

Lancaster University Students' Union Trustee Board
Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting held Thursday 27 January 2022

Present		
Oliver Robinson	SU President & Chair of Trustee Board	He/Him
India Ellis Teams	SU VP Union Development	She/Her
Dom Casoria	SU VP Societies & Media	He/Him
Amy Merchant	SU VP Welfare	She/Her
Paul McCarthy	SU VP Sport	He/Him
Gaya Shewani	SU VP Education	She/Her
Amanda Chetwynd Teams	External Trustee Vice Chair of Board Finance & Risk Sub-Committee Chair	She/Her
Richard Soper Teams	External Trustee Governance Sub-Committee Chair	He/Him
Dave Morris [later] Teams	External Trustee	He/Him
Tony Camp Teams	External Trustee FRSC expert member	He/Him
Sam Maeschalck	Student Trustee	He/Him
Rhys Peploe	Student Trustee	He/Him
Callum Slater	Student Trustee	He/Him

In attendance		
Chris Cottam	Advocacy & Governance Manager	He/Him
Veronica Longmire	Executive Administrator	Minutes

Apologies received from the SU Chief Executive.

There was one Item of Business for discussion submitted by the Chair of Board & SU President:

Proposed Changes to the Articles of Association and Bylaws

The New Democratic Model

The Chair opened the meeting and introduced the paper circulated prior to the meeting, and detailed below, indicating that the purpose of the meeting was to decide whether the proposals, in principle, were acceptable and that the paper was the views and recommendation of the Full-time Officers.

1. Appointment of External Trustees

Proposed that external trustees be appointed using a panel of 1 student trustee, 1 external trustee, the SU President and 2 Union [Council] Assembly delegates. Appointment to then be approved by the Union Assembly.

2. Student Trustees

Proposed that student trustees be elected in Term 2 [Lent] and appointment take place alongside full-time officers.

3. Trustee Removal

Proposed that trustees could be removed by a referendum that hit the 5% *in favour* threshold as with other referendums and applied to all trustees.

Such referendum could be called by a verified petition of 2% of the membership, a motion at a general meeting or a two thirds majority vote of the Union Assembly.

4. Union Assembly

As there were already three Councils in operation [University Council, City Council and County Council], two of which [City and County] had regular on-campus elections, the option to reconsider the name was utilised and the title 'Union Assembly' was settled on.

Composition of the Union Assembly would be 6 Full-time Officers / 6 Liberation & Campaigns Officers and 16 directly-elected delegates. Wider conversations might indicate an appetite for an additional LCO, specifically a Parents'/Carers' Officer.

All these elections to be held in the March elections and would become the Union-wide elections, thus maintaining JCR elections as a separate identity.

To accommodate for the size of the ballot box, people would be encouraged to run on Slates, regulated by a more powerful Democracy Committee.

5. Diversity in Union Assembly

The major problem remained regarding ways to ensure outcomes result in an Assembly representative of the wider community, as well as being diverse. Three methods were identified, the first two relied on Progressive STV, the third relied on regulation of slates through the Democracy Committee.

The Single Transferable Vote was currently used in all Union elections and was a system of preferential voting with a quota.

Progressive STV was a system of inserting diversity requirements within that (candidates who do not meet diversity requirements would be considered to have not hit quota and eliminated), which are met through the execution of the voting system. Doable in paper elections, but yet to be seen if possible to execute through the current UnionCloud system.

Scenario 1 | diversity requirements would be based on the totality of Council [if the students were to elect an all-male FTO and all-male LCO team then the requirements for Women+ representation in the remaining delegate would adjust to compensate]. Given a total membership of 28, we should expect 14 of those seats to be filled by women+. If 12 of them are already filled by men, then all those 14 would have to be drawn from the 16 directly elected delegates. I do not think this form of STV can be technically done within the constraints of UnionCloud, but it's a worthwhile ideal to aim for.

Scenario 2 | diversity requirements would be based solely within the directly elected delegates and would not adjust to compensate for the Officer element of Council.

Scenario 3 | where neither of the first two scenarios were technically feasible, the FTOs believed the best way to ensure diversity was to look at ensuring that slates that put themselves forward were sufficiently diverse themselves, and for the Democracy Committee to have a greater role in more tightly regulating them.

Discussion/observations/concerns: representation for postgraduate students | the election model for student trustees | the importance for a diverse Board | elections timing | use of slates for elections – accessibility and restrictions on size | diversity ideology | coherent platforms | continued lack of engagement | untested processes | proposed Articles allowed for flexibility | proposals not being representative of the wider body of students | leverage of slates as a way to improve engagement | apt promotion of roles | use reserves positions on the Assembly | unproductive to try and elect without slates | the motto of the organisation 'to make the Union as accessible to as many students as possible'.

Further discussions around: sub-committees derived by Union 'Council' | position on relationship between full-time officers and Council body | clear status re manifestos and Council body | reinforcing diversity and reflection of the student body | the balance on ballot paper / FTOs standing on slates | clear, explicit communications | question mark around alternatives if slates not used | consultation of student body around use of slates.

There was general consensus to having a Council body, but not for the use of Slates.

Board observed that elections could be held at any time during term-time providing all due processes and mechanisms were followed | that decisions could be overturned by Referendum and an AGM | specifics in wording required changes.

Proposed that election of student trustees be held in term 1 alongside JCR elections as term 2 was a heavy political period.

Agreement reached that election of student trustees be held in week 8 of term 1 [not included in the Articles but potentially in a bylaw].

Discussion around the recruitment of external trustees concluded there was a desire to have a panel with appointments approved by Union Assembly and for there to be a rigorous and transparent process, with panel impartiality and a robust feedback and evaluation process for rejected candidates.

Discussion regarding trustee removal concluded that the removal of an officer was not the same as a trustee and explanation given that amendment would require content changes to the Articles, would require conversations with solicitors, and would then create a very tight timeframe.

The Chair indicated that week 8 of term 2 was the desired timeline for the matter to go to Referendum. However, it was important to note there was a duty of care to not create unnecessary pressure on staff, that more work was required before submission to any Referendum, University Council's interest in the matter. It was key that Board must be confident as the proposals were being forwarded by Board, time was needed to review and debate and that a dated timeline was required.

Board further noted it was important that sufficient time be allowed for robust consultation with the student body.

ACTION | Advocacy and Data Protection Officer to work on a worst / best case timetable, by the end of the week or following Monday if possible, to allow Board to understand the implications and review amendments

Board also observed that a switch-on date was key prior to putting the question to Referendum.

The meeting then closed.