

Bangor University Students' Union
General Meeting
Tuesday October 23rd 2007, 7pm

Present

List kept on file.

Apologies

Ruth Cordingley, Pride, Ki Aikido, Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Fencing, Liberal Democrats, DJing Society, Swimming Club, UMCB, SODA

Applications for Speaking Rights

There were no applications for speaking rights

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Accepted by a majority

Notice of Elections

The following positions were stated as being available:

3 Members for NUS Winter Council

3 Members for Annual NUS Conference

5 Independent Councillors

Head of Campaigns Committee

Head of Welfare Campaigns Committee

Head of Mature Students' Committee

Head of Women's Committee

Head of Welsh Newspaper Committee

2 Members of Elections Committee (open to Heads of Standing Committees and Independent Councillors)

Reports

a) President

It's easy for us to forget that by October we're already three months into a new year in the Students' Union – a lot has been done and there's a lot still to do. I started my second term in August with a healthy mandate and a strong taste for what the themes of 2007/8 would be; finances, governance, NUS reform.

By the time another AGM rolls around my 6 years in Bangor will be coming to an end and I imagine I'll be in a somewhat reflective mood – I have five umbrella aims which I'd like to be able to stand up at that AGM and report back on as successful and underway:

I want the Students' Union to remain a respected and influential part of the University community.

I plan to leave the Students' Union in a healthy financial state.

I plan to equip the Students' Union with the tools and the structures it needs to see in the next ten years.

I want the new Students' Union building plans to be firmed and on the way.

I want the Students' Union to be a strategic and professional organisation, striving for excellence in everything it does.

Bangor University Students' Union is an excellent organisation; we have first-rate staff and more on the way, we have outstanding and committed student volunteers at every level.

I'm proud to work as part of such a great team of people and I'm very excited at having been given the opportunity to work for another year as president at Bangor.

b) Communications & Societies Officer

This year I plan to build upon last year's work, increasing professionalism and improving communication

across the board.

Over the last year I have struggled to fulfil my remit without administrative support, so it is quite a relief that from early November two student activities administrators will be starting work. I hope that this will allow me to spend much more time on development and much less time on administrative work.

The training Andy and I have run for clubs and societies is already paying dividends; the quality of the societies is definitely improving as a result. I am working towards having a collection of strong, professionally-run and properly funded societies that everyone can take part in, so am working on improving our policies and procedures so that societies' committees can do the best possible job of running their society.

I have started work on updating the Students' Union website but it is a work in progress. I want to have a website that people have good reason to check regularly with clear, easy-to-find and relevant information and will continue to work on this over the coming months.

Storm FM's licence is up for renewal in February, so I will be working with Storm to consult the student body on how they like to listen to the radio: should we renew the FM licence? Should we switch to an online station? Should we combine the two? I want to take this decision seriously as we will have to live with our decision for several years.

In the next few months I would like to conduct a huge consultation exercise across the student body on a variety of issues (such as halls of residence, the effectiveness of our media and what you'd like to see in a new SU building) so that we can feel that we are taking an appropriate stance on issues as they crop up.

I will be working closely with Sam on a far-reaching governance review over the next few months. This will examine all our structures with the goal of streamlining and tightening up how the Students' Union works. I have been closely involved in NUS' governance review over the past few months so hope to bring that experience to our own governance review.

c) Athletic Union President

As expected this year we have experienced more problems due to the shortage of sports facilities provided to us by the University. It has further compounded the problems that we were experiencing last year. For the short term I am working with local clubs and venues to obtain suitable facilities but more often than not these are coming at a cost. In the mid term and at the moment I am drafting a paper in conjunction with the President to seek the universities support in these matters and obtain extra funding and facilities so that our clubs do not suffer. The University has agreed to do essential maintenance work that I demanded be done and have also agreed to some maintenance work on our external storage sheds. In the long term I want to see permanent workable solutions that benefit all our clubs and will be pushing for these over the coming year.

We are in the process of recruiting for a new student activities administrator that will have remit for both Societies and Athletic Union and once they are appointed I plan to start setting the ground work for the varsity that will held in March. The plan is to have an inter University contest between Aberystwyth and ourselves and compete in as many sports as possible. It will be a massive event and provide a goal to all the teams post the BUSA season.

I am also planning on working closely with the University to develop the sports strategy that I pushed for so hard last year. We must make the university realise that sport is an integral part of the student experience here in Bangor and requires much more investment. I plan to aim high so that the benefit to our students is seen for the coming years.

d) Education and Welfare Officer

My work so far...

Summer:

- One and a half week handover with the former EWO.
- Started my term in office on the 1st of August
- Attended 2 NUS residential training courses (Action through advocacy and Training the trainers)
- Wrote to the VC regarding the halls disciplinary process and changes that need to be made to ensure that all students are treated fairly in this process. The letter has been addressed and we are reviewing the changes after xmas.

Freshers' Week:

- Organised the Sabb flyers that were placed in welcome packs for new students. These flyers were a great way of publishing the SUs location as well as the variety of support we could offer them-which can only really be a good thing.
- Glad to see that no students had to be placed into hotels this year.
- Organised free minibuses from the venues to halls each night of freshers week. These proved to be very popular and the donations made by students more than covered our costs.
- Visited students in halls to welcome them and hand out some useful information.
- Nightline and LGBT training sessions.

Advice Centre:

- I worked on new keyrings that promote the advice centre and Nightline- as last years did not show contact details for the advice centre.
- I worked on getting new pencils- these seem like a trivial thing but actually can be a great reminder to students that we are there for them and of how the advice centre can be contacted.
- I worked on flyers that give more detail about the services that the Advice Centre offers. These have been given out to students and have proved to be very effective.
- Since moving offices I have held weekly meetings with the Advice Centre and continued to represent them and students at various meetings.
- Created a facebook group so that students have better access to information about the advice centre and its services.

The advice centre is a great service and one which is well established within the Students Union, however more publicity on the services available is being looked into. The free pregnancy testing kits and cheap condoms are still available to all students- and the condoms will now also be sold in the SU shop to ensure that everyone has access to cheap contraceptives.

Support:

- I sent an email to all students highlighting who I am and where I can be found. I have had a great response from this email and have been able to help people with all kinds of problems that might not have otherwise come forward.
- The change in location of my office has proven to be a wise move as I am now directly accessible to students.

I see the support of students as the main part to my role as well as representing students welfare and education through the various meetings that I attend. I will continue with the mass emails as I feel that this is a very effective way to let people know that you are there for them and for them to ask questions or air their concerns- especially for those who do not live in halls. I also intend to start a facebook group so that people can contact me directly, hear more about the work I am doing, and to find out more handy information on the real things that affect students.

Nightline:

- Set up the on-line rota system to make signing up for Nightline duties easier and quicker for volunteers.
- Worked with the NL publicity officer to update the publicity for the group. We have moved away from the black posters to something more bright and colourful. We have already seen the benefits of the changes in the increased use of the service this term.
- Written and presented the first ever committee training session for the Nightline committee- something that was needed and gratefully received.
- Written a presentation to encourage new volunteers to sign up to Nightline. This was presented at SVBs introduction to volunteering evening.
- Conducted over 40 Nightline interviews to select trainees for this year.
- Written a new nightline training programme that can be rolled out each year –as NL did not have a standardised training programme previously.
- Organised the new volunteers training weekend.
- Attended their weekly committee meetings as an associate member to aid the smooth running of the service.

There is a lot that can be done with Nightline and lots of things that simply need updating or standardising so that there is a clear transfer of information from year to year. This years committee are really enthusiastic and dedicated to their work and this is a great benefit to the service- the NL committee places will be filled at the coming GM. We are also preparing an Annual Report about Nightline to be published in December giving information and general statistics about the service in order to help people understand their work and identify

areas that we can improve on.

Course Representatives:

- I am currently contacting departments to gain contact details for course reps.
- A date has been set for training and multiple sessions will be held to make sure that all course reps have the opportunity to attend.

Course representatives are a really great way for students to have their say and make a real difference to the education which they pay so highly for. I am starting from basics with the course reps system as this was not previously within the Welfare Officers remit, but is one that should be addressed and promoted throughout the university- which is what I intend to do this year.

Other:

- At the LGBT officers request I have helped with a Queer Guide Training and the LGBT committee elections.
- Helped with the Halls Warden interviews in order to select candidates to fill the last few vacancies. Gave a talk on the advice centre with Bev to the new intake of wardens.
- Have held two Give It A Go sessions (study skills and personal safety), they were not as well attended as we had hoped but those attending did find the sessions very useful. I have also organised a self defence and British Sign language session as part of this programme of events.
- Helped show perspective students around the SU during the recent University Open Day.
- I am currently the signatory for JCRs (though I have no jurisdiction over how they spend their money) and have helped with the booking of coaches and venues.
- I now have a storm show on every week which is proving to be a lot scarier than I had ever imagined but also loads fun! ☺

For a more indepth look at what I've been up to please refer to my reports to exec meetings-or come and find up in my office!

e) Llywydd UMCB (Welsh Students' Union President)

Over the Summer:

I spent my time meeting people and making preparations for the year ahead. I prepared a calendar to give UMCB members an idea of what will be happening over the year. I started organising the rugby trip to Ireland and the Gloddest (Christmas Feast). I spent a week at the National Eisteddfod at Mold and met a great number of people, some of whom will be coming to Bangor over the next few years, present students and others who are former students.

Fresher's Week:

The week was a success as we had a good level of attendance for all our activities. The week's highpoint was the gig at Time-Amser. There were problems regarding bilingualism at Serendipity as not all the stands were bilingual. We have now made plans towards improving on the situation by next year by preparing a contract that all will have to adhere to and it will cover general matters as well as language.

UMCB Activities:

Nearly £500 was raised on the door of the first Clwb Cymru of the term and we hope that it will continue to be as popular. We have held a Little Village Trip and a successful quiz. We have further activities organised from now to the end of term.

Cymdeithas Llywelyn:

Several people showed an interest during Freshers' Week but despite attempting to arrange a meeting only one or two have responded. I hope this year to raise interest in the group and get a good committee together to ensure continuity over the coming years.

UMCB Committee

I hope that we will have a full committee in place in order to continue with last year's good work. A committee should have been elected by this meeting.

Marketing/Promotion:

The Marketing Department has prepared a supplement for the Welsh magazine *Go!wg* that will mention UMCB and JMJ. Some Open Days for Welsh medium students have been arranged. I will be present at those in order to promote UMCB. Events like this are important in order to attract students from South Wales as well as the North.

Welsh Education:

I hope that we will be able to increase the numbers of students who study through the medium of Welsh this year; there are a few more modules available through the medium of Welsh this year and Bangor University is the institution that has the best provision of Welsh medium modules and the highest number of students studying through the medium of Welsh. Although we can be proud of this it is still not an adequate provision.

We support the idea of a Welsh College so we hope that we can arrange at least one event similar to the one held last year in conjunction with other higher education institutions.

It is a difficult and complex issue but UMCB have published a small leaflet explaining the matter and I intend to write an article for *Y Ddraenen* to motivate people to take advantage of the courses that are available and to continue to demand Welsh medium courses.

JMJ:

The Welsh medium hall will be relocated over the next few years. The importance of the hall must be stressed in order to ensure that it remains as strong as ever as it is the heart of the Welsh student community. The hall has a very strong sense of community and in order to ensure that it isn't lost I will prepare a survey at the beginning of the second term to demonstrate the importance of MJM.

f) Union Chairperson

Planning a more Structured Future

The forthcoming year for Steering and the Chair

Steering has a serious responsibility to maintain the democratic integrity of our Union's meetings. This essential task has fallen by the wayside in recent years, and other members, particularly the Executive, have worked hard to keep the Union's democratic process going. We are sure that the membership is grateful that they have done so.

My predecessor laid the foundations for the coming year in her last speech. The Union's building is due to be replaced, and we will go through a period of upheaval as this takes place. Change will happen, as it always does, and we should embrace it as an opportunity to raise our game and engage. We should not ignore that past, its implications, or our commitments to it, but use our history as the bedrock that our future is built upon.

We will once again have elections this year, with the promise of change, grateful that some continuity has been retained in the sterling personnel whose sound grasp of the day-to-day running of the Union makes it a far more effective institution than it may otherwise be.

While our new building's foundations are laid, **we** must also lay foundations for the future; a future in which new people will come to sound knowledge of what has been done in the past, and how to proceed in the years to come.

To this end, I, as Chair and Head of Steering, with their able and unremitting commitment to this thankless task, undertake to continue the work that we have barely begun: to properly document the processes of our Union. We will begin with the processes that Steering and I must use to keep our meetings in order and our constitution current and up to date. We shall seek to expand this remit, as time allows, to other processes within the Union, in the hope that our successors will continue this crusade of empowerment and awareness for the future of our Union.

This year Steering shall

- Continue the work of organising and chairing meetings, including Council, Exec and the AGM
- Document processes in regard to these activities
- Seek to begin the documentation of other processes within the Union
- Remain within budget and raise oney from events following the large meetings so as to further facilitate meetings
- Oversee the Constitution
- Stay within budget

g) International Students' Officer

No report submitted

h) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Officer

No report submitted

i) Welsh Affairs Officer

In the last few weeks I feel we've had a lot of success with the running of U.M.C.B activities. I have helped to get new members for U.M.C.B. in Serendipity.

We have had two successful Clwb Cymru's and I have helped out on the door during one.

We try to arrange a crawl or a night in the Glob in upper Bangor on the Thursdays there aren't Clwb Cymru's. On Thursday the eleventh we arranged a quiz in The Glob. The running of the quiz was supposed to be my responsibility but I had a family emergency so I asked Bethan to step in. I was able to get back to take over the quiz and reveal the answers and overall I feel that we had a very good turn out. Last Tuesday we had a general meeting in JMJ to set up the U.M.C.B. council, unfortunately we didn't get much of a turn out for that and so we will rearrange that for a later date. Last Thursday we had our second Clwb Cymru of the year and again it was a pretty big turn out. The annual rhyng-gol gig is coming up and so will the eisteddfod later in the year and so Bethan and I had a discussion about the t-shirts and came to a decision and Bethan gave the orders so they should arrive by next Monday. On Monday night we started to get some names for the rhyng-gol gig to try and arrange buses to go down to the gig in Aberystwyth. Hopefully over the next year U.M.C.B. will continue to be as successful.

j) Students With Disabilities Officer

Hi there as your SWD officer I have the following aims for the academic year.

- Making links with other SWD Officers at other universities and seeing what ideas they have implemented. – Have already started this and looked at what other universities do ect.
- Having an "open door" by holding regular sessions where students can come and discuss their concerns as well as looking for possible solutions to solve the situation / problem.
- Work with the Welfare and Educational Officer to ensure a successful academic life for students with disabilities.
- Pod cast's – work to aim to get pod cast's introduced within lectures.
- Improve the amount of information given to students about what the university can do for them, from acceptance to graduation.

Questions

Question: Has the Students' Union done anything over the summer with regards to the changes in the Ocean Sciences Department?

President: Redundancies last year resulted in the restructuring of courses in the Ocean Sciences department, with little consultation with the students. I raised this matter with the University, and they expressed regret and embarrassment at what happened. New practices are in place for approval of courses. This change could not be stopped, but we have tried to ease the situation wherever possible.

Question: Why have the Council and AGM minutes not been uploaded promptly to the website?

CSO: Some errors in the redesigning of the website meant that some links were broken. Also, we have been working without a secretary, and the write-up of minutes has been slower than usual. We have recently employed a member of staff to assume these secretarial tasks, so these problems should now be fixed.

Elections

The following elections were held:

NUS Winter Council (3 positions):

Mark Jessett, Bethan Williams, Xanthe Larcombe, Tom Clark, Ian Doulton, and Gemma Chapman stood for the positions

NUS National Conference (5 positions):

Mark Jessett, Carolan Goggin, Andy Redfearn, Xanthe Larcombe, Tom Clark, Ian Doulton, and Gemma Chapman stood for the positions

The above elections were conducted by the Single Transferable Vote method, and were counted after the meeting. The results will be announced at the Council meeting on November 23rd.

Head of Welsh Newspaper Committee:

Gwenan Evans In Favour: 179, Against: 2, Abstaining: 29

Gwenan Evans was elected

Head of Mature Students Committee:

Barbra Kells: 59

Rhi McCrore: 117

None of the Above: 4

Abstaining: 9

Rhi McCrore was elected

Independent Councillors (5 positions):

Tom Clark, Ian Doulton, Gemma Chapman, Spencer George, and Jennifer Stanley stood for the positions.

As the number of candidates did not exceed the number of positions, the meeting decided by a majority to vote for the above as a group.

In Favour: 170, Against: 9, Abstaining:7

Tom Clark, Ian Doulton, Gemma Chapman, Spencer George, and Jennifer Stanley were elected as Independent Councillors

Ratification of Union Council Business

The meeting accepted the minutes of the Council of 20th March by a majority.

Motions

Students' Union Budget

The budget was discussed by the President

Vote: In Favour: 162, Against: 2, Abstaining: 0

The budget was accepted

Students' Union Affiliations

The affiliations were discussed by the President

Vote: In Favour: 160, Against: 4, Abstaining: 0

The affiliations were accepted

AOB

The chairperson Mark Jessett thanked the Union Steering Committee for arranging the General Meeting.

Meeting Closed 20:26