



Ideas to improve your Union, University and City

Better Union Agenda, 18/03/2021, Zoom (Online) [5.00-7.30pm]

1. Apologies for absence
 2. AGM - updates on how LUU has been run this past year, and a chance to ask questions
 3. The discussion of each Idea in turn:
 - a. The Student who submitted the Idea (or a nominated spokesperson) to explain what they want and why
 - b. Clarifications, questions, comments and change proposals from Forum attendees
 - c. The Forum Facilitator to establish if the Student Panel are able to make a decision
 - d. Secret ballot of the Student Panel
 4. Announcements and reports from two Student Executive Officers detailing progress with regard to implementation of Policy and allowing questions from Forum attendees
 5. Announcements and reports from Forum attendees / AOB
 6. Announcement of Student Panel Verdict(s).
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Name: Isobel Walter

Your Better Union Idea: Should LUU support the Students United Against fees campaign?

What do you want? / Why do you want it?

I want the Student Exec to promote the campaign and encourage students to show their support. This is a national campaign, calling on the Government to offer financial compensation for tuition fees to all students in the UK, and ultimately a move towards free education. This year, Universities have been unable to offer students the value that they are paying for. Students across the country are paying for an educational experience that they are not receiving and must be compensated for this. By coming together at Leeds, we can amplify this campaign and contribute to a national movement to challenge the government's treatment of students.

Name: Holly Fiddes

Your Better Union Idea: Should LUU stop giving out Amazon vouchers as prizes?

What do you want/Why do you want it?

LUU often offers Amazon vouchers as prizes for answering surveys or otherwise engaging with LUU. There are many ethical issues with Amazon as a company, including its offences in terms of workers rights and environmental impact. Perhaps most notably the Ethical Consumer has called for a general, global boycott of Amazon because of its extensive tax-avoidance. The fact that LUU essentially gives 'Amazon money' to students who engage with them through surveys is disappointing and suggests LUU supports its unethical practices. There should be a blanket ban on offering Amazon vouchers and other vouchers should be offered instead.



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Name: John Doak

Your Better Union Idea: Should LUU and The University work together to create a consistent booking system for bookable society spaces?

What do you want? / Why do you want it?

Currently room booking is split by organisation, with LUU having a small amount of space and a good online booking system and the University having a large amount of space but a convoluted and inefficient booking system. This is an inefficient use of space as often whatever is available is booked rather than what would be most appropriate. For example holding an AGM could be done in a seminar or lecture room but will instead be done in a hall in LUU as it's the only space they can book easily, this then deprives others of access to a type of space they may need. A unified booking system would be easier for stakeholders to use and would maximise the efficient use of all campus space. Once cooperation is agreed between LUU and the University the LUU booking system could be expanded as this is already user friendly. Naturally timetabling priority should be given to key stakeholders such as schools being given first access to book teaching spaces and elite sports teams priority to book SPA spaces. Once this has been done all remaining available space could then be made available to be booked by others. Key decision makers and their contact details should also be prominently available so that any issues and queries can be quickly resolved. It would also be advisable to implement some controls and checks to prevent intentional overbooking.

Name: Lucy Murphy and Sophia Hartley

Your Better Union Idea: Should LUU provide learning opportunities for committees that empowers members to access wellbeing services across LUU and UoL?

What do you want? / Why do you want it?

The specific problem is that committee members of clubs and socs at Leeds University Union have little guidance on how to approach sensitive issues to do with students' mental health and wellbeing. As such, our students feel ill-equipped to deal with some of the challenging aspects of a committee role on a club or society. These problems are heightened around themes of members' wellbeing when committees have to navigate the boundaries of their role whilst also wanting to help their members who appear vulnerable.

We live in a society where the taboo of mental health, mental disorders and wellbeing are being dismantled day by day by the power of conversations. This will continue to be positive for our society. These conversations will naturally occur in young people, online and in person, and even under the influence of substances. When these conversations inevitably happen we want our committee members to be prepared to confidently identify the services available to them at Leeds.

From our research we have found that the following areas are key concerns for committees when understanding their role:

- Welfare; what we are and aren't allowed to do.



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- What is expected of us, resources to hand out students, what to do if we get someone who is in serious need of help, the kind of resources the uni has, who to contact for access to disability services etc.
- Recognising mental health issues within members and how to effectively help them if they come to a committee member.

A further root of the problem is that our members do not engage with the current training on the Love to Learn platform. This is because the material is generic and focused on workplace templates for an office lifestyle. This could not be further from the student experience! This is impersonal to our members and has no relevance to the challenging scenarios our committees may find themselves in.

The root problem is then exacerbated by the implications of Covid-19. For example, we currently have less members in Leeds, students are bound to online activities which are naturally less engaging. As a whole we are currently managing the risk of student isolation which as we move forward out of this pandemic is going to cause a fallout of wellbeing impacts. By introducing this wellbeing component to committees at the start of the year we can be proactive about the problems students may disclose to the Activities Team and Help and Support.

Additional information can be found [here](#).

Name: Christopher Mee

Your Better Union Idea: Should LUU provide free cash withdrawal services within the LUU Building, and advertise these alternatives to paid withdrawals prominently?

What do you want? / Why do you want it?

LUU should make steps in order to always provide building users with free access to cash. At the current time, there are three cash machines within the building, two of which charge for withdrawals, Foyer and Gear, and one which does not, Amazon Lockers. The aim of this policy will be to eradicate all machines which charge for cash withdrawals, but due to stated contractual commitments, those which charge are unable to be changed in any way. By passing this policy this will commit LUU to changing these as soon as possible in a way which does not have a negative economic impact on LUU.

In the meantime, LUU should offer free cash withdrawal services in their outlets, similar to the cash back option you get in supermarkets, and this should be signposted. This provides a short-term solution so that LUU's members and building users are not charged to withdraw their own cash.



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Name: Adam Abdallah and Yousuf Farooq

Your Better Union Idea: Should the Union Adopt the APPG Definition of Islamophobia?

What do you want? / Why do you want it?

We want the Union to adopt the APPG Definition of Islamophobia.

The definition reads: Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.

Nearly 10 per cent of the student body and many staff members identify as Muslim at this University and they increasingly face racist smears, as well as being labelled extremists or terrorists. There is growing evidence going back over several years which demonstrates that Muslim students in Universities are having their educational experience undermined by the erosion of their civil rights, intimidation and discrimination which silences their voices and curtails their academic freedoms. Based on my personal experience and research into Islamophobia I believe that having a definition that recognizes it as a type of racism that targets Muslimness will do much to ensure that Muslim students have confidence that they will be treated fairly and their educational experience in the classroom and on campus will be free of intimidation and discrimination.

Adopting this definition will empower Muslim students and staff to fight this racism perpetrated against them and enable the institution to effectively identify cases of Islamophobia and deal with them in due manner. It will also give the LUU the opportunity to set the example for other unions in leading the fight against the marginalisation of Muslim student in the UK.
