

Durham Students' Union Assembly Agenda

Tuesday 4 December 2018 – 18:30, ER140

Time	Subject	Who	Paper
18:30 18:30	A. Welcome	Chair	
18:30 18:33	B. Minutes of the meeting on November 8	Chair	UA/1819/08
18:33 18:35	C. Apologies for absence and conflicts of interest	Chair	

Routine Business

18:35 18:40	D. Vice-Chair Election	Chair	UA/1819/09
18:40 19:00	E. Officer Updates	Officers	UA/1819/10
19:00 19:20	F. Committee Updates	Committee Chairs*	UA/1819/11

****Access Break****

Items for Discussion

19:30 19:45	G. UCU Anti-Casualisation Policy	David Evans	UA/1819/12
19:45 20:00	H. Elections Expenses Policy	George Walker	UA/1819/13
20:00 20:15	I. Support of the Associations Policy	Neve Ovenden	UA/1819/14

**Academic Affairs Committee, DUCK Committee, Governance & Grants Committee, JCR Presidents' Committee, MCR Presidents' Committee, Societies Committee and Union Rep Committee.*

Assembly is committed to making its meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. If you consider yourself to have any access or reasonable adjustment needs, please contact the Union President at su.president@durham.ac.uk at least 2 days in advance of the meeting to make arrangements.

Assembly Minutes: 8th November 2018

Item A: Welcome

George Walker (GW), SU President, opened the meeting

Item B: Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were approved and confirmed the election of Ted Lavis-Coward as the Chair.

No comments or corrections from Assembly.

Item C: Conflicts of interest and apologies

Apologies from Stephenson Union Rep

PG Academic officer declared a conflict of interest on Item I as a result of having supported board mandate for this work, said he disagreed that he should have to, called for review of this process and recused himself from the vote.

Item D: Introduction to Assembly

Chair noted the student staff protocol, outlined some of Assembly's core processes and reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring democracy is accessible.

Item E: Approval of External Board Trustee

Ratification of external trustee passes.

Item F: Open Position Elections

Candidates for UG open place gave a 30 second hust

Candidates for PG open place gave a 30 second hust

Item G: Officer Priorities

President - President George Walker outlined his priorities for the coming year.

Welfare and Liberation - Welfare and Liberation Officer Meg Haskins outlined her priorities for the coming year.

UG Academic - Undergraduate Academic Officer Saul outlined his priorities for the year.

PG Academic - Postgraduate Academic Officer David Evans outlined his priorities this year.

Opportunities - Opportunities Officer Charlie Walker outlined his opportunities for this year.

Question to President about the #RippedOff campaign. GW responded that the focus of this so far has been engaging Freshers and the Community.

Item H: Procedural Motions

GW proposed the motion on procedural motions, asking if he could include an amendment.

The chair clarified that the deadline had passed but that the President could seek to amend this at the stage at which the board of Trustees approved the motion.

Clarification was asked for what this process was and provided.

Assembly voted in favour of the motion.

Item I: Student Group Constitution and Heads of Terms

Charlie Walker (CW) proposed the motion.

Jess Dunning (JD) proposed amendments to the SG agreements.

No speeches against the amendment or questions.

JD summed up amendments.

Assembly voted in favor of the amendment.

Amelia Mccloughlan (AM) spoke opposing the motion on the grounds of a lack of clarity on the content and concerns about the consultation on the motion so far.

Question for clarification on when the new unratified associations could be ratified.
CW responded that once the framework was in place he believed that the ratification could go ahead with delay.

Meg Haskins (MH) spoke in favor of the motion, addressing the concerns of associations.

Steven Lowes (SL) spoke against the motion, raising concerns about the consultation.

Karina Hyams (KH) spoke in favour of the motion, denying that there would be the negative effects that have been claimed on Nightline.

Dan Boyle (DB) spoke against the motion on the grounds that there was not enough clarity in the motion about what it meant.

Question for clarification on the opposer's promise to bring a better motion back in December based on timescale.

SL responded that this would be difficult but a motion to mandate the SU to do further consultation would be possible.

AM asked proposer why the new associations can't vote in assembly.

CW clarified that the trustee board, as well as Assembly, need to approve new associations, and trustee board has not approved pending student group risk work.

CW clarified that standing orders needed to be changed, which requires the vote of both assembly and the board of trustees.

JD asked for clarity on whether societies could negotiate not to submit a yearly plan for three terms

CW responded that that would be the case.

AM summed up against saying she felt people supported having guidelines but opposes the paper and process, and she wants a commitment to further consultation in writing.

CW summated by restating the consultation process to happen with examples.

Assembly voted against the motion.

Item J: Tyne & Wear Citizens

CW proposed the motion.

AM requested clarification regarding Mental Health First Aid training

CW clarified that this is something that would be made easier through affiliation.

Question asked for clarification on what the cost would fund.

CW clarified the campaigns training and support that would be received

Question about how people would chosen for training.

CW says open for discussion.

Assembly voted in favour of the motion.

TO: Assembly
FROM: George Walker, President
RE: President Report
DATE: 04 December 2018



Update on priorities:

Community Engagement

Voter Registration Campaign – Increased citizenship and democratic engagement is a key aspect of community engagement. We have been running a joint campaign to encourage Durham students to register to vote, in partnership with Durham University and Durham County Council. From 12th-22nd November, Electoral Registration Officers from Durham County Council visited colleges to register students to vote. The College with the highest number of newly registered students will receive a £250 prize.

Learning from best practice – Both Durham SU and Durham University are at a relatively early stage in the development of our community engagement work. As part of developing Durham SU's community engagement strategy, we are visiting other Universities/Students' Unions whose work in this area is recognised as sector-leading. On 19th November, we visited the Birmingham Guild of Students and on 17th January we will be visiting Leeds.

Engaging with University Task Force – The University has established a new 'Community Engagement Taskforce' (CETF) this year. The main group of the CETF includes representatives from the University, County Council, Parish Council, local services, business and local residents, as well as me as the student representative. The CETF also has five subgroups covering different areas of community engagement, with an SU Officer on each group. Whilst we share some common goals with the University regarding community engagement, we want to use our involvement in the CETF to shape the University's work to take into account student priorities for Durham and ensure student buy-in for community engagement initiatives.

Report on University and local community – Jane Robinson (Former Durham University Chief Operations Officer) is currently producing a report on the ways in which the University interacts with Durham City and the wider county. We met with Jane to discuss this work and give our feedback on the current state of the University's community engagement work and the role Durham SU can play in community engagement.

Building Relationships with local representatives – A key part our community engagement work will be working with local representatives to put forward student priorities for Durham and to gain support for policies that will benefit students. I am having ongoing meetings with representatives and have already had positive meetings with our local MP and the Vice-Chair of Durham County Council. Topics of discussion have including key issues such as housing, licensing, economic development, student safety and Higher Education funding.

Student Workers

Student staff in the University – We are aware that many student staff in the University are often taken for granted, with their rights regarding pay and conditions often not being fully respected. I have raised the issue with a number of senior figures in the University including the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor Colleges and Chief Financial Officer. We have also had a separate meeting with the University's Director of HR to discuss the issue. The University has acknowledged, including to the University's finance committee, the inconsistencies with the treatment of student staff and I will continue to work to make sure that corrective action is progressed as a matter of urgency.

Collaboration with Careers Service – I met with the University's Student Employment Service to discuss how we might be able to collaborate to improve the quality of student employment opportunities in Durham. In particular, we highlighted the need to make students better aware of the support they can access through the careers service, and the potential to work together to raise awareness of issues surrounding student employment during the annual 'Student Employment Week'.

Students @ Work Campaign – I am currently working with our Policy & Marketing teams to pull together key information relating to the rights of students in part-time work, as well as information relating to international students and the benefits of joining Trade Unions. I am hoping to use this information to launch a campaign to support student workers and raise awareness of student workers' rights before the end of this term.

General updates:

#RippedOff Campaign – After having held the largest protest against spiralling college fees to date this year, I have continued to pressure the University on this issue. We are encouraging students to send postcards and emails directly to the Vice-Chancellor and we are supporting the development of action at a college level, such as through the Aidan's RippedOff Task Force. We have highlighted potential future dates for action, such as University open days. We have also created our #RippedOff Timeline on the website, to show students all the actions that have been taken during the course of the campaign so far.

Library Wish Tree Project – I have been working with the Library on their 'Wish Tree' project to collect donations for local charities in the run-up to Christmas. From 26th November-14th December students will be able to donate items using the tags on the Christmas tree in the library. The three charities we are partnering with are Durham Action on Single Housing, Moving On Durham and Age UK County Durham.

UCU Strike Fund – We have released a poll to consult students on how best to spend the funds from the fund set up following the UCU strike action last academic year, based on some consultation carried out by the previous President. The poll will run until the end of term and once completed the results will be presented to the University to lobby them on how best to spend the funds to benefit students.

Bursaries – As part of our work to tackle the cost of Durham, I am sitting on the University's new Financial Awards Committee alongside our Academic Officers David and Saul. The committee is working to identify areas in which the University needs improved support and to better allocate the university's funds. We are leading on research to quantify the 'Cost of Attendance' for Durham students which will help us to secure appropriate needs-based financial support.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Saul Cahill, Undergraduate Academic Officer

RE: Undergraduate Academic Report

DATE: 04 December 2018



Update on priorities:

Liberating the Curriculum:

I've started to collate the feedback gathered in meetings with four of the associations I've met with so far as well as continuing to try and meet with the remaining four associations. All going well, I'd hope to be able to bring a curriculum position paper to the January Assembly.

I also attended the NUS-UUK Black Attainment Gap roundtable in Sheffield which will feed into Universities UK's report due in early January which will propose a range of recommendations to universities about initiatives they should implement to reduce the attainment gap.

I was disappointed, however, to discover that nobody from Durham University had attended any of these roundtables especially since we have been flagging this project with Alan Houston since our very first meeting with him. I plan on raising this issue with him next Tuesday and should have an update to provide on this at assembly.

Spaces for Students:

We received over 80 responses to our survey on the changes to seminar scheduling, showing students in a wide range of departments had been affected and that nearly all thought this was a change for the worse. I will feed this information back to the University who had, somehow, thought this change should only affect History students and we're considering our options going forward.

At Academic Affairs committee, we heard back from our Faculty Reps about discussions in Faculty Education Committee about overfilled lectures. Some of this was attributed to people attending lectures who shouldn't and some lecturers will now be asking anyone not entitled to leave if this situation arises again. While this may explain some of the issues, the scale of the issue and the fact it has seemingly exploded this year suggests that expanding student numbers are definitely still playing an impact here.

Co-operating with Academic Societies

I've held several discussions within the SU about how we can better promote what good work is currently being carried out by Academic Societies, including Computer Science's Hackathon and the variety of projects carried out by Pro Bono society.

We've also considered specifically dedicating space on the SU website to articles written by members of academic societies discussing specific academic discussions they've facilitated which could mirror those currently produced by Classics and others.

General updates:

Visits

Myself and David Evans visited Worcester to attend a workshop held by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator so we could better understand what is considered best practice in a range of university appeals processes, particularly valuable in light of a number of changes to policies the University is currently considering. This should also, hopefully, help augment the advice the SU is currently able to provide to students who might be looking to seek a review of their case by the OIA.

Committees

I attended Access and Admissions Subcommittee which discussed the new admissions system, a breakdown of the enrolment figures for this academic year and a reworking of contextual offers amongst other items.

I also attended Quality and Standards Subcommittee which discussed programme accreditation, approval, external examiner feedback and other quality assurance issues. With papers around 400 pages in length, this committee is exactly as exciting as it sounds – but all very important work.

CIS

As the only officer foolish to take this stuff on, I've somehow ended up the de-facto officer for IT. This involved workshops that took place before the beginning of the academic year on developing a new Target Operating Model for the University's IT systems, which describes how IT should aim to be managed within the university.

Since last assembly, I've been involved in shortlisting candidates for the new Chief Information Officer who will be in charge of running CIS. I'll also be on the interview panel for this role on the Thursday following assembly.

I've also agreed a meeting the day after assembly to discuss CIS' priorities for the near future with Tim Clark, UEC lead for IT, and and Geoff Kendall-Smith, acting CIO.

In all this, I hope to first ensure that the university is committing sufficient resources to CIS so that things actually work, so we don't see a repeat of the wi-fi shambles in Collingwood last year or the all too frequent cases of CIS simply being unable to deliver on IT projects. Secondly, I hope to make sure that the services provided to students continue to improve, rather than stagnate. Many universities had technology, such a lecture capture, a decade ago and, frankly, students deserve better.

TO: Assembly

FROM: David Evans, Postgraduate Academic Officer

RE: Postgraduate Academic Officer Report

DATE: 04 December 2018



Update on priorities:

Postgraduate Teachers' Pay and Conditions

Assessing current issues: Whilst my past experience means I am aware of many of the issues with the current state of affairs for postgraduates who mark and teach, I am gathering further information to complete the picture. I have met with the Director of HR for the University and received agreement from her to circulate a request for such information from departments as template contracts for PGs who teach (sometimes also showing how work is allocated), whether compulsory training is paid, expectations of the time taken to mark essays etc. I have also met with individual PGs who have been able to share their experiences of the issues they have found while working, and in some cases share their worker contracts with me. If you are a postgraduate who teaches and would be willing to talk to me about your experience or share a copy of your contract with me for analysis, I would love to hear from you!

Collaboration with University and Colleges Union: Some details on the conditions of PGs who teach have been shared with me from our friends at UCU. Durham's UCU branch is now beginning its own Anti-Casualisation campaign, which will lobby for improved conditions for teachers on hourly-paid contracts including PGs who teach. I have met with Durham UCU leadership on several occasions to identify overlap between our campaigns and feed in information that may strengthen their own campaign as regards PGs who teach; this has resulted in an offer of joint working, including the use of jointly-branded campaigning materials, and the release of a joint statement on the issues with current conditions which I have drafted. I feel working with UCU will be of great benefit to our own campaign, and therefore I today also present to Assembly a policy on collaborating with UCU to formalise this relationship, which I hope you will approve later in the meeting.

Determining desired changes: My work to date has led me to identify an initial picture of what needs as a minimum needs to change to make life fairer for PGs who teach and the Undergraduates they provide an education to. I present them here for Assembly's comment:

- An increase to the hourly rate of pay to match grade 6.1 on the University pay scale (a grade which a teacher on a permanent contract is usually given)
- An annual cost of living increase to be applied to the rate for PGs who teach
- Paid time for PGs who teach to attend compulsory training
- Introduction of policy that allows all PG students with the knowledge to teach on a given course a fair chance at applying for and being allocated work

- A review undertaken at Faculty- or Department-level to establish fair expectations for paid preparation time for teaching and rates at which work can be marked

Best Practice in Supervision

The opportunity presented by working with UCU on the campaign for PGs who teach has meant I have made only initial progress on this priority. I have so far conducted an initial examination of the University-wide requirements on supervision (including discussions with relevant staff in the University's Curriculum, Learning and Assessment division and the former Dean of the Graduate School responsible for implementing them in 2005) and will be investigating whether these requirements are well-known, adhered to, and indeed fit for practice in each department.

Additionally, I am currently working through a previous body of research conducted by the SU regarding supervision quality and will use this to identify areas in particular need of reform. Initially, discussions I have held with individual students suggest one area that may need particular attention is the reporting of misconduct behaviours and awareness of mechanisms in place for dealing with this, however further research beyond anecdotal evidence must be undertaken. If you yourself have an issue with the supervisory system you would like to raise, I am more than willing to discuss this with you.

General updates:

MCR Presidents' Committee: I have received delegated responsibility from George to liaise with MCR PresComm on behalf of the SU. The Committee will have met three times by the time of Assembly, and is functioning well with a Chair in place, potential project areas identified, and some representatives appointed to University committees. At least one MCR has raised issues regarding their relationship with their College and I am making representations on their behalf in efforts to repair this.

Chief Financial Officer recruitment: I have sat on the interview panel for the recruitment to the University's vacant CFO position. The process has now concluded, with my preferred candidate being offered the post. If the candidate has accepted the position by the time of Assembly I will be able to provide a further update on this.

Student Academic Representation: Saul and I have met twice with the Faculty through Academic Affairs committee; outcomes from the first Faculty Education Committees have been discussed, and projects for the year identified. A common theme of discussion has been the SU's Student Consultation Framework approved by the University for implementation this year; some academics have reservations about this, and I will be working to clarify and amend the Framework in an education setting to secure buy-in from our academic colleagues. Additionally, there continues to be a gap in Faculty-level PG representation after restructure of the Faculty Education Committee system – by the time of Assembly I will have raised this once again at Research Degrees committee and hope to secure commitment to additional PG representation on this committee as a backstop.

Council & Senate: These two committees sit at the highest level of University governance. Myself, George and two JCR Presidents were involved in the appointment process for new external members of Council. A paper on the cost of colleges, the first genuine attempt at

determining this, has been seen at Council, and we will be working with University finance to gain a more accurate picture of this. At Senate, a paper on the 'research leave' process for academics is due to be seen by the time of Assembly – I hope to secure amendments to safeguard students from their supervisors going on leave without suitable notice or cover.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator: Saul and I attended a workshop run by the OIA, an external review body that adjudicates on complaints raised by students around errors or unfair treatment in University procedures (e.g. academic appeals). This was useful not only to enable us to help you better, but also to scrutinise some of the new procedures being created by the University. If you find yourself in a situation where the OIA may be useful, please ask us or the Advice Service!

International Fees and Finance: Following confusion around tuition fees in different academic years (particularly for international students), we have received reaffirmation that international tuition fees are frozen for the duration of a course. However, this information is not well-presented on the University's webpages, and we are working with University Marketing and Finance to restructure and clarify these pages. We have also discussed a proposal with the International Office to introduce tuition fee discount scholarships for international students and are working to improve and support this.

Business Faculty Proposal: A proposal has been drafted to create a fourth faculty at the University, the Business Faculty. The Business School has engaged well with the SU in ensuring students are consulted appropriately under the Student Consultation Framework in this proposed change, and we will work with the Business School to ensure this continues

Library Refurbishment: Saul and I have attended many meetings regarding the library, and are working to ensure alternative provision to the space currently out-of-action is provided. One point to note that I am concerned about is the current plan to upgrade WiFi facilities over summer, which would involve sections of the library being temporarily closed, of particular detriment to PGs completing dissertations at this time. I shall be seeking more concrete assurance of how the impact of any such work on PGs will be mitigated.

Review of Periodic Reviews: The University is reviewing how departments, colleges and other University divisions are themselves reviewed, and I have sat on this committee. I have been working to ensure both that the process has an appropriate level of student input into the materials on which reviewers assess the body being reviewed (so we can be assured it is working well for students), and that there is student representation on the review panel.

Support for other SUs: There has been significant interest from SUs around the country into how our PG Academic Officer role operates, with other SUs looking to introduce their own PG Officer position. I have created and shared an information pack on the position with several other SUs, and also aim to work with those SUs that also have PG Officers to create a wider report into the benefits of such a position so that we can share our best practice.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Charlie Walker, Opportunities Officer

RE: Opportunities Officer Report

DATE: 04 December 2018



Update on priorities:

Priority	Actions taken	Next steps
Campaign for Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graphic design for campaign complete Collection of stories on experiences of unaffordability underway Conversation with Scholarships and PVC C&SE about Student Opportunities Fund VC & PVC C&SE have agreed that UEC will receive paper on Living Wage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share results of qualitative survey Speak to CFO about Student Opportunities Fund Meet with Scholarships again Write paper on Living Wage Living Wage campaign training through Citizens
Project Awesome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial conversations with Palatinate and Purple Radio Article on future of student media published Participation in student development trial ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce initial report on student media support Have initial meetings about University Challenge Hear feedback from Opportunities Team on progress of student development trial
Common Room Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial conversation with PresComm Initial conversation with PVC C&SE Brainstorm with PresComm Chair PresComm Chair attended Birmingham trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hear feedback from Birmingham trip Write up findings Present findings to PresComm

General updates:

- Attended “Lessons From Auschwitz” visit with two JCR Presidents and a university partner.
- Voter registration drive happened in Colleges 12th—23rd November.
- Societies Varsity, Give It A Go, Student Group Showcase, and Refreshers Fair are in the pipeline.
- Tyne & Wear Citizens Mental Health Assembly.

- Consultation on Student Group Governance launched.
- Attended Student Development Programme Board and appointed a Student Development Programme Manager.
- NUS Strategic Conversation in Bristol. Offered Durham SU's view on the future structure of NUS.
- NUS Zones Conference. Won Society & Citizenship NEC Place.
- Southampton Solent SU. Participated in peer-to-peer governance review.

TO: Assembly
FROM: Meg Haskins, Welfare and Liberation Officer
RE: Welfare and Liberation Report
DATE: 04 December 2018



Update on priorities:

Consistent and quality student support

In October I established a task and finish group to create a programme of standardised training for welfare officers and student leaders. The group consists of student representatives and staff members involved in college and university student support. We plan to have recommendations for the Student Support and Wellbeing Subcommittee by February.

The first student PPG was held in October and I am beginning to collect information on the cost of medical notes across the country in order to contextualise the extortionate cost in Durham University.

I've continued to build stronger relations with the Claypath and University Medical Group. I have attended multiple Patient Participation Groups and am in ongoing conversation with the General Manager of the Practice about how we can ensure student voices are heard more clearly.

Background research is being compiled on the importance of BAME professional representation in the University Counselling Service.

I held an initial round of consultation with welfare officers and college presidents around thoughts on Bristol's model of emergency contacts. Any changes to the university emergency contact procedure will undergo further consultation.

Student safety

Pincident is still ongoing. I am continuing to collect data on all forms of unwanted harassment, violence and discrimination, as well as bystander intervention. I will be presenting initial findings to the upcoming Durham City Safety Group in December. Pincident data is also be used to assist the Religion and Race-based Hate Crime Steering Group's work.

I attended the recent SVMOG meeting and a climate culture assessment will hopefully take place later in the year in order to assess all of the work done so far to tackle sexual violence.

Discussions are planned with the university to address more efficient and affordable ways to help vulnerable students home get home safely during late night hours.

Quality, affordable housing

The housing survey was launched to better understand the private renting experiences of students. This data will be used to drive my and future officer work around improving housing conditions, including the possibility of introducing a landlord rating scheme.

After visiting Dun Holm House student accommodation and hearing numerous student complaints, I worked to place pressure on Dun Holm House to provide a better solution for students affected by incomplete and misrepresented rooms.

Research is underway to learn how other unions have tackled the issue of poor quality housing, which will accompany the results of the housing survey.

General updates:

- ★ I visited Birmingham SU and heard about the work they're doing to promote student safety through warden schemes; the training that their mentors (peer supporters) receive; and how they're starting to tackle issues in the private rental sector.
- ★ I attended the Access Review Group, Faith and Chaplaincy steering group, subgroups of the Community Engagement Task Force, Respect Culture Group, and Institutional Athena SWAN Committee.
- ★ I met with students who hold caring responsibilities as well as estranged students to better understand and find ways to support their needs.
- ★ I contributed to the Tyne and Wear Citizens Mental Health Assembly as well as the North East Universities Health and Wellbeing Network to discuss best practices around mental health and self-harm.
- ★ The rent guarantor scheme is undergoing legal checks through the university before it is formally launched. In the meantime, if students are experiencing hardship or expect to experience financial difficulty due to not having a rent guarantor, I urge them to contact the University Hardship Fund as soon as possible.
- ★ Free sanitary products are available at the Durham SU reception desk.
- ★ Welfare Forum and Association Collaboration were held last week.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Stuart Goldie, Academic Affairs Committee Chair

RE: Academic Affairs Committee Update

DATE: 04 December 2018

Study Space – this had been identified as a concern of many students across all faculties. We will be collecting data on space availability and usage; we'll also talk to students to establish what types of study space are most desired by Durham students. This will then be used to lobby the university to make more spaces available and consider future provision as part of their growth.

Lecture capture – an issue many students are concerned with. Members of the committee will continue to provide feedback to staff regarding student experience of lecture capture.

Communication with departments and academic reps – whilst some departments have a very active student rep culture others struggle to recruit enough students. We aim to learn from departments that successfully engage with students, and help to close the feedback loop in other departments to hopefully produce a more engaged culture in future.

Change to exam regulations – student registry has proposed changes to exam regulations which they have asked faculties and course reps to consult on. The committee believes that the evidence presented in the proposal is deeply flawed; and the changes suggested would have serious implications for fairness, access and equality. As such the committee opposes any changes put forward by this paper.

PG teaching – in collaboration with the PG academic officer the committee is engaged in on-going discussions regarding PG teaching opportunities and workloads.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Andrew Dean, MCR Presidents' Committee Chair

RE: MCR Presidents' Committee Update

DATE: 04 December 2018

The Presidents of Durham's Middle Common Rooms have met regularly to discuss common or specific issues faced by each common room. Through our discussion, we have decided to make the following our priority for the year. Most of our priorities involve increasing and improving representation of postgraduate students at all levels throughout the University.

1. JCR/MCR Relations

Each college and common room has a different arrangement and organisational structure. By discussing particular situation, we can improve the relationship between JCRs and MCRs in colleges and make postgraduate students feel more represented at college level. Another priority is to ensure that postgraduates are receiving equal benefits of common room memberships to undergraduates.

2. Levy System (opt in/out)

At the start of the academic year, confusion led to inefficient taking of membership levies, meaning that some MCRs were not aware of their memberships, and could not budget accordingly. We will investigate better options for receiving membership levies to better benefit MCRs.

3. How University advertises colleges

Most of the University's advertising is aimed at undergraduates but many have a thriving postgraduate community. We will seek to improve advertising and marketing for postgraduate students at all levels in order for postgraduate students to feel more part of the student community.

4. Housing

The rising cost of private housing in Durham City is making living in colleges more appealing to postgraduates. However, with the increase in accommodation fees, many are struggling to find a place to live. Some colleges are also experiencing a decrease in the number of postgraduate rooms. Together with the increased cost of facilities such as washing (£3.50 in one college), postgraduates are being put off from attending Durham University. We will prioritise fighting the rising cost of accommodation in Durham, working with the Welfare and Liberation Officer.

More generally, MCR PresComm will seek to increase consultation on University policies and procedures to ensure that postgraduates at Durham University are as properly represented as the undergraduate community.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Steven Lowes, Societies Committee Chair

RE: Societies Committee Update

DATE: 04 December 2018

The new Societies Committee was elected at the end of the last Academic Year. Since then, we've met around 10 times for various reasons. I've been asked to report back to assembly on what has been achieved so far and what we aim to do over the year.

On the 16th October, we ran the first Societies Forum of the year. These are termly events, where any Student Group members and exec can come together to provide feedback and suggestions to the committee. In previous years, the committee was elected during the first Societies Forum, but since we were elected early, we could use the event to get suggestions for our working groups.

The working groups are subcommittees which meet to discuss and work on more specific issues, that individual members are especially interested in. This year, we decided on 3 working groups based on Student Group feedback and Societies Forum:

- The **Room Booking** working group deals with the Room Booking process, and how it can be improved to be more transparent and to increase the Students' confidence in the system. This was a major point of complaints at Societies Forum.
- The **Documentation** working group will ensure that all policy and procedure related to student groups is sufficiently detailed, and will generally just try to make it easier to follow the rules than to break them.
- The **Celebration** working group aims to shout about how great our Student Groups are, and help them get the recognition they deserve. This could range from promoting Student Groups that are doing well in social media, to improving the SU awards, and developing the new Student Group Accreditation Scheme.

All 3 of these working groups have already met once and elected subcommittee chairs, and will be starting work this week.

In other news, there was the whole thing with Societies Committee's position against the proposed changes to the Student Group Agreement. I won't go into details as I'm sure you're all fed up at this point. The important thing to note is that the SU is taking the initiative on getting Student Consultation before bringing it back to Assembly. I met last week with Kirsty and Charlie to agree on a consultation timeline, which should have been released by now. Students will be consulted, changes made, and a new version of the proposal will be brought to January Assembly.

Final thing – at the end of last year, Assembly passed a motion to add Media Rep and Associations Rep positions to Societies Committee. Elections for those positions will be running soon, so keep an eye out and consider applying! I'm always available to chat about what the role entails 😊

TO: Assembly
FROM: Nat Kunin, Union Rep Committee Chair
RE: Union Rep Committee Update
DATE: 04 December 2018

The small things

- Transparency on the website
 - Job descriptions for SU staff
 - Staff emails
 - Publication of subcommittee minutes
- Asking questions for members of colleges:
 - Status of DIFC
 - Plans for SU club nights
 - Update on the future of the Dunelm House

The big things

- Lloyds international ID policy
- Accommodation during congregation
- Shifting focus of the Ripped Off campaign
- NUS delegate elections
- Liver-in voter registration

Assembly

- Clarity of SU motions
- Following up on past motions
 - WEDComm replacement
 - SGA timeline
- Going through upcoming motions
 - Inviting proposers to explain the reasoning behind their motions
 - Inviting those who disagree with specific motions to explain their positions

TO: Assembly

FROM: David Evans

RE: Policy to Collaborate with UCU on Campaign to Improve Conditions for Postgraduate Teachers

DATE: 04 December 2018

Assembly Notes:

1. Postgraduates who teach are a category of casualised staff in the University who have not seen a pay increase since Oct 2008, and who are subject to erratic conditions on whether they are actually paid for work they carry out.
2. The Durham Branch of the University and Colleges Union (DUCU) passed a motion at its October meeting critical of the casualisation of teaching and research staff in Durham University and proposed measures to challenge this.
3. Durham SU has previously passed a motion in support of DUCU during their strike action over pensions in Academic Year 17/18.
4. DUCU have access to additional resources that may be relevant to the postgraduate pay campaign planned by the Postgraduate Academic Officer, by virtue of the UCU's national network and expertise from organisers of similar campaigns at other Universities.
5. An offer to jointly brand UCU's anti-casualisation campaigning materials with marques from Durham SU and DUCU to show our joint aims has been extended to the SU.

Assembly Believes

1. There is strength in collaboration with partner organisations where our interests clearly overlap, and this is the case between DUCU's challenge of the wider casualisation of staff in the University, and the Postgraduate Academic Officer's more targeted campaign to improve conditions for casualised postgraduate teachers.
2. Whilst DUCU's intended lobbying goes wider than the Postgraduate Academic Officer's declared postgraduate teachers' pay campaign, feeding into DUCU's campaign and drawing on their resource and expertise will strengthen our own lobbying power on our campaign.
3. Endorsing joint working on this specific campaign does not commit the SU to ongoing work with DUCU in the case our interests diverge; however it will build trust and contacts between Durham SU and DUCU that may be beneficial to future work conducted by the SU.

Assembly Resolves

1. To mandate the Postgraduate Academic Officer to support DUCU's anti-casualisation activities as they relate to pay and conditions for postgraduate teachers.
2. To mandate the Postgraduate Academic Officer to work in collaboration with DUCU for the purposes of Durham SU's own campaigning to improve pay and conditions for postgraduates who teach in the University.

3. To approve the use of materials jointly branded between Durham SU and DUCU pertaining to the campaign to improve pay and conditions for postgraduates who teach in the University, subject to further approval by the responsible staff member in the SU.

TO: Assembly

FROM: George Walker

RE: Elections Expenses: Amendment to Standing Orders

DATE: 04 December 2018

Assembly believes:

1. The current election rules in the standing orders set a spending limit of £60 for campus-wide Durham SU elections, of which only £40 may be reimbursed by the Union.
2. There is concern that the Union not reimbursing the full amount may disadvantage candidates who are unable to cover the additional £20 themselves.
3. Passing this amendment to the standing orders now would ensure that the amended rules, allowing for full reimbursement, would be in place for Sabbatical Officer elections in the new year.
4. The set amount of £60 has not changed in a number of years however the value of that amount will have changed during this time.
5. A set amount also does not allow for any review of candidate spending in elections year-on year or any adjustment made based on feedback.

Assembly resolves:

1. To amend Appendix C1 of the Standing orders as follows:

Remove

“15. Candidates/campaigns are permitted to spend a maximum of £60 on their campaign of which the Union will reimburse up to £40 on presentation of the required documentation, including receipts.”

And replace with:

“15. Governance & Grants Committee will set the maximum amount that may be spent by candidates/campaigns on their campaign. The Union will reimburse this amount in full upon presentation of the required documentation, including receipts.”

TO: Assembly

FROM: Neve Ovenden, Working Class Students Association UG Vice-President

RE: Policy for the support of Associations

DATE: 04 December 2018

Assembly Notes:

1. The Presidents of the recognised Associations are voting members of Assembly (Standing Order section D3).
2. Each Association is required to maintain a constitution which Assembly has authority to approve so long as it complies with the Standing Orders and Union policies.
3. Assembly has the authority to ratify the affiliation of Student Groups within and to the Union (Articles of Association clause 94.8)
4. The term "Student Groups" includes Associations (SO s. G1)
5. The Welfare and Liberation Officer has Officer responsibility for supporting and coordinating self-defining students to come together in Durham SU's Liberation Associations and liberation and rights campaigns (SO s. F6.4)
6. Associations recognised by the SU are stated explicitly within the Standing Orders and Changes to the Standing Orders may be jointly made by the Board of Trustees and Assembly (SO s. G11)

Assembly Believes:

1. Trans Association, Women's Association and Working-Class Students' Association have met their obligations to be ratified as Associations as defined in the Standing Orders and Articles of Association including presenting a constitution to Assembly.
2. As the above mentioned Associations were ratified by Assembly this should entitle each President of these Associations to have voting rights at Assembly.
3. Assembly has given these Associations its approval, therefore failure to allow these Associations full voting membership of Assembly and the rights granted to other Associations, including funding, undermines the democratic authority of Assembly to ratify Associations.
4. There is a lack of clear guidance from the SU for Associations, both in the general operation and ratification process.
5. The Associations would benefit from training annually from the SU.

Assembly Resolves:

1. To re-affirm their commitment to the ratification of Trans Association, Women's Association and Working-Class Students' Association and ask the Board of Trustees to implement Standing Order changes to list these Associations as 'Recognised Associations', within the meaning of the Standing Orders, at its next meeting (or meeting of a relevant subcommittee).
2. To require the Welfare and Liberation Officer to work with the aforementioned Associations to ensure any concerns raised by the Board of Trustees, that have hitherto prevented these Associations being recognised within the Standing Orders, are made public and are addressed as a matter of urgency.
3. To mandate the Welfare & Liberation Officer to set up a working group between the Association Executive Committees and the Welfare and Liberation Officer to produce clear guidance for Associations, and to implement an annual training programme for Association Presidents and Executive Committee members.