

Durham Students' Union Assembly Agenda

Thursday 6th February 2020, 18:30, PCL054

Time	Subject	Who	Paper
18:30 18:30	A. Welcome	Chair	
18:31 18:33	B. Minutes of the meeting on 3rd December	Chair	UA/1920/22
18:33 18:35	C. Apologies for absence and conflicts of interest	Chair	

Routine Business

18:35 18:40	D. Board Update	Kate McIntosh	UA/1920/23
18:40 19:00	E. Officer Updates	Officers	UA/1920/24
19:00 19:10	F. Election and Referendum Update	Gareth Hughes	UA/1920/25
19:10 19:25	G. Committee Updates	Committee Chairs*	UA/1920/26

****Access Break****

Items for Discussion:

19:35 19:45	H. Decolonising the Curriculum <i>SU Core Position</i>	Sam Johnson Audini	UA/1920/27
19:45 19:55	I. Signing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Accord	Jess Dunning	UA/1920/28
19:55 20:05	J. Divest from Barclays	Seun Twins	UA/1920/29

20:05	K. Creating an Open Forum	Sarah McAllister	UA/1920/30
20:15	Assembly format		
20:15	L. Motion to remove 'Secret Ballot'	Laura Curran	UA/1920/31
20:25	from Procedural Motions		

.
**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 SU governance account: dsu.governance@durham.ac.uk at least 2 days in advance of the meeting to make arrangements.

Assembly Minutes 03.12.2019

Item A: Welcome

JM opens meeting. Reminds members of SU's online resources about Assembly.

Reminder of procedural motions.

Update regarding societies to be partisan: issue has now been resolved.

Item B: Minutes of the meeting on November 7th 2019

Minutes accepted by Assembly

Item C: Apologies for absence and conflicts of interest

Apologies received from Working Class Students Association.

No conflicts of interest declared.

Item D: Board Update

KMc updates on Board Report.

TP: Understand that an attempted resignation by a Trustee has been overturned.
Can KMc explain this to Assembly?

KMc: To knowledge of the Board, only one Student Trustee has resigned. Won't go into specific detail about any personal situations.

E. Election of Vice-Chair.

No nominations received online prior to the meeting.

2 nominations in room – to see CL at the end of the meeting.

F. Officer Updates

KMc (President): updates on UCU strike action on behalf of Officer team.

KMc (President): Officer update

- University launching review of accommodation fees. Working to introduce differentiated fees.
- General election. Register to vote campaign moving to 'plan your vote' campaign. Thanks to Assembly members who have been involved so far.

- University meetings: Council, Senate, UEC.

AM (Welfare and Liberation): Officer update

- #BurstingtheBubble campaign; Tenants Fees Act factsheet; free sanitary product provision; mental health first aid modules
- Policy on Students with Children; PG support
- Associations ratified; report & support tool launched.

SJA (Undergraduate Academic): Officer update

- Strike action; teach-out on education; mitigating impact on students
- Decolonisation work with Durham People of Colour Association (DPoCA); course rep training; liberate my library
- Foundation degree revised to be inclusive of mature students
- Investigating disability support best practice

DE (Postgraduate Academic): Officer update

- PGT advisory board
- Visited London SUs and WonkHE; PG funding issues
- Working on submission tool for hidden costs
- New study space for PGRs on the way; reviewing quality of PG study

JD (Opportunities): Officer update

- Sustainability conference; national student radio awards
- Real Living Wage campaign
- Presidents forum – feedback collected to improve support
- 17 Days of Sustainable Christmas
- Work on climate change/sustainability; Good Neighbourhood project

No questions for Officers.

Item G. Updates from Assembly subcommittees.

- Academic Affairs committee (CP)
- DUCK (LG)
- Governance and Grants (KMc)
- JCR PresComm (CE)
- MCR PresComm (SM)
- Student Groups Committee (AW)
- Union Rep Committee (TC)

AM: What changes would Union Rep Committee like to see on the sexual violence policy? And how would an anonymous reporting platform differ from the recently launched platform?

TC: Anonymous reporting pathways should be made clearer – new platform has only just launched. Will be taking feedback to the University.

DE: Jonny elected as chair of G&G – can this happen, is this a violation of the Standing Orders?

KMc: This has been checked – yes he can [be chair].

DE: Understanding was that Chair of Assembly could not be Chair in any sub-committees.

JM: This will be discussed and checked at next G&G Committee.

JM: Sub-committees to update in every Assembly in future.

****Access break****

JM: Confirms that a conversation has been had during the access break and that their role as Governance and Grants Chair is not an issue. They will take to the committee at next meeting for clarity.

Item H: Association Updates

- Students with Disabilities Association (SwDA)
- Women's Association
- LGBT+ Association
- Durham People of Colour Association (DPoCA)
- Trans Association
- International Students' Association
- Mature Students' Association (MATSA)

(Apologies from Working Class Students' Association)

Assembly member questions:

Gender neutral toilets: what are the regulations?

BT: Walls and door have to touch ceilings – which presents difficulty to University. They currently appear to be unwilling to do this.

What does decolonisation mean to the departments?

ST: Top-down, root-branch changes – starts with reading lists, how education is constructed, who contributes to knowledge, honest conversations, challenging political ignorance – decolonisation is whole structural change.

Brexit committee - there are no international students on the committee?

ML: Confirms this is correct

KMc: ML will attend next meeting. Clarifies what the committee does.

ML: Emphasises need for student consultation

DPoCA: Proposes changes to Freshers' Fair to increase Associations' visibility.

JM: Suggests DPoCA speak to Jess (Opportunities Officer)

MATSA: Issues accessing Association-wide e-mail.

JM: Need to wrap-up discussion for time purposes. This should be continued as separate conversation.

Item I: Durham University is Institutionally Disablist

JMa presents motion.

No requests for clarification

No speeches opposing

Assembly member: What are the next proposed steps for the University?

JMa: Consider access at the beginning – not an afterthought, not a financial consideration. Disabled students shouldn't be isolated from student experience. Support shouldn't be withheld from students who can't afford it – should be easily accessible.

Assembly member: Experiences a lack of support for students with hearing issues. Will this help?

JMa: Relating to Assembly – the Chair can look into this. This motion asks that the University does more to support disabled students – for instance, lecturers using microphones during lectures.

Moves to vote. Motion passes.

Item J: Fight the Housing Rush.

JM: Notes that Assembly can vote on this with advisory power. This is not a binding decision – how SU manages budget is down to Board of Trustees.

TC: Presents motion.

No requests for clarification.

No speeches opposing motion.

DE: Recognition that revenue made from advertisements is used for other good things the SU does.

CE: Fully understand that advertisements should represent diversity of housing – but is motion asking that no housing is advertised during Michaelmas at all?

TC: Hopes that the motion is unnecessary next year – but yes, this motion proposes that the SU does not advertise any accommodation during Michaelmas term.

Moves to vote.

Motion passes.

Item K: Assembly format (Discussion facilitated by DB)

JM: introduces format. Everyone has chance to discuss – if more to be said, vote for a second informal discussion.

DB: Introduction. Invites discussion on what makes up democracy at Durham Students' Union?

Assembly member: having representatives accessible to students. Clarity and transparency.

TP: Nobody gets side-lined

Assembly Member: the SU, the JCRs and Assembly – ensuring all are accessible and held accountable.

AM: Open communication

CG: Ensuring that everybody feels welcome and welcomed enough to feel like their voice is wanted in discussions which are important to students. Feeling like voice is just as valid as anybody else's.

DE: Shouldn't be voting on things we think and something happens

ST: Simplicity of language – clarity to make fully accessible

DB: Is this what democracy looks like right now?

ST: Not a no or yes – we are at a point of transition.

DB: To what extent is/does Durham SU's democracy...

- Flexible? (Mixed response from Assembly members)
- Fair? (Mixed response from Assembly members)
- Participatory? (Mixed response from Assembly members)
- Accessible? (Negative response from Assembly members) – extended discussion on accessibility of democracy.
- Allow for accountability of all elected representatives? (Negative response from Assembly members)
- Clear? (Negative response from Assembly members) – extended discussion on what clear democracy means, and which aspects of current democratic system are not clear.
- DB returns to point about accessibility.

DB: Rounds up discussion. Should democracy be reviewed with view to improve? – positive response from Assembly members.

DB: Asks members to give 3 words used to describe democracy at the SU on post-its to be collected by SU staff.

JM: Officer and Trustee elections – nominations open in January 2020. Merry Christmas!

TO: Assembly
FROM: Kate McIntosh
RE: Board Update
DATE: 6 February 2020

Board of Trustees business:

The Durham SU Board of Trustees has met once since the last meeting of Assembly, on 20 January 2020. The trustees considered:

- The Chief Executive's Report, which discussed the intense period of activity before the Christmas break and the focus on ensuring Durham SU engaged fully with the General Election and with the industrial action from UCU.
- The Finance Report, which showed that Durham SU's management accounts were broadly in line with budget.
- The 2018/2019 Annual Report, which was approved, alongside the report from Durham SU's Auditors, which presented the audited statutory accounts. The Report and Accounts are public documents and will be filed with the Charity Commission and available on the Durham SU website in the coming weeks.
- A proposal to put a revised set of Articles of Association to a referendum of all students in February 2020. Assembly will hear more about this at its meeting.
- A revised Code of Practice for Durham SU, which would be further considered by University Council on 24 January 2020.
- Reflections of delivery of the Durham SU strategy after two years, and proposals for the parameters of a refreshed strategy for the period 2020/2021 to 2021/2022.
- Updates on Assembly meetings, risk management, the success of student group registration, a new Standing Order for Elections, a Reserves Policy, and signatories on the Durham SU bank accounts.

DURHAM SU BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

Members present

Anthony Baker, Clare Powne, Chris Nash, Amie Waterman, Caragh Aylett, Jess Madden, Kate McIntosh, Amelia McLoughlan, Jess Dunning, Sam Johnson-Audini, Tom Pymmer, David Evans

In attendance

Gareth Hughes, Kirsty Morrison, Georgina Lambert, Martin Horrocks, Rebecca Henderson, Dani Beckett, Kathryn Sullivan, Lauren Hodgson (minutes),

Apologies

Oliver Colling, Poppy Azmi

Notification of Any Other Business or Conflicts of Interests

None

Any underlined text is confidential and for Board members only, and will not be included in the open papers published on the website.

Meet a member of staff

Dani Beckett will join Durham SU for two days a week for the period of the Director of Campaign's secondment, to act as senior staff lead for the Welfare and Liberation Officer. Dani will report to the Director of Campaigns and has been asked to develop a Liberation, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Durham SU, and to deliver a review of Durham SU's democratic framework. Dani is a campaigns consultant, and a former Deputy Chief Executive of Queen Mary SU.

Minutes from the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were approved with a small amendment to the wording of the Chief Executive Report section.

Annual declarations of eligibility to serve, and declarations of interest

AB noted the annual declarations. GH explained that he and MHo have completed additional declarations as Chief Executive and Finance Manager and reminded members to keep declarations up to date and inform AB of any changes.

JD asked if student group exec roles were included in the declarations. GH clarified that this wasn't generally necessary but should be declared for individual items.

Appointments

DE and JM had declared a conflict of interest relative to each other, as they are in a relationship. AB and KM have therefore worked to manage this conflict by ensuring that DE and JM are appointed to different Board Committees. There was one vacancy remaining on the Performance and Delivery Committee, after all student trustees had expressed an interest in their first preferences.

DE asked what training was available for new trustees. GH confirmed that a development day was planned for 9 October for all trustees and training was available throughout the year in addition to this.

KMc reported the outcomes of the competitive recruitment for lay trustees, and the recommendation of Governance and Appointments Committee that Caragh Aylett be appointed to the remaining year of Martin Parker's term of office.

The Board made appointments to Committees as in the paper, and appointed Caragh Aylett as a lay trustee, and to the position of supervising trustee.

The Board appointed Peter Robinson as Returning Officer and Gareth Hughes as Deputy Returning Officer.

Chief Executive Report

The delegation of authority approved by trustees over the summer was not required and that the delegation framework presented at this meeting will supersede the temporary arrangements.

Further to correspondence over the summer break, the Students for Life society is now ratified. The group is in the usual management framework and presents no unusual degree of risk.

GL is now on secondment with SumOfUs, an international online campaigning organisation, with DB and RH giving support to cover her role. GH thanked CP for her supporting in making these arrangements. A number of new staff have joined the team over the summer period and Laura Wilkinson is now on maternity leave, giving birth to her daughter on 26 August.

Kingsgate venue has been newly developed and the café will open for business in the new term, a full report will be made to PDC. Renovation works continue throughout Dunelm House with investment from Durham University. The stair lifts in the building have all been replaced. Social learning/casual furniture will fill the common spaces in Dunelm House. Committee rooms will also be refurbished with new furniture and digital equipment.

GH explain that Durham SU had successfully negotiated funding for two projects with Durham University. Membership subscriptions for departmental/academic societies have been funded for two years and a one-year grant has been secured to invest in officer support to engage with University Executive and senior committees.

Finance Report

The accounts were close to what was expected. Audit is due to be carried out week commencing 14 October.

Management/Statutory accounts training will be available for all trustees with MHo. AB encouraged all members to attend the training if possible.

Delegation of Authority Framework

GH presented the framework and advised that the framework is reviewed on an annual basis, reflecting good practice which supported the high turnover of members of the Board. Governance and management of student group processes have been added as a new section, after some amendments to the framework in the previous year.

CP suggested that the delegation of authority be extracted from the report for each of the committees and used as guidance for objectives for the year. CP suggested that clarification was needed on some of the wording in the document sounded like committees were responsible for approval of items listed when this was not the case and also asked if terms of reference for all committees be made accessible to trustees.

The Board approved the Delegation of Authority Framework.

Strategic Risk

The initial assessments in the paper would be discussed by the Board, and a formal assessment will be made at Performance and Delivery Committee. GH advised the Board to focus on risks which can be properly understood and where Durham SU has some control over reducing harm. For example: there is a certainty that Brexit will have some effect on Durham SU and its work, but at this stage there is too much uncertainty as to allow effective analysis or mitigation.

TP questioned what support was being given to international students regarding Brexit. KMc confirmed that she is a member of the Durham University Brexit Steering Group, which has been set up by the University, which is looking at how the University can manage the situation and eventual outcome. JM asked if it had been considered having information available for international students at the Durham SU advice service and GH explained that this was not something that would be covered by the advice service and this is something that will be looked at by the University.

The Board agreed that risks associated with staff engagement, student staff delivery model and health and safety be removed from the Strategic Risk Register, and other risks be assessed by PDC for presentation to the Board at its April meeting.

Recognition of the GMB Agreement

KM and SJA left the room during this item.

Assembly agreed a policy in Easter Term 2018 which requested Durham SU negotiate with the GMB trade union and agree a Recognition Agreement for the students of Durham University and particularly those employed at Durham SU. HR Committee have considered the proposal and requested amendments which the GMB have agreed to and are now in the final document.

CP explained that the recognition agreement had been recommended by HR committee and they had previously discussed the document and raised concerns but these were not fully resolved as these were believed to be manageable by staff at Durham SU.

CN questioned if there was a possible conflict of interest in that if the SU were paying for the fees and a dispute came up, how would this be managed. AB questioned whether there would be a separation created between those who are members and those who aren't.

GH explained that this was offered out to all student staff and was a personal choice for each staff member, whether they choose to sign up or not, only a few staff had chosen to not sign up, so there should be no divide. The potential conflict had been considered by HR Committee, and although acknowledged, the security of the Agreement meant that the GMB could be confident that their funding was not dependent on 'pulling punches'; there was every confidence the arrangement would be successful.

The Board approved the Recognition Agreement.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

TO: Assembly
FROM: Kate McIntosh
RE: President Report
DATE: 06 February 2020

Update on priorities:

Affordable accommodation for all

- I have got confirmation from the Vice-Chancellor that the University Executive Committee is broadly behind my proposal to cut college costs by differentiating fees.
- So, what next? We need to make sure that the things we care about - affordability, access, protecting the College experience, value for money - dominate the conversation about reducing fees.
- I'm putting together the Terms of Reference for the Fee Review Group to kickstart the process in time for fees to be cut by the 2021/22 academic year
- I've produced three concise demands on differentiated accommodation fees, based on a new NUS policy paper on affordability, and Durham SU's research on the Funding Gap which I presented to the University Executive Committee last term and was well received. They are:
 - **Affordable rooms in every College.** We have calculated this to be around £6746 for a catered room based on research on [the Funding Gap](#) and [Cost of Attendance](#).
 - **A further 25% of rooms at 50% of the maximum maintenance loan.** This is an NUS recommended ask, based on the understanding of affordability as proportionate to the money you have available to you, rather than relatively cheap, or poorer quality. It works out to rooms priced at £4601.50, which would close the funding gap for anyone with a household income of £43k or less.
 - **Transparency on the real cost of a room in College.** The University has failed to explain comprehensively where the money we pay for rooms in College goes, despite multiple attempts to find or invent numbers.
- I'm preparing to lead a demonstration launching these new demands, the timing of which will depend on the response to the Terms of Reference and when the first meeting of the Review Group takes place.

Other updates:

- I've supported the reestablishment of the Tenants' Union which now has an exec and has become an SU Student Group! Well done to everyone we've been organising with the Tenants' Union.
- I attended an NUS workshop on the student housing sector, with a particular focus on fire safety in Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSAs) in light of the recent fires in student accommodation in Bolton.

International student representation

- The International Student survey has launched! Nicola our Welfare Policy Co-ordinator and I spent time before Christmas revising questions for the survey, and we hope to find out more about International Student experience, sense of belonging, use of support services, and relationship with the community.
- When we have collated the results of the survey we're planning to run focus groups to learn more about some of the big themes.
- This work will inform a report/policy I'll write on improving international student experience and representation.
- Since the last meeting of Assembly we have met the International Office and discussed international student representation and support.

Harassment and violence in Durham City

- Since the last Assembly I've been researching training that is available to venues like clubs and bars and working on the feasibility of offering this to local venues.
- I've also contacted the Mayor of Durham to talk about getting support for this among other parts of the community, including venue staff themselves.

General updates:

Respect and student leadership

It won't have escaped anyone's attention that Durham University has a problem with respect. Two years ago a former SU President Megan Croll kicked off an institution with Commission into disrespect, and now that Commission is reporting and offering recommendations. In regular meetings with University senior staff I have been making sure the findings of the report are discussed, and pushing to have string student representation on the Working Group that will oversee implementation of the recommendations.

Ultimately, the Report seeks to understand a complex, institution-wide cultural problem, and as student leaders we have a responsibility to pay attention to it too. If we want our University to be better, we have to lead that change, and be brave

enough to call out disrespect, harassment and intimidation when we see it. I've written [an article on some of my recent experiences](#) in an attempt to do just this.

Research trip to the Baltics

At the start of January, Durham SU's Chief Exec Gary and I went on a research trip to the Baltics and Finland, along with staff and Officers from 14 other SUs. In five days we covered four countries, fourteen Student Organisations, ranging from SUs run exclusively by student volunteers where only the President is elected, big, National Students' Unions and the richest SU in the world in Helsinki, which owns a chain of sustainable and affordable cafes, and is developing a luxury hotel in the centre of the city.

I learnt a lot about how we do democracy and why we value it, student representation in Universities, governments supporting student organisations to build and manage their own student accommodation, the similarities between Finnish Nations and Colleges, student mental health campaigning and research, and how different cultural factors impact how many women lead SUs across the region. There'll be more developed thoughts on all of this out soon, but you can also [read up on some of the experiences we had here](#).

College Operations review (part 2)

The second phase of the College Operations review (also known as BPR2) is planned to happen this summer. I successfully argued for the introduction of any new model to be considered Major Impact, instead of Moderate as the first phase was last year, within the [Student Consultation Framework](#), pending review once the University Executive Committee has formally endorsed a proposal.

I've been working with Common Room Presidents, and particularly JCR PresComm Chair Caragh, to formulate a first response to the proposals that have come to Operations Board and ensure that any and all concerns about potential changes are raised at multiple points in the process.

Formal consultation on proposed changes is due to start towards the end of February, and I plan to work with others to produce a template response to consultation to maximise impact and numbers. We are also considering other ways to maximise responses and make sure student concerns make an influential contribution to discussions around new models.

University Council

Council will meet two days before this meeting of Assembly, and my report deals with the motion Assembly passed declaring the University institutionally disablist, student leadership in the context of the Respect Commission, the cost of Durham and ongoing work on accommodation fees, the Office for Students' proposed

standards for Universities dealing with sexual harassment, and Durham SU's work in academic representation

NUS Strategic Conversation

I also recently attended NUS' Strategic Conversation in Leicester, where I learnt more about changes in NUS, which is currently in a transition year designed to ensure future financial sustainability. One of the big changes in NUS relates to democracy and how National Conference will work, which means leading our team of delegates this year involves a new challenge of adjusting to a different system for motions, debates and elections. Over the next week and months we're going to start preparing delegates for National Conference so they're best able to represent you when we get to Liverpool!

Interview panels

I've been heavily involved with interview panels recently, most notably for the new Head of Castle who will be coming into post in the summer. This was a recent highlight as my contributions at multiple stages of the recruitment process shaped how discussions went and I am very pleased and confident the new Head of Castle will do a brilliantly job for the College and its student in the role.

Residents' Forum

Before Christmas I attended the Durham University Residents Forum and presented the Durham Community Engagement strategy. I got some very tough questions from local representatives but I feel confident that our values and what path we are on came across very well, and this is another good step in the direction of a more cohesion community.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Sam Johnson-Audini

RE: UG Academic Officer Report

DATE: 06 February 2020

Update on priorities:

Decolonising Durham

- I have completed writing the 'Decolonise Durham' Manifesto, which outlines a vision and principles for the decolonise campaign going forward. The manifesto has been sent out for consulting with DPOCA and other student groups, it is planned to be launched mid-march. As a part of writing the manifesto I have also worked on and proposed the Decolonise core position coming to this assembly.
- I'm continuing to work with the library on the 'Liberate my library' campaign and am currently planning events with the relevant associations to support the campaign.

Academic Support

- I have launched a survey on experiences of academic support, encompassing a broad range of issues from academic advising to extenuating circumstances. The survey has been publicised through faculty and course reps and I am working with other relevant student groups to further promote. So far the survey has had a positive response and the responses are helping to form an upcoming campaign surrounding academic support.
- Met with the Head of Disability Support and the Director of Student Support and Wellbeing to discuss the costs of educational psychological assessments for specific learning difficulties.

Reforming Pedagogy

- I have been having discussions with the English Department for student consultation on their lecture capture position which will culminate in a forum in late February.
- I have met with members of DCAD to discuss a developing project on how academia supports students from marginalised backgrounds and advise on further student consultation.
- Further meetings have been set up with key departments to discuss innovative teaching methods going forward.

General updates:

- I have researched and updated the SU's position on the NSS for the year.
- In January, along with the rest of the officer team, I went on several away days to discuss the SU strategy.
- I took over the SU Instagram for a day to answer questions and to showcase a day in the life of the Undergraduate Academic Officer.

TO: Assembly

FROM: David Evans, Postgraduate Academic Officer

RE: Postgraduate Academic Officer Report

DATE: 6 February 2020

Update on priorities:

Year of the PGT

Recruitment to our 'PGT Advisory Board' project has completed, and the Board is up and running with our first discussion on the pre-arrival and induction periods having taken place. The project seems to be working as planned, with several issues brought up that were previously unknown to us. One thing is certain – the application portal for PGT courses Durham uses leaves plenty of room for improvement!

We have set out our plans for the topics to consider at future meetings, which covers:

- Funding and the Cost of Durham
- Academic Space and Resources
- Participating in Extra-curricular activities and Wellbeing
- Academic Support and Supervision
- Graduation and Employability

Comment and suggestions on the topics, along with any informal feedback from current or former PGTs that aren't part of the group, are encouraged and welcomed.

Postgraduate Access & Participation

Of my three priorities, this one has unfortunately taken more of a backseat role due to emergent issues with industrial action and PGR pay in particular. That said, we've been monitoring wider sector developments around this and have started digesting various new and timely pieces of research, such as January's discussion paper from Scotland's Commissioner for Fair Access [1].

We are further investigating one of the wider issues underpinning our interest in PG A&P, namely the University's current handling of its Student Support (formerly Hardship) Fund. When an application form runs to 17 pages of information to complete (not including T&C's), it is probably not fit for purpose. Couple this with the University reasoning that fewer applications to the fund is evidence of Durham having no issues with the affordability of the University experience – rather than, say, a result of forcing people into commercial debt before they will approve an application – and we have cause to investigate how the fund operates and lobby for improvement. And that is what we are doing.

(Hidden) Academic Costs

The tool for reporting any costs for your studies you've incurred, as I mentioned we were scoping out last Assembly, is still in development – we've now settled on what it should look

like and how it will function practically. The approach we're going to take with this priority is that this tool will serve as an awareness raising campaign in and of itself, in addition to providing useful data to show what the University should work on improving. Particularly for postgraduate and other unregulated fees, it's really important the items that are and aren't included within tuition fees are clear and fair, and the best way of ensuring that will be for us to equip people with the knowledge to spot where a charge may be inappropriate.

General updates:

Pay for Postgraduates who Teach

A timeless tale that will never end, but one that I won't give up on resolving. The transition to a new finance system by the University has thrown up some predictably unpredictable issues with the timely payment of postgraduate teachers, which I have worked to resolve. If you are a postgraduate teacher, you should be being paid monthly for any work you complete – if you are not, please email me with the details and I shall deliver some stern words to someone suitably senior to remedy it.

In addition to reacting to emergent pay issues, the negotiations over the structure by which postgraduates who teach are engaged and paid are still ongoing. The latest concern I intend to address regarding conditions is the potential pay gap between those on employment contracts and those who are casual workers undertaking the same work, brought about by arbitrarily different holiday entitlements. It's about 5%, it's unfair, and the University should sort it out.

Access to Graduations

Rumours abound of the potential for PG students not being permitted to graduate at the Summer ceremony in the near future. Currently, we believe this has been discussed as being potentially implemented in a couple of years' time, but are working to clarify this – hopefully I can update in more detail by the time of Assembly. If this is being seriously considered, I'll be working damn hard to challenge it – postgraduates are as entitled to a celebration of their achievements as undergraduates are, and the University's failure to account for its own expansion in graduation logistics is not an excuse to discriminate against postgraduates.

Best of the Rest:

- We've appointed and trained all our new course reps!
- We've been advocating for more student representation from colleges and faculties on Senate, the University's highest academic governance body.
- We've further developed our plans for refreshing our strategy; I confused much of the staff team by forcing them to allocate ping-pong balls to strategy headings...
- I'm literally not allowed to hold my position for another year – if you want to be the next PG Academic Officer, please nominate yourself and talk to me about what it entails!

[1] <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commissioner-fair-access-discussion-paper-access-postgraduate-study-representation-destinations/>

TO: Assembly

FROM: Amelia McLoughlan

RE: Welfare & Liberation Officer Report

DATE: 06 February 2020

Update on priorities:

1. AN INCLUSIVE DURHAM: **Breaking down institutional barriers**

- **University Health and Well-being Strategy**

This has been the main focus of my university work and is an ongoing process of ensuring that the health and well-being strategy that the University is proposing is 1) fit for purpose and 2) actually improves the health and well-being of students! However, it has suffered several delays due to its complexity, but I'm happy to report that the student consultation we facilitated last term are now being incorporated.

- **Respect Commission**

The final report was released on 21st January, and is now making its way through university committees. This report demonstrates that the University has an institutional issue in addressing gender inequality, classism and BAME representation which underpin discrimination within the wider university culture. Going forward, I am intent on holding the University accountable for how they now take action on these issues.

- **Athena SWAN**

Athena SWAN is a national framework to address gender inequality within higher educational institutions. As welfare & liberation Officer, I have been invited to sit on the SAT group which leads the implementation and self-assessment of the project. This group will also promote international women's day in March.

- **Period Poverty**

The #FreePeriod campaign is moving forward with three sanitary products available within the Bill Bryson Library. In addition, the University equality, diversity and inclusion unit are leading a project to install dispensers with free sanitary products in high traffic locations across the campus. As this is confirmed, I will update.

2. POSTGRADUATE WELFARE: **Identifying key issues and developing welfare and support through policy**

- **Policy for Students with Children**

We now have baby changing facilities in Dunelm House - this is very exciting! Due to the health and wellbeing strategy, the task and finish group on students

with children has been slightly delayed, but will be going through committee imminently. All students who contacted me have received updates. This is also an issue I be following through with Athena SWAN work.

- **Supporting MCR's**

This term I will be holding focus groups and feedback sessions for postgraduates to feed in to a plan proposal, and this will go to both JCR and MCR PresComm for consultation.

3. **LIBERATION: Initiate a framework and environment that supports marginalised groups of students to campaign for changes that will improve life and wider society for them.**

- **Liberation Strategy**

I have been and will continue to work with our liberation consultant to shape a Durham Students' Union liberation strategy. I have been meeting regularly with Association Presidents to hear their concerns and support them in their actions and campaigns. The latest association collaboration meeting will focus on a liberation campaign taking place this term, and their role in feeding into the strategy more widely going forward.

- **Declaring Durham University Institutional Disableist**

Following the motion being passed, I set up meetings with the University head on support and wellbeing to present and discuss our action plan to address institutional disableism. I have also liaise with other sabbatical officers nationally, and will continue to gather good practice such as the report recently issued by UCL and the ongoing disabled students protest happening at Greenwich University.

- **Response to Sexual Violence and Misconduct**

It has been rather disappointing given that the Office for Students has recently released new guidance on this matter, that the University task force has been severely delayed in meeting - with no meeting taking place since September! Despite this I have been working with the University coordinator, and will continue to work with students to keep these issues on the agenda.

General updates:

- **Student Minds Mental Health Charter**

I was invited to attend the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Students, speaking to MPs on the potential of the charter and the true impact of mental health and students at University. I raised the issues of funding resources, cultural competency, difficulties for international students and the general negative attitude towards students and the damaging stereotype that assumes that more

elitist institutions are sufficiently funding student services. I will continue to work with key sabbatical officers in collegiate universities to address shared issues of mental health, welfare and equality going forward, and will issue a fuller report on this date in due course. My absence from this assembly, is due to our participation in the Student Minds Students' Unions project, where I am training to better understand how to implement change and underpin the implementation of the charter throughout the University.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Jess Dunning, Opportunities Officer

RE: Opportunities Officer Report

DATE: 6th February 2020

Update on priorities:

1. Improving Sustainability within the university

- a. I have been in different meetings regarding the transportation issues around the university, the procurement of products and how the university is currently tackling that as well as keeping up to date with the development of the buildings up on the Hilde Bede site and keeping up with Greenspace meetings.
- b. I did a 17 days of Sustainable Christmas campaign which went extremely well. We had A LOT of food, toiletries, warm clothes and money donated for the Foodbank and DASH.
- c. My 17 week educational campaign has kicked off. I have been busy planning the UN SDG Campaign for this term. We have a lot of events coming up. Most notably the Eco-Fest which is on the 8th of February.

2. Lobbying the university to become an accredited Real Living Wage Employer

- a. I ran another Real Living Wage campaign week in line with the SDG Goal 1 (No Poverty). We had over 300 responses for our question at Re-fresher's stall.
- b. I continue to be an active and vocal member of the Casual Workers group and am trying to ensure that every staff and student within the university gets paid the Real Living Wage.
- c. I have started writing a paper to UEC taking into account all the data and testimony we have collected over the last 3 months. This will be presented in the third week of February.

3. Funding Gap for students

- a. Nicola from the policy team and I have sat down and come up with dates to run a focus group with different students in March on what they need the fund for, how the fund will work and how much money we will need to source. There will hopefully be more updates on this in the next assembly.
- b. I also developed a Student Worker Questionnaire with a member of Palatinate that we have kept open since term began. We aim to see the relationship between the maintenance loan students receive, the amount of hours they work and at what pay and how that has an impact on their physical and mental wellbeing.

General updates:

- I had a great Christmas back in Wales.
- I have been helping plan Durham's Got Talent
- I've had meetings with the Opps team to discuss the feedback from Presidents Forum last term
- We now sell vegan cakes in Kingsgate
- Kingsgate Cocktail Launch night was a success.
- I went on a staff away day to look at our strategy. I am going to engage students to gather their input on the Stronger Communities Strategy by using the next Presidents Forum to facilitate feedback and discussion.
- We had another really successful Re-fresher's Fair (even though I wasn't there!)
- The Vegan and Vegetarian Society put on a very successful vegan market.
- I have been planning my 'Jess Gives It a Go' sessions
- I have been having meetings with various student groups and trying to help the tackle any issues that are arising/giving them ideas on how to tackle them

TO: Assembly

FROM: Sam Johnson Audini

RE: Decolonising the Curriculum: SU Core Position

DATE: 6 February 2020

The belief and its justifications

What we learn is inherently political. From what we are taught to how we are taught, certain values and voices are prioritised, and others marginalised. Decolonisation centres the impact of colonialism, both historic and ongoing, in how we understand the world in which we live and the information that we teach. What we learn is overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, knowledge produced by and centred around the Global West, putting the achievements and knowledge of the West above those of other regions, centring them as the producers and owners of knowledge. Within Durham there are few courses that acknowledge communities of colour and where those spaces exist, students are unable to progress in the same way as there is a lack of resources that students can access in terms of resources that actively address these communities. The onus often falls on students of colour, unpaid, to partake in decolonial and anti-racist activity in order to make their courses and the university a better place. This further entrenches the hierarchical values inherent in colonialism. Durham as an institution has a disproportionate lack of students of colour from the UK, and international students of colour are often charged exploitatively high fees.

The definition of a better future

Decolonising the curriculum is an ongoing process that must be continually shaped in collaboration with students and staff of colour. The processes should not be tokenistic; student labour should not be expected to be unpaid. The groups undertaking decolonisation work should be supported and integrated into university decision making processes as equal partners.

Our curriculum should be relevant to all students and engage with the global context in which it has been produced. This includes the content and method of what and how we're taught and our learning resources, who we learn from and with and the diversity of the opinions, content and learning communities we have access to. We should be critically engaging with the colonial power structures that have shaped our disciplines and challenge these, including challenging the values that are held as 'norm' and the history of our subjects. We need a curriculum that engages in dialogue with itself throughout as opposed to one which merely tinkers around the edges.

In essence, the University needs to undertake a full scale review of the processes and practices that exist in the University and how they work to exclude and marginalise students of colour. We want to see the end of exploitation of international students. Their contribution to our University is more than economic, and they should not be valued for their economic power alone. We have to serve their needs as students first, alongside all other students, to benefit from the University experience.

The barriers

Durham University has a distinct lack of people of colour in managerial and decision making positions. This means that decisions are often taken without a single person of colour in the

room and when those decisions are made, they lack transparency. Conversations about racism and colonialism are difficult, but even more so when the internal power structures of the University do not allow for individuals affected by the issues. Moreover, we run the risk of reproducing the same issues if those in charge do not consult with people of colour during this process, whilst at the same time interrogating their position and their complicity in a system that has excluded for so long.

DU has been expanding rapidly over the past few years, with a focus on recruiting international students to drive revenue as international fees are often double, if not triple the price of home/EU fees. While this provides an opportunity for increasing diversity amongst the student body, it relies upon a strong University reputation. The context of marketisation and competition for student numbers makes introspection on the part of the university is difficult as it requires being publically self critical and acknowledging past and present failings, which may be damaging for the University's reputation.

Belief about the change and the responsibilities

Durham Students' Union must take a leading role in this process through

- working closely with Durham People of Colour Association, academic representatives and colleges. Prioritising a collaborative approach, centring students of colour and educating other students on decolonisation.
- Fully supporting student representatives across the University, to be engaged in working towards this goal and building a common understanding of decolonisation, through their positions in colleges, departments and elsewhere.
- Engaging in internal criticism and investigating initiatives which are successful at other students unions.

Durham University should

- consider not just the themes of the content studied, but also the diversity of teaching methods, learning resources and their creators, teaching staff and student body when it considers diversity of curricula.
- Not rely on the goodwill of staff and students of colour to undertake decolonisation work. When staff and students of colour do participate in decolonisation work in partnership with the university they should be treated as equals and their labour remunerated.
- Actively recruit staff of colour to bring their perspectives and expertise to the courses offered
- Ensure any curriculum review activity includes consideration for decolonisation.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Jess Dunning

RE: Signing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Accord

DATE: 6th February

Assembly notes:

1. In 2015, the United Nations established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to work towards global peace and prosperity.¹
2. The 17 SDGs cover a wide range of issues that affect billions around the world, with 169 associated targets helping to guide work towards the SDGs.²
3. The United Nations aim to achieve the SDGs by 2030.
4. The United Nations recently demanded action on the SDGs, acknowledging that work on them was not “advancing at the speed or scale required”.³
5. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Accord was set up in order to encourage education about the SDGs.⁴
6. The Accord also aims to encourage individuals and institutions to sign the Accord, in order to report on their contributions towards the SDGs.

Assembly believes:

1. The vision underpinning the SDGs, with an emphasis on respect, equality and sustainability, is both a desirable vision for the future, and is also in line with the vision of the Students' Union.
2. That the SDGs are important and affect people at a local level as well as both national and international levels.
3. That the staff and students at Durham should be educated on the relevance of the SDGs to both their everyday lives and their work.
4. That the University and the Students' Union should take action to ensure that they contribute towards the goals.
5. That both the University and Students' Union should report to staff and students on how they contribute towards the goals.
6. That both the University and Students' Union should consider the SDGs in their decision making processes.

Assembly resolves:

1. To mandate the Officers to lobby the University to sign the Accord on behalf of Durham University.
2. To mandate the Officers to make available any reports sent in by the SU and Durham University to all staff and students in order to make them aware of the contributions of the SU and University towards the SDGs.

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

² <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

³ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

⁴ <https://www.sdgaccord.org/>

TO: Assembly
FROM: Seun Twins
RE: Divest from Barclays
DATE: 6th February

Assembly notes:

Burning fossil fuels is the primary contributor to climate change.

- The vast majority of fossil fuels must stay in the ground to stop catastrophic climate change.
- Barclays is a major financier of fossil fuel companies, funding them to the tune of \$24bn between 2016 and 2018.
- Barclays have financed companies behind projects including, Lancashire fracking, the Dakota Access Pipeline and Cerrejon coal mine in Colombia.
- Durham University has pledged to divest from fossil fuels, but still primarily banks with and invests in Barclays.
- The SU currently has no relationship (financial, commercial or otherwise) to Barclays.

Assembly believes:

- Barclays should stop financing all fossil fuel companies and projects as soon as possible, beginning with new extractive infrastructure like pipelines, new gas and coal mines.
- Institutional boycotts are an effective tactic for achieving change at banks like Barclays, evidenced by the success of a similar campaign against South African apartheid.
- Previous support of divestment from the SU has been successful with regards to fossil fuels, we now need to go further.

Assembly resolves:

- Boycott Barclays until they stop financing all fossil fuel companies and extraction projects globally (including banking, other financial dealings, sponsorship, corporate partnerships, advertising, ATMs and branches on campus).
- For the Opportunities officer, in collaboration with other student representatives, to draft and introduce ethical banking policy including considerations for sustainability and climate change.
- For the President and Opportunities Officer to lobby the University to cut all ties with Barclays and introduce ethical banking policy.
- Support People & Planet's Divest Barclays campaign.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Sarah McAllister

RE: Creating an Open Forum

DATE: 6th February

Assembly notes:

- Durham SU's current standing orders define forums and how they should be conducted.
- Assembly often has a low attendance of non-voting members.
- One of the aims of the charitable objectives of Durham SU is to ensure that the democratic governness will champion student activity.

Assembly believes:

- Holding an Open Forum in which any member of Durham SU can submit and talk about an agenda item, in an environment where there are no voting members, will allow more people to participate and ensure everyone present has an equal influence and opportunity to voice their opinion.
- The time constraints in which people are able to speak about motions is part of the way in which Assembly is run, however this often constrains discussions between its members.
- Having an Open Forum will allow a collaborative culture where people are able to discuss issues in Durham openly. This would also allow a greater democratic process and inclusivity.
- Enhancing participation in democratic structures is vital to ensure Durham SU fulfils its charitable objectives.
- Holding an Open Forum at the beginning at term, allows members of Durham SU to discuss motion ideas which they may be considering bringing to Assembly. By allowing these ideas to be discussed in an open manner, without the time constraints that exist in Assembly, will allow people to work together on motions and amend their ideas before it is submitted to assembly.
- The Open Forum will not usurp the importance of Assembly. Any motion ideas that are discussed in the Open Forum will still have to be submitted to assembly following the standing orders and will be voted on in the same manner. Furthermore, motions do not have to be discussed at an Open Forum before they are taken to Assembly.
- The Open Forum will not only influence motions that are brought to Assembly, but may also influence campaigns and other collaborative projects carried out by members of Durham SU.

Assembly resolves:

- To create an Open Forum.

- To approve the following amendment to Standing Order: Appendix E1: Committee and Forum Membership and Objectives.

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Meetings</i>	<i>Chair</i>
<i>Academic Affairs Committee</i>	<i>To identify and discuss matters relating to academic affairs and academic support across the University. To develop or recommend academic policy for the Union To share best practice and learn from each other's experiences To work with and advise the Academic Affairs Officer To direct the work of the Union on all academic and academic support matters To elect representatives for Assembly</i>	<i>Postgraduate and Undergraduate Academic Officers Faculty Representatives</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Elected by and from the core membership excluding the Academic Officers</i>
<i>DUCK Committee</i>	<i>To discuss matters and work on issues relating to fundraising at Durham University</i>	<i>DUCK Chair Elected members of the DUCK Executive Committee (DUCK handbook)</i>	<i>Fortnightly</i>	<i>DUCK Chair</i>
<i>Governance and Grants Committee</i>	<i>To review and make recommendations on governance To review policy seeking adoption by Assembly To oversee the administration of all elections To work towards increasing democratic participation in the Students' Union To adjudicate on appeals against decisions of the Senior Returning Officer To monitor the progress of policy implementation To allocate grants in accordance with regulations agreed by Assembly and the Board of Trustees To ensure allocated funding is used in compliance with</i>	<i>President Opportunities Officer Chair of Assembly 5 x Members elected by Assembly with three of those reserved for those who are members of a society 1 x Student Trustee</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Elected from the membership of the committee excluding officers</i>

	<i>stipulations</i> <i>To review and act on delegation requests</i>			
<i>Junior Common Room Presidents Committee</i>	<i>To discuss matters relating to Junior Common Rooms (JCRs)</i> <i>To work to enhance the college experience of members of JCRs</i> <i>To work to improve the governance and support available to JCRs</i> <i>To identify, draft, adopt or recommend policy on issues relating to Junior Common Rooms</i>	<i>President</i> <i>President or equivalent of each JCR</i> <i>President of Ustinov Graduate Common Room</i>	<i>Fortnightly</i>	<i>Elected by and from the membership excluding the President</i>
<i>Middle Common Room Presidents Committee</i>	<i>To discuss matters relating to Middle Common Rooms</i> <i>To work to enhance the college experience of members of Middle Common Rooms</i> <i>To work to improve the governance and support available to Middle Common Rooms</i> <i>To identify, draft, adopt or recommend policy on issues relating to Middle Common Rooms</i>	<i>President</i> <i>One representative from the postgraduate communities as elected by each of the colleges</i>	<i>Fortnightly</i>	<i>Elected by and from the membership excluding the President</i>
<i>Students' Union Reps Committee</i>	<i>To provide a forum for feedback to the SU from common room exec and students via Students' Union Reps</i> <i>To scrutinise and contribute to the effectiveness of SU campaigns and events using feedback from Common Rooms</i> <i>To provide a forum for the SU President and relevant Officers to update Students' Union Reps regarding the activities of the SU and University-wide issues</i> <i>To nominate Students' Union Reps to represent students on relevant University Working Groups</i>	<i>President</i> <i>1 x elected representative from each college</i>	<i>Fortnightly</i>	<i>Elected by and from the membership excluding the President</i>

	<p><i>To support Students' Union Reps in the drafting of relevant policy for Assembly</i></p> <p><i>To set priorities for Students' Union Reps to collectively work towards throughout the year d to monitor progress towards these goals</i></p>			
Student Groups Committee	<p><i>To identify and discuss matters relating to Student Groups excluding Associations</i></p> <p><i>To review and recommend changes to the Student Group Agreement</i></p> <p><i>To identify, draft, adopt or recommend policy on issues relating to student groups</i></p> <p><i>To work to develop Student Groups and their members</i></p> <p><i>To enhance collaboration between Student Groups</i></p> <p><i>To work to improve the governance and support available to Student Groups</i></p> <p><i>Attend Societies Forum to help facilitate discussion</i></p> <p><i>To work with and advice the Opportunities Officer</i></p>	<p><i>Chair Opportunities Officer</i></p> <p><i>6 x Members elected by society members at Societies Forum representing each category of societies</i></p> <p><i>1 x media rep</i></p> <p><i>1 x Association Liaison Rep</i></p>	Monthly	Elected by Societies Forum
Societies Forum	<p><i>To identify and discuss matters relating to Student Groups, specifically Societies</i></p> <p><i>To enhance collaboration between Student Groups, specifically Societies</i></p> <p><i>To receive updates regarding issues affecting Student Groups, specifically Societies</i></p>	<p><i>Opportunities Officer Student Groups Committee members Any member of a Union student group</i></p>	Termly	Opportunities Officer and Student Groups Committee Chair
Open Forum	<p><i>To identify and discuss matters relating to students across Durham</i></p> <p><i>To enhance collaboration between students at Durham university</i></p> <p><i>To support members of Durham Student Union drafting motions for Assembly</i></p> <p><i>To support members of Durham Student Union to</i></p>	<p><i>Any member of Durham Student Union</i></p>	Termly	Assembly Chair

	<i>work on cross-campus campaigns.</i>			
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TO: Assembly

FROM: Laura Curran

RE: Motion to remove the 'Secret Ballot' Procedural Motion

DATE: 6th February

Assembly notes:

- That there are currently ten Procedural Motions, whose function is to change how Assembly votes on motions.
- That Procedural Motion IV is 'To vote on a question by secret ballot (requires a two-thirds majority)'.
- That Durham SU is currently undergoing a Democracy Review, which includes reviewing the democracy of Assembly.

Assembly believes:

- That Voting Members should be held accountable with regards to how they vote.
- That Procedural Motion IV can get in the way of Voting Members being held accountable, since if there was a secret ballot on a motion, Voting Members could use this to justify them not revealing how they voted.
- That in light of the Democracy Review, Durham SU should make changes to increase the democracy of Assembly, which includes allowing Voting Members to be held accountable.

Assembly resolves:

To amend the Standing Orders to remove Procedural Motion IV, 'To vote on a question by secret ballot (requires a two-thirds majority)':

Standing Order D: Assembly

19.1 The motions are as follows, in decreasing order of precedence:

- I. To suspend the rules (requires a two-thirds majority),
- II. A vote of no confidence in the chair
- III. To overturn a ruling of the Chair,
- ~~IV. To vote on a question by secret ballot (requires a two-thirds majority),~~
- ~~V. To not vote on a question,~~
- ~~VI. To suspend or revoke a guillotine,~~
- ~~VII. To recess the meeting for a specified amount of time,~~
- ~~VIII. To vote on a question in specific parts,~~

~~IX.~~ VIII. To vote on a question by roll call (requires only one-third of votes),

~~X.~~ IX. To move to a vote