



Manchester Debating Union

COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: 28/01/2015

Attendance: Declan, Conor, Becky, Alex, Becky, Katie Mo., Chloe, Rose, Robert, Katie Mc. Mhairi, Ria, Laura, Helen

Apologies: Josh

Agenda:

- Chair prerequisite: **VOTE**
- Constitutional change to Exec voting system: **VOTE**
- Sponsorship: discussion about sponsorship for the coming year
- Schools: update on the upcoming schools competition
- Communications: Update

1. Chair Prerequisite:

Proposal: changing the chair prerequisites

A constitutional change to make it a prerequisite for anyone running for the position of chair to have previously had role in the House Committee (incl. Externals Officer).

Why this is necessary:

- The role of chair has become linked to a great extent to public debates and events, having the previous exposure and knowledge of how public debate event management works, and are then better able to do their role.

Above passed on 12/11/2015.

Update 15/01/2015**Proposal:**

Candidates for the position of chair should have organised at least one public debate for the Manchester Debating Union, this includes public addresses, panel events and public debates. The outgoing chair should give ample warning of this and allow candidates who ask the ability to organise an event. This should be done at the same time as advertising the House Committee at the end of 2nd semester (for the Summer Period), again at the start of 1st Semester, and then lastly at the start of 2nd semester.

Update 26/01/2015**Counter Proposal:**

Proposal: candidates for chair should have served on committee for one year (same as president).

Why:

The chair is the head of the committee and has oversight of the committee, implying they need to have an understanding of committee dynamics and how roles interact with each other which isn't gained just by being on house committee. Also, successful chairs in the past haven't had event managing our public debate experience (when one of the main duties in the role was to organise public debates), again implying that it isn't important to have experience.

Discussion on the first proposal:

- Chloe are there limiting spaces on the house committee, would this be an issue?
- Conor also stressed that this needs to be often reminded, so that people are not taken by surprise.
- We need to keep a record of who did what debate, but Declan assured us that there is already a record of that, and Becky added that people should be able to appeal to committee if somebody they were treated unfairly regarding this. And of course we have evidence.

As an amendment: if you would like to make an appeal on having organised a public debate a chair an externals says that you haven't, then you can either take it yourself to committee, or request for the equity officer to take it to committee on your behalf.

Vote:

Yes: 10

No: 2

Abstentions: 0

Passed

Discussion on second update:

- Need to clarify exactly what the parameters are.
- Conor: one semester and not being removed from committee after one semester (this needs to be further discussed)
- Alex: one legitimate term, without any objections raised.
- Becky: large part of chair is public debates and they will learn from helping out with debates.
- Becky: organisation of the debates is the important part. You might want second years to do it because they have the time to do things. We don't need to formalise it.

Vote:

Yes: 1

No 9

Abstain 2

Not passed

2. Constitutional change to the Exec. Voting system:

Proposal: Changing the voting system from First Past the Post to the Alternative Vote

Executive positions are currently decided by FPTP.

In FPTP everyone votes for their favourite candidate. The candidate with the most votes wins. However, if the vote is split between several candidates someone may win with less than 50% of the vote, so a candidate could win who over 50% of voters did not want. The MDU executive elections are high stakes, as there are only 5 elected positions which are sometimes very hotly contested. Often, someone will not run for a position as they are worried they will split the vote and an unpopular or less competent person will get in due to this. This stops good competent people running for elections. We want as many good competent people as possible to run, and always make sure that whoever wins an executive position is preferred by over 50% of the electorate of the MDU.

To solve this, I propose we change to another electoral system called the alternative vote (AV). AV is a preferential system where the voter has the chance to rank the candidates in order of preference. The voter puts a '1' by their first choice a '2' by their second choice, and so on, until they no longer wish to express any further preferences or run out of candidates. Candidates are elected outright if they gain more than half of the first preference votes. If not, the candidate who lost (the one with least first preferences) is eliminated and their votes are redistributed according to the second (or next available) preference marked on the ballot paper. This process continues until one candidate has half of the votes and is elected. This means two good candidates can run without the worry of stealing votes from the other, as the second best of those two will then be eliminated and their votes redistributed. You then get the candidate the most people want. This system is used to choose leadership positions in most political parties (basically most things that are several people running for one post).

- Becky: using alternative vote, because it is quite important. Reference back to old committee minutes to see reasons (they were repeated during this meeting)
- Laura: people need to understand what they are doing and how it works. This can only work as long as we are willing to teach people.
- Katie Mo.: One of the key issues in this debate is that the person getting the role is not necessarily the person that is liked the most.
- Chloe raised the issue of people getting worried about splitting the vote, this does not change and it might not stop people from running.
- Alex: introduced the concept of electronic voting, and making sure that AV would work.

Need 11 votes to pass this. 12 voting here.

yes 5.5

no 3.5

abstain 3

Not passed.

3. Sponsorship:

- We need to make the sponsorship package shorter.
- Mhairi: need to see how much we are asking for, what they would say. Need to add that for each thing. Worth looking for the IV again, think very carefully about that.
- **Becky and Helen need to look at getting money from the SU/social responsibility**

4. Schools:

An update from Rose on what is happening with schools, what we need to be doing/is expected of us. Be there at 8 sam alex foyer.

5. Communications:

- Google drive: get on it, send your email addresses to Alex.
- Updates: things should go through Alex: he can figure things out so that we have good timing, and it looks relatively professional.
- Invites: because of the limitations of facebook, we need people to invite other people, so makes sure that before events, you invite people from your friends who are in the MDU/in the facebook group.
- Need for photographers: keep on the lookout for photographers.