



SU Committee Meeting – 09.11.2021

Attendance: LH (Publicity & Relations Officer), AW (President), KM (VP), JS (PGM President), JV (SU Rep), AD (SU Rep), WS (SU Rep)

Apologies:

Absent:

Location: Conference Room

Introductions

LH introduces themselves gives a near death experience and called us all uneducated cunts

Committee introduces themselves and also shares near death experiences

UCU Strikes

Motion

LH: Has everyone read the SU motion? It basically gives an update on what UCU wants, it acknowledges postgraduate students' position in this, says our staff deserve protection and support difficult decisions made. They say there is no conflict for them to state their support as an SU. Quite a shit motion

AW: It is just enough of a stance

LH: I feel cuth's is leaning towards supporting it - havent spoke to too many but spoke to the minority reps who agree but I think it will be beefed

JS: I agree but the writing is sufficient

AW: I support but I would like more of a stance

JV: It just reads like cool you are doing the strikes, we support you

JS: The issue is that it is durham, if they posted something spicier then they would get a lot of backlash as there are a lot of students in Durham the SU represents who aren't in support of strikes

LH: It doesn't give justice to UCU

AW: Does not engage enough with the idea of the uni as a community - in prescomm we concluded that the community point is the most important point to think about. SU always says they don't have enough say but there is a systemic issue of representation across all stakeholders through the uni - no staff, student leaders, non academic staff, we all aren't



represented. Senate does not have representation - we should all be working together to get that and I feel this motion doesn't want to get into the middle of that

AD: "As soon as possible" and "quicker the better" both used which is not great

AW: Quicker it is resolved misses the border point of the wider issue in higher education, lecturers are not happy about the way they are treated - I don't like how it says we respect it but we want it over

LH: No mention of mature students and PhD students. If you didn't know anything about the strikes this says nothing on why they are doing it and their current position. SU has done a bad job in explaining it - all the resources are old

JV: It is all stuff from the last round which made it hard to understand what is going on this time

AW: It has come up a lot that no one knew what did the other strikes achieve - they actually did achieve a lot

JS: I think on the wider systemic issue of representation - I am concerned that if the motion did not pass and a re written motion put a bigger emphasis on the systemic issue but maybe took away from the specifics now - I don't know if that does justice to supporting these specific strikes

AW: I agree with you that the motion is good enough and I think it could be worded in a better way, it doesn't need to be the focus but at least a tip of the hat to the bigger underlying issues. Core sentiment is fine and if we don't support it there won't be another motion

JS: It is a good springboard for future conversations

LH: Better to support than not

AW: With representation, bias coming in from student leader but ST (SU Pres) has said student representation in the uni is fine

JS: That stems from a wider conversation last year that most people don't know about - there does need to be greater student representation but not at the top as it would not be productive - they need to be on several different committees. We landed on a different stance to where we began with student leaders in this conversation. We sat in a lot of spaces that were not worth the time. Optics wise if the JCR Presidents came in arguing for greater representation in this - it looks like you couldn't give a shit about the strikes

AW: I would approach it more from the angle of looking at the university administration - this is a group out of touch with all stakeholders and I think you could insert point 4 where it is talking about the uni administration or a 5th point but we can't amend it at this point. Ultimately UCU are wanting better dialogue, better representation for us but the way the motion wants it over quickly takes away from bigger concern of UCU

LH to vote for



Amendment 1 - UG Body

Believes:

ADD

2. The undergraduate student body, being the majority of the Student Union membership, deserves to have their rights and interests protected by the union.

AW: It is a given, just trying to spin it into a fuck the staff statement

JV: Basically says the SU should not care about postgrads which is not what the SU is there for

JS: If you look at the postgrad body, more than half are on taught courses and other researchers who teach and are likely UCU members or be like me with one supervision session once a month and are facing losing two months of them. Why is it in believes - silly

LH to vote against

Amendment 2 - Remove and support

REMOVE certain words from section 2

2. No UCU member will engage in industrial action lightly, and we respect ~~and support~~ the difficult decision they have made. We know that striking is always the last option. This dispute must be resolved, through negotiation, as soon as possible

Also ADD

4. Notwithstanding section 2 of Assembly Resolves, the Student Union shall not support any measures that will be prejudicial towards the interests of the undergraduate student body

LH: Removes the support and says SU should not support methods that are prejudiced to UG students. Let's not

AD: Takes one of the good bits of the motion to just get it done

LH to vote against

AW: If the second amendment passes then are we voting no on the motion?

LH to vote against the motion if the the second amendment passes

AW: What about the first one?

JS: As shit as it is i dont think it takes too much away from what the motions resolves to do

AW: I am unsure



LH: I'd vote no?

JS: Is at your discretion ultimately

LH: We will hold drop ins

Amendment 3 - Updated info

Update info+ More detail on the situation (two changes to "Durham SU notes")

- *Replace SU notes 1. with "That the UCU have recently conducted a ballots for industrial action including strike action and action short of a strike. That Durham UCU branch voted in favour of both forms of industrial action on both ballots"*
- *Replace SU notes 2. with "That ballots and prospective industrial action about similar disputes to past UCU strikes: ~~As well as Continuing to protect pensions which was the focus for the 2018 UCU strikes, staff are also balloting over and the 'four fights'~~"*

LH: Proposed amendments adds on that the durham ucuc voted in favour of action. Voted 72% in favour of strike actions and 85% in favour of action short of a strike - staff still doing jobs but interrupts uni operations. Second part is to say its similar to past action - not really a huge change

AW: Motion was written before ballot was closed - have to go by assembly deadlines. I don't know what takes them so long that you have to submit four days before.

LH: Silly. The SU is so silly

AW: Amendments should be open till beginning of governing and grants meetings

LH to vote for this

Amendment 4 - More details on how students are supported

Replace "Many Durham postgraduate research students are adversely affected..."

With "Durham students who also have staff roles at Durham are adversely affected by the issues raised particularly in UCU's Four Fights campaign. Those who are members of the USS pensions scheme, or hope to be members in the future careers in academia, are particularly impacted by USS cuts, which have lifelong impacts that affect early career workers most. Many Durham postgraduate research students are and as dural members of Durham SU ans UCU, and are therefore ~~they will be~~ entitled to vote in the ballots and engage in any industrial action"



On the list of “Durham SU Believes”, Add “Durham students and our education are affected by staff working conditions. To receive the world-class education we expect at Durham, we need staff to have fair compensation and realistic workloads.”

JV: I prefer this wording - it doesn't make postgrads sound as much like an afterthought

LH: Makes them sound more in favour of it

LH to vote in favour of this

Amendment 5 - write to UCE and UCU

On the list of “Durham SU Resolves” Add “To write to both Durham University Executive Committee (UEC) and Durham UCU Committee expressing our support for Durham staff, our hopes for this dispute to be resolved by negotiation, and our expectation that UEC will give UCU's positions and concerns careful consideration in seeking to resolve this dispute with minimal disruption”

AW: Hardens the stance, means they have to go to the uni

JV: Still not doing an awful lot but it is more. Don't see what we gain by voting no

JS: I'm in favour of voting yeah

LH to vote for this

WS arrives

AOB

AW: How are we responding to the strikes?

LH: Drop ins, as Cuth's I think we should say something - I don't want to do anything before talking to the wider student body. Doing a poster to explain the strikes and hopefully make people more aware. JS, AW and I plan to submit correspondence with statements about the facts instead of a motion right now. Next SU comm will be 6 days before assembly - next one is 25th so SU comm 19th 1pm. Then 26th 1pm

AW: SU governance structure knows no bounds AHHHH