

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE | Minutes of the meeting held Friday 13 November 2020

Ex-officio members present

Atree Ghosh | VP Union Development | Chair [He/Him]
 Oliver Robinson | SU President [He/Him]
 Shannon McCaul | VP Societies & Media [She/Her]
 Paul McCarthy | VP Sport [He/Him]
 Amy Merchant | VP Welfare [She/Her]

Members present

Jesse Phillips | LGBTQ+ Officer [They/Them] | later
 Amy Stanning | Mature Students' Officer [She/Her]
 Max Kafula | BAME Students' Officer [He/Him]
 Molly Lawson | Students with Disabilities Officer [She/Her]
 Yu Hong Goh | International Students' Officer [She/Her]
 Charli Clement | Womens+ Officer [She/Her]
 Noah Katz | Faculty Taught Rep [They/Them]
 Sophie Banks | PG Rep Research [She/Her]

In attendance

Alan Roberts | Interim Chief Executive [He/Him]

Apologies

Bee Morgan | VP Education [She/Her]

Due to the COVID19 pandemic the meeting was held via Microsoft Teams and recorded for the purposes of minutes, with no objections raised. The Chair opened the meeting, thanked everyone for attending, and welcomed two new committee members, Noah Katz and Sophie Banks to their first official meeting.

The Chair declared there was no formal agenda, that the LGBTQ+ Officer would be joining the meeting later and apologies received from the SU Vice-President Education.

There were no minutes to approve at this meeting. However, the draft minutes of the meeting held 27 October had been circulated for digital approval. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

A discussion paper had been received from Max Kafula, BAME Students Officer:

Black History Month [BHM] Summary Presentation

The summary presentation highlighted events held, lessons learned and the potential opportunities for the future. The committee noted that BHM 2020 had been based on COVID19 and events delivered online | this was the first time ever this method had been used | although it was disappointing that most popular cultural events had to be cancelled or not happen, it gave the opportunity to work with other Students' Unions and collectively 13 events were delivered | overall turnout was 341 which had exceeded expectations and made it more successful than the previous year, given the digital platform | the theme was based on the Black Lives Matter movement with the aim of retaining the level of awareness and building on racial inequality | the event that had the largest engagement and wide support was the decolonisation of the curriculum, thus continuing the trend of recent years.

With regards to future events/campaigns, it was hoped, with discussion, that a forum could be established to track the progress of decolonisation of the curriculum and help tackle the awarding gap. There was also support for the Critical Race Theory [White Privilege and Microaggressions] and a desire to move issues forward with events and campaigns.

There were good levels of turnout, engagement, variety of events, levels of promotion and the overall positive theme. Recommendations for the future included earlier planning due to work on Welcome Week at the same time / improved communications all round, and particularly between the Union and the University to allow for a more University-wide event / working closely with SU media channels / more non-western based oriented events / a more blended approach with a view to Black History Month being more accessible.

The Chair and other officers congratulated Max on doing an impressive job of Black History Month and for the presentation at this meeting. It was agreed that a blended approach would be worthwhile and that physical and online events would make the event more accessible and potentially reduce stress.

At this point in the meeting the Chair suggested an 'Officers' Manifesto Check', looking at what was going on and how the committee could feed into this, and take the opportunity to look ahead.

BAME Students' Officer | reported falling slightly behind | midway through drafting a policy for future years and would like to share this with FTOs and/or this committee | planning going forward.

There was one potential campaign the officer wished to launch, which was for the University and the Students' Union to cease using BING and for the University to address the specific concerns of each minority group.

Mature Students' Officer | asked the committee to note that one of the challenges around postgraduate representation was engagement and that the timing of elections was restrictive to a small range of students. The forum executive had discussed whether to seek to move the elections to October [alongside PG Board elections]. However, it had decided there would still be problems re engagement and this was not a sensible way forward. Two possible options, with the aim of providing continuity, were put forward:

- Split the role into a job share, with an election in the spring term [March], as is, with a further election in the autumn term of the new academic year [October];
- Appoint a Deputy with a formal role in the forum to maintain the status quo [elected in October for 12 months].

The Chair recapped that under the Democracy & Governance review currently underway, there should be focus groups taking place in the near future and that this issue / suggestion could feed into that. It was further stated that conversations had taken place with the PG Board Chair around people putting themselves forward for nomination and further work on this was planned.

PG Rep Taught | asked whether the Students' Union planned to issue an opinion/statement on the matter of students returning home for Christmas and the window for travel announced by the government. It was believed that potentially students from across the country would be travelling at the same time, and that the dates stated were disruptive from an academic perspective.

The Chair responded that he had met with one of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors and had spoken about the situation. The University was liaising with other Universities in the region with a view to co-ordinating a staggered travel window. Moving things to online and getting the message out as quickly as possible was also being attempted.

In response to the comment that messages can take a while to filter through it was stated there had been a suggestion that the Students' Union and the University do a combined video and include information for students having to remain in Lancaster about available support services / outlets open on campus etc. There was also the potential to work with different groups looking at organising online activities. Work on this had started.

The Chair further identified that whilst the government had given dates for travel home, it had not yet stated anything about when students tried to return after the vacation. The University was in the process of trying to obtain information around this.

It was believed that any potential statement from the Union would be undergraduate focused.

ACTION | Matter to be taken to Academic Executive Committee for further discussion | Noah Katz

Items for Information

There was no update from the Interim Chief Executive.

Updates from Full-Time Officers

VP Union Development and Chair of Executive Committee

- ❖ Had been working on elections
- ❖ Referendum work [running 25 to 27 November]
- ❖ Voting for JCR elections
- ❖ Worked with Liberation & Campaigns Officers to get the Why I Ran campaign off the ground and rolling

SU Vice-President Welfare

- ❖ Since previous meeting care package launched and delivered [felt requests would increase]
- ❖ Toolkit put together | awaiting go ahead for it to become live
- ❖ Worked with some University staff and running a Covid19 drop-in session
- ❖ Running a live presentation for isolating students | first one taken place and two planned for Week 7
- ❖ Worked with the University on a bid for money to enable the University to work on a project focused on international students and mental health [very exciting stuff]

SU Vice-President Sport

- ❖ Interesting times for Sport due to lockdown
- ❖ Been doing a different Corona activity every day and running out of ideas | any suggestions for gym exercise welcome
- ❖ Planning a virtual pre-Roses event with counterpart from York
- ❖ Be Active Be Safe channel launched | hoped to get as much exposure as possible with live calls taking place
- ❖ With lockdown the role had been more difficult but attempting to get people active

SU Vice President Societies & Media

- ❖ Obtained feedback from students re Freshers Fair with a view to ascertaining what to do better for ReFreshers Fair in term 2
- ❖ Working on a campaign with student media to try and get more students involved from different degrees
- ❖ Worked with GreenLancaster on a big campaign to be launched in January
- ❖ Looking at re-launching the society spotlight / Give it a Go albeit online

Students' Union President

- ❖ Usual University meetings
- ❖ Involved in selection of new Chief Executive Officer | tentatively narrowed down to hopefully make an appointment | there are appointable candidates but decision yet to be made | believed the enormous

amount of work had not been wasted | next stage to reconvene the student panel and Executive Committee and get final candidate to join

Updates from Liberation & Campaigns Officers

LGBTQ+ Officer

- ❖ Organised and been involved in two forum regular meetings with successful attendance
- ❖ Currently preparing for the forum general meeting [16 November evening]
- ❖ Worked with EDI team, Chaplaincy and members of the LGBTQ+ staff network to organise a Trans Day of Remembrance vigil [19 November]
- ❖ In talks with the Library regarding some form of memorials in the Library space
- ❖ Was invited to talk to the LGBTQ+ staff networks new Allies scheme | good number of volunteers

Mature Students' Officer

- ❖ As a member of the LGBTQ+ staff network have been working on the Safe Home Base scheme launched on 12 November | over 45 members of staff on the session | webpage going live which will bring together all points of reference internal to the University and external points of help and support to which LGBTQ+ students could be directed to one of the Allies
- ❖ Also looking at visibility – auto-signatures on emails / rainbow lanyards / more training events
- ❖ Successful and popular event, one of the most successful things the staff network has done | everyone to be encouraged to look at this and mention to any students people think it's relevant to
- ❖ Forum general meeting coming up with social element and a prize [be in it to win it] | candidates lined up for the two remaining executive vacancies
- ❖ Working on the questionnaire looking at travel and academic support for postgraduate and mature students and working with the Womens+ and other officers to get it out
- ❖ Cook-along joint evening with the International Students' Officer and the international forum on 25 November

International Students' Officer

- ❖ Over past weeks had been working on the forum and chat sessions arranged to take place every Saturday

Womens+ Officer | Charli Clement

- ❖ She and Lydia were still finding their feet
- ❖ Currently working on She Should Run with JCRs and NUS elections | content provided by Lydia
- ❖ Held virtual workshop via Instagram and Facebook
- ❖ Discussion underway for a Rights workshop potentially in week 9 in line with Human Rights Day [Instagram content due out]
- ❖ Everyday microaggressions campaign pushed back slightly but still very exciting
- ❖ Working on an idea for a Womens+ book club

Students with Disabilities Officer

- ❖ Attended forum events and executive meetings
- ❖ Held musical night which was fun and enjoyable
- ❖ Working on the Improve your Learning campaign | three fully attended meetings taken place
- ❖ Working with Student Media on schools/podcasts | live event with LA1TV coming up
- ❖ Survey was going well with more than 500 responses and time still for more to come through
- ❖ Campaigns going well with big group in place

BAME Students' Officer

- ❖ Meetings taking place with BAME organisations
- ❖ Looking at next steps around Black History Month

Any Other Business | none raised