

YUSU Policy Development Review Report

Contents

[1.Context of Review](#)

[1.1 Time to change](#)

[1.2 How we got to this point](#)

[1.3 A changing context: Covid-19 lessons and the value of 'knowing'](#)

[Understanding lived experience](#)

[Clarity on representation](#)

[Use of a new platform](#)

[2. Recommendations](#)

[2.1 Focus on a simple, dynamic and empowering approach](#)

[2.2 Central digital point for student ideas: YUSUggestions](#)

[2.3 Officer Group to play stronger role in policy](#)

[2.4 Splitting of accountability and policy development](#)

[2.5 Adapting the Policy Coordinator role](#)

[Appendix A: Student Consultation Feedback on Idea 1](#)

[Appendix B: Student Consultation Feedback on Idea 2](#)

[Appendix C: Student Consultation Feedback on Idea 3](#)

[Appendix D: Student Consultation Feedback on Idea 4](#)

[Appendix E: Student Consultation Feedback on Idea 5](#)

1.Context of Review

1.1 Time to change

As YUSU grows and changes to adapt to the varied needs of our diverse membership, it is vital we continually reflect on and tailor the ways we involve students in decision-making and shaping our priorities.

We embarked on a policy review because we know there is more we can do to connect with our students, to generate new insights from them, to support their education, and to give them the capacity to influence change at the University and beyond. Our policy activity has been challenging for some time; as it has been for lots of student unions across the country. We know our democratic activities need to reach a wider range of students and be easier to navigate. We know we have to be responsive to student needs and ideas, but also provide a space for them to debate and take action at the University of York and beyond.

The reality over the last few years has been the same small group of students (PTOs, Sabbs, student media leaders) using the policy process to 'get things done' at YUSU. The process has become transactional; with students often expecting their ideas/wishes to be implemented by YUSU immediately, once their policy has passed. The focus has invariably

been on narrow issues that YUSU can control rather than influence - which doesn't seem to chime with delivering on the changing interests and needs of students, or YUSU's wider charity objectives on campaigning, influencing change, citizenship and participation. Further, the transactional nature of the process often facilitates divisions and detachment from the Union, rather than supporting community building ambitions.

We reflected that the limited engagement with policy at YUSU and the nature of the policies going through the process was, in part, due to the structures we currently have in place. We decided that in order to generate meaningful participation in YUSU policy and shift the focus from the summative moment of approval to the formative process of development, we needed to transform the way we think about and organise policy.

1.2 How we got to this point

We appointed an independent consultant to conduct a review of our policy process, including the composition and role of the Policy Review Group (PRG). In June 2019, Kathryn held a number of focus groups with key groups including elected officers, college chairs and presidents, and ordinary students. Alongside this she undertook interviews with over thirty students with varying levels of participation in Union activity. This was followed by a further half day consultation session with internal stakeholders including incoming and outgoing sabbatical officers, incoming and outgoing student trustees and staff.

Kathryn presented to Trustees on key themes identified, specifically: transparency; the interrelationship with College communities; and patchy understanding of systems and processes. She recommended two options: a 'status quo plus' model and 'YUSU council'. Following discussion at the Board it was agreed her final recommendations would integrate these approaches. Following a final report submitted to the Board in October 2019, Kathryn's final recommendations were eventually condensed into five key ideas for further exploration and consultation with students.

Consultation took place with key stakeholders in the following main formats:

- A physical consultation session with the Officer Group (Sabbatical and Part-Time Officers) on 07/11/2019.
- A physical consultation session open and advertised to all students held on 22/11/2019.
- An online feedback survey as a form of online consultation which was hosted on the YUSU website and sent directly to key student groups. The survey was open for responses from November 2019 til March 2020.
- Physical briefing of the Academic Leadership Team (ALT) on the review on 27/01/2020 where they were then signposted to the online survey.
- Trustee presentations and discussion in June and October 2019 followed by an opportunity for trustees to feedback on the proposals in writing in late 2019.

Student consultation in Autumn and Spring terms of 2019/20 was based around "The 5 Big Ideas" that we saw as the basis of the changes we are wanting to make. These were:

1. The creation of three strands, YUSU Actions, YUSU Policies and YUSU Debates, that make up the overarching "Make a Change" process for all submitted ideas.

2. Create a central point for students to share their ideas on our new website: YUSUggestions.
3. Replace the current Policy Review Group with a Policy Forum, which would comprise of 15-20 students.
4. The new Policy Forum would have a greater role in the development of policy.
5. The Chair of the new Policy Forum will be paid at the rate of a student staff member at YUSU

This consultation closed in Spring 2020, the original plan was that the proposed approach would be finalised with Trustees and Officer Group during Summer term, however Covid-19 and the workforce implications and re-prioritisation of activity has meant that this work, alongside a number of other key projects has been temporarily paused.

The full student consultation feedback can be found in the appendices.

1.3 A changing context: Covid-19 lessons and the value of 'knowing'

Covid-19 has brought unprecedented challenges to all aspects of our daily lives and students have been impacted greatly. When students arrive or return to the University of York, they will be faced with predominantly online teaching, reduced opportunities to participate in social and extracurricular activities and a socially distanced campus.

In this 'remote' and socially distanced world, it will be increasingly important to cut through to our students by offering simple points of entry to political and policy engagement. Moreover, there is a greater need to offer a single and intuitive digital platform via our website; enabling students to share their questions, ideas or views and receive swift responses from their representatives. Covid-19 has confirmed and accelerated the need to create a dynamic approach to policy, where a larger number of students can share their ideas and perspectives on our SUggestions page - like they would on instagram, facebook or twitter - without the need to develop a more traditional 'policy' idea.

Covid-19 has also made it even more important to provide students with a platform to share their lived experiences. Covid-19 has completely transformed the experiences of students in higher education, both socially and academically. It is crucial that YUSU provides empowering ways for students to develop and share personal narratives based on their experiences at the University of York. Student stories/narratives are crucial for improving experiences during this challenging period. 'Narrative knowing' will help YUSU learn deeply about how students are interpreting events, their values, beliefs and their experiences.

As we adapt our democratic approaches to a post-lockdown 'new normal', it's important to reflect on the effectiveness of new ways of working and the lessons we've learned over the last five months.

Understanding lived experience

Of particular note is the 'Life in Lockdown' project. Funded from the University's access and participation plan, 'Life in Lockdown' has involved students sharing their experiences of

lockdown in the form of stories. The creativity has been astounding; we've received artwork, videos, digital stories, written accounts, recipes, spoken word poems and photographs. In total, 40 students have submitted over 100 representations of their lived experiences during the lockdown period. Many students have spoken about the pleasure and importance of the process of storytelling. The project has given them a platform to be creative, to be heard and to educate YUSU and the University about the impacts of Covid-19. The implications for policy are clear. The process of developing and sharing is just as important as the content itself, which means developing empowering, enjoyable and accessible modes of engagement. Secondly, we need to think about policy less instrumentally, as just the moment of 'approval' for getting things done, and more about determining, in partnership with our students, what their interests and views are, and how this should inform decision-making.

Clarity on representation

In this difficult time, it is also vital that students know who their Reps (Sabbs and PTOs) are, what they are working on, how they can engage with them and how they can hold them to account. These are all areas the policy review had been exploring, but our socially distanced world has heightened the importance of them. Whilst the impact of Covid-19 has been felt across the population as a whole, students and young people have certainly felt some aspects more sharply. Uncertainty is underpinning the job market impacting many students' career plans longer term, as well as the availability of the hospitality and retail jobs that have traditionally provided part time opportunities for students. Many also feel uncertain about future study arrangements.

Transparency is critical for accountability and for student trust in YUSU. For students to trust YUSU's decision-making, particularly in light of Covid-19, they must know what their representatives stand for, what their priorities are, and have the ability to engage with and influence them. Clearly, a key tenet of representative accountability is having an accessible process for when things are not going well and students want to communicate their dissent. However, an often overlooked aspect of accountability, which is even more imperative during times of crisis, is citizen engagement and participation. As such, when thinking about accountability, we need to consider what platforms and tools will best enable students to engage, individually and collectively, and also how to connect students with their representatives.

Use of a new platform

To provide students with an opportunity to ask questions and propose ideas during the Covid-19 pandemic, the current policy process was adapted into the online 'Covid-19 Forum', using the SUMS SUGgestions module on the YUSU website. Any student could use the online forum by writing a submission, using the 'thumbs up' function and leaving comments. Students submitted ideas and questions to the Forum, covering a range of themes such as academic contingency policy and accommodation, and received swift responses from Sabbatical Officers. They could also submit views and experiences, which

other students could interact with, providing an opportunity for building community and connections by sharing their lived experiences, as discussed above.

The Covid-19 Forum proved a useful trial run of the SUGgestions platform with regards to student engagement and the technical running of the process. Students appeared to receive the forum well, with 20 submissions over a period of 7 weeks. The majority of submissions were questions, rather than ideas, experiences or views, which was to be expected with students' pure need for information over the pandemic. Sabbatical Officers promoted the submissions they had answered on social media, sparking further debate and direct interaction between students and Officers. We had several positive reactions from students when the forum was launched by the Union President, many enthusiastic about the clear digital platform through which to get their questions answered. The forum showed that students respond to having a simple, central and digitally accessible way of communicating their ideas to YUSU. The use of the platform also would allow ideas to be submitted at any time, removing the barrier of students having to stick to the submission periods of current policy cycles.

The technical side to setting up the Forum through the SUGgestions module shone a light on the limitations of the platform. Initial plans for the main policy process focused on using the 'tabs' in SUGgestions to categorise submissions into the 3 proposed strands: YUSU Actions, Policy and Debate. However, the platform does not allow the flexibility we hoped - e.g. the names of the tabs are fixed. Moreover, submissions cannot be manually moved between tabs easily, this relies on the interaction level from students 'voting', along with a complicated process of approval in the operational side of the website. Facilitating SUGgestions is a time consuming process that requires process planning and the strict following of a guidance procedure, particularly due to the inability to 'undo' any action in the operational side without assistance from the central SUMS team in Lincoln. The facilitation of the procedure was therefore carried out by Student Voice staff owing to the level of responsibility and the fact that access to the operational side of SUMS requires staff level access. The operational implications of using SUGgestions need to be considered when looking at roles and responsibilities within the new policy process.

In order to locate SUGgestions at the heart of a dynamic new policy process, timeframes for publication of submissions and student leader responses would have to be considered in relation to staff and sabbatical officer capacity during term time. The logical step might be to extend timeframes, now we have moved on from focusing exclusively on Covid-19 and the need for urgent responses has decreased. Another lesson learnt from running the Forum was that for it to be successful, the Sabbatical Officers need to be heavily invested in the project and integrate their response role into their work plans.

2. Recommendations

In the light of the themes identified in our initial consultation with students (and student leaders) and the likely long term impact of Covid-19 on the Union, students' experiences and University life more widely, we feel that the approach we had been developing provided a

good foundation, but was not sufficiently future proof, simplistic or accessible for a much-changed world.

2.1 Focus on a simple, dynamic and empowering approach

It is far too easy, when thinking about policy in a student union context, to get bogged down in the processes of governance: who makes the decisions, how decisions are made, objectivity, conflicts of interests etc. What this moves us away from is the 'why' of policy and exploring critically what we are trying to achieve. In simple terms, policy in a union context should be an enabler, about collective action and students having the power to participate in decision-making and priority setting. Distance between students and their representatives and overly bureaucratic processes can undermine the foundations of this collective solidarity and participation.

A simple digital platform - complemented by social media - can provide new spaces within which greater numbers of students can articulate their views, ideas and questions, challenge their representatives and enter into dialogue with other students. Students will not have to develop motions in order to participate; they will not have to have a clear sense of how their idea should be implemented from the outset; and they will not need a deep knowledge of YUSU's democratic structures. The first stage of voicing a simple idea, question or opinion, via the website, will be the same for everyone. This clean and simple approach removes barriers for students who do not know about traditional policy development and purely want to engage with their union. For this reason we recommend moving away from referring to the process as a policy process.

However, we also want this new approach to offer something for all students, to be dynamic. Students should be empowered to simply share a quick idea - e.g. "can all YUSU bars sell nachos" - and gauge whether there is support from others. Students should also be empowered to share more contentious and transformative ideas, which they can then discuss, explore and develop with other students and YUSU Officers.

2.2 Central digital point for student ideas: YUSUggestions

From the lessons learnt from the trial run of the SUggestions platform, we feel confident that this central digital point for all ideas will be a positive route for increasing student engagement with the process. We have learnt from recent events that using a digital platform can future-proof the process, in a time where social contact may be limited for the foreseeable future and students are increasingly looking online to connect in an easily accessible way. The voting and commenting function of the platform is hugely beneficial to widening student engagement with the policy process, as any student can easily interact with ideas with the click of a button. With regards to the technical capabilities of SUggestions, whilst the pilot during the lockdown has demonstrated its limitations very clearly, we feel it still can be used for the process. Students would submit to the central point, not needing to differentiate between action, policy or debate, which will be determined afterwards. This is due to the platform's limitations in being able to display categorised submissions, however this positively could lead to a simpler student experience and enable

students to work in partnership to develop policy. We recognise that the presentation of the site, and language and communications around it are important for managing expectations on the tiered approach to policy development, at the same time however, student feedback reflected that many valued the development process inherent to current arrangements. We recommend work begins by Student Voice staff to develop the simplest process flow for user experience and viable operation. This would be underpinned by terms of reference and an operational protocol. A first stage sign off would ensure any material published was suitable for online publication, managing potential risks.

2.3 Officer Group to play stronger role in policy

Officers responding to questions and ideas on our Covid-19 Forum during the height of the pandemic, worked well, with the online platform providing a simplistic and expeditious space for dialogue between students and their elected representatives. The Covid-19 Forum also helped the Officers understand what mattered most to students during a particularly challenging time. In light of this, we feel it is important that enabling dialogue and connections between students and Officers should be at the heart of future approaches to policy at YUSU.

One of the strengths of the existing approach is the involvement of elected officers in shaping policy through consulting with and involving the students and groups that they represent. Feedback in the initial stages of the consultation with the consultant was very positive on Officers' roles in policy execution, describing the "accessibility" this meant was embedded in the approach. Students also emphasised an appreciation of the development aspects of the approach to policy and implementation. This theme continued to play out in the later stages of student consultation, with the Forum idea being well received because of the focus on consultation and responding to students.

Officers' roles extend to setting the direction of the Union with the Group as a whole being responsible for the direction of day to day activity in accordance with decisions of relevant bodies. This Group is also elected to provide guidance and input into operational and strategic planning. In addition, alongside the existing Policy Coordinator, the President of the Union has overall responsibility for the Policy Process, ensuring it is run fairly and reflects the views of a broad range of students. Whilst this Group is active from a consultation perspective, there is a disconnect in practice from Officers' roles developing and implementing ideas in partnership with students. In relation to the role of President this was highlighted in consultation with Trustee as an area that could be more firmly embedded into the role.

It's proposed that the democratically elected Officer Group play a more central role in the policy process, replacing the PRG. This approach should help ensure that Officers work and collaborate directly with a wider range of the students that they represent, helping to bridge any disconnect and put the elected Officer Group more centrally at the heart of policy development. This approach would see elected Officers at the forefront of decisions on next steps with policy and how the process flows between different stages, for example, from a straightforward action to policies for development or debate.

2.4 Splitting of accountability and policy development

Transparency has been a core driver of this programme and a central theme throughout the consultation process. It was identified at an early stage as a weakness in terms of procedures with students describing “no real accountability of the Policy coordinator” and “suspicion of the role of staff”. Further, while the existing role of the Policy Coordinator and Policy Review Group is focussed on policy development as well as accountability, in reality in recent years time has been spent disproportionately on the policy process rather than the accountability aspect of the brief. It’s proposed that the brief is split to enable enhancements to both elements of the role and a stronger focus on both policy and accountability, to improve transparency and accessibility. The existing democracy framework provides for activities such as open meetings, which if utilised within this student-led framework could strengthen accountability for decision-making and encourage and embed debate and dialogue with officers beyond the AGM.

2.5 Adapting the Policy Coordinator role

With the splitting of accountability and policy development, we recommend a rethink to the current Policy Coordinator role. With Officer Group taking responsibility for the policy consultation, development and decision making, the need for a formalised Policy Coordinator is diminished. As proposed in the consultation, we are wanting to move towards the role having a solely operational and administrative function. Student consultation showed strong support for remunerating this operational role, however due to the current financial situation we cannot commit to this in the short term. We recommend that Officer Group will lead the process supported on the administrative side by Student Voice staff members initially. When the financial situation allows we hope to employ a member of staff to work in the Student Voice team and assist with the operational side, either in a part time student staff role, or through a student voice internship position.

The new Accountability Committee will need a chair to lead on the function of the group, taking the accountability side of the current Policy Coordinator role. When looking at the consultation feedback there were strong views about the need for a student to be elected to ensure decision making was in the hands of students. Therefore we recommend the Accountability Chair will be elected in a campus wide election, likely included into the main YUSU Elections in Spring Term. However, the position holder would have to step back from the setting of the election rules if they were considering re-running for the position. Electing this position satisfies the call for the Policy Coordinator role to be accountable to students. Drawing on proposals previously submitted by Josh McKenzie it’s proposed that the Accountability Chair would lead a Committee.

Trustees may wish to consider how the make up of the Committee could avoid vested interests; one option (supported by some trustees in earlier stages) may be that members could be selected at random from the student population, an alternative may be to hold places for representatives from existing student leadership networks, such as College Chairs and Presidents, the Sports Committee, Academic Leadership Team etc.

We are not recommending that the Committee has oversight of elections; we have concerns about the practicality of running elections by Committee given the need to ensure impartiality and turn around election decisions quickly. It is proposed that the Committee has a role in supporting elections, setting the rules and working collaboratively with the professional staff team to consider targets and act as a focus group to consider ideas and approaches on key events such as Election Results Night.

Appendix A: Student Consultation Feedback on Idea 1

The creation of three strands, YUSU Actions, YUSU Policies and YUSU Debates, that make up the overarching “Make a Change” process for all submitted ideas.

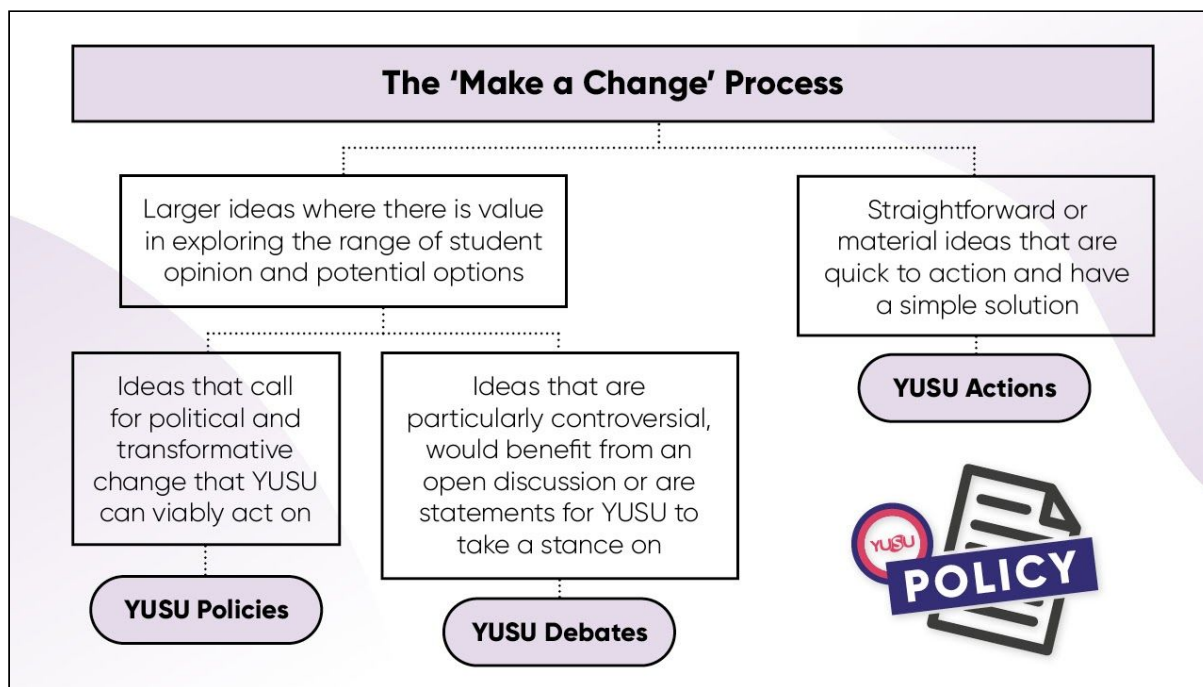


Fig 1. Graphic depicting the proposed three strands and their criteria.

- Officer Group strongly supported the creation of the three strands, believing it to be a simple and accessible framing. It was noted that the separation between Policies and Actions would be particularly beneficial, as in the current process the development of high quality policies is impeded by having to process “Actions” in the same way as true policy ideas. Officer’s commented that there needs to be strong, clear criteria which determines which strand an idea is falls into and a “human element” to the process needs to remain i.e. Policy Coordinator meeting with the proposer.
- From the online consultation form, there was almost 100% positive feedback with regards to the ‘Make a Change’ process with 3 strands. The small proportion of feedback that wasn’t explicitly positive was due to wanting more detail on the process before making a judgement.
- The Open Meeting discussion around the 3 strands was equally positive, feeding back that it is a more accessible, engaging and transparent system. Participants felt there needed to be an option to move ideas between strands as the idea is developed with the Policy Coordinator.
- Whilst YUSU Actions and Policies were seen as more clear cut, there was deeper discussion around YUSU Debates, likely due to this strand being the most radical change to the current system. Attendees highlighted the strand’s educational benefits and the opportunity to link with current debating societies. The concept of having a platform for students to discuss controversial issues and get actively involved in the

process was deemed important. However there were concerns over using a debate as a decision making process, specifically: attendance figures needed for an idea to pass; accessibility of having to physically attend to have your voice heard; and the potential of biased audiences.

- An issue highlighted in the physical consultations was the desire for the process to remain completely in student hands. Participants initially suggested a student group (e.g. Officer Group, the Policy Forum) should make this decision, however understood that this would mean the group would have to meet at an unreasonable frequency. Therefore it was agreed an appropriate and feasible approach would be for a staff member to allocate ideas to a strand but decided from a clear set of comprehensive criteria set by students.

Appendix B: Student Consultation Feedback on Idea 2

Create a central point for students to share their ideas on our new website: YUSUggestions.

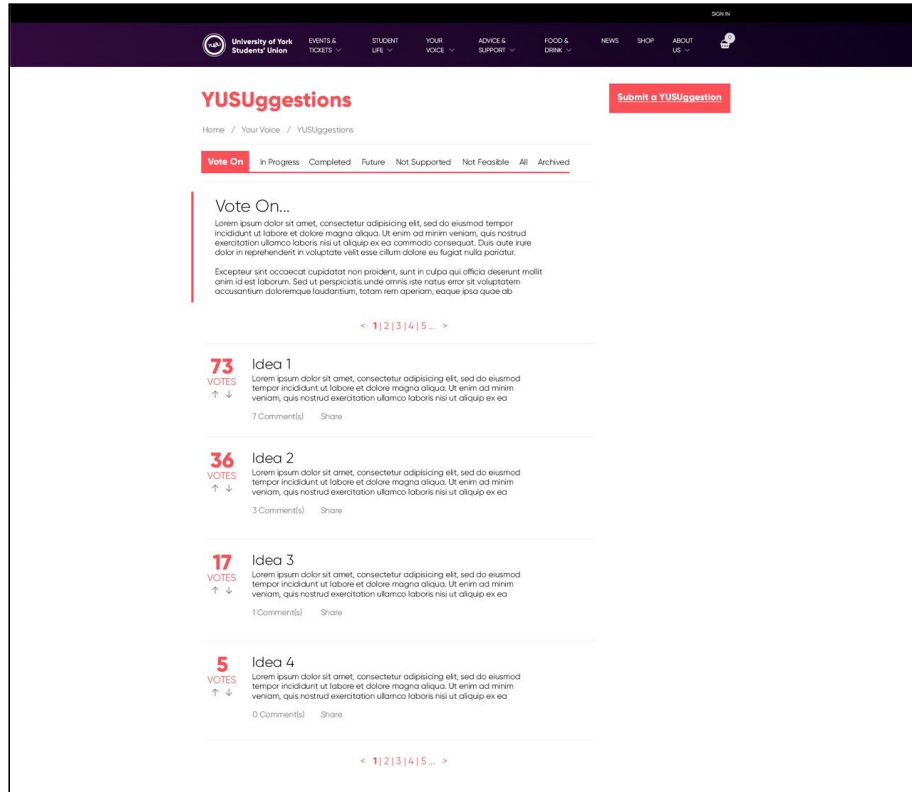


Fig 2. Mock up of SUGgestions web page.

- We received strong positive feedback we received from Officer Group about the use of a single clear submission point. Our website has the functionality to provide this through the SUGgestions module that has been successfully used at other Unions.
- We did not consult about the use of the SUGgestions platform in the online survey due to the strong positive feedback we received from Officer Group and its success at other Unions. We therefore feel confident going ahead using this platform and development is under way.

Appendix C: Student Consultation Feedback on Idea 3

Replace the current Policy Review Group with a Policy Forum, which would comprise of 15-20 students.

Initially Officer Group fed-back on the suggested composition of the Policy Forum from the external consultant's report. This was a "council-like" model of 15-20 students, with a membership of two full-time officers, part-time officers, college chairs, sports club presidents, society presidents and four open places. The individual members of the forum were fluid and different representatives from each leadership group could be sent to each meeting.

Officer Group feedback:

Whilst there was an agreement that the suggested membership would bring a broad range of knowledge, there were strong concerns of the practicalities of the model. It was commented that fluid membership brought risks of lack of accountability and made the logistics of training members problematic. However even the option of the suggested membership in a fixed format was not favoured by the group. Issues of lack of representation for key groups (e.g. two society presidents is a very small representation for over 300 societies) and the potential to become "cliquey" were raised. Also there was a dislike of the lack of diversity of students involved, with the majority of the membership being made up of students who are already involved in YUSU which provides little opportunity for ordinary students to be involved. It was noted these students already have a high workload and may not be able to volunteer more of their time to the forum.

In light of this negative feedback we consulted on the following alternative options during the open consultation (online and physical). These were:

- A Citizen's Jury - randomly selected students
- Officer Group plus randomly selected students
- The current Policy Review Group structure with increased membership - selected students who apply for the role
- Option to put forward an alternative choice



Fig 3. Resource used in the student consultation session.

2) Which students do you think should make up the policy decision making group, the "Policy Forum"? (Please tell us if you have another idea in the "Other" option)

24 responses

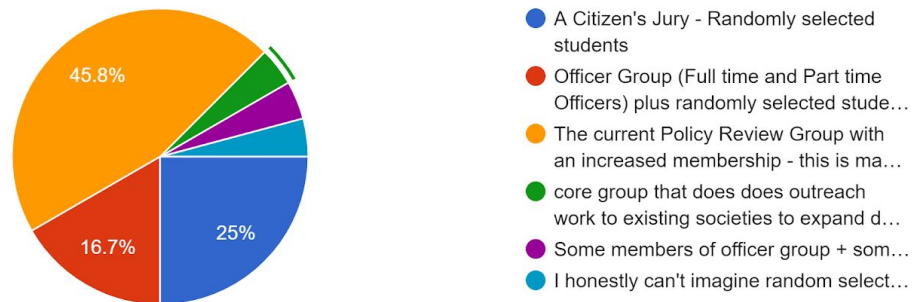


Fig 4. Online consultation feedback graph.

- The majority of online consultation participants believed that the Policy Forum should follow the current PRG model with increased membership, as seen by the graph. Three participants used the "Other" option, two suggesting council-like structures and one describing a core group that reaches out to consult through student groups.
- The open meeting participants found the Citizen's Jury option to be infeasible due to the concerns that randomly selected students would not engage or attend meetings, at least not without an incentive. Participants also felt involving Officer Group would enhance the powers of already involved students and there would be a risk of Officers dominating meetings with randomly selected students being too intimidated to speak up in the meetings.
- Participants preferred the extended PRG model for its design of engaging students who are passionate about policy and choosing to be involved, rather than being selected to be. This model was also favourable for its ability to engage students who are new to YUSU, however it was noted that this does not allow the diversity of students that random selection would, with a certain "type" of student likely to apply. They also highlighted the risks in using newly engaged students to make decisions, as they may not understand the context around situations and how YUSU works.

Appendix D: Student Consultation Feedback on Idea 4

The new Policy Forum would have a greater role in the development of policy.

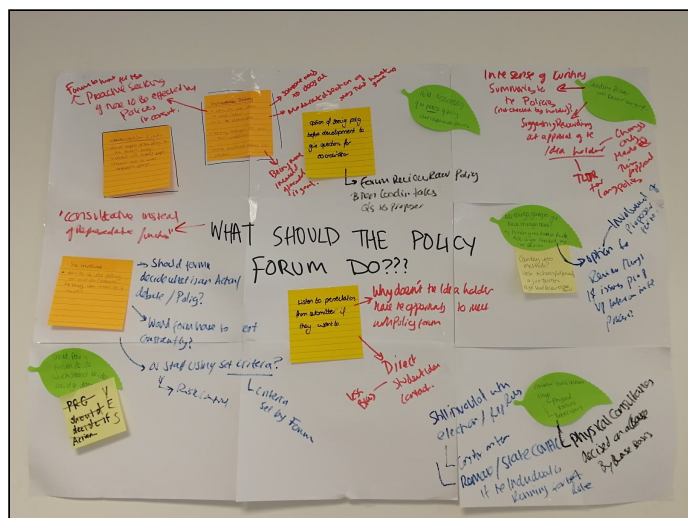


Fig 5. Online consultation feedback graph.

- In the online consultation students were asked “Do you think the new Policy Forum should play a greater and more active role in the development of policy?”. Respondents were generally in support of this question, with a few providing suggestions that the group’s remit should involve coordinating debates, refining policy and providing policy submitters feedback on their ideas.
- To develop more detail of the forum’s responsibilities, In the Open Meeting participants were asked the broader question of “If the new Policy Forum had a greater role in the development of policy, what should they do?” In relation to the submissions that are in the YUSU Ideas strand, participants had a variety of suggestions, which can be summarised as follows:
 - Access - the forum should work with the policy submitter to reword/rewrite the submission into language that is easy for all students to understand. They should also meet with the idea proposer directly to ensure full integration of the student in the process.
 - Consultation - it was agreed that the forum should have a particular focus on consultation, potentially even making this the group’s core function. Participants suggested that each member of the forum should act as a ‘consultation lead’ who is responsible for consulting with a particular group of students on any proposals. The forum should also proactively seek out the thoughts of any students/groups who would be directly affected by a particular policy, run physical consultation sessions and engage student “experts” to provide context and knowledge of the subject matter.
 - Implementation - it was suggested the forum should also have a deeper involvement in the implementation of passed policies, however there were questions around the specific details of how this would work in practise.

The following more general responsibilities were also raised:

- Election rules - participants suggested that the forum should be involved in the setting of the YUSU election rules, with members being required to disclose connections and step down from the forum if they are considering standing as a candidate.
- Being involved in setting the criteria for the 3 strands of the process.

Appendix E: Student Consultation Feedback on Idea 5

The Chair of the new Policy Forum will be paid at the rate of a student staff member at YUSU

Officer Group and the participants of the Open Meeting were originally consulted on the proposal of a paid, appointed student to Chair the Policy Forum. This proved to be a contentious issue, so we split into two separate decisions for the online consultation.

Do you think this should become a paid role?

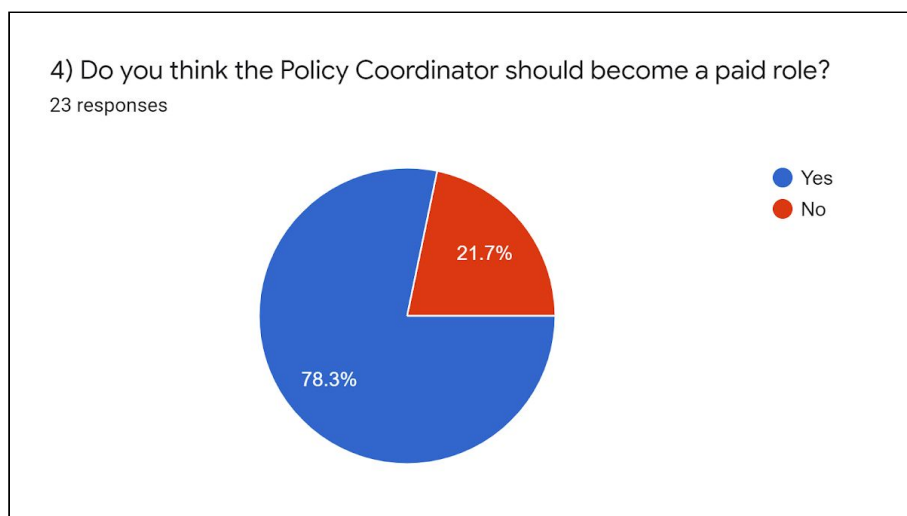


Fig 6. Online consultation feedback graph.

- As seen from the graph, the majority of online feedback felt that the Policy Coordinator/Chair of the Policy Forum role should be paid, with the accompanying reasons citing payment is justified due to the high administrative workload.
- Officer group and open meeting participants also agreed that the workload warranted payment. However there were concerns that other student volunteers such as Part-time Officers (PTOs) would question why their roles are not paid. Therefore for the online consultation it was explained to participants that the Policy Coordinator would play a more operational role than other student volunteers, which demands a time commitment and level of engagement that removes the autonomy intrinsic to other student representative roles.
- There were also concerns expressed during the Officer Group consultation that converting the chair/leader of the policy group into a student staff position may cause the perception of staff making decisions on policy rather than students.

Should the role be elected or appointed (by a student panel)?

5) Paying the Policy Coordinator affects how we can recruit them. After reading the information regarding this at <https://yusu.org/your-voice/polic...eas>, do you think the Policy Coordinator should be:
23 responses

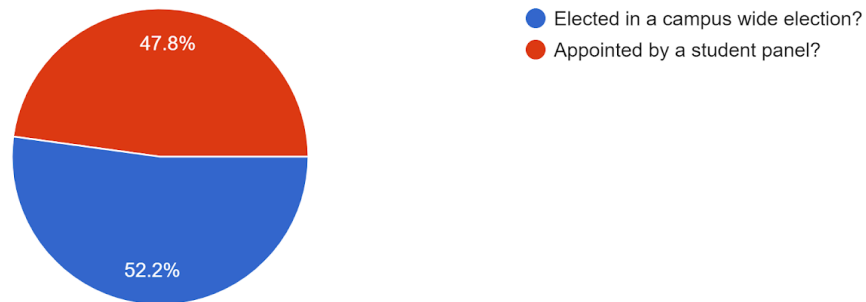


Fig 7. Online consultation feedback graph.

- As the graph shows, the election or appointment of the Policy Coordinator role is the most divisive issue found from the online consultation. It was explained to online and open meeting participants that the role would be a non-representative, operational role which we propose should be appointed by a student panel, partly due to the Education Act dictating that no student can hold an elected and paid position for more than two years, thus limiting the role holders progression to a Sabbatical Officer role. However there were still strong opinions expressed that appointment of the role would lack the accountability and student decision making that they believe there should be for this role.
- In the Open Meeting it was highlighted that if the position was appointed then the individual shouldn't be able to vote in the forum decisions as they aren't a student representative. However current PRG members are appointed and are voting members of the group, therefore this issue may not be relevant.
- The participants of the open meeting were passionate about recruitment of the position involving as many students as possible, in the absence of an election allowing them to have their voice heard. It was understood that a large interview panel would be daunting and inappropriate for a position at this level. A suggestion solution was including a presentation stage to the recruitment which student leaders could attend, prior to the candidates being interviewed by a smaller panel.