



UNION ASSEMBLY

Union Assembly Minutes

Agenda for the meeting held: **TUESDAY 5TH DECEMBER 2023, 3PM – 6PM**

Agenda Item 1 | Introductions

Minutes of meeting 07/11/23: [Union Assembly Minutes 07.11.23.docx](#)

Chair introduced the meeting and laid out some ground rules for the meeting.

Update on actions:

- Sam Hedges has spoken to the student who will be creating an AI working group.
- Sam Hedges has spoken to Molly O'Reilly-Kime and are working together on PGR representation.
- Santi Siabato has action more concise communication.
- Cerys Evans made some amends to League Forums, coming up this weekend.
- Cerys Evans working towards action on heating.
- Harrison Stewart planning to draft bye-laws for the future alongside future bye-law changes.

Minutes approved.

Agenda Item 2 | For Discussion | Full-Time Officer Reports

President: [Union Assembly FTO Report - President 05.12.23.docx](#)

Cerys Evans presented the report and explained that some cost of living support has been approved, with some caveats on evaluation of use for next 10 weeks.

No questions.

VP Education: [Union Assembly FTO Report - VP Education 05.12.23.docx](#)

Sam Hedges presented the report and updated Union Assembly on Faculty Forums. PGR Faculty Forum has also taken place.

Member in Attendance – report mentions Academic Rep CTP event

Sam Hedges – it is this Thursday

Member in Attendance – could updates be sent out more in-advance

Sam Hedges – we have been under-staffed which has caused some delays.

Thomas Cross – how are you going to engage students in your Know Your Rights campaign?

Sam Hedges – social media is part of promotional work. We will also get Academic Reps involved by writing articles that we will promote.

Hannah Bywood – we had Faculty Forums last night. We ran our FST session expecting a presentation from you, we were surprised that no one knew about the project or the item on our agenda. What information will we get about CTP? In future, will you be present to lead this activity.

Sam Hedges – the University’s CTP project has not been producing student-facing material as early as planned. They are looking for feedback from Reps but I am dependent on content from the CTP project team.

VP Societies & Media: [Union Assembly FTO Report - VP Societies & Media 05.12.23.docx](#)

Santi Siabato presented the report and updated on society affiliations which have re-opened. New societies will be affiliated in Week 10. League Forum is happening this Saturday.

Hannah Bywood – the societies team went straight to our junk, has meant plans are made and people are unable to attend forum.

Santi Siabato – reminder will go out as soon as possible.

Molly O’Reilly-Kime – congratulations on opening affiliations. Is there a reason that affiliations are being held-off until 2024?

Santi Siabato – It is a lengthy process and we want to give all new societies time to complete their training.

VP Sport: [Union Assembly FTO Report - VP Sport 05.12.23.docx](#) (some contents restricted)

Jack Watson presented the report with date for Roses 2024.

No questions.

VP Union Development: [Union Assembly FTO Report - VP Union Development 05.12.23.docx](#)

Harrison Stewart presented the report and provided an update on elections, 93% of JCR positions are filled.

Member in Attendance – what is happening with student consultation on the strategy?

Harrison Stewart – we have engaged with staff and the Board, the only people we haven’t is students. It is a long process and will need a lot of student engagement. Roll-out of strategy is scheduled for March.

Member in Attendance – will this engagement take place during the writing phase?

Harrison Stewart – we do not want this to be a tick-box exercise. We are still in the writing phase. I would like to thank those present for attending as a student, non-member of Union Assembly.

Thomas Cross – do you have an update on Extravs?

Harrison Stewart – we have a working group including all JCR Presidents. We have conducted some research work to find out what students want to see. Our decision is going to be made at the end of this term on what Extravs will look like in 2024.

VP Welfare: [Union Assembly FTO Report - VP Welfare 05.12.23.docx](#)

Josh Newsham presented the report and provided an update on cost of living crisis and the papers on the agenda. Josh encouraged attendees to join-in the Full-Time Officers’

Christmas “wish-list” campaign at the Christmas Fair.

No questions.

Agenda Item 3 |For Discussion | Liberation & Campaigns Officer Reports

International Students’ Officer: not yet submitted

Annika Budhrani was not in attendance so unable to provide a verbal update.

Josh Newsham offered to take questions on their behalf.

No questions.

LGBTQ+ Students’ Officer: [Union Assembly LCO Report - LGBTQ+ Officer 05.12.23.docx](#)

Thomas Cross presented the report and provided a verbal update.

Thomas thanked the executive of the LGBTQ+ Forum for their work despite their reduced size.

Cerys Evans – how has engagement been in your elections?

Thomas Cross – we have 8 posts filled, compared to 15 last year. We did a lot of work to promote the elections.

Postgraduate & Mature Students' Officer: [Union Assembly LCO Report - Postgraduate & Mature Students' Officer 05.12.23.docx](#)

Molly O'Reilly-Kime presented the report, provided a verbal update on their work, and asked for support to help promote their upcoming elections for the Postgraduate & Mature Forum executive.

Cerys Evans – we have a new PG Board who have just been elected. Are you planning to work with them?

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – I want to build the forum executive before engaging with PG Board. In particular, if there is a Graduate College Exstrav.

Racial & Ethnic Minorities Officer: not yet submitted

Aminah Mann was not in attendance so unable to provide a verbal update.

Josh Newsham offered to take questions on their behalf.

Member in Attendance – has the forum been convened this academic year? I haven't seen much social media presence. Lack of activity is a concern.

Josh Newsham – My focus is providing support for forums to establish and deliver the work they would like to deliver. I am hoping a lot more can be done in January. I am aware of low levels of activity and visibility; work is being done in difficult circumstances.

Cerys Evans – do you have a sense on the success of elections in the forums where LCOs are not present today?

Josh Newsham – a lot of forum executives work differently. That is something they need to report on themselves.

Students with Disabilities Officer: not yet submitted

Rowan Birch was not in attendance so unable to provide a verbal update.

Josh Newsham offered to take questions on their behalf.

No questions.

Women+ Officer: not yet submitted

Hana Dodsworth was not in attendance so unable to provide a verbal update.

Josh Newsham offered to take questions on their behalf.

Santi Siabato – do you have an update on the She Should Run campaign?

Josh Newsham – we have done lots of work. One workshop has taken place with promotion on SU social media. I know Furness got very involved in the campaign during their election.

Member in Attendance – I was meant to host the first workshop but was cancelled with no reasons. Could Hana provide the reasons for this cancellation?

Agenda Item 4 |For Approval | Full-Time Officer Team

Cerys Evans, President

Coversheet: [Agenda Item 4 - Coversheet.docx](#)

Paper: [Agenda Item 4 - LUSU Officer Review Paper.pdf](#)

Cerys Evans presented the paper and emphasised the consultation undertaken with student leaders.

Josh Newsham – I think this is one the biggest, most genuine reforms proposed in LUSU for a while. Roles are not fit for purpose. It is good to see reform going ahead to open a new chapter for the Union.

Huseyn Guliyev – main concern of Academic Reps was that the new roles would be too big. I was told that there are committees who can take some of the leadership responsibilities left by the removal of some of the roles. I would like a little more clarity on the structure and where responsibilities lie.

Cerys Evans – I was a little shocked by the lack of understanding from Academic Reps. Idea is that we go to a vote for approval now, then Governance Sub-Committee of Trustee Board and Trustee Board to draft the bye-laws for future Union Assembly approval. I am confident about workload distribution; the key thing is removing operation work from the roles. I met DVC for Operations and DVC for Governance to review the number, frequency, and utility of meetings the FTO are expected to attend.

Huseyn Guliyev – I feel we should have the details of the bye-laws now. We are voting in a very tight timescale, but I do not have the details would like. It needs more time to consider.

Cerys Evans – I am coming with draft is to allow you within the creation process, before formal approval is sought. I am happy to receive feedback on how this should have worked. I would like to thank my team – it is a very hard thing to recognise the limitations in a job that you are currently doing. Thank you for being open-minded, thoughtful, and for considering the best needs for the SU. Past FTO teams have not wanted to deliver this review in their terms of office. I was keen t do this in-year, hence the timescales involved.

ACTION – CE to circulate feedback from on restructuring process for the roles.

Huseyn Guliyev – I appreciate dialogue between FTOs and Union Assembly.

Matthew Lamb – I would like to thank Cerys for consulting Union Assembly members.

Jack Watson – I think this is a bold, progressive move. Recent work in accountability models in sports and societies has allowed the merging of these roles.

Member in Attendance – I was the VP Education last year. We had discussions about restructuring team near the end of my term. I feel a model that includes 5 roles is more appropriate. When we had a VP Activities, they focused too much on sports and not societies and media. I am glad that accountability processes are in-place in sports and societies, but I feel this is too quick. Moving from 4 to 6, reduces the opportunities available by a third. I know the realities of recruiting into career posts in the Students' Union.

Cerys Evans – We could postpone this decision and elect 6 Officers for next academic year, they may hate this proposal and it may never happen. Is the argument that keep doors open worthwhile if the doors are rotten? We are investing in our recent graduate employees. You asked me yesterday if I was confident that we could fill these positions – I am confident that we have the operational support to recruit career staff posts. We have new people starting, there is good recruitment happening.

Member in Attendance – I am so glad that the culture is changing as I had such a bad time last year.

Cerys Evans – The LUSU we are building is stronger. I really value student opinion and have taken the steps to engage over 300 people. I don't think out-of-date knowledge of LUSU is helpful.

Santi Siabato – I support this change. I had the same reservations about the combination of VP Societies & Media and VP Sports. Setting up League Champions means that the VP Activities could be held to account to ensure societies' and media groups' voices are heard. I had same reservations about operational support. Nothing will get better unless we try. We don't know yet what this would lead to.

Cerys Evans – I did some consultation with staff who had been in LUSU over a decade. They said that the dominance of sports in the VP Activities role was not apparent.

Sam Hedges – I was initially not supportive for this change. I have been reassured that the proposed roles will mean the roles are more worthwhile and meaningful for post-holders.
Molly O'Reilly-Kime – are there any concerns about incumbent advantage in the upcoming elections where posts are combined?

Cerys Evans – I am very excited for next election cycle, just based off rumours. I would argue that this is the worst year to be an incumbent as the roles will be different next year. I hope we have really competitive elections to get great candidates. I think you are likely to get 4 great candidates.

Adam Bucknall – I think consultation was very good. I also think idea is very good, especially the overarching EDI responsibilities. How will this be presented to the broader student body?

Cerys Evans – my hope is to do the marketing proactively. The elections are key, but before then I am keen to talk to students about the change once approved. The plan is to go public.

Thomas Cross – in general I am very in-favour of this. How will Union Assembly hold the FTOs to account on cross-cutting responsibilities?

Cerys Evans – the models would allow the team to allocate responsibilities based on skills and knowledge they have through their lived experience and studies. The team could then allocate responsibility to different members of the team to give Union Assembly clarity. We want to empower the accountability processes to do their job with roles that are understandable and responsibilities are clear.

Charlie Seddon – is this vote indicative or a Brexit deal where we vote for something with no clarity on the outcome?

Cerys Evans – Approval now is for LUSU to have four Full-Time Officers for the coming elections. We will then go away and draft bye-laws as that is the key go-live moment.

Vote:

19 voted FOR

0 voted AGAINST

5 ABSTENTIONS

Union Assembly approve the proposal.

Agenda Item 5 | For Approval | Changes to the LGBTQ+ Forum Terms of Reference

Thomas Cross, LGBTQ+ Officer

Terms of Reference including proposed changes: [Agenda Item 5 - LGBTQ+ Forum ToRs.pdf](#)

Thomas Cross presented the paper and explained the process prior to submission to Union Assembly.

Adam Bucknall – 4.6.7.4.6 should be 4.6.7.4.7

Matthew Lamb – should this just be a decision of the forum, rather than Union Assembly.

Thomas Cross – as a sub-committee of Union Assembly, I feel there is a need for this to come here as a safeguard.

Hannah Bywood – why have you removed Associated Members?

Thomas Cross – we are a safe space for students, so should just be students. Having non-students in attendance make it harder to manage.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – why is neurodivergence separate from disabilities?

Thomas Cross - we sought guidance from the NHS, safest option was to include both.

Happy to amend if needed.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – I worry that this implies that neurodiversity is not a disability. What was the decision-making process behind the removal of the Bye-Law Review Committee?

Thomas Cross – the committee has nearly always been made-up of executive members. It makes more sense to make these decisions in general meetings and executive committees. It seems unnecessary given membership.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – I have lived through two committees. It is true that it is mainly executive members. I think this may be a bit of confirmation bias; the people who want to get involved. In the past, I believe bye-laws were approved by general meetings.

Josh Newsham – I would like to support these changes. As the previous LGBTQ+ Officer, I had real difficulties changing these. The bureaucracy limits people's ability to engage in forums and other spaces. These changes make the forum more flexible.

Cerys Evans – I want to praise these changes. Why are you only allowing one person per role?

Thomas Cross – mainly to make it administratively easier. I think if you want to be on the executive, you should be able to commit to the role. Executive works as a team and some roles have duplicate posts.

Cerys Evans – raise in quorum, does this reflect higher engagement?

Thomas Cross – yes. This also sets higher standards and avoid the risk of it becoming a clique.

Cerys Evans – Appendix 3, LCO are recognised by central LUSU. Clause 2.4 would be subject to changes to the Union Assembly bye-laws. I would have concerns about non-LCO access to the LCO's email given confidential nature of many of the emails received.

Thomas Cross – I wrote in 2.4 in the hope that the Union Assembly bye-law will change. For social media, access should be shared. For emails, would it not be best to avoid emailing the LCO if they are not in-post.

Cerys Evans – my concern would be with emails from students directly. I wouldn't expect forum executive members to be able to appropriately handle these.

Thomas Cross – I am happy to amend this section.

Cerys Evans – I commend simplification and removal of Bye-Law Review Committee.

Approved unanimously.

Agenda Item 6 |For Approval | The impact of the ongoing conflict in Israel-Palestine on Lancaster students

Full-Time Officer Team

Paper: [Agenda item 6 - Impact of the ongoing conflict in Israel-Palestine on students in Lancaster UA Paper.docx](#)

The Chair has asked that attendees read this guidance before participating in discussion on this topic: [The National Union of Students' Guidance](#) and [Israel-Palestine: Avoiding Antisemitic and Islamophobic Hate Speech | SNS \(solutionsnotsides.co.uk\)](#)

The Chair asked attendees to be respectful of each other and expect some sensitive topics to be covered in discussion.

Josh Newsham presented the paper and explained why it had been brought to Union Assembly by the Full-Time Officer Team. Josh emphasised the focus on activity actionable by the Students' Union for students and on-campus. There are lots of student disillusioned from the Students' Union and University over a lack of action and communication about the conflict. Important to note protests, the need to support the safety of all students, and the need to take action against hate crime and discrimination.

Matthew Lamb – would we be able to see a final sight of the statement? Would ISoc and JSoc also get sight before publication?

Josh Newsham – yes that is a really important step. Intention of this motion is to establish a basis for a statement to be written. You will see the statement before it is released. It will be sent to JSoc and ISoc as well.

Vakare Kuodyte – is it only the JSoc and ISoc included, not Arab Society?

Josh Newsham – we spoke to the societies who had reach out to us. If there are more societies that wish to be included I will reach out to them.

Vote:

20 voted FOR (this includes one proxy vote, submitted before the Agenda Item as the member had to leave)
0 voted AGAINST
0 ABSTENTIONS

Union Assembly approve the motion.

Josh Newsham – if anyone has any concerns or questions, please do get in touch. We want to make sure we are reaching all parts of the Union.

Agenda Item 7 | Any Other Business

Harrison Stewart – Thanked the Chair and noted that roles across Union Assembly are now filled.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – there is a need the Students' Union to support student protest and not dehumanise student protesters. Our job is to represent students, that involved supporting the right to protest.

Josh Newsham – it is really important to support all political activity. I am not aware of comments made about protesters. We are working to ensure freedom of speech is protected.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – lots of these groups do not want to be part of LUSU and are often protesting about the work of the SU. We need to consider why these groups don't want to be affiliated with the Students' Union.

Cerys Evans – there is a protocol in the SU around challenging staff behaviour.

Member in Attendance – there is a difference between a freedom of speech and an incitement of violence.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – if you are at a protest and see something like that happening, please call it out.

Matthew Lamb – is there a round map for bringing in the proxy vote for Union Assembly positions.

ACTION – CE to include proxy voting alongside other changes to bye-laws following approval of changes to FTO team.

Hannah Bywood – we work a lot with Lead Academic Reps. They feel that they've not received any support or training from LUSU.

Sam Hedges – staffing issues have meant a lot of projects have not been feasible, including the implementation of promised training for Lead Reps. In 2024, we have a meeting with the PVC regarding the Curriculum Transformation Project, a meeting with the Head of Student Educational Services, and the event later this week.

Aisha Nassor – some Lead Reps were contacted about training.

ACTION – SH to update Union Assembly on Lead Rep training and support.

Josh Newsham – can we take a picture?

Chair closed the meeting.