



**University of St Andrews  
Students' Association  
Students' Representative Council  
Student Services Council**

**MINUTES**

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February – Large Rehearsal Room – 6:30pm

**Present**

<b>Member's Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Sam Ross	Association Alumni Officer
Ru MacIver	Association Chair
Hannah Jacobs	Association Director of Events and Services
Charlotte Flatley	Association Director of Student Development and Activities
Claire Shirey	Association Director of Wellbeing
Clare Grist	Association Environment Officer
Ryan Hay	Association LGBT+ Officer
Lewis Wood	Association President
Tom Abbott	Athletic Union President
Charlie Maguire	Principal Ambassador
Camilla Duke	Rector's Assessor
John Weaver	Science/Medical Science Faculty President
Jonathan Davis	SRC Accommodation Officer
Lorraine Callaghan	SRC Member for Age Equality
Hyewon Han	SRC Member for First Years
Brianna Chu	SRC Member for Gender Equality
Tomasin Animashaun	SRC Member for Racial Equality
Anna Lloyd	SRC Member for Students with Disabilities
Ciara McCumiskey	SRC Member for Widening Access and Participation
Olivia Budde	SRC Member Without Portfolio
Fanny Empacher	SRC Postgraduate Academic Convener
Mizuki Morasaki	SRC Postgraduate Development Officer
Sneha Nair	SSC Arts Festival Convener
Flora Rowe	SSC Broadcasting Officer
Jamie Minns	SSC Charities Officer
Ru Ferguson	SSC Debates Officer
Paloma Paige	SSC Design Team Convener
Antonia Wade	SSC Entertainments Convener
Kevin Phelan	SSC Member Without Portfolio
Matthew Lansdell	SSC Performing Arts Officer
Jennifer Bre	SSC Postgraduate Officer
Pia Szabo	SSC Societies Officer
Natasha Bateman	SSC Volunteering Officer

## In Attendance

Iain Cupples	Student Advocate (Education)/HR Manager
Adam Stromme	Socialist Soc/Polis
Alexandra Weiler	
Ali Drabu	
Dr. Anindya Raychaudhuri	UCU
Ethan Landes	
Fiona Blackwood	
Isa Dosker	PhilSoc
Jacob Zayshley	Socialist Soc
Kume Akingbola	School of Management
Laura Turner	
Leonie Hoher	
Markus Hansen	Socialist Soc
Martin Dowling	UCU
Nick Farrer	
Ryad Khatib	
Saranga Sudarshan	
Steph Haywood	
Tom Williams	The Saint
Zelda Tobias-Kotyk	

### **1. Adoption of the Agenda**

Adopted without dissent

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Hannah Raleigh	Association Community Relations Officer	<b>Apologies</b>
Zachary Davis	Association Director of Education	<b>Apologies</b>
John Weaver	Science and Medicine Faculty President	<b>Apologies</b>
Olivia Budde	SRC Member Without Portfolio	<b>Apologies</b>
Marcell Kovacs	SSC Music Officer	<b>Apologies</b>
Nicola Simonetti	Arts and Divinity Faculty President	<b>Absent</b>
Pat Shareefy	SSC Employability Officer	<b>Absent</b>

### **3. Open Forum**

#### **3.1 Motion to call on the SRC to support members of the University of St Andrews in taking industrial action as called upon by the UCU in 2018**

This SRC Notes:

1. In January 2018 the *University and College Union* (from here on UCU) announced strike action due to changes to the national pension scheme by *Universities UK* (from here on UUK)
2. Strikes were announced to take place Thursday 22, Friday 23, Monday 26, Tuesday 27, Wednesday 28 February, Monday 5, Tuesday 6, Wednesday 7 and

Thursday 8, Monday 12, Tuesday 13, Wednesday 14, Thursday 15 and Friday 16  
March 2018

3. After academic salary real-term has been reduced by 15% over the past 10 years. The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) now threatens to take away pension security for university staff (see Appendix 1)
4. The Management of the University of St Andrews has stated no support of the strike causes and expressed no intention in calling upon UUK for renegotiations with the UCU (See Appendix 2). The Student Representative bodies of the University of St Andrews have, to date, not taken position on the upcoming strike action
5. The right to strike is recognized as a human right and constitutes part of a healthy democracy
6. 90% of teachers that are St Andrews UCU members voted in favour of strike action
7. The UUK has pursued changes to the pension scheme without agreement with the UCU, and without any compromise of its position
8. Changes to the pension scheme are made on a national level by the UUK board of which Principal Sally Mapstone is a member

This SRC Believes:

1. That lecturers and university staff who assert their right to strike should be met with understanding and support from the student body
2. That students and the university will benefit from improved conditions for staff as it enables high learning and teaching quality in the long-term development of the University of St Andrews
3. People working in higher education deserve fair remuneration as well as fair treatment in decisions regarding their pension scheme security

This SRC Resolves:

1. To express understanding for and support strike action taken by those working at the University of St Andrews regarding changes to the USS pension scheme and to stand in solidarity with them
2. To encourage the senior management team at the University of St Andrews to reconsider their position in order to pressure the UUK to return to negotiations with the UCU
3. To work with the University to minimize effects on students' academic experience as a result of strike action
4. To inform students about the strike and ways of supporting it
5. To urge the university not to penalise the absence of students from tutorials and lectures during the period of the strike

Proposer: Alexandra Weiler, 170019944

Seconder: Leonie Hoher, 170015326

#### APPENDIX

**1** Baker, S., 2017. Real-terms pay for UK academics still below 2010-11 salaries, *Times Higher Education*. Available through: <<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/real-terms-pay-for-uk-academics-still-below-2010-11-salaries>>

**2** Mapstone, S. (2018). Industrial Action. [email].

A motion on this issue had been put forward by petition. Alexandra Weiler (170019944) presented the motion as the first signatory. The Chair allowed a short break for members to read the text of the motion.

Alexandra said that she was a first year student, and felt it was important for students, and the SRC as the voice of students, to support their teachers from both a political and a human point of view. She felt the motion was in the interests of both staff and students, as the quality of teaching was related to staff wellbeing and many students wish to go into academia. Fair negotiation and pensions were important to staff, and students should show solidarity with lecturers.

Lewis offered compliments to Alexandra and her co-signatories on bringing the motion. He said that in his experience, student opinion on the issue was divided: as President, he had received a number of emails from students on both sides of the issue. He welcomed the petition as a proactive move, and noted it was well written and had attracted over 400 signatures.

The Chair opened the floor to questions on the motion.

Flora noted that UCU had voted in favour of action, but asked how many University staff were UCU members? UCU members present said that it was about 40-50%, and of those 64% had been present at the vote. 90% of those present had voted in favour of strike action.

There was discussion of the 'notes' section point 1, which referred to 'changes to the national pension scheme by Universities UK'. In the interests of accuracy this was amended to read 'changes to the national pension scheme proposed by the Universities UK representatives on the USS Joint Negotiating Committee'. This amendment was **passed without dissent**. Also for the purposes of accuracy, a proposal to replace the existing 'notes' point 8 with text reading 'Principal Sally Mapstone is a member of the UUK board' was **passed without dissent**.

The floor was then opened to debate.

Adam Stromme spoke first. He said that he used to be on SRC, and was present tonight representing the Socialist Society and also Polis. He said he had taken a long time to realise how poorly people were informed on this issue. He felt there was a need to emphasise certain points. The fund was not in deficit at present, nor was it expected to be. It held £60 billion in assets, and grew 20% last year. The claim that radical changes were required was in Adam's view a nonsensical position. He noted that the fund has to be assessed every 3 years for its financial position. In 2008, this had led to a strike, and in 2011 and 2014 a vote on strike action. Adam felt the UUK position amounted to gutting staff pensions: a £200,000 cut to the pension value of every member. He was really angry with the idea that this was for the security of staff pensions. Finally, he said that he felt an absence of support for the UCU position by the SRC would not be neutrality, but in effect taking a position opposed to UCU.

Dr. Raychaudhuri then spoke. He said that he was a lecturer in the School of English. He had trained for 10 years to get this position, and felt he was lucky to get it: many of his contemporaries did not have this. He spoke of starting salaries so low that staff could apply for hardship funds for their dependents. He noted that the proposed changes would mean a pension that under the current scheme had an annual value of about £22,000 would go

down to around £10,000: this would inevitably lead to a radical change in living standards in retirement, with staff in that position on the poverty line. This was a particular threat for younger members of staff, often reliant on temporary contracts or even hourly work. Academia was not a highly paid career, as it was sometimes perceived to be.

Finally, he noted that he was very grateful to students for bringing this motion and the support shown. No staff participating in the action wanted to do this: they would much rather be teaching. University management had said the changes were necessary for the sake of the University, but the question should be asked, what is the University? It was made of people, not buildings. If only the rich can afford to become academics, this would be bad for students.

Charlotte asked if the SRC were to support the motion, what would that mean on a national level? Adam pointed out that a 24 member board represented 117 institutions in UUK. St Andrews held one of those positions, and were part of the faction pressuring to make changes. This motion would therefore help to signal that students don't support these changes on a national level.

Tomasin said that when students come to St Andrews, it is because the relationships with staff are close and personal: for many students, staff are the people they aspire to be. It would be wrong if lecturers can't afford to have a good life. They love teaching, but deserve to be able to live. If we value the relationships students have with staff, we should stand and support them. The University could not succeed without its academics.

Flora said that one of her main concerns was that if we don't support staff, we would not have people wanting to go into academia. There was a duty on the SRC to think in the longer term, not just of the immediate inconvenience.

Fanny echoed Lewis' thanks to the signatories for bringing the motion. She noted that every speaker so far had spoken in support. She said that she believed point 5 could in practice prove quite difficult. What does it mean that students 'aren't penalised'? This may need some clarification.

Alexandra suggested that one aspect of this was that absences from class in support of the action should not count. Material students might miss as a result of the action was a tougher question: Schools may need to look at this, but the SRC should encourage the University to ensure students were not disadvantaged.

Dr Raychaudhuri said that UCU advice was that the strongest way students can show support was not to cross a picket line. If this resulted in empty lectures, then the impact of action would be clear. However, he noted that he personally couldn't suggest or recommend to a student not to attend a class, knowing their absence might lead to consequences such as academic alerts. He asked if SRC could find a way to recommend to the University that absences due to industrial action not be counted? This would make a big difference.

Pia noted that it wasn't possible to distinguish whether non-attendance was in support of the strike or for other reasons. Flora raised the issue of impact on students who were on borderlines, and asked how we can support the strikes without harming students?

Lewis agreed this was a big challenge, and was skeptical about whether the University would agree not to penalize students as it may be seen as, in effect, encouraging students to also participate in the action, possibly to the detriment of their education.

Various amendments to point 5 of the 'resolves' section of the motion were discussed, including proposals to merge it with point 3, delete it, or amend the existing language. However, each was dropped or rejected and the text of point 5 remained as in the original motion.

Lewis asked if there was anyone present who wanted to speak against the motion? No-one indicated that they wished to do so.

The SRC then voted on the motion. It was **passed without dissent**.

#### **4. Reports of the Sabbatical Officers**

##### 4.1. Report of the Association Director of Events & Services

Drag Walk went really well. The motion on Association discipline discussed previously by SSC would go to Board for approval on Thursday, along with an updated proposal for expenditure on lighting for Club 601/STAge. Hannah was working on graduation ball, and rag week was under way. There would be a 'pirate bop' on Friday.

##### 4.2. Report of the Association Director of Education

Not present.

##### 4.3. Report of the Association Director of Wellbeing

Claire had met with member of University Court to discuss mental health provision. The Listening Skills workshop with LGBT+ had gone very well, and Claire may experiment with open sessions. Claire met with the University about security issues and was working with Tomasin on a joint event for cultural societies. Planning for elections was going well: the committee met recently and Claire encouraged people to run. Nominations opened on Monday.

##### 4.4. Report of the Association President

Lewis had been doing a lot of work on matters relating to the strikes: he noted that he would send the motion passed earlier to the Principal. The Council's HMO review would see a presentation on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Lewis had met with potential candidates for President and echoed Claire in encouraging people to run.

Charlie asked how Lewis would raise awareness of the strike motion? Lewis said he would send an email to the Principal tomorrow. The motion allows the sabbaticals, on behalf of the SRC, to say they represented the student view: it lent validity as the sabbs were now mandated. Camilla noted that she would also communicate the motion to the Rector, and would meet with senior University staff.

##### 4.5. Report of the Association Director of Student Development & Activities

Zach and Charlotte attended an academic forum on enterprise education, with all Heads of School and service unit heads. That sabbaticals were working with admissions to welcome prospective students with open offers, giving tours of the Union Building and other facilities and showcasing opportunities. Matthew and Charlotte had attended a stewardship meeting about the Tudor fund. Free Fruit Fridays had been trialed, and may return. Finally, Charlotte would be working with CAPOD tomorrow on societies skills drop-in sessions.

#### 4.6. Report of the Athletic Union President

Tom had spent the weekend at Sheffield at BUCS nationals: It had been St Andrews' best ever year at BUCS nationals, with 10 medals won. We now have our highest position in the UK ever. The new tennis centre should be done in about ten days: the 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> was the estimated completion. There had been good engagement on LGBT+ activities last week, including competitors wearing the rainbow laces at Sheffield. The AU Board would meet on Friday, and would approve some changes, including the addition of a volunteering and engagement officer. Tom would meet with the University on the University strategic plan, aiming to improve collaboration. There would be a RAG Sinners on Wednesday.

### 5. Questions for SRC Committees and Officers

#### 5.4 Questions for Association LGBT+ Committee

Drag Walk –Ryan noted that the committee had worked very hard on this event and minuted thanks.

#### 5.8 Questions for SRC Member for Age Equality

Lorraine highlighted the auction on Friday in Sandy's Bar, 7-9pm. All proceeds would go to RAG week.

### 6. Questions for Subcommittees

#### 6.3 Questions for SSC Charities Committee

Jamie had not submitted a report due to being busy with RAG. He minuted thanks to everyone for involvement. The committee were doing a fantastic job on daytime events as well as evening.

#### 6.9 Questions for SSC Societies Committee

Board would meet on Thursday – SSC members should email Pia as SSC Senior Officer if there was anything they wanted to raise or discuss.

### 7. New General Joint Business

#### 7.1 Carveups for elections committee

One vacancy had arisen for an SRC representative and one for an SSC representative.

Ryan Hay was nominated for the SRC representative. There were no other candidates and no dissent, so Ryan was duly appointed. No nominations were received for the SSC vacancy.

## **7.2 SSC - Charities constitution change.**

Matt introduced the motion. He explained that this was a recognition of current practice and encourage those who currently fill these niches. Hannah, Jamie, Lewis, Charlotte seconded the motion.

Lewis asked about the inclusion of specific projects. Matt noted that these are intended to be long-term.

The motion was **passed** with one abstention and no votes against.

## **7.3 Design Team motion**

Paloma explained that again, this was an update to reflect actual practice. Crucially it would add formal remits to existing roles, as well as reorganizing some positions to make them more effective. Overall, responsibilities would be more condensed.

The motion was **passed without dissent**.

## **7.4 STAR motion**

This introduced 3 roles covering publicity and marketing. The motion was **passed without dissent**.

## **7.5 Postgraduate Society motion**

The society felt they needed an additional convener as presently there was too much work. The motion was **passed without dissent**.

## **8. Any Other Competent Business**

The motion to dissolve the position of SRC Member for Widening Access and Participation had been formally withdrawn.

## **9. Collaborative Solutions**

Not minuted.