

Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union

Student Council 2022/2023

Date	10/05/2023	Time	13:00
Location	Online - MS Teams		
Part Time Officers	Bobby Angelov - Societies Officer (BA) Francesca Whetstone - Community Officer (FW) Jordan Pidwell - Volunteering Officer (JP) Nick De Prazer - Mature Students Officer (NDP) Tes Choi - Liberation Officer (TC) Caius Datt - Education Officer (UG Exeter) (CD)		
SU Presidents	Georgi Griskeviciene - President Exeter and interim Chair (GG) Kira Orchard - President Welfare and Inclusivity (KO) Lauren Taylor - President Student Experience (LT)		
SU Staff	Matt Parker - Student Voice Manager (MP) Penny Davies - Student Voice Coordinator, Falmouth (PD) - Minutes Secretary		
Apologies	Luke Court - President Falmouth (LC)		
Observers			

	Item	Type	Lead
1	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair Welcome - due to chair being absent Georgi Griskeviciene volunteers to be chair. Council approves. 	Verbal	Chair
2	Ratification of minutes	To approve	Chair
3	<p>Motion to hold a referendum for the SU to disaffiliate from NUS UK</p> <p>Summary of discussion: Kira Opens the conversation providing a summary of the following reasons for disaffiliation. The previous discussion around the NUS antisemitism report and historic failure to protect Jewish students. Feedback from students who have attended NUS conferences. Believes that the topic of accountability was approached appropriately at conferences. Explained cost of membership. In summary does not believe that we as a union benefit from NUS membership, as students can still participate in national campaigns, and we will only miss out on being able to attend the national conference. Question: Should the SU disaffiliate from NUS UK? Following this not many questions from the council, but one regarding the timing of the referendum and whether calling it in the new year would be more beneficial. Response from Kira and Lauren was that it takes time throughout the academic year for Sabbatical officers to come to this conclusion. It is best to take the knowledge from the previous academic year into account. Other PTOs asked questions about the timing for the fee being paid and the timeline for actual disaffiliation. There were other concerns raised on whether students would be properly informed about what a yes or no vote would actually mean. It was confirmed by Kira that the SU must remain neutral so the student campaigners will be responsible for making sure the students are educated on the outcomes.</p> <p>Minutes: KO presents the NUS motion being raised.</p> <p>KO: What we pay doesn't balance out to what we take part in, everything you can do with us being affiliated you can do when disaffiliated. Certain reps can't go to conferences and vote on NUS policy [if we disaffiliate], but from the feedback I've had that isn't a</p>	Verbal	KO

	Item	Type	Lead
	<p>negative. This is specifically for NUS UK, not NUS charity, as they are two different fees.</p> <p>BA: Are we voting for it, or to start a referendum?</p> <p>KO: Yes, voting to start the referendum. It will take place next week.</p> <p>BA: Would that be a good time? It would be better to start it at the beginning of the next academic year.</p> <p>KO: That's my concern too, but this is the 2nd time it's been brought to council at this time of the year, I believe it's because you come into the President role and only realise at the end that we're spending a lot of time on nothing. However, it will just be a cycle, there probably won't be a better time to do it if that makes sense. I think we can hit quorum; we need a lot of people to do it.</p> <p>MP: Referendum has to meet 350 individual voters to be valid.</p> <p>LT: I want to reiterate what Kira has just said, we didn't know much about NUS when we came into the role. New council will have to take the time to learn about and consider NUS and the impact it has on the union, it's only this time that we can take into consideration the past year. I worry that we'll be going in a constant endless loop of talking about disaffiliating and then waiting until September. There is no good time to do it, if we did it any earlier than this it would clash with easter, elections, and so on.</p> <p>FW: Following from Lauren, 'when is a good time' – if we were to vote for it to happen, that fee, it's annual I presume? Has the fee already gone through for the next year? If it has, I see BA's point, if it hasn't, would we lose out on any of the money? That's my only concern.</p> <p>MP: The way it works – I don't have 100% knowledge on funding, but should a referendum result be yes to disaffiliate, we inform NUS of the decision to disaffiliate, we have to do so before July 2023 and membership will cease at the end of the calendar year. It's not a clean break, there will be other things we have to commit to and pay.</p> <p>KO: We know that as cost of living continues, Higher Education funds are drying up a bit. This isn't to say they will be putting their affiliation costs up, but they might. So is it better to put that money back into the SU directly?</p> <p>JP: Just wondering, I know that other organisations that have local bases with a national body, the national body has insurance teams that deal with safeguarding and issues hard to deal with locally,</p>		

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	<p>making it value for money. Do NUS provide us with that support and insurance?</p> <p>KO: No, I don't believe they do. I don't believe from my experience that I've ever seen NUS come down here. We can send presidents and officers to conferences to vote on policy, and get Totum card profit, but it's not that much profit – it's pennies. We have local connections anyways, with unis/SUs that also aren't part of NUS.</p> <p>JP: So, we're not relying on them?</p> <p>KO: No.</p> <p>CD [read by LT]: To be honest I don't think Totum cards are hugely popular with the student body anyways. [via MS teams Chat]</p> <p>BA: I assume students would be let known full detail of what a yes and a no would mean?</p> <p>KO: I would run a campaign to vote to leave, with the support of any PTOs who want to get on board, but we will present both options to students.</p> <p>GG: What is the time frame that we're looking at? It will be a quick decision made, lots of hardcore campaigning for a week.</p> <p>MP: As chair, it's your prerogative to set the timeline for this referendum. The advised timeline would be next Monday to next Friday for voting. 12pm-12pm.</p> <p>GG: Happy to approve the timeline that we've just discussed.</p> <p>MOTION PASSES Yes - 9 No - 0</p>		
4	<p>Motion to oppose the UCU's marking and assessment boycott LC was supposed to present this motion but is not in attendance, GG will talk through it.</p> <p>GG: We're currently in a marking and assessment boycott that the UCU have re-balloted for. Our mandate was to support the strike until the next ballot, currently we don't have a mandate to support. This is to add context to that AND oppose the boycott due to the impacts that it could have on student graduation and progression. Does anyone have any questions?</p>	Verbal	Chair

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	<p>GG: If we vote no, we will be NEUTRAL, if we vote yes, we will have a stance to OPPOSE the marking and assessment boycott. It's set to continue until September, so staff will continue the boycott over the summer and that may impact marks being given out for graduation.</p> <p>TC: I was just wondering, I'm not exactly sure how it works – if we support it and they do a strike that does impact the graduation, how much do you think that will help? Does it actually instigate change? It's unlikely that the university are not going to respond, that will make a difference.</p> <p>GG: The UCU do want student support on this, it's difficult to go ahead without student support so it may be detrimental, but they may still do it. We'll make it clear that students are unhappy.</p> <p>TC: If they boycott, how much that will benefit them and what they're trying to do?</p> <p>GG: The last boycott was in 2006, that's the biggest pay rise they had. But that wasn't during a recession and difficult cost times. I think they're hoping it will be in their favour but the university is holding firm ground. Everyone is feeling the crunch of cost of living and cost of inflation in general; they're not convinced the UCU will get the results they want.</p> <p>TC: Does the university have any contingencies in place?</p> <p>GG: they're looking at mitigation. They are still looking to work around it and make sure students can graduate but it's about the students who have fallen behind because they have deferred work. If cohorts don't have anything to mark during the boycott, they will be fine. It depends on when your assessments were, which isn't fair.</p> <p>MP: The motion will have an effective period for review of a year.</p> <p>MOTION PASSES Yes - 8 No - 1</p> <p>LT: I feel like the UCU in particular have been very sneaky with the way they've gone about this boycott. Previously they've been really open about what they're doing and how it will affect students. In this case, with the boycott, because I think they know students will be really unhappy with it – they've been quiet and secretive in comparison to how they've been before. Once it's public that we're not in support, I think this will impact them a little bit. They haven't been honest about how this will affect students and how this will</p>		

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	<p>literally affect their graduation. I think it's a little bit dirty and a bit sneaky.</p> <p>JP: that's what swayed me a little bit, I know as a 3rd year I joined during lockdown and have been impacted by strikes. If I don't graduate now, I'll be deeply unhappy.</p> <p>TC: I was just curious how much contact there's been with the SU and UCU about this and trying to sort it out beforehand?</p> <p>GG: The convo is mostly between the UCU and unis, but we had a conversation with the UCU before it was balloted and passed through. It's something they're quite passionate about, but it's something clear to me that they want student support on this, so coming out in opposition will come off quite strong.</p> <p>FW: The SU is to support the students, and this isn't supporting the students, which is why I think it's voted through.</p> <p>NDP [read by GG]: Some courses run later until august, and some people would like to start master's degrees – this will impact that [via MS Teams chat]</p>		
5	<p>Motion to lobby Falmouth university to allow students who have applied for extenuating circumstances to graduate</p> <p>GG: This is something that already happens at Exeter. Bear in mind the marking boycott may impact this. If you receive 300 credits in your UG and 60 in your final year, you can still attend graduation, you just receive a placeholder. Falmouth don't allow you to attend unless you receive all of your marks and your final result. We want to share the policies of Exeter with them to make sure it's fair across the board. I don't think we have many Falmouth students here today but please comment.</p> <p>BA: I didn't know much about this initially, but I've been getting a lot of emails in my role as dept rep from a lot of students who won't be able to attend grad because of that policy. Even course academics and course leaders are looking for ways to support this in any way because they want their students to attend.</p> <p>GG: I do think it's something that's wanted quite widely. I think they're just not sure how to change it, so some guidance from Exeter's policy will be helpful. I think LC could make some changes with this that will be quite beneficial.</p> <p>BA: Is there a way that will facilitate academics to show their support, write a letter or something, to make our stance even stronger?</p>	Verbal	Chair

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	<p>GG: Possibly, it depends how Luke goes about it. Letters of support from academics could be an avenue Luke goes down, it shows academic support which is important.</p> <p>GG: This policy would be reviewed in a years' time.</p> <p>MOTION PASSES</p> <p>Yes - 8</p> <p>No - 1</p>		
	<p>MAKE A CHANGE: make AMATA room bookings for societies free.</p> <p><i>Currently all on campus teaching spaces are free for societies to use with the exception of the AMATA studios. This leaves societies with significant costs for room bookings which consequently gets passed on to their members through class fees. AMATA room bookings should be free to hire alongside all other on campus teaching spaces. By doing this, it will help lower the costs for societies and make their sessions more accessible to all students.</i></p> <p>GG: As I understand it, we pay a small fee for societies to use these spaces. I'll open this up to discussion.</p> <p>BA: I think yes, obviously -0 there's no point in asking people for money to use something that they already pay for. Is there a description for why they [AMATA] require those funds?</p> <p>GG: Yes, essentially it does go towards equipment and insurance and things like that.</p> <p>CD: From my experience working with a few societies that have had to book these rooms, there isn't a reason given. I think it's just upkeep for these rooms that, as stated, they already pay to upkeep. A lot of societies already struggle financially, so it's something that really needs to be changed.</p> <p>LT: I was trying to find some info on exactly how much it costs – this is what's shared with our activities committee. Looking at Tremough Follie's budget, it's 27 pounds per studio hire for a session, and they have 60 sessions per year. For their showcases and shows, it's 315 pounds for a bigger studio. To provide a bit of context on prices. The reason why AMATA charge is about insurance and making sure spaces are upkept and so on. But AMATA also hire out their spaces to external, so they're making it a competitive market for anyone who wants to come in and hold shows, as well as students. Which I think is bollocks if you ask me, they give priority to externals which is quite disgusting. I don't think it's feasible for us to lobby for AMATA to be free because if we go down this route it will be a similar thing for the</p>	<p>Make a Change</p>	<p>Chair</p>

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	<p>sports centre for sports clubs. AMATA is actually decently priced in comparison to the local market, e.g., the fish factory and the poly charge extortionate amounts in comparison, but it does make a drain on these society budgets to pay for these bookings. It is a lose-lose situation. With a society booking an academic space, it takes a lot less to maintain a seminar than it does a studio in AMATA, with also staffing as AMATA has to be staffed more than a building like peter Lanyon. This is a longwinded way of saying it's not feasible to say 'let's make it free' as I don't think that will happen, I think we're setting ourselves up for disappointment. However, in the last council FW and JP brought a motion to lobby for cheaper facilities for sports clubs and societies so it could be a big part of that as part of the lobbying. But I completely agree CD, it is crap, I'm sorry I'm not being more positive about this. I just don't want us to pass this motion and then have it fall a bit flat. It's also a case of, this battle could lose a little bit of momentum with the incoming presidents. We can lobby to make it cheaper, but probably not to make it free.</p> <p>FW: Just following on from LT, perhaps it could be that we vote against making it free, but LT, JP and I could make a case to make it cheaper rather than free.</p> <p>CD: What I was wondering is, with LT having read out these budgets, particularly for the regular room space – for insurance spaces, could a society pay some sort of access to room booking fee that's half of what they're paying at the moment, at the start of the year? So they don't have continual costs coming out of the year.</p> <p>LT: I will chat to Laura [the SU activities manager] about that, as she will know more than I would. She has been thinking about this as well. Some sports clubs cannot pay termly pitch costs, so we're trying to work out a way of stopping that to better manage club finances.</p> <p>KO: I just wanted to bring up – I agree with what's been said. The risk is there, the unintended consequences of having to pay for academic room spaces being booked. It's better to lobby it in with all spaces being cheaper rather than solely AMATA being free.</p> <p>GG: I don't think we can change what the mandate is, we either oppose or say yes we will try to make it free. I wonder with this one, in trying to make it free, we could make it cheaper. So, if you vote it through, we'll work to make it free, and potentially it will become cheaper as a consequence.</p> <p>FW: For rooms in PL and DDM, you don't have to pay as a society?</p> <p>GG: Yes, it's just free through room bookings, but doesn't come with any equipment that you might need in AMATA.</p>		

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	<p>FW: So that's why it's more expensive in AMATA?</p> <p>GG: Yes, but if you have to hire extra equipment that's not in the room, there may be a charge on top of that as well.</p> <p>TC [via MS Teams chat]: Could or do they do a deposit system? Where they have a contingency for misuse but for the rest its free</p> <p>LT [via MS Teams chat]: I will note this down and discuss with our activities manager.</p> <p>GG: How long should we sustain this before this policy is reviewed – can we pass this on to the next president team or is it running until the end of our presidency?</p> <p>MP: This is not based on what presidents are in, this will be SU policy. I would typically go for a timeframe of a year, but it's up to you.</p> <p>GG: We'll vote for a years' time then.</p> <p>MOTION FAILS</p> <p>Yes - 3</p> <p>No - 6</p> <p>GG: Just to reiterate, that doesn't mean we won't still work to make AMATA cheaper. We will work towards cheaper facilities, but we won't lobby to make them free.</p> <p>LT: To reiterate, I will be working with FW and JP to work on the motion they submitted on how to make all facilities cheaper.</p>		
	<p>President Updates</p> <p>GG: Please feel free to ask any questions about any previous minutes, this is a place to hold us to account.</p> <p>KO: Some very brief updates as I've been prepping for NUS stuff. I've been trying to get some provision in place for Trans and nonbinary students who use various pronouns, some movement has been made at Falmouth. In the new academic year, they'll be allowing students to put pronouns on teams, making guidance on how to do it and explaining that it's students' choice. In terms of the n the Exeter side, I'm working to make sure they keep students in mind when they update their guidance. That's the only major movement that I can think of at the minute, but the pantry has funding now for the next academic year and in the future. It should be around for the next 1-2</p>	Verbal	Chair, KO, LT

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	<p>years, hopefully for the future. We bleed – the goal is for it to be in all toilets next year, that will be up to student and staff/the SU to ensure.</p> <p>GG: I've been working a lot on Exeter connect, it's coming to some experience days in June, the first being on Penryn campus to celebrate the unique Cornwall experience. Streatham and Truro are invited, and there will be faculty talks from students and staff, beach activities from our societies, a celebration of all that's great about studying in Cornwall. The Streatham experience day will happen on the 9th of June, and one for Truro in St Luke's will take place the following week that will be more catered to medical students/BMBS. The mandates I've taken forward, this term I'm pushing the Divest Borders campaign forward through a few different places, e.g. the ethical partnerships group at University of Exeter, and the Guild next week. I'm supposed to be meeting with the University of Exeter's Chief financial officer soon to talk about ethical investments and trying to get something in a policy that states that we're not going to invest in border industries.</p> <p>LT: The SU Awards, I took the lead on our part of the awards – the entire script was written by me, I took the lead on supporting the wider staff team, it's related to my manifesto priority about fun. I also supported a couple of our groups in submitting for the national society and volunteering awards. We had 3 on the long list, as of Friday the Asian society is on the short list and will be going to the ceremony on the 23rd. Fingers crossed that they have success at the national awards. We also have the last activities committee and forum, so I will be evaluating how effective these spaces were this year as they died a pretty sad death last year so I revived them, and we want to see if they're good/bad. We allocated the last £2000 of the activities development grant across 8 different groups. I'm taking forward some motions passed in the last council, such as the motion with FW and JP. The Skate Park motion will be taken to the sports and wellbeing dual assurance group in Exeter and has been brought to the VC of Falmouth, who said it sounds like a brilliant idea. It's just a case of, is there funding available? I'm pretty sure there is, so hopefully that will move forward. I've been in the Exeter graduation review meetings, reviewing the accessibility of Truro cathedral. The ramp they used last year was awful, but now they have sent info to get a new ramp for the cathedral so it should hopefully be better. Also, hopefully there may be a change to the guest ticketing system – I don't want to say more in case Exeter backtrack on their word, but they're looking at making it cheaper. That's just for Exeter, as Falmouth haven't been doing any graduation reviews. I'm working with a biodiversity officer to revamp the walled garden to make it more accessible and turn this into a sensory garden. Finally, the spotlight on sports and societies, I'll be working with Jas [comms</p>		

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	<p>coordinator] to see how we can keep it going when I leave next year and also do some interviews with some clubs and societies to talk about their year and hype themselves up. If you're on a committee and would like to be involved, please let me know.</p>		
	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>MP: We are undergoing a democracy review at the moment and are now looking at our wider democratic models and how students engage with our democracy, and how we can expand it and make it more accessible to more people and open it up to more change. We wanted to bring the changes to this council, but the timeline wasn't right, so we wanted to run another council session in the first week of June to discuss this. We've been running some focus groups with students, and we would love to hear from you as well about what you like about our new model and how you think it could be implemented. I will send round some information in the coming week. I want to make this session fun for you guys as it's been great to work with you all. If you'd like more information or would like to chat more about the democracy review or council, please let me know.</p>	Verbal	Chair
	<p>Date and time of next meeting TBC</p>	Email	

