



MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

The fourth ordinary meeting of the Union Council

The meeting of Union Council was held on Tuesday 18th February at 18:30 in Room G.01, Royal School of Mines (RSM)

Present

Role	Name
Union Council Chair	Lloyd James (LJ/Chair/THE CHAIR)
Union President	Abhijay Sood (AS)
Deputy President (Welfare)	Shervin Sabeghi (SS)
Deputy President (Education)	Ashley Brooks (AB)
Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)	Thomas Fernandez Debets (TFD)
Deputy President (Finance and Services)	Fi-Fi Henry (FH)
BME Officer	Deborah Adegoke (DA)
CGCU Vice President (Wellbeing)	Miles Gulliford (MG)
Deputy President (Education)	Ashley Brooks (AB)
Deputy President (Finance and Services)	Fi-Fi Henry (FH)
Deputy President (Welfare)	Shervin Sabeghi (SS)
Disabilities Officer	Hilliam Tung (HT)
Ethics and Environment Officer	Francesca Siracusa (FS)
GSU PGR Academic & Welfare Officer (Engineering)	Raya El Laham (REL)
GSU President	Mohit Devgan (MD)
GSU Vice President (Representation)	Milia Hasbani (MH)
ICSMSU President	Benjamin Russell (BR)
International Officer	Amr Alwishah (AA)
PG FoE Council Rep	Igor Gawron (IG)
PG FoNS Council Rep	Adrian LaMoury (AM)
PG NF Council Rep	Eoin O’Kane (EOK)
RCSU Vice President (Education)	Michaela Flegrova (MF)
RCSU Welfare Officer	Peter Hull (PH)
Recreation Sector Chair	Christopher Turner (CT)
RSMSU President	Christopher Carter (CC)
Sports Sector Chair	Ross Unwin (RU)
UG FoE Council Rep	Hayley Wong (HW)
UG FoM Council Rep	Bartosz Szyszka (BS)
UG FoNS Council Rep	Aishwarya Chidambaram (AC)

Observers:

Proposer: Union Stance on UCU Action	Josef Willshire (JW)

Apologies:

Absent:

Arts and Entertainment Sector Chair	Joseph O'Connell Danes (JOD)
CGCU President	Fatima Khan (FK)
CGCU Vice President (Education)	Poppy Oldroyd (PO)
Community and Faith Sector Chair	Jack Lee (JL)
Culture Sector Chair	Shuning Xu (SX)
Gender Equality Officer	Vinzenz Freigassner (VF)
ICSMSU Academic Chair	Waseem Hasan (WH)
ICSMSU Welfare Officer	Jack Hall (JH)
Interfaith Officer	Amna Ahmed (AA)
Knowledge Sector Chair	<i>Vacant</i>
LGBT Officer	Freya Hepworth Lloyd (FHL)
Mental Health Officer	Ambika Bharadwaj (AB)
PG FoE Council Rep	Luke Jamieson (LJ)
PG FoE Council Rep	Xiaoran Liu (XL)
PG FoM Council Rep	Jaye Sahota (JS)
PG NF Council Rep	Rahul Jugnarain (RJ)
RCSU President	Alex Auyang (AAu)
RSMSU Vice President (Education)	Alexandre de Saint Germain (ASG)
RSMU Welfare Officer	Arman Sarjou (AS)
Silwood Park President	Conor Nicoll (CN)
UG FoE Council Rep	Douglas Adams (DA)
UG FoE Council Rep	Ioannis Ioannidis-Karatsivoulis (IIK)
UG FoM Council Rep	Pylin Parkes (PP)
UG FoNS Council Rep	Grace Fisher (GF)
UG FoNS Council Rep	Zhidong Zuo (ZZ)

Item	Actions
<p>1. Chair's welcome and Chair's business 1.1. Chair welcomed the Council to the fifth meeting of the 2019/20 session. No Chair's business.</p>	
<p>2. Apologies: 2.1. Apologies to be circulated in the published minutes.</p>	<p>LJ to update minutes to include apologies</p>
<p>3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 3.1. Chair could not present minutes of previous meeting since they have not been completed.</p>	
<p>4. Action Tracker 4.1. The Chair could not track actions for the same reason as above, but the council agreed there were no actions due for this meeting.</p>	
Matters for Decision	
<p>5. Union Stance on UCU Action 5.1. JW makes a presentation on current strikes, asking union council to vote to support them. Some key points are summarised below: 5.1.1. Massive loss [of pay and pension] for all academic staff, so the union should support them. 5.1.2. Staff salaries decreased by Imperial College, need to pressure the University to treat staff better, to maintain staff of the current standard. 5.1.3. These are the same demands as approved 2 years ago by the College, but firmer. The Union President should speak to the College, to pressure them together. 5.2. MM continues speech of JW, presents himself as an academic, running master's course in medicine, and part of the striking staff. His main points are summarised below: 5.2.1. These are long term issues on a local and national level. 5.2.2. Universities have become wealthier, but the distribution of income amongst staff has not stayed in parity. 5.2.3. The College handled strike action issue "incompetently": UCU offered to negotiate issue, but received no response from College admin. 5.2.4. MM Denies claim that pension is running a deficit. 5.2.5. States that the College trying to make "huge increase in our contributions". Some can't afford this and will withdraw from the pensions scheme, making the large national fund collapse. This will leave many smaller ones [pension schemes], more prone to being taken advantage of. Will cause "long term decline in academia". 5.2.6. MM underlines this is a fight for young people's future too. 5.3. AA explains they have first-hand experience of strikes in Cardiff over 4 weeks, raising concern that students may not graduate. Asks whether staff are paid on strike action days. 5.4. MM answers: yes, they are not paid, they are prepared to take the loss.</p>	

<p>5.5. AA proposes amendments: would like transparency as to where money saved from this goes. Students and staff should lobby to make sure students are not adversely affected because of strike.</p> <p>5.6. JW responded: money went back to students in the last strike, but College said it would remain in their hands this time. JW states that UCU believes the funds should go to SHF (Student Hardship Fund).</p> <p>5.7. MM and JW agree, and JW mentions a petition conducted during the last strike to achieve this.</p> <p>5.8. SS asked whether it was [a petition] about reclaiming tuition fees. AS confirms it was.</p> <p>5.9. LJ suggested there should be a separate discussion about recoup of money at a later date.</p> <p>5.10. JW added that the UCU should be included.</p> <p>5.11. LJ asked to amend document with “during and as a result of”. Approved by JW</p> <p>5.12. LJ stated that the UCU website says the Union is only involved in the national pension strike.</p> <p>5.13. MM answered that pensions negotiations are local, but there is also a national team negotiation. There was a ballot for each of these.</p> <p>5.14. LJ asked how will stopping students learning affect the College.</p> <p>5.15. MM explained that students will put pressure on the College, that it worked last time, but the plan was ignored since (“not implemented properly” by the College).</p> <p>5.16. MH asked if the Union will create its own material.</p> <p>5.17. JW answered yes, and support talks.</p> <p>5.18. LJ raised a significant split of opinion among students. There is considerable unease in the cohort for supporting this.</p> <p>5.19. AS responded that it is difficult to assess support of a cohort due to numbers, “which is why we are here”. Putting pressure helps end disruption either way, and “people should be uneasy about this, we need to stop this long-term trajectory”. Same as other issues such as rent, need to do something at some point.</p> <p>5.20. RZ added that the strike isn’t about a little thing now, but to stop a long-term downward trend of salaries and pension, been going on for 15 years. Staff felt they had no choice. They are going to withhold research and admin on top of teaching. This gives all the more reason to support the strike. “The ball is in the college’s court” to stop this. “Without even mentioning increased workload for example”.</p> <p>5.21. SS stated that staff at all (non-senior levels) have been supportive. All working towards a common better goal. Better services for students and staff.</p> <p>5.22. CC restated that staff have already voted to strike, and it’s now “our turn to support them”.</p> <p>Resolve: Vote to support UCU strike action</p> <p>Motion Passed: 29 for, 1 against, 1 abstain.</p>	<p>LJ to set up discussion on use of money saved from strikes.</p>
<p>6. SOs Appendix B Amendment</p>	

<p>6.1. LJ Summarises the paper, stating that it is to “help remedy poor attendance of sub-committees. Motion is requesting to approve changes.</p> <p>6.2. AA wanted to hear from members of ERB</p> <p>6.3. AC answered that they thought they could come up with a better solution but could not, so was not able to discuss with other ERB members in time.</p> <p>6.4. AB found that this was a good compromise to get voting</p> <p>Passed by consensus</p>	
<p>7. CU Constitution Approval <i>LJ ‘surrenders’ their position as Chair at this point due to interest in paper</i></p> <p><i>MH accepts position as acting Chair for remainder of the motion.</i></p> <p>7.1. LJ stated that Council approving committee changes is a drain on committee time, but somebody should approve this. A sensible committee for this should be the Governance and Identity Board (GIB), which should govern Constituent Union constitutions. However, need College Council to approve this. Instead they proposed to do something similar to RCSU; to have a constitution which outlines what each committee’s responsibilities are. Have a committee that supervises role changes and similar tasks but fits within Union constitution.</p> <p>7.2. MH asked whether other regulations which were never asked to be approved before would need to be approved.</p> <p>7.3. LJ recognised that this is ambiguous, that there is no consensus around this, but clarified that this is mostly just a change of responsibility.</p> <p>7.4. MH questioned whether there is a need for all these things to be approved. “Seems to add an extra level of faff”.</p> <p>7.5. LJ answered that CUs have policies on this too, and that the proposed changes are more similar to that.</p> <p>7.6. CC said they generally agree with this, but had 2 concerns: infrequency of meetings, and could just not have GIB involved.</p> <p>7.7. LJ answered that if GIB were involved, they can meet whenever they want, so could meet before UC meetings. There is general rule that changing anything on their constitution should have some level of scrutiny.</p> <p>7.8. SS stated that a lot of roles here are from CUs, so less-senior positions should not have a say over the CUs. Just put all roles in council and have them approve them. It has worked before and should be easier.</p> <p>7.9. Peter remarked that there is “something a bit strange about lumping things into regulations”: it is not well defined whether they require approval or are just policies.</p> <p>7.10. LJ responded that GIB is part of the Union structure, so issues will be fed into the election system. RCSU shouldn’t do it, since they can change their own constitution. So, this change would bring consistency of needing approval. It should be up to Constituent Unions and GIB what counts as regulations.</p> <p>7.11. Peter asked what stops CUs from just deciding what goes in.</p>	

- 7.12. LJ pointed out that the proposal states that they cannot.
- 7.13. MF remarked that it is strange to lose the oversight that is so fundamental to constitutions.
- 7.14. LJ replied that this is a very good argument for why it must change now. Understand that the Clubs, Societies & Project Board (CSPB) would be able to change committee [positions] of Management Groups (MGs).
- 7.15. MF stated that normally “we can feed into these changes”, rather than CUs just deciding their own, which would affect many other committees.
- 7.16. PH proposed that fundamental roles should be outlined in the constitution but does not see why all other roles and details should need approval. Perhaps there can be some compromise.
- 7.17. CC asked if Management Groups have constitutions.
- 7.18. LJ confirmed they do.
- 7.19. CC found that CUs made decisions and “sent them off to council for stamping”. CC stated that CUs have a better idea of how their committees and affairs work.
- 7.20. An observer asked how often CUs try to make such changes, since most changes are surely not important.
- 7.21. MH replied that based on experience the number of changes is not extreme but very variable.
- 7.22. The observer asked to clarify what sort of changes.
- 7.23. MH responded that core committee roles tend to be changed quite often.
- 7.24. Another observer stated that CU’s should be stopped from making “crazy” changes.
- 7.25. CC responded that “we should trust our CUs”.
- 7.26. MH asked CC to clarify whether they meant with some oversight.
- 7.27. CC admitted they were not sure yet.
- 7.28. LJ agreed with CC on principle, that having all CUs approve decisions gives checks, but avoids waiting for council meeting. It also avoids arbitrary council views. Furthermore, changes happen often with CUs.
- 7.29. MH asked if LJ would amend the proposal to only pertain to committee roles.
- 7.30. LJ replied that they would rather not but is open to it if needed for approval.
- 7.31. Nobody seconded that proposal.
- 7.32. AA asked if there is any regulation on minority representation of CUs’ constitution changes?
- 7.33. MH replied that there is not, that roles are currently only based on responsibilities.

Resolve: Vote to pass CU Constitution Approval (agenda point 7).

2/3 majority needed

Motion rejected: 14 for, 8 against, 9 abstain.

BREAK – 19:45

<p>are not relevant to come here, since they go directly to where they can make change.</p> <p>9.11. CC stated that asking an OT to do something directly is generally more efficient and easier than submitting a paper.</p> <p>9.12. SS clarified that papers are usually for bigger issues.</p> <p>9.13. LJ suggested that people think about what they would like to change and submit a council paper for the next meeting.</p> <p>9.14. AS added that members should also think about any dissatisfaction with the College to bring up next time.</p> <p>9.15. LJ offered council members to email LJ if uncertain about relevance.</p> <p>9.16. VF raised the concern that some members are not familiar with specific issues and regulations.</p> <p>9.17. AS assured them that papers don't have to be specific changes or issues and can be more general feedback.</p>	
<p>10. GSU Report</p> <p>10.1. BR summarised report as tabled, emphasising large postgraduate survey the GSU are conducting. Large amount of data, with analysis still ongoing. Idea of a postgrad community hub came out strongly, to bring cross-faculty cooperation. Asks if there are any questions or objections at this stage.</p> <p>10.2. AC asked how the funding is managed.</p> <p>10.3. BR replied that over the past 3 years, GSU have approached the Deans to ask for "a little extra" to support such projects.</p> <p>10.4. MH underlined that this funding is not guaranteed but must be requested.</p> <p>10.5. AC asked for an approximate estimate to the funding available.</p> <p>10.6. BR responded that they get £3000 from the Union, but no faculty support. Can apply to extra funding from Graduate School, then talk to each Dean, etc. They believe this should change. The salary for GSU comes from the Graduate School. They want to patch it over to the Union, to make it more independent, but are not sure whether that will happen or not.</p> <p>10.7. AS remarked that they want to go over the Unions finances, so this issue will be looked at too.</p> <p>10.8. AB also stated that there needs to be a serious look at how funding is distributed amongst students. The amount of funding should be in line with the number of students each group has.</p>	
<p>11. Felix Report</p> <p>11.1. An observer and Felix writer reviewed the report as tabled. Felix received a copyright strike which the union helped deal with it. Asked for questions. None received.</p>	
<p>VOTE TO EXTEND MEETING BY 10 MINUTES – ACCEPTED BY CONSENSUS</p>	
<p>12. President Report</p> <p>12.1. AS summarised report as tabled. Asked for questions, none received.</p>	
<p>13. DPE Report</p> <p>13.1. AB summarised report as tabled, particularly on how to enhance empty student spaces, stating it is a work in progress. Asked for questions, none received.</p>	

<p>14. DPW Report 14.1. SS summarised report as tabled and invited questions. None received.</p>	
<p>15. DPCS Report 15.1. AS summarised report as tabled and invited questions. None received.</p>	
<p>16. DPFS Report 16.1. SS summarised report as tabled and invited questions. 16.2. MH asked if bursary is part of the same funding. 16.3. SS confirmed it is.</p>	
<p>17. Any Other Business 17.1. TFD stated that if anyone had any questions about the Corona virus, to email him, underlining that there are resources available. 17.2. TFD noted that the results of the Student Experience Survey (SES) came in. 17.3. AS pointed out a spelling mistake in a report. 17.4. FH gave updates on events being planned, summarising feedback on events (e.g. the Summer Ball), particularly on Silwood, and on food in FiveSixEight. 17.5. MH proposed students should be shown more clearly what steps have been taken over the food issue at FiveSixEight. 17.6. FH agreed.</p>	
<p>Meeting finish: 20:40</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Close of Meeting</p>	
<p>Next meeting: Tuesday 17th March 18:30</p>	