University of Nottingham Students’ Union
Full-Time Officer Committee

17th January 2020 Meeting Minutes

Members Present:
James Pheasey (JP) President
Abdi Ahmed (AA) Postgraduate Officer
Jacob Collier (JC) Community Officer
Millie Doherty (MD) Sports Officer
Georgina Pittman (GP) Activities Officer
Myles Smith (MS) Equal Opportunities and Welfare Officer
Cassie Ulrich (CU) Education Officer

In Attendance:
Jenny Everitt (JE) Finance Manager
Denis Lelin (DL) International Officer
Kathryn Sullivan (KS) MiraGold Governance Consultancy
Lee Taylor (LT) Environment & Social Justice Officer

19.23.

1 Welcome, Apologies, & Quoracy
   .1 JP welcomed everyone to the meeting, noted apologies, and noted that the meeting was quorate.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meetings & Actions
   .1 The Committee confirmed the minutes from the previous meeting.
   .2 The Committee noted the updated Action Log.

3 Intro – Finance Manager
   .1 JE was welcomed to the meeting, and introduced themselves.
   .2 The Committee introduced themselves and their roles to JE.
   .3 [JE left the meeting]

4 Beat the Burglar Campaign
   .1 The Committee received an update on the Beat the Burglar Campaign from JC.
   .2 The Committee approved up to £150 of the Officer Initiatives budget towards the Beat the Burglar campaign.

5 Refreshers Engagement
.1 The Committee received an update on Refreshers from GP.
.2 The Committee noted concerns that the reception desk in the Exchange building on Jubilee Campus has not been branded for a launch in Refreshers as had been planned. The Committee decided to raise this to the Leadership Team Meeting.

6 Democracy Review Model Advancement
.1 [MD joined the meeting via phone.]
.2 The Committee noted the two proposed democratic models, which had been revised based upon feedback given by the FTOC the previous week. The Committee had decided not to further consider Model C.
.3 The Committee agreed to make a decision on what to advance to student-leader consultation to allow for the maximum time for the consultation process to be developed.
.4 The Committee discussed the merits of advancing either only one or both models to student-leader consultation. The Committee noted that as per the Students’ Union’s Bye-laws, referendum questions must be yes or no questions and could not compare models therefore, only one model could be voted on. The Committee decided to only advance one model to final consultation to ensure robust feedback was collected to enable the most responsive revisions from the student leader feedback to be collected w/c Jan 27 2020.
.5 [KS joined the meeting via phone.]
.6 The Committee received an update from KS explaining the revisions from Model A.1 to Model A.2.
The revisions notably included:
  - Replacing the two Education Officers with an UG Education Officer and PG Education Officer;
  - Replacing the two Campaigns Officers with a Wellbeing Officer and a Community Officer;
  - Replacing the two Activities Officers with a Sports Officer and an Activities Officer.
Model A.2 was the final version of Model A discussed.
.7 [KS left the meeting]
.8 The Committee received an update from JP explaining the revisions from Model B.1 to Model B.2.
The revisions notably included:
  - Separation of the Union Affairs Officer into a Union Opportunities and Engagement Officer and a Union Development and Democracy Officer.
  - Clarifications of Zone Committee membership and clarification of demographic based Officers.
.9 The Committee discussed the level of the employment status of the Sports Officer in Model B. The Committee noted the critical nature of the full-time employment of this role, specifically due to the demands placed on the role by the requirements to continuing support of Varsity and the resource requirements of the partnership between UoNSU and UoNSport. The Committee agreed that the Sports Officer would be a full-time employed sabbatical role within Model B, equal to the other full-time employed sabbatical officers.
The Committee discussed that Model A.2 is somewhat similar to current structures. Concerns were discussed that it may maintain some of the problems of the current structures.

The Committee discussed that Model B.2 was more of a radical change than Model A.2. Concerns were discussed as to the organisational appetite for this, and that Model B.2 would require more initial effort to be maximally effective.

Further discussion continued on details of the two Models.

The Committee unanimously voted to trigger a referendum, agreeing to confirm the details of the referendum question following the student-leader consultations.

The Committee voted to advance Model B.2 to student-leader consultation. Votes: [For: AA, MD, JP, GP, MST, CU], [Against: JC]

The Committee noted that this advancement was not an endorsement of Model B.2 in its current form, rather, it was to advance Model B.2 to the next stage of the consultation process. The Committee noted MD’s apprehensions regarding certain areas of the model, about which MD expressed a desire to see clarifications and changes to result from the consultation process. The Committee agreed that throughout the consultation process the model would be changed or updated to reflect the feedback from students.

[MD left the meeting]

The Committee noted concerns from JC regarding the presentation and lack of clear document formalising the full updated details of Model B.2. The Committee requested for KS to provide a more detailed paper on the updated Model B.2.

The Committee agreed to reconvene later that day to discuss the paper.

ACTION: JP to speak to KS and provide the Committee with the requested paper.

[Meeting Adjourned]

7 Democracy Review Model Discussion

[Meeting Reconvened]

[Present: AA, JC, JP, GP, MST, CU; In attendance: DL]

The Committee received the requested paper from KS, presented by JP, clarifying Model B.2 including more detail and an update to the zonal location and accountability of the Union Development and Democracy Officer.

The Committee discussed the Union Development and Democracy Officer. The Committee discussed the distinction between a staff role and an officer role. The Committee noted the decline in the Union’s democratic integrity and governance since the removal of the previous Democracy and Communications Officer. The Committee noted that while operation responsibility lies with Union staff, the political responsibility cannot. The Union Development and Democracy Officer would hold some of this of political responsibility for the holistic development of the Union’s democratic process. The Committee noted that the clarification
removed the voting rights from this role and increased its accountability mechanisms to ensure it effectively carried out its role. The Committee did not make any changes to the model.

.4 The Committee discussed the concerns regarding the ability of a single Education Officer manage such a large portfolio indicating concerns related to workload. The Committee discussed the size of the Education zone allowing more work to be done by others Officers and Representatives within the zone. The Committee noted that the details of this system fall within the scope of the Academic Representation Review strand of the Democratic Review, to be further developed following the referendum.

.5 The Committee discussed postgraduate representation. The Committee noted that the Postgraduate Officer role has historically been held by a Postgraduate Taught student and not a Postgraduate Research student, despite the differing needs of these types of students. The Committee further noted that the Academic Representation Review strand of the Democratic Review would be responsible for determining the academic representational needs of both PGT and PGR students within the Education Zone. The committee did not make any changes.

.6 The Committee agreed the Union was responsible for effectively communicating the model clearly and properly to the membership both prior and following the referendum.

.7 The Committee voted to agree that the clarified Model B.2 will be the version advanced to the next stage of consultation.

Votes: [For: AA, JP, GP, MST, CU], [Against: JC]

Date of Next Meeting: 24.01.2020
Chair of Next Meeting: Cassie Ulrich