



Manchester Debating Union

COMMITTEE MEETING

12/11/2014

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

Apologies: Katie Mc, Josh, Martin

Previous action items:

- Making a list of competitions → make a calendar, ALEX needs to make a calendar on the website.
- Declan needs to release the competition
- Chloe: that equity officer should put together a policy regarding the area of each member of committee. This could also be done with the chair.

Chloe: policy document about the committee roles and the one about sending to competitions

Alex: the constitution different on website: needs to switch the constitutions to the websites and make a calendar about sending to competitions

Vote on advanced training:

Proposal 1

Summary: Advanced training should remain selective unless numbers attending drop. The existence of advanced and the level required to join will be known to members, anyone can ask to join at any time. Rejected applications will be logged with the equity officer who will report on inclusiveness of policy. Policy will be reviewed in January.

Detailed proposal:

- All members of the MDU will have access to information about advanced training - its existence will be known as will criteria to join.
- Band 1 and 2 judges will invite members to advanced training if they fulfil one or more of the following criteria:
 1. Speaking between a 70-75+

2. Show great enthusiasm for debating and want to improve (so particularly around the lower end of 70-75 bracket, enthusiasm can be used as a criteria even if speaking level is lower)
- Any member can apply to join advanced at any time by asking a Band 1 or 2 judge. If they do not fit the criteria set out above the judge will tell them the criteria and suggest ways in which they can improve, as well as inviting them to ask again in a few weeks. (judges should always give clear suggestions as to how improvement can be accomplished e.g. going to more IVs, prepping debates at home etc...) - all rejected applications will be logged with the equity officer so they can be monitored.
 - The training co-ordinator will ask band 1-2 judges after each session for speakers they feel fit the above criteria - to check that they are thinking about who to ask.
 - Band 1 and 2 judges will be cycled between rooms so that speakers currently in lower rooms are not missed.
 - The policy for admittance to advanced training will be reviewed after the first semester to ensure it is fair and will be opened if it is found to exclude promising debaters or if advanced training does not have enough members for a debate.
 - Once members have joined advanced training they are welcome to continue attending.

Proposal 2

- Advanced Training is publicised along with a list of criteria expected of those who attend.
- Those who reach that criteria are free to be invited by band 1 and 2 Judges
- At the end of week 8 once all technical skills have been completed, those who are enthusiastic can also attend advance training.
- They have until the end of semester (a month) to reach the standards of advanced training, or may be asked to return down to the general training session.
- The Training Officer also reserves the ability to stop new people who show an obviously large gulf in skill such that they would not gain considerably from advanced training from attending until they improve in the general training session.
- Multiple advanced training rooms, in a semi-tiered system.
- This maximizes the number of people we can get to an IV skill level, and as such gives us a larger pool of talent to improve, and will in the long run maximize the competitiveness of the MDU.

Vote: vote on each proposal individually

Proposal 1

- Yes 11
- No 0
- Abstention 0

No point to vote for proposal 2

Becky added that we need to publicize training, but it was added that in the this we need to add that when you come to advanced you also need to come to Tuesday Training. You should prioritise Tuesday training. People might get bored, but then we should have judge developing a lot sooner, so that good freshers can participate. Alex added that this is a good discussion to have with the new training officer.

Declan needs to write a policy about attending Monday training as well as Tuesday.

House committee policy vote

Policy:

Proposal:

- The House Committee, as a body is limited to 10 people (including Externals and Chair, who both chair and lead the committee).
- Members of the House Committee are chosen by the Externals Officer and the Chair after Committee Positions are chosen by the exec.
- Members of the House Committee have specific roles, such as (but not limited to) - Finding speakers for debates, finding speakers for addresses, organising the filming of events, sorting out the rooms (getting tables, chairs etc), ushering people in.
- I see this as having dual roles, everyone either finds speakers for debates/addresses, then has another role on top of that.

Why this is necessary:

- This provides a firm and stable structure to the House Committee, giving distinct roles to the body and it be a decision making body.
- Makes it more likely that people will want to get involved in the House Committee.
- As the MDU grows, and our events become more popular, the expectation is also greater, which increases our need to be able to fill that, which can happen with a larger, more legitimate and serious House Committee.
- Different roles may be necessary in the future if we do continue to grow, ticketing etc, if we have this structure in place already then we'll be well ahead.
- More likely to get more, and hopefully better, speakers.
- More people focused on doing this job, seen as a much more important role.
- Similar structure to other debating unions such as Durham, who are very successful at getting a broad range of speakers and celebrity addresses.
- Free's up Chairs time
- Not having to spend most of their time contacting speakers
- Able to focus on overseeing inner working of committee and providing support there.

Amendments after discussions

- Committee Members can sit on House Committee - Treasurer be part of the House Committee to ensure insight in regards to Budget.
- House Committee Responsible for putting forward list of Public Debate motions by specified date for each Semester - which is then ratified by the committee.

It was decided that we should vote on whether we want to change the way the house committee works rather than on the policy directly.

Questions about whether or not treasurer should sit on the house committee. Declan added that committee vote overrides house committee vote. It would take pressure off us. We need more definition, committee still need editorial control for the publicity.

Vote:

- For: 11
- Against: 0
- Abstain: 0

Declan needs to upload ratified policy by the 19th.

Chair pre-requisites:

Proposal:

A constitutional change to make it a prerequisite for anyone running for the position of chair to have previously had a 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.

- This is so that we can protect the role of chair.
- Becky added that we should on whether we want a prerequisite for this the way we have one for the role of President
- But Mhairi added that some good chairs have not been externals.
- Conor: organizing debates is very stressful; you have to be able to keep on top of it, this would give you a good idea of the work. But Alex pointed out that as there were only 10 places on House Committee, people might find it hard to get involved.
- We might be able to scale the size up and down.

Vote for a prerequisites (we need to ratify the policy):

Yes: 11

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Lifetime membership:

- Mhairi wants to change the membership, as this could make us into a more competitive society. We could have different models and variants of membership (recreational and competitive membership for example)
- Alex: we need to look at the actual economics of it, surviving as a society, not just the ideals
- In order for this to work, before purchasing membership, one could go to one free competition, novice or other (if you have missed it).
- Lifetime membership for alumni?
- We need to have a written policy for this

Chloe pro-am policy to write up, by the 19th

Remind Katie about the judge/speak policy

Policy from Mhairi about Membership