

Student Council Agenda – May 2025



Facilitator (s): Viljo Wilding (they/them) & Jayden Rushton (she/her),
Democratic Procedures Officers
Secretary: Em Harvey (she/her, Representation Manager)
Minute Secretary: Rhian Lister (she/her, Representation Coordinator)

Location: 5X107 (Frenchay Campus, X Block) and [Online](#)

Date: 15 May 2025

Time: 17:00 – 19:30

Welcome, Apologies & Housekeeping

DPO welcomed those in the room and online to Student Council and confirmed the housekeeping of Student Council, reminding observers that they do not have automatic speaking rights.

Introductions and Quoracy Check

Student Council Members in attendance:

Aasrit Durbha (ASI)
Amin Alhawary (NFI)
Anya Brentnall (Sport)
Charlie Moon (ASI)
Leila Powell (Sport)
Yeva Skoliuk (NFI)
Sofiia Shargorodskaiia (NFI)

Apologies received by:

Mia Welton (Reps)
Yash Kapoor (Reps)
Khadiza Hossain (VP Education)
Julienne Chipesia (Reps)

Others in attendance:

Em Harvey (Secretary)
Jayden Ruston (DPO)
Muhammad Habib (VP Sports & Health)
Lubyna Gardezi (VP Community & Welfare)
Rhian Lister (Minutes Secretary)
Sam Olure (SU President)
Viljo Wilding (DPO)
Umar Abbasi (VP Socs & Comms)
Mose-Issie Ebengho (BME Officer 25/26)
Ubaid Ullah (DPO 25/26)
Aoife Phillips (Plant Based Universities)
Jack Priestley (Sustainability Officer 25/26)

Not attended:

Ella Jones-Williams (Reps)
Jonathan Ayiemba (NFI)
Lily Lassiter (NFI)
Freddie Holt (ASI)
Jessica Jaszek (Sport)
Sheik Njie (Sport)
Skyler Kearsey (ASI)
Yanko Yankov (Sport)
Megan Schmidt (Reps)

Student Ideas Voting

[Plant-Based Universities](#)

Plant Based Universities Presentation

- Increase to 60% for plant-based options on campus, 10% yearly (subject to financial and social review)
- This aligns with the university's values
- Everyone gets a say on the SU menus
- Wish to make this as inclusive as possible
- There will be no ban or boycott of products
- 21 universities have already passed this including University of Bristol

DPO reminds members that there should be reasons for veto. The default is that an idea should pass.

- Does this have financial implications for The Students' Union?
- Is it in breach, or contrary to or inconsistent, with charity or education law or any other legal requirements
- Is it in the best interests of The Students' Union
- Will it affect the responsibilities of the trustees of The Students' Union?

[AI Generated images with UWE](#)

- Secretary gives context of this idea, that AI generated images have been posted by UWE on social media and this has already

been raised and discussed at the Board of Governors – this goes to show the power of Student Ideas.

- Council member raises that sometimes AI is helpful when you need a certain photo of people but don't have their consent for example
- DPO raises concerns about the impact on the planet and artists
- Additional context on the comments received on the Student Idea on how students are concerned about sustainability, the hypocrisy of being penalised for using semicolons in their essays as being perceived as using AI.

Due to the quoracy of Student Council members not being met, Student Council members were contacted to vote online to complete the process for these Student Ideas to be concluded this academic year. The result from this vote is below:

Number of Student Council members voting: 19 (out of 20, 16 needed for quoracy)

Plant-Based Universities: 8 approve, 9 veto, 2 abstain – two-thirds majority needed to veto as was passed by Executive committee, therefore Idea has been passed

AI Generated Images with UWE: 17 approve, 1 veto, 1 abstain – 5-star Student Idea with results being passed to Board of Trustees

Accountability Session

VP Societies and Communications

- Diversity Day: last year this was over 1 day, this year they held it across each campus site and over 3 days.
- More than 20 socs took part and brought their cultural food and performances
- Collaborated with No More Silence Magazine
- Will be giving money towards Society Awards
- 3014 total socs memberships as of end of March which is a 3% increase from last year
- Worked to enhance the sustainability education course with Sandrine

Questions

- **E-Sports society gaming room presented at Learning and Teaching Student Experience Committee (LTSEC), what was outcome?**
 - In next LTSEC they will come up with the results. Approached manager for facilities on room for E-sports soc but was unable to get a room. Will see what happens in LTSEC, if not, will raise in Academic Board
- **Introduced funding for Society Awards – has this affected the number of nominations and will you adjust the prize levels for next year?**
 - Nominations increased from last year, but tickets did not. Not sure about giving more funding for next year, but looking to reduce ticket prices next year potentially.

VP Community and Welfare

- Empowering student leadership with Welfare Committee e.g. designing CVs to support students' wellbeing
- Supporting with panic attacks, issues with sleep etc. Reached 8000 views (reel)
- Organised picnic meal in May and provided free food and refreshments, with the aim to reflect and refresh to support with mental health and provide sense of community.
- Anti-Sexual Campaign: We are Here. Fostered many partnerships. Campaign to raise awareness of the free, confidential support available for people who have experienced sexual assault.
- Employment and EDI panel
- Arranged vegan cook-off competition with prizes
- Student Experience Awards 2025, over 300 nominations, inspiring to read the stories of students who have gone above and beyond
- Session with UWE Drugs and Alcohol practitioner outlining what kind of support there is for students
- International Advisory Committee started
- Supporting Students with Credit Control and Re-enrolment, making plans with students

Questions

- **Feels the credit control issue is more of a university responsibility and should be more signposting**
 - Everything that is related to education affects students' wellbeing. Students come to VP for support on these issues as they trust her. VP and President has monthly meetings with credit control. President outlines that this is part of their role.
- **On 4th April, a student encountered activists – person with mic said 'people only talk about the rights of Palestinians and Sudanese people, but don't talk about animal rights.' Religious societies currently have longer process for external speakers but seems that no one knows who allowed this group on campus. Can you provide any insight on how to go about this?**
 - VP Societies and Communication shares that they discussed this in a presidents meeting with the CEO and were aware of this issue, but were not clear on who this student was. VP Community and Welfare states they are working on this issue.
 - Confirmed that this wasn't a Students' Union affiliated group and would have been dealt with by the Students' Union had it been.

VP Sports and Health

- Varsity – hosted varsity at UWE and won the trophy.
- NUS Southwest Regional Meeting
- New VP can continue improving gym facilities
- 3rd Annual Sports Conference – helped to organise.

Questions

- **Funding and planning secured for basketball hoop at Glenside?**
 - No, first we need to see if the space is available. They selected a place and emailed and received permission to use this space. Just waiting for further permission
- **Planned a mental health workshop but postponed it?**
 - Organising this with a Programme Leader, but his son was ill and didn't have time.
- **You lobbied for the modernisation of gym equipment. Any improvements made? How did you ensure they met diverse fitness needs?**
 - Some equipment is getting a bit old but still in good condition. Felt like raising it with UWE Centre for Sport was enough. Didn't

- consider diversifying the gym equipment.
- Was told it wasn't role of VP Sports to fix, sports clubs to lobby university to make change, sports likely to be brought into Partnership board to lobby directly to university.
- **A lot of things mentioned that didn't happen, what have you actually achieved this year?**
 - Healthy food events awareness. Took on initiatives that previous VP had started, recommended to future VP to ensure more attainable goals for future.
- **Did you think your goals could have been achieved in the year? Did you think how you could have changed your objectives to make an impact now? You have not fulfilled your manifesto, you've just passed the baton on.**
 - Time was very short with complication with family situations and learning new skills like project management. Have laid foundation for next VP Sports
 - President shared that it took him time to get settled in the role and was able to make impact in 2nd term

President

- Ask students what they would like to see for international events
- WONKHE trip
- Reasonable Adjustments to Deadlines update (RA2D)
- New external trustees interviewed and will be brought to next Student Council to ratify

Questions

- **How many new trustees are you looking to appoint?**
 - Two in total, marketing and governance
- **You've overseen the development on the new IT system.**
 - Taking time before implementing, will look at how RA2D impacts students' wellbeing.

VP Education was not in attendance but submitted their report in advance of Student Council, there were no questions at that time for them to answer when they returned from leave. Secretary shares that questions are welcome for the VP Education's updates

Support for Trans & Nonbinary Students

Motion brought by Viljo Wilding for the following statement to be voted on by Student Council:

"The Students' Union at UWE:

- Resolves that a commitment to Equality & Diversity remain at the heart of our values
- Believes that discrimination and harassment have no place within our community
- Commits to rooting out discrimination in all its forms, wherever it appears
- Reiterates its unwavering support for Trans and nonbinary students"

LGBT+ Officer shares that everyone she's spoken to (including those who aren't directly affected but are allies) has been unsatisfied with the UWE and Students' Union statement on support for trans & nonbinary students. LGBT+ Officer outlines that the statements say trans women are not considered women.

DPO puts forward a discussion, encouraging Council to reaffirm their commitment to the SU's values. States that changes will need to be made to make clear that Women's Welfare Officer also includes trans women, same with Men's Welfare Officer and trans men. Want Student Council to push Students' Union and UWE to make a statement that nothing will change for the negative and only change will be positive.

Questions

- **How could the Students' Union have written a better statement?**
 - LGBT+ Officer: Consult a transgender person and talk to somebody who is affected and ask how best the university can support you in this.
 - President confirmed that in future if there is an elected student leader who represents an affected student group they should be consulted, the judgement does not change the fact that we can have a trans welfare officer.
- **Comment from observer that other universities have much stronger responses. The SU and UWE can take more of a stance and should.**
- **Question around what the Council are supposed to vote on if it's a motion**
 - Secretary reminds students that the purpose of The SU is to represent the student voice, and so we are raising this in Council because we genuinely want to know what your thoughts are.

DPO: would like to put forward the idea that the Student Council votes on principles and motion will go to Council members to either vote yes, no or abstaining on supporting the motion and statement

Result from online Student Council members:

Number of Student Council members voting: 19 (out of 20, 16 needed for quoracy)

Support for Trans and Non-Binary Student: 13 yes, 2 no, 4 abstain – these results will be passed to Students' Union senior management for information

Any Other Business

VP Societies and Communications: Thanks Council for reinforcing what your rights are.