

TCDSU Union Forum Meeting #2
11th October 2021
5pm to 9pm

Apologies: Ethnic Minorities Officer.

Chair: Leah Keogh
Secretary: Beverly Genockey

Minutes:

The minutes of the last meeting of the union forum (27.09.21) were approved following a minor correction of the title of “Gníomhí Gaeilge” which the secretary missed while minuting the meeting.

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Discussion Items:

1. President’s Report:

The president noted the long agenda for the evening and elected to give a brief, verbal report, noting the success of anti-apartheid week, and preparations for council next week (19.10.21).

2. The *University Times* budget:

The Editor of the *University Times* was invited to join the zoom call to present the proposed budget of the university times for the year 2021/22.

The budget which was presented to the union forum can be found [here](#).

The Editor of the *University Times* was then removed from the meeting in order for the union forum to discuss the presented budget, and formulate questions to put to the editor about the budget.

The consensus reached by the union forum was that the budget was not particularly easy to comprehend, and lacked detail. The Union Forum then decided on a number of questions to put to the UT Editor upon their return. These questions would be put to the Editor through the President or Education Officer if officers would prefer that, or officers could ask questions to the editor themselves if they liked.

A member of the Union Forum (**Communities or Gender Equality - needs clarifying**) asked the President what happens if the Union Forum votes to reject the *University Times* budget. The President said that what would happen would be that the Editor would be provided with the reasons for rejecting the budget, and asked to present an updated version at the next meeting of the Union Forum. The President further noted that the *University Times* budget has been rejected before by the Union Forum, sometimes three times in a year.

A member of the Union Forum (**Communities or Gender Equality - needs clarifying**) asked if there was a previous version of the *University Times* budget that the Union Forum could look at.

The Education Officer said that on a quick glance through their google drive they could find a budget from the year 2017/18 which had precisely the same layout and amount of detail as the 2021/22 budget.

The Editor of the *University Times* was invited back to the call to field questions from the Union Forum. Details of this discussion can be seen below:

1. The Education Officer noted that there was no figure for the adobe subscription under the sundries section of the expenses.
 - The editor clarified that this was 48 euro.
 - The Education Officer then asked if this was 48 euro for the year in total, or so far?
 - The editor clarified that the figure was 48 euro per month, but that the yearly cost was factored into the projected yearly expenses figure presented in the budget.
2. The Education Officer then asked if the figure for the dropbox subscription (36euro) was for three months (as the editor suggested in their presentation) or for the entire year.
 - The editor clarified that the dropbox subscription costs 12 euro per month, and that the yearly cost was factored into the projected yearly expenses figure presented in the budget, but that the 36 euro represented the cost so far.
3. The Education Officer then asked for clarification on the two figures (4100, 6900) that appear in the rightmost column of the 'income aims' section of the budget.
 - The editor clarified that this was their own rough work, and should be disregarded.
4. The Education Officer asked for more details regarding the figures in the 'income aims - print and online' section of the budget - more specifically, how these figures were calculated and where the income is expected to come from.
 - The editor clarified that these figures were calculated by the paper's advertising director and their deputy. Advertising is expected to come mostly from Tangent and a handful of smaller businesses - offbeat donuts, the dublin inquirer.
5. The President commends the editor for reducing the number of print editions of the paper from 9 issues to 6 and asks if this can be taken further by reducing the quantity of the papers which are produced, noting that the first issue of the paper resulted in a lot of waste around house 6.
 - The editor notes that this is being planned, and says that a higher quantity of papers were printed for the first edition given that it was released during (senior) Freshers' Week. There were 1300 copies of the paper produced for this run.

6. The Entertainment Officer follows this, asking that if the quantity of the papers printed is expected to decrease, why do the projected production costs in the budget not reflect this?
 - The editor clarifies that the Irish Times does not give production costs based on quantity. The projected production cost figure in the budget (2550 euro) is for 1300 copies of the paper but the editor expects it to decrease. Given that they don't have a precise quote for the reduction in producing the paper yet, they felt it best to overestimate in the meantime.

7. The LGBT+ Rights Officer notes that the editor mentioned that they are 'shopping around' for more competitive prices for producing the paper. The member asks if the paper has received these quotes, and with which companies.
 - The editor notes that the paper has not yet received any official quotes for printing from companies other than the Irish Times. The editor continues that it is difficult to find such a printer and remarks that although *Trinity News* were able to do this, it is more difficult for the *University Times* as they are not a tabloid newspaper, and if they were to do it, they would likely have to outsource printing to a UK printer.
 - The editor continues that the broadsheet design is 'part of UT's identity' and the paper has won awards for its design. The editor then states that this is the way the paper 'has always been' and it is what differentiates them from *Trinity News*.

The Editor of the *University Times* was thanked by the President and Education Officer for their contribution, and the President remarked that they would follow up with the Editor the next day with the outcome and any relevant feedback.

The Welfare & Equality Officer proposed that the Union Forum vote by secret ballot on whether to accept or reject the *University Times* budget.

Following this, on 11.10.21 the TCDSU union forum voted by secret ballot to reject the proposed *University Times* budget in its current form.

3. Hacks & Snacks (presented by Alice Payne, Volunteer Forum Coordinator)

The Volunteer Forum Coordinator proposed a series of social sessions (titled 'hacks and snacks') with the other members of the Union Forum. The proposal is such that the members of UF would meet up every week or two for a cup of tea or coffee, a snack, and a chat in order to promote friendship through UF and make UF more visible and approachable. The Volunteer Forum Coordinator also suggested that other students and reps could be invited to join in the social session.

The proposal was very well received by the Union Forum, and approved by consensus.

The president then invited the Volunteer Forum Coordinator to liaise with the Ents Officer and Simon Evans, TCDSU Administrator, in order to organise the sessions and the snacks.

4. CRWG Review & Proposed Constitution (*presented by Leah Keogh, SU President*).

The Welfare & Equality Officer proposed that the Union Forum go in camera for this discussion item on the basis that the Proposed Constitution & Review would be going to Council as a discussion item, and much like how sabbatical officers can't campaign in referendums, the individual felt it best to remain in camera as the minutes of Union Forum go to council for noting, and it would be best to have class reps and other members of council weigh in on the proposed constitution and review independently, without being influenced by the opinions of senior officers of the Union.

The Union Forum then voted, by consensus, to go in-camera for this discussion item.

5. Class Rep Training (*presented by Beverly Genockey, Education Officer*)

The Education Officer noted that they said that they would bring a full itinerary for Class Rep Training to this meeting of the Union Forum for discussion - noted that this hadn't been done yet, and cited the running of Class Rep Elections as the reasoning.

The Education Officer then gave a verbal update on the plans for Class Rep Training including the 'guest speakers' and the SU specific sessions that would be delivered. Invited feedback in the slack channel from members of the Union Forum once the itinerary was placed there, the next day.

6. Students4Change March on Saturday 16th October (*presented by Leah Keogh, SU President*).

The president notes that they had been approached by the chairperson of *Students4Change* and asked for TCDSU support.

The president said that before making a decision on the matter, they would like to hear the opinions of the union forum.

- The gender equality officer noted that the demands of students4change in their protest do not seem logistically possible, and points to the good work being done by staff in their own school [law].
- The STEM convenor noted that if refunds were given to students on the grounds set by s4c, then they believe that the quality of education would decrease.
- The LGBT rights Officer notes the recent SU open letter on re-timetabling and states that the SU needs to say *why* they want change and why they are not siding with students for change.
- The Welfare and Equality Officer notes that they have had a lot of casework on return to in-person learning and most of these students feel that society at large is not 'back to normal' and they do not feel supported by students4change.
- The health sciences convenor further noted that they believe that students4change seem to be focussed on getting 100% f2f lectures but that's not a possibility in health science because the

faculty have a duty of care to patients and some of the schools have to work with hospital restrictions.

- The mature students officer notes that they appreciate the TCDSU stance with the open letter, but asks what the 'foreseen backlash' mentioned in the letter is.
- The President notes they believe it will be further student protests, more emails and more phone calls from angry parents (which sabbats have already been inundated with).
- The mature students officer then further remarks that TCD needs a recording policy for lectures, and that the college has handled the return to in-person teaching rather poorly.
- The Education Officer asks if it is even possible to support students4change without the approval of council or an EC ruling on the matter, given students4change's Marxist/Anarchist Ideology and how this might conflict with 1.4 of the TCDSU constitution.
- The Chair of the EC remarked that they also believed that this would require an EC ruling.
- The President suggested that until such a ruling was made, that the union forum vote by secret ballot on whether to support the October 16th protest.

Following this, on 11.10.21 the TCDSU union forum voted by secret ballot not to support the students4change protest on 16.10.21

The meeting was adjourned.