

S. 18-1 A Motion to Amend the Union Debating Society Constitution

Owner: Matthew Singer
In Effect From: Immediately
Review Date: 03 April 2018

The SSC note:

1. The Current Union Debating Society (UDS) constitution, as written in Chapter 14 of the Laws, must be updated to ensure greater accessibility and external image for the society.
2. There is currently no access representative on committee to spearhead widening access policies.
3. It is both difficult and inefficient to review the portfolio of the Communications Secretary in an AGM setting.
4. The following changes were unanimously approved by the Board of Ten on 14/3/2018.

The SSC believes:

1. The UDS would benefit from the addition of an Access Representative (see 3.2.13 Appendix B pg. 9), co-opted from the Board of Ten.
2. This would be valuable to the UDS as the remit of the position would be of extreme importance though not so extensive as to require an additional member of on Board.
3. The UDS would benefit from an interview process (see proposed changes to 5.6 Appendix A pg. 5 and B pg. 10, addition of 5.8 Appendix B pg. 10) for the selection of the Communications Secretary.
4. An interview is preferable for this role due to its importance as the face of the UDS and as it would be a more appropriate setting to extensively review a portfolio.

The SSC resolves:

1. To update Chapter 14 of the Laws.
2. To remove the current UDS constitution (Appendix A) and replace it with Appendix B.

Proposer

Matthew Singer - SSC Debates Officer

Seconders:

Kevin Phelan - SSC Societies Officer
Zelda Kotyk - Association LGBT+ Officer
Niamh McGurk – SSC Charities Convener

Appendix A

St Andrews Union Debating Society Constitution

The Society shall be known as "The University of St Andrews Union Debating Society", hereinafter "the Society", and shall take for its motto: "pro amicitia et literis."

1.Membership

1.1.The membership of the Society shall consist of all the matriculated students of the University except those who have exercised their right to opt out under the terms of the Education Act 1994. Only ordinary members shall have voting rights in elections to the Board and shall be the only members eligible for election to the Board of Ten.

1.2.All members shall also be members of the House and shall have speaking and voting rights in the House, save where the vote is of a constitutional or binding nature.

1.3.Membership shall be entirely free of charge. At the first debate that the Convenor chairs in that capacity, the Convenor shall swear upon the sword of the Society the following oath:

1.3.1."I, (Convenor's name), Convenor, swear to uphold and protect the ancient traditions and rights of this House of the University of St Andrews Union Debating Society; and especially, I swear to guard the right of every matriculated student of this seat of learning to attend debates and speak his or her mind in any capacity at no charge or fee whatsoever. This being one of the chief glories of this House."

2.The Debates Board

2.1.Membership: The Officers of the Society shall be:

2.1.1.The SSC Debates Officer (Convenor and Chair)

2.1.2.The Treasurer of the Society

2.1.3.The Clerk to the House (Secretary)

2.1.4.Inter-Varsity Secretary

2.1.5.Schools Secretary

2.1.6.Communications Secretary

2.1.7.Steward to the House (Social Secretary)

2.1.8.Internal Secretary

2.1.9.The Two Chief Whips

2.1.10.The Sergeant-at-Arms

2.1.11.The Freshers' Representative

2.1.12.Director of Student Development and Activities

2.2.Remit

2.2.1.The responsibility of the Board is the organisation of all matters concerning the Society.

2.3.Quorum

2.3.1.The quorum shall be three-fifths of the members of the Board.

2.4.Meetings

2.4.1.Meetings of the House and of the Board must occur at least once a fortnight, during term-time, excepting exams.

2.4.2. All members of the Board must attend all meetings of the House and Board, or send apologies in writing (electronically or hand written) to the Clerk of the House at least 24 hours in advance.

2.4.3. All meetings of the House and Board must be clearly advertised at least five days before the meeting.

2.4.4. All members of the Board must report to meetings of the Board on their actions and planned activities.

3.Responsibilities of the Officers

N.B. All officers must read and sign a copy of the Constitution on being elected to their position.

N.B. Officers elected at the AGM may be elected as a job-share, provided it is clear that only one person, to be declared at the meeting, is able to vote in Board meetings and is ultimately responsible for fulfilling the role. Any other member of the job-share shall be invited to attend board meetings, and shall be expected to assist in the role to which they have been elected.

3.1.The Convenor shall:

3.1.1.Chair meetings of the Board, or appoint a nominee to do so. The Convenor shall have a deliberative and casting vote on the Board.

3.1.2.Be responsible for the smooth running of the Society and the setting of the calendar of events.

3.1.3.Represent the Society on such external bodies as shall from time to time be determined.

3.1.4.Have the power to make such decisions as the Convenor deems necessary in the absence of the Board; or where it is inappropriate to call its members together. All decisions taken by the Convenor will be reported to the Board at the earliest possible occasion.

3.1.5.Arrange the carving up of a Deputy Convenor, who shall fulfil the duties of the Convenor in the event that the Convenor is unable to fulfil their position, by the end of the session in which they were elected.

3.1.6.The Convenor shall appoint a Father or Mother of the House.

3.2. Other Officers

3.2.1.The Treasurer shall be responsible for the Society's finances and the sound maintenance thereof (which shall be in line with all Association regulations, and include a monthly update of the Society's finances), and be responsible for co-ordinating the raising of all sponsorship for the Society. They will also co-head a Freshers' subcommittee with the Freshers' representative, responsible for fundraising and organising other activities.

3.2.2. The Clerk to the House shall have secretarial duties, including the recording of all events and decisions in the House and of the Board. The Clerk shall advise the Convenor in constitutional matters. Furthermore, the Clerk shall be charged with the protection and preservation of the Society's minutes in conjunction with the University Library. Finally, the Clerk is charged, at the beginning of every meeting of the House, to read the minutes of the previous debate in a humorous and topical fashion until motioned to cease. The clerk must also take attendance at every meeting of the Board and House.

3.2.3. The Inter-Varsity Secretary shall have duties including the coordination of the selection of debaters for Inter-Varsity and other competitions and convening Inter-Varsity debating competitions in St Andrews.

3.2.4. The Schools' Secretary shall have duties including the Society's participation in the organisation of all schools debating competitions and events, and all matters pertaining to schools debating in the area.

3.2.5. The Communications Secretary shall have duties including all aspects of publicity for the Society, including the production of the Freshers' Guide, the Society's internet presence, the website, weekly emails and maintaining a consistent and positive external image of the Society.

3.2.6. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall have duties including the enforcement of order within the House, the production of Order Papers, organising clothing orders and all aspects of the Society's alumni relations.

3.2.7. There shall be two Chief Whips. They will be elected at the AGM as a team and shall both have a vote on the Board of Ten. They shall be jointly responsible for all aspects of debating and public speaking training within the Society.

3.2.8. The Internal Secretary will be responsible for the organisation of all internal competitions, and shall also assist the Convenor in finding and confirming guest speakers for formal public debates.

3.2.9. The Steward to the House shall be responsible for all aspects of the Society's hospitality and shall be responsible for the planning of all social events, including the annual Gaudeamus Party to follow the Magstrand Debate at the end of the second semester.

3.2.10. The Freshers' Representative (non-voting member) shall be responsible for the representation of all first year debaters which includes any person who has not actively competed or participated within the society for more than a year. They will also co-head a Freshers' subcommittee alongside the Treasurer, responsible for fund raising and organising other activities. Moreover, they shall assist the Convenor and Deputy Convenor in the smooth running of the society. The election will take place during the first semester of each academic year and not during the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The

election will take place within the Board of Ten, the Convenor shall retain their deliberate and casting vote privileges, and should be advertised at least 5 days in advance to all members of the society.

3.2.11. The Deputy Convenor will be charged with the duty of assisting the Convenor in the smooth running of the society.

3.2.12. The Father/Mother of the House (non-voting member). This role is honorary and should be appointed to a non-Board member who has shown continued dedication to the society. While honorary, the Father or Mother of the House shall do their best to assist the society in any way that is fitting. The holder of this position is not subject to the rules regarding attendance.

4. Minutes

4.1. Minutes shall be taken by the Clerk to the House, or the Clerk's nominee, who shall be responsible for their lodgement in the University Library.

4.2. Upon arrival at the Board they shall be signed by the Clerk and the Convenor and shall form the only authoritative record of the proceeding of the Society.

5. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

5.1. The AGM of the Society shall be held following the Students' Association annual diet of elections and before the end of teaching in the second semester. The AGM shall be called for the purposes of:

5.1.1. Presentation of reports of the outgoing Officers.

5.1.2. Annual statement of the Society's accounts and finances.

5.1.3. Valediction of the outgoing Convenor.

5.1.4. Election of all positions other than SSC Debates Officer, Association Director of Student Development and Activities, Fresher's Representative, Deputy Convenor, Father/Mother of the House and the SSC Nominee.

5.1.5. Any other competent business to be discussed.

5.2. There shall be no less than 14 days' notice of the AGM and this shall be posted in places which shall be determined from time to time by the Board.

5.3. The AGM shall be chaired by the new convenor or their nominee.

5.4. The quorum for the AGM shall be as laid down in the Standing Orders of the House.

5.5. The method of election to the board shall be that determined by the Convenor, subject to the approval and monitoring of the Associations Elections Officer's Committee.

5.6. The positions to be elected at the Annual General Meeting include: The Clerk to the House, Inter-Varsity Secretary, Schools Secretary, Communications Secretary, Steward to the House, Internal Secretary, Chief Whip and Sergeant-at-Arms

5.7. The treasurer will be appointed one week prior to the AGM based on an application and interview, with the panel consisting of the outgoing president, the incoming president, the outgoing treasurer and the outgoing DoSDA

6. Extra-Ordinary Meetings

6.1. Extra-Ordinary Meetings may be called by the Convenor or by means of request, in writing, to the Convenor, signed by five members of the Board or twenty ordinary members of the Society.

- 6.2.A written request for an Extra-Ordinary Meeting must state the purpose and proposed agenda of such a meeting, allowing that other business may be discussed.
- 6.3.The form of an Extra-Ordinary Meeting must be acceptable to both the Convenor and the petitioners.
- 6.4.An Extra-Ordinary Meeting must occur not more than two weeks from the receipt of such a request and must be advertised for not less than five days.
- 6.5.Only ordinary members of the Society shall have voting rights at an Extra- Ordinary Meeting.
- 6.6.The quorum for an Extra-ordinary Meeting shall be as laid down in the Standing Orders.
- 6.7.The resolutions of an Extra-Ordinary Meeting shall be binding upon the Convenor and the Board, subject to the oversight of the Students' Association.

7. Elections

- 7.1.Elections of members of the Board shall be governed by Chapter Seven of the Laws of the Association.
- 7.2.The Board shall have the power to co-opt, or elect in the house, members in order to fill casual vacancies. Such a co-option shall require five days' notice and the same circulation as for the AGM in subsection 5.2 of this chapter.

8.Standing Orders of the House

- 8.1.The House shall be governed by the Standing Orders laid down by the Board, as ratified by the SSC.

9.Resignations and Dismissal

- 9.1.A member of the Board who wishes to resign must send a letter of resignation to the Convenor and to the Clerk of the House.
- 9.2.Any matter regarding resignation must be dealt with within seven days of the receipt of the letter, during term-time.
- 9.3.A member of the Board shall be deemed to have vacated his or her position if three consecutive meetings have been missed, or five in a term of office, without accepted written apologies.
- 9.4.If a member of the Board has failed to uphold the responsibilities of their position, but yet has not met the automatic dismissal requirements above, the board may call a motion of no confidence in that member. If the motion is adopted by three quarters of the total membership of board, the Convenor is mandated to submit a motion to the next meeting of the SSC, asking for removal of this officer.

10. Gender in Public Debates

- 10.1.In every formal public debate there must be an extensive attempt to have a diversity of genders as official speakers. This applies unless the Convenor and Internal Secretary have both exhaustively invited a varied range of speakers without success, and if there has been no success in exhaustively seeking out a variety of willing university students or debaters.

Appendix B

St Andrews Union Debating Society Constitution

The Society shall be known as "The University of St Andrews Union Debating Society", hereinafter "the Society", and shall take for its motto: "pro amicitia et literis."

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1.1.The membership of the Society shall consist of all the matriculated students of the University except those who have exercised their right to opt out under the terms of the Education Act 1994. Only ordinary members shall have voting rights in elections to the Board and shall be the only members eligible for election to the Board of Ten.

1.2.All members shall also be members of the House and shall have speaking and voting rights in the House, save where the vote is of a constitutional or binding nature.

1.3.Membership shall be entirely free of charge. At the first debate that the Convenor chairs in that capacity, the Convenor shall swear upon the sword of the Society the following oath:

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Debate at the end of the second semester.

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3.2.12. The Father/Mother of the House (non-voting member). This role is honorary and should be appointed to a non-Board member who has shown continued dedication to the society. While honorary, the Father or Mother of the House shall do their best to assist the society in any way that is fitting. The holder of this position is not subject to the rules regarding attendance.

3.2.13. The Access Representative will have responsibility for widening access strategy and ad-hoc projects and shall be co-opted from the elected board.

4. Minutes

4.1. Minutes shall be taken by the Clerk to the House, or the Clerk's nominee, who shall be responsible for their lodgement in the University Library.

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5.1.5. Any other competent business to be discussed.

5.2. There shall be no less than 14 days' notice of the AGM and this shall be posted in

places which shall be determined from time to time by the Board.

5.3.The AGM shall be chaired by the new convenor or their nominee.

5.4.The quorum for the AGM shall be as laid down in the Standing Orders of the House.

5.5.The method of election to the board shall be that determined by the Convenor, subject to the approval and monitoring of the Associations Elections Officer's Committee.

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5.7.The Treasurer will be appointed one week prior to the AGM based on an application and interview, with the panel consisting of the outgoing president, the incoming president, the outgoing treasurer and the outgoing DoSDA.

5.8.The Communications Secretary will be appointed one week following the AGM based on an application including portfolio and interview, with the panel consisting of the outgoing president, the incoming president, the incoming DosDA and the outgoing DoSDA.

6. Extra-Ordinary Meetings

6.1.Extra-Ordinary Meetings may be called by the Convenor or by means of request, in writing, to the Convenor, signed by five members of the Board or twenty ordinary members of the Society.

6.2.A written request for an Extra-Ordinary Meeting must state the purpose and proposed agenda of such a meeting, allowing that other business may be discussed.

6.3.The form of an Extra-Ordinary Meeting must be acceptable to both the Convenor and the petitioners.

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6.5.Only ordinary members of the Society shall have voting rights at an Extra- Ordinary Meeting.

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7. Elections

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