

**Item 8**

Received on: 3/10/14

Received by: Brian Alcorn

University of Lincoln Students' Union Student Council
Monday 13th Oct 2014, 6pm - Moot Court, David Chiddick Building

Motion: Union Democracy Consultation

Context

One of my priorities of the year, having been elected, is to engage with the broad membership more effectively and to be a more open and accessible Union.

I have found that many students are not aware of student council and its role in the organisation, and have also found that several SU's around the country "do democracy" differently, through their student councils (or equivalent).

NUS has done some research on democracy which has piqued my interest. Their report "Democracy is Dead! Long Live Democracies!" is an excellent resource with very intriguing findings. A part I wish to highlight is their findings on how students want to participate in different stages of decision-making:

- 61% wanted to participate in identifying issues to be addressed by the Union
- 45% wanted to participate in analysing different solutions to these issues
- 48% wanted to participate in deciding which solution to implement
- 24% wanted to participate in implementing the decision

From this the findings show that the clear majority want to help with highlighting areas of focus whilst a minority want to actually work to make the changes, preferring to leave this to their elected representatives to work to achieve the desired outcome.

Proposal

I feel many students at Lincoln have been given the opportunity to raise issues to be addressed – our course reps are an excellent example of this. But it's those in the middle, who want to analyse and decide on solutions, who feel their voice isn't being heard.

Rather than me just going away and bringing a proposal for a new way to "do democracy" through student council and its sub-committees, I want to include students in this analysing and decision making process, before bringing my proposal to Student Council – with a hope to implement any changes or processes in the second term.

With this in mind, it is my intention to use a Working Group which has been formed to ensure a demographically representative group of engaged students can feed into the process, using the demographic data we have on our members from the University. With this Working Group, and using resources from NUS for guidance, I will facilitate discussion and ideas through 3-4 meetings with a view to bring an outcome to Council. This might be to propose a change of our democratic structures, or it might be to remain as we have always done, or it might be something different entirely; we just don't know.

I seek Council's support for what I am proposing, and I will keep Council updated throughout the process.

Proposer: Brian Alcorn, President

Seconded: Olivia Hill, Vice-President Welfare & Community