

Student Members' Meeting

Thursday 13th January 2022, 5:00 - 6:00pm | Online, Zoom

All current City students can attend the meeting but must register and join the event with their university email address (@city.ac.uk).

	Item	Paper Reference	Lead
1	Welcome and apologises	N/A	Chair
2	Confirmation of items for any other business	N/A	Chair
3	Items brought forward by the Chair	N/A	Chair
Items for Decision			
4	Amendments to Memorandum and Articles of Association	SMM-012	Shaima Dallali, Ruqaiyah Javaid, Shahd Haj Khalil
Any Other Business			
5	Any other business	N/A	Chair

Amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association

Proposer and Seconder: Shaima Dallali (President)
 Ruqaiyah Javaid (VP Education)
 Shahd Haj Khalil (VP Community & Wellbeing)

The Union notes:

1. A democracy review took place in the 2020/21 academic year which included an externally commissioned piece of research.
2. The review included interviews with stakeholders, a student survey which received around 1,300 respondents, student focus groups and a review of alternative models of for a students' union. Students were clear in their feedback that the existing model of democracy was not meeting the needs of City students.
3. The democratic structures have not been reviewed for at least five years.
4. That it is legally a charitable company limited by guarantee and there are requirements that the Union needs to adhere to set out by the Charity Commission, Companies House, and the Education Act 1994.
5. That all students had the opportunity to respond during the consultation on the proposed changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association in accordance with the governing documents. The consultation happened in November 2021 and was published on the Union's website and emailed to all students; there were no responses submitted to the proposed changes.
6. Bye-Laws are jointly made or repealed by Student Council and the Board of Trustees. Student Council on 17 November 2021 passed the new Bye-Laws and is now recommending them to the Board of Trustees.
7. Evidence demonstrates that in Union elections, students elect a representative cohort of students that reflects the diversity of the student body. That currently elected Student Leaders involved in the Union reflect the diverse student demographic at City:

City student demographics

City students: Women (57%), BAME (66%), International (26%)¹, Disabled (8%)²

Leader demographics (2020/21)

Executive Officers: Women (64%), BAME (59%), International (35%), Disabled (12%)

Student Council: Women (69%), BAME (57%), International (25%), Disabled (19%)

Society Leaders: Women (62%), BAME (70%), International (17%), Disabled (9%)³

8. That this motion was previously considered by the Student Members' Meeting on 1 December 2021 and achieved a majority vote but did not reach the two thirds majority vote required to pass the amendments. Student Members in

¹ Student numbers taken from City, University of London <https://www.city.ac.uk/about/vision-and-strategy/academic-excellence/student-statistics>

² Disabled student number taken from City, University of London's Access & Participation Plan 2021-22 https://www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/492747/CityUniversityOfLondon_APP_2020-21-V1_10001478.pdf

³ Students' Union demographics taken from the City SU MSL Membership Database which receives live student data from City, University of London. Disability only represents where students have disclosed the information. The Union does not have data on sexuality.

attendance raised concerns with the absence of the Student Members' Meeting and accessibility of the new system proposed in the democracy review.

9. The Union made amendments to Bye-Law 6: Assembly which was subsequently approved by Student Council as a direct result of concerns raised by students at the Student Members' Meeting on 1 December 2021. The change to the Bye-Law inserted the following:

8. Student Members' Meeting

8.1. The Assembly may have a section of its meeting known as the Student Members' Meeting. A Student Members' Meeting allows all Student Members present to discuss and vote on a priority, stance, or statement that needs wider student consultation.

8.2. A section of an Assembly may be turned into a Student Members' Meeting upon the Speaker receiving a written request from a minimum of 40% of Assembly Members or a Secure Petition signed or agreed to by at least 150 Student Members at least 15 working days' ahead of the meeting.

8.3. At least 10 working days' notice will be given to all Student Members notifying them that a Student Members' Meeting is taking place and the business to be conducted.

8.4. The Union will produce guidance and make available ahead of the meeting on how a balanced discussion will take place on a proposed priority, stance, or statement and how all Student Members present are able to vote on the proposal.'

10. That the amendments made to Bye-Law 6 ensures that there are opportunities for all students to come together, debate and vote on issues that they care about.

The Union believes:

1. Based on the feedback from students and the outcome of the review, that the following principles should underpin a new democratic structure:
 - The Union should be simple and easy to understand.
 - Voting in union elections should be simpler and easier to understand.
 - The Union should be as open as possible, with minimal barriers to engagement.
 - The Union should have a representative structure reflective of the high diversity in demographics and views.
 - The Union should engage with currently unengaged groups and keep students engaged.
 - Decision making should be easy, inclusive, and policy continuity should be assured.
 - The democratic elements of the Union should run efficiently, with clear chains of accountability and responsibility.
 - The Union should be flexible and adaptable to change.
2. The proposed amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association and Bye-Laws reflect the will of students as identified through the research as part of the democracy review.

3. The new democratic structures will allow for wider, more informed student engagement in democratic decision making. Meetings of the Assembly will focus on feedback, learning, discussion, and decision-making by contributors internal and external to the university.
4. All student members will have the ability to get involved in decisions of the Union in two ways: by referenda (now All Student Vote); and by a section of an Assembly Meeting being dedicated to a Student Members' Meeting for the purpose of agreeing a Union priority, stance or statement.
5. Like the current democratic structures, the 50 Assembly Members will be reflective and representative of the diverse community at City. The Assembly structure will not put large demographics of people, for example, Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students into one homogenous group to be represented by one person. Instead, electing a large body of students from an already diverse population of people will allow for a more focused approach to the experiences of traditionally underrepresented identities. The Assembly may also choose to co-opt (appoint) students of a particular identity if they believe they are missing experiences of a group.
6. That other students' unions who have already implemented similar democratic systems, for example Greenwich University Students' Union, have experienced a sharp increase in the diversity of their election candidates and subsequently elected Officers.
7. The Union will ensure underrepresented groups of students are actively encouraged to stand in the elections by running workshops and offering 1-2-1's with different liberation groups (BAME, Disabled, LGBTQ+, International, Women) to ensure a diverse pool of candidates.
8. The Union will support with reviewing the demographics of Assembly Members to ensure a diverse and representative body that reflects the students; if this were to fail focus groups with particular identity groups (or e.g., societies) will be convened to shape the work of the Assembly.
9. A move to Union Priorities from policy will be more accessible for students and give the Assembly and the Sabbatical Officers clear direction on what should be delivered for students and lead to more decisions being put into action, which does not currently happen.
10. The Union (including Sabbatical Officers, the Assembly and student members) will be able to take clear political stances on issues that are time-sensitive or happening outside of the City community.

The Union resolves to:

1. Recommend to the Company Law Members (the Union's Trustees) to approve the changes proposed to the Memorandum and Articles of Association.