



MOTION BOOKLET 2024



YOUR UNION
rgu:union
AGM
2024
YOUR VOICE

THURSDAY 29TH FEBRUARY

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WELCOME

WHAT IS A MOTION?

A motion, very basically, is an idea. It is a line of text that asks the Union to do something to make a difference for students. If you think there is a project or a campaign that the Union should be running, and isn't, then you have the power to submit a motion for the change you want to see.

At this year's AGM we will discuss and vote on seven motions, all of which have been submitted by RGU students.

I WANT TO CHANGE PART OF A MOTION

If you would like to suggest a change to part of a motion, then you can do this by submitting an amendment.

Amendments can be submitted before the AGM through the Union's website (www.rguunion.co.uk/agm), or you can wait and submit your amendment during the AGM, at the start of the motion discussion.

MOTION 1

ENSURE CORE UNION FORUMS AND DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS ARE HYBRID SO ALL STUDENTS, INCLUDING DISTANCE LEARNERS, CAN ATTEND

MOTION 2

REPRESENT THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGES OF STUDENT PARENTS AT AN INSTITUTIONAL, LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL, AND LOBBY FOR SUPPORT

MOTION 3

INTRODUCE A FUNDED PROGRAMME TO PROVIDE FREE ACCESS TO SPORTS CLUBS FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

MOTION 4

INCREASE THE VISIBILITY OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES AT THE UNIVERSITY

MOTION 5

FLEXIBILITY RELATING TO FEE PAYMENT PROCEDURES AND REPAYMENT PLANS



TODAY'S AGENDA

1. Welcome from Chair and quorum count
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes from the previous AGM [VOTE]
4. Matters arising from the previous AGM
5. Student President & Vice President update
6. Trustee Board update
7. Governance and finance
 - Draft statutory accounts [VOTE]
 - Affiliations and donations [VOTE]
8. Student Ideas/Motions
 - Motion 1: Ensure core Union forums and democratic meetings are hybrid so all students, including distance learners, can attend. [VOTE]
 - Motion 2: Represent the financial challenges of student parents at an institutional, local and national level, and lobby for support. [VOTE]
 - Motion 3: Introduce a funded programme to provide free access to sports clubs for students experiencing financial difficulties. [VOTE]
 - Motion 4: Increase the visibility of financial support services at the University. [VOTE]
 - Motion 5: Flexibility relating to fee payment procedures and repayment plans. [VOTE]
9. Announcements
10. AOB

QUESTIONS

If you have a question for a member of the Union Exec, please raise your hand (on Teams or in the room) or you can submit via the text chat in the meeting.



MINUTE OF THE 2023 RGU:UNION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, HELD AT 4:30PM ON 2ND MARCH 2023 AT RGU:UNION AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

ATTENDANCE

Student Body Assembly General (121 ordinary members signed in), including:

Suzanna Bamigbola (SB) President (Communicatino & Democracy), Oluwafunmilola Akinoso (OA) President (Education & Welfare), Joel Adebajo (JA) President (Sport and Physical Activity)

Also in attendance (non-voting):

Gregor Mailer (GM) Chief Executive, Grace Smith (GS) Marketing Manager, Graeme Clark (GC) Finance Officer, Eva Crawford-McKee (EC) Graphic Designer

1. Welcome from the Chair and quorum count

SB welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting 2023 and confirmed that quorum had been met.

SB explained that the meeting was being recorded for minute-taking purposes, and reminded all attendees, in the room and online, to stay connected to the Teams call to participate in all votes and enter the prize draw.

SB talked through the meeting agenda and advised anyone wishing to participate to raise their hand, on the call and in the room.

A test vote took place with all in attendance.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from Ceceila Coker, Ordinary Member.

3. Minutes from the previous AGM

The minute of the Annual General Meeting 2022 was distributed in advance of the meeting as part of the AGM Motion Booklet, available as a download on the Union website. Hard copies were also distributed to those in the room.

SB noted that the minute was produced from a recording to ensure accuracy.

SB invited any comments from attendees, none were received.

A vote to approve the minute took place. The vote passed with 96% voting YES.



4. Matters arising from the previous AGM

OA outlined any actions and matters arising from the previous Annual General Meeting.

Inadequate job opportunities for international students - Members of the Union team have worked closely with the University's Employability Hub to ensure that suitable job opportunities can be sourced and promoted effectively to international students. Steps taken include the introduction of a part-time jobs fair in the Union during semester one, with around 20 different employers in attendance. Advisors from the Employability Hub also host regular drop-in sessions within the Union to provide advice and support to all students regarding job searches, CV guidance and more. Looking ahead it is hoped that more jobs fairs and similar events can take place at different points throughout the academic year to assist those who start in January and May.

Improve cooking facilities at 53.3 Degrees in Gray's - All three Student Presidents meet quarterly with key members of staff from the University's Estates, Contracts and Procurement teams alongside Aramark, who provide all catering services across the campus. This point was raised with these groups following the Union's AGM in 2022, at which point a limited catering offering was being provided in each building on campus due to a phased return to activity following Covid restrictions. The campus catering outlets, including Gray's School of Art, are now providing a full service to students with upgrades currently taking place across a number of outlets.

Carbon footprint sign - The University has recently launched its 'RGU Net Zero' strategy which contains a number of priorities, including 'net zero campus', 'academic offer' and 'thought leadership and innovation', with a campus-wide approach being taken with a view to support the Scotland-wide ambition to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. Effective communication of these messages and wider awareness of the University's progress towards its targets has been discussed by the Project Zero Board, which contains Union representation, and a communications and marketing plan is being developed to cover campus and digital touchpoints.

Trans and non-binary inclusivity training for staff - This has been followed up internally with the Union team initially, and a training and workshop session focused on trans and non-binary inclusivity, awareness and support was provided for Union staff and Student Presidents in conjunction with the RGU Peer Support student-led group. Members of the Union team are now working with the University's staff EDI Advisor with a view to offering similar sessions to RGU staff.

Unrealistic assessment schedule - This has been raised with University senior management. Assessment principals at the University have been agreed upon, and work has taken place to ensure sufficient time is maintained between assessments. It has also been noted that this motion affects all students and so effective solutions that meets the needs of all students have been sought.

Timetable flexibility for student parents - This has been raised with University senior management and feeds into a larger project entitled 'The Future of Teaching & Learning'. This includes a review of current timetabling practices and the identification of potential system improvements. The Union has also recently introduced a free-to-join student-led Student Parent Network. It is hoped that feedback and comments provided by this group can influence decisions at University-level with regards to the needs of student parents.

Parking on campus (two motions) - Both of these motions related to inflexibility of the University's parking permit scheme. This was raised with the Estates and Transport departments, and a review of the RGU car parking strategy is currently underway. However, some 'quick win' solutions were identified, and were rolled out ahead of the start of semester one 2022/23. This included the



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introduction of a parking payment mobile app, alongside the introduction of a daily parking rate, which could be used in a 'pay as you go' manner instead of the traditional monthly/semester payment, although this is still available as an option.

OA invited any comments from attendees, none were received.

5. Student President & Vice President updates

SB explained that an update video was to be presented on behalf of the Student Presidents and Vice Presidents, but due to a technical issue it cannot be played at this time. The video will be posted online to provide all members with an update regarding the work of the Executive Committee. SB reminded attendees they can raise questions to the President or Vice Presidents at any time.

6. Trustee Board update

JA, as Vice Chair of the Trustee Board, provided an update on behalf of the Board.

Membership updates - The most significant membership changes at Trustee Board level saw Student Trustees Chioma Onoshakpor, Sophie Foster, Adrianna Hoffmann and Confidence Amuda move on due to graduations and/or the natural conclusion of their term in office.

Management and review of financial situation - The Trustee Board manages the finances of the Union on a quarterly basis and approves its budget annually. The Board also considers how the Union manages its reserves and how it undertakes its statutory audit. A new auditor was appointed in 2022, with Hall Morrice now tasked with carrying out the Union's annual financial audit process. A financial summary is included in the AGM booklet and will be presented during the meeting.

Regular review of risk and related procedures - Every quarter the Trustee Board reviews perceived risks to the Union, and ensures correct procedures are in place to protect the charity, its staff, and the students it represents. The most significant risk has been identified as an inherited and on-going pension liability obligation.

Compliance with Education Act - Representatives from the Trustee Board met with University senior management, including the Principal, at an annual meeting to provide an update on the work of the Union, and to provide assurances that the Union complies with law as written in our Code of Practice and the Education Act (1994).

Support with significant projects and initiatives - The Board meet quarterly to review Union operations and to provide support with regards to major projects or initiatives including; ongoing social space development projects, which has recently received an investment from the Union's reserves; guidance and assistance with identifying and maximising external funding sources; long-term strategic direction; plus regular reviews of the Union's governance documentation and internal policies and procedures. Members of the Board have also assisted with significant projects such as a recent review of the Union's constitution and governance documentation.

JA invited any comments from attendees, none were received.



7. Governance and finance

Constitutional Matters

SB explained that the Union Constitution should be updated every five years. This year a review took place, with support from the Union's legal advisors, Ledingham Chalmers (LC). LC presented recommendations to the Union, which are outlined in the AGM Motion Booklet alongside a revised Constitution document.

SB explained that the recommendations did not contain any significant changes but did contain minor amendments based on best practice in the sector.

The following changes were proposed:

2.1 Aims and objectives, and 17.2 Dissolution: Replace the words 'charitable purposes' in clause 17.2 with 'objects' so it reads: "...for one or more of the Association's objects as set out in clause 2.1 of this Constitution..."

2.2.4 Aims and objectives: Amend the clause so it reads: "promote inclusion and encourage active participation in the work and activities of the Association"

8.1 Referendum: Replace the word 'shall' with the word 'may' so it reads: "The Association may, following approval by the Executive Committee, hold Referendums on matters relating to the policy of the Association and to propose amendments to the Constitution."

8.1 Referendum: Information relating to quorum and voting thresholds will be moved to the Referenda Regulations document. The Referenda Regulations document will be updated to include information relating to quorum and voting thresholds.

14 Regulations: Add the words 'comply with' to clause 14 so it reads: "The Association shall maintain and comply with at all times the Regulations in the proceeding clauses of this constitution."

SB explained that the amendments have been approved by the Trustee Board and are now presented to AGM to approve.

SB invited any comments from attendees.

A question/comment was received from an attendee outlining that they had not read the noted amendments until now and felt it was difficult to vote because of this. SB explained that all papers were released on the Union website a few days before the meeting to ensure students could read in advance.

A vote to approve the Constitutional changes took place. The vote passed with 86% voting YES.

Draft statutory accounts

GM presented an update on the Union finances and statutory accounts for 2021/22.

GM explained that the Union receives a financial audit every year and have recently begun working with audit firm Hall Morrice (HM). HM carried out their audit at Christmas time, the accounts were then approved by the Union's Trustee Board Finance Committee, and then Trustee Board.



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GM explained the full accounts and audit findings could be found on the Union website.

GM outlined £722,567 total income and £714,165 total expenditure, providing a positive variance of £8,402 in the statement for 2021/22. Income presented a significant increase compared to £577k in 2020/21 due to a full return from Covid providing more opportunity to generate income, for example a strong Freshers period, a full-scale Freshers Fayre with brands and businesses on campus, plus event ticket sales and merchandise. The block grant from the University is around £500k. Expenditure was also a significant increase compared to £494k in 2020/21 due to increased costs relating to on-campus operations, for example event costs, specifically increased costs relating to venues, catering and entertainment. The Union ends the year with a surplus of £8.5k which is reinvested into student activities and goes into reserves.

GM explained the Union carried healthy reserves in case of emergency, and that with the backing of the Trustee Board funds can be released from these to fund major developments, for example the new Union space and welfare initiatives.

GM presented the balance sheet which reports £245k in total assets, but explained that the Union suffers from a liability of £471k relating to a former pension scheme. GM explained that many other Students' Unions are also suffering from this and that payment plans are in place to cover this shortfall over the next decade, at a cost of around £50k per annum. This means the balance sheet displays a total deficit of £225k, however auditors and Trustee Board are comfortable that the pension liability is controlled, with assets of £245k placing the Union in a positive position.

A vote to approve the accounts took place. The vote passed with 83% voting YES.

Affiliations and donations

GM explained that the affiliations and donations are outlined in the AGM Motion Booklet. GM outlined the most significant figures, which included National Union of Students at £12k and Duke of Edinburgh's Scheme at £1.3k. Significant sporting affiliations include British Universities & Colleges Sport at £5.5k, Scottish Student Sport at £7.8k.

GM presented a total of £2,046 charity donations and explained that the Union is duty bound to present any donations that have been made directly from the Union's bank account to another charity. GM explained that the Union is aware lots of fundraising takes place by students throughout the year, but much of these donations are now made through online pages such as Just Giving, so the Union does not legally track or report this.

A vote to approve the affiliations and donations took place. The vote passed with 91% voting YES.

8. Student ideas / motions

Proposal for solo and dual work pod stations

Erinne Bird MacKellar (EM) presented this motion.

- What is the problem - The effects of COVID-19 have meant an increase in hybrid-style working staff and students and full-time remote staff and students; this has led to the increase of zoom and team calls in the university. Overall, the university has seen an increase in zoom and team calls for meetings and lectures that require students and staff to come together, for example, recent Course Representative training sessions and meetings - these are also held on teams. Some on-campus students work with staff, and work with those working hybrid or entirely online, meaning they

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must find quiet places on campus to hold online calls/meetings where they can have a fully engaged conversation. This issue is particularly problematic for students carrying out a thesis or any primary data collection who may need to discuss elements with their supervisor, host interviews or focus groups, and require their full attention. This means that some students must adapt to highly noise-polluted areas in the university, which sometimes means having to book out group pods or find obscure quiet places on campus where they can have these online calls/appointments. Sometimes this cannot be carried out, and there is an interference of loud background noises, which can significantly impact the quality of online calls/meetings.

- Why is it a problem - It is a problem as there needs to be more on-campus working areas dedicated for students to use to effectively talk and engage in their online meetings/lectures/calls without noise disruptions.

- What is the solution - The solution is to provide solo and dual working pods on campus where students can focus and freely engage with the content of their online meeting/call and know that they are not disrupting neighbouring students or disrupting the respondent of the online call. The university is adapting to post-covid working conditions. RGU must make adjustments for the benefit of students and staff where there are comfortable and appropriate working conditions to hold online meetings and calls on campus.

Question via Teams (Daniel Wagstaff - DW): What is the cost of the pods?

EM is aware they are quite expensive but as similar pods are available at other Universities/Unions it is not impossible.

Question from the floor: Do we have space? Who will cover the cost, the Union or the University? SB explained it would be possible to work with the University to identify suitable spaces for this. Regarding funding, the Union could explore this further.

Comment from the floor: This would be of benefit to students who have classes at different times, and would help students with cost of living as they could spend more time on campus instead of at home.

Question via Teams (Vanessa Tenkorang - VT): Where would they be installed?

SB explained the Union would work to make this happen within the Union space if possible, maybe also elsewhere on campus.

SB invited speakers or statements against the motion, none were received.

SB explained no amendments were received in advance and invited amendments from attendees, none were received.

A vote to approve the motion took place. The vote passed with 91% voting YES.

Spaces for mental health, relaxation and wellness

Tamsyn Lampkin (TL) presented this motion.

- What is the problem - Students often have large gaps between classes where they want to relax and refresh. Students do not spend much time on campus after class time or in between classes. Staff also have similar issues and would benefit from access to similar spaces, possibly shared.



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- Why is it a problem - Often times class and coursework can feel overwhelming, if there was a room or space on campus where students could spend 10mins - 2hrs of their time this will help with their mental health. For example, similar space was created at The Hilton TECA for their staff to use during breaks or after work. They found great results in moral and dedication to work. The room is dark blue/green, mostly empty but has a vast amount of soft furnishings, soft lighting and calming music.

- What is the solution - Students, and potentially staff, should have access to a dedicated relaxation and wellness space on campus, recommended within the Union, where they can rest and recuperate.

OA explained that this motion has been submitted as a result of student feedback.

Question via Teams (Amuche Hamed-Alli - AH): How many people can be in the room at the same time?

SB explained this question is very specific, the space has not been confirmed yet.

TL explained that limits could be put in place depending on the size of the space.

Comment via Teams (Maja Hubers - MH): Nice idea! I would only be worried about the speaker. If it's a quiet room it should be quiet right? Not giving people the chance to connect and play unrelaxing music.

SB asked whether this is a proposed amendment.

MH answered this is not an amendment unless the motion specifically mentions a speaker.

TL clarified that a 'community policy' would be put in place to ensure respect by all users.

SB explained the motion is at this stage a concept, if it passes then the specific arrangements, for example whether a speaker is included, can be confirmed with student consultation.

Comment from the floor: Would this space be available for nursing mothers and those with children?
SB explained the motion is at this stage a concept, if it passes then the specific arrangements can be confirmed with student consultation.

SB invited speakers or statements against the motion, none were received.

SB explained no amendments were received in advance and invited amendments from attendees, none were received.

A vote to approve the motion took place. The vote passed with 86% voting YES.

Multi faith facilities

Suzanna Bamigbola (SB) presented this motion.

- What is the problem - The current location for the University's multi-faith facility on campus at Kaim Cottage is not visible to students and is not accessible to students with disabilities or mobility issues.

- Why is it a problem - The multi faith facility is in a building not easily recognised or easily reached by the students. The facility is not visible.

- What is the solution - The Union should work with the University to ensure multi-faith facilities are created in all buildings across the campus. This should be a priority development with quick progress displayed.

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JA explained that the rooms would be flexible in nature and accessible to students of all faiths to use.

Question via Teams (Helen Blackwell - HB): Are there no spaces for religious observation?
SB explained that there is one space, Kaim Cottage, which is isolated, not visible, and not accessible.

Question from the floor: We need to be careful regarding sensitivities of different religions.
JA explained that he has travelled to see good practices at other Universities and has seen how it works effectively at other campuses. The Union and University should take notes from these successes. Any religious items in the spaces can be moved and stored depending on who is using the room at any given time.

OA explained that the University introduced temporary faith facilities in other buildings at peak times, which were used by different religions without issue.

Question via Teams (Omozele Olotu - OO): Is the proposal to make the existing space more visible?
Religion is a sensitive issue and some students may not want to have religion put in their faces.
SB explained the current space is not accessible and is not widely known amongst students.

Comment from the floor (Patricia Innocent - PI): As part of the Catholic Society it would help to have a fixed location to hold mass and not have to move to different rooms every week.

Comment via Teams (Bilkisu Bello - BB): This is a brilliant idea. As a Muslim there are regular prayer hours and it is a challenge to always cross campus to pray at Kaim Cottage. Noise should be considered when fixing locations in case prayers or religious activities are loud.

Comment from the floor (Tamsyn Lampkin - TL): There should be storage nearby for any religious items to be stored securely.

SB explained the motion is at this stage a concept, if it passes then the specific arrangements can be confirmed with student consultation.

SB invited speakers or statements against the motion.

Comment from the floor: If there are clashes between religions that may cause problems. We should survey religions currently observed at the University.

Comment from the floor: We should maintain what currently exists. It may not be a negative that it is not visible, it makes it more private.

SB explained no amendments were received in advance and invited amendments from attendees, none were received.

A vote to approve the motion took place. The vote passed with 76% voting YES.

Support the 'Divest from Fossil Fuels' campaign

Audrey Okpara (AO) presented this motion.

- What is the problem: Go Green is starting a campaign for RGU to divest from investments in fossil fuel companies. Issue: Environmental problem With the investment money RGU enables further usage of fossil fuels which are proven to play a big role in climate change and therefore the current climate crisis we are living in. Issue: Time concern The issue is that as a student we can only do so much in our 1 or 4 years here. We have limited time to engage in out-of-uni activities and after our 4 years here we have to leave this behind.



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- Why is this a problem: RGU actively negatively influences the climate crisis by investing in fossil fuel industries.

- What is the solution: Adopt the Fossil Free campaign and demand that RGU: 1. Exclude the fossil fuel industry from their investment portfolio; 2. Introduce a publicly accessible ethical investment policy excluding the fossil fuel industry; 3. Commit to and fully divest from all fossil fuels within 3 years. Mandate a Full-Time Paid Students' Union President Role to A. Support students to lead, and put resources towards, a high-profile divestment campaign on campus, including - where relevant - the dissemination of information about the university's investment practices. B. Request quarterly updates of the university's investment portfolio. C. Lobby for and secure student representation on all university investment-related committees. D. Lobby the university to end all future investments in fossil fuel companies and to divest from fossil fuel industry companies immediately.

Comment from the floor: Support this motion. RGU is trying to be sustainable, but these investments do not back this up.

Comment via Teams (DW): People may be concerned about the impact on RGU's industry links, but Aberdeen University has already successfully done this and has maintained its positive links. RGU is now in the minority with these investments.

JA explained that if this motion passes it will direct the Union to push the University to make this change, the vote today does not immediately trigger the change at the University.

SB explained no amendments were received in advance and invited amendments from attendees, none were received.

A vote to approve the motion took place. The vote passed with 81% voting YES.

Increase RGU accommodation provision for families

Patricia Innocent (PI) presented this motion.

- What is the problem: International students are being exploited by hotels and private property owners due to the lack of family-friendly student accommodation in the city.

- Why is it a problem: International students arriving in Aberdeen for the first time do not know their way around and have to rely on hotels and private property owners for accommodation on arrival. The cost of staying in hotels is expensive, and some students have found themselves in unsuitable situations. Based on fact, many international students have found themselves in an unpleasant situation due to the desperation of finding a roof over their head in an unknown city.

- What is the solution: Family friendly accommodation should be available for student parents. RGU Union should work with the University to ensure students with families have access to suitable and affordable student accommodation.

Question from the floor: Was this in place before?

PI explained that accommodation exists, but this is for single students only.

Comment via Teams (Bilkisu Bello - BB): This would be helpful as there are challenges with private landlords when you explain that you are a student. This will help a lot of people.

Comment from the floor: There are lots of empty properties in the city. Could agents be lobbied to make them available?

SB explained that this can be considered if the motion passes.

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SB explained no amendments were received in advance and invited amendments from attendees, none were received.

A vote to approve the motion took place. The vote passed with 90% voting YES.

Affordable bus travel for students over 21

Samson Akinrinola (SA) presented this motion.

- What is the problem: It is possible for under 21's to access free bus travel, but many students are not within this age bracket and do not qualify for the discount. A one-way ticket can cost £2.85 and an all-day ticket costs £3.95. These prices are excessive.
- Why is it a problem: Students who are over 21 are struggling to keep up with daily bus ticket costs alongside other bills and daily expenses.
- What is the solution: The Union should campaign for cheaper bus tickets for students of all ages. Question from the floor: What price are you proposing? Can the University not make arrangements with First Bus directly?

SB explained that if the motion passes the Union will aim to improve arrangements regarding pricing with First Bus.

Comment from the floor: Students in some English cities receive free bus travel.

Comment via Teams (Adesanya - AJ): Support this motion, £2.50 would be more affordable.

SB explained no amendments were received in advance and invited amendments from attendees, none were received.

A vote to approve the motion took place. The vote passed with 92% voting YES.

Insufficient allocation of student parking permits

The proposer or seconder were not in attendance so SB presented the motion.

- What is the problem - Insufficient allocation of student parking permits.
- Why is it a problem - Parking is a problem because some students live miles away from the university and have no option but to drive to campus. If they have not been issued with a parking permit, they will have to either: use available parking spaces within the local community potentially causing disruption to local businesses and residents; park miles away from the campus and walk; or they must make inconvenient and impractical journeys via public transport. This risks lateness and impacts the ability to attend classes.



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- What is the solution - An increase in the number of parking permits released to students with the convenience of been able to apply for one at any time.

SB explained no amendments were received in advance and invited amendments from attendees, none were received.

A vote to approve the motion took place. The vote passed with 60% voting YES.

9. Announcements

SB highlighted the Student Elections, with nominations currently open. All Student President and Vice President roles are available.

Question via Teams (Beulah Lowry - BL): Can distance learners be elected?

GM explained that any student can run for a role in the election, but with the full-time paid roles there is an expectation of on-campus presence as the Union would need to follow HR procedures. Students are invited to contact Student Presidents, GM, or any Union staff for further information.

SB highlighted the upcoming Student Achievement Awards, and encouraged students to purchase tickets, which are currently on sale.

OA highlighted the STAR Awards, with nominations currently open.

JA highlighted the upcoming Boat Race and Granite City Challenge events.

10. AOCB

SB gathered details for the price draw via Teams, with winners to be announced later in the week. Prizes include Aberdeen Gift Cards, Amazon vouchers, ASOS vouchers, and RGU hoodies.

SB thanked all attendees.

The meeting closed at 6:50pm

BREAKFAST CLUB

FREE!



TUESDAYS
8:15am - 9:30am

RGU:UNION
LEVEL 3



MATTERS ARISING FROM 2023 AGM

PROPOSAL FOR SOLO AND DUAL WORK POD STATIONS

It has not been possible to deliver on this request during the 2023/24 academic session due to constraints relating to space development and project finances, however this remains on the Union's agenda and will be explored as further discussions relating to Union space take place.

SPACES FOR MENTAL HEALTH, RELAXATION AND WELLNESS

The Union has created a small working group to follow this motion up, led by the President (Education & Welfare) and Advice & Representation Co-ordinator, with positive progress being made. In consultation with the student Disability & Inclusion Champions, student surveys and focus groups have taken place to identify the needs relating to a 'Quiet Room' in the Students' Union. Proposals are being finalised ahead of discussion with the University's Estates Department. It is hoped this can be finalised and delivered ahead of the 2024/25 academic session.

MULTI FAITH FACILITIES

Work continues on this motion, which requires significant planning, reclassification of rooms, and in some cases construction work by the University's Estates Department, however the Union has been included in discussions relating to development of a new campus 'masterplan' and will work to ensure multi-faith facilities are discussed as part of this process. In the meantime commitments have been made to ensure temporary multi-faith facilities are available in buildings across campus during peak extended study periods, for example exam time, specifically in the Ishbel Gordon Building and Sir Ian Wood Building.

SUPPORT THE DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS CAMPAIGN

In October 2023 Robert Gordon University became the 103rd UK university to divest from fossil fuels by announcing its commitment to exclude fossil fuel extraction companies from all its investments by updating its Investment Policy.

A press release confirming this change can be read at: <https://peopleandplanet.org/news/2023-10-25/press-release-robert-gordon-university-divests-fossil-fuels>

MATTERS ARISING FROM 2023 AGM



INCREASE RGU ACCOMMODATION PROVISION FOR FAMILIES

Changes with UK Government student VISA legislation have resulted in fewer international student dependents entering the country and seeking student accommodation. Additionally, limitations within the University's student accommodation sites, which contain only single rooms, have made it challenging to fully deliver on this motion, however the Union has taken steps to improve pre-arrival communication, and increase awareness of alternative accommodation options within the city by introducing a Student Housing Fair in semester one, in addition to the existing fair in semester two. The Union continues to monitor the situation should further support be required.

AFFORDABLE BUS TRAVEL FOR STUDENTS OVER 21

Free bus travel for young people in Scotland is policy of the Scottish Government, and is not controlled at a local level by operators, for example First Aberdeen or Stagecoach. This provides some challenges in relation to delivering this motion, however during the 2023/24 session Student Presidents have met with leaders of Aberdeen City Council and raised this issue, requesting further discussion and action. Additionally, Student Presidents meet periodically with First Aberdeen and have raised concerns regarding ticket pricing. Further work continues.

INSUFFICIENT ALLOCATION OF STUDENT PARKING PERMITS

The Union meets regularly with the University's Estates Department, who manage the transport and parking permit procedures across campus. This student concern was raised and co-incided with a University-wide review of parking policies and procedures. Students' Union representation was included on this policy working group, which helped to shape the introduction of new permit allocation procedures. An additional 70 parking permits were made available during the 2022/23 academic session, with the Union continuing to monitor any feedback related to this.



TRUSTEE BOARD UPDATE

ABOUT THE TRUSTEE BOARD

RGU Students' Union is governed by a Trustee Board, made up of both student and external trustees. Essentially, this Board exists to ensure the Union operates in a responsible manner and to provide support and guidance to the Executive and staff teams. The external trustees all have experience and skills in focused areas, such as finance, management, marketing, and fundraising, which helps to ensure that any major decisions are always made with the Union's financial, legal and strategic priorities in mind.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Ian Campbell (2020 - pres) - *Chair*
Jo Royle (2019 - pres)
Patricia Innocent (2023 - pres)
Oluwatoyin Bolajoko (2023 - pres)
Phoebe Moncur (2023 - pres)
David Strachan (2020 - 2023)
Oluwafunmilola Akinoso (2022 - 2023)
Suzanna Bamigbola (2022 - 2023)
Joel Adebajo (2022 - 2023)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Gregor Mailer (2020 - pres)

FINANCE OFFICER

Graeme Clark (2018 - pres)

HEAD OF SPORT

Ian Lowe (2023 - pres)

Hannah Leslie (2017 - 2023)

TRUSTEE BOARD MEMBERSHIP

SABBATICAL TRUSTEES

Patricia Innocent (2023 - pres)
Oluwatoyin Bolajoko (2023 - pres)
Phoebe Moncur (2023 - pres)
Oluwafunmilola Akinoso (2022 - 2023)
Suzanna Bamigbola (2022 - 2023)
Joel Adebajo (2022 - 2023)

STUDENT TRUSTEES

Calvin Park (2021 - 2023)
Opeyemi Adedeji (2021 - 2023)

EXTERNAL TRUSTEES

Ian Campbell (2020 - pres) - *Chair from 2023*
Jo Hall (2022 - pres)
David Strachan (2019 - 2023) - *Chair to 2023*
Caroline Daniel (2020 - 2023)

UNIVERSITY TRUSTEES

Jo Royle (2019 - pres)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Gregor Mailer (2020 - pres)



KEY UPDATES, DECISIONS & ACTIONS

Changes to Trustee Board membership

The most significant membership changes at Trustee Board level saw External Trustee and Chair of the Board, David Strachan, move on at the conclusion of his term in office. Ian Campbell, current chair of the Finance Committee was appointed as Chair of the Board from 2023 for a term of three years. Elsewhere, Caroline Daniel, External Trustee also moved on at the end of her term in office. Student Trustees Calvin Park and Opeyemi Adedeji also leave the Board due to graduations and the conclusion of their term in office. The Union will soon begin recruitment for new External and Student Trustees to join the Board, in line with the Trustee Recruitment regulations. A new Chair of the Finance Committee will be appointed when this recruitment process has concluded.

Management and review of financial situation

The Trustee Board manages the finances of the Union on a quarterly basis and approves its budget annually. The Board also considers how the Union manages its reserves and how it undertakes its statutory audit. A new auditor was appointed in 2022, with Hall Morrice now tasked with carrying out the Union's annual financial audit process. A financial summary is included in this booklet and will be presented by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Trustee Board at the Annual General Meeting.

Regular review of risk and related procedures

Every quarter the Trustee Board reviews perceived risks to the Union, and ensures correct procedures are in place to protect the charity, its staff, and the students it represents. The most significant risk has been identified as an inherited and on-going pension liability obligation from a former pension scheme.

Compliance with Education Act

Representatives from the Trustee Board met with University senior management, including the Principal, at an annual meeting to provide an update on the work of the Union, and to provide assurances that the Union complies with law as written in our Code of Practice and the Education Act (1994)

Support with significant projects and initiatives

The Board meet quarterly to review Union operations and to provide support with regards to major projects or initiatives including; ongoing Union space development projects in the Riverside Building, which has recently received an investment from the Union's reserves; guidance and assistance with identifying and maximising external funding sources; long-term strategic direction; plus regular reviews of the Union's governance documentation. Members of the Board also assist with significant projects upon request.



FINANCE UPDATE

Robert Gordon University Student Association

Financial Statements for the
Year Ended 31 July 2023

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 July 2023

| Note | 2023 Unrestricted Funds £ | 2023 Designated Funds £ | 2023 Total Funds £ | 2022 Unrestricted Funds As restated £ | 2022 Designated Funds £ | 2022 Total Funds As restated £ | |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Income from: | | | | | | | |
| Donations and legacies | 2 | 530,500 | - | 530,500 | 508,000 | - | 508,000 |
| Income from fundraising activities | 2 | 38,131 | - | 38,131 | 7,184 | - | 7,184 |
| Other trading activities | 2 | 244,930 | - | 244,930 | 207,383 | - | 207,383 |
| Total | 2 | 813,561 | - | 813,561 | 722,567 | - | 722,567 |
| Expenditure on: | | | | | | | |
| Charitable activities | 3 | (670,096) | (3,496) | (673,592) | (633,310) | (2,134) | (635,444) |
| Raising funds | 3 | (92,452) | - | (92,452) | (104,147) | - | (104,147) |
| Total | 3 | (762,548) | (3,496) | (766,044) | (737,457) | (2,134) | (739,591) |
| Net income/(expenditure) before transfers | | 51,013 | (3,496) | 47,517 | (14,890) | (2,134) | (17,024) |
| Transfers | | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Net movement in funds | | 51,013 | (3,496) | 47,517 | (14,890) | (2,134) | (17,024) |
| Reconciliation of funds: | | | | | | | |
| Total (deficit)/surplus brought forward | 9 | (451,723) | 18,748 | (432,975) | (436,833) | 20,882 | (415,951) |
| Total (deficit)/surplus carried forward | 9 | (400,710) | 15,252 | (385,458) | (451,723) | 18,748 | (432,975) |

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year.

Expenditure on charitable activities of £673,592 includes a credit of £41,869 (2022: credit of £25,129) for provision of pension deficit obligations. Further details are included in note 10 to the financial statements. All activities relate to continuing operations.

Summary received from Hall Morrice, independent auditors, to the Trustees of Robert Gordon University Student Association:

We have audited the financial statements of Robert Gordon University Student Association (the 'charity') for the period ended 31 July 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 July 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

FINANCE UPDATE



Balance Sheet at 31 July 2023

| | Notes | Year ended 31 July 2023 | | Year ended 31 July 2022 As restated |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| | | £ | £ | £ |
| Fixed assets | | | | |
| Tangible assets | 6 | | 35,371 | 24,346 |
| Current assets | | | | |
| Stock | | - | - | |
| Debtors | 7 | 34,402 | | 41,218 |
| Cash held on behalf of clubs and societies | | 65,177 | | 59,400 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | 244,699 | | 246,274 |
| Total current assets | | 344,278 | | 346,892 |
| Creditors – amounts falling due within one year | 8 | (128,245) | | (125,482) |
| Net current assets | | | 216,033 | 221,410 |
| Total assets less current liabilities | | | 251,404 | 245,756 |
| Provisions: pension liability | 10 | | (636,862) | (678,731) |
| Net liabilities | | | (385,458) | (432,975) |
| The deficit of the charity Unrestricted funds | 9 | | | |
| General funds | | | 236,152 | 227,008 |
| Pension reserve | | | (636,862) | (678,731) |
| | | | (400,710) | (451,723) |
| Designated funds | | | 15,252 | 18,748 |
| | | | (385,458) | (432,975) |
| Total charity deficit | | | (385,458) | (432,975) |



AFFILIATIONS & DONATIONS

CHARITY DONATIONS

Archie Foundation
Coppafeel
Islamic Relief UK Appeals

FUNDRAISING TOTAL
£2141

UNION AFFILIATIONS

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|---------|
| National Union of Students | - | £12,941 |
| Nightline Association | - | £47 |

SPORTING AFFILIATIONS

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------|
| Basketball | - | £30 |
| British Universities & Colleges Sport | - | £5,866 |
| Netball | - | £30 |
| Rifle | - | £291 |
| Scottish Rowing | - | £235 |
| Scottish Student Sport | - | £8,007 |
| Scottish Womens' Football | - | £80 |
| Volleyball Scotland | - | £75 |



MOTIONS

MOTION 1

ENSURE CORE UNION FORUMS AND DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS ARE HYBRID SO ALL STUDENTS, INCLUDING DISTANCE LEARNERS, CAN ATTEND

MOTION 2

REPRESENT THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGES OF STUDENT PARENTS AT AN INSTITUTIONAL, LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL, AND LOBBY FOR SUPPORT

MOTION 3

INTRODUCE A FUNDED PROGRAMME TO PROVIDE FREE ACCESS TO SPORTS CLUBS FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

MOTION 4

INCREASE THE VISIBILITY OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES AT THE UNIVERSITY

MOTION 5

FLEXIBILITY RELATING TO FEE PAYMENT PROCEDURES AND REPAYMENT PLANS



I WANT TO CHANGE PART OF A MOTION

If you would like to suggest a change to part of a motion, then you can do this by submitting an amendment.

Amendments will be invited during the motion discussion and will follow the process outlined on the next page.

HOW DO WE DISCUSS AND VOTE ON MOTIONS?

There will be an open discussion for each motion.

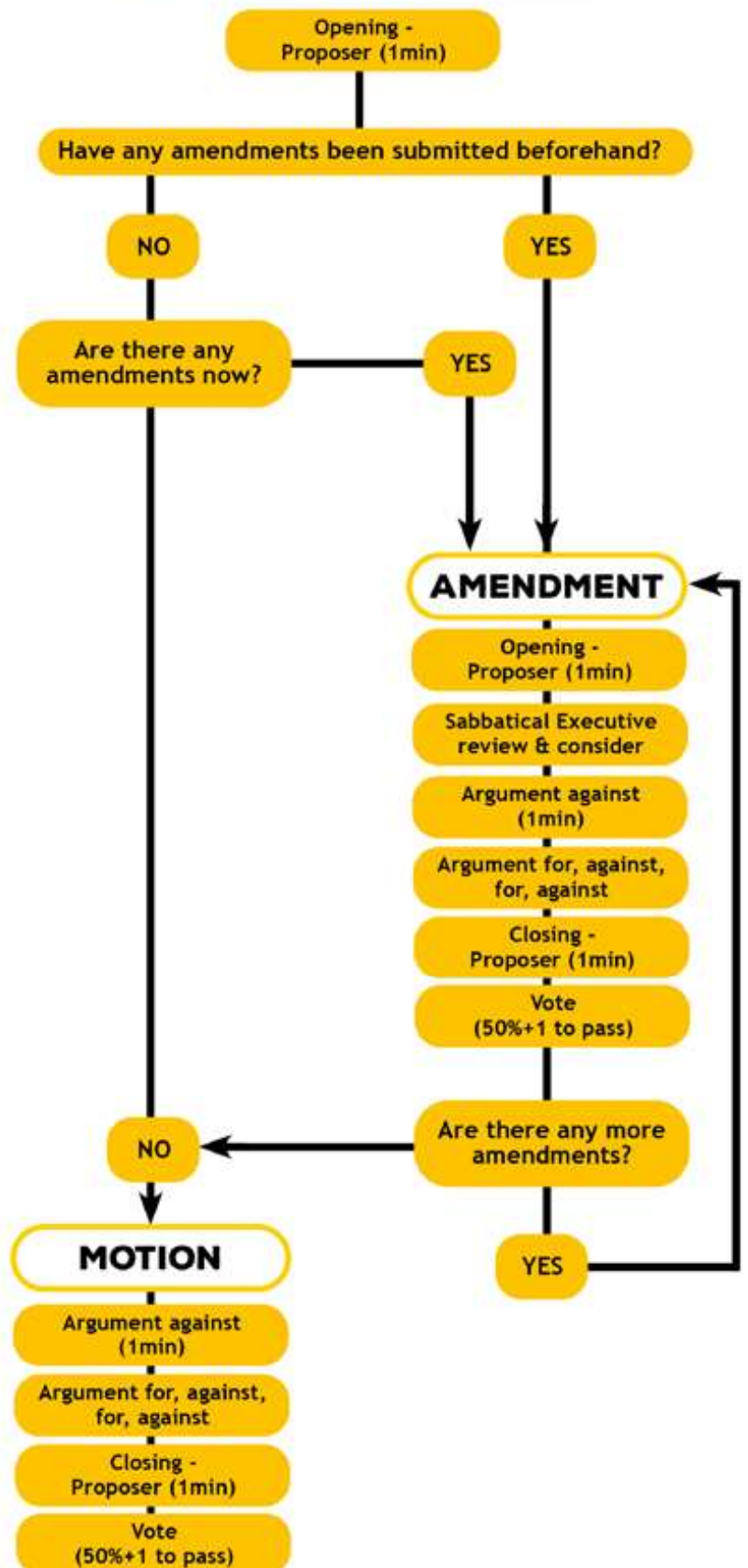
Motions will be called one by one and the proposer will have an opportunity to speak to the audience for one minute, explaining why they think students should support their motion. Students are then invited to argue against the motion, and there may be a small debate.

It is also possible that students may want to change small parts of a motion, these are called amendments (find out more on the next page). Each proposed amendment will get a separate debate and a separate vote.

After all amendments have been voted on, and there have been arguments for and against the motion, the proposer will have the chance to deliver a closing speech before it is put to a vote.

If it passes, then the motion is endorsed by the AGM and becomes RGU:Union policy!

MOTION PROCESS





AMENDMENT INFORMATION

WHAT IS AN AMENDMENT?

Amendments are suggested changes to a motion. Once motions are published online, you have the chance to read over them and decide whether you agree or not. If there is a part of the motion that you would like to change, you can submit an amendment.

Any amendment submitted **must...**

- 1) be viable
- 2) be reasonable
- 3) not amend the motion in such a way that it impacts on the motion's core aim

HOW DO I SUBMIT AN AMENDMENT?

Amendments can be submitted before the AGM through the Union's website (www.rguunion.co.uk/agm), or you can wait and submit your amendment during the AGM, at the start of the motion discussion.

The meeting chair will invite amendments before discussion of each motion.

HOW DO I WRITE AN AMENDMENT?

Simply outline which motion you are discussing, highlight the specific change you would like to make, and the rational for the change.

Changes could be to add, remove, change, or reword a point in the motion.

EXAMPLE AMENDMENT

MOTION

"RGU:Union should look to further support students in finding safe accommodation"

AMENDMENT

Housing is expensive, the Union should also help students in finding affordable accommodation. Add "affordable" to the motion, making it "RGU:Union should look to further support students in finding safe and affordable accommodation"



MOTION 1
**ENSURE CORE UNION FORUMS AND
DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS ARE HYBRID SO
ALL STUDENTS, INCLUDING DISTANCE
LEARNERS, CAN PARTICIPATE**

Proposer: Oluwatoyin Bolajoko
Secunder: Johnson Oshodi

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

There has been an observed lack of participation and engagement of online/part-time/distant learning (alternative pathways) students in Union programs, especially democratic meetings and forums. This is because most of these meetings are often conducted on-campus leaving the alternative pathways students with no opportunity to lend their voice on matters affecting their student experience.

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

As an institution that prioritises EDI, the under-representation of alternative pathways students is a disservice to the work being done across all academic schools. Since the voices of these students are not being reflected at forums and democratic meetings, it is difficult to receive their feedback and effect the necessary changes needed to improve their experience

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

Union democratic meetings (such as student voice, AGMs, and societies' forums) should be conducted in a Hybrid format to allow the participation of students who are not able to attend on-campus.



MOTION 2

REPRESENT THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY STUDENT PARENTS AT AN INSTITUTIONAL, LOCAL, AND NATIONAL LEVEL, AND LOBBY FOR SUPPORT

Proposers: Iro Karanika
Secunder: Oluwatoyin Bolajoko

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Childcare coverage has been reduced, meaning students with children have to pay more out of pocket to be able to go to the daycare.

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Student parents who are studying were not informed in time of this change in how much of these costs are covered, and now they have to pay more out of pocket which is not fair on the parents' behalf. They are already too full with their studying and the bare minimum is supporting them 100% to make sure their children are safe without having to pay entirely out of pocket.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

The Union should represent the financial challenges of student parents at an institutional, local and national level, and lobby for an increase to the Coverage Costs for Childcare services at RGU or implement a scheme that would help parents financially.



MOTION 3

INTRODUCE A FUNDED PROGRAMME TO PROVIDE FREE ACCESS TO SPORTS CLUBS FOR STUDENT EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Proposer: Mohtashim Iqbal E Waris
Secunder: Nadeem Mohammed

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

RGU is providing number of sports activities for students, a few of them are free (i-w Gym, Swimming and a few classes) that benefits a lot of students. However, when it comes to sports, that limits most of the international student participation since most of the student can not afford it.

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

The cost associated with participating in sports is difficult for everyone, rendering it unattainable for a significant number of students. This issue goes beyond mere inconvenience, as it creates a barrier that deprives students of the physical, mental, and social benefits that sports provide. As a result, a growing number of students are unable to engage in extracurricular sports activities, hindering their overall development and potentially perpetuating disparities in health and well-being. Addressing the unaffordability of sports for students is crucial to ensuring equal opportunities and holistic growth for all.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

Offering a funded program that provides free slots for booking in sports activities for students to address the issue of unaffordability and promote equal opportunities.

Benefits:

Physical Well-being: Access to sports activities promotes physical fitness, reducing the risk of health issues such as obesity and cardiovascular diseases.

Mental Health: Participation in sports has been linked to improved mental health, including reduced stress, anxiety, and depression. It provides a constructive outlet for managing emotions and building resilience.

Social Skills: Sports foster teamwork, communication, and camaraderie, helping students develop crucial social skills. This can positively impact their relationships in both academic and personal settings.

Academic Performance: Research suggests that regular physical activity is associated with improved cognitive function and academic performance. Engaging in sports can contribute to a well-rounded education.

Community Building: The program can strengthen community ties by bringing together students, parents, educators, and local businesses in support of a shared goal - the well-being and development of the youth.



MOTION 4

INCREASE THE VISIBILITY OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES AT THE UNIVERSITY

Proposer: Iro Karanika

Secunder: Oluwatoyin Bolajoko

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Students are struggling making ends meet and RGU does not provide adequate advisory support for students.

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

In order to have a decent life they have to keep up with 3 or 4 jobs, which makes balancing of uni and work a bit more challenging than it should be. More students are dropping out of Uni because of this or getting a loan, which is not ideal. Most of them are even embarrassed to say anything.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

The Union should work with the University to increase the the visibility of financial support services at RGU, and possibly create more scholarships so that the financial stress of students is reduced.



MOTION 5

FLEXIBILITY RELATING TO FEE PAYMENT PROCEDURES AND REPAYMENT PLANS

Proposers: Uyiosa Bryan Igbini, Jasper Egberongbe
Secunder: Dooter Nyior

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The current tuition payment structure at our university has posed significant challenges for students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds or facing financial hardship. The requirement to pay tuition fees within short deadlines has placed immense pressure on students and their families, leading to financial strain, anxiety, and even mental health issues. Moreover, the lack of flexible payment options or support mechanisms has exacerbated these challenges, leaving many students feeling overwhelmed and unsupported.

Constant fluctuations in exchange rates and the uncertainty surrounding tuition payment can induce significant psychological stress and anxiety among African students. The fear of not being able to afford tuition fees or the prospect of accumulating debt can negatively impact students' mental health and academic performance.

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Tuition trauma, stemming from the stress and anxiety associated with financial strain and difficulties in paying tuition fees, has profound psychological effects on students. Here are some ways in which tuition trauma impacts students psychologically: Increased Stress and Anxiety, Feelings of Helplessness and Hopelessness, Impact on Mental Health, Social Withdrawal and Isolation

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

Proposing a solution that requires international students to pay a minimum of 50 percent of their tuition fees before coming to the United Kingdom, along with the establishment of a more flexible payment plan after resumption, can indeed alleviate the burden of tuition payment and mitigate the psychological impact of tuition trauma. Here's how this solution can address the problem effectively:

1. 50% Prepayment Requirement:

Reduced Financial Stress: Requiring international students to pay a significant portion of their tuition fees before arriving in the United Kingdom reduces the financial burden they face upon starting their studies. With this, students can better focus on settling into their new academic environment and adjusting to university life without the added stress of impending tuition payments.

Better Financial Planning: Prepayment allows students to plan their finances more effectively and allocate funds accordingly. Knowing in advance the portion of tuition fees they must pay before coming to the UK enables students to budget and save appropriately, ensuring they have sufficient funds available to meet this obligation.

Enhanced Enrollment Stability: Requiring a 50% prepayment can also enhance enrollment stability for universities, as students who have made a significant financial commitment are more likely to follow through with their plans to attend. This can reduce the risk of last-minute withdrawals or dropout due to financial reasons, benefiting both students and institutions.

2; Establishing a more flexible payment Plan

Establishing a more flexible payment plan after students' arrival in the UK allows for the gradual payment of remaining tuition fees over an extended period. This approach reduces the immediate financial strain on students, particularly those facing currency exchange challenges or relying on external sources of funding.



**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS
ABOUT TODAY'S MOTIONS,
THE AGM OR UNION
ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL,
PLEASE CONTACT**

**PATRICIA
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PRESIDENT COMMUNICATION
& DEMOCRACY**

PRESCD@RGUUNION.CO.UK

rgu:union

**NOMINATIONS
OPEN**

**STAND UP FOR
RGU STUDENTS**

Student Elections 2024

**NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FROM
22ND FEBRUARY TO 7TH MARCH**



**SCAN HERE TO
GET INVOLVED**