**QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS’ UNION**

**MINUTES**

Statutory Meeting of the Students’ Union Council

held on 22 January 2025 at 5.00pm in Elmwood Hall, Elmwood Avenue.

**Present:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Alex Sheridan | Undergraduate Faculty Representative Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) |
| Anna McDermott | Postgraduate School Rep School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics (SHAPP) |
| Amy Smith | Student Officer Postgraduate Education  |
| Ash Caufield | Chairperson Trans Students’ Association |
| Ayyan Nomani | EPS Representative (Undergraduate) |
| Beth Elder | Chairperson Environmental Action Students’ Association |
| Callum Smith | Postgraduate Research Faculty Representative Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) |
| Durgadas Bindhu Rajendran | Postgraduate Representative |
| Eli McBriarty | Student Officer Undergraduate Education  |
| Elizabeth Hartley | Chairperson Disabled Students’ Association |
| Emily Burke | Chairperson Women Students’ Association |
| Florence Diana Charles | Postgraduate Representative |
| Himanshu Betude | Undergraduate School Representative School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering (SMAE) |
| Jack Lydon | Chairperson LGBT+ Students’ Association |
| Jamie Lukas Campbell | Postgraduate Research Faculty Representative Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) |
| Jess Hindley | Student Officer Welfare |
| Joel Sheridan | Undergraduate School Representative School of Natural and Built Environment (SNBE) |
| Kieran Minto | Students’ Union President  |
| Lewis Robinson | Undergraduate School Representative School of Law (SLAW) |
| Matthew McCallion | Postgraduate Representative (Union Speaker, in the Chair) |
| Michael E. Loughran | Undergraduate Faculty Representative Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) |
| Nadine Curtis | Undergraduate Faculty Representative Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) |
| Phyu Sin Win Win Han | AHSS Representative (Undergraduate) |
| Robbie Mitchell | Undergraduate School Representative School of Chemistry & Chemical Engineering (SCHEM) |
| Rory Brolly | AHSS Representative (Undergraduate) |
| Sajid Khan | Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement  |
| Sophie-Jean Knox | EPS Representative (Undergraduate) |
| Souhardya Datta | Postgraduate Representative |
| Suyi Yang | Student Officer Equality and Diversity  |
| Swati Joshi | Undergraduate School Representative School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences (SMED) |
| Taha Tajamul | International Student Representative (including INTO) |
| Tan Jia Jun | AHSS Representative (Undergraduate) |
| Taylor Montgomery | Postgraduate School Rep School of Law (SLAW) |
| Tiarna O'Neill | Chairperson Irish Language Students’ Association |
| Tom Bloomer | UG School Representative School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science (SEECS) |

**In Attendance:**

DAMIEN CORRIDAN (CLERK OF COUNCIL)

BARRY CRUICKSHANK (REPRESENTATION SUPPORT OFFICER)

ANNA LEAHY (ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION ASSISTANT)

The Speaker of Council welcomed all attendees to the third Statutory Meeting of the 2024-25 session of the Students’ Union Council.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received for the following Councillors:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Connor Darragh | Undergraduate School Representative School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics (SHAPP) |
| Gokul Menon | Postgraduate School Rep Queen's Business School (SMGT) |
| Himanshu Ranjit Jain | Postgraduate School Rep School of Pharmacy (SPMY) |
| Saffron Baker | Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) |

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

2.1 Minutes of Statutory Meeting of 3 December 2024 SUC/M/24/6

It was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of 3 December 2024 (SUC/M/24/6) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Amendments to the Constitution (as approved at the December Meeting) – Update

The amendments to the Constitution (as detailed in paper SUC/P/24/58) approved at the December Statutory Meeting of Council were endorsed by the student members of the Union by means of Referendum held on 10 – 12 December 2024 and subsequently approved by Management Board on Tuesday 17 December 2024. The amendments to Student Officer roles take effect for the SU Elections 2025.

4. Communications

4.1 Condolences

Kieran, Students’ Union President Updated Council that there had been a student fatality since the last meeting of Student Council and as a mark of respect would like to honour this individual with a moments’ silence.

Council would like to remember:

* Samuel Dawson

4.2 National Students’ Unions – Updates

Ben Friel, the NUS-USI President gave Council an overview and update on NUS-USI, what they do, and what they are currently working on.

Recent activities reported on included:

* Meeting with 10 MLAs
* Lobbying around housing and student maintenance funding
* Gave written statements to the Economy Committee
* Raised concerns around the NI HE funding review
* Participating in the NUS Campaigns Exchange event

Current areas of campaign focus are:

* Fair pay for everyone
* Fix EMA
* Continuing Housing Work
* North-South Mobility
* HE Funding Review

4.3 Student Leader Elections 2024-25 – Update

Council noted that nominations for SU Elections 2024-25 opened on Thursday 29 December 2024 and shall close on Thursday 30 January 2025 at 5.00 p.m. Polling shall take place from Monday 3 March – Thursday 6 March 2025.

4.4 Student Council Membership – Update

Council acknowledged that the current membership of the QSU Student Council stands at 79 members.

The Union Speaker departed the meeting, with the Union President assuming the chair.

5. Constitutional Amendments/Rule Amendments

 There were none.

6. Business for Consideration

6.1 Recognition of Clubs & Societies

The following applications for recognition were considered by the Clubs and Societies Committee when it met on 14 January 2025:

6.1.1 QUB AMICUS Society (Academic Society)

6.1.2 QUB Racial Equality Student Society (General Interest Society)

6.1.3 QUB Commercial Awareness Society (Academic Society)

6.1.4 QUB Scream Queens Society (General Interest Society)

6.1.5 QUB Sudanese Society (Cultural Society)

6.1.6 QUB Indian Society (Cultural Club)

6.1.7 QUB Psychology Research Collective Society (Academic Society)

6.1.8 QUB Latin American Society (Cultural Society)

Sajid Khan, Clubs and Societies Committee Chair updated Council that all applications had completed required documentation and met the criteria in the Constitution to be considered for recognition.

He further stated that The Committee considered the application and met with representatives from each group and finally noted that the Clubs Societies Committee recommends that Council formally recognise these group as an official Clubs and Society, categorised as follows:

* QUB AMICUS Society (Academic Society)
* QUB Racial Equality Student Society (General Interest Society)
* QUB Commercial Awareness Society (Academic Society)
* QUB Scream Queens Society (General Interest Society)
* QUB Sudanese Society (Cultural Society)
* QUB Indian Society (Cultural Club)
* QUB Psychology Research Collective Society (Academic Society)
* QUB Latin American Society (Cultural Society)

Following a vote, the above Clubs & Societies were ratified.

6.2 Process for Selecting Delegates to National Union Conferences

Council noted that the National Union of Students no longer holds an annual NUS UK Conference and has removed the requirement for NUS-USI to elect delegates for the NUS-USI Conference, preferring in instead for member unions to develop local arrangements for appointing representatives at their conference, with a preference for national union representation activity being assigned to existing roles in member unions.

Council further noted that:

* The Union of Students’ Union Ireland does not place a requirement on members unions to elect delegates to USI Congress.
* Many elected delegates to national conferences have not attended conferences, at a financial and representational cost to the Students’ Union.

Council agreed that:

* The current provisions in the Students’ Union Constitution concerning the election of delegates to national union conferences was no longer applicable as the national unions no longer required elected delegates.
* As an interim measure, delegate positions will be allocated to Full-Time Student Officer roles in the first instance, with remaining vacancies put to election amongst student representatives in the Students’ Union, with the electorate comprising student representatives in the Students’ Union.
* Council shall, at a later date, develop formal proposals for appointment of national conference delegates and consider any relevant constitutional amendments.

6.3 Review by the Proposal Support Committee of Policy Scheduled to Lapse

Council agreed to delegate to the Proposal Support Committee a review of the Union's policies set to expire at the end of the 2024-25 academic year, focusing on policy duplication, relevance, and accessibility of language. The Committee shall report back with recommendations for amendments to policy, which will be considered by a Statutory Meeting of Council for final decision on which policies to update, repeal, or allow to lapse, subject to the Committee's recommendations being limited to format and administrative changes.

7. Business for Discussion

*Councillors were invited to raise any relevant issues for discussion under agenda items 7.1-7.3.*

7.1 Cost of Living Crisis – Updates

QSU Free Meals and Giveaways

Kieran Minto, Students’ Union President, updated the Council that the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team had run the Warm Up With Us initiative in partnership with Queen's, giving out 3,119 free meals to students that year, Suyi further updated that this is part of our larger campaign to help students with the cost-of-living crisis.

Kieran further updated that this was part of their larger campaign to help students during the Cost of Living Crisis.

Free lunch had been given out in the Students’ Union Foyer on the following days:

* Tues 12 Nov: Warming stew with a crusty roll and yummy biscuits
* Wed 13 Nov: Soup with a crusty roll, fruit and cheese
* Thurs 14 Nov: Tasty meal deal (wrap/sandwich, crisps, fruit, treat) and carton of juice
* Tues 19 Nov: Delicious chicken curry with rice and naan bread, and chocolate truffles
* Wed 20 Nov: Soup with a crusty roll, fruit and cheese
* Thurs 21 Nov: Tasty meal deal (wrap/sandwich, crisps, fruit, treat) and carton of juice

Kieran further updated that The Students’ Union Mental Health and Wellbeing team are providing free breakfast over four days in February from SU Foyer.

**Free Breakfasts overview**

Provide circa 5,000 free breakfasts across four days at the end of February. Dates are 21, 22, 27 and 28 February, 8.00am to 11.00am each day.

Summary of the campaign:

* Substantial breakfast provided to students which includes food that can be taken and eaten later – such as: overnight oats, pancakes, yogurts, flapjacks/cereal bars, Danishes, and fruit.
* Internal services presence to signpost other offerings to support students (SU Advice, Disability & Wellbeing, Careers, Employability & Skills, and Learning Development Service).
* Blackbullion cards and Cost-of-Living support cards will be given to each student which contain QR codes that link to QUB and QSU support pages. Signposting to The Pantry.
* Use 2 x large boards link between food and mood to be highlighted with an additional focus on mental health maintenance and support available, especially during the winter months.
* Giveaway of a large number of practical items to support students to stay warm.

7.2 QUB Academic / Support Services Issues – Updates

QUB Academic Year Structure Review

Kieran Minto, Students’ Union President, informed Council that the Students' Union is collaborating closely with the University on a comprehensive review of the QUB Academic Year Structure. This initiative emphasises optimising assessment periods and reimagining Semester 3 to better support and enhance the overall student experience.

No other issues raised by Councillors at this time.

7.3 Students’ Union Mental Health Activity – Updates

Kieran Minto, Students’ Union President further updated Council that the Mental Health and Wellbeing Social Prescriber, Elaine Reid has reported her findings from the first cohort of social prescribing students indicated that 100% of participants found the programme useful.

Queen’s Students’ Union is the first union in the UK and Ireland to appoint a Social Prescriber.

7.4 Students’ Union Strategic Plan 2025-2030 – Council Discussion

In a productive discussion led by Queen's Students' Union President, Kieran Minto, councillors actively participated in a spirited discussion regarding the forthcoming 2025-2030 Students' Union Strategic Plan. Councillors expressed a wide array of ideas and concerns that they felt were crucial for consideration, including the need for enhanced mental health resources, increased support for underrepresented groups, improved sustainability initiatives, and expanded opportunities for student engagement in governance.

The dialogue was marked by enthusiastic contributions, with councillors emphasising the importance of fostering a vibrant campus culture, addressing academic pressures, and developing stronger connections between students and local communities.

The contributions by Councillors shall be incorporated into the development of a draft Strategic Plan, which will be presented for consideration to a future meeting of Council.

8. Bye-Elections

There were none.

9. Elections

 There were none.

10. Motions

 There were none.

11. Report of the Management Board and Recommendations

11.1 Report of the Management Board

Kieron Minto, the Students’ Union President gave a verbal report of Management Board.

This report was accepted.

12. Report of the Executive Management Committee and Recommendations

12.1 Report of the Executive Management Committee

Kieron Minto, the Students’ Union President gave a verbal report of the Executive Management Committee.

This report was accepted.

12.2 Report of the Union President (December 2024)            SUC/P/25/1

 This report was accepted.

12.3 Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (Dec 2024) SUC/P/25/2

 This report was accepted.

12.4 Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (Dec 2024)            SUC/P/25/3

 This report was accepted.

12.5 Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate Education (Dec 2024) SUC/P/25/4

 This report was accepted.

12.6 Report of the Student Officer Undergraduate Education (Dec 2024) SUC/P/25/5

 This report was accepted.

12.7 Report of the Student Officer Welfare (Dec 2024)            SUC/P/25/6

 This report was accepted.

13. REPORT FROM OTHER UNION COMMITTEES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Report of the Clubs and Societies Committee SUC/P/25/7

 This report was accepted.

13.2 Report of the Standing Committee SUC/P/25/8

This report was accepted.

14. Reports from University Committees

There were none.

15. Constitutional Questions

There were none.

16. Questions (to Elected Student Representatives)

There were none.

17. Any Other Competent Business

Michael E. Loughran, Undergraduate Faculty Representative Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) invited Councillors to New Horizons: The Ethics of AI seminar with Fr Philip Larrey on Tuesday 28 January at 6.0pm in the Canada Room, Lanyon Building. The seminar is on the ethics of Artificial Intelligence facilitated by internationally renowned thinker philosopher, Fr Philip Larrey.

18. Date of Second Meeting of the Students’ Union Council

The fifth Meeting of the Students’ Union Council 2024-25 will take place on 11 February 2025, In Elmwood Hall, Elmwood Avenue.