

# DURHAM SU ASSEMBLY

There will be a meeting of Assembly at 1600 on Thursday 17 March 2022.  
Please try to join the meeting from 1545, to allow for connectivity tests, for a prompt start at 1600.

## AGENDA

### 1. OPENING OF MEETING (CHAIR, 5 MINUTES)

To receive apologies, conflicts of interest, notification of any other urgent business not on the agenda.

### 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS ON 10 FEBRUARY 2021 (CHAIR, 5 MINUTES) UA/2122/18

To accept the minutes as an accurate record of the previous meetings.

*Routine business items*

### 3. BOARD UPDATE REPORT (CHIEF EXECUTIVE, 5 MINUTES) UA/2122/19

To receive an update report from the Board of Trustees.

### 4. OFFICER UPDATES (OFFICERS, 15 MINUTES) UA/2122/20

To receive an update on priorities from the SU officer team.

### 5. COMMITTEE UPDATES (COMMITTEE CHAIRS, 15 MINUTES)

To receive updates from committee chairs on activities since the last meeting.

### 6. ASSOCIATION UPDATES (ASSOCIATION CHAIRS, 15 MINUTES)

To receive updates from association chairs on activities since the last meeting.

*\*A comfort break of 10 minutes will be held, before returning to discussion items.*

*Items for discussion:*

### 7. SUPPORTING COUNTY DURHAM'S CITY OF CULTURE 2025 BID (OPPORTUNITIES OFFICER, 20 MINUTES) UA/2122/21

To discuss a motion on County Durham's City of Culture 2025 Bid.

### 8. DEMOCRACY REVIEW: ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP (OPPORTUNITIES OFFICER, 30 MINUTES) UA/2122/22

To discuss the Democracy Review: Assembly Membership Proposal.

***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](mailto:dsu.governance@durham.ac.uk) at least 2 days in advance of the meeting to make arrangements.***

# DURHAM SU ASSEMBLY

## DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING 10 February 2021

Virtual Meeting, Zoom

### 1. OPENING OF MEETING

NE opened the meeting, welcoming members and attendees, explaining zoom etiquette, outlining that no offensive or unacceptable behaviour would be accepted and would result in being removed from the meeting.

### 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS ON 09 DECEMBER 2021

There were no amendments to minutes of the last meetings.  
Minutes from the last meetings were approved.

#### *Routine business items*

### 3. NOMINATIONS FOR AVAILABLE POSITIONS

One nomination had been received for the vacant NUS delegate position and no nominations had been received for the vacant Governance and Grants Committee positions.

Aaliana Khan husted for NUS delegate position

NE moves to a vote.

NE announced the results, Aaliana Khan is elected as NUS Delegate.

### 4. OFFICER UPDATES

Updates were provided from the SU Officer Team on their priorities for the year. Updates were provided by:

Seun Twins, SU President

Charlie Procter, Undergraduate Academic Officer (provided by Delcan Merrington)

Declan Merrington, Postgraduate Academic Officer

Jack Ballingham, Opportunities Officer

Jonah Graham, Welfare and Liberation Officer

### 5. COMMITTEE UPDATES

SU Rep Committee

Student Groups Committee

Governance and Grants Committee

JCR PresComm

Academic Affairs Committee

(Apologies from, DUCK, MCR PresComm )

## **6. ASSOCIATION UPDATES**

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

(Apologies from Trans Association)

**\*\*ACCESS BREAK\*\***

*Items for discussion:*

## **7. ENDING THE USE OF NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT IN CASES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT, BULLYING AND OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT**

JC presented the motion

JC submitted an amendment to the motion.

NE moves to a vote for the amendment.

The amendment passes.

The motion was voted on with the amendments included.

NE moves to a votes.

The motion passes.

## **8. DEMOCRACY REVIEW: ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP PROPOSAL**

JB presented the motion.

Procedural motion V to not vote on a question is proposed.

NE moves to a vote on procedural motion V.

The procedural motion does not pass.

Jon Chan proposed a number of amendments, one of which was withdrawn in the meeting:

Amendment 1 proposed by JC.

NE moves to a vote.

The amendment does not pass.

Amendment 2 was withdrawn by JC.

Amendment 3 proposed by JC.

NE moves to a vote.

The motion does not pass.

Amendment 4 proposed by JC.

NE moves to a vote.

The motion does not pass.

NE moves to debate the motion.

JB spoke in favour of the motion.

AW spoke against motion.

Procedural motion IX To vote on a question by roll call is proposed.

NE moves to a vote.

The motion does not pass.

TO: Assembly  
FROM: Seun Twins  
RE: Durham SU Board of Trustees Report  
DATE: 17 March 2022

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## **DURHAM SU BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT TO ASSEMBLY**

The Board of Trustees met on 8 March 2022, and addressed the following business:

- Developments in risks, including some exceptional student group activity, delivery of services and education through strike action, and a successful Durham SU elections.
- The Durham SU financial reports, and the students' union's sustainability.
- The benefits and risks of Assembly as both an online and physical meeting, and asked for the discussion to be had with Assembly members as to the longer-term options for accessible participation in democracy. The trustees also agreed that the Chief Executive had the discretion to make the May meeting a physical event, presuming all risks could be managed, but were clear that this was to evaluate the benefit relative to online meetings and should not be seen as a precedent for 2022/2023.
- An approach to the NUS revised version of the Charity Governance Code, such that Durham SU would be able to demonstrate long-term, incremental response to the best practice.
- A framework for consulting students on the priorities for student life which would be included in the new Durham SU strategy.
- A proposal to develop a training and development package for Common Rooms, for consultation over Easter term.

The trustees also received reports from the People and Culture Committee, which met on 8 February 2022, and the Performance and Delivery Committee, which met on 9 February 2022.

TO: Assembly  
FROM: Jack Ballingham  
RE: Opportunities Officer Report  
DATE: 17 March 2022

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## Opportunities Officer Assembly Report

### **Student Group Agreement reform**

The process for reforming the Student Group Agreement has now commenced, and two consultation sessions with student group leaders and members have been held. We'll be holding further consultation, and an online web form for all students to submit comments and suggestions is being published soon to aid with this. After this stage we'll be drafting a new version of the Agreement based on students' feedback. I'd encourage all members of Assembly to engage with this process, and it would be very much appreciated if they could circulate this information to their relevant networks.

### **Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill work**

Campaigning work on the HE (Freedom of Speech) Bill has recently focused on working with the NUS and other SUs on the Bill; I had a productive meeting with Birkbeck SU recently, who share many concerns with us. I hope to be able to organise a national event discussing the Bill following NUS national conference, after the Easter break. I'm very glad that Assembly members decided to send the motion I authored on the Bill to NUS conference, and I'll be attending the conference as an observer on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> March. I attended a compositing meeting with Strathclyde SU, who submitted a similar motion; we both decided it was best to not composite our two motions. Before conference I'll be organising with other unions to raise awareness about the Bill, and I've been reaching out to other unions to promote our motion in the priorities ballot for NUS conference. I also recently attended the NUS' regular working group on the Bill.

### **Democracy Review**

Following the vote on the motion regarding Assembly membership at the last meeting of Assembly, the debate there has been taken on board and further consultations have been held on the matter. The updated motion before Assembly at this meeting reflects this feedback, with the change being mainly to the Wider Student Experience section of the motion.

I have discussed the issue of JCR election of college reps with JCR Presidents' Committee and college SU reps, who agreed that the best way forward was for memoranda of understanding between the SU and each JCR to be drawn up, setting out the relationship between the two. These agreements would include election processes for college Assembly members, as well addressing many other aspects of the relationship, including training and campaigns. These memoranda would be an agreement between the trustees of the SU, and the relevant governing bodies in each JCR. While memoranda of understanding are likely to take some further time to agree and draft, I believe they reflect the best way forward, and that this issue can be resolved to everybody's agreement.

### **Other items**

Myself and the Opportunities team have recently begun planning for the SU's annual awards, which will recognise the work of our societies, volunteers and student leaders.

I've been involved in showing solidarity with the recent UCU strikes, and attended the regional union rally in Newcastle, where representatives from Durham were given the chance to speak. Because of the University's poor response to industrial action, myself and the other officers did not attend the most recent meeting of University Senate.

The SU officers recently visited other students' unions in Liverpool and Manchester to learn about their methods of operating; I was particularly interested in their democratic structures and commercial operations.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Jack Ballingham

RE: Supporting County Durham's UK City of Culture 2025 Bid

DATE: 17 March 2022

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**Assembly notes:**

- UK City of Culture is awarded every four years to a city (or local area as of 2025) which is selected by a panel nominated by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) that demonstrates the ability of that city (or local area) to meet 7 main criteria<sup>1</sup>.
- In August 2021, DCMS announced that County Durham as amongst 20 places across the UK which had expressed interest in being recognized as UK City of Culture 2025<sup>2</sup>. The 20 places are spread across the UK, from Angus to Cornwall and Great Yarmouth to Armagh<sup>3</sup>.
- County Durham was among eight places longlisted in October 2021 by DCMS, and as a result was awarded £40,000 to support the development of the proposal<sup>4</sup>.
- In February 2022, Durham County Council announced that it had finalized its bid for UK City of Culture 2025<sup>5</sup>.
- The University announced that it is also “proudly supporting” the County’s bid for UK City of Culture 2025<sup>6</sup>.
- The shortlisting process will conclude in March 2022, with the winner announced in May 2022.

**Assembly believes:**

- The success of the bid<sup>7</sup> would showcase the culture, history, innovation and expertise present across County Durham, opening a year-long programme of celebrating arts, culture, sport, science and economics.
- That the ongoing recovery from Covid-19 of the region as a whole would be greatly assisted by the direct and indirect benefits, estimated to include up to 2500 jobs, 15 million visitors and up to £741.5m total economic benefit, of a successful bid for City of Culture<sup>8</sup>.
- That the support of the University is influential and welcome, however the direct and vocal support of Durham students in this bid would also demonstrate the importance to

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<sup>1</sup> See section 2.2 [UK City of Culture 2025: full application guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-city-of-culture-2025-full-application-guidance)

<sup>2</sup> [Record 20 places bid for prestigious UK City of Culture 2025 title - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-20-places-bid-for-prestigious-uk-city-of-culture-2025-title)

<sup>3</sup> [City of Culture 2025 – Google My Maps](https://www.google.com/maps/@51.5,1.1,15z)

<sup>4</sup> [UK City of Culture 2025 longlist revealed - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-city-of-culture-2025-longlist-revealed)

<sup>5</sup> [County Durham finalises its bid for UK City of Culture 2025 - Durham County Council](https://www.durham.gov.uk/news/county-durham-finalises-its-bid-for-uk-city-of-culture-2025)

<sup>6</sup> [Why we're backing Durham's bid to be UK City of Culture 2025 - Durham University](https://www.durham.ac.uk/news/why-we-re-backing-durham-s-bid-to-be-uk-city-of-culture-2025)

<sup>7</sup> [Our Bid – UK City of Culture Bid 2025 \(durham2025.co.uk\)](https://www.durham2025.co.uk/our-bid)

<sup>8</sup> [County Durham finalises its bid for UK City of Culture 2025 - Durham County Council](https://www.durham.gov.uk/news/county-durham-finalises-its-bid-for-uk-city-of-culture-2025)



students of the region around us, as well as the positive benefits that students bring to the region.

**Assembly resolves:**

- To fully, and actively, cooperate in supporting the ongoing bid with the County Council and University through groups, committees and events.
- To raise awareness of the ongoing bid in the student population, including encouraging students to pledge their support to the bid individually<sup>9</sup>
- To join any celebration event, and continue to work actively with both the County Council and University, should the bid be successful.

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<sup>9</sup> See pledge here [Get Involved – Pledge your support – UK City of Culture 2025 Bid \(durham2025.co.uk\)](https://www.durham2025.co.uk)

TO: Assembly

FROM: Opportunities Officer

RE: Democracy Review – Assembly Membership Proposal

DATE: 17 March 2022

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### **Assembly Notes:**

Durham Students' Union has conducted a review of its democratic processes during the 2021/21 academic year. The work identified a range of areas in need of review, with the most pressing being the Union's Assembly.

In summer 2021 and Autumn 2021, reforms were passed to change different aspects of Assembly. The last round of changes proposed a new membership model for Assembly. Although the model passed as part of a larger suite of reforms, members wanted us to revise the proposal and bring it back to Assembly.

A new proposal was brought forward to Assembly in early 2022 which was rejected as Assembly members wanted further consultation, especially around the Wider Student Experience block.

### **Assembly Believes:**

The purpose of Assembly is to inform the policy direction of Durham Students' Union work between the annual election cycle and to scrutinise the work of the Officer Team.

There is a strong student leadership culture at Durham with many students engaged in representative roles across the university both academically and from the wider student experience. For Assembly to be reflective of Durham and open up the policy process to as many Durham students as possible, Assembly membership should comprise of a balance of students directly drawn from and elected from the student body and those representing core constituencies of students.

### **Assembly Resolves:**

1. To organise student constituents into 6 key groups:
  - 1.1. Academic
  - 1.2. Associations
  - 1.3. Colleges
  - 1.4. Open Place
  - 1.5. DSU Sabbatical Officers
  - 1.6. Wider Student Experience
2. Where an Assembly place is held by a student elected by a core constituency, that constituency can decide who takes the place. For example, the committee of

an Association may decide that their space will be taken by their Chair, or by another member of their elected committee.

3. The new model will increase the number of representatives on Assembly and allow more students to directly influence decision making.
4. If students hold roles in other elected groups or committees within the institution, they are permitted to run for any of the directly elected places they define into.
5. In the below proposal any Assembly seat titled 'Rep' will be decided by the committee of constituents they represent and any Assembly seat titled 'Place' and the DSU Sabbatical officer will be elected.
6. To qualify for a Departmental or College place for example, a student would need to be a member of the Department or College they were running for.
7. **Academic**
  - 7.1. Academic Affairs Committee Rep (x1)
  - 7.2. Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Undergraduate Place x 2, Postgraduate Place x 2)
  - 7.3. Faculty of Sciences (Undergraduate Place x 2, Postgraduate Place x 2)
  - 7.4. Faculty of Social Sciences and Health (Undergraduate Place x 2, Postgraduate Place x 2)
  - 7.5. Durham University Business School (Undergraduate Place x 2, Postgraduate Place x 2)
8. **Associations**
  - 8.1. Associations Reps (1 per Association)
9. **Colleges**
  - 9.1. College Place (x 17)
  - 9.2. JCR PresComm Rep (x 1)
  - 9.3. MCR PresComm Rep (x 1)
10. **Open Place**
  - 10.1. Open Student Place (x 7)

## **11. DSU Sabbatical Officers**

- 11.1. President
- 11.2. Welfare & Liberation Officer
- 11.3. Opportunities Officer
- 11.4. Postgraduate Academic Officer
- 11.5. Undergraduate Academic Officer

## **12. Wider Student Experience**

- Student Groups Place (x 8)
- Student Group Committee Rep (x 1)
- DUCK Committee Rep (x 1)