



LUSU Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 11th November 2011

PRESENT:

Rachel Harvey	Bairrig fm Station Manager
Emily Blanchard	Elections Officer
George Gardiner	LUSU President
Oliver Susoy	Bowland Vice President
Emily-Jayne Nicholls	Cross Campus Media Officer
Sarah Strachan	Furness Vice President
Sam Norman	Environment Officer/Furness Equal Opportunities
Rob Dickinson	Furness President/CCO Societies Officer
Carrie Skinner	Nightline Service Director
Emmy McIntyre	CCO EWD Council Officer
Ros Ballinger	LGBTQ CCO
Olly Trumble	LUSU VP Events and Democracy
Ellie Sutherland	Inter-College Sports CCO
Sarah Taylor	PGSA President
Stephen Smith	Fylde President
James Beedie	CCO Arts and Social Sciences
Jonathan Hayton	CCO FST
Dennis Esch	Fylde VP Welfare/CCO International Students' Officer
Alexander Carlin	LUSU VP Academic
Jess Newton	Lonsdale Vice President
Rachel Essex	Lonsdale President
Grace Fitzpatrick	Equality Campaigns CCO
Tania Nadarajah	Inter-College Sports Officer
Anastasia Rattigan	Bowland President
Hilde Roed	Grizedale General Secretary
Jasmine Blakemore	Cartmel President
Jess French	CCO Communications
Joel Pullan	CCO Management School
Matt Walker	Social and Events Officer
Christy Parkes	Grizedale President
Danny McGuire	Cartmel Vice President/Welfare Campaigns CCO
Jemma Gaskell	County President /LUSU Council Officer (Chair)
Marc Handley	LUSU VP Activities

APOLOGIES:

Matthew Power	LUSU VP Media and Communication
Catherine Alexander	Liberation Campaigns CCO
Matt Saint	LUSU VP EWD
Libby Martin	County Vice President/Academic CCO

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Helen Close	Student Staff Minute Taker
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1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – PASSED with amendments

2. MATTERS ARISING

The Elections Officer was missing from the apologies.

3. PRESENTATION: LUSU INVOLVE AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECT

Ben Matthews of LUSU Involve and a student volunteer attended Council to provide information on their international projects. The aim is to involve 1500 students per year in volunteering. Green Lancaster recently achieved a Green Gown Award for Best Student Initiative. A former student who used the Enterprise scheme with LUSU Involve has been featured in Forbes magazine in a top ten of company start ups.

This year, LUSU Involve plan to be proactive in Winter Officer Conference and will be providing opportunities to improve employability.

There has been travel to the Lancaster University international campus at Goenka – 50 students went this year, it is hoped that this number will double by next year.

A volunteer with LUSU Involve then spoke of her experiences while volunteering in India. Their experiences were divided into four areas – Academic, where they attended lectures at Goenka; Business, where they met representatives from local and national businesses; Politics and Governance, where the group met politicians and Volunteering, which divided the students into two groups, one of which worked with Youth Parliament and the other with a charitable organisation, whom they are still working with now they are back in the UK. There has since been an inbound trip where students from Malaysia and Pakistan have visited Lancaster.

4. OFFICERS' INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS

VP Equality, Welfare and Diversity – As submitted.

VP Events and Democracy – As submitted. Encouraged members of the Council to attend the Still Human event taking place this weekend.

VP Media and Communications – As submitted.

LUSU President – As submitted. Has attended the Unions 94 meeting where there was constructive debate on a number of topics. Currently working on CCO handover packs. The bar takeover has been agreed to in principle by the Council in the last academic year and this is now making good progress.

VP Academic – As submitted.

VP Activities – Provided in the meeting.

Furness JCR – As submitted.

5. MINUTES OF UNION EXECUTIVE to be approved

Passed

6. MINUTES OF EWD COUNCIL to be approved

There was a query over the submission of a group apology from County JCR due to their being at a County event. This was considered allowable. The minutes were passed.

7. MINUTES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL to be approved

There were some mistakes involving incorrect positions in the register. These will be corrected and the minutes were passed with these changes.

8. BOARD OF TRUSTEES BUSINESS to be noted

Noted

9. MINUTES OF SOCIAL AND EVENTS GROUP to be approved

Apologies were not recorded for the Fylde President. These will be corrected and the minutes were passed with these changes.

10. MINUTES OF STUDENT MEDIA BOARD to be approved

There was a correction to when agenda items should be submitted – they should be given in on the Monday before the meeting, not the day before. The minutes then passed.

11. MINUTES OF CROSS CAMPUS OFFICER COMMITTEE to be approved

Passed.

12. CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BUSINESS

- a. County – The Council Chair stepped down in order to deliver an explanation on these changes. The deputy chair took over and a new deputy was chosen for this process. The changes were as read in the agenda. A query was made over whether the two new Vice Presidents would have equal status for taking over from the President in the event that the President was unavailable. The County President said that it would be a discretionary matter to be decided between the two Vice Presidents when necessary.
The changes to the County Constitution were passed unanimously.
- b. Lonsdale - Changes as read in the agenda. These were unanimously passed. It was asked that in future all colleges use the same format as Lonsdale's document for ease of seeing what amendments have been made.
- c. Bye Law 24: Student Media – The changes were as read in the agenda. These were passed unanimously.
- d. Cartmel – There were some minor semantic corrections given. It was asked where the information on the Legends competition was, these are still being finalised as yet. There was also an issue whereby the JCR

elections for this college clashed with the LUSU Elections. There are several points that have been included in the constitution historically which are now out of date and should be changed. It was agreed that any points which conflicted with the LUSU constitution could be changed by the VP Events and Democracy.

With aforementioned changes, this constitution passed unanimously.

- e. Furness – There were some inappropriate sections of the constitution which the LUSU President asked to be removed as they are unacceptable. The CCO for International Students asked that the bye law be taken away and reviewed by the JCR before resubmitting at next council. He also asked why there is no International Officer for Furness. The Furness Vice President responded that the responsibility for International Students falls within the remit of the EWD Officer, and that it seems excessive to need to review the entire constitution.
It was decided that with the necessary changes, this constitution would be passed.
- f. Grizedale – This constitution was issued in Council. It was unanimously passed.
- g. Bowland – There was a query for the clarification of the International and Diversity Officer's title. This was confirmed to be the correct one and amendments will be changed on the incorrect title. With these changes the constitution was passed.

13. MOTIONS FOR LUSU COUNCIL

The first motion was for Overseas Tuition Fees and was put forward by the Cross Campus International Students' Officer. Home students can predict their fees each year and these are set at protected levels. International Students have no protection, and already pay more than home students. There is no guarantee of protected or capped fees, which can be increased to any level that the University chooses. The cost of educating a student is now clear, and while there are more costs involved in an International Student these are fairly fixed, so more transparency is needed on what the additional money is used for. There should be security on each year's fee increase also.

The VP Academic Affairs asked that it be made clear that this motion is focused on International Undergraduates.

The motion was passed.

The second motion was to extend the election period. The VP Events and Democracy explained that as the University is changing, the student demographic will also change. There are likely to be more International and Postgraduate students in the future. The voting period is currently short compared to many other Universities. An extended voting period would also give the technical team more time to sort out any issues with voter codes. The original motion was to extend the voting period by a full week, but this was decided against as it could create more stress for campaigners. The proposed extension is therefore for 2 days. The campaign period will not be extended, only

the voting period within this campaign time.

It was put forward that this could generate too much pressure for candidates, and that the extended time is not likely to improve the uptake of International Students on voting as the issue is not a lack of time but a lack of advertising and engagement.

The VP Events and Democracy responded that it would give candidates longer to go and engage students in the voting period, so that there would possibly be improved engagement.

The Elections Officer added that currently candidates mainly focus their efforts on Undergraduates as these are the group that are most likely to vote. This extended voting period would give the candidate the opportunity to engage a larger group of students.

The Fylde President asked whether there is a policy for improving the engagement of International Students. The VP Events and Democracy responded that there will be more clear content to educate and also give all students more opportunity to engage with candidates.

The PGSA President added that the best way to improve engagement from Postgraduate students would be to make voting dates and information about how to vote more clear, such as weekly reminders in the run up to voting. Postgraduates tend to have a very full timetable so an extended voting period would be advantageous.

The VP Academic Affairs read a statement from the VP EWD who was unable to attend. He said that he did not consider International students to be any more time-poor than home students. It is not that the voting period passes people by but that students are not properly engaged. This extended period will generate more stress for candidates.

The Elections Officer responded that while LUSU always endeavour to prevent candidates from overdoing it and 'burning out', it is always up to the individual.

The LUSU President pointed out that there is no evidence of illness in candidates from institutions with longer voting periods.

The VP Events and Democracy also added that there had been no statement that International students were more time-poor. He said that if this motion is not passed, then it will never be known whether or not the extra time could make massive democratic changes.

The Grizedale President asked whether campaigners have always been allowed to campaign in the voting period. VP Academic Affairs replied that they have been since voting moved to online and there was no longer a physical ballot voting space.

The Fylde President pointed out that while candidate's health may not suffer, their grades may due to extended voting period. Voters may also be annoyed if the period of voting is perceived to drag. He also said that he has been informed that the majority of voters cast their vote within the first 6 hours of the voting period. The change of hustings to a Sunday night could also mean fewer students are available to attend.

The VP Events and Democracy replied that the overall campaign period has not changed in length, and that if students are unable to run a campaign alongside their degree they may be unable to deal with timekeeping as an officer.

The Furness Vice President said that as elections have so far improved year on year after far greater changes, this might be an excellent opportunity to improve. This is also only a test run and could be changed back if necessary. The Elections team should be trusted due to their previous successes.

The Grizedale President asked if there is any evidence of an improved uptake as related to an extended voting time.

The Elections Officer replied that after a previous extension of 6 hours, the voting showed a 40% increase. Other Universities show a better uptake percentage over a longer period.

The VP Academic Affairs added that one size doesn't fit all and the success of extended voting periods at other Universities may not necessarily apply to Lancaster. It is still important to consider the different needs of Undergraduate and Postgraduate students. He also added that as it is easy and quick to vote there is no need for a longer period.

The Fylde President proposed an amendment to the motion to extend the period by one day instead of two as a halfway house.

The Social and Events Officer pointed out that many options were considered and while three days total voting time was looked at four days was settled on for a reason.

The VP Events and Democracy said that this is only a test run and will be changed back if unsuccessful. Feedback will be provided as soon as possible after the voting takes place.

The motion was put to the vote and passed.

14. APPLICATION TO COUNCIL RESERVE FUND

The application is for £750 to go towards the Winter Officer Conference. A professional consultant is being brought in to improve training and food and drink will be provided for networking events.

The amount in the Reserve Fund was queried. The LUSU President replied that there is currently £3000 in the Fund, none of which has yet been used. This application was then passed.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The LUSU President asked the Council for their opinions on the Industrial Action taking place from many administration and academic staff at the University. Pension talks have broken down and so strikes will take place.

The Council were asked what level of involvement they felt that LUSU should take in this.

The Lonsdale Vice President asked if students would be supported if lectures were affected. The LUSU President responded that if this occurred then LUSU would try to lobby for lectures not to be cancelled or for lecturers to be replaced.

The Bailrigg FM Station Manager felt that while LUSU should publicise the strikes they should not assist them.

The LUSU President said that it should be clear that LUSU sympathises and are disappointed by the negotiation breakdown but that lectures should not be affected by this action.

It was also mentioned that while the information should be provided through Squeak and the LUSU website the student media officers would not be required to advertise the action through Bailrigg FM or SCAN.

The VP Academic Affairs read out some further information about why the strikes are taking place. He also added that the NUS have backed the strikes as the changes to the pension system may fail to attract top lecturers and researchers to Universities.

The Arts and Social Sciences CCO added that anything which has a detrimental effect on students should not be backed by LUSU.

It was agreed that LUSU would, at least, publicise the action and as the position was still unclear the matter would be discussed further at the Executive Committee.

The LUSU President also asked if there was any action that the Council felt LUSU should be staging locally. It was suggested that the local Council cuts affecting the bus timetable board in the bus station could have a detrimental effect on students, particularly those who live off campus. It was decided that Officers would go away and consult with their JCRs and bring any ideas back for the future.

It was also added that the current level of effort is appropriate, such as looking into hidden course costs and ensuring value for money for future students.

The Fylde President added that accommodation costs may be something to consider. The LUSU President responded that there is very little to be done on this point as the University is contractually bound to increase rent. The Fylde President said that it would be useful to release a statement to say that LUSU had looked into this, even though there is no action to be taken.

The LUSU President therefore said that it seemed that managing expectations and provided value for money seemed to be the priority. It needs to be made clear that despite the fees increase students will still need to put the same amount of effort into their work.

The VP Activities noted that the Remembrance Service in Alexandra Square was excellent and would hopefully be continued in the future.

The VP Events and Democracy asked for Christmas Ball budgets to be submitted as soon as possible.

The Council Chair asked for all Information and Questions to be submitted before the meeting in the future to improve meeting efficiency.

13 November 2011.