

# Student Members Meeting Minutes

5pm Tuesday 12 February 2019 | B200, University Building

Attendance record

School	Initials
Cass Business School	19
School of Arts & Social Sciences	27
School of Health Sciences	33
School of Mathematics, Computer Science & Engineering	36
The City Law School	19
<b>Total Number of Student Attendees*</b>	<b>121</b>

\*actual numbers fluctuated during the meeting, however quoracy (30) was maintained throughout.

Officers	Initials	Title
Kristina Perelygina	KP	President
Tuna Kunt	TK	VP Education
Nazia Bharde	NB	VP Activities & Development
Albena Haytova	AH	Chair of Student Council (Meeting Chair)

Staff in Attendance	Initials	Title
Angelo Weekes	AW	Representation Manager (Chair's Support)
Hannah Roberts	HR	Head of Membership Development
Skye Golding	SG	Wellbeing & Insight Coordinator (Committee Secretary)
Mark Riley	MR	Societies Coordinator (Door)
Manoj Kerai	MK	Activities and Events Coordinator (Door)
Nabil Yousef	NY	Democracy Assistant

## Part One

### 1) Welcome and apologies

AH opened the meeting and welcomed attendees to the Student Members' Meeting and outlined meeting conduct.

### 2) Minutes

Minutes from last year approved by those present.

Paper Reference: SMM-001

### 3) Confirmation of Items for Any Other Business

No Items were received.

### 4) Items specially brought forward by the Chair

No Items brought forward.

## Items for Information

### 5) Trustee Report on Union Activities

Paper Reference: SSM-002

KP provided the meeting with an update on activities, including:

- Exciting year for the Union in its first year operating as a charitable company limited by guarantee. This means we have increased independence from City and managed our own finances. Knox Cropper have also been appointed as the Union's auditors.
- The Union through a program of work has now established at least one Academic Society in every discipline and will be working to further develop these societies over the coming years.
- There has been a continued focus on events not involving alcohol to make them more inclusive.
- There have been targeted events such as the International Culture Show, Black History Month Debate and events for students of faith.
- There was a 7% increase in student satisfaction in NSS question 26 and the Union is now in the top 15% of students' unions in the country for this question.
- Advice Service: During the period of 1 October 2017 to 31 July 2018 in comparison to the previous year, the Union increased the number of cases handled by 46.1%, the number of students supported by 47.3% and the number face-to-face appointments held by 97%.

No questions were asked from the floor.

### 6) Management Accounts

KP provided details of the Union's financial statements. Key points included:

- Total incoming resources for the year increased 46.4% to £1.185 million. This income was mainly from an increase of the Block Grant received from City, University of London.  
Total resources expended increased by 31.6% to £1.30 million. This increase was largely due to the creation of a number of coordinator roles which did not exist previously.  
We are pleased we have been able to increase the Union reserves to £208K which ensures we have 3 months operating costs. Having a strong reserves positions will enable the Union to be more adventurous with its spending in future years.

## Part Two

## Items for Decision

### 7) Affiliations

Paper Reference: SSM-003

KP presented the proposed list of organisations that the Students' Union and Societies wished to affiliate to. KP noted that these would be voted on as a block.

There were no speeches against.

### Decision

The Meeting **approved** the list of affiliations.

## 8) Oppose PREVENT

Paper Reference: SSM-004

Ruqaiyah Javaid (RJ) introduced the Motion. She explained that the Prevent duty unfairly targets Black and Muslim people. RJ told the meeting that there were 5700 referrals in 2015, with only 5% going on to receive radicalisation education – many innocent people left traumatised by process. Speakers have been classified as high-risk by university due to having Muslim names. Asked the Union to oppose Prevent through a number of measures.

**Speech Against:** The point of Prevent is to stop all terrorism, not just Islamic terrorism. It also looks at the BNP and EDL. Meant to help people who may go in that direction due to mental health issues etc. As you said, only 5% of referrals go on to receive radicalisation education. It doesn't criminalise people or stop speakers coming to campus. The Prevent duty sits under wellbeing departments – it is to help people, not criminalise them.

**Speech For:** RJ thanked him for his speech against the motion. Pointed out that contrary to what was said, the duty clearly attacks Muslims, indicating beards and hijabs as risk factors. Markers of terrorism are so nuanced and unclear and it is left to members of staff to interpret them – leading to confusion in staff rooms and suspicion among students and staff. How can we say this protects people? The original Prevent only targeted Muslims, with the addition of right-wing extremism occurring only to appease the public. 5% figure shows huge over-referral rate leaving people traumatised. Parents are being told their children will be taken away. It has stopped speakers. Palestinian society as experienced speakers being flagged because of Muslim names.

**Speech Against:** I don't believe it's Prevent stopping the speakers. You need to look up what it says. Amendments to add right-wing groups are a good thing. Prevent stops people going down a dark path and hurting themselves and others.

**Speech For:** RJ pointed to several local cases of Muslims being targeted for nothing. Argued that University should be a place for personal and political growth, and for challenging your experiences and beliefs. Prevent creates an atmosphere of suspicion and stops students organising for change. The Union should take a stance against Prevent. As a charity it doesn't have to comply, it chooses to further this Islamophobic, far-right agenda.

### Decision

The Meeting **approved** the motion.

## 9) Academic Certainty

Paper Reference: SSM-005

Raha Ghadaksaz (RG) introduced the motion, explaining that second years on her course had been unhappy with inconsistent marking and poor feedback and wants to provide a more formalised way for large groups of students to access support from the Union when the University doesn't listen to their concerns over grades. At the moment appeals have to be done on an individual basis and not by a whole cohort. RG argued that the University should be able to explain why students had received the grades they have been given.

**Question:** How have you brought this issue to the University's attention?

**Response:** RG explained that she had brought the issue to module leaders herself and had spoken to around 25 other students who had all either emailed or met with staff at the University and received no help.

**Question:** What exactly are you asking for?

**Response:** RG – For Union support in seeking explanation and getting exams looked at again.

**Question:** Where does the process end?

**Answer:** When the University can explain why certain grades have been given and provide answers to inconsistencies in marking.

**Question:** KP asked if students in this instance had been through the formal appeal process.

**Answer:** RG explained that students could only appeal individually through a clerical check or extenuating circumstances. She wants support for formal procedures on behalf of multiple students at once.

There were no speeches against.

### **Decision**

The Meeting **approved** the motion

## **10) Friday Prayer on Campus**

Paper Reference: SMM-006

Kawthar El-Rrakik (KER) introduced the Motion. He pointed to City's large Muslim cohort, who wish to continue the tradition of Friday prayers on campus so students don't have to leave campus or miss lectures to pray. The policy also assists with overcrowding at local mosques, builds community. KER also pointed out that religious belief is a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act. This is a renewal of a previous policy.

There were no speeches against.

### **Decision**

The Meeting **approved** the motion.

## **11) The Right to Clean Praying Facilities on Campus** Paper Reference: SSM-007

Zakariya Sheikh (ZS) introduced the motion, explaining that while he was grateful for the prayer room's existence, students were struggling with the fact that it is not properly cleaned and maintained. Prostration during prayer is unpleasant when the floor is dirty. The Islamic Society have purchased a hoover but been told they cannot store it in the room, and that it must be cleaned by staff. This is not happening.

**Question:** What's it like at the moment?

**Response:** It's not even hoovered weekly. We can't clean it ourselves. We have spoken to the Chaplaincy and PAF but seen no change.

There were no speeches against the motion.

### **Decision**

The Meeting **approved** the motion.

## **12) Graduation Prices**

Paper Reference: SSM-008

TK introduced the motion, explaining that the costs of attending graduation, including tickets and gown hire, were prohibitive for some students and should be removed as far as possible to allow all students the chance to attend.

**Speech Against:** Cost of graduations has to be paid for somehow. There are staff and cleaning costs etc. The fees go back into the University. Paying extra for graduation is only around £100 per person compared to the hundreds of thousands extra absorbed by the University as a result of charging. £100 is not that much. It's unreasonable to spend money on what is essentially a party. Don't go if you don't like the cost.

**Speech For:** TK argued that it is the right of all students to attend their graduation. The University makes a large profit and has a surplus. It's a moment students will remember for the rest of their lives. City has lots of Widening Participation students who might be financially struggling and it is our responsibility to support them at the end of their journey here.

**Question:** The mental health department is underfunded, isn't that more deserving?

**Answer:** I agree that is important but we have recently put in place the Stepchange framework and work is being done. It's not either or, we can afford quite a lot.

**Speech For:** We have made savings through electronic books in the library, so can definitely find money for graduation.

**Speech Against:** There is a surplus which last year was 14 million. However this goes back into the University to improve facilities and learning resources. Would rather that money go into more staff, buildings, facilities rather than graduation.

**Speech For:** NB – Told attendees that she is a BAME student and the first in her family to go to University. She couldn't afford lots of aspects of University life and had to work hard to support herself. Says it is crass to say you shouldn't go to graduation if you can't afford it.

**Speech Against:** Student said he was also from a widening participation background and has three jobs to support himself with no help from parents. Appreciates that the University needs this money for elsewhere. Claimed he was probably poorer than everyone in the room but that the issue should not be made personal.

**Speech For:** TK. Graduation is a big part of the student experience and everyone has a right to it.

### **Decision**

The Meeting **approved** the motion.

## **13) Keep Wednesday Afternoons Free**

Paper Reference: SSM-009

Ed Armitage (EA) introduced the motion, which is a renewal of a previous policy which has not been uniformly enforced. Explained that keeping Wednesday afternoons free for students to take extra-curricular activities was common practice at UK universities. Allowing students this time to pursue other opportunities outside of lectures improves student experience and makes students more employable.

There were no speeches against.

### **Decision**

The Meeting **approved** the motion.

## **14) Tackling Sexual Harassment on Campus**

Paper Reference: SSM-010

TK introduced the motion, explaining that it would mandate consent and active bystander training to be made available to student leaders, improve the mechanism for reporting incidents and introduce anonymous reporting. It would also introduce a yearly awareness campaign to educate students on what constitutes sexual harassment and improve safety in halls.

**Question:** Sexual harassment is not black and white and an alleged male perpetrator is often treated differently because something he's said has been taken the wrong way by a woman. Can you give us an example of what would constitute sexual harassment?

**Answer:** I can't give every example as, like you said, the issue is not black and white. It's also important to emphasise that it's not always a male perpetrator against a female victim.

Student who asked the original question responded that he found a reversal of genders unlikely.

**Question:** Can we make sure anonymity is protected for both parties?

**Answer:** TK – The process is already anonymous other than to a central body and the individuals handling cases.

**Question:** I just wanted to point out that the process is unclear for all types of assault and harassment, not just those cases with a sexual component.

**Answer:** TK agrees. Work is being centralised this year after work from Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment working group.

**Question:** Can we make sexual harassment and assault training mandatory? It is as important as what we are studying on our courses.

**Answer:** TK – proposal is for the training to be for student leaders to begin with but it would be good to expand.

**Question:** Can it include free self-defence classes, particularly for women?

**Answer:** EA – I see your point, but that puts the onus on the victim. We should teach perpetrators not to assault people and not vice versa.

A student responded that while EA was correct, there was still no harm in learning to defend yourself as the Union could not control the outside world.

Chair moved to a vote.

**Decision**

The Meeting **approved** the motion.

**15) Increasing Participation in Sport through Student Groups**

Paper Reference: SSM-011

NB introduced the motion and explained that student groups and societies were not insured to play sport together as part of those groups, making it difficult for students who did not wish to play for a team to participate in exercise and stay healthy. The motion asks the University to provide insurance to encourage people to play sports through societies, building community and improving health and wellbeing.

**Question:** Just to clarify, this is to do with societies and not teams?

**Answer:** NB – yes, this is for non-competitive sport, allowing students to use CitySport without paying individually.

**Question:** Is this for the University to give the Union money so they can provide insurance or for the University to cover the insurance?

**Answer:** NB – we currently have only £20,000 to cover over 130 societies so cannot afford it. We are open to negotiations on how the logistics work but the University would need to provide funding.

**Decision**

The Meeting **approved** the motion.

**16) City Students' Union to Affiliate to Nightline**

Paper Reference: SSM-012

NB introduced the motion, which asks to Union to affiliate to Nightline, an independently registered charity offering listening, support and information to higher education students by way of a confidential helpline out of hours. It would be in addition to the current counselling system which is underfunded and not open outside of working hours.

**Speech Against:** I'm not against mental health services but this service is already available national through Samaritans. This is a big cost for what is a duplicate service.

**Speech For:** Exam times are particularly tough and it's hard to know where to find support. No harm in having more options if it can help.

**Speech Against:** I get it but why can't Union make us aware of already existing services. This adds more cost to the University when there are already well-funded societies providing the same service.

**Speech For:** I've tried some other services and they took a few days to get back to me. What if it's serious and you don't have that time? If facilities are on campus it eases the pressure on existing services and makes it easier for students to access it.

NB informed students that the fee would be 10p per student for the Union and 27p per student for the University and that students would be able to volunteer and get training through the service.

**Decision**

The Meeting **approved** the motion

**Any Other Business**

**17) Any Other Business**

There were no items submitted to discuss.

AH closed the meeting.