

Student Council Meeting

Meeting held in MR1 Students' Union, Frenchay Campus, at 18:00 on Thursday 23rd February

001: The Chair introduced himself and welcomed those present to the second SCM of the year and set out the agenda and purposes of the meeting and role of the Democratic Procedures Committee.

002: The Student Executive had provided reports of activities to date that had been circulated to members beforehand. The Chair invited members to ask questions of the Presidents present.

Derya to VP C&W: were Halls Reps now up and running (in Unite halls especially)? There had been a second break in at halls this year; could Halls Reps assist in the deterring and reporting of such crimes?

The VP was unaware that a break in had occurred but explained the logistics and difficulties of setting up a Halls Reps system and that she had been seeking feedback from students living in halls across all campuses. The VP reported that she hoped a Halls Reps system would be in place by the end of the year.

David to VP S&C: would the funding from the Student Experience Fund be extended?

The VP answered that there was increasing demand from societies for funding and that an extra £10,000 had been made available.

Derya to VP S&C: what was the average membership of societies and how many societies been shut down this year?

The VP answered that the average membership of a society was 36 and that 3 societies had been shut down this year.

Alina supplemental: what were the reasons for those societies being shut down?

The VP explained that the circumstances were specific to each society but the usual reasons were too few members or lack of activity.

Simon to VP S&H: how many new teams were taking part in Varsity this year and what was the VP's contribution to this?

VP Ed answered in absentia that the VP S&H had been the lead for both UWE and UoB on Varsity through the Varsity Exec and her contribution to this was substantial.

Derya to all: what was the process to produce, and who was the author of, the SU's statement on the so-called Muslim ban?

The VP C&W answered that the Executive was the joint author and had decided that a statement was necessary in order to reassure and support the large Muslim student population at UWE.

Derya supplemental: why was a similar statement of reassurance and support for UWE Jewish students not put out after the election of the new NUS President?

VP C&W explained that the current Executive was not in office at that time.

Derya supplemental: the Executive was in office when the Home Affairs Select Committee reported on the anti-Semitic nature of the NUS President's remarks so why was such a statement not subsequently released?

The SU president explained that the Islamic Society had approached the Executive and requested a statement of reassurance and support for Muslim students.

Derya supplemental: this still does not explain a lack of a statement.

VP S&C agreed that, retrospectively, such a statement should have been released and VP C&W explained that new processes were being put in place for such matters in the future.

David to SU President: Many student shad mistaken the posters advertising the puppy petting rooms as elections material, what was the President's' opinion on this and could clarity be given? The President answered that he has a duty to keep students informed of his achievements in relation of his manifesto.

Chair: voting/elections irregularities/concerns should be reported to the DRO to investigate.

Dylan to VP S&H: what additional transport would be provided to Ashton Gate? VP S&H would be contacted by the Executive and asked.

Derya to VP S&C: how beneficial had the use of sticky labels been in promoting cross society collaboration?

VP S&C answered that it had seemed to work quite well and that she had received positive feedback from society members.

Ann to VP S&C: why was collaboration between societies at UoB not encouraged more?

VP S&C explained that her priority was working with UWE societies and that this issue would be mentioned with her successor but that she believed it should be student led in response to student demand, which so far she had not seen.

Patrick to VP C&W: due to cuts to the Disability Students' Allowance, money was being taken from unseen disabilities with the DSA projected to be in deficit within the next two years; what action was being taken to protect students?

VP C&W answered that she was compiling a report regarding students' lived experiences in regards to this issue and that this was a priority not just for her but the entire Executive.

Patrick supplemental: what is the timeframe for this report?

VP C&W said the timeframe was within the next few weeks.

Alina supplemental: were there plans to ask UWE for additional disability funding as there was insufficient focus on this from the university?

VP C&W explained that fighting to maintain the current provision would be a real challenge but that she and the Executive would still be trying to secure more funds.

Chair: any further questions should be directed to the Chair or Secretary or directly to the Executive.

003: The Chair clarified that only the title of the Idea would be binding if passed and that the Idea holder's additional information was only advisory.

Improve the Quality and Quantity of Halal Food around Campus

Zain: this Idea is important to Islamic students; with approximately 2,500 Islamic students at UWE there is not sufficient quantity or variety on offer.

Outcome: **Pass**

The SU Should Provide Out of Hours Pastoral Care for Students

Patrick: from personal experience, such a service is vital for students. This Idea would strengthen the hand of VP C&W to demonstrate the student demand and need.

Derya: there is an NUS motion going forward to national Conference submitted by UWE delegates calling for assistance in setting up Nightline

Outcome: **Pass**

Say No To Increased Fees

SCM requested it be known that this should apply to all fees, including those paid by international students.

It was confirmed that passing this Idea would not mandate an NSS boycott.

Outcome: **Pass**

Condemn and Refuse to Comply With the Prevent Agenda

Zain: there is a perception of hysteria related to Muslims. The Prevent agenda is both over-prescriptive and misinformed; it misrepresents what radicalisation actually is, the implementation is over-arching and the referrals are unnecessary. The Idea seeks to apply pressure in order to reform the policy.

Derya: Student Council should concern itself with what it can actually change. Prevent is part of a larger government policy which aims to prevent people from becoming terrorists in the first place or supporters of terrorism. The policy document does not mention Muslims or Islam and for certain areas most people who are referred are white nationalists. For such a small number of students to decide to effectively boycott government policy is unrepresentative.

Zain: as a policy how effective is it if Muslim students do not want to engage with the SU or other institutions because of the perceived hysteria?

Iraje: can it be proved that this policy directly target a specific group of students?

Shay: what is happening at other institutions?

Zain: we have the opportunity to be one of the first SUs in the country to take action in this respect; although demonstrations have occurred, there is no policy such as this.

Shay: the wording of the Idea is very harsh and Student Council should consider its duty to the reputation of the SU.

Zain: work is taking place as to what would replace the agenda that does not discriminate against specific groups.

Patrick: to radicalise you must first isolate and disenfranchise. If this policy makes people feel like this then it is doing the opposite of what it set out to do. Passing this Idea would tell those students feeling this way that they are valued and not suspects.

Alina: this is *not* just about Muslim students but *all* minorities and the wider student body.

Tristan: could an Idea be created that everyone can unite behind?

Derya: this motion should be rejected due to its extreme wording. Students Not Suspects themselves believe that it is implementation of the policy that is wrong and not the concept itself. Student Council should be critical of Ideas of how they are now and not what we would like them to be.

Patrick: can the Idea be sent back to the holder for amending?

Derya: for the SU to take meaningful action, the Idea needs to be actionable with a clear mandate of what the SU seeks to achieve.

Iraje: could the Idea holder provide evidence to support their amendments?

Outcome: **Veto**

Action: **DPC to contact Idea holder**

Hot Water Points around Campus for Pot Noodle/Tea/Coffee

There is a 30p charge in shops and eateries for hot water and although there are more points around campus, there are often long queues for these.

Outcome: **Pass**

004:Lobby the Vice-Chancellor to oppose the removal of NHS student bursaries

David: assistance should not be taken away from disadvantaged students.

Iraje: although more money will be available from Student Finance, placements are intense and money does not cover these costs.

Outcome: **Pass**

Make a commitment to more unisex bathrooms on UWE campuses

David: feedback from Bower Ashton students has been universally positive in relation to the unisex bathrooms on that campus.

Akande: is there a demonstrable need for these bathrooms?

Alastair: the bathrooms at Bower Ashton have raised no concerns and are seen to be very important to students there.

Derya: seeks clarification as to the system at Bower Ashton.

David: the bathrooms are private cubicles and not the same as those in Union 1 on Frenchay but single occupancy.

Outcome: **Pass**

Make Campus Officer Positions More Prominent in the Running of the SU

Secretary: the VP Ed is undertaking a review into the entire system of the roles and support of the PTOs.

David: representation for students at satellite campuses is very important for those students.

Derya: since the Executive and most SU functions are based at Frenchay, this is important to address the concerns of Glenside and City students.

Shay: there is a very real perception that the needs of those campuses are ignored.

Iraje: greater local knowledge of the campuses is required to represent them effectively.

Outcome: **Pass**

Restore a bus link between Yate and Frenchay Campus

Derya: SU President has conducted a bus survey which is going to be presented to UWE Travel, the Vice Chancellor and the bus companies, passing this Idea could strengthen his case.

Dylan: the First bus from Yate to Parkway is always late so onward connections are missed; the bus leaves at 10 to the hour when lectures finish on the hour so when buses are late this can lead to a total journey time of over two hours; this disproportionately affects commuter students and students living at home.

Outcome: **Pass**

Play radio stations other than Kiss at Bower

Alastair: the station played depends on the person working although it is mainly Kiss.

Student Council stressed that students were looking for more variety.

Outcome: **Pass**

Extend Council Tax Exemption period for final year students

Patrick: there is little the SU can do about Council Tax as it is set by the Valuations Office Agency.

Derya: course completion dates would need to be changed to the end of the exam re-sit period in order to achieve this.

Alastair: students continuing on to postgraduate studies fall through a gap in which they have to pay and so this would support such students.

Outcome: **Pass**

005: Student Council was clear that the policy presented does not meet the needs of students requiring guarantors and that a more detailed and generous policy is required. The struggle for international students in this regard is very real and this policy does not appreciate or go far enough to alleviate this. Student Council did acknowledge that this is a positive first step in the right direction however.

006: clarification of the process for Ideas that override existing policy was required. The amendment regarding whether or not contentious issues could be given an Exec pass was removed from the proposal.

Outcome: **pursuant to agreed modification, the proposal was accepted and will be sent to the next meeting of the Board of Trustees for ratification.**

007: Derya pointed out that the minutes of the last meeting had inaccuracies which was agreed to by those present at that meeting.

Action: **Secretary to amend the previous minutes accordingly. Complete.**

Student Council wished to have the minutes reflect that the role of Democracy Coordinator was very important to have and voted unanimously to voice support for the continuation of the role.