

# BYE LAW FIVE: BETTER STAFFS FORUM

## Introduction

*Better Staffs Forum is the main policy setting and decision making body of the Students ' Union, and allows the membership to directly influence the Union's priorities and to hold it to account via its elected Officers.*

*It should meet as regularly as required to deal in a timely matter with student issues but in any event, no less than once each semester, with every attempt made to make it accessible to all by setting dates in advance and varying times and locations.*

## 1. Membership

- 1.1. The meetings are open to all students, who have speaking rights but not voting rights.
- 1.2. Full Time Officers attend to update on progress to date and answer any questions from the panel or the floor.
- 1.3. Student Councillors attend to inform the debate and to communicate the views of students in their areas.
- 1.4. A Chair is appointed annually, by The Appointments Committee to facilitate proceedings and ensure that these are appropriate fair and inclusive. The Chair remains impartial and does not have a vote.
- 1.5. The Panel members are randomly selected from current Membership records.
- 1.6. Two hundred students are contacted prior to each Forum and invited to be a member of the voting panel.
- 1.7. The panel consists of a maximum of 16 students and for results to be quorate a minimum of twelve should be present.
- 1.8. No student can be a panel member more than once in each academic year.

The Chair supported by a nominated member of Union staff, appointed by the CEO, meets with the panel prior to the Forum and explains their role and the decision-making process.

## 2. Process for submitting business

- 2.1. Any student can submit an idea or proposal on line at any time, through the Union website or by emailing the Union directly.
- 2.2. Students would contacted for clarification, if necessary, and invited to the next Forum meeting to present to the panel or offered an immediate resolution/response where appropriate.
- 2.3. Where a proposal has significant reputational or resource implications, it would be referred to the Trustee Board for a decision as to whether it would be appropriate to go to the Forum.
- 2.4. Where a proposal is impractical, illegal or inappropriate it would not go any further, and where appropriate the student would be advised.

## 3. Meeting Format

- 3.1. Introduction: The Chair introduces the Panel and Officers, and updates on progress from previous Forum. The Chair ensures everyone understands how the Forum will run and establishes the ground rules.
- 3.2. Officer updates: The chair will ask each Officer present to update on their outcomes, plans for the future, and progress against their manifesto promises to date. The Chair will invite questions before moving on to the next Officer.
- 3.3. Presentation of Proposals: The Chair will have received all the proposals in advance and have decided on a running order for the meeting. They will invite each student (or their nominee) in turn to present their ideas to the panel, and facilitate the discussion giving the student an opportunity to speak again before moving to a vote.

#### **4. Decision Making**

- 4.1. After the student has summed up their proposal, the Chair will ask the panel if they have sufficient information to make a decision. If the answer is no and further discussion does not clarify matters, the Chair will adjourn the vote to the next meeting where the specified additional information will be presented prior to the vote taking place.
- 4.2. If the Panel unanimously agree that they have sufficient information to make an informed decision, the Chair will request by a show of hands who is in favour and then who is against- there is no option to abstain.
- 4.3. If 75% of the panel vote in favour the proposal passes
- 4.4. If 75% of the panel vote against the proposal fails, (a failed proposal cannot be submitted again in the same academic year)
- 4.5. If more than 50% of the panel vote in favour of a proposal, the idea would be deemed to have sufficient merit to put it to a broader vote of the membership and an online poll would take place to ascertain student feeling. (4.3 & 4.4 to be repeated for each proposal)

#### **5. Actioning Decisions**

- 5.1. When all proposals have been discussed the Chair will check understanding of the outcomes and seek a lead officer to ensure that the appropriate actions are taken.
- 5.2. The Lead Officer may involve Student Representative Council for support and guidance where appropriate.

#### **6. Reporting back**

- 6.1. All outcomes should be made available to all students on line within 5 working days of the Forum taking place.
- 6.2. Ongoing progress reports should be recorded and posted on line on a weekly basis, where the required outcomes aren't quickly actionable.
- 6.3. An update should be given at each Student Representative Council meeting by the President or their nominee.