Agenda for 434th Union Council
Thursday 10th May 2018, 6:30pm
A41, Sir Clive Grainger Building, University Park Campus

- Introduction by Union Council Facilitator
- Motion 1: UoNSU Sustainable SU
- Motion 2: Postgraduates Who Teach
- Motion 3: Trade Unions and Students Unions
- Motion 4: Student Run Services Motion
- Motion 5: Transparency Policy
- Motion 6: Support Repeal the 8th

Motion 1:

UoNSU: A Sustainable S.U.
Proposed by Ellie Mitchell, Community Officer 2017-18
Primary Officers: Community Officer, ESJ Officer

What:

1) To mandate the Community Officer and Environmental and Social Justice Officer, with appropriate staff support, to form a Sustainability Working Group to review the work of the Students’ Union in terms of its sustainability and ethics.
2) To mandate the Sustainability Working Group to create a Sustainable S.U. Strategy document which shall be presented to Democratic Procedures Committee for formal approval and which shall have the standing of a Guidance Document within the governance of the Union. The Working Group should review all areas of Union activity and its findings and recommendations should come with clear timeframes for delivery. The Strategy should be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect progress, or lack of, and reprioritise work.
3) To become an NUS Green Impact Students’ Union (GISU) accredited Union, rated ‘Excellent’. The Sustainability Working Group shall be the coordinating body for this purpose.

Why:

1) Our Union already has Waste and Recycling Guidance Document that gives broad statements of values – this motion seeks to underpin that document with an active Working Group and provide a proactive strategy for implementation and growth of UoNSU as a sustainable S.U.
2) Who we are and how we do things should be reflective of the progressive values our Union holds, lessening our environmental impact and making choices that make a positive difference to the world; we need to think globally, and act locally.
3) Nearly 100 other students’ unions nationally have become NUS GISUs, and we should be working towards the best possible ranking in their accreditation, learning from others and applying that knowledge to become as a leader in the sector for sustainability.

Evidence:
1) Our Waste and Recycling Guidance Document can be found on the website, and its key points including focussing on reducing waste and putting sustainability at the heart of our work.

2) NUS Green Impact Students Union info can be found here: https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/green-impact

3) To become an NUS GISU we will need to have a Working Group to coordinate the work. It will be a broader piece of work than just reviewing recycling opportunities. As their own website says: Although it’s called ‘Green Impact’ it’s not just about planting trees or getting your recycling in order, sustainability is a lot more than that, touching on issues of equality, community, curriculum reform, campaigning and much more. Our vision is that through sustainability initiatives on campus alongside the content of the taught curriculum, students will graduate from higher education being equipped to deal with the global challenges we currently face.

Motion 2:

Postgraduate employment rights – Postgraduate researchers who teach

Proposed by Yolanda King, Postgraduate Officer 2017-18

Primary Officer: Postgraduate Officer

This Union Notes

a) The NUS and UCU drafted a Postgraduate Employment Charte calling for fair employment rights. These include fair and equal access to employment opportunities, a letter of appointment, clear job description and terms and conditions, the right to belong to a trade union and be involved with the activities of the union, full induction training, and pay for all hours worked.

b) Currently we know that not all of these conditions are being met with there being large variations in employment conditions in practice. Whether Postgraduate part time teachers are receiving full induction, equal access to employment, and pay for all hours worked are just a few example of issues experienced at Nottingham.

c) It is inevitable that UoNSU and the University of Nottingham will continue to employ Postgraduates.

d) A project is currently taking place within University of Nottingham Human Resources in collaboration within UoNSU and UCU, in order to establish a fairer contract for Postgraduates who teach and demonstrate on a part time basis.

e) Work is currently taking place within UoNSU to identify issues relating to postgraduate engagement.

The Union believes:

a) University of Nottingham should be sector leaders in terms of conditions and practice for postgraduate teachers

b) Quality employment conditions for postgraduates who teach translates into better morale, which in turn leads to a better working environment for Postgraduates and a better learning environment for undergraduates.
c) Postgraduates currently do not strongly associate with UoNSU. Supporting their rights as students and employees of the University will strengthen the Postgraduate affiliation and the Postgraduate Students’ Network Community.

The Union resolves:

a) To mandate the Postgraduate Officer to continue to work on the development of a fair and equitable settlement for PG’s who teach in terms of contracts and conditions of employment
b) To lobby UoN to adopt the recommendations of the Postgraduate Employment Charter where relevant.
c) To continue working with UCU to push for continuation of the investigation into working conditions of PGs who teach and their conditions of employment
d) To continue to develop our strategies of engagement with a traditionally hard to reach group of students
e) To mandate the Postgraduate Officer and Postgraduate Students’ Network to help any relevant and reasonable activities that PGRs and the PGR Network Reps, or any other interested students, may wish to undertake in support of the campaign
f) Once this contract is in place this motion will also mandate the Postgraduate Officer to continue to engage with UCU, UoN HR and the annual review process of the contract

Motion 3:

Trade Unions and Students’ Unions

Proposed by Cassie O’Boyle, Education Officer 2017-18

Primary Officer: President

1. The Union notes:

   I. The National Union of Students has worked in collaboration with trade unions since the 1950s.

   II. The University of Nottingham Students’ Union has no clear policy on trade union membership for its career or student staff.

   III. The University of Nottingham Students’ Union are in the process of developing their second five year strategy which includes a section on life after University.

   IV. Staffing issues are to be decided by the Trustee Board, however Council can indicate a stance and request work be undertaken by the Board.

   V. University of East Anglia (UEA) Students’ Union have recently undertaken a forward thinking partnership with GMB union for their student staff, providing free membership of GMB and actively encourage membership.

2. The Union believes:
I. In order to be prepared for life after University, students need to understand their employment rights.

II. Partnering with trade unions will support students develop their learning and understanding of the workplace and employment rights, and further enhance the work towards the aims of our new strategy.

III. The Students’ Union, by virtue of its very existence, recognises that there is power in a union. Collective action delivers powerful results for all.

IV. In developing working relationships with trade unions we can achieve stronger negotiating and campaigning leverage when tackling issues relevant to students within the wider University community.

V. Some PGR students already feel disenfranchised with the Students’ Union; having a better, more formal relationship with UCU could improve this.

3. The Union resolves:

I. To request that the President, in their role as the Chair of Trustee Board, should investigate the development of People Policy to promote trade union membership and formal recognition by the Students’ Union.

II. To investigate UEA’s recent agreement with GMB as a potential model for developing relationships with trade unions.

III. The Students’ Union should promote, through their central channels, the availability of free UCU membership for PGR students.

Motion 4:

Student Run Services: Development and Next Steps

Proposed by Martin Nguyen, Activities Officer 2017-18

Primary Officer: Activities Officer

What?

- To work to clarify the place of Student Run Services within the governance of the Union, taking into account their different roles and functions and acknowledging that they may diverge into different models under our governance to better suit their needs.
- To work with media groups to create a communications strategy that provides adequate support around key Union events, such as varsity or elections, and that acknowledges their role in holding our Union to account and informing our membership. This plan should give them adequate time to prepare reports on embargoed information, but also acknowledges both the need for the Union to treat such information sensitively, and that at times information may arrive at short notice to the Union. In instances where information arises as short notice, there should be reasonable provisions within the communication strategy.
- To review our training offer to Student Run Services and investigate where we can provide additional bespoke training and support to their members. This should be reviewed
annually, taking into account feedback and reflections from Student Run Service members, staff and Officers.

- To investigate potential models for recognition and celebration, such as balls, via a committee of one interested member from each Student Run Service Exec and the Activities Officer.

Why?

- ‘Student Run Service’ is a catch all term for the providers of a wide variety of different services and opportunities for University of Nottingham students. This can be unhelpful given how differently they all operate, and work should be done to clarify their status within our governance and develop a model, or models, that fit their needs best.
- Our media groups are key providers of information to our membership and their role in keeping our Union accountable via scrutiny is invaluable. We should create a plan to help them plan for key events, be factored in early to the planning of those events, and to work to ensure they are able to report to the best of their ability on embargoed information, with reasonable allowances.
- Because how our Student Run Services work can vary, their training needs can do as well. In reviewing our offer we can see what works, what doesn’t, and make changes to deliver the best service for our students.
- Student Run Services should collaborate with the Activities Officer to investigate potential models for recognition of their valuable efforts, identifying key needs and reflecting on what has or hasn’t worked in the past to inform decisions.

Motion 5:

**Transparency and Ethics of Relationships Between UoNSU and External Providers**

Proposed by Alan Holey, President 2017-18

This Union notes:

1) That whilst there is a due diligence process for commercial agreements, there is currently no student oversight of this process.
2) That we are a membership-led organisation that puts students at the heart of everything we do.
3) That there is a Full Time Officer Committee that shall ‘Be the coordinating body of the Union’ (Byelaws: Officers of the Union (7.ii.))

This Union believes:

1) In the principle of being led by our membership and having student oversight in all of our activities.
2) In having student oversight of the due diligence process of any external agreements between student groups and externals to ensure our work is values-based.
3) In having professional support from our established staff teams to ensure the best decisions are made in the interests of our members.

This Union resolves:

1) The relevant staff teams shall submit updates on external agreements to the Full Time Officer Committee to allow elected Officers to raise concerns or queries where any arise.
   a. The Committee shall receive updates on commercial interactions, from enquiry stage through to the final stage, to the weekly officer meeting, and for officers to raise concerns or queries where any arise.
   b. To allow the Committee to raise concerns and instigate further discussion where necessary.
   c. Where the Committee agrees that an agreement is inappropriate or inconsistent, they may request further clarification or request further work be carried out to alleviate the concerns of the Committee.

2) To review the organisational structures of the Union at large to ensure student oversight is built in as standard.

3) To lobby the University on behalf of our membership where they have entered into an agreement with an external entity that is deemed to be inconsistent with our values and to support our members should they wish to undertake peaceful and lawful protest on matters related to this policy.

4) To allow Full Time Officers to submit amendments to this policy where appropriate to ensure its continued working in practice.

Motion 6:

Motion: Support Repeal the Eighth - East Midlands Together for Yes*

Proposed by Seagh Kehoe

Why you are proposing the idea

Pregnant people in Ireland still do not have access to safe and legal abortion. Any individual who procures an abortion within the country risks a 14-year jail term - including the doctor(s) who perform the procedure or assists it. Everyday an approximated 12 people in Ireland will have an abortion – between 9-10 will travel to the UK whilst 3 will risk a 14-year prison sentence by taking illegal abortion pills. People have already died in Ireland having been denied life-saving abortion procedures – including Savita Halappanavar. Thousands of people are unable to travel for abortion services due to family, legal status, financial situation, health or in abusive relationships. All of this is a result of the 8th amendment in our constitution, which states:

The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right.
As a result of this amendment, reproductive justice is denied.

In September 2017, the Irish Government announced a referendum to change the country’s laws on abortion. The government has confirmed this will be held on May 25th, 2018. On this day, the people of Ireland will vote to determine whether the 8th Amendment will be repealed.

There are currently 110 Irish citizens registered at the University of Nottingham. It is important that these students are supported and encouraged to inform themselves about this debate, to register to vote before May 8th, and to go home to vote on May 25th. The NUS has already expressed support and solidarity with the campaign to repeal the 8th amendment in the Republic of Ireland and have a listed a number of actions member unions can take to support this. I hope that our SU at UoN will work with us (East Midlands Together for Yes) on this. We need free, safe, legal and local abortion access in the Republic of Ireland now.

What the motion is asking the Students’ Union to be mandated to do

We are asking UoN SU to launch a Home to V8te campaign on campus to raise awareness and encourage students to register to vote by May 8th. We also ask UoN SU to set up a travel fund to assist students to get home to vote on May 25th. We also hope UoN SU will help fundraise for Alliance for Choice and the Abortion Support Network. We have an extensive information at hand to provide UoN SU with and are more than happy to work with and advise you on this campaign.

What evidence you have to back up your idea

The UN has ruled numerous times that Ireland’s abortion laws have subjected those women and other pregnant people to cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. In 2017, the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights published a report that singled our Ireland as an example of a country with highly restrictive abortion laws which “can have a broad range of physical, psychological, financial and social impacts on women, with implications for their health and well-being.”

Who supports your idea / who you have consulted with about it.

Our Head of State Leo Varadkar and Minister for Health, Simon Harris, is backing the repeal of the 8th amendment. The National Women’s Council of Ireland is campaigning for Yes. As of April 25th,

---

1 https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studywithus/international-applicants/country-info/countryinformation/ireland.aspx
the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, which trains and accredits most Irish obstetricians, expressed its support for the repeal of the 8th amendment. Adoption Rights Alliance have endorsed a Yes vote. Disability organization Inclusion Ireland is advocating for a Yes vote. Our Union of Students in Ireland (USI) is endorsing a Yes vote, and the National Union of Students UK, the National Union of Students Scotland and the National Union of Students Wales are all standing in solidarity with this, too. We are also happy to add that Pro-Choice Nottingham also stands in solidarity with our East Midlands Together for Yes.

*East Midlands Together for Yes is made up of Irish citizens studying and working at universities in Nottingham. We are working to inform Irish citizens here in the East Midlands about the 8th amendment, its impact and why it is important to go home to vote Yes on May 25th.
