

Student Senate

Members of Student Senate are notified that the next meeting will be held:

Tuesday 28 January 2020

Room 4J, 4th Floor Students' Union 6pm

Agenda

Please contact the Student Voice Team on 02920 781434 or email democracy@cardiff.ac.uk to discuss any additions or amendments you may have or to request further information on any of the below agenda items.

Section I Standard Items:

A. Apologies

B. Minutes from previous meeting

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Section II Submitted Items:

Section III Any Other Business:

1. Lapsed motions

There are none

The next meeting will take place at 6pm on Tuesday 17 March in 4J,
Cardiff University Students' Union, Park Place

SECTION I

B. Minutes from previous meeting

Student Senate Tuesday 10 December 2019, 4J at 6pm Minutes

Attendees

Ali Shahid, Ashly Alava Garcia, Caroline Pilat, Christopher Dunne, Flavie loos, Hannah Doe, Jackie Yip, Janet Williams, Joelle Tham, Josephine Tanner, Kavian Shirkoohi, Luke Doherty, Marshall Tisdale, Niamh Hinchcliffe, Rachel Beaney, Rebecca Fisher-Jackson, Ronan West, Syed Shah, Thomas Mahony-Kelross, Tomos Evans, and Zachary Edge.

Section I Standard Items:

A. Apologies

Charlotte Mallinson, Jennifer Geminiani, Stephen Oldfield , Nyin Liew, Zoltan Sztranyovszky, and Uzair Ahmed

B. Minutes from previous meeting

Minutes approved with two amendments:

- JM – amend to JW throughout the document
- Page 4, Motion needed more thought and discussion.

C. Update from Scrutiny Committee

Josh Lewis, Chair of Scrutiny Committee provided an update to Student Senate noting that the committee is happy with the officer progress and have sent some questions to those officers. Minutes will be made available in January.

JP noted that if students wish to ask questions to officers for Scrutiny Committee they can email democracy@cardiff.ac.uk

Section II Submitted Items:

A. Create Lennon Walls in SU

Michael Li spoke for the motion explaining about the current situation in Hong Kong. ML noted that the Lennon Wall should be for multiple causes. ML noted the location of the Lennon Wall would be located next to Starbucks on the Second Floor.

Tomos Evans spoke against the motion. Noting the need for Hong Kong students to have their voices heard. Low engagement with Mainland China students happens across the union. TE explained about the current media around the situation. TE noted concern about further disengagement from these students as well as whether taking part in this activity could impact these students when they return home. Noted concern about monitoring Cantonese and Mandarin which the union cannot guarantee.

Luke Doherty spoke for the motion. Noting the platform and hate speech and how the Lennon Wall could help create a bridge between students. LD said that the Lennon Wall creates a platform for it.

TE replied to the comments from LD. TE asked the question as to what Chinese students do with the information they have once they leave Cardiff. TE explained the barriers of changing perceptions of these students. TE said that they had been in contact with Chinese students who were concerned about the implementation of the wall.

LD spoke for the motion explaining that the platform is positive discussion about freedom of speech.

Chris Dunne spoke against the motion. CD explained how they were uneasy particularly in relation to moderation. Creating a space where students can say whatever they would like which the union cannot moderate what is submitted in Cantonese or Mandarin.

- Question: JY asked if Michael had spoken with Hong Kong and Chinese Societies.
 Answer: ML noted that the Hong Kong Society support the Lennon Wall, however Chinese Society had not been spoken to.
- Question: TE asked if the motion is passed, how long would the wall be up for?
 Answer: ML noting the wall is for multiple causes but noting it was for being for one month or two months.
- Question: JW If the wall were to go ahead, would you be happy for students to just write in English
 Answer: ML agreed
- Question: JY clarified that it would be in Welsh and asked what would happen to the messages that are written
 Answer: Noting that this would be dependent upon how many there are and what variety of comment there are. Further discussion noted that the comments would be shared online to keep them rather than then being recycled.

General Motion discussion

Question: RB asked TE if the push was for the students' union to remain neutral on the topic
 Answer: TE noted that the idea was for the students' union to remain neutral due to the nature of the organisation and instead asked that the union provide support for peer-to-peer support. TE also explained a concern around students not understanding the history of the geopolitical climate of the matter.

Question: LD ask whether the wall could help students learn about the situation
 Answer: TE responded that this could be an outcome; however, the inherent risk of the situation outweighs the opportunity

Question: JP asked the proposer if the motion is to set a union stance or whether it is for the creation of a Lennon Wall

Answer: ML replied that the motion is just for the creation of a Lennon Wall

Question: HD asked TE if they would be happy with a Lennon Wall existing that is not specifically for this issue

Answer: TE expressed no reservations about their being a Lennon Wall
 JY explained that the union would not block an expression wall but there were questions and problems surrounding students abusing the system.

RB noted the current issue of the Pro Choice protests. RB noted a concern around the students' union's neutrality on issues such as this and explained that this example could provide the opportunity for the students' union to be more progressive.

LD referred to the Pro Choice protests and freedom of expression as part of the university experience. LD referenced the Cardiff Confessions platform and how it can be used as an example of how not to express views but that the Lennon Wall could.

JP reminded Senators of the Procedural Motions.

CP highlighted that the motion references a Lennon Wall for the Hong Kong protests and does not suggest the creation of a Lennon Wall for any other conflicts or political movements. CP also drew attention to how the motion's last line was in block caps and how that when written this way it evokes hostility. CP also expressed how 'freedom' is different for each culture and how making assumptions about how people interpret the phrase 'Freedom of Speech' is dangerous.

TK asked the chair how procedural motions functioned.

JP provided an explanation

TK proposed an amendment

“Instead of creating a Lennon Wall in the SU specifically in solidarity with Hong Kong and the five demands, for the SU to create a Lennon Wall and a designated physical in the students’ union for any issues and to enable this experiment and space to continue as long as no students’ welfare is being effected.”

TK spoke for the amendment noting that the physical space be an experiment for freedom of expression.

Question: LD Asked for clarification relating to why the motion would be changed to reflect potential outcomes from the motion.

Answer: TK noted the intention was to generalise the core idea of the motion, particularly when referring to the block caps within the motion.

Question: Kevin asked for a clear definition of what is meant by “No-one’s Welfare is effected”

Answer: TK referred to the general concept that other speakers had noted around the fear of escalating tension. TK highlighted trust in students but the clause acts as a safety mechanism to end the wall.

Question: AAG asked how the amendment would create a different outcome from the initial motion.

Answer: TK highlighted that the response to the previous question answers this particular question

TK passed on the opportunity to summate the amendment

ML spoke against the amendment and noted the original drive of the motion is to raise awareness of the Hong Kong revolution but that other situations can be discussed whilst also raising awareness of the Hong Kong revolution.

Votes For: 9

Votes Against: 5

Votes Abstain: 7

Amendment passes

JT proposed a Procedural Motion

JT proposed that Senate enact Procedural Motion 5: That the next meeting discuss the amended motion

CD raised concern about moderation not being able support the wall 24 hours a day. Tom (Student Rep) continued and noted that Cardiff Confessions is anonymous whereas the Lennon Wall would mean that students have to physically walked up to it to post. Tom then noted positivity around the wall due to the current political climate at Cardiff University.

Votes in favour of a procedural motion: 14

Procedural motion falls

Chair asked the Senate to vote.

B. Make new student ID cards free or cheaper

Rebecca Rabson RR spoke for the motion: noting that they were overdrawn over the summer and couldn't return books to the library because they didn't have a Student ID card and couldn't afford to replace the card. RR highlighted that some students have to use their cards to get into lectures. RR argued that the number of students that would lose their card would be lower than those who would take advantage of the situation.

No speaker Against the motion

Question: CD cost being high for students particularly when considering a weekly budget being £20. CD asked whether specifying a price or an emergency card available when needed could be added to the motion as an amendment if RR agreed

Answer RR confirmed openness to amendments

HD and KK proposed an amendment

“When a student needs a new student card for the first time additionally to their normal card, they are able to get this for free. If they need a new one after this in future they should pay the normal cost (£10) in cases of emergency a student card can be provided and paid back later at the normal cost (£10).”

Amendment is accepted by the proposer

LD proposed an amendment

LD proposed a further amendment to add that any emergency card would be provided free of charge.

JP asked if there was any definition as to what constitutes an 'emergency'.

LD responded that it would be if a student is in financial crisis i.e. a student is beyond their overdraft and it impacts their ability to study.

HD rejected the proposed amendment

Question JT asked how an 'emergency' would be proved?

Answer LD noted that it would be students in economic crisis whilst at university.

Question AAG asked if this would be the same process as extenuating circumstances

Answer LD responded that students can show how they are experiencing financial difficulty as per the hardship fund process and the decision would be at the discretion of the university as to whether the student would be permitted an emergency card.

Question CD asked how the free emergency card would be regulated i.e. how long can the student have the emergency card.

Answer LD replied that it is dependent upon what the emergency is and on a case-by-case basis.

LD summated that this will support those in financial stress. Push behind the amendment is to be as inclusive to the student population.

HD responded explaining their rejection of the amendment to the amendment. 'In Case of Emergency' is different per person. HD noted that this is the opportunity for students to have their card when they need.

Votes For: 3

Votes Against: 13

Votes Abstain: 5

Amendment falls

JT asked who would know which number card a student was on

JP replied that the university would have a record

Chair reminded Senators that Student Senate does not have the ability to fund this policy and instead the motion mandates officers to lobby the university for it.

Tom asked what the charge for replacement cards goes towards and if the cards are to be free then where would the cost come out of.

RB noting the university's financial situation of being in deficit.

TK provided the opinion that the motion is about making an attempt to make change regardless of whether or not it is possible.

Section III Any Other Business:

A. Lapsed motions

- i) Time to Change Pledge
- ii) Stop Fuelling Hate
- iii) Put Liberation and Campaigns at Centre Stage

B. General Election

Senators were reminded to vote in the General Election on Thursday 12 December 2019.

C. Good debate

TK noted that the debate and discussion of the meeting was positive and to be praised.

End of minutes from 10/12/19

Section II Submitted Items for 28/01/20:

A) Should we lobby for the USS Pension Fund to Divest?

What is the issue?

USS stands for the Universities Superannuation Scheme and is one of the largest principal private pension schemes for universities & other higher education institutions in the UK. It currently has investments across a range of sectors including fossil fuels, tobacco, and armaments. Currently the USS proposed changes are part of the ongoing industrial action being undertaken by UCU as the scheme has valued itself with a deficit (shortcomings in its future value needed to cover future costs)

What is your idea?

Students have approached us on lobbying for this. Senate should balance the issues and give the Sabbatical officers a steer as to whether to also lobby for the University to push for the scheme to divest alongside pushing the University on the current goals of the UCU industrial action's 'Four Fights' in what could be seen by us as a politically complex period of time. I realise 500 characters isn't enough, so am happy to provide senators with a briefing note.

Submitted by: Nick Fox

B) Changing Society and Sports Club Membership Fees

What is the issue?

Many Societies and Sports Clubs will charge a variety of fees to students, such as half year memberships. However, some societies will charge new member fees, or charge students by their year of study. This is manifestly unfair, and should change.

What is your idea?

Societies and sports clubs should no longer be allowed to charge membership fees by year of study, and those societies or sports clubs that wish to continue charging new members at a different rate than returning members, should show that these members incur some extra financial burden on the society, such as additional training or equipment costs, before being permitted or to continue charging these fees. VP Societies and Sports should be mandated to implement these changes by September 2020.

Submitted by: Christopher Dunne

C) CU and CUSU Official Commitment to the Freedom of Speech.

What is the issue?

There have been several examples where the freedoms of thought and expression have been closed down and suppressed. A culture of intolerance towards particular opinions and ideologies has gained momentum; whilst diversity of opinion has failed to be encouraged. Students deserve an inclusive and tolerant safe space where they can think independently.

What is your idea?

CU & CUSU commit to the Freedom of Speech by removing non-platforming policies; the blanket removal of censures on newspapers; and a default stance of neutrality on politically charged issues. CU & CUSU actively promote Free Speech; and commit to providing public events that appeal to both Left & Right-Wing students. A balanced number of public lectures and debates from a Right & Left perspective should feature throughout the academic year; and can be followed up by workshops

Submitted by: Luke Doherty

D) Support and advice to pregnant mothers.

What is the issue?

Women at University may find their studies disrupted by an unplanned pregnancy; and feel there is only one option to resolve the issue. Women who might want to keep their pregnancy are often ill-informed and poorly supported. Terminations are sometimes presented as inevitable to those women who are unaware of how they might emotionally and practically cope with pregnancy and motherhood alongside their studies. Women are well informed about terminations; but not always about an alternative.

What is your idea?

Whilst women are entirely free to choose a termination, they are equally free to keep their pregnancy. Thus, information and links to pro-life organisations who offer counselling and practical support to women in crisis pregnancies should be made available on CU's Pregnancy Support Page. Post-Abortion support should be made equally available, too. CU & CUSU should work to actively eradicate the stigma attached to pregnancies and motherhood whilst at University.

Submitted by: Luke Doherty

E) Protection of Religious Freedoms**What is the issue?**

A large number of Christian students and their affiliated society have been placed under considerable moral strain after decisions were made by the Student Body that seriously contravene their religious views. CU & CUSU have a responsibility of inclusivity towards them, and all religious groups. The attitudes of individuals on and offline, and atmosphere on campus, been intolerant and sometimes offensive.

What is your idea?

Cardiff University and the Student's Union must make a commitment to actively protecting Religious Freedoms; particularly those of thought and expression. In doing so, students must feel free and able to speak openly without having the debate closed down; being labelled names and loaded terms; and in a safe space. CU & CUSU must actively promote and protect religious freedom.

Submitted by: Luke Doherty

Section III Any Other Business for 28/01/20:**1. Lapsed motions**

There are none