

**Societies, Sports & Opportunities Executive Minutes**

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Date & time | 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2020 – 18:00   |
| Location    | Windsor 1-05   |
| Attendance  | <p>Sophia Bolton (VP Societies &amp; Media) – Co-Chair<br/>           Dom Brown (VP Sport) – Co-Chair<br/>           Jack O'Neill (President)<br/>           Lucy Brown<br/>           Jess Weeds<br/>           Niamh Smith<br/>           Christos Dexiades<br/>           Sophie Malby<br/>           Iggy Iwersen<br/>           Olivia Stocks<br/>           Thomas Barrett<br/>           James Giles</p> <p>Phill Dowler (Democracy Coordinator) – Secretary<br/>           Dan Curran (Deputy Head of Membership Support and Engagement)</p> |
| Apologies   |  |

| Item                                | Notes   | Action |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------|
| 1. Welcome                          | SB welcomes members and thanks them for attending the extra meeting to allow time to think about what had been said in the previous meeting.  |        |
| 2. Student Opportunities Membership | <p>DB and DC run through the four possible options for a revised membership fee and the questions that were circulated. It was then opened up to the group to ask further questions.</p> <p>NS queried to what extent does the fee feed into funding that was directed to Societies and if that was cut, would it result in a significant loss in funding. DC explained that it accounts for approximately 15% to 20% although that varies as some receive significantly less than others. It is likely that clubs would see a bigger impact.</p> <p>LB asked what a variable fee would look like to which DC explained that it needed further investigation. At this point the Executive is setting the general direction. LB expressed concern of being put into a high category and how much higher it would cost.</p> <p>SM highlighted that the committees engaged with preferred a fixed fee although members preferred</p> |        |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <p>to give money directly to a group through a no fee option.</p> <p>NS asked what impact it would have on media outlets although DC explained they aren't funded the same way and aren't linked.</p> <p>SM highlighted that from a careers point of view, students are told joining and running student groups develop skills for future for careers, but if they are encouraged to join them, and a society gets more expensive, some will be priced out of joining. DC responded that not all groups would raise their fees.</p> <p>SM suggested all groups would need to re-evaluate their membership models and DC added that all groups are encouraged to do so, but many committees are hesitant to raise their costs.</p> <p>LB suggested that members wouldn't be as bothered to pay a fixed fee if they knew what it was for. SM added that people are told to buy it but don't receive the full information or where all of it goes and who it goes to or why it is paid.</p> <p>OS joins the meeting.</p> <p>DB directed the Executive to complete an activity noting down their preferences and some thoughts around the options.</p> <p>The majority of the group supported moving to no fee with LB floated that there could be no fee for societies and a fee for clubs with LB suggesting that there's a risk for sports clubs to face bigger challenges with no fee.</p> <p>NS raised the concern over a drop in funding and in turn having to put up membership fees and that there needs to be more information on where the fixed fees go. OS added that if there's a fixed fee, it risks keeping smaller groups small as they continue to not receive funding.</p> <p>NS suggested that no fee would remove the stigma of fundraising and members are more willing to spend money on groups they are using and not funding others. NS goes on to support the earlier suggestion of LB to which SM queried whether a separate approach would divide the student groups which goes against the work to bring together the roles for VP Societies &amp; Sports.</p> |  |
|--|--|--|

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <p>JG came to a similar conclusion of a no fee for societies and possibly a fee for clubs. Although commuting students find fees a barrier for participation and suggests committees are less supportive due to the risk of less funding although suggests groups focus on internal development to avoid this.</p> <p>TB found that no fee was the preference although most input had come from groups that received no funding and once knowing where the current fixed fees were going, were unhappy with paying it.</p> <p>LB suggests that whatever the outcome, it needs to be transparent with members to which CD adds that people want to know where the money goes, whether that's directly to the group or the Union to divide. TB added that explaining where fees were spent would be easier at group level if they had the control.</p> <p>JG asked what would happen to those who paid for membership for future years. DC explained a process of refunding would take place which will impact approximately 700 members.</p> <p>TB and JW exit the meeting due to other commitments and support moving to no fee.</p> <p>CD felt that lots of committee members are avoiding the option of no fee in the event they lose funding but aren't considering the overall fairness to groups.</p> <p>NS responded that if committees are scared of losing funding and that it would affect them as a group then groups need to consider overall finances. DC is aiming to move all groups to improved financial sustainability.</p> <p>NS believes that some groups having a higher fee to join some clubs would be a bigger barrier to people who want to join activities more socially. SM added that lots of clubs run free sessions and that people who are interested in the sport, will pay the fee because they want to join.</p> <p>LB added that if there was more support with fundraising and finding sponsorships then clubs would be more comfortable moving to no fee.</p> <p>DC highlighted that there are a few groups that benefit significantly more than other groups.</p> |  |
|--|--|--|

|                                     |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
|                                     | <p>LB suggested that there needs to be more work to find out whether a mixed approach can actually be done, or whether the Union looks to move everyone to a Student Group rather than being a Club or Society within the student group category.</p> <p>OS asked if a mixed approach was made, would clubs only have access or would it be open to societies as well. DC clarified that societies would have access but significantly less. To which JG suggested that a blanket no fee approach be adopted.</p> <p>DC asks members to cast an indicative vote on one option. One vote was recorded for a mixed approach between clubs and societies, eight votes were recorded for no fee.</p>   |  |
| <p>3. Relationship Expectations</p> | <p>Item moved to the March Executive.</p>  |  |
| <p>4. Officer Update</p>            | <p>DB started the updates covering the topics being worked on. The first being the inclusivity of Varsity. SM asked whether events such as wheelchair basketball could be run as well as other activities from disability sports day.</p> <p>LB suggested seated volleyball and identifying ways to increase the amount of commuting students by providing transport to make it easier to travel in.</p> <p>DB asked JG, as a Convenor of the Commuting Students Collective, what activities might help access. JG suggested that transport to and from the station would be useful, as well as improved parking which could be achieved by reserved Varsity parking. SM suggested a Park and Ride system which was popular among members.</p> <p>DB updated that a bag drop off is being considered. JG added that bags wouldn't stop someone from attending, just that you may not attend for as long. There is a bigger appeal in knowing you could get a bus directly to the events. LB added that this should also be the case for any event that happens off campus.</p> <p>DB asked for feedback on the experience of alumni sports day for those who were able to attend. SM suggested that attendees enjoyed the day and that it was better than last year with better food. The evening events could be improved though.</p> <p>SB provided officer updates and queried whether members would like to see sustainability embedded in the Students' Union strategy.</p> |  |

|        |   |  |
|--------|---|--|
|        | JG asked whether the Union Shop could stop selling plastic cups as they could offer better ones. SM added that all the University outlets are very plastic heavy using them throughout their services. OS suggested using more digital screens over digital print as the posters change frequently. |  |
| 5. AOB | No further business   |  |
|        | Close of meeting  |  |