

MINUTES OF THE BIG STUDENT MEETING (AGM) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
5.30PM, THURSDAY 22 October 2009
Vertigo, Level 8, the Union, John Anderson Campus

PRESENT: Taken as registered (208 Ordinary Members in attendance)

UNON CHAIR: Liam Burns, NUS Scotland President

IN ATTENDANCE: Ian McCartney, Al Wilson & Audrey Murray – Chair's Aids and Minute-Taker

AGM09/10.1 ROLL CALL & QUORUM COUNT

The meeting is quorate with 208 signatures

AGM09/10.2 MINUTES of 2008/09 AGM and Emergency MEETING 2008/09 & BUSINESS ARISING THEREFROM

The Minutes were ratified by the AGM.

AGM09/10.3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

AGM09/10.4 AMENDMENTS to the CONSTITUTION, RULES & SCHEDULES

The Chair asked approval of the AGM to have the debate recorded by Fusion Radio and pictures taken during the meeting.

A vote was taken and AGM **agreed**.

The main motion "Transform Your Union Part 2: The Governance Strikes Back" and an amendment "Transform Your Union Part 3: Return of the Representation" were both proposed by the President.

The amendment was discussed, requesting the position of Honorary President to be replaced by a second student representative on University Court. There were no speeches against this proposal. The summation was waived by the President and a vote taken. The vote **passed**.

A summation of Part 2 including the amendment was offered, but waived.

The motion was voted on and **passed**.

AGM Notes:

1. That under the terms of the Education Act 1994, Students' Associations are required to regularly review their governance structures
2. That a comprehensive review of Governance structures was first put in motion by the 2007/08 Executive Committee
3. The election of the "open Forum Model" by referendum in March 2009
4. Since March the Executive Committees of 0809 and 09/10 have been adding the devil to the detail
5. The proposed changes to the USSA constitution
6. That as part of this, honorary officials of the Students' Association will cease to exist
7. The current revision of the University's Charter and statutes
8. That the USSA Honorary president is currently a member of University Court

9. That from 2010/11 USSA's second position on University Court is up for revision
10. That both within benchmark groups of Scottish Universities and also the 1994 Group, a minimum of two student members on a University's governing body is in the clear majority

AGM Believes:

1. That change for change sake is unnecessary, but that which is beneficial to all should be embraced by all
2. The Open Forum approach represents a fundamental shift in the nature of governance in USSA and provides more open and accessible democratic structures
3. That any change of such magnitude requires substantial bedding in period and subsequent Executives should regularly review the way the new structure is working
4. That with the change in governance and the cheery wave goodbye to USSA's honorary officials, the time is ripe to secure two elected student members on University Court
5. That Court can be a lonely place for the student member and by having two elected student members on it, this would change
6. More importantly and fundamentally two student members would ensure the proper and fullest representation of students at the highest level
7. That as they are elected by cross campus ballot, the second student member should be either an executive member or forum vice-chair, to ensure maximum accountability to the student body

AGM Instructs:

1. To **delete all** in the current USSA Constitution and **replace with** the attached New USSA Constitution & Schedules
2. That this document shall be forwarded to University Senate and Court for approval before the executive committee elections of 2010 and that the remaining changes shall take effect from 1st July 2010
3. Subject to the successful passage of Transform Your Union 2, the President, when presenting the new constitution to Court, also present this motion
4. The President to lobby members of Court on the introduction of a second student representative on Court beginning in academic year 2010/11

AGM09/10.5 SUBMISSION OF ACCOUNTS & EXECUTIVE REPORT **10.6**

The President highlighted pertinent figures within the Accounts for 2008/9, in particular the £125,000 surplus for the year.

With regard to the Accounts for 2009/10, there is a deficit of £90,000 within the first three months against the budget, but this can be accounted for due to the recession hitting sales. It is anticipated there will be an upward trend, with the situation being monitored. It was noted that although sales were behind budget, we were still doing well on sales overall and footfall had stayed the same year-on-year.

Executive Objectives

The objectives, as stated in the Mission Statement

Communications

1. Improve students' knowledge of activity opportunities and support services available to them

2. Develop and deliver an effective and organic Communication Strategy
3. Help maintain Union image as a friendly and energetic place for students

Transparency

4. Ensure the Association delivers on our core value of being “by students, for students”
5. Make the Association more accessible to our diverse student population

Engagement

6. Widen the appeal of campaigning through a positive image of it, thereby encouraging students to stand for more
7. Provide Liberation groups with support and encourage more liberation activism and politicisation
8. Enable our students to exercise ownership of their Association through the provision on continuous support and development potentials

Focus on Learning and Teaching & Strathclyde Experience

Representation

9. Ensure all our students have access to the highest academic standards
10. Ensure appropriate decisions are made with concrete information given by our students
11. Ensure Executive Committee reflect the needs and wants of the membership through active engagement

Governance

12. Provide our students with a new governance structure which allows members more access to the decision-making process. The winning model which eventually became “The Open Forum Approach”

Services

13. Commercial surplus for memberships benefit
14. Ensure a diverse and relevant range of services throughout University for our students

Union Building

15. Ensure guarantees are given on a new USSA building that meets the needs of our students

Refurbishment

Four areas were refurbished over the summer:

- The Lounge had £8,500 spent offering work areas, social space and open-access computers
- The Priory had £15,000 spent offering pub grub, live music and relaxed venue
- Student Involvement Zone had £16,000 spent offering a computer bank, shared working space and encouraging student ownership
- The Fishbowl offers a visible Executive, information hub and core services

Investing in Staff and Students

- Current recruitment for a Communities Engagement Co-ordinator
- Students as staff
- Long term investment in Engagement and Support

Refocusing attention on Learning and Teaching

Strathclyde Teaching Excellence Awards

The How and When...

- Student led awards recognising good teaching in two categories:
 - Innovative Teacher
 - Outstanding Teacher
- Nominate online between now and March
- Panel meets to decide shortlist
- Awards lunch for staff and students

Following a vote the meeting gave their **approval** of Submission of Accounts and the Executive Report

AGM09/10.7 MOTIONS

i. Anti-BNP

A main motion and amendment were presented.

The proposer of the Amendment was invited to give a speech and waived a final summation, a vote was taken and **passed**

The main motion, including the amendment, were proposed. Following a lengthy discussion and a challenge to the Chair, a vote was taken which was not passed.

An immediate recount was requested and held. The vote was retaken, but the motion still **fell**.

ii. Better Services in the Orbit Cafe

Following a speech by the Proposer, with a final summation waived, a vote was taken and the Motion **passed**

AGM Notes:

1. That USSA has a number of Standing Policies that refer to the Orbit Cafe¹
2. That contracts with suppliers are one of the factors that dictate the price of food. The suppliers that Residence and Catering Services use for the Orbit Café and other catering outlets are coming up for renewal in February
3. That students are not allowed to eat in the library and that there is no packed lunch space available in the library except during exam times within the space is opened after the Orbit Café closes
4. That Chip & Pin machines are scheduled to be in place by February

AGM Believes:

1. That many students are dissatisfied with the services that the Orbit Café provides
2. That while there have been some improvements, these improvements have not gone far enough
3. That additions such as (but not limited to) Chip & Pin machines would greatly improve the Orbit Café
4. That students need a place in the library to be able to eat packed lunches during the day and not just at exam times
5. That the food is overpriced for the quality & range on offer
6. The Scene provides better quality and range of food for cheaper prices

AGM Instructs:

1. That the Executive lobby the Residence and Catering Department to ensure Chip & Pin machines are installed in the quickest possible time
2. That the Executive lobby the Residence and Catering Department to provide packed lunch area within the Orbit Café
3. That the Executive lobby the Residence and Catering Department to negotiate that has a wider range of food at a cheaper price
4. That the Executive lobby the Residence and Catering Department to ensure a continued improvement in the services provided by the Orbit Café and all other catering outlets on campus

Proposer: Iain Pullar, Vice President Operational & Commercial Services

Secunder: Kelley Temple, Vice President Support & Campaigns

¹ *Library Facilities, 31st January 2005; Inadequate Library Facilities, 29 January 2007*

iii. Military Recruitment

The proposer gave a speech for the main motion, followed by a speech from the proposer of an amendment. Following discussion, a summation was made and a vote was taken on the amendment. The vote **passed**.

The amendment, having deleted the main motion, then became the property of the original proposer who gave a speech.

A vote was taken on the motion and **passed**

AGM Notes:

1. At the previous AGM a motion was successfully passed banning military recruiters from Union premises
2. The wording of the previous motion was interpreted by the Student Union to allow a Service Affiliated group into the Union
3. The AGM does not have the authority to ban military recruitment on campus and only with Union buildings

AGM Believes:

1. The UOTC, UAS AND URNU are present at the Freshers' Fair in order to inform the students of the greater opportunities available to them during their time at University, with no obligation to join the Armed Forces
2. The UOTC, UAS and URNU share a common goal to develop their members in many aspects of their personal skills such that they are better equipped then for the workplace, be it military or civilian. Despite receiving payment for some activities they undertake it is in no way presented to prospective members as an alternative to a part-time employment

AGM Instructs:

1. That despite military recruiters being banned from Union buildings it is clearly evident that the UOTC, UAS and URNU are not directly involved in military recruitment and as such they should be allowed fair and full representation in Union buildings alongside other University groups

Proposer: Bryan Simpson

Secunder: Ross MacLatchie

iv. Saying No to the Marginalisation of Students Through Beauty Pageants

The proposer gave an outline about the motion.

The quoracy of the meeting was questioned. A headcount using voting cards was carried out and found still be to quorate at 160.

Following discussion a vote was taken and fell. A re-count was requested and vote re-taken. The motion then **passed**. There were no challenges to the chair on this point, so the Agenda continued.

AGM Notes:

1. Strathclyde's name is on the website of the beauty pageant "Miss Student UK" as one of the many colleges and universities taking part in the competition
2. Contestants get through rounds based on popularity. For example, Miss Student UK's first round is based on how many hits a contestant's profile, pictures and videos get compared to her competitors
3. It has been noted that entry requirements into beauty pageants have been based on dress sizes – notably that of a size 10 and under
4. USS has a commitment to our Equal Opportunities policy

AGM Believes:

1. Beauty pageants like "Miss Student UK" and "Miss University GB" are harmful to students as they exclude a lot of women students, men and promote that there is only one definition and type of "beauty". A lot of students feel uncomfortable with entering these competitions as well, as there is a sense of not being beautiful or good enough to enter
2. These competitions are objectifying to women and women students as men cannot enter and contestants are judged on looks alone. Women and students are more than just looks – women have fought for over a century for access to a proper education and to be judged on intelligence and hard work
3. As a Students' Union, we have to create a safe space and environment for all our students. Beauty pageants can encourage and contribute to mental health problems and eating disorders, especially through size restrictions

AGM Resolves:

1. For USSA to not be associated or for our Strathclyde University name to be used on any beauty pageant materials. This includes "Miss Student UK" and "Miss University GB"
2. For USSA and the University to not host or promote any beauty pageants and competitions

Proposer: Janel Muir, Women's Officer

Second: Kelley Temple, Vice President Support & Campaigns

v. Staff Cuts

The main motion was presented. Reference was made by AGM that current Standing Policy "Save YOUR Lecturers" already covered this issue. A call for parts requested. Following a vote the motion **fell**

vi. The Customer is Always Right

Following a speech from the Proposer and no challenges, the summation was waived and vote taken. The motion **passed**

AGM Notes:

1. That the attached document represents comments consistently made by students in their responses to the National Student Survey and first year surveys

2. The University of Strathclyde's vision and mission, which states
"Providing a high-quality education and experience to all our students, regardless of background, inspiring them to develop to the full their abilities"
3. The University of Strathclyde's Academic Strategy (06-09) which states:
"innovative teaching which impacts on curriculum design, teaching methodology and the learning environment and which enables the students to develop as reflective learners capable of regulating their own learning experience"

AGM Believes:

1. That in recent years there has been increasing moves within the higher education sector to view students as consumers
2. That this view of students is wrong and counterproductive; students should be co-producers in their educational experience – as partners with the university
3. At any rate, if students really are to be considered as consumers then there are always obligations posed on the service provider and rights on the part of the consumer
4. That today's students deserve an education which is equipped for the demands of the 21st century, allows for academic freedom and ownership, provides them with the means for self development and flexible to needs
5. That the attached document represents a minimum level of standards and services students should expect from their Strathclyde experience
6. That these standards should be achieved through partnership and collaboration between the university, students and USSA
7. That with great rights come great responsibilities; in order to be afforded these rights, students should recognise and adhere to the regulations imposed on them by membership of the university

AGM Resolves:

1. To adopt the attached document as policy and for it to form the basis of USSA's Education Policy Committee's priority campaign
2. For the President to circulate the policy to relevant university staff and officers and submit it through the formal committee process
3. For the President to seek university buy-in and adoption of the document and adhere to it's obligations

Proposer: Philip Whyte, President
 Seconder: Amy Davies, Deputy President

The Student Manifesto

The right to representation and recreation

- ✓ All students are entitled to be represented by USSA for and on behalf of themselves at all levels of the university
- ✓ Students should have the ability to represent themselves via class representation and be provided the means to achieve this end by the joint efforts of USSA and the university
- ✓ Students should be free to fully enjoy sporting and other recreational activities by virtue of having Wednesday afternoon free
- ✓ Students should receive recognition of institution wide extra – and co-curricular activities on their academic transcript

The right to co-operation

- ✓ Students should have the right to be viewed as co-producers in their learning experience; empowered to be a valued partner, not consumer
- ✓ Students should have input into the design and delivery of their curriculum
- ✓ Feedback on teaching methods and resources should be actively encouraged, evidenced by tangible outcomes and higher student satisfaction

The right to adequate resources

- ✓ The university to provide adequate and liveable accommodation for all new students; taking into account increasing student numbers and differing needs and demographics
- ✓ Students should have access to an adequate number of hard copy and electronic learning resources; through the adequate provision of IT and library facilities
- ✓ No student should have to pay for any material which is essential to them completing their degree
- ✓ The right to study and learn in a suitable environment which is conducive to these ends and adequately equipped for this purpose
- ✓ Students should receive a personalised and timely timetable, both for classes and exams

The right to adequate support and advice

- ✓ All students should have consistent and regular access to an adviser of study to assist with all aspects of the student experience
- ✓ Teaching staff should be readily accessible both online and in person to answer questions and contact hours provision increased and clearly advertised
- ✓ Students should be aided and supported in their transition between each years of study to enable self learning
- ✓ Students should be given clear and full information on progression to each year of study, including potential choices and expected outcomes
- ✓ All students should receive the same level of and access to support regardless of year of study or place of study

The right to access

- ✓ Students should be provided access to adequate, university provided, childcare arrangements
- ✓ Students should be afforded clear and comprehensive information on studying at the university from a school level – all students should have a smooth and supported transition from secondary to tertiary education
- ✓ Students should be offered realistic and relevant information and guidance on all aspects of their future and current Strathclyde experience

The right to proper assessment and feedback

- ✓ Students should receive assessments and feedback which are for learning, not simply of learning – continuous assessment should be provided
- ✓ Students should receive anonymised marking on all pieces of assessment
- ✓ Assessments should be evenly distributed throughout the year to ensure a balanced workload
- ✓ Feedback should be timely, continuous and relate to clear and identifiable criteria

- ✓ All efforts should be made to provide fact to face feedback, utilising also self assessment and peer to peer feedback

vii. To Ensure the Continued Cooperation of Organisations Involving Students with Strathclyde University and Student Association

The proposer gave a speech on the main motion, to which an amendment was presented. Following a speech and waiver of summation, a vote was taken on the amendment and **passed**.

The amended motion was summated by the proposer. A vote was taken and **passed**

AGM Notes:

1. That the University Officer Training Corps (UOTC), University Air Squadron (UAS) and University Royal Naval Unit (URNU) were forbidden to enter the Association premises during the 2009 University of Strathclyde Freshers' Fair
2. That this was due to the interpretation of the motion "TO END STRATHCLYDE'S COMPLICITY IN MILITARY CONFLICTS" which was passed at the Association General Meeting February 2009-10-28
3. That the OTC, UAS and URNU are not directly involved in military research and development, nor do they hold any ties with BAE Systems or other companies linked to the arms trade
4. That there is a common misconception that members of the UOTC, UAS and URNU are under obligation to join the armed forces once they have graduated; this is not the case. Members of the OTC, UAS or URNU are under NO obligation to join the armed forces
5. That the UOTC, UAS and URNU are entirely apolitical

AGM Believes:

1. That all organisations and their representatives involving students at Strathclyde should be provided with the opportunity to be present at activities/events organised by the University
2. That all organisations and their representatives involving students at Strathclyde should be provided with the opportunity to be present in the Association's buildings and events, including but not limited to posters, stalls, presence at careers fairs, etc. providing they abide to the rules and regulations set out by the Association, including but not limited to, standing policy and Equal Opportunities policy
3. That no University policy should prohibit Strathclyde students from acting at their own free will when wishing to represent their organisation and that no student organisation should be subject to discrimination by other organisations, regardless of background, aim, political views etc.
4. That those who seek to ban any organisation from the Association that they do not personally agree with would, if successful, destroy the democratic credentials of the Association

AGM Instructs:

1. The Association to allow all organisations and their representatives involving students at Strathclyde the opportunity to represent themselves in the Association's buildings and events, including but not limited to, posters, stalls, presence at careers fairs, etc.

Proposer: Gavin Wilkie
Seconder: Gary Gillies

AGM09/10.08 A.O.C.B.

- i. Course notes – AGM raised the issue of cost and accessibility of course material which is not always found on-line. Also the cost of course material rises every year. The President responded and assured AGM that this issue, being part of the now passed Student Manifesto, was being dealt with and encouraged similar issues to be raised with the Executive

The Association General Meeting Closed at 19.55