

**027**

**For the Union to Explore Options for External Student Representation**

**Proposer:** Serene Shibli Sexton (Campaigns and Democracy Officer)

**Seconded:** Luke Johnson (Martial Arts Sports Executive)

**Union Notes**

1. The Student Union at present does not recognise any Trade Unions as legitimate student representation.
2. The Union has previously recognised trade unions in this capacity, previously recognising the GMB Trade Union,
3. Byelaw 8.3 sets the Union as having the following objective:  
*"8.3.1 To create and sustain a positive and welcoming environment for all members, visitors and staff;"*
4. Byelaw 8.14 lays out for Union Support Services:  
*"8.14 Support Service users should, where appropriate, be provided with a range of options to deal with their queries."*
5. Byelaw 8.25 sets out the Unions aims to be that we:  
*"8.25.2 Ensure that all employees receive equal treatment, and that, wherever possible, they are given the help needed to attain their full potential to the benefit of the individual and the Union officers elected by them."*
6. We also have Byelaw 7: Staff protocol which dictates  
*"7.5 This Protocol will apply to student employees as staff during the hours at which they are at work. Additionally, student employees are not permitted to raise issues relating to their employment in any Union meeting."*  
*"7.11 Staff will not give public expression to views contrary to policy that deliberately bring the Union, its staff or its policy into disrepute."*  
*"7.12 Staff will not comment to representatives of the media, including student media, on policy or employment issues."*
7. And the Articles say that the Unions powers are:  
*"5 To further its objects, but not to further any other purpose, the Union may: alone or with other organisations:  
5.8 provide or appoint others to provide advice, guidance, representation and advocacy;"*
8. Our Articles of Association also state that:
  - a. *"B The Union will seek at all times to:  
(iii) pursue equal opportunities by taking positive action within the law to facilitate participation of groups discriminated against by society."*
  - b. *"F In pursuance of these objects, the Union will embody the following values:  
Empowerment - The action of empowering; the state of being empowered."*

*Democracy - Government by the people; power resides in the people as a whole, and is exercised either directly by them or by officers elected by them."*

*In the interest of transparency, other values are articulated in the articles of association.*

## **Union Believes**

1. The Union has a duty to facilitate an environment welcoming to its members that will empower and equip students to grow and flourish.
2. Given we are a democratic union this is undermined if our members struggle to represent themselves through our procedures.
3. That when students encounter problems our student support should be able to support and/or sign post them to viable options in order to seek help and resolution to their problems.
4. That Byelaw 7, while being important for the protection of UEA SU workers' rights, is a barrier to students being able to fully express their lived experiences as UEA SU members publicly.
5. And so, some students may feel their ability, as members, to contribute to UEA SU's constitutional objectives set out in byelaw 8.3.1. limited and in need of support to achieve equal opportunity for representation as their peers.
6. And so, to not provide affirmative support for students unable to express their full experience of being members in democratic and public spaces could be considered a contravention of B(iii) of the Articles of Association.
7. And thus, given our values laid out in the Articles of Association, and Byelaw 8.25.2 students should be affirmatively empowered and supported to feed-back and be heard by UEA SU, in processes in accordance with UEA SU Policy.
8. That Trade Unions, like Student Unions, are democratic organisations; and if our staff cannot represent themselves in our democratic institutions as set out in byelaw 7, in order to fully pursue and embody our values as a democratic institution committed to our members being able to be democratically represented and able to represent themselves, we must empower our members and support their efforts in seeking democratic representation beyond UEA SU.
9. Therefore, given that UEA SU is empowered to work with other organisations "to provide advice, guidance, representation and advocacy;" it is both reasonable and constitutionally imperative for the Union to recognise and signpost Trade Unions as legitimate avenues for support to ensure students are affirmatively supported and represented as members of their Union.

## **Union Resolves**

1. For Management Committee to explore recognising the representation of students by Trade Unions.
2. For the discussion in Management Committee and its outcome to be reported back to Union Council.
3. For Student Officer Committee and/or Democratic Procedures Committee invite a Unison representative, and any other appropriate unions of their choosing, to Union Council
4. For the Union to be open and signpost Trade Unions as a legitimate and recognised avenue support, pending the outcome of the conversation in Management Committee.

