



the DURHAM UNION

GENERAL COMMITTEE: WEDNESDAY 12TH MARCH 2025

Item One: President's Report

The President made brief comments to summarise the term. He thanked all in attendance for their hard work, and particularly emphasised the success of events such as Lord Johnson, Fraser Nelson, and Mary McAleese.

Item Two: President-elect's Report

The President-elect outlined some of the confirmed speakers for his term, before publicising opportunities for members to speak in debates. He then spoke positively about progress on the term card, as well as constructive communications with the University. The President-elect confirmed that the EDI Report will be put together next term.

Item Three: Custodian's Report

The Custodian confirmed that five additional bar staff have been trained, before noting that the bar is turning a profit. He then commented on renovations around 24 North Bailey, thanking all involved for their help. He announced further improvements for next term – including lighting for the garden – inviting members to contribute with ideas.

The Custodian noted that private bookings have brought in additional revenue for the bar. He then announced plans to open the bar earlier after exams. The Custodian then thanked members for doing door duty and helping the bar run.



Item Four: Equalities Officer's Report

The Equalities Officer noted progress made this term, in making the committee more visible online. This extended to creating WhatsApp groups to promote

inclusivity and publicise equalities events. He affirmed the need to make the most of these reforms, commenting also on plans to reform the Complaints Process, and introduce a Members Code of Conduct.

Item Five: Alumni officer hust

Molly Purcell proposed by Oliver Lycett of St Hild & St Bede, seconded by Henry Hawes of Stephenson College

First, I would like to work to foster the relationship itself that we have with our alumni. Having explored different avenues to go about this, I intend to rebuild our use of, and relationship with, the alumni advisory board. Not only will this allow us to get more of our alumni actively involved with the union today, but will also offer an opportunity to build meaningful connections with them, and use them for valuable input and advice. I also intend on reintroducing the alumni termly newsletter. I know this was achieved in the past by Ollie, and it is something that I am very keen on putting back into function. This newsletter will be posted onto our LinkedIn page, as I said, termly, and will involve showing the statistics of the term, so number of debates and address for the term etc, as well as other information such as turnout for the presidential election and the progression of the Durham Schools debating tournament. On the topic of our LinkedIn, such regular posting will also help our algorithm and enhance our outreach, hopefully reaching more of our connections and building the possibilities of increasing the involvement of our alumni. Additionally, having had the Westminster workshop last term, I would like to introduce more of such similar special events within the union. I believe in working with our alumni we can help guarantee more of our members' experience



in possible disciplines they are interested in, in the last case this was politics, but I would hope to expand this out into exploring other avenues as well.

This brings me onto my second aim, which is to of course, ensure the continuation and expansion of the mentorship scheme introduced by Callum. The introduction of this project this year has been incredibly successful, and is a way for us to offer increased networking to our members, and give them invaluable opportunities unique to our society. On the topic of this, having managed to help secure 50 mentors this academic year, I aim to be able to work towards increasing this figure to 70 for next year. I would love to be able to offer the mentorship scheme to a wider remit of our membership, past the general committee, and so guaranteeing this expansion thus guarantees that more and more of our members can reap its benefits. With a lot of the groundwork done to make this happen having already been accomplished by Callum, I believe this is an accessible goal, and can be a selling point of the union for the next freshers drive if advertised properly, helping to attract and bring in new membership.

Thirdly, I would like to set up a flow of income from our alumni to help aid our access schemes. Increasing the accessibility of the union is something at the forefront of the coming terms, and I believe that if the connections we have with our alumni are used effectively, this will be very much achievable. I will aim to create funding that will allow for further subsidised ball and social tickets to narrow any inequality of opportunities within the union, and believe that communication and thus sponsorship from willing alumni will aid in reducing this as much as possible. During my appointment as Ball Chair we saw notably lower rates for tickets as opposed to terms before, and even though only a couple of access tickets were purchased, they were still priced at £50, which I believe can be significantly reduced if an alumni funded initiative is successfully executed.

Lastly, continuing on from the success of the Alumni reception hosted last term, the next event I would like to host in the next Michaelmas term is a dinner in the House of Lords at the palace of Westminster. This would involve gathering some of our most dedicated and invariably generous alumni for an evening meal that would aim in and continue to strengthen the connections between our alumni and the union. In order for such an event to be possible I hope to work in guaranteeing a sponsor for the event, hopefully working alongside our sponsorship officer to ensure this. I hope for this to be a good way to maintain direct, in person communication with



our alumni whilst retaining the excitement of having an infrequent formal reception, and should be made available to a select number of interested students.

Ms Purcell was elected on a General Aye.

Item Six: Ratification of the Debate Equity Officer

Yulia Wolczuk

Ms Wolczuk was ratified on a General Aye.

Item Seven: Ratification of the Welfare Officer

Milli Hargreaves

Ms Hargreaves was ratified on a General Aye.

Item Eight: Constitutional Amendment No. 1

Proposed by Henry Hawes of Stephen College; Seconded by George Hammond of Hatfield College.

Mr Hawes outlined the premise of the amendment, in keeping the size of House Committee at 10 members across all three terms. This will help support operations.

The amendment passed 39-3.



Item Nine: Constitutional Amendment No. 2

Proposed by Callum Oxley of Trevelyan College; Seconded by Adam McIntyre of University College.

Mr Oxley outlined the premise for his amendment, and the advantages of tailoring the President's Committee more to their preferences, and allowing for it to be formed earlier. He affirmed that appointed members as per the amendment will not have voting rights.

The amendment passed 32-11.

Item Ten: Constitutional Amendment No. 3

Proposed by Isla Shiner, Trevelyan College; Seconded by Robbie Bono of St Cuthbert's Society.

Ms Shiner outlined the premise for the amendment, noting that reforming 'Low Income and State School Rep' to 'Social Mobility Rep.'

The amendment passed 35-9.

Item Eleven: Any Other Business

Avesta promoted an Equalities Coffee morning to be held this Saturday.

The meeting concluded at 16.01.