

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION

MINUTES

Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council
held on 5 December 2022 in Blue Sky Room, Level 1, Queen's Students' Union.

Present:

Abhishek Kumbhar	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Adam Wilson	Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) Undergraduate Faculty Representative
Aidan Moran	Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement
Anna Herron	Part-Time - Environmental Officer
Asha Marie Larson-Baldwin	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative (Union Speaker)
Avery Johnston	Part-Time - Trans Students' Officer
Bea Holland	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Beatrice Titcombe	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Beth Elder	Student Officer Education
Bryony Tunney	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Deirbhile Flynn	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Elliot Sellers	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering (SMAE)
Emma Murphy	Union President
Eoin Ussher	Students' Union Council - Queen's Accommodation
Hany Bahgat	Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative
Hazel McMorrow	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences (SMED)
Huda Al Baqali	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Jamie-Lukas Campbell	Student Officer Postgraduate
Jenny Steele	Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative
Jess Hindley	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Julien Kolta	Part-Time - International Students' Officer
Kieran Minto	Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MHLS) Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative
Leo Davies	Part-Time - Student Parents' and Carers' Officer
Matthew Charwood	Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) Postgraduate Research Faculty Representative
Matthew McCallion	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Law (SLAW)
Meghan-Louise Meban	Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MHLS) Postgraduate Research Faculty Representative
Monica Amir Saad	Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MHLS) Undergraduate Faculty Representative
Niamh Bone	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Pete / Shijie Wang	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Arts, English and Languages (SAEL)
Petra Stone	Part-Time - LGBT+ Students' Officer
Rebecca Smyth	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Psychology (SBS)
Rebekah McCauley	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Nursing & Midwifery (SNAM)
Róisín Costelloe	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Ryan Irwin	Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) Undergraduate Faculty Representative
Tara Lynne O'Neill	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Tiarnan Tracey	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Tiffany Gracias	Postgraduate School Rep - Institute of Professional Legal Studies (IPLS)
Tj Lindsay	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Mathematics & Physics (SMP)
Tobenna Okeke	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science (SEECs)
Vishesh Bhagchandani	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)

In Attendance:

DAMIEN CORRIDAN (CLERK OF COUNCIL)
LOUISE MCGEOUGH (ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION ASSISTANT)
CIARAN HIGGINS (STUDENTS' UNION DIRECTOR)

The Speaker of Council welcomed all attendees to the Third Statutory Meeting of the 2022-23 session of the Students' Union Council.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received for the following Councillors:

Kieran Portbury	Student Officer Equality & Diversity
Samantha Emily Koitz	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative Undergraduate
Sophie McManus	Postgraduate School Representative - School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy, and Politics

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 Statutory Meeting of 16 November 2022 (SUC/M/22/6)

It was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of 16 November 2022 (SUC/M/22/6) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Policy Updates

3.1.1 Multilingual Wellbeing Support Information

It was noted that this matter is being carried forward the Student Officer Equality & Diversity.

3.1.2 QUB Examination Scheduling

It was noted that Councillor Lindsay and Councillor Irwin are in discussions with their Faculty concerning this matter.

3.1.3 Period Inclusion Policy Across All Aspects of University Life

It was noted that this matter is being carried forward the Student Officer Equality & Diversity.

3.1.4 Supporting University and College Union (UCU) Industrial Action

The Union President extended thanks to all who attended and supported recent UCU industrial action.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Condolences

There were none.

4.2 National Students' Union Updates

Emma, Students Union President informed Council the National Union of Students (NUS) has dismissed its president, Shaima Dallali, over anti-Semitism claims. It follows an independent code-of-conduct investigation after allegations were made against her. The investigation into Ms Dallali is confidential and no details have been published.

The findings of a wider investigation into antisemitism in NUS are yet to be published.

4.3 National Conference Delegate Elections 2022-23 – Schedule

The Clerk of Council confirmed the elections to delegations for national conferences will take place in early semester two, with nominations opening on 9 January 2023.

The National Conference Delegate Elections would be for the following:

- NUS Conference Delegates
- USI Conference Delegates
- NUS-USI Conference Delegates

4.4 Student Leader Elections 2022-23 – Schedule

The Clerk of Council confirmed that the nominations for the Student Leader Elections 2022-23 would be open on 9 January 2023. Council noted elections would return to four days of polling.

The Schedule is as follows:

Nominations Close: Thursday 2 February (5.00pm)

Polling Opens: Monday 27 February 2023

Polling Closes: Thursday 2 March 2023

4.5 Council Membership – Update

The Clerk of Council updated Council that Tom Hinds had resigned from their position on Council.

5. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS/RULE AMENDMENTS

Enabling Motion (Constitutional Consistency)

Enabling motion to rename, reorder and renumber Constitutional clauses, and remove invalid references, as appropriate, to reflect the amendments approved by Council.

This motion shall be deemed to have been moved and approved if any Constitutional amendment at this meeting is moved and carried.

Constitutional Amendment Motion:

“This Council empowers the Clerk of Council to rename, reorder and renumber Constitutional clauses, and remove invalid references, as appropriate, to reflect the amendments approved by the Statutory Meeting of the Students’ Union Council, held on 5 December 2022.”

Enabling Motion (Referendum)

Enabling motion to conduct a Referendum on to ratify Constitutional amendments approved at the Statutory Meeting of Council.

This motion shall be deemed to have been moved and approved if any Constitutional amendment at this meeting is moved and carried.

Referendum Motion:

“A Referendum shall take place, via by a secret ballot of all student members on QUBSU.org, on by end of the Teaching Week period in December 2022, at a date and time to be determined by the Returning Officer.

The purpose of this Referendum shall be to ratify those amendments to the Students’ Union Constitution and its Rules that have been approved by the Students’ Union Council during the Statutory Meeting of the Students’ Union Council, held on 5 December 2022”

5. Constitutional Amendments/Rule Amendments

SUC/P/22/62

5.1 An amendment to change the current Full-Time Student Officer posts to be as follows and allocate responsibilities accordingly amongst the Full-Time Student Officer posts:

Union President
 Student Officer Undergraduate Education
 Student Officer Postgraduate Education
 Student Officer Equality and Wellbeing
 Student Officer Community and Climate

Student Officer International

This amendment removes the Part-Time Student Officer posts of International Students' Officer and Environmental Officer. These roles shall be changed to such that they lead Student Associations.

This amendment updates the structures of internal Students' Union committees to reflect the changes to Student Officer roles and responsibilities.

This amendment gives all members of the Executive Management Committee greater responsibility for supporting underrepresented and disadvantaged groups to as the issues these groups face fall under the remit of different Student Officers.

This amendment gives all members of the Executive Management Committee greater responsibility for promoting wellbeing, welfare, and student mental health as these issues relate to all Student Officer areas of work.

The motion was amended as follows:

Replace the role of Vice President Education with Student Officer Undergraduate Education

Replace the role of Vice President Postgraduate with Student Officer Postgraduate Education

Rename the role of Vice President Campaigns and Engagement to Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement

Rename the role of Vice President Equality and Diversity to Student Officer Equality and Diversity

Rename the role of Vice President Welfare to Student Officer Welfare.

All Sabbatical Student Officers to be considered as Vice Presidents of the Union (i.e., major office holders of the Union)

Each Executive Management Committee Officer shall take an active role in representing the interests of under-represented or disadvantaged student groups as it relates to their roles.

Each Executive Management Committee Officer shall take an active role in promoting student wellbeing, welfare, and student mental health as it relates to their roles.

The Union President shall have responsibility for identifying priority campaigns and developing strategy for priority campaigns.

The Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement shall have primary responsibility for good community cohesion externally and shall be the primary contact with residents' associations.

Update references to Committees of Council to reflect the changes to Student Officer roles and responsibilities.

[The motion was debated and amended.]

The constitutional amendment was carried.

The Council approved an enabling motion to authorise the Clerk of Council to composite the amendments approved at the meeting such that invalid references were removed from the text of the Constitution and to provide the text to the Returning Officer for a referendum.

- 5.2 An amendment to formally reflect in the Constitution the Students' Union role in academic representation in the University:

This amendment formally includes the Union's role in academic representation in the Constitution, including referencing the agreed Student Academic Representation Code of Practice.

This amendment removes duplication of text in the Constitution, creates a single role description for all Faculty Representatives, and gives clearer guidance on the election of Faculty Representatives.

This amendment maintains Faculty Representative attendance at meetings of the Executive Management Committee and full membership of the Students' Union Council.

[The motion was debated.]

The constitutional amendment was carried.

5.3 An amendment to establish Student Associations to replace the existing Part-Time Student Officer representative structure:

This amendment shall:

- Replace current Part-Time Student Officer Structure with a set of “student-led associations”, with the associations acting as a community and campaigning body for each group of students, which will be formally supported by the Students' Union.
- Provide for the Chairperson of each association to be elected across the student body as is the case with the current Part-Time Student Officers.
- Provide for the Chairperson of each association to be entitled to attend EMC and be a full member of the Council as is the case with the current Part-Time Student Officers.
- Remove a series of student networks and forums which will broadly be replaced by new structures
- Replace two Part-Time Student Officer positions on the Students' Union Management Board with two additional representatives from the Students' Union Council.

[The motion was debated.]

The constitutional amendment was carried.

5.4 An amendment to establish campaign coordinating and organising committees in the Students' Union:

This amendment shall:

Establish a set of formal organising committee structures shall be created to maintain links between Student Associations and Council and the Executive Management Committee.

Establish a structure for student-led campaigns to connect with Student Officers and campaign committees in the Students' Union.

Provide a structure for established student-led campaigns to be recognised and receive support from the Students' Union, through Student Societies.

[The motion was debated.]

The constitutional amendment was carried.

6. BUSINESS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Recognition of Clubs & Societies

The following applications for recognition were considered by the Standing Committee when it met on 30 November 2022:

- 6.1.1 Queen's University Belfast Animal Law Society (Society)
- 6.1.2 Queen's University Belfast Arab Society (Society)
- 6.1.3 Queen's University Belfast Taylor Swift Society (Society)
- 6.1.4 Queen's University Belfast We are Donors Fionntán Society (Society)
- 6.1.5 Queen's University Belfast Women in Engineering Society (Society)
- 6.1.6 Queen's University Belfast Royal Navy Unit Society (Society)

Emma, Students' Union President updated Council that all applications had completed required documentation and met the criteria in the Constitution to be considered for recognition.

She further stated that The Committee considered the application individually and met with representative from each group and finally noted that the Standing Committee recommends that Council formally recognise these groups as official Clubs and Societies, categorised as follows:

Queen's University Belfast Animal Law Society (General Interest Society)
 Queen's University Belfast Arab Society (Cultural Society)
 Queen's University Belfast Taylor Swift Society (General Interest Society)
 Queen's University Belfast We are Donors Fionntán Society (General Interest Society)
 Queen's University Belfast Women in Engineering Society (Academic Society)
 Queen's University Belfast Royal Navy Unit Society (General Interest Society)

The SU President proposed voting on the Societies as a block, which was agreed by the Council.

Following a vote, there were equal votes in favour and against. Following some discussion, there was a recount vote, with equal votes in favour and against.

The Speaker of Council voted in support of the proposed ratifications.

The above Clubs & Societies were ratified.

The guillotine fell and all remaining agenda items were deferred to the fourth statutory meeting of Student Council on Thursday 26th of January 2023.

7. Business for Discussion

- 7.1 Cost of Living Crisis – Update and Discussion
- 7.2 University and College Union (UCU) – Industrial Action Update
- 7.3 2022-23 Academic Year – Issues / Concerns
- 7.4 Students' Union Democracy Review – Update
- 7.5 Students' Union (Building) – Update
- 7.6 Students' Union Mental Health Activity - Update
- 7.7 Students' Union Strategic Plan 2020-25 – Update

8. Bye-Elections

Council is asked to note that, following a bye-election, the Councillors named below have been elected to the Students' Union Standing Committee:

Nadine Curtis and Ali Gardezi

9. Elections

There are none.

10. Motions

10.1 **Bereavement Leave for Postgraduate Research Students**

This Council notes that:

Postgraduate Research (PGR) students in receipt of funding are currently (in many cases) ineligible for bereavement leave during their time of study and that the only option available for many PGR students who suffer a bereavement and who need to take leave from their studies for the duration of the bereavement period is to request a Leave of Absence.

This Council further notes that:

Taking a Leave of Absence results in not only the student's research programme being placed on hold for the duration of the Leave, but also is their funding withheld; this funding includes their stipend that is necessary for supporting their livelihood throughout their research programme (which they are effectively conducting as a full-time job).

This Council regrets that:

Northern Ireland employment law only guarantees employees statutory leave without pay for a reasonable period for bereavement but praises the fact that employees may at least be granted paid bereavement leave as part of their employment contracts.

This Council believes that:

Bereavement leave is a necessary right to allow students time to grieve the loss of a loved one and that this is especially prudent in the case of PGR students considering the nature of their work.

This Council mandates:

The VP Postgraduate to investigate methods allowing PGR students to be eligible for bereavement leave by ensuring that their stipends may be funded during said leave.

Proposer: Matthew McCallion (PG School Rep, Law)

Seconder: Jamie-Lukas Campbell (Student Officer Postgraduate)

10.2 **QUB Lecture Delivery – More Flexibility for Students**

This Council mandates the Students' Union to:

Coordinate the academic reps to campaign for a lunch period to be included in the daily lecture timetable for students to prevent long multi-hour lectures taking place during lunch periods.

The Students' Union to resource, or to seek University funding for, the provision of free tea and coffee for students across campus when they are on-site for long periods.

Proposer: Hany Bahgat (EPS PG Taught Faculty Representative)

Secunder: TBC

10.3 **Queen's Accommodation Charges and Fees**

Council Notes:

1. That QSU is engaged in a cost of living campaign in the face of cost of living crisis facing society.
2. That Queen's Accommodation has assisted in this campaign by removing certain fees and fines.
3. That many residents of Queen's Accommodation are first year students living away from the family home for the first time.

Council Further Notes:

1. That certain costs of Queen's Accommodation are presently quite high. These include, but are not limited to, laundry and vending machines on-site.
2. That residents of BT9 - Willow Walk are entitled to a statement at the half-term updating them on their energy usage, which is measured by an energy meter, and they have not as-of-yet received this.

Council Therefore Mandates:

1. That QSU lobbies to seek a reduction on price for laundry and the usage of vending machines for Queen's Accommodation residents.
2. That QSU lobbies for residents to receive their energy statements.

Proposed: Eoin Ussher (Student Councillor)

Secunder: Beth Elder (Student Officer Education)

11. Report of the Management Board and Recommendations

11.1 Report of the Management Board

There was none.

12. Report of the Executive Management Committee and Recommendations

12.1 Report of the Executive Management Committee

12.2 Report of the Union President (November 2022) SUC/P/22/63

12.3 Report of the Vice President Campaigns and Engagement (Nov 2022) SUC/P/22/64

12.4 Report of the Vice President Education (November 2022) SUC/P/22/65

12.5 Report of the Vice President Equality & Diversity (November 2022) SUC/P/22/66

12.6 Report of the Vice President Postgraduate (November 2022) SUC/P/22/67

13. Reports from other Union Committees and Recommendations

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| 13.1 | Report of the Standing Committee (9 November 2022) | SUC/P/22/68 |
| 13.2 | Report of the Standing Committee (30 November 2022) | SUC/P/22/69 |
| 13.3 | Report of the Environmental & Ethical Committee (11 Nov 2022) | SUC/P/22/70 |

14. Reports from University Committees

There are none.

15. Constitutional Questions

There are none.

16. Questions (to Elected Student Representatives)

There are none.

17. Any Other Competent Business

There is none.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THE STUDENTS' UNION COUNCIL

An extraordinary meeting of Council will be held via MS Teams on Wednesday 7th December 2022.

The fourth Meeting of the Students' Union Council 2022-23 will take place Thursday 26th of January 2023 at 5.00p.m. in Blue Sky Room, Level 1, Queen's Students' Union.