

J21-08 Motion to Reform the Debates Board.

Owner: Zaine Mansuralli

In Effect From: 5th March 2021

Review Date: September 2021

It is noted that:

1. The Union Debating Society board has increased in size significantly over the past two years.
2. The majority of association subcommittees are organised into an executive committee and specialised committees.
3. Several positions have been reformed significantly in recent years, both de facto and through amendments to the Laws of the Association.
4. The Laws of the Association do not currently recognise the Union Debating Society's affiliation with the Scottish Students' Debating Council (SSDC).

It is believed that:

1. The Union Debating Society would be more efficiently run in smaller committees as the current Debates Board, numbering 18, is difficult to assemble and too large to allow all members to discuss competent business arising from their portfolios during weekly hour long meetings.
2. The current structure of the Debates Board discourages student participation as it requires members to attend meetings, discuss issues and participate in events irrelevant to their portfolios.
3. A number of positions have changed to the point where their current titles and descriptions are no longer fit for purpose, and the Laws should be updated to reflect positions more accurately.
4. The Laws of the Association should reflect the Union Debating Society's affiliation with and obligations towards the Scottish Students' Debating Council (SSDC).

It is resolved to:

1. Replace the existing Chapter 14 Sections 2 and 3 of the Laws of the Association (Appendix 1) with an updated version (Appendix 2).
2. Replace the existing Chapter 14 Section 5.6 of the Laws of the Association (Appendix 3) with an updated version (Appendix 4).
3. Add a new section to the Chapter 14 of the Laws of the Association, Section 12 (Appendix 5), to recognise and govern the Union Debating Society's affiliation with the Scottish Students' Debating Council.

Proposer

Zaine Mansuralli – SSC Debates Officer

Seconders

Union Debating Society

Gavin Sandford – Director of Events and Services

Anna-Ruth Cockerham - SRC Disability Officer

Toni Valencia - SSC Member Without Portfolio

Appendix 1

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.** The Two Communications Secretary
- 2.1.7.** Steward to the House (Social Secretary)
- 2.1.8.** Speakers Secretary
- 2.1.9.** The Two Chief Whips
- 2.1.10.** The Sergeant-at-Arms
- 2.1.11.** The Freshers' Representative
- 2.1.12.** Schools Outreach Officer
- 2.1.13.** Equity Officer.
- 2.1.14.** The Parents (Mother/Father) of the House
- 2.1.15.** 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

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 Convener, 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 Parents 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 co-ordination 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 Competition Convenor shall be responsible for overseeing and organising the Society’s participation in the organisation of schools debating competitions and shall assist the Schools Outreach Officer as needed.
- 3.2.5.** The Schools Outreach Officer shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to the Society’s outreach and development of debating at local schools and shall assist the Schools Competition Convenor as needed.
- 3.2.6.** The two Communications Secretaries 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, and the mailing list. They shall be expected to split their opportunities as they see fit.
- 3.2.7.** 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.
- 3.2.8.** 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.
- 3.2.9.** The Speakers 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, single speaker events and panels.
- 3.2.10.** 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.
- 3.2.11.** The Fresher’s 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 social activities explicitly for first year debaters, refreshers and 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 LAWS OF THE ASSOCIATION 64 Meeting (AGM). Only first year debaters and Board of Ten Fifteen members of that academic year will be allowed to vote in this election which will take the same process as an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) as outlined in Section 5 of the LAWS OF THE ASSOCIATION. This election should be advertised at least 5 days in advance to all members of the society. First year university debaters are those that are involved in debating for less than a calendar year since their first training session.

- 3.2.12.** The Deputy Convenor will be charged with the duty of assisting the Convenor in the smooth running of the society.
- 3.2.13.** The Parents (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.
- 3.2.14.** The Equity Officer shall serve as the internal Equity Officer for debating competitions organised by the Society, shall assist the Chief Whips on to providing training on equity in debating and discussing sensitive issues respectfully, and shall work to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged and minority groups in Society activities.
- 3.2.15.** Every member of the Board of Ten Fifteen (voting or non-voting) shall be required to speak or judge at at least one competition a semester. Some exceptions may be made for exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Intervarsity Secretary.

Appendix 2

2. *The Debates Board*

2.1. Membership

2.1.1. The UDS Board of Ten

- 2.1.1.1.** The President & Convenor (Chair)
- 2.1.1.2.** The Treasurer of the Society
- 2.1.1.3.** The Clerk to the House (Secretary)
- 2.1.1.4.** The Two Media Officer(s)
- 2.1.1.5.** The Chief Whip
- 2.1.1.6.** The Equity Officer
- 2.1.1.7.** The Freshers Representative
- 2.1.1.8.** The Chairman of Ways and Means (Chair)
- 2.1.1.9.** Director of Student Development and Activities

2.1.2. The Competitive Debates Board

- 2.1.2.1.** The Chief Whip (Chair)
- 2.1.2.2.** The Training Officer
- 2.1.2.3.** The Competitions Secretary
- 2.1.2.4.** The Schools Outreach Officer
- 2.1.2.5.** The Schools Competition Convenor

2.1.3. The Public Events Board

- 2.1.3.1.** The Chairman of Ways and Means (Chair)
- 2.1.3.2.** The Serjeant-at-arms
- 2.1.3.3.** The Steward to the House
- 2.1.3.4.** The Public Debates Secretary

2.1.4. The Parent(s) of the House (Honorary)

2.2. Remit

- 2.2.1.** The Debates Board is responsible for the organisation of all matters concerning the Society.

2.3. Meetings

- 2.3.1.** Meetings of the Board of Ten, the Competitive Debating Board and the Public Debates Board must occur at least once a fortnight, during term-time, exempting exams.
- 2.3.2.** All members of The Debates Board must attend all meetings of Boards they participate in and send apologies in writing (electronically or hand written) if they are unable to attend to the Clerk of the House at least 24 hours in advance.

- 2.3.3. At the discretion of the Convenor meetings of the entire Debates Board can be held, and must be clearly advertised at least five days before the meeting.
- 2.3.4. All members of *The Debates Board* must report to meetings of their respective Board their actions and planned activities. *The Competitive Debates Board* and *The Public Debates Board* chairs must update the Board of Ten on the activities of their respective Boards .

3. *Responsibilities of the Officers*

N.B. All positions elected at the AGM may be elected as a job-share.

3.1. The President & Convenor (Chair of the The Debates Board & Board of Ten) shall chair meetings of *The UDS Board of Ten* and the collective *Debates Board* or appoint a nominee to do so in their absence. The Convenor shall have the deciding vote on the Board and be responsible for the smooth running of the Society. The Convenor shall appoint the honorary Parents of the House who may provide support and advice to the Society at their discretion.

3.2. *Other Officers of The Board of Ten*

- 3.2.1. **The Chief Whip (Chair of The Competitive Debates Board)** shall oversee the competitive and schools-orientated business of the society including hosting training sessions for both casual and competitive purposes.
- 3.2.2. **The Equity Officer** shall serve as the internal Equity Officer for debating competitions organised by the Society. They shall work in coordination with the Chief-Whip(s) to provide training on equity in debating and discussing sensitive issues respectfully. They shall also work to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged and minority groups in Society activities.
- 3.2.3. **The Clerk (Secretary)** shall be responsible for secretarial duties, including the recording of all events and decisions in the House and of the Debates Board. The Clerk shall submit the minutes to the University Library.
- 3.2.4. **The Treasurer** shall be responsible for the Society's finances. They will coordinate sponsorship for the Society.
- 3.2.5. **The Chairman of Ways & Means (Chair of The Public Events Board)** shall be responsible for organising the public events. They are

specifically charged with recruitment of speakers and shall be assisted by the Public Events Board in this task.

3.2.6. The Two Media Officers shall have duties including all aspects of media and advertising for the Society.

3.2.7. The Freshers Representative shall be responsible for the representation and social activities of all first year debaters which includes any person who has not actively competed or participated within the society for more than a year. This role will be elected at an EGM of first year debaters and members of the Debates Board.

3.2.8. DoSDA (Director of Student Development and Activities) shall represent the Students' Association on the Board of Ten.

3.3. *The Competitive Debating Board*

3.3.1. Chief Whip (Chair)

3.3.2. The Training Officer shall be responsible for the organisation and smooth running of weekly debate training sessions.

3.3.3. The Competitions Secretary shall be responsible for arranging the UDS's representation and participation in external competitions.

3.3.4. The Schools Outreach Officer shall be responsible for outreach and development of debating at local schools.

3.3.5. The Schools Competition Convenor shall be responsible for organising schools debating competitions.

3.4. *The Public Events Board*

3.4.1. Chairman of Ways and Means (Chair)

3.4.2. The Serjeant – at – arms shall be responsible for duties including the enforcement of order and producing order papers. In addition, they are responsible for organising clothing orders and maintaining alumni relations.

3.4.3. The Steward shall be responsible for the planning of all social events, including the annual Gaudeamus Party.

3.4.4. The Public-Debates Secretary shall be responsible for the organisation of public debates and recruiting speakers.

Appendix 3

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

Appendix 4

5.6 All elected positions, other than the Freshers' Representative and Debates Officer, will be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

Appendix 5

12.1 The Union Debating Society (UDS) shall be affiliated to the Scottish Students' Debating Council (SSDC) and abide by its policies except insofar as they conflict with Association policy and procedure.

12.2 The Chief Whip shall be responsible for representing the interests of the UDS on the SSDC or nominating a representative to do so.

12.3 Members of the SSDC Executive who are members of the UDS shall be considered non-voting members of *The Debates Board* and may participate in *The Competitive Debating Board*, though they shall not be subject to attendance requirements.