

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

Democracy Committee Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held **Friday 03 February 2023**

Present:

JCR Officers		
Emmanuel	County	
Callum	Lonsdale	
Ryan	Pendle	
Alice	Furness	
Full-Time Officers		
Callum Slater	VP Union Development	He/Him
Union Staff		
Frank Longdon	Student Insight & Voice Manager	He/Him

Appologies: Aeryn (Grizedale)

Agenda Item 1 | Introductions

VP Union Development introduces members to Democracy Committee. Emphasised the importance of the Colleges within the Students' Union. Discussed scope of committee and influence over the Students' Union democratic activity. Explained that Democratic Committee is a sub-committee of UA, UA is new and only first met this week. Minutes from this meeting will go to UA. This space is about the detail, the nerdy stuff: bye-laws, governance, etc.

Agenda Item 2 | Responsibilities of Democracy Committee

Byelaws:

VP UD: we have approved new byelaws this week through UA. Not on website yet but available for committee members on Teams for the meantime. Democracy Committee to deal with small, detailed, and technical aspects of the byelaws. Major changes require further approval outside of this committee. I will aim to bring a couple of byelaws each meeting for us to review as they are new. Committee members will be asked to read relevant byelaws before they are discussed future meetings.

Terms of Reference:

VP UD: clarified distinction between College ToRs and Union byelaws, and hierarchy of governance documents within the Students' Union. In future we may look at College ToRs in this committee. We have been very bad at keeping things up-to-date and published online. If you do make changes, please let us know so we can publish online.

Democracy:

VP UD: second responsibility is about developing democratic activity and encouraging increased participation.

Referenda:

VP UD: Democracy Committee responsible for planning referenda. Nothing on the horizon. If something did come up, we would be responsible for co-ordinating that.

Proxy Voting:

VP UD: this relates to the AGM (or LUSU Student Update). Bit friendlier, but still the AGM. Every student has the right to vote, if they can't attend the AGM we have to make arrangements to allow them to vote.

ACTION -> VOICE TEAM | Process for proxy votes at the AGM to come to the next meeting.

Agenda Item 3 | Elections

VP UD: nominations are open now. We are electing FTOs, LCOs, NUS Delegates (x2), Student Trustee (x1), and College JCR Exec by-elections this term.

Anyone co-opted needs to be ratified in this election. If any roles are missing please let us know so we can include in the election.

Nominations opened yesterday, close Friday 24th February (W16). We will be doing lots of support for people thinking about nominating themselves. We have launched a Recommend a Friend project – you can anonymously recommend them. We will contact them to encourage nomination.

Once nominations close, we will run candidate briefing on Friday 24th February. Campaigning will open at 10am on Monday 27th February.

We are running hustings slightly differently this year. Due to past comments about the length of the event, we are splitting across 2 days: Friday 3rd March, and Tuesday 6th March. Length is being cut-down drastically. Candidate speeches are being replaced by candidate video recordings to be published online before the event – to remove around an hour of business. Gives more space for questions from candidates and any students in attendance. A bit more informal, a bit more fun, and shorter.

Hustings is being combined with LUSU Student Update. We have struggled to reach quoracy at past AGMs. Gives people space to change the Students' Union through motions before the election has even finished.

Following trail at JCR elections, voting is Tues to Thurs of Week 18. Gives elections team time to resolve complaints and prepare results.

Results night on the Friday evening. Venue not certain yet. Link-in Sugarhouse event as well.

Tree for Votes scheme. We bought 180 trees through JCR elections – due to plant soon.

Looking to grow voter promotions throughout the voting period in Alex Square. A carnival of elections activity – fun stuff linked into the elections. Hook a Duck, Bungee Run, etc.

Banner making workshops for candidates.

At close of voting (Thursday evening), pizza party for candidates before results on Friday. To end the elections on a nice note.

Priority Ballot: running this year. We've got a survey live which asks students to rate their top priorities for the Students' Union. We will create a report and publish to help candidates write their manifestos.

We are planning to support candidates throughout the campaigning period: breakfasts and other activity to support their wellbeing.

We used to have a "democracy cow". We want Democracy Committee to come up with a silly thing we can use to help promote the elections.

We are thinking about how we incentivise voting. We want people to vote, but also make a meaningful vote. Open for ideas.

Ryan: When will priority ballot be published? Will it be used beyond elections?

VP UD: Monday. Yes, it can be used to guide our work. We are publishing widely so you may want to use as well.

Callum: Where is priority ballot?

VP UD: on social media, and look for the lobster on the website. In future, I will share democracy articles on Teams with you all.

Callum: Lonsdale College elections are missing from the webpage.

VP UD: As role was a recent addition, webpage hasn't been updated since.

Alice: We have one more position to fill. Additional one if Welfare & Education.

VP UD: It should be live now.

Emmanuel: We have co-opted recently into two roles and a VNC for another role. I am planning to just promote nominations.

VP UD: Please let us know asap when your executive changes. We need to ensure our information is up-to-date.

Callum: is it still worth co-opting people in?

VP UD: Please explain to people co-opted that they also need to put themselves forward in the by-elections. Make sense to fill the next 4 weeks.

VP UD: Nominations form is different. Through Qualtrics rather than website. We have done this so we can ask some extra questions, including EDI characteristics. Gives us space to monitor trends and underrepresentation, and plan activity in response.

We would love your help to promote voting. If you are a candidate you can't.

VP UD: We meet every 3 weeks. Next meeting W6. We will be much closer to elections and the close of nominations. I can give you details of elections promo activity. I will bring 2 or 3 byelaws and we will need to approve plan for proxy voting.

Agenda Item 4 | Any Other Business

n/a