

## **Council Chair Report**

*Paul Beaumont*

Over the term there have been some highlights and low-points and some bits in-between, which I would like to report back to the Board.

### **General Meeting**

The Union General meeting, whilst not meeting quorum, had just less than 50 attendees, all of whom engaged well and positively with the discussion at hand. I was very impressed with the quality of the discussion and pleased that it meant the Higher Education Funding policy was slightly amended and passed at the next Council.

### **Higher Education Funding**

This was a good piece of work, lead on by the DPFS that I would say has been consulted on well. It is difficult given it divides opinion, but the new policy leaves a lot of manoeuvrability whilst committing to certain core principles. It doesn't tie the union to any particular cause and is arguably a good model of 'flexible policy making' to use in the future for any other controversial decisions.

### **Discussion on acceptable behaviour**

The President led an informal discussion at the end of one Council on acceptable behaviour within the Union. This will hopefully lead to ideas to feedback into the Union training programme for future years and will help stop repeats of any of the serious society misdemeanours that have occurred this term.

### **Officer Trustee names**

I was a little disappointed for this paper to be brought quite so soon, and with surprisingly very little interest in discussion from members, though there was almost total disagreement to last year's Council decision.

I would prefer for this paper to address all of the issues raised in the last discussion in Summer 2014 more thoroughly. There doesn't appear to have been the same level of debate this time, though in the Council meetings I have to act impartially and the members present seemed happy enough to approve it. This is perhaps partly my fault and due to a packed agenda that I didn't push harder for this in the meeting itself.

Greater discussion is probably needed at this second stage in the process to ensure this is fully covered.

### **Bursary Funding**

It was also unfortunate that the College Secretary had to submit to Council a paper by the previous year's sabbaticals on this issue that Council had not seen. This led to a retraction of a previous motion against the College's decision and highlighted a gap in the information Council had available when making these decisions. In the future, I think we need to be more careful to present all the facts before proposing motions, though I appreciate the sharp

deadline imposed by College on this issue gave very little time for the Union to act and respond properly.

### **Motion of No Confidence**

The motion of no confidence against the Rugby Club Captain was dealt with professionally and decently by Council Members and ACC members present. The apology from the Captain to the Council was well put and sincere. Council voted against the motion as it was satisfied that the Captain had learned their lesson, and accepted responsibility for their actions. A motion of censure was not possible within the meeting (which was proposed as an alternative) due to the Byelaw's requirements of giving 5 clear days notice.

### **Extras**

The Democracy Review that was agreed at Governance Committee is yet to come to Council (at the time of writing). Additional ideas and points I would suggest (based on meetings so far this year), is that policies and discussion need to probably go through Council subcommittees first. Once those members with an interest in a policy have discussed it at a subcommittee, Council can much more expediently pass it as a whole. Although there is often no issue with the fundamentals of policies being brought to Council, at the minute, we are having some very long meetings (averaging 2.5 hours, probably) that could be shortened if there was more agreement around the edges of the policies through discussion in subcommittees.

Voting pads have been used for the first time, and the President is looking into making these a welcome permanent addition – they made counting the votes very easy!