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**2023/24**

**MEMBERS**

Ambleside Campus Reps

Courtney Loring

Phoenix Beckwith

Brampton Rd. Campus Reps

Craig Bennett

Beth Jones

Academic Officer – Ryan Simmons

Activities Officer – Kara Ashurst

Welfare Officer – Paula Nwachukwu

Lancaster Campus Reps

Zaynab Khan

Ayesha Mahmood

Fusehill St. Campus Rep

Chris Brown

Date: 05/02/2024

In Attendance: Chair - Kara Ashurst (KA), Ryan Simmons (RS), Beth Jones (BJ) Craig Bennett (CB) Chris J. Brown (CJB), Zaynab Khan (ZB), Ayesha Mahmood (AM)

Misty Lamb (ML) and Danny Prescott (DP) in supporting role.

Apologies: Phoenix Beckwith, Courtney Loring, Paula Nwachwuku

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| AGENDA ITEM |  |
| 1 | Democratic Review   * Current System   + Observations, survey, Issues… * Proposal 1 – pros & cons * Proposal 2 – pros & cons * Voting threshold |
|  | ML quickly briefed the democratic review and differences in proposals. She asked if everyone thought the voting booklets that will be used was easy to understand which everyone agreed. Mentioned that the voting threshold will be 5% of each campus so will require lots of publicity if possible. This would be running alongside the main elections so should be easier to attain the publicity, but she requested that the everyone spread the word through their courses and friend groups.  CJB observes that there are quite a few student positions available in the proposed systems and asks what would happen if UCSU is unable to find enough students to fill all the different positions. RS states that UCSU would consider allowing students to fulfil multiple part-time roles. For example, you could be a rep for two different things which are only part-time, amounting to a total 10 hours a month.  DP clarifies that all positions will be paid, like micro contracts from the savings of removing the Activities officer position. This is because over the years it has become harder and harder to recruit people into a full-time role, especially as the students here have quite a definitive career path from full-time study into full-time jobs. DP recognises that if UCSU wants good quality people in, they need to be paid for their work otherwise they would rather find paid work elsewhere than dedicate their free time to a student union committee.  ML requests for help to support events as detailed in following item. |

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| AGENDA ITEM |  |
| 2 | Elections & Referendum   * Upcoming available roles – ways to promote to students * Brief on Election period plan * Request for help to support if available.. * NUS referendum |
|  | ML mentioned the available officer roles which she had already sent out an email to all campus reps anyway. She requests for help during this period to help support events. She will send out a timetable detailing when each one will be happening on which campus. All reps are welcome to help but if they are running for an officer position, they will have to be advised and trained to be impartial during their support so as to ensure they are not inappropriately using this time/space to campaign or de-influence others from applying – DP reaffirms this.  ML also asks for best ways to gain attention for elections during nominations and voting period.  ZK, AM and CJB expressed that posters are too passive and not eye-catching enough. CJB furthered that they look too similar. ML mentions that UCSU will have banners up which will be slightly different and more attention-grabbing. BJ states UCSU should incentivise voting through sweets for example. DP wary about incentivising voting because it should be an entirely democratic process but things of small or no material value such as sweets like BJ said should work.  DP briefs everyone on the NUS referendum and why this has come up. Mentions that last years Executive Committee had interactions with National Union of Students and found their training to be inadequate and not worth the money UCSU pays them for. They felt strongly that this money could be used elsewhere and drew up a referendum plan to de-affiliate from NUS UK. The Trustee Board reviewed the plan but felt there were things that needed to be tightened up before referendum could go ahead, therefore it did not proceed as planned and was pushed to this year. This is now brought up in this meeting for current committee to decide whether they want to renew the policy which states that a referendum on disaffiliation will be allowed to go ahead within the next 12 months. DP states that NUS may send people to campaign against de-affiliation and that UCSU would be proceeding with dis-affiliation referendum under the committee’s approval so EXEC members must be aware of that they may potentially be approached by NUS UK.  Members all expressed approval but are worried about the short time frame and that students will not actually know what they will be voting for. BJ recommends that staff members from UCSU go into lectures to brief students and explain. CJB seconds the worry and believes more information need to put out so students sufficiently know what is at stake. Mentions he believes there should be an extension [in terms of running alongside main elections] for a proper informed decision. ZK and AM expressed that they personally had no idea what NUS was hence fail to see the value but they second the idea that information needs to be put out about what NUS brings to the table so students can make an informed decision. KA asks for clarification that the committee approves for this to go to referendum. ZK states yes and that she personally does not see the point in continuing affiliation.  DP explains the reason for going along main elections to be that it would be hard to secure the voting threshold outside of main election period. CJB reiterates the worry – says publicising information to do with referendum should go ahead in this time but potentially consider extending the voting period. ML comes in to clarify that although next 4 weeks is the election period and there will be loads of publicity events but most of the work of securing nominations will be through targeted messaging and approaching people who UCSU already know. UCSU could come up with a plan to direct efforts into prioritising getting information about NUS out there instead. Explains that the long, 4 week period is more about allowing students to consider whether they want to commit to the sabbatical positions than it is badgering students to nominate themselves. |
| Action: | ML to come up with a publicity plan for the referendum for EXEC to revise – aiming to get as much word out there. |

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| AGENDA ITEM |  |
| 3 | BUCS   * Review of report – participation stats, costs… * Discussion * Decision |
|  | KA briefs members that BUCS is to do with UCSU sports teams and the agenda today is to weigh up the benefits to decide if it is worth the money invested into it.  ZK and AM stated they had personal experience with it in first year when they tried out netball. They found it hard to navigate around the BUCS website system which they recall was raised by a lot of the. Stated that it doesn’t seem that beneficial especially since the university is small. Money could be invested in a different way and collaborations between societies and universities to secure games can be possible. They used their personal experience running the South Asian Society and have sought out their own connections and collaboration events. They believe that UCSU sports teams will be able to do the same, might even be easier for them. CJB states a similar thought process and that its a lot of money for how many students it actually benefits (50). CJB mentions the best and right way to go around it is to ensure there is a clear plan about how games will be secured and how they will be supported to ensure the teams have as much access and opportunities to activities.  RS draws the observation that much of the time saved from the process of BUCS such as applications, paperwork etc. (done by Grace) would be redirected into supporting the development of the societies and increasing overall engagement.  KS asks what members think – whether students want a competitive league to their societies or do they regard it mostly as a social opportunity and space. ZK says from her own experience, a lot of it is about socials and not the sports. CJB states its hard to give his opinion due to the lack of sports teams in Fusehill campus as the ones there are run through the university.  KA asks BJ for her opinion. BJ states she is quite torn, though there is a good case for stopping BUCS. RS states that the decision made in this meeting today does not mean that there would be no chance in the future to re-join BUCS again. Suggests that if we decide to leave, this can be on the agenda to be reviewed by next year’s EXEC. Expresses that this decision should be made based on the foresight of the next year or two and the students’ priorities. KA says it is a yearly membership so the decision to be disaffiliated can be reviewed again at a later date.  KA asked everyone for their final decision – all decided to stop BUCS. |
| Action: | KA to proceed with cancelling membership with BUCS. |