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**UNIVERSITY OF SUFFOLK STUDENTS’ UNION (SU)**

**Staff and Officers Working Together Bye-Law**

**30.04.2018**

**Updated 28.09.2020 (non-substantive changes approved by Board of Trustees)**

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| **Type of Document** | **Title of Document** |
| Bye-Law | Staff and Officers Working Together Bye-Law |
| Recommendation | To Approve the following Bye-Law |
| Approval Bodies and Date Passed | 10th of May Trustee Board 2018 |
| Proposing Member | Student Engagement Manager |
| Staff Responsible for Review | Student Engagement Manager |
| Committee Responsible for Review | Trustee Board |
| Review Date | 30.05.2021 |

**Students’ Union Cover Page Explanation**

The Students’ Union is a democratic organisation set up to represent and support students at the University of Suffolk. As such we are required to clearly outline our decision making and approval process at every level.

**Articles of Association**

The Articles of Association is the rule book of the Students’ Union, it sets out the constitution and the letter of the law for the organisation. Changing or adapting the Articles would be very unusual and would require approval from all SU democratic and corporate structures in addition to University Board approval

**Bye-Laws**

Bye-Laws govern the SU at the top level, for example setting out our elections processes and our democratic processes. Bye laws must be passed by Annual General Meeting (All Students) and the Trustee Board.

**SU Policy**

SU Policy or SU Policies are documents that are originally motions submitted by members of Student Council. They are written and drafted by Officers with support by SU Staff. SU Policy must be approved by the Student Officer Committee to become Live Policy. Once implemented the policy is live for three years, lapsing after the third year AGM.

**SU Operating Plans**

SU Operating Plans are internal documents that ensure staff are able to carry out policy or Bye Laws. These documents will be used day-to-day. SU Staff propose these documents to the corporate governance structures; Trustee Board, Management Committee or sub-committees. As an example, following the approval of an Elections Bye-Law, SU staff would draft an Operating Plan on the implementation of Course Rep elections.

**SU Strategies**

SU Strategies are documents that look to the future development of the organisation. These documents inform operating plans and reviews. SU Strategies will include key measurements to measure impact and performance. These documents set the direction of the Service or the Organisation for a length of time, usually 3-5 years.

**Reviews**

Reviews ensure compliance, inform decision making and help us to solve problems in service delivery. Reviews investigate a particular area within the SU or University and make recommendations to the group, which commissioned the review to take place. The recommendations may go to our corporate governance structure depending on the level and outcome.

**Initial Scoping Document**

An initial Scoping Document or Scoping Document looks at a proposed project or workload. Scoping documents look at the feasibility of a proposed project, if there is budget to achieve it and whether it is possible or desirable to implement.

**STAFF AND OFFICERS WORKING TOGETHER**

### Basis

1. The Students’ Union is established as a collective self-governing organisation of its members.
   1. Central to the resources of the SU are the employed staff who provide for continuity, long-term planning, professional advice, managerial expertise and day-to-day operation and implementation of policy.
   2. The purpose of this Bye-Law is to clarify the relationship between the members, their elected Student Officers and staff.
   3. For the purposes of this Bye-Law, Full-Time Student Officers of the SU will not be considered to be employed staff.
   4. This Bye-Law will apply to student employees as staff during the hours at which they are at work. Additionally, student employees are not permitted to raise issues relating to their employment in any SU meeting that is not within the remit or bounds of the meetings terms of reference.

**Responsibilities of elected full-time and part-time officers**

* 1. Elected officers provide the political leadership and student voice to the SU - they will shape political policy through democratic means and represent the students of the University of Suffolk. Working closely with staff, elected officers will ensure that the operations of the SU are responsive to the needs of the membership.
  2. Elected officers should ensure that discussions concerning individual staff members (conduct, performance, recruitment and terms and conditions) do not take place in public forums as Officers are privy to groups including Trustee Board.
  3. If an elected officer has concerns regarding a staff member, they should first direct these informally to the staff in question. However, if this is not possible or does not adequately resolve the issues, these should be shared with the line manager.

### Responsibilities of Staff

* 1. The role of SU staff is to empower elected officers to achieve their manifesto goals and to represent the student membership.
  2. Staff are expected to provide professional advice and support to the elected Officers in their areas of expertise, but may not seek to unduly influence political policy decisions.
  3. Staff may not participate in, or seek to influence, the democratic decisions of the SU or participate in democratic meetings.
  4. Staff should not negatively comment on the conduct or performance of elected officers, or the SU’s political policy or political direction.
  5. Staff may attend meetings of any body of the SU when invited to do so by the Chair of the meeting.
  6. Staff are expected to provide professional advice to elected student representatives on any matters within their area of work but shall not seek in any other way to unduly influence the policy making process of the SU.
  7. Staff will not comment to representatives of the media, including student media, on policy or employment issues.

**Staff and Officers Working Together**

* 1. The elected officers and SU Staff Members will work very closely throughout an Officers Term of Office. Staff Members and elected officers are expected to invest their efforts to ensure that productive working relationships are developed. As part of this, staff and Officers should hold high expectations of each other’s respective professional performance and feel able to respectfully ‘challenge’ each other if there are grounds to do so.
  2. The SU Management Team take responsibility for ensuring that the organisations direction is informed and influenced by the political agendas of elected officers as well as quantitative and qualitative feedback from students.

* 1. Elected officers hold responsibility for the delivery of their manifesto objectives, for fulfilling their role descriptions they were elected for and for adhering to the Students’ Union’s employability documents, with the support and guidance of SU Staff.

**Officers Working Together**

* 1. Elected officers are expected to fully engage and challenge where appropriate, ensuring the SU’s stated objectives are achieved for the benefit of all members.
  2. Officers should feel able to confidently “challenge” other elected officer’s areas of work through the correct framework of democratic procedures, including but not limited to; Student Council and Student Officer Committee.

**SU Governance**

* 1. The University of Suffolk Students’ Union is a democratic and student-led organisation, with a robust governance structure. However, from time to time, this may require review and adaption to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, effective and reflective of the wants and needs of all students and stakeholders.
  2. Elected officers should not seek to unduly influence the review or adaptation of the SU democratic processes. The Board of Trustees is the ultimate authority in this regard.

* 1. Sabbatical trustees should ensure a clear distinction between their representative role as a sabbatical officer and their legal role as a trustee of the charity.

**Concerns from either party**

* 1. If an elected officer has concerns regarding a staff member, they should first direct these, informally to the staff in question. However, if this is not possible or does not adequately resolve the issues, these should be shared with the line manager.

* 1. If a staff member has concerns regarding an elected officer, they should first direct these, informally, to the officer in question. However, if this is not possible or does not resolve the issues then concerns should be shared with the Chief Executive or line manager.