

AGM Minutes**Welcome and apologies**

The Acting Union President, Steve Gore welcomed everyone to the meeting. Steve confirmed that the meeting was quorate based on those present in the room and registered online for proxy voting.

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 29 November 2018 were approved - For: 67
Against: 8 Abstain: 35

Annual reports

The question was raised by a member in the audience about the appropriateness of including details in the accounts of the number of Jalapeno Shots sold. The Acting Union President confirmed that this would be reviewed, but the statements provided for the accounts were from a member of staff who no longer works for SUSU. In future, the tone of the accounts and the details provided will be more professional.

Receipt of Consolidated Accounts and Trustee Report for the year ending 31st July 2017 and approval of affiliations 2017-18.

The Report and Accounts were received - For: 71 Against: 8 Abstain: 26

Appointment of auditors

The continuation of the appointment of the auditors was approved - For: 66 Against: 7 Abstain: 33

Resolution 1: Political Expenditure

A member of the audience asked where the money for the Political Expenditure comes from. This question was answered by the VP External Engagement, Fleur Walsh who confirmed that this money is put aside at the beginning of each year and is in line with the External Engagement aims for community engagement and encouraging the youth vote.

A member of the audience asked about the impartiality of SUSU's involvement in political issues and registering to vote. The Acting Union President, Steve Gore answered this by confirmed that SUSU is legally required to remain impartial and can only encourage students to register to vote and be involved, but that SUSU would never side with a party or candidate.

In response to a question about the amount that is set aside, the VP Democracy and Creative Industries, Evie Reilly confirmed that this was a historic amount that is reflected in the accounts. If the amount is deemed too high, this can be reviewed this year. VP External Engagement, Fleur Walsh confirmed that this amount was not to the detriment of any other budget lines within SUSU

and Acting Union President, Steve Gore confirmed that if it is not spent in any given academic year it is placed in the reserves budget to roll on to the next year.

The Resolution of Political Expenditure was passed – For: 52 Against: 37 Abstain: 22

Resolution 2: Union Review

A member of the audience asked whether the workload for the new VP Education and Democracy would be too high. VP Democracy and Creative Industries, Evie Reilly answered that she currently works closely with the VP Education already for election of Academic Representatives. The Core Staff who support these Sabbatical Officers will remain the same and so this change brings the work in line with the staff structure.

In response to a number of questions raised around the changes to Union Groups Managers or Leaders, VP Democracy and Creative Industries, Evie Reilly confirmed that they would not be Student Officer but that they are on the same level. The new Union Groups roles will still be elected by the student body during the Spring Elections, which came up during feedback and consultation on the You Make Change portal, but they would not need to attend as many meetings as previously.

A questions was asked about how the budget lines would look after the new Sabbatical Team was put in place. VP Democracy and Creative Industries, Evie Reilly confirmed that the budgets had not yet been looked at and would be reviewed separately. The VP Student Communities, Emily Harrison also confirmed that the budgets would not just be split or rearranged by the roles. The new remits will be looked into properly and the appropriate amounts would be allocated based on the work that needs to be done going forward.

In line with discussion around the budgets, the questions was raised of what would be gained from the reduction in salary. VP Democracy and Creative Industries, Evie Reilly confirmed that this change was more for future-proofing the organization against potential cuts to the block grant and would also improve efficiency in the team through moving remits.

The question was asked whether the Media Officer and the Community and Volunteering Officer would become barriers for the work that the Union Groups and RAG do. VP Democracy and Creative Industries, Evie Reilly answered that this wouldn't result in barriers but that these roles were there to take the work of representation so that there is more time for managing activities given back to the Union Groups.

In answer to how the level of engagement with elections would be address now that roles have been taken away, VP Democracy and Creative Industries, Evie Reilly answered that it would be an opportunity to reintroduce students to the elections through the new roles and remits. This would be a chance to talk more about what being a Sabbatical Officer involves and a reduction in the number of roles would encourage a little more competition.

The VP Student Communities, Emily Harrison also answered that the reduction in Sabbatical Officers is in line with other Student Union's and so this would make the roles more recognizable in the election. Especially for PG students who may have studied for their UG degree elsewhere.

The question was asked whether a pay cut and retaining the 7 sabbatical roles would be better as Solent have lower salaries. VP Student Communities, Emily Harrison answered that this would be less engaging as you would be asking for the same workload for less money. Solent Union had two unfilled Sabbatical Roles the previous year which indicates that the salary is not enticing enough, certainly compared to grad schemes in the industry.

For more details please visit <https://www.susu.org/representation/union-review.html>

Option 1: A five-person sabbatical structure

The new sabbatical roles under this structure would be: President, VP Education & Democracy, VP Sports, VP Activities, VP Welfare & Community

For: 59 Against: 47 Abstain:12

Option 2: A six-person sabbatical structure

The new sabbatical roles under this structure would be: President, VP Education, VP Sports, VP Activities, VP Welfare & Community, VP Democracy

For: 49 Against: 56 Abstain: 13

The result of the vote is for the next sabbatical team to have 5 roles: President, VP Education & Democracy, VP Sports, VP Activities, VP Welfare & Community

Resolution 3: Trustee Board Changes

That the Trustee Board shall consist of 12 members (four Sabbatical Trustees, four Student Trustees, four External Trustees).

The question was raised whether it should be equal representation, Sabbatical Officers and Student Trustees are elected from the student body but the External Trustees are not and would it not be better if they had fewer seats. The Acting Union President, Steve Gore confirmed that the new structure does still mean that there are eight student voices to four external trustees. In response to questions about the reduced numbers, Steve Gore confirmed that this was as a result of recommendations from for Charity Commission but that the student voices are still the majority.

The change to the Trustee Board structure was approved - For: 71 Against: 9 Abstain: 25

Resolution 4: Chair of Trustee Board

The Trustee Board shall be Chaired by an External Trustee.

A member of the audience asked why the change had been proposed and whether this could potentially change the balance of representation if the Chair has a deciding vote in a tie break. Evie Reilly explained that an External Trustee usually serves 3 years with the Union and would provide some consistency to the board as well as experience. Steve Gore confirmed that the change was a recommendation as the Sabbatical Officers are paid by the Students' Union and so there may be a conflict of interest but that the vote would reflect what the students would like to see.

Regarding student representation at high levels within the Student Union, there were a number of questions around the change this would have on the board and specifically what powers Trustee Board has alongside Union Senate. Evie Reilly and Fleur Walsh confirmed that there are a range of expertise that the External Trustees bring to the board from industry, including finance, academia and business but ultimately, they would still be accountable to the student body. Steve Gore confirmed that the composition of Trustee Board would still have a higher proportion of student representation and it is common for other Student Union's across the UK to have an external trustee as chair so it wouldn't change the composition of the board or its function greatly. Steve Gore confirmed that the Union Senate has oversight of the elected officers, their work and the political direction of the Union, while Trustee Board has oversight of strategic or operational work within the Union.

In response part of the resolution confirming that an External Trustee would be appointed to the role, questions were raised around the process for this and what merits would be expected for the person taking on that role. Steve Gore confirmed that they would be expected to have experience in checks, balances and financial security of businesses.

The change to the Chair of Trustee Board was not approved and will continue to be chaired by the Union President - For: 40 Against: 44 Abstain: 29

AOB

A vote on the changes made to the You Make Change Portal was added to the agenda under AOB during the Union Senate Meeting that took place on 20 November 2018. Submissions to the You Make Change Portal that were made anonymously would no longer be shown publically on the website. During the discussion at Union Senate where this was originally raised, concerns were brought forward about how this would affect transparency of the Union's responses to these submissions.

Evie Reilly opened the discussion at the AGM by sharing some of these concerns and reiterating the original reasoning behind the change. The You Make Change Portal is often misused if submission are put through anonymously, leading to complaints being shared here instead of through more appropriate channels.

An audience member asked how anonymous the submission are as students receive responses. Evie Reilly explained that during Union Senate she was mandated to explore how the data is stored and how anonymous it is, and that in the meantime a disclaimer would be placed on the website regarding responses to anonymized submissions.

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There were a number of questions raised around the rules for filtering, rejecting or keeping private certain submissions through the You Make Change Portal. Evie Reilly explained that there has not previously been a rule or method to reject any submissions that are not suitable, unless on legal grounds. By keeping submissions from being public, this is a way to filter unsuitable submissions that was not previously possible. If those submissions are made public still, there needs to be a way to reject any that are abusive instead.

Regarding the reasons and accountability of rejecting some submissions, Evie Reilly confirmed that a report would be sent to Union Senate that can provide statistics on the rejected submissions and the reasoning behind each one.

Isabella Camilleri, VP Welfare added that the submissions were not rejected on the grounds that the Sabbatical Officers didn't like them or didn't want to answer them but that the group decides together each week and takes a considered response to each. A member of the audience suggested that an independent person could sit in these meetings and help to ensure that this remains the case in difficult situations. Evie Reilly explained that the submissions are reviewed each week by the team and that this deliberation usually takes a full hour. If an independent person was not able to make the meeting it could delay the process. Steve Gore said that this was a good suggestion and that it would be considered depending on the outcome of the vote by students at the AGM.

With regards to questions around the You Make Change decisions and its impact on the Harassment Reporting tool, Isabella Camilleri confirmed that the Harassment Tool reports directly to Student Services and that the Sabbatical Officers don't have access to this information. Isabella also reiterated that the You Make Change Portal was not designed as a public forum but is a platform for change and suggestions. Steve Gore also added that students are never mandated to make harassment against them public.

The decision to continue publishing publically any submission on You Make Change that is anonymous was approved - For: 80 Against: 14 Abstain: 15

There was no further business raised and so the Annual General Meeting was officially closed and the Making Change Summit commenced.

Making Change Summit Minutes

Topic 1: How can the Students' Union better engage with and support our Postgraduate Students?

Our VP Student Communities, Emily Harrison opened the discussion by introducing some of the key areas of work that the Students' Union is already focused on. There is a new level of academic representation starting from this academic year; our Postgraduate Research Representatives will sit in each faculty to ensure that there are student voices on relevant faculty level boards at the University. This is part of a drive to ensure that there is more robust representation for all students within important University meetings and the aim is to introduce Postgraduate Taught Representatives once agreements have been confirmed with the University.

The new PG Breakfast Club this year will not only provide a free breakfast to Postgraduate Students but provides a platform for discussion and mingling. There will also be Postgraduate BBQs in March and September for socializing and to encourage our Postgraduate Students to take a break away from the office. As part of this, there will be a PG Fun Day in the summer, organized by the Postgraduate Committee.

These activities form part of a core offer that the Students' Union will be organizing alongside anything that our elected Postgraduate Reps and Postgraduate Committee decide to do. This will ensure that each year, there are regular events that happen regardless of whether the Committee is in place. Often events are dependent on the time commitments of elected officers who are also studying and so this core offer will ensure that there is less pressure on those students to deliver a year of events and instead their voices are more for representation.

A question from the audience asked whether there were any studies on the age demographics for which postgraduate student engage most with the Students' Union. Emily Harrison confirmed that this data could be put together and published on Facebook. Evie Reilly also discussed changes to how the Students' Union looks at the Postgraduate Community as they are no longer grouped with Student Parents.

An audience member asked about outlets on campus opening in the summer and staying open later in evenings and weekends. Emily Harrison confirmed that after receiving many You Make Change submissions around this she has met with the Union Services team. The Shop has started to open later but one of the issues with this is the staffing costs. A solutions to this has been the pop up shop in the Stags during the holidays that has some essentials including milk and sandwiches. Emily will be looking at introducing this at sites such as well, starting with NOCs. Sam Dedman confirmed that this would have a positive knock on effect for Nursing and Health Sciences students as well.

Steve Gore raised a discussion on the events program for PGs being separate and that we should look to have more events that are open to everyone. In the past, the Students' Union has run Comedy Nights and Roller Discos. This sentiment was echoed by a member of the audience who said that more non-drinking events and alternative nights out had been very welcomed by MedSoc students as well.

Although events are a good way to engage with PG Students, a member of the audience asked about how the Students' Union planned to engage with students who see themselves as, and are treated by the University as staff members. There is no HR protection or policies for PG Students who work for the University and so they don't get any sickness cover or pay. The Engineering department have cut the number of hours that PGs can work and be paid but the amount of work that needs to be done has reduced so PG students are no finding they are working for free.

Emily Harrison confirmed she was working on a policy with the University that would address the working hours, the lack of HR cover for PGs and issues around mental health and stress. The PGRs who teach policy is referenced in Emily's Sabbatical Plan and was brought to the Student Communities Zone to be discussed. They will also be looking to help change the policy so that PGRs get paid for their prep time not just teaching time.

Emily is also looking at Welfare Support and met with the Quality Standards and Accreditation Scheme to put together a body of work. This will look at including all the support services in and suspension letters sent to students as well as pushing for more communication during that time. The Students' Union will also start to send regular communications to student emails throughout the year, the policy will be worked on in the background but Emily will put a blog together when it is completed.

An audience member raised that students who come back to their studies later have more responsibilities and so they need less focus on events and more on mental health and representation. Sam Dedman reiterated about the new levels of PGR Representation in Faculties and that the plan is to introduce PGT Representation as well.

The final discussion was around communication between the Students' Union and Postgraduate Students. Although emails are useful, they often aren't read and if this is the only communication that comes from the Students' Union then information about the support and services will be lost. A members of the audience suggested that the Students' Union should look at attending the induction talks to let them know at the very beginning what support is available and where they can go for help. Sam Dedman said that this was starting to happen after the faculty restructure at the University as we have a better list of when these are taking place and we will look at attending as many as we can. Emily Harrison said that we would be looking at how we contact Postgraduate students but that emails had been requested and so we will be creating a monthly newsletter to consolidate the events and support that is available throughout the year.

Topic 2: What can the Students' Union do to be more sustainable and look after the environment?

Our VP Welfare, Isabella Camilleri opened this discussion by introducing some of the sustainable actions that the Students' Union is already taking. Looking at reducing food waste initially, we are working on food vouchers and a food sharing space. The food sharing space is struggling at the moment due to concerns over vermin and loss of income for outlets as students may wait for free food.

We are also looking at issues with the bins as mixed recycling is currently sorted by hand. There is also a survey out at the moment that is looking at some sustainability issues for students that includes bins on campus.

A member of the audience asked sell or return policies in the shop and what happens afterwards. Isabella said that she didn't have information to hand on what happens to food after but that she will look into this. Isabella confirmed she had spoken to the shop already and they return unsold items and aren't charged for anything that is returned to the supplier.

In response to this, a member of the audience asked if we would be able to do something similar to Marks and Spencers who send their food to the homeless. Isabella said that we may not be able to do this as unpackaged food may not be accepted and could be considered unsafe after transport, and any food that is packaged is already in the sale or return policy so would go back to the supplier. A member asked where the reduced items in the shop can be found, Isabella confirmed that this is usually the second fridge on the bottom shelf.

Sam Dedman added that the Students' Union will be looking at other issues as well as food waste including working with UniLink to ensure that bus engines aren't left running at the Interchange.

A member of the audience asked about computers being left on overnight at the University and can the Students' Union work with iSolutions on this. Emily Harrison asked if we knew why they were left on and the reason is updates. Isabella confirmed that we would look into this with the University.

Another question was raised around water waste, as it seems that all the urinals leak. Isabella said that she would be looking into getting this fixed with facilities.

Topic 3: Should the Students' Union be more political?

Our VP Democracy and Creative Industries opened with a brief discussion on the wider political landscape and confirmed that there was a lot of conversations over Freshers about the issues with Brexit. Sam Dedman talked about the amazing work that our Clubs and Societies have been doing and asked the question whether we should be doing more as a Students' Union or whether we should empower our students to take the lead.

A member of the audience said that they would like to see the Students' Union act more rather than holding discussions and that issues affecting students especially needed more political action from SUSU. The member of the audience expressed that they felt students didn't see the Students' Union as a vessel for change, or for lobbying the University at the moment and that this perspective needed to be improved. This was countered by another member of the audience who said that discussion was still needed but there should be action afterwards. At the moment, the Students' Union should look to encourage more students to come forward with issues before engaging with the University on issues.

Evie responded to this discussion by confirming that the action the Students' Union takes needs to be informed by the student body and this is why discussion is needed. We would benefit from more students coming forward with issues that we can lobby for. Our VP External Engagement, Fleur Walsh also said that we should be looking at how we mobilize students especially in local issues. We should conduct some research into how many students can vote on issues that affect them and help to empower more students to engage and be heard.

A suggestion from the audience is that the Students' Union look to run more like a traditional union where initial talks expand to lobbying for action both from the University and in the wider community. Evie asked that we look back at the Strike Action to see that when there is an issue the Students Union is able to do this but it is difficult to engage with students at the moment.

Acting President, Steve Gore said that we needed to learn from some of the past failings of the Students' Union and ensure we are fighting for issues that are relevant and student-led. A member of the audience echoed this by suggesting there are more routes for students to have issues come to an AGM or an All Student Vote to be heard by more of the student body. They also asked for the You Make Change portal and petitions to be advertised more.

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A member of the audience suggested that we model what we do more on the nursing department who have a meeting each year where issues are taken to an elected committee to be reviewed. Sam Dedman agreed that we needed a way for submissions to be brought forward but that we wouldn't want to have a system that bogged us down in policy and process.

Another member of the audience raised that there is a lot that the Students' Union does online and through social media and that students would benefit from more grassroots action. Students would like to see more face to face interaction around campus. The discussion at the AGM were already decided before the meeting, another member of the audience suggested there was a more engaging way for students to bring their own ideas and discussions.

AOB

There was no further business raised and so the meeting was closed.