

Spaces for Students: SC talked about the creation of new library spaces and a new library café with a hot water tap. SC has also led a recent visit to Kings College London and has been surveying what students want from study space. It has been found that a mix of formal and informal spaces and more plug sockets were key areas, and these will be looked at when renovating Dunelm House.

Academic Societies: SC stated that a grant is being developed to support Academic Societies, and that he will be holding an open meeting to discuss this with groups who are considering applying.

Access: SC stated that he is pushing for more admission from students in local neighbourhoods.

Lecture Capture: SC explained that the University will be hosting an event to talk to students about Lecture Capture. Focus groups will be held about Lecture Capture this term, and focus groups will be held this week about the Academic Advisor system.

DE

Postgraduate Pay and Conditions: DE stated that the University has agreed to the creation of a working group for casual staff at the University, and to discuss the improvement of guidance for engaging postgraduates who teach. UCU will not be involved in this group.

Supervision: DE explained that DSU is creating a survey into part-time and distance learner students. DE has also begun discussions with Bath SU, who have an independent advisor for Postgraduate Research students. DE is looking into a system for Durham whereby academics independent of departments can help students in a confidential manner.

Postgraduate Research Student Survey : DE encouraged students to fill this out, explaining that the officers have decided to promote this.

Postgraduate Forum: DE explained that this would be held next Thursday at 7pm.

Printing: DE explained that he has put forward the proposal of free printing for PGRs, and that this has been received by Education Committee and is being discussed for the AY19/20.

CW

Campaign for Affordability: Citizens Listening Day will be organised to discuss costs.

CW stated that the proposed changes to the Fonteyn Ballroom had been approved by UEC.

CW celebrated the Fashion Show and the success of DUFC and BloodSoc in the National Societies Awards.

CW talked about the Lessons from Auschwitz trip follow-up, and the published reflection on this by SJCR President.

CW also spoke about the current planning for Freshers Fair and the upcoming Annual Awards.

TLC asked for questions from members.

A member asked why no progress has been made on the student group agreement changes, and asked CW what he has to say to students about this.

CW responded that the timetable for consultations that was set out was agreed to.

CW stated that he does not accept the premise that things have not been done, as lots has happened since January assembly.

A member made a general comment: they stated that the main bugbear at the moment with student spaces is overcrowding, and that it is disappointing that there is nothing being done about this.

SC responded that he is currently working on communicating to students where there are spaces available.

Item F: Association Updates

Students with Disabilities Association

Faith and Disability talk, as well as conversations held with chaplains.

Talk organised on a 19th century feminist abolitionist vegetarian with dwarfism.

Conversations with colleges about Disability History Month (posts and videos on page).

Consultations with DSU about accessible lecture access, as well as redefining the University's definition of accessibility, and consulting on building work and lifts in DSU. A survey will be going out in Easter about lifts across the University.

More updates and information on SwDA Facebook page.

Working Class Students Association

Celebrated one year of being an association and will soon join other associations in being fully ratified by the Board of Trustees.

Freshers guide being produced about how to navigate Durham University. WCSA confident about creating spaces where working class students can form bonds, and which are socially and economically accessible.

Working class history month, as well as the celebration of Durham miners and the Trade Union movement. In the process of creating a banner to represent pride in working class identity. This is to gain a better understanding of their position in Durham and within wider community.

Next term: welfare drop-ins.

More updates and details on WCSA Facebook page.

International Students Association

Trying to rebuild and reconnect with colleges this year.

A survey was carried out of 400 international students. The results showed that international students don't know what the University provides for them, and that they want more spaces for international students to feel like they fit in.

Thanksgiving night was organised, as well as an International Students Ball, tickets for which have sold out.

A poster campaign was organised to highlight different experiences that the EXEC have faced, e.g. NHS fee charges.

A collection of duvets has been set up for international students. The association will be celebrating Eid next term, partnering with Islamic society and a group at NUSU. Next week is International Students Week, and there will be a motion proposed tonight about tuition fees for international students.

TLC stated that there are no other reports from associations; hence there were only three updates.

TLC asked for questions from members. No questions were asked.

Item G: Sexual Violence (Core SU Position)

MH explained that the existing policy on sexual violence has lapsed, and that it is important to take a stance on how we feel about this, as it has the potential to affect all members of the Durham community.

MH stated that no student should have to experience or fear sexual violence. This is why she is proposing a zero-tolerance approach, to encourage a culture of collective responsibility in ending sexual violence on campus. This will include working to empower students to become active bystanders, creating a supportive environment for all victims/survivors.

TLC asked for any requests for clarification.

A member asked MH to define what is meant by a zero tolerance approach.

MH stated that this is a widely understood and self-explanatory term and that therefore within the Union we should be striving and fighting for this approach.

A member requested further clarification on what would happen to a student if found to have committed sexual violence.

MH stated that the student would have to go through the usual policies that are already in place in the Union and the University.

TLC asked members to vote on this policy. All votes were counted. The motion was passed.

Item H: Equality and Diversity (Core SU Position)

MH introduced the core SU position on Equality and Diversity.

TLC asked for any requests for clarification. No points of clarification were raised.

TLC asked if any member wanted to speak against this motion. No speeches opposing.

TLC asked members to vote on this policy. All votes were counted. The motion was passed.

Item I: Accessibility (Core SU Position)

MH introduced the core SU position on Accessibility, which will include the creation of accessible digital resources, so that no student's experience is limited and everyone is able to participate.

TLC asked for any requests for clarification. No points of clarification were raised.

TLC asked if any member wanted to speak against this motion. No speeches opposing.

TLC asked members to vote on this policy. All votes were counted. The motion was passed.

****Access Break****

Item J: Association Elections

SJA proposed a motion to change the nature of elections to the executive committees of associations to be held as a cross-campus ballot rather than during Annual General Meetings (AGMs). SJA stated that, given the scope of associations, they can be prone to attacks due to a perceived lack of accountability. If these elections are held as cross-campus ballots, as the International and Women's Associations have already put in place, there will be bigger mandates that are therefore better for everyone.

TLC asked for any requests for clarification.

A member asked if associations will be able to define the rules of cross-campus campaigns.

SJA responded that they will.

A member asked if associations can currently choose to hold elections in this way.

SJA confirmed that they can. She stated however that the LGBT+ Association conversation on this matter has been going on for two years, and that accountability should happen as soon as possible. SJA stated that there should be more standardisation for the framework of associations.

TLC asked if any member wanted to speak against this motion. One member declared that they wished to speak against the motion.

TLC asked if any member wanted to speak for this motion. One member declared that they wished to speak for the motion.

For: The International Students Association does their elections through online ballots as it has 6000 members, and it is impossible to get more than 400 students into one room. It improves accessibility, as students who cannot make it to elections can still participate. The association wouldn't be able to function if elections were held at the AGM.

Against: Member not opposed to associations doing it in this way, but doesn't want associations to be forced to do this if they don't want to.

TLC asked for questions, comments or clarifications from members.

A member asked if there would be any protections against entryism on the website.

SJA responded that the likelihood of entryism is equal on both sides. People who are not members of LGBT+ Association have historically attended AGMs and voted, for example. Overriding benefits of accessibility are more important than risks of entryism.

A member commented that the barrier to entry is lower on the website.

SJA stated that this is the practice at most other Students' Unions in the country, and that these societies are still functioning. Barrier for entry being lower is a good thing, as students don't have to go into the room to vote against the executive committee. Secret ballots don't exist the way they should, due to physically being there and low turnouts. SJA stated that she would rather people didn't feel uncomfortable voting as things stand.

TLC announced that a member had proposed procedural motion number 5 - proposal to not vote.

TLC asked for votes to hear the case. More than 5 members voted in favour.

TLC gave the member 30 seconds to propose the procedural motion.

The member stated that it would be best to discuss this matter with associations first and vote at a later date. This is so that worries can be eased before this is forced upon associations.

SJA responded that she does not want this thrown into the long grass, as associations need to be accountable to a wider student body.

TLC asked members to vote on the procedural motion. All votes were counted. The procedural motion fell.

SJA concluded by stating that associations need to be more accountable to wider range of people, that there is already a barrier to entry, that problems occur on both sides, and that more people need to be involved in associations, and it is not a democratic process if people cannot attend AGMs to vote.

TLC asked members to vote on this motion. All votes were counted. The motion was passed.

Item K: Association Ratification

LA stated that associations need to be fully ratified by constitutions being approved by assembly and the Board of Trustees. LA does not want to wait until June for these to be finalised. LA wishes for power to be delegated to the Governance and Grants Committee to get these approved sooner. They can then be taken to the Board of Trustees meeting in June.

TLC stated that there is one proposed amendment to this motion. The member proposed to amend the motion by stating that, instead of giving the power to Governance and Grants Committee, this power should be given to Student Groups Committee. Student Groups Committee looks at ratifying societies and represents associations and is used to reading and ratifying constitutions. It is therefore a much more appropriate committee.

TLC asked if any member wanted to speak against this amendment. A member declared that they wished to speak against: member stated that associations are uncomfortable about the lack of codifying structure. It is therefore important to be separate from societies. Muddy the waters to put it to this committee instead of clarifying definition of associations. This is why it is proposed to go to Grants and Governance Committee.

TLC asked if there were any questions or requests for clarifications from members.

A member asked who sits on each committee.

A member responded that Grants and Governance Committee includes the President, Opportunities Officer and the chair of associations. Student Groups Committee includes one representative from each category of student groups.

TLC asked members to vote on the amendment. All votes were counted. The amendment fell.

TLC stated that members will now debate the original un-amended motion.

TLC asked if any member wanted to speak against this motion. No members declared to speak against the motion.

TLC asked if LA wished to conclude. LA asked for members to please vote so that the association may be ratified.

TLC asked members to vote on this motion. All votes were counted. The motion was passed.

Item L: Support access to free, safe and legal abortions

TLC invited members to read the text for detail on the nature of this motion.

A member asked for the text of this motion to be displayed on the projector.

CL proposed that the SU should take a pro-choice stance. This is because the SU should support the individual's right to choose, and because the SU's stance should reflect the UK stance. CL stated that there are two resolves:

1. Student safety and wellbeing – it is upsetting for students to see pro-life rallies on campus.
2. Pro-choice campaigns should be promoted by the Opportunities Officer (mandated).

TLC announced that a member had proposed procedural motion number 4 – Vote will need two-thirds majority to pass.

TLC asked for votes to hear the case. More than 5 members voted in favour.

TLC gave the member 30 seconds to propose the procedural motion.

The member stated that the people voting for this motion are largely doing it for political reasons, whereas those voting against are largely doing it for reasons relating to governance. It is therefore important to protect against the possible stigmatisation of people wanting to vote.

A member responded that those voting should be held accountable, and that democracy should not be done in secret.

TLC asked if there were any questions or requests for clarifications from members.

A member asked a question about the nature of procedural motions.

TLC responded that these were voted for in the January assembly.

TLC asked members to vote on the procedural motion. All votes were counted. The procedural motion fell.

TLC announced that a member had proposed another procedural motion: number 5 – proposal to not vote.

TLC asked for votes to hear the case. More than 5 members voted in favour.

TLC gave the member 30 seconds to propose the procedural motion.

The member stated that, whilst she likes this motion in principle, the wording of the motion does not reflect its true purpose, and therefore needs reworking, e.g. to include a stance on triggering pictures. It could therefore be brought to next assembly.

TLC asked if any members were prepared to speak against the procedural motion. No members declared to speak against this motion.

TLC asked members to vote on the procedural motion. All votes were counted. The procedural motion passed. The motion would therefore not be debated or voted on.

Item M: International Tuition Fees

PA stated that there should be a freeze placed on tuition fee hikes for the next five years.

TLC asked if there were any questions or requests for clarifications from members.

A member asked why there should be a freeze for five years.

PA responded that the ultimate goal is to get tuition fees for international students to an affordable amount – 5 years therefore gives more time to get tuition fees to an affordable amount for international students.

TLC asked if any members were prepared to speak against this motion. No members declared to speak against the motion.

TLC asked members to vote on this motion. All votes were counted. The motion was passed.

Item N: Leadership and Management Training

ST stated that in the JCR and executive committee at Castle, big projects are being undertaken involving big teams. Many of these projects involve complex processes and jobs, and the students involved may not have prior experience of leading executive committees or managing projects. ST stated that the project potential is not being fulfilled due to a lack of skills in leadership and management. ST therefore proposed that training should be given to

a certain number of these leaders, and that the Opportunities Officer can work more on the details of this arrangement if the motion is passed.

TLC asked for any requests for clarification.

A member stated that an amendment has already been accepted to include all common rooms.

ST responded that the motion should have already been amended on the projector to show the amendment.

TLC asked for any questions from members.

A member asked about how the training will be funded.

ST responded that there could be a training day organised, but that the SU should have the budget for this.

A member asked if this training will take place in-house.

ST responded that the training would be run in Durham, and that the Opportunities Officer can look into this. ST suggested that this could involve improving access to Durham University training.

A member asked, if common rooms decide on type of training, how can it be ensured that the training is useful for a wide range of students?

ST responded that leadership and management skills are broad enough across all roles to be useful to a wide range of students.

TLC asked if any members were prepared to speak against this motion. No members declared to speak against the motion.

TLC asked members to vote on this motion. All votes were counted. The motion was passed.

TO: Assembly
FROM: Meg Haskins, Welfare and Liberation Officer
RE: Welfare and Liberation Report
DATE: 20th June 2019

Update on priorities:

Consistent and quality student support

Following lots of discussion throughout the year with College and Association Welfare Officers, Common Room presidents and University staff, I'm really pleased that next week all Welfare Officers will receive 3 days of training, including a residential stay in Berwick where sessions will include Mental Health First Aid and Liberation Work. Welfare Officers will also join Common Room and Association Presidents and Experience Durham Sabbs in a day of training in Durham where they will learn active listening skills, effective and appropriate signposting and responding to disclosures of sexual violence.

I have worked with Durham SU staff and current Association Exec members to develop a morning of training for Association executive committees, which is taking place next week.

I have also recently established and met with two Project Boards consisting of staff and students to contribute to the development of online Mental Health First Aid training for all students, with an additional module for student leaders. These should be ready to be rolled out in Michaelmas term!

Student Safety

Pincident: I have now launched the new, more direct messaging for Pincident with new posters and online materials. Since this, we have seen a substantial increase in reports coming to the SU via Pincident.

Active Bystander: A Durham-specific Active Bystander course has now been funded by the University and is currently being developed. It is hoped that this will be completed and ready to be rolled out in Michaelmas to student leaders across the University (SU, Experience Durham, Colleges) before Freshers' Week. This will also be available as one-off sessions for groups of students throughout the year.

Hate Crime: This month, all SU staff are being trained in identifying and responding to incidents of hate crime, with an additional 10 also being trained in supporting students to report hate crime to the police. This means that the SU will be a Hate Crime Reporting Centre. I have also attended the Hate Crime steering group and worked with the University on a new campaign against Hate Crime, Sexual Misconduct and Violence and Bullying and Harassment.

Quality, affordable housing

In April, I published my report on the findings of the private rented housing survey which was open from December 2018 to January 2019. The report includes my recommendations on improving the housing search, property conditions, housing costs and awareness of renter's rights. I have since met with the VC and PVC Colleges to discuss these recommendations and will also be meeting with Durham City's MP later this month.

I have also met with both the PVC Global and PVC Colleges to discuss the lack of progression with the Rent Guarantor Scheme. This has led to the scheme being prioritised by UEC, with the hope of the scheme being up and running very soon!

General updates:

- ◆ I attended: the Race Equality Charter launch; Lived Environment Sub Group; Citizenship Sub Group; Sexual Misconduct and Violence Operations Group; Student Support and Wellbeing Sub Committee; Race Equality Charter: Self-Assessment Team meeting; Hate Crime Task and Finish Group; Religion and Faith Steering Group; the Respect Commission group; Durham City Safety Group and Wider Student Experience Committee.
- ◆ I visited Leeds University Union and Hull University Union to discuss their respective landlord and housing rating schemes.
- ◆ Re-branded the Association page on the SU website, had new President posters designed, printed and put up in the SU and contributed to the development of training sessions for Associations.
- ◆ Ordered new 'dump-bins' to improve access to free sanitary products in the SU.
- ◆ Held Welfare Forums with talks from MATSA's Welfare Officer and a guest from Alcoholics Anonymous as well as a Discussion on Sexual Violence, which was open to all students. This forum included a talk from ItsNotOkay as well as contributions from staff who sit on the Sexual Misconduct and Violence Operations Group.
- ◆ Had an Access Statement Generator put up on the SU's website so that any groups hosting events can easily obtain an access statement for their marketing and communications.
- ◆ Raised student concerns to the Patient Participation Group of Claypath and University Medical Group, with a particular emphasis on the cost of medical notes. I am now working with PVC Colleges on this issue after raising it at WSEC.
- ◆ Developed a student-facing signposting booklet, welfare handbook and Associations FAQ guide to make resources clearer and more accessible.
- ◆ Took a paper on the accessibility of Durham's campus to Student Support and Wellbeing Sub Committee which has resulted in the University agreeing to complete an accessibility audit of all teaching and learning spaces.

TO: Assembly
FROM: David Evans, Postgraduate Academic Officer
RE: Postgraduate Academic Officer Report
DATE: 20/06/19

Update on priorities:

Postgraduate Teachers' Pay and Conditions

The 'Casuals Working Group' of the University tasked as part of its remit with examining the conditions for postgraduates who teach has, with some small amount of nudging from myself, begun to reach the correct conclusions regarding what needs to change in this sphere. One such conclusion is that the arrangements for the majority of work, where students are asked to teach on a specific module for an extended period of time, lend themselves to fixed-term employment rather than a casual worker relationship – which would confer stronger rights and more professional treatment to postgraduates who teach.

Consensus is also building towards tying the hourly rate of pay for teaching and assessment work to a point on the University pay scale, likely at a rate of c. £14.40 per hour (plus holiday accrual). This has the added benefit of building in annual review of this rate, which is uplifted for cost of living allowances and outcomes from union pay negotiations. This would compare reasonably favourably to other Universities, based on research I have conducted with other Students' Unions. Further points are outstanding regarding the manner in which work is offered to students and the time expectations for lesson preparation and marking, which will require both stronger University policy and Department buy-in by the group's closure – the Core Policy being brought to this Assembly further outlines our proposed stance here.

Best Practice in Supervision

The University Task and Finish Group concerning research supervision and participation in research culture has concluded and reported to Research Degrees Committee. Specific work on meeting the needs of part-time and distance learning research students was contained within this, resulting in several recommendations on areas as varied as library resource access, training provision, setting expectations of supervisor engagement and access to visitor accommodation. The SU has been explicitly commended by the University for its work on this, from concept through to survey and analysis, and I am proud to have brought to light this issues and for the University to have taken them seriously.

Further outcomes from this group will be of wider benefit to research students, including the development of supervisor training and support materials, supervision agreements setting out expectations for student and supervisors as to their respective responsibilities, improved avenues for the reporting of supervisory concerns through Departmental Deputies for PGRs with clarified roles, the saving from abolition of Faculty-level PG Deputies who may now develop a mediatory role, and annual 'induction' support for all PGR students. With the support of both University and SU for these recommendations, I will work to oversee their implementation in the coming year.

General updates:

Postgraduate Research Printing: It's finally happened! The University has released over £100k in funds to support free printing for PGR students with effect from the next academic year. This will not only support students throughout their research period, but will also enable them to print out their final thesis copies at no cost.

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey Results: The University has recently received and analysed the results from the PTES survey conducted in 2018. These results tally with those of NSS survey of the same year, exposing similar issues in organisation and student engagement. The University has agreed action on this at Senate, and a piece of work I intend to undertake next year will look at the difference in expectation and reality in PGT courses, and in particular module availability and administration.

Faculty & Department Operations Review: This University-wide review has thrown up some particular issues around the level of support for PG students in departments. My key representations on this have been in relation to clarifying specific responsibility for PGT support within the generic 'learning and teaching coordinator' roles proposed, and the level of PGR support within the Arts & Humanities Faculty in particular, where a 'faculty research hub' model will be imposed. The intricacies of the review and our work on it are difficult to explain here – expect a fuller verbal update at Assembly or view our written response online.

ReviseWise Campaign: In the lead up to the exam period, you may have noticed a variety of materials released from the SU promoting healthy study habits, including free revision planners and revision materials, and our brand-new study space map which has been widely used by students. Saul and I were very pleased to revive SU work in this area after a moratorium last year – any feedback on how to improve it for next year is appreciated!

Best of the Rest:

- We've been working on changes to the Course Rep appointment system following feedback from staff and students – there are separate Assembly papers to implement the change and set our policy going forward that Saul and I are bringing, do take a look!
- More interviews for University senior management, this time for Faculty Dean of Social Sciences and Health – hopefully I can provide an update of the outcome verbally today!
- We're recruiting for next year's Faculty Representatives – nominations are open until the end of June, please complete the nominations form online if you're interested.
- The Officers and several students who support the University's access work met with Chris Millward of the Office for Students regarding the University's plans for widening access – Saul and I will be authoring a submission to sit alongside the University's Access and Participation Plan, driving home the points we believe are most important.
- A new inclusive teaching and assessment policy passed the University's Teaching and Learning Committee, which should obviate the need for supplementary adjustments in marking the work of some students with specific learning disabilities, better ensuring equity between all students.
- I defended a range of students' interests in addition to those in my remit at University Council, ensuring that in particular agreed SU amendments that allows certain advocacy support for students in non-academic misconduct hearings will now be permitted.

TO: Assembly
FROM: Saul Cahill, Undergraduate Academic Officer
RE: Undergraduate Academic Officer Report
DATE: 12/06/19

Update on priorities:

Liberating the Curriculum

- Attended Race Equality Charter launch
- Alan Houston has confirmed that focus on “inclusivity” will be the main focus of the work departments are required to undertake next year relating to Curriculum Reform. Will seek assurances that we have a shared understanding of this when the plan for Curriculum Reform is discussed at the next Education Committee, as well as present our recommendations on how students should be involved in shaping the curriculum.

Spaces for Students

- Launched our Study Spaces Map as part of Revise Wise.
- Library Steering Group approved the new Library Strategy which commits to building 400 new spaces within the library as well as other measures relating to library provision.
- Attended Learning Spaces Consultation Group which is less of a consultation group and more of a lobbying group, attempting to influence the refreshed Estates Strategy to develop better teaching spaces as well as increasing the amount of non-library study spaces on campus.

Academic Societies

- Held an open meeting with Academic Societies to discuss how to operate the Insights Grant, Free Academic Society and how societies develop their relationships with their academic societies
- Working on finalising proposals around Free Academic Society membership with Charlie.

General updates:

Access

- Fed into the development of the Access and Participation Plan, pushing the need to improve recruitment of local students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods as well as BAME students
- Attended, with other officers and student ambassadors, a meeting with Chris Millward where we pressed the need for more to be done to address the often exclusionary culture at Durham that can serve to put students off applying.

- Attended the first meeting of the Foundation Programme Review group, exploring ways the Foundation Programme can further support widening participation.

Timetabling

- Continuing to follow the developments related to the construction of the new Teaching and Learning Centre. Have expressed our opposition to any attempts to introduce 8am lectures should the building be delayed.
- Exciting development that I'm not sure if I can mention – may be able to present a verbal update to assembly.

Executive Dean Recruitment

- Have attended longlisting and shortlisting meetings for the new Executive Deans for Science as well as Arts and Humanities. These will replace the existing position of Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor with a more public facing role.

Meetings

- Senate – interventions on Black Attainment Gap report, lecture capture and more
- QSSC – Common Awards renewals, student enrolment and continuation reports
- Teaching and Learning – Discussed the proposals for Curriculum Reform
- HE Immersion Visit – Met with civil servants from Department for Education to discuss our relationship with the University, concerns around accommodation fees and international tuition fees
- Academic Advisor Task and Finish – Discussed proposals for standardisation of the provision of academic advisors. Committee has since stalled due to staff leaving but will push for work to continue.
- Education Committee – APP, defended inclusive marking policy, and more

TO: Assembly

FROM: Charlie Walker, Opportunities Officer

RE: Opportunities Officer Report

DATE: 20th June 2019

My final report

As this is my tenth and final report to Assembly as Opportunities Officer I have written a report which outlines a few major changes and achievements in Opportunities over the past two years as well as my usual update. As the first Opportunities Officer I have tried to establish a role which covers a broad remit of student activity happening across Durham, including fundraising and volunteering; personal development; the Union's relationship with Experience Durham; and our commercial activity.

One of my earliest and most important tasks was to help create a new Opportunities Team in the Union, increasing and focusing the staff resource devoted to supporting student groups. The service we offer to groups has improved and we are now able to spend more time than before talking to and supporting our 250 student groups. We have improved student group guidance, support and processes as well as reforming student group governance.

I have made improving our relationship with Experience Durham a priority and I am really pleased at how well this has gone. We would like this partnership to be more visible in future but it has already involved working more closely together on projects ranging from Freshers' Fair to a new Outdoor Trail. I have also had productive conversations about their new and expanding work in leadership and student development.

We have invested a lot more into our student staff including by becoming a real Living Wage employer. In this year's staff survey 95% of student staff said they would recommend Durham SU as a good place to work, which is 20% better than our third sector benchmark. 80% agreed that we give a high priority to employee welfare and health & safety, which is 19% better than our third sector benchmark.

Our bar and café have grown thanks to the hard work of our student staff and commercial team, with gross profit projected to be £336,729 this year compared to £323,621 last year. The actual surplus is down a little, but this is partly due to spending on the Living Wage. We expect to do even better next year with the refurbishment and reopening of Kingsgate. Taking a slightly longer view, we expect that bar/café income will have grown from £38k in 2015/16 to £393k in 2019/20, ten times bigger in just four years.

I can only end by thanking all of the volunteers and exec members who make Durham's student experience so exceptional and all of the staff who have supported me as an officer. I wish everyone, friend or foe, well and that is that, the end.

Update on priorities:

Priority	Actions taken	Next steps
Campaign for Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs Day complete • VfM statement being drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work will continue into next year as part of an SU-wide priority
Project Awesome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media report complete and shared with media groups • University Challenge work allocated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share with university
Common Room Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation shared with JCR PresComm and Assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share with MCR PresComm and Colleges Divisional Business Meeting • Set up working group

General updates:

- Attended NUS Conference
- Attended National Societies Awards with DUCFS and BloodSoc
- Working with the Parish Council on a volunteer scheme
- Consulting academic societies on changes to the way they work
- Reviewed Society categories
- Student Group Committee elections
- University consultations on Catering and Operations
- Interview panel for new Heads of College
- Annual Awards happened
- Planning for handover

TO: Assembly
FROM: George Walker, President
RE: President Report
DATE: 20th June 2019

Update on priorities:

Community Engagement

- ◆ First draft of Community Strategy has been produced and will be presented to the board.
- ◆ Currently meeting with stakeholders in the community including Durham BID and County Councillors to start creating a network and to fully understand the wider Durham City issues and concerns.
- ◆ Launched 'Events in Durham' calendar detailing the community events students can get involved with in Durham over the Summer. Published article detailing my top 5 events to look out for, including the Miners Gala and Jazz Festival.
- ◆ Continuing to attend local community events including Durham Pride UK which are being made into Instagram highlights.
- ◆ Visited St Andrews University to speak to their Community Relations Officer and understand how they manage their relationship with the local community.

Student Worker Rights

- ◆ Attended Casuals Workers Group meeting
- ◆ Will be attending SEOTY Awards to celebrate the great student employers and employees in Durham.
- ◆ Collaborating with Careers Department to produce a series of videos on Student Worker Rights.
Topics will include:
 - How to find part time work in Durham
 - Raising issues and concerns with your manager
 - Dealing with discrimination at work
 - Top tips for employees
 - Understanding job contracts

General updates:

- ◆ **European Elections:** Ran European Election campaign to raise awareness of the EU elections, encourage students to vote and explain the importance of voting. Produced an article for SU website and Facebook live video. Held EU hustings event open to both students and locals to provide information about the parties they could vote and who would be representing them in the North East. All parties were invited and on the night representatives from the Labour Party, Conservative Party, Green Party, UKIP and Liberal Democrats attended. All candidates gave a short hust and then answered questions both pre-submitted and from the floor.
- ◆ **VC Town Hall:** Vice Chancellor has agreed to attend Town Hall meeting on 14th June to answer questions to the student body on University growth. The event will provide excellent forum to discuss concerns from the student body and strong basis from which to conduct further conversations and follow-up with actions as necessary.
- ◆ **Respect Commission:** Part of a wider piece of work taking place to create a better culture of respect within the University. Work has also focused on the attitude and behaviour towards student leaders within the University. Meg Haskins and I organised a meeting with members of the University's Respect Commission and student leaders to talk about experiences as a student leader, particularly in working with senior member of the University. All feedback will be used to create a better culture for work where everyone is respected and respectful.
- ◆ **SU Roadshow:** Had the first stop on the SU Roadshow journey outside the Bill Bryson Library where Officers and SU staff members talked to students about academic and welfare issues. Academic issues that were raised included the lack of study space and the need for more explanation as to why certain types of assessment are used. Welfare issues included changes to the college system and cost of college accommodation. We have more dates and locations planned for the Roadshow for the rest of the term.
- ◆ **New SU Trustee Recruitment:** Durham SU is in the process of recruiting two new lay trustees to sit on the board.
- ◆ **University Council Report:** Presented report to University Council addressing priorities for Durham students such as University growth, diversity in University leadership and student housing as well as highlighting strategic student sector development including NUS reform and NUS-UUK Black Attainment Gap Report.
- ◆ **NUS Reform:** Attended National Union of Students (NUS) Conference in Glasgow where Delegates were asked to vote on a reform motion which proposed changes to make NUS sustainable and secure its future. Durham SU proposed amendments to the reform motion including; in order to protect women's representation in delegations to NUS Conferences; maintain liberation committees; and hold caucuses for sections (International, Postgraduate, Mature, Part-time, Parents and Carers). All of these amendments were passed by Conference.

TO: Assembly
FROM: George Walker, President
RE: Officer Members of UEC
DATE: 20th June 2019

Governance Matters: Officers Members of UEC

Assembly is formally required to appoint student representatives to sit on University Committees (unless those positions are filled ex officio, for example the Academic Officers as members of Senate).

The University Executive has reformed its committees and is establishing a Provosts Board to oversee delivery of the academic strategy, and an Operations Board to oversee operations delivery.

Following strong lobbying by the President, a student place on each Board has been agreed.

Assembly is asked to agree that:

- The President should be appointed to the Operations Board
- The Undergraduate Academic officer should be appointed to the Provosts Board

TO: Assembly
FROM: George Walker, President
RE: Trustee updates
DATE: 20th June 2019

For resolution

CONTEXT

The Board agreed a reform of its Committees at its last meeting, and asked for text to be prepared which could then be presented to Assembly in June for approval. Standing Order K describes the Committees of Board, and this paper should be read in conjunction with the [current regulations](#).

The Board also discussed a more established framework for Executive leadership, and the President presents for information only a delegation of leadership note, which describes how Durham SU manages its day-to-day work, including the implementation of policy from Assembly.

RECOMMENDATION

The trustees have the right under Article 59 to delegate power to a committee, and to revoke that power at any time. Notwithstanding the usual practice for making Standing Orders under Article 57, the Board may therefore resolve to constitute, alter or disband a committee at its discretion. Any such resolution should be reported to the next meeting of the Assembly.

Deleting Standing Order K removes the confusion as to whether the consent of Assembly is required to amend Board Committees Future changes will therefore be a resolution under Article 59 and not a Standing Order under Article 57.

COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

PRINCIPLES

The trustees have the right under Article 59 to delegate power to a committee, and to revoke that power at any time. Notwithstanding the usual practice for making Standing Orders under Article 57, the Board may therefore resolve to constitute, alter or disband a committee at its discretion. Any such resolution will be reported to the next meeting of the Assembly.

The Chair of a committee may be appointed by the Board but, if the Board does not directly fill the position, then the committee itself will appoint the Chair. The Chair of a committee shall have discretion to vary the dates and times of all meetings, and to call additional meetings as necessary, but must call at least one meeting in each term.

Except where specifically noted, all members of committees of the Board will be chosen by the Board. Non-trustee members will be appointed by the Board on the recommendation of a Committee. All appointments of trustees to Board committees shall be reviewed annually.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board will be entitled to receive papers and speak at all committee meetings, but are not required to attend and do not contribute to the quorum.

Members of any Board committee may be removed from their position if either:

- They fail to attend two consecutive meetings without sending apologies, and the committee resolves there is no good reason for their absence.
- The Board votes by a simple majority to remove them.
- In the case of a trustee, they cease to be a trustee.

The Chief Executive shall act as Secretary to Board committees, or they will nominate a staff member in their place.

PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE

Membership

The Performance and Delivery Committee has five members:

- One lay trustee
- Two Officer trustees.
- Two student trustees

A quorum of the Committee will be three members, at least one from each constituency.

Purpose

The committee ensures that Durham SU is accountable for the successful implementation of its strategy, with particular focus on campaigning and service activities. The committee scrutinises the students' union risk management processes and financial performance, and has oversight of systems for compliance with law and regulation.

Specifically, in respect of the implementation of strategy, the committee will:

- Agree the measures of performance which assure the trustees of strategic success.
- Propose the annual report to the Board.
- Propose the annual plan to the Board.

Specifically, in respect of risk management, the committee will:

- Develop a strategic risk register for recommendation to the Board and maintain oversight of the measures taken to constructively engage with these risks.
- Recommend external auditors to the Board, and receive reports from the auditors as appropriate.
- Oversee all matters relating to health and safety and data protection.
- Receive reports on any major incidents occurring within the Union, and in light of these look at the effectiveness of existing policies or other measures.

Specifically, in respect of financial performance, the committee will:

- Develop policies which ensure the good financial management of Durham SU.
- Receive management accounts.
- Propose the annual budget to the Board.
- Authorise capital expenditure plans.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

Membership

The People and Culture Committee has five members:

- One lay trustee
- Two Officer trustees.
- Two student trustees

A quorum of the Committee will be three members, at least one from each constituency.

Purpose

The committee ensures that Durham SU's Officers, staff, and volunteers are supported and effective, with particular focus on the performance of the Chief Executive. The committee champions liberation, equality, diversity and inclusion throughout Durham SU's work. The committee has oversight of the systems that assure the good governance of Durham SU.

Specifically, in respect of Durham SU's people, the committee will:

- Develop employment and volunteer support policies which contribute to high performance and engagement.
- Oversee the performance and remuneration of the Chief Executive.
- Recruit the Chief Executive, and senior staff as appropriate, with

Specifically, in respect of Durham SU's liberation, equality, diversity and inclusion work, the committee will:

- Develop employment and volunteer support policies that contribute to a fair workplace.
- Agree the metrics which demonstrate better performance.
- Oversee Durham SU's safeguarding policy and practice.

Specifically, in respect of good governance, the committee will:

- Ensure positive engagement with the Charity Governance Code.
- Convene a panel to recruit new lay trustees, always including the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Board.
- Support democratic development, including oversight of Durham SU's elections.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Membership

The Fundraising Committee has three members:

- One lay trustee
- The Opportunities Officer
- A student trustee

A quorum of the Committee will be two members, including the lay trustee.

The committee may invite the Chair of the DUCK Committee to relevant parts of meetings.

Purpose

The committee ensures that the Durham SU's fundraising by student groups is well governed and students are supported to undertake exciting and ambitious activity. The committee has oversight of the relationships with charitable organisations affiliated to by Durham SU student groups. The committee supports the students' union's corporate grant writing and fundraising work, including oversight of restricted funds.

Specifically, in respect of fundraising by student groups, the committee will:

- Consider Durham SU's practice with respect to the Code of Fundraising Practice.
- Oversee risks associated with activities within DUCK.
- Develop a strategy to ensure successful student group fundraising.

Specifically, in respect of Durham SU's relationships with other charitable organisations, the committee will:

- Maintain a Register of Affiliations
- Oversee associated risks.

Specifically, in grant writing, fundraising and restricted funds, the committee will:

- Develop the grant submission to Durham University.

- Authorise bids for restricted funds, and report on good governance and use.

For information

DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Articles of Association (Article 64) provide for the Board of Trustees to delegate day-to-day management of Durham SU to the Chief Executive. The students' union's complex operating environment requires a careful balancing of governance, professional, and political interests to manage successfully. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Board, has therefore proposed a framework for exercise of this delegated authority.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Membership

The Chief Executive

Directors and senior staff nominated by the Chief Executive

The Durham SU Officers

The Chairs of the JCR and MCR Presidents Committee may be invited to attend as appropriate.

A quorum of the Leadership Team will be two senior staff and two Durham SU Officers. The Chief Executive or a nominee will Chair the Leadership Team meetings. The Executive Assistant will keep a record of decisions made, for report as appropriate.

Purpose

The Leadership Team advises the Chief Executive in the day-to-day management of Durham SU. The Leadership Team should be consulted by the Chief Executive on matters of significance and, in particular, is responsible for supporting them in:

- Implementation and delivery of the Durham SU strategy.
- Reporting on Durham SU's performance against objectives and action as required.
- Making recommendations to Board and Assembly on policy initiatives and other matters.
- Ownership and management responsibility for key risks.
- Coordination of Durham SU planning and budgeting process, approval of annual plans, and recommendation of the annual budget to the Board.
- Such matters as may be referred to it by Board or Assembly.

Political leadership

The Leadership Team coordinates governance, political, and professional interests and advises the Board, Assembly and management team. The balance between competing interests is complex. The most important starting point is to acknowledge this complexity, and approach discussions thoughtfully. The principles of the Leadership Team are:

- The Leadership Team seeks to make decisions by consensus but will pay particular regard to the views of members with political or operational accountability.

- Colleagues can offer valuable support and should expect as a minimum that conversations are private and respectful. There is a commitment to collective decision making. Members do not surprise or undermine each other.
- Staff are not apolitical and will contribute to discussions about adopting, interpreting, and developing policy. It is inappropriate, however, for the Leadership Team to form a political position which could be legitimately challenged or overruled by students where there is not an Officer majority in support.
- The Officers have professional expertise of their own and offer insight of member experiences; they will want to understand and support operational development proposals. It is inappropriate, however, for the Leadership Team to make an operational decision for the organisation to implement which is not supported by the senior staff.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Membership

The Chief Executive

Directors and departmental managers

The Durham SU Officers

A quorum of the Management Team will be a member of senior staff, two managers and two Durham SU Officers. A manager will be elected to Chair the meeting for a calendar year. The Executive Assistant will keep a record of decisions made, for report as appropriate.

Purpose

The Management Team coordinates the delivery of the Durham SU annual plan and advises on responses to emergent priorities. The Management Team should be consulted by the Leadership Team on matters of significance and, in particular, is responsible for:

- Implementation and delivery of the Durham SU annual plan.
- Reporting on departmental performance against objectives and action as required.
- Ensuring consultation and advice is received on policy initiatives and other matters.
- Such matters as may be referred to it by the Leadership Team.

Political leadership

The Management Team coordinates the implementation of decisions made by the Board, Assembly and Leadership Team. The principles of the Management Team are:

- The Management Team seeks to make decisions by consensus but will pay particular regard to the views of members with political or operational accountability.
- Colleagues can offer valuable support and should expect as a minimum that conversations are private and respectful. There is a commitment to collective decision making. Members do not surprise or undermine each other.
- Staff are not apolitical and will contribute to discussions about adopting, interpreting, and developing policy. It is inappropriate, however, for the Management Team to form a political position which could be legitimately challenged or overruled by students where there is not an Officer majority in support.
- The Officers have professional expertise of their own and offer insight of member experiences; they will want to understand and support operational development proposals. It is inappropriate, however, for the Management Team to make an operational decision for the organisation to implement which is not supported by the staff.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Saul Cahill

RE: Course Representatives Reform Proposals

DATE: 20 June 2019

Background

This year, academic officers have been working to see how we can improve our course rep system and provide better support and development opportunities to our course reps as well. This, combined with some concerns raised by academics around the challenges encountered with recruiting course reps in a timely manner, led to the creation of a task-and-finish group including faculty reps and academics to discuss what changes could be made to the system as well as how we can address the functioning of Student-Staff Consultative Committees (SSCC) to ensure they're more effective.

This group produced a series of recommendations which have been circulated to all course reps and have also been discussed the University's Education Committee. Course reps had a chance to respond to these proposals by a feedback form as well as by attending Saul and David's office hours.

Consultation Process and Responses

Three main issues were consulted on.

1. A change of timing in elections from the beginning of Michaelmas to the second half of the term. This was felt to allow for more flexibility in running elections as well as giving a longer time-frame for first years to become acquainted with the course rep system and improve engagement with the election process. There was broad agreement with the rationale for this change but concerns were raised with the lack of first-year input into the first SSCC of the year.
2. A specific question was raised around that of postgraduate course reps, with recruitment to these positions often proving challenging currently. The general consensus was that these elections should take place at the same time as they currently do due to the students being in Durham for one year. Potential solutions to challenges around postgraduate course reps will be considered by the Academic Representation task-and-finish group.
3. Allowing course reps to renew rather than requiring them to undergo yearly election. We believed that this would allow for the SU to provide ongoing training to course reps to further develop the quality of representation they could offer as well as maintain continuity when there are ongoing projects within SSCCs. There was a broad agreement that this could be a positive step but there were concerns about those who want to become course reps later into their time at University as well as the current accountability process being seen as insufficient.

Revised Proposal

Taking this feedback into account, the follow proposal is being brought to assembly.

In terms of timing, there is general agreement with moving the elections to the second half of Michaelmas according to the following timeframe:

Activity	Term Week Number (Indicative Dates based on 2018-19)	
	Current	Proposed
Marketing/Promotion	1 (w/c Oct 8)	5 (w/c Nov 5)
Nominations	1 (w/c Oct 8)	6 (w/ Nov 12)
Election Opening	Start 2 (15 Oct)	Start 7 (Nov 19)
Election Closing / Reps appointed Current reps leave office	Start 3 (22-23 Oct)	Start 8 (Nov 26)
Training	End 3 (27 Oct)	End 9 (1 Dec) or later [End 3 (27 Oct) – for PGs, refresher for current reps]

To address the concerns around first year representation, Education Committee agreed that the first SSCC of the academic year within each department should be open to all students, which should also encourage better participation in the elections themselves.

The opportunity to renew was broadly seen as a positive development, but to address the concerns raised it is felt best to communicate the possibility for all students to express their interest in becoming a course rep at the beginning of Michaelmas term. If nobody expresses interest in becoming a course rep, the existing course rep will be allowed to continue without facing re-election. If another student expresses their interest, an election will be conducted in line with the timeframe for first year reps.

Assembly Notes:

- Course rep elections often have low voter turnout.
- The current election process lacks flexibility to enable better communication between Durham SU and academic departments.
- Many new Course reps choose to run for a second year in post feeling they can better represent students using the skills built up in their first year in post
- An Academic Representation task-and-finish group, consisting of faculty reps and academics, has produced recommendations for changes to the system outlined in the above document.

Assembly Believes:

- Democratic elections are essential to the process of appointing course reps
- Low voter turnout is in part due to the current timing of elections coinciding with significant activity at the start of the academic year
- Improved engagement in course rep elections will enhance the perceived legitimacy of course reps.
- The recommendations provide a framework that will allow ongoing development of course reps, enhancing the quality of representation provided.

Assembly Resolves:

- To endorse the proposed changes to the course rep system as outlined above
- To replace Standing Order H.13 *“The term of office of all academic representatives shall be one academic year.”* with *“Academic representatives shall be appointed on an annual basis according to a process agreed between Durham SU and the University.”*
- To replace Standing Order H.4 *“The number of Course Representatives shall be approved annually by Assembly after consultation with the University.”* with *“The number of Course Representatives shall be agreed between each Department and Durham SU annually, subject to a minimum of 2 per level.”*

TO: Assembly

FROM: George Walker

RE: Durham SU's Election Rules

DATE: 20th June 2019

Assembly Notes:

1. That the Returning Officer has been asked to review Durham SU's Election Rules

Assembly Believes

1. That current Election Rules are no longer fit for purpose
2. That adopting the revised Election Rules as submitted by George Walker (Appendix 1) would be beneficial to students and reflect a fair democratic process

Assembly Resolves

1. To adopt the revised Election Rules, as submitted by George Walker (Appendix 1)
2. To accept the amendment to Appendix 1, as proposed by Laura Curren

DURHAM SU ELECTIONS RULES

The Returning Officer

The Returning Officer will be appointed at the first meeting of Assembly in each Academic Year on the advice of the Board of Trustees and must not be a member of Durham SU. The Returning Officer will have authority over all Durham SU elections and referendums, subject to the Articles of Association and the Standing Orders. The principal duty of the Returning Officer is to safeguard the interests of the student electorate in fair, democratic votes.

The Returning Officer has authority to interpret these Elections Rules and publish Elections Guidance. The Returning Officer will report following each election to Assembly and to the Board of Trustees.

The Returning Officer will appoint the Chief Executive or their nominee as a Deputy Returning Officer, to administer cross campus ballots and issue initial rulings as appropriate.

Voting and campaigning

Cross campus ballots will be held for Officers, student trustees, and delegates to the National Union of Students UK Conference. Durham SU uses transferrable voting in its elections because this is fairer and better reflects the interests of the student electorate. All elections will have a re-open nominations option (RON) as a candidate.

The ballot is administered by professional staff and volunteers, appointed by the Deputy Returning Officer. Administrative support will not demonstrate partiality towards any election candidate. Students are expected to have an interest in the outcome of an election or referendum, so will not usually be administrative support.

Students in positions of authority will not be permitted to use resources that others generally do not have the ability to access.

Complaints

All complaints relevant to cross campus ballots will be considered using this complaints procedure. The Durham SU statutory complaints procedure will only be appropriate if a complainant believes that no confidence can be placed in entire ballot, and should be addressed to the supervising trustee in the first instance. Complaints must be received before the close of ballot

Complaints will be considered first by the Deputy Returning Officer, who will make an initial ruling. The Deputy Returning Officer is only able to accept complaints relevant to Durham

SU regulations, and will not be able to consider concerns that are breaches of University or Common Room rules

A ruling of the Deputy Returning Officer can be appealed to the Returning Officer on grounds that there was procedural irregularity in the handling of the complaint, or if there is new evidence which for good reason was not available at the point of making the complaint.

The Returning Officer's decision is final. The Returning Officer has power to caution, sanction or withdraw a candidate who does not follow the Rules, Guidance, or meet reasonable expectations of a Durham SU candidate.

Elections Guidance

The Returning Officer will publish Elections Guidance for each cross campus ballot which will include at least:

- The nominations process, which must be open for at least seven clear days.
- Good campaigning practice, to support high participation in respectful, positive campaigns.
- Support made available, including any Durham SU contribution to candidates.
- The voting process, which must be designed to support wide participation from student voters.
- The complaints process, with detailed steps as to how students submit complaints, and how the complaint will be handled.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Laura Curran

RE: Amendment to Election Rules: SU Officers and Trustees to be Neutral in Cross-Campus Elections

DATE: 20 June 2019

Assembly Notes:

1. That Durham SU prides itself on being the 'champion of every Durham student', as outlined in the Durham SU Strategy 2017-2022, 'Forwards'.
2. That Durham SU states how 'high democratic participation will strengthen student leaders', as outlined in the Durham SU Strategy 2017-2022, 'Forwards'.
3. That College Union Reps acting as College Election Coordinators are required to remain neutral for the duration of the elections period, as outlined in the Standing Orders.
4. That there is currently nothing in the Standing Orders about the role of the current Student Officers and Trustees in cross-campus elections, and so are allowed to act in a non-neutral manner.

Assembly Believes:

1. That Durham SU should be inclusive and give candidates running in cross-campus elections an equal footing.
2. That Student Officers and Trustees have significant influence over how students perceive candidates, due to the nature of their role.
3. That Student Officers and Trustees publicly supporting, endorsing, and campaigning for candidates, can give these candidates an unfair advantage, and the remaining candidates an unfair disadvantage.
4. That Student Officers and Trustees should, in a neutral manner, encourage students to vote in cross-campus elections, in an effort to increase democratic participation.
5. That, since we already have members of Durham SU who are required to remain neutral in cross-campus elections, it is not unreasonable to require the Student Officers and Trustees to also remain neutral.

Assembly Resolves:

1. To amend the Standing Orders to include the following:

Officers and Trustees

- The current Student Officers and Trustees shall be required to remain neutral for the duration of the elections period.
- The current Student Officers and Trustees shall be responsible for the promotion of cross-campus elections across the University.
- The above points do not apply to current Student Officers and Trustees that are running again in cross-campus elections:
 - If this is the case, then the Student Officer or Trustee running in the election shall not use their position as Student Officer or Trustee to garner votes during that election.
 - This means using social media or any other available resources that are specific to the role of that Student Officer or Trustee, to garner votes during that election.

TO: Assembly
FROM: George Walker, President
RE: Value for Money Core Position
DATE: 20th June 2019

The belief and its justification:

With students paying over £9,000 per year in tuition fees and incurring other significant costs associated with their course, extra-curricular activities and living costs, there has been much debate in the Higher Education sector about how Universities should seek to deliver 'Value for Money' (VfM) for students. This discussion has been led by the Universities' regulator, the Office for Students, and was highlighted in the recent Augar Review of post-18 education funding. Despite the desire of the regulator to scrutinise VfM, it is still unclear exactly how this is defined across the sector, or here at Durham.

We believe that students should receive value for money from the University for the various fees they pay. For students, value for money means transparency about costs and how money is spent, quality of provision and affordability of the Durham experience, so that cost doesn't become the tool of creating a Durham that is increasingly exclusionary.

The Union must make sure that the University regards students as key partners in the development of the University's work on VfM. When considering VfM, the primary focus should be on the experiences of students whilst studying at Durham. VfM must be delivered for all students, regardless of socioeconomic status, background, protected characteristics, home or international status and course of study.

Definition of a better future:

The Union will lobby the University to implement an approach to VfM that puts students and their interests at its heart. To do this, we must adopt a student definition of VfM based on the following principles:

Quality – The cost of attending Durham must be matched by a high-quality student experience and learning provision for all those who attend Durham University. This experience must be high-quality in all areas, including: academic studies, Wider Student Experience activities and support services. It is not good enough for the University to seek to demonstrate the quality of this experience through eventual graduate outcomes, or by relying upon the University's reputation. Students at Durham must agree that the experience they have had is high-quality and the University should utilise a range of quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate that this is the case.

Affordable – In order for VfM to be delivered for all students, the Durham student experience must be accessible to all, regardless of ability to pay. This means that costs must be set a level which is fair and reasonable, so that cost is never a barrier to attendance at Durham. The affordability must encompass the whole student experience, including costs related to academic studies, the wider student experience and living costs so that it can be a vehicle for widening participation. The University must utilise its resources to provide adequate financial support to students for whom cost is a barrier, in order for them to meet these costs and to be able to enjoy a high-quality student experience.

Transparent – The University must take all reasonable measures to make clear to students the true cost of attending Durham University, and how that money is spent. These costs must include not just headline figures such as tuition fees and the University accommodation, but also the hidden costs relating the wider student experience, academic studies and support services. The University must work with the Union to best communicate this information to students, helping students to understand these costs and how their money is being spent to deliver a high-quality student experience. Students should feel able to hold the University accountable for its delivery of VfM.

The barriers:

The cost of being a Durham student is significant, with Durham SU's research into the cost of attendance (Appendix B) estimating the cost of the Durham student experience to be £20,737.00 per year, including tuition fees. Based on the principles above, we do not believe that Durham University currently offers good value for money across its provision.

The University's existing VfM statement (Appendix A) differs from the principles set out in this paper, with a far greater emphasis on graduate outcomes and the University's reputation and performance in league tables. We wouldn't recognise 'good value for money' from a gym where the equipment didn't work, the prices changed arbitrarily or trainers weren't good teachers, even if people were fitter after attending. So we don't think that we can say we get 'good value for money' in our education, just because the right number of Durham graduates go onto get well-paying jobs – the quality of teaching, learning resources and student experience must be considered as part of ensuring students get value for money. A major challenge will therefore be to persuade the University to centre its VfM work on the student experience, utilising the student voice in demonstrating value.

The complex nature of Durham's collegiate system can make it more difficult to determine cost and for the University to deliver transparency, as costs are different for different groups of students and it is less clear where money is spent. We must continue to be clear that whilst this presents difficulties, it must not be used as an excuse for a lack of transparency and that work must continue to be undertaken to make clear to students the true cost of the Durham student experience.

Belief about the change and the responsibilities:

The position of Durham Students' Union is:

That, in the short term, Durham SU should exercise its influence through the relevant University decision-making bodies to embed the principles outlined in this paper in the University's VfM work. In the long term, we'll lobby the University to adopt and implement a University wide VfM policy that puts quality education and student experience at the centre.

That Durham SU will continue to ask for recognition of the true cost of the Durham student experience and the financial support needed in order for these costs to be met by all students, and hold to account Durham University where the principles outlined in this paper aren't present in practice.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Saul Cahill and Zoe Haylock

RE: **Access to a Durham Education**

DATE: 20/06/2019

The belief and its justification

- Durham University is, demographically, currently deeply unrepresentative of the region it is situated in as well as the wider country as a whole. This is in part due to reputation, but also due to current and historic failures on the University's part to address the barriers to accessing Durham University.
- Durham consistently fails in recruiting Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students, despite historic pressure from students, the Students' Union and national media¹. The small number of BAME students has presented challenges in creating and growing positive cultures vital in enhancing access within the University.
- For the University to contribute fully to the region as it hopes to, it must be much more ambitious in recruiting local students and tackling the culture within the University which is often off-putting to these potential students.
- Unless progress is made towards more representative student demographics, the culture of the University will remain static. This would have a negative impact on both the University's contribution to society and the student experience.

Definition of a better future

- The University should become more ambitious, undertaking activity to engage local schools and alumni who are teachers in schools serving Low Participation Neighbourhoods. This activity will both help to develop those schools and improve results, but also create strong links between local schools and the University.
- Working with the University towards a clear, long-term goal of recruiting students from backgrounds not strictly monitored by Office for Students, such as BAME students, and students from state schools.
- Stronger development of the 'pipeline' for academic development for those who arrive from underrepresented groups² in Higher Education. Specifically, ensuring that those who with the ability and desire to progress to further study are able to, such as undertaking Postgraduate study.

¹ "Half of universities have fewer than 5% poor white students". S. Coughlan, BBC News, 14/2/2019
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47227157>

² Regulatory Notice 1 – Access and Participation Plan Guidance, pp16-17. Office for Students, 28/2/2019
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/0bcce522-df4b-4517-a4fd-101c2468444a/regulatory-notice-1-access-and-participation-plan-guidance.pdf>

- Support from across the University, including colleges and academic departments to tackle exclusionary cultures and practices wherever they are found.

The barriers

- At present significant autonomy across different parts of the University can create notable inequities in access. As a result, this is an issue which must be addressed at a number of levels simultaneously.
- The existing culture represents a significant barrier to progressive policies, and in some places has actively inhibited positive change.
- Some senior staff have demonstrated support for positive changes to improve access to Durham, however this is far from universal, The importance of broadening access should continue to be demonstrated to encourage others to support further work on the area.
- Current staff demographics of the University are problematic for such policies as, in common with the student demographics, they do not accurately reflect the wider population of the country.

Belief about the change and the responsibilities

- Durham Students' Union must take a leading role in this process. Through researching initiatives which are successful elsewhere, as well as lobbying University staff and tackling exclusionary culture wherever it is found.
- Student representatives across the University, fully supported by the Students' Union, should be engaged in working towards this goal, through their positions in colleges, departments and elsewhere.
- The University itself must rise to the challenge of improving access for those of all backgrounds. This will involve strong leadership on the issue from the most senior levels of the University, as well as in-depth work to ensure that colleges, departments and other parts of the University are actively working towards the same goal.

TO: Assembly

FROM: David Evans

RE: Student Workers in Teaching and Assessment

DATE: 20/06/2019

The belief and its justification

- Postgraduate students studying for a Doctorate have a right to opportunities to experience teaching and assessment work. As this work is an integral part of a future academic career to which many doctoral students aspire.
- Other postgraduate students and 4th Year Undergraduate students may in certain situations also be qualified to carry out academic work, dependant on discipline-specific expectations, but this should be the exception and not the rule.
- Student workers engaged in teaching and assessment work deserve to receive support and training from the University to ensure they can effectively carry out their duties. Undergraduates also have a right to be educated by properly supported, engaged and effective teachers.
- Higher Education teaching is a highly-skilled job, and those engaged in its delivery deserve rates of pay, benefits, and contracts reflecting the demands of the work.
- Assessment of written work, the provision of feedback, and the preparation of teaching sessions are in particular time-consuming jobs – those who undertake it are based placed to judge its workload demands and should be involved in workload modelling decisions around it.
- Personal circumstances should not affect the ability of suitable candidates to apply for academic work – in particular, work allocation should never be based in nepotism and allocation processes should be transparent as well as agreed by both staff and students.
- Work by the Students' Union should be just one part of efforts in this space – trade unions such as the University and College Union (UCU) can also represent affected workers and support us in securing rights for our own membership.

Definition of a better future

- The rate of pay for student workers involved in teaching and assessment should be set at a rate commensurate with others engaged in similar work in the University, not based on worker seniority, and should be subject to annual cost of living increases.
- Students agree with the University what work they will undertake in advance of each term or ideally year to provide certainty; accordingly students should be engaged on fixed-term contracts where possible and given the worker protections these provide.

- All departments offer some amount of teaching and assessment work to their postgraduate research students. Departments must not overuse peer marking to sideline opportunities for student engagement in teaching and assessment.
- Students agree the training they receive at faculty level prepares them well for engagement in teaching duties, all departments offer additional bespoke training and students are paid for all training they attend in connection with their teaching work.
- A University-wide policy should be agreed and adhered to regarding the manner in which opportunities for such work are advertised and allocated at departmental level.
- Departments collaborate with their student workers to regularly review and agree expectations for time spent on marking and teaching preparation work.

The barriers

- Bringing rates of pay up to a fair level incurs a cost, either borne centrally by the University or within departments – the benefits to postgraduates as well as to the undergraduates they teach must be evidenced to justify this.
- Responsibility for ensuring good practice for student workers is spread across several levels, including Human Resources (HR), trade unions, senior management, departments, faculties and workers themselves – all parties must be involved to ensure full buy-in.
- Employment and workers' rights is a complex technical space which we need to devote time to understand and be effective within – the substance of student involvement in teaching and assessment must be shown to warrant fixed-term employment.
- The current situation of precarious, casualised workers creates difficulty in mobilising students to lobby for changes to procedures within their departments, which is a key driver of unfairness regarding availability of opportunity and workload expectations.

Belief about the change and the responsibilities

- Durham Students' Union must create lines of communication for student workers involved in teaching and assessment to raise concerns about their conditions, without fear of jeopardy to their working relationship with the University.
- Departments and student academic representatives must work proactively to gather student opinion regarding conditions in student-led teaching and assessment, from both University and student perspectives, acting on their views as appropriate.
- Durham Students' Union must build relationships which span departments and University professional services. These should be used to ensure minimum standards of pay and conditions for student workers in teaching and assessment are agreed and followed, as well as working towards improvement in these areas.
- Durham University must recognise the value of student workers in teaching and assessment in supporting the delivery of Durham's educational mission. To demonstrate this, the University should match the rate for hourly paid teachers to a suitable pay scale point, and offer fixed-term employment contracts (with associated rights), to workers engaged for specified ongoing teaching and assessment duties.
- The Durham Centre for Academic Development must work with students, faculties and departments to identify and meet training needs for teaching and assessment work.

- Durham Students' Union and the UCU must collaboratively campaign to rectify any unfairnesses they identify in the pay and conditions of student workers in teaching and assessment, while respecting each other's negotiating priorities

TO: Assembly

FROM: Chelsea Lowdon

RE: Support access to free, safe and legal abortions

DATE: 20 June 2019

Assembly notes:

1. In England, Wales and Scotland, an individual can legally access an abortion within the first 24 weeks of pregnancy. This is in accordance with the Abortion Act of 1967¹ which requires permission to be given by two doctors. However, in certain circumstances, an abortion can be carried out after 24 weeks².
2. In Britain, 90% of people believe that abortion should be accessible if an individual's health is endangered, and 70% believe that it should be accessible if an individual decides they do not wish to continue with the pregnancy³.
3. Abortion is not legal in Northern Ireland so individuals seeking abortion often travel to England for access putting their health and life in danger⁴
4. There are a large number of Irish students studying at Durham University⁵
5. The NUS publicly supports the right to choose and ran a 'Home to Vote' campaign at the time of the Northern Irish 'Repeal the 8th' Referendum in 2018⁶.
6. Recently, some US states (including Alabama and Georgia) have sought to limit access to legal abortions⁷.

Anti-choice protests may be distressing or intimidating to some individuals.

Assembly believes:

1. . That individuals should have control over their own bodies, and should thus have the opportunity to decide themselves whether to continue a pregnancy or not.
2. That safe, free and legal abortion should be available for all
3. Students should be aware of their legal right to abortion and know how to access one should they need it.

¹ Abortion Act 1967. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/87/contents>

² NHS Overview: Abortion. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/abortion>

³ British Social Attitudes Survey (34). Moral Issues. Available at:

http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39147/bsa34_moral_issues_final.pdf

³

⁴ https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/she-is-not-a-criminal-the-impact-of-irelands-abortion-law/?fbclid=IwAR1GfmFdSV_2EeApzTb7x0ZCpHrKff7Obsz-bpLCNcFzG0kbseqQToDnKRQ

⁵ https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/student_registry/statistics/summary/1.8nationality/181-8.pdf

⁶ NUS. Home to Vote. Available at: <https://www.nus.org.uk/en/take-action/welfare-and-student-rights/home-to-v8te/>

⁷ Amnesty International (2019). Abortion Laws in the US – 10 things you need to know. Available at:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/06/abortion-laws-in-the-us-10-things-you-need-to-know/>

4. That anti-choice protests, sentiment and organisations are on the rise. These networks disproportionately target University campuses, and their organising methods can be distressing and intimidating for some.
5. That the Students' Union should campaign for abortion access, not only on behalf of our Northern Irish student population, but also as a fundamental human right
6. An official pro-choice policy would not prevent students who disagree with abortion on ethical or religious grounds from exercising their right not to seek an abortion
7. Pro-choice policy encourages students to make well-informed decisions regarding their bodies and their futures

Assembly resolves:

1. To officially take a pro-choice stance on abortion and support the right to choose
2. To support students who engage in legal, peaceful counter-protests against anti-choice organisations on our campus
3. To work with the NUS wherever possible to support campaigns which support Irish citizens' access to abortion
4. To provide students with information about access to safe and legal abortion via the Students' Union's resources.

TO: Assembly

FROM: David Evans

RE: Academic Student Representation

DATE: 20/06/2019

The belief and its justification

- Students have a right to be involved in decisions about their education, both from the position as the potential 'consumer' of a University service and by the nature of a University education in being a collaboration of academics, from the student body through to the academic staff
- Students hold a differing and valid viewpoint than that of career academics regarding the education of which they are a part – a multitude of viewpoints must be brought together to generate a complete picture of the educational experience, and where it might be improved
- Collaboration between students and career academics is developmental for both parties, fostering trust, effective working and the development of ideas at all levels of teaching, learning and research
- Nominated student representatives at Departmental and Faculty level are an integral component of effective student voice, providing a clear route by which student opinion may be brought to the attention of career academics, and ensuring students have a voice directly on University decision making bodies
- The democratic selection of representatives creates legitimacy in their ability to represent significant student populations; however effective representation additionally requires mechanisms by which all students may engage informally in discussions about their education
- The Students' Union has a duty to ensure representatives have the right tools and ongoing support to effectively voice the views of their constituents, and to facilitate the administration of representative systems in partnership with the University

Definition of a better future

- All students know who their appropriate reps are, know the variety of academic issues they can raise with them, and feel confident being able to do so
- Representatives shape not only the educational experience of their peers, but their own collective development of skills needed to be an effective representative
- Trust is built between academics, the student body and the Students' Union in the system of selection used to appoint student academic representatives
- Academics and representatives proactively identify areas where student voice must be included in decision making, and representatives' contributions are valued
- Turnout in democratic elections for course reps is comparable to those of similarly administered Students' Union and University Common Room elections
- Students and Representatives are able to reflect on each year in post and recognise issues they have raised to their department or faculty translating into action by staff

- The voices of undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students are represented equitably, their differing needs and expectations respected

The barriers

- Differing views amongst departments and faculties, in addition to students and the Students' Union, as to the efficacy of any single system naturally arise, but all must have confidence in the representative systems used for them to be effective
- Providing assurance on effective informal representation is difficult by its nature; we must collaboratively develop mechanisms that both support and evaluate such efforts
- Perceptions of the Students' Union's place in supporting academic representation vary significantly amongst stakeholders – the Students' Union must demonstrate its will and ability to lead in this space to secure engagement with its platform
- Student experience at Durham University is an intensely volunteer-driven space – student academic representation must not become lost amongst the wealth of other activity placing demands on students' time and attention
- Academia is a skilled profession, and we will encounter some academics sceptical of the value of input from students regarding academic matters – we must work to convince them of the benefits of partnership working, and of our right to student voice
- The sheer number of representatives needed to support each course creates unique administrative and communication challenges – we must develop robust systems to manage this, and recognise we cannot work in isolation to achieve this

Belief about the change and the responsibilities

- *Durham Students' Union must* develop and maintain comprehensive training and support resources to enable our academic representatives to fulfil their potential
- *Durham Students' Union, University leadership, academic departments and students must* collaborate to evaluate and improve the systems used for appointing academic representatives on a agreed, regular timescale
- *University leadership must* instil a culture of listening amongst career academics, creating an expectation that student voice is taken on board and acted upon
- *Durham Students' Union and University leadership must* collaborate to develop mechanisms for the accurate capture of informal student feedback, and promote their use and evaluation by departments and faculties
- *Durham Students' Union must* continuously improve its channels of communication with academic representatives, putting together the wider picture of student concerns and targeting support to representatives in departments with emerging student issues
- *Durham Students' Union's Academic Officers must* act strategically on common student academic concern elevated to them through the representative structure, and through this action continue to develop trust in the Students' Union as our representative body

TO: Assembly

FROM: Meg Haskins

RE: **Good Quality Housing Experience: Core Position**

DATE: 20 June 2019

The belief and its justification

A students' University experience can be significantly affected by their housing experience, whether this is positive or negative. Poor quality student housing is an issue which effects students nationally, with Durham's housing situation reflecting the national picture. However, good quality student housing is not solely determined by the physical condition of a property or room, but also by affordability, support from the University and the Union, the housing search and contract signing process and the experience with a landlord, letting agent or college. The Union believes that no student should have a negative experience of any of these factors simply because they are a student, or because of structural barriers. Whether privately renting, or living in college, all tenants have legal rights and should have the same standard of housing experience as any other group.

Definition of a better future

All students should have a good quality housing experience, regardless of whether this be in a private rented home, purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) or college. This means that no student should live in a home which falls below legal standards, and that all landlords, letting agents and colleges should take responsibility to ensure that all accommodation is of a good standard. Furthermore, accommodation providers should strive to meet more than the minimum standard of accessibility, in line with the Accessibility: Core Position.

There should be widespread knowledge of tenants' rights, with the Union promoting awareness of available support services. There should be continued investment in these support services, by both the University and the Union, so that all students have access to support should they need it.

Accommodation across the sector should be affordable and accessible, so as not to systematically exclude students from underrepresented groups. Ultimately, satisfaction levels amongst students should increase to reflect improvements to the student housing experience. Further, Durham University should have a care for and an interest in the broader Durham student housing market, as a key factor in a good student experience.

The barriers

Quality and cost

The historic nature of Durham City means that not all housing is fully accessible. Thus, some students are physically excluded from living in good quality student homes, due to their access needs. Additionally, the increasing costs of both private-rented and college accommodation, coupled with the University's expansion plan, presents a barrier to some students who are systematically excluded from affording a good quality housing experience. The Union recognises that the high fees set by the University for living in college have driven costs across the sector up, so they are disproportionate with both the region and similar institutions.

Poor quality student housing exists across the country, and therefore tackling the issue will require time and commitment from student leaders, the Union, the University and national student representatives. It will also require cooperation from local landlords and letting agents, who must agree to work to improve the standards of student housing in Durham.

Culture

The Union also acknowledges that many aspects of the student housing experience are the result of a deeply engrained culture of early house hunting, early signing and pressure stemming from both students and/or letting agents. Challenging and tackling this culture will also inevitably take time and collaborative efforts from all relevant parties. As above, this involves cooperation from local landlords and agents.

Belief about the change and responsibilities

The position of Durham Students' Union is:

That the Union should continue to support students by providing information and advice through the Advice Service and online resources.

That the Union should continue to lobby against increased college accommodation fees, with the view that these costs have a direct effect upon the cost of private rented accommodation.

That the Union should continue to support students in holding landlords, letting agents and the University to account for unacceptable standards of housing.

That the Union should seek to work collaboratively with the relevant parties to improve the student housing experience and lobby for providers to strive for more than minimum standards.

That the Union should challenge any barriers which systematically exclude students' access to a good housing experience.

That Durham University should have a care for, and work to mitigate the impact that the quality and cost of student accommodation has on the accessibility of Durham University and on the experience of its students.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Kate Abrahams, Mei Chen, Francesco Fioritto, Nikhil Ghosh, Alex Glover, Alex Hill, Evie Hill, Barbara Krumpholz, Daisy Pullman, Tom Pymer, Roisin Smith, Andrea Vismara

RE: Durham Green New Deal

DATE: 20 June 2019

Background:

For the purpose of this motion, we request that it is noted that there is a difference between the Greenspace Group (which is a University body consisting of those individuals who have an influence over the current environmental policy) and ECODU (which is a student-led think tank who meet to discuss potential environmental policy and presently have no official standing whatsoever).

Assembly notes:

- There is no Durham University (hereafter referred to as “the University”) employee dedicated to combatting climate change or protecting the environment
- There is no student representation which focuses on green matters.
- Current environmental projects are undertaken by individual colleges: there is no centralised ecological project
- That although the colleges have Environment Champions, there is rarely collaboration between the colleges or individuals on the issues
- That even within colleges most students don’t know who their Environment Champion or JCR Environmental Rep is, or indeed what the role is
- The current University expansion plan (hereafter referred to as the expansion plan) is extremely poor regarding the environment, sustainability and carbon management, with virtually no mention of any of these things
- The University Greenspace Group has been largely unfilled in recent years, with the role it is meant to fill largely being taken by the independent student think tank known as the Environmental Community Of Durham University (hereafter referred to as ECODU)
- That across the country and the world, local councils and national governments (including Durham County Council and the Parliament of the United Kingdom) have declared climate emergencies in reflection of their dedication to tackling the problem
- That ECODU have, immediately prior to this meeting, published and distributed their report

Assembly believes:

- There is no greater threat to our planet than climate change and its related environmental threats
- The SU and the University both have the responsibility and duty to help fight the problem
- The University is uniquely placed to utilise the latest technologies to combat the problem
- Although the University and the SU have taken some steps towards greater eco-friendliness, they have so far been insufficient in tackling this problem to the extent it warrants
- As a result of the aforementioned insufficiency, both University and SU need to be more decisive in combatting the problem
- The lack of communication and coordination between the differing groups and individuals with responsibility or focus on environmental policy has made taking steps difficult

- The role of the University Greenspace Group must increase in order to successfully tackle the problem

Assembly resolves:

- This motion constitutes a declaration by the SU that a state of climate emergency exists
- To mandate the SU President to resource the work including to fill the sustainability roles within the SU which are currently vacant.
- The SU shall up a regular meeting for the Environment Champions of the respective colleges on a monthly or bimonthly basis, which will improve the chain of communication between students, colleges, staff, Greenspace, and the University.
- To strive to create a role on the University Executive Committee based solely upon sustainability and environmental issues, specifically either the nomination of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Sustainability, or the raising of the Dean of Environmental Sustainability to the University Executive Committee
- In addition this, to push the University to reinstate the roles of Greenspace Sustainability Coordinator and Senior Energy and Sustainability Manager, and appoint people with the adequate time to fulfil the duties to the roles of the Chair of the Environmental Sustainability Strategic Planning Group and the Chair of the Carbon Management Team.
- To push the University so that the Greenspace Group contains the following positions:
 - Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Sustainability
 - Dean of Environmental Sustainability
 - Greenspace Sustainability Coordinator
 - Senior Energy and Sustainability Manager
 - Chair of the Carbon Management Team
 - Sustainability Manager (Travel and Biodiversity)
 - Environmental Bursar
 - A Representative of ECODU
- That all new buildings undertaken by the SU shall be carbon neutral and that the SU shall campaign to mirror this in the University
- To endeavour to change the culture of the University by professing itself as green and environmentally-conscious as one of its main strands of identity.
- To support University-wide campaigns promoting sustainability.
- To include issues of sustainability and the environment in any new University projects.
- In accordance with the targets set by Durham County Council, to decarbonise the University by 45% for 2030, and be carbon-neutral by 2050.
- To use proposals for decarbonisation such as the Buro Happold and Siemens Report as models to guide future policy on the issue.
- To encourage students to “think globally, but act locally” - an awareness of University-wide issues whilst also acting within college.
- Change our culture by promoting environmental-awareness and environmental action, and doing what we can in our everyday individual choices.
- College environment reps must be mandated to attend a discussion with the other reps as part of their role when they run to become one, thus improving the chain of communication.
- To create and support campaigns promoting sustainability, such as Waste Awareness Week.
- To empower the Environment Reps in colleges to further engage the student body in this through whatever means the individual Reps deem necessary.
- To campaign for the University to reinstate the Greenspace Group as a fundamental part of their consultancy on the environment

- To ask the University about the progress made on fulfilling the single use plastics pledge with a view to publicising the progress in future
- To commit to making new constructions out of materials other than concrete
- To sign up to the Children's Rainforest programme which allows a tree to be replanted in Costa Rica for every tree felled elsewhere in the process of future building projects
- That the SU shall in future publicise and improve on those areas where things are being done to protect the environment both within the Su and at a University level
- To consult ECODU, who shall maintain their independence as a student think tank, on future matters pertaining to the environment
- The SU will commit to campaigning a doubling in funding in the next edition of the University development plan for clean energy research and development
- The SU will, wherever possible, purchase clean, renewable, and emission-free energy products for general use
- The SU shall push for the creation of a series of new cross-departmental project dedicated to selling Durham-developed clean, renewable, and emission-free energy technology
- The Opportunities Officer shall be provisionally mandated to take responsibility for environmental and fairtrade issues, with a long-term view to creating a role for an SU Environmental and Fairtrade Officer

TO: Assembly

FROM: Tom Pymer

RE: Mo Mowlam

DATE: 20 June 2019

Assembly notes:

- The University is currently constructing a new college
- The University is planning to name the new college after a major donor to the construction
- Durham University has many impressive alumni
- There are currently only two and a half colleges named after women (Josephine Butler, St Mary's and Hild Bede), only one named after an individual from an ethnic minority (St Mary's) and none from the LGBT+ community

Assembly believes:

- Colleges should be named after inspirational people with links to Durham University, not whoever makes the largest donation towards a college's construction
- Mo Mowlam was an inspirational woman, for the following reasons:
 - i) Her role in the Northern Ireland Peace Process and the Good Friday Agreement, admired across the political parties
 - ii) Her advocacy for cancer research and her own battles with brain cancer
 - iii) Her cheerfulness in the face of adversity
- On top of these reasons, she is one of Durham's most successful former alumni
- The next college should be named after a woman with strong links to Durham
- Whilst it might be questionable to name colleges after political figures, there is a precedent as Grey College is named after Charles Grey, Liberal Prime Minister, architect of the Great Reform Act and inventor of a very nice kind of tea
- Adding to the previous point, it is no more questionable than having eight colleges named after prominent Christian figures (Saints Aidan, Chad, Cuthbert, Hilde, Bede, John and Mary and Bishops Thomas Hatfield and William Van Mildert)

Assembly resolves:

- That the Students' Union shall formally suggest to the University that the new college be named "Mo Mowlam College"
- The Students' Union shall lobby the University to adopt this name and shall continue doing so until the new college's name is formalised

APPENDIX

Other potential names might include:

Giles Ji Ungpakorn - Thai professor of political science and dissident

Dame Elisabeth Hoodless - Executive Director of Community Service Volunteers

Rupert Whitaker - founder of the Tuke Institute; co-founder of the Terence Higgins Trust

Jill Black - Justice of the Supreme Court; former Lord Justice of Appeal and Privy Councillor

Caroline Swift - leading counsel to the Inquiry in the Shipman Inquiry and Justice of the High Court

Ruth First - anti-apartheid activist assassinated by the South African security services

Kerryann Ifill - President of the Senate of Barbados

Sir Milton Margai - first Prime Minister of Sierra Leone

Libby Lane - Bishop of Stockport, first woman consecrated as an Anglican bishop

The people on this list are considered to be those whom it is impossible to dispute made a tangible positive difference in the world.

