**MINUTES:**

**Union Council Meeting – 15/03/2022**

**Attendees**
Gaebriel Min
Sol Gjøines
Tripti Kaur Kohli\*
Albert Jose\*
Julia Pentz
Bianca Radoslav
Fee Hobbs

Amanda Francis

**Apologies**
None

**No Apologies**

Emily Screen

\*No longer members of Union Council due to Masters course finishing in February 2022 but were present for meeting

1. **Kara** ran through Action updates:
* *Action: Kara to involve UC in voter engagement plans and UC to help in getting students to vote.*

Update: Union Council were invited to help with voter engagement but there was no offer of assistance with this

* *Action: Kara to include the NUS Referendum information on the website and as part of the Elections*

 Update: Information was included on the website

* *Action: ALL OF UNION COUNCIL to think about means to engage nominees and increase voter turnout, ready to discuss at election meeting. Also consider ways to improve the part-time officer experience.*

Update: Union Council were invited to a meeting but only Gaeb and Sol turned up. Kara would still welcome ideas so please do share them

* *Action: Kara to organise election meeting with UC*

 Update: As above, meeting organised but only Presidents were there

* *Action: Kara raise with Andy Squire and seek next steps on changes to Covid testing and relaxing of the rules*

 Update: University continuing to make masks mandatory

* *Action: Kara to find out numbers of those on Graduate Route Visas affected by having to pay for quarantine stay in hotels and investigate if other Union’s are doing anything to reimburse these students*

Update: Kara spoke to Andy about this, he was going to ask if any other Union’s were seeking to to support students

1. Update on UCU’s strike action from UCA’s UCU Representatives - Smin Smith and James Trafford, a PhD researcher in the Epsom Business School and a Reader in Philosophy, respectively.

Smin and James made their introductions and explained who UCU primarily represents; academic and teaching staff, in particular graduate teaching assistants (GTA), PhD students and lecturers.

UCU’s campaign is built on the Four Fights; Pay (improving hourly rates), Workload (35 hour working week, unpaid hours), Equality (closing gender and ethnic pay gaps) and Casualisation (ending zero-hour contracts, poor job security and short term contracts).

At UCA specifically, UCU reported that the disestablished Course Leader role in 2019 led to work being disseminated to Programme Directors and Year Leaders and increased workloads. In addition with the Curriculum Transformation a large reduction in face to face contact with students was being seen, i.e. less tutorials, cross-taught modules notably in the Business School where up to 800 students could be cross-taught resulting in increased marking.

The casualisation of contracts is cited as another problem with 30% of teaching at UCA delivered by staff on “precarious contracts”. This can lead to problems with students contacting staff outside of working hours and it not being on staff’s paid time. Associate lecturers and GTA’s have same working conditions as someone on a Zero Hours contract.

GTAs are being reportedly used in place of lecturers and asked to mark with no prior training.

As of 21st March, industrial action will resume.

**Amanda** asked how students can help show solidarity. Smin responded:

* Message the Vice Chancellor
* Message the Students’ Union
* NUS Letter which students can sign
* Stand on the picket line with those striking
1. In light of the UCU industrial action. **Amanda** proposed a motion to decide whether the Students’ Union should support the strike action. **Sol** seconded the motion.

The paper was present, questions were asked and a vote took place on whether the SU should support the industrial action. It was a unanimous **Yes**, 6 votes to 0.

This means that the Students’ Union will actively show support for the industrial action. **Fee** suggested putting out a statement from the SU.

***Action: Kara to organise a meeting with Andy Squire, Presidents and Maria Radakin to discuss how the SU will show support for striking lecturers.***

***Action: Gaeb to send out a letter template to Union Council members on how to contact lecturers.***

**AOB**

To be noted that Tripti and Albert have now finished their time on Union Council and on behalf of the SU, we would like to thank them for their ideas, passion and work over the past 9 months.

**The next meeting will be on 26/04/2022 at 3:30pm.**