

SUC/A/25/2

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION

To: Members of the Students' Union Council

Dear Councillor,

Please attend the fifth Statutory Meeting of the 2024-25 Students' Union Council, to be held on Tuesday 11 February 2025 at 5.00 pm in Elmwood Hall.

Yours sincerely,

DAMIEN CORRIDAN

Clerk to the Students' Union Council

AGENDA

FIRST CIRCULATION

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of Previous Meetings
 - 2.1 Statutory Meeting of Wednesday 22 January 2025 SUC/M/25/1
3. Business Arising from the Minutes
 - 3.1 Process for Selecting Delegates to National Union Conferences
 - 3.2 Review by the Proposal Support Committee of Policy Scheduled to Lapse
 - 3.3 Students' Union Strategic Plan 2025-30 - Update
4. Communications
 - 4.1 Condolences
 - 4.2 National Students' Unions – Update
 - 4.3 SU Elections 2024-25 – Update
 - 4.4 Student Council Membership – Update
5. Constitutional Amendments/Rule Amendments

There are none.
6. Business for Consideration

6.1 The Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement, as Chairperson of the Clubs and Societies Committee, has tabled the following Clubs and Societies to be considered for recognition by the Council:

6.1.1 Ulster Scots Society

6.1.2 European Law Students' Association Society

6.1.3 Slavic and Balkan Society

The Clubs and Societies Committee has not been in a position to meet and consider new Club and Society proposals since the most recent meeting of Council. As required, the groups detailed above have submitted:

- *The names and student numbers of the Student Members submitting the application.*
- *A draft constitution for the proposed Club or Society.*
- *A development plan (including a proposed budget) for the Club or Society.*
- *The names and student numbers of fifteen registered students of the University who support recognition of the Club or Society.*

At the meeting of Council, each proposed group shall make a brief presentation to Council on their application and shall be available to provide clarifications and answer any questions that may arise concerning their application.

Council shall then be asked to consider recognition of each group, and if recognised, assign one of the following categories to each group – based on the group's aims and objectives: General Interest; Academic; Cultural; Religious; Political; Charitable; Campaigning; or Sporting Club.

The Council shall not grant recognition to any Club or Society if its:

- *Aims or objectives are contrary to the Charter and Statutes of the University, or the Students' Union Constitution or Constitutional Rules.*
- *Aims or objectives are similar in nature to an existing Club or Society.*

6.2 Policy Updates – Policies Approved by Student Ideas Submission

The following new Students' Union policies were considered by the new Student Ideas Submission process since the last meeting of Council, with voting on proposals taking place from Tuesday 14 January – Tuesday 28 January 2025. The number of students participating was 561.

Ideas approved shall be discussed by Council to consider the next steps to progress policies. Councillors will be asked for feedback on the approved policies and be asked to indicate which policies should be prioritised for action.

Other ideas shall be referred to the Proposal Support Committee (PSC) of Council for further consideration.

Title	Votes	For	Against	% For	% Against	Status
Free Public Transport and University Transport for All Students	490	483	7	98.6%	1.4%	APPROVED
Broaden the Variety of Food Available on Campus	358	343	15	95.8%	4.2%	APPROVED
Increased Seating and Facilities for Packed Lunches	328	308	20	93.9%	6.1%	APPROVED
Charging Stations in the Students' Union and McClay Library	344	322	22	93.6%	6.4%	APPROVED

Better Mapping of the QUB Campus	307	276	31	89.9%	10.1%	APPROVED
Water Fountain and Refill Station in the Medical Biology Centre (MBC)	280	249	31	88.9%	11.1%	APPROVED
Allow Cash Payments in the Union Bar and SU Shop	351	307	44	87.5%	12.5%	APPROVED
More Designated Disabled Parking Near QUB Buildings	246	211	35	85.8%	14.2%	APPROVED
Introduce White Lines in the Parking Spaces Along Elmwood Avenue	247	203	44	82.2%	17.8%	APPROVED
Hold More Events for Non-Traditional Students Throughout the Academic Year	219	175	44	79.9%	20.1%	APPROVED
Host Animal Therapy Relaxation Events in the Students' Union	281	215	66	76.5%	23.5%	APPROVED
Organise a Cultural Fusion Festival	229	175	54	76.4%	23.6%	APPROVED
Install Student Lockers in Lecture Buildings	273	197	76	72.2%	27.8%	REFER TO PSC
Build a Multistorey Carpark on Campus	349	179	170	51.3%	48.7%	REFER TO PSC
More Accessibility and Higher Profiles for Student Reps	192	73	119	38.0%	62.0%	REFER TO PSC
Hold a Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) Night with Students as the Competitors	221	71	150	32.1%	67.9%	REFER TO PSC

6.2.1 Free Public Transport and University Transport for All Students

Idea Summary

Make public transport and University transport free to all students.

Benefits

Saves students money as they do not have to pay for transport (buses / taxis, etc.)

Encourages use of sustainable public transport instead of private cars, which have positive environmental and traffic congestion impacts.

Students save time as they must walk less between campus and their accommodation, allowing more time for study, extracurricular activities and part-time work.

Supports students with mobility issues.

Improved student safety as students have access to secure regular transport options.

Challenges

There would be a substantial cost incurred to subsidising public transport for tens of thousands of university students in Northern Ireland, which would possibly require additional funding from government or another source.

A separate free service may not have the frequency, routes or availability that can be provided by a fee charging service with the current public transport model in Northern Ireland.

Agreeing priority transport routes could be difficult as some students will not benefit.

Students are discouraged to walk, which may have some negative health impacts.

If students are taking a bus instead of walking, overall student carbon emissions would increase.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will develop an outline plan and begin researching potential funding options.

6.2.2 Broaden the Variety of Food Available on Campus

Idea Summary

Introduce more variety and variation in the food offering from food outlets on campus.

Benefits

Greater variety of food, and increased healthy options, with less westernised 'fast food'.

More enjoyable mealtimes and exposure to new food types and new genres of cooking.

Greater coordination between food outlets on campus can reduce duplication in menus.

Potential to encourage students to submit menu ideas and recipes.

Menus better reflect eating habits of international students.

Challenges

More broad menus and more food varieties may increase cost of meals.

Fear of financial risk for food outlets if new menus do not sell well.

Some students have developed a preference for the current menu offerings.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will seek a review of food offerings from QUB and external food outlets on campus, which will include variety of food offering and the variety of dietary options (e.g. vegan, pescatarian).

The Students' Union will also identify any existing market research that exists within the University about current students' food preferences.

6.2.3 Increased Seating and Facilities for Packed Lunches

Idea Summary

Provide more seating and kitchen facilities in the SU and MBC to accommodate students bringing packed lunches.

Benefits

Helps students save money by bringing, and heating, their own meals.

Encourages students to spend time on campus and socialise without spending money.

Increases available social seating space on campus.

Supports students from lower-income backgrounds and those who commute.

Challenges

May require additional fit-out of spaces on campus.

Spaces will require maintenance to keep them clean and in good working order.

It may be difficult to add microwave / hot water facilities to some social areas on campus.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will approach the University to increase availability of microwave and tea/coffee making facilities in the MBC and the McClay Library, and work to increase available seating in these areas and in the Students' Union.

6.2.4 Charging Stations in the Students' Union and McClay Library

Idea Summary

Introduce secure charging stations in the Students' Union and McClay Library for students who do not have personal chargers with them on campus.

Benefits

Access to secure phone and laptop charging facilities if students do not have a charger to hand.

Alternative to finding and using wall sockets for charging phones and laptops in the University.

Students can have access to multiple charging locations on campus.

Potential to increase availability of charging points across campus.

Challenges

Likely to be a cost to procuring and installing securing charging stations.

Use of charging stations will incur a recurring energy cost for the Students' Union.

Suitable locations will have to be identified.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will identify potential locations for charging stations in the Students' Union area and develop a plan to procure charging stations.

The Students' Union will propose potential locations for charging stations elsewhere on campus, including the McClay Library.

6.2.5 Better Mapping of the QUB Campus

Idea Summary

Improve the available maps of the campus so students can find buildings, classrooms and meeting rooms with ease.

Benefits

Easier navigation of campus for students and visitors, especially when at the start of a semester when they are unfamiliar with locations or classrooms.

Maps available on the QUB App and on timetables.

Challenges

Requires digital mapping of campus and integration with QUB App and other online services.

Development of digital maps may be time consuming and have a resource cost to the University.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union put identify any current plans to improve campus mapping and navigation and will develop a proposal for the University where there are gaps in current plans.

6.2.6 Water Fountain and Refill Station in the Medical Biology Centre (MBC)

Idea Summary

Increase availability and awareness of water fountains and water refill stations in the Medical Biology Centre (MBC).

Benefits

Free access to drinking water for students and staff, removing the need to purchase bottled water.

Encourages personal hydration and positive wellbeing.

Reduces environmental waste through a reduction of single use plastic bottles.

Challenges

Likely to be a cost to procuring and installing securing water stations.

Suitable locations will have to be identified, with appropriate plumbing infrastructure.

Use of water stations will incur recurring energy and maintenance costs for the University.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will identify potential locations for additional water stations in the MBC and propose options to the University's Estates Directorate.

6.2.7 Allow Cash Payments in the Union Bar and SU Shop

Idea Summary

Cash payments, along with digital payments, to be accepted in the SU Shop and the Union Bar.

Benefits

Allows students to spend cash received (from work and family) in the SU Shop and the Union Bar.

Student do not have to go elsewhere to lodge cash or spend their physical notes and coins.

Students without access to digital banking or without bank accounts can make purchases in the Union Bar and SU Shop.

Potential increase in staff/student employment to process cash transactions.

Challenges

Will require new till systems to be installed in the SU Shop and Union Bar, which will have a cost and could lead to higher prices.

Will require additional cash handling and cash management processes to be introduced in the Students' Union.

Most students generally have bank accounts or digital banking, which may result in cash payments having a high transaction cost for the Students' Union.

The University is generally moving away from cash-based transactions across campus.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will present an outline proposal to the University, detailing how cash transactions could be introduced in the Students' Union.

6.2.8 More Designated Disabled Parking Near QUB Buildings

Idea Summary

Increase the availability of disabled parking near the entrances to QUB buildings.

Benefits

Increased accessibility to campus for disabled students, particularly those have additional mobility requirements.

Easier to attend classes and saves time as there is greater assurance of appropriate parking.

Promotes a culture of equality.

Challenges

Limited parking currently available for conversion to designated disabled parking.

Belfast City Council, the Department of Infrastructure and the University would most likely all have to support proposals.

Identifying appropriate parking spaces outside all buildings could be difficult.

It may take time to implement if formal planning approval is required from Belfast City Council.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will present an outline proposal to the University and ask the University's Estates team to identify current disabled parking near campus, and potential options for new parking.

The Students' Union will approach Belfast City Council to identify and future plans they have to improve disabled parking available in the Queen's area of Belfast.

6.2.9 Introduce White Lines in the Parking Spaces Along Elmwood Avenue

Idea Summary

Create clearly identifiable parking spaces (with white lines) on Elmwood Avenue (beside the Students' Union) to make more efficient use of parking space.

Benefits

Maximises the number of cars that can make use of the limited number of parking space beside the Students' Union.

Increased parking availability will reduce the number of students parking in unsuitable locations

Encourages safer parking, within defined boundaries.

Students have shorter distances to walk, including those with mobility issues.

Challenges

There may be a cost to Belfast City Council or the Department of Infrastructure if parking is formalised.

The process may also require additional planning permission.

Creation of defined parking spaces may encourage the local authorities to introduce paid street parking.

Those parking inappropriately outside defined parking spaces could incur a fine.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will develop an outline plan and present it to the University's Estates Directorate for support and the approach the relevant Belfast City Council authorities.

6.2.10 Hold More Events for Non-Traditional Students Throughout the Academic Year

Idea Summary

Provide more support and development opportunities to students from non-traditional backgrounds throughout the year, not just focusing on the first few weeks of the year.

Benefits

Gives non-traditional students, such as student parents & carers, mature students, returners to education, widening participation students and disabled students, time and space to adjust to university life and then access student opportunities and support when they need it.

Students have opportunities to apply for programmes and find out about activities throughout the year.

Students may avail of information sessions about university services and supports (such as the library and study skills sessions) throughout the year.

Greater participation in campus life by students from non-traditional backgrounds.

Generally, a more inclusive approach to student life in the University.

Increased opportunities for non-traditional students to connect with students from similar backgrounds.

Reduced stress for students at the beginning of the academic year.

Challenges

Requires greater coordination and more detailed scheduling of activities, programmes and events across all departments on campus.

Additional resources may be required to hold additional events or run additional programmes.

Mapping the timing of activities to individual students' academic calendars.

Greater central coordination of welcome and induction activities and communications for students would be required.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will develop a specific set of proposed changes to university 'welcome & induction', support services and opportunities and present these to the University.

The Students' Union will review its own programmes and services to make them more accessible to non-traditional students.

6.2.11 Host Animal Therapy Relaxation Events in the Students' Union

Idea Summary

Use animal therapy events as a form of mental health and relaxation support in the Students' Union.

Benefits

Stress and anxiety reduction through interaction with therapy animals, which is known to reduce human anxiety levels.

Social interaction and mental health awareness through events where students spend time with animals.

Could be used during exam periods to provide stress relief.

Challenges

Events would require resourcing and a suitable external partner to provide animals.

Regular events would be logistically challenging to organise.

Health and safety of students and therapy animals would need to be managed.

External partner organisation will need to prioritise animal welfare which will limit engagement with animals.

“Paws & Relax” and “puppy petting” events can be stressful for animals if not conducted properly.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will develop an outline plan for hosting animal therapy events and will work to identify a suitable external animal welfare partner organisation to support such events.

6.2.12 Organise a Cultural Fusion Festival

Idea Summary

Organise a festival each semester that celebrates the diverse cultural backgrounds of students and staff.

Benefits

Creates a greater sense of community on campus, improving awareness inclusivity and understanding amongst different cultures and traditions.

Potentially reduces 'homesickness' as international students will see visible representations of their home cultures.

Skills development and networking opportunities for students participating in festival organisation.

Adds to campus life by providing a series of notable and exciting events.

Challenges

Organisation of a festival would require additional funding and resourcing.

Support and 'buy-in' from existing cultural groups on campus is required.

Events may duplicate existing cultural activities on campus.

Organising a festival every semester would require a large time commitment from students.

Substantial coordination effort required by those involved.

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will approach existing cultural Societies and community groups on campus, and relevant University departments, to determine appetite for such a festival and identify potential resources and coordination support.

7. Business for Discussion

Councillors are invited to raise any relevant issues for discussion under agenda items 7.1 – 7.3.

7.1 Cost of Living Crisis – Updates

7.2 QUB Academic / Support Services Issues – Updates

7.3 Students' Union Mental Health Activity – Updates

7.4 QUB Review of the Academic Year Structure – SU Council Input

8. Bye-Elections

There are none.

9. Elections

There are none.

10. Motions

10.1 **Appointment of Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner**

This Council notes the appointment of the New Veterans Commissioner, David Johnstone, and congratulate him on his recent appointment.

Proposer: Jay Basra (Student Councillor)

Seconder: Georgia McIlroy (Student)

10.2 **Continued Action Against Period Poverty**

This Council to mandate continued lobbying efforts to combat period poverty nationally. Moreover, this Council mandates that the QSU works with the Schools to increase the amount of period products available across the Queen's campus, as well as the student centre. Some female students have complained of a lack of access. Without access to these products, it will detrimentally effect students' attendance to their classes. Especially during the winter months, with the cost of fuel and living, we must support students in any way we can. An example of a lack access is the MBC building.

Proposer: Jay Basra (Student Councillor)

Seconder: Georgia McIlroy (Student)

10.3 **Council Recognition of Burn's Night/Supper**

This Council to mandate that the QSU recognises Burn's Night/Supper. A famous Scottish poet who wrote in Scots, a language linked strongly with the Ulster-Scots Heritage and Language. It would mean a lot to both Ulster-Scots and Scottish Students if the QUBSU recognised this event with a social media post and some awareness about local celebrations.

Proposer: Jay Basra (Student Councillor)

Seconder: Georgia McIlroy (Student)

11. Report of the Management Board and Recommendations

- 11.1 Report of the Management Board
- 12. Report of the Executive Management Committee and Recommendations
- 12.1 Report of the Executive Management Committee
- 12.2 Report of the Union President (January 2025)
- 12.3 Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (January 2025)
- 12.4 Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (January 2025)
- 12.5 Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate Education (January 2025)
- 12.6 Report of the Student Officer Undergraduate Education (January 2025)
- 12.7 Report of the Student Officer Welfare (January 2025)
- 13. Reports from other Union Committees and Recommendations
- 13.1 Report of the Undergraduate Education Committee
- 13.2 Report of the Postgraduate Education Committee
- 13.3 Report of the Proposal Support Committee
- 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
- 18. Date of Annual Business Meeting of the Students' Union Council
Monday 24 March 2025 at 5.00 p.m. in The Cube, Level One, Students' Union.

Business Agenda Deadline: Thursday 13 March 2025, 9.00 a.m.

Constitutional Amendments Deadline: Monday 24 February 2025, 9.00 a.m.