

Permanent Space for Commuters

Proposer: Ellie Nash (Union Council Representative, UEA Commuters' Society)

Seconded: Tyler Bell (Non-Portfolio Office)

Summary: This motion highlights the need for a permanent space for commuters on campus. As evidenced by the growing presence of the Commuters' Society, (30 members have joined since we formed at the start of this semester) a high proportion of UEA students are commuters. However, the experience of the committee and feedback from our members, strongly suggests that this community of students does not have any space at the university to relax or feel included.

Council Notes

1. Where people who live on campus or in student housing locally can return home in their breaks, the survey drafted by Commuters' Society shows over 40% of our members commute from over an hour away and are often left feeling they have nowhere to go, and that UEA have not adequately appreciated the difficulties or social disruption of being a commuting student.
2. Existing campus spaces, such as the Hive, Unio and the UEA library get full and it is stressful to find a seat.
3. There is no formal, permanent setting for commuters to bond and form connections with other commuters.
4. In a recent survey of Commuter Society members, no respondents said that they found it easy to find space on campus to relax or do work. Furthermore, 100% of respondents feel a permanent, dedicated space to commuters would be beneficial. ¹
5. A lack of adequate space can make commuting students feel that they lack a 'home' on campus and leave them struggling to socialise and make connections. ²
6. Other UK Universities have 'reserved spaces' such as common rooms which are imperative to commuter welfare. ³

Council Believes

1. There needs to be a permanent space provided for commuters to socialise and work, with adequate domestic and leisure / wellbeing facilities to accommodate these students during their day.
2. A dedicated space would allow commuter students to feel supported and involved in university life.
3. Accessibility and representation is a right of all students and we should lobby for this in areas where it is missing.
4. It is important that the University recognise the issues faced by students who commute. The University can and should do more to make commuting students feel a sense of belonging.

¹ <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-WM6T863W7/>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/dec/13/students-who-commute-to-university-are-getting-a-raw-deal>

³ <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/support/commuter-students/>

5. Having a dedicated space would begin to tackle the issues faced by these students and is key in helping to form connections and find support with others who are having a similar university experience.

Council Resolves

1. To lobby the university to provide a permanent space on campus that can be used by commuters for working and socialising.
2. To lobby the university to communicate with commuters in the design, implementation and accessibility of this space to ensure an adequate sense of belonging and support.