

## Student Council Meeting

Meeting held in MR1 Students' Union, Frenchay Campus, at 17:30 on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May

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

The Secretary had the following updates on Ideas which had been passed.

Round up card spends and donate to RAG: This was costed at approx. £2500 for the year in lost sales. The Board agree with the principle of supporting further charitable giving via the shop but it would have to be cost neutral to the organisation. A working group is required to look at what may be the best option and to look to trial over Welcome providing a budget code to retain the cost neutral position. This will be reviewed after the trial period and if the costs can be off set then can move forward.

Say NO To Increased Fees: The Board agrees with the principle that students should receive value for money and will work with and lobby the university to give the best value for the fees paid. The Board also endorse the Union lobbying for additional support in bursaries in line with any rises that may occur. The position to lobby locally and nationally to restore NHS bursaries remains.

To provide out of hours pastoral care: the University had agreed to fund a Nightline service, a committee had been established and interviews were underway for phone operators and the service should be launching in September.

The Articles of Association have been updated to bring them in to line with the democracy review and the realities of the SU's new structure. These changes were already agreed by the last AGM of the old democratic structure and have been approved by the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales.

The Board of Trustees agreed the Section 6 Bye-Law changes approved by Council in February, they are now *de jure* in effect and will *de facto* begin to be exercised as of September when students return and the new academic year begins.

In accordance with the Democratic Review, VP Education is to carry out a review of the Bye-Laws to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet the requirements of the realities of the new democratic model. Representation Manager and Secretary will be the staff lead on these changes in consultation with DPC and Council where necessary. These changes will be largely cosmetic in nature and will seek to clarify procedures not create new powers or processes.

Council's request for the Secretary to develop ideas to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the SCM and address the issue of quoracy can be seen in the proposals put forward under item 003. The Secretary requested that any member with additional ideas should contact him over the Summer.

**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 all: when was the last time you met with the Directorate?

VP S+C had met the Pro Vice Chancellor for Student Experience at the last Partnership Board meeting; she reported a good working relationship with the PVC who is very responsive to student and SU needs.

Derya to all: can you update Council on efforts to encourage students to register to vote?  
VP C+W reported good support on this matter from the University and South Gloucestershire council. More than 200 paper registrations had been completed and it was unknown how many had been completed online. The University and the SU had planned incentive days to encourage more students and a hustings with local candidates had been organised.

Derya to VP S+C: the societies app in your manifesto could not happen, why is that?  
VP S+C explained that the SU web developer had left at the start of the year and a full time replacement had not been found and so the capacity was not there this year.

David to all: how can candidates help the SU implement their manifesto commitments and what is an appropriate timeframe for the implementation of manifesto commitments?  
VP S+C says that a strong, honest and thorough handover is required.  
VP C+W says that the SU's new strategic plan should provide for the spare capacity to enable the SU to help elected Presidents with their manifestos.  
VP Ed adds that current Presidents and Officers should reach out to candidates before elections and then again before official handovers begin.

David to VP S+C: congratulations on a successful Socs Ball; the photos from the event are currently behind a wall, can this be rectified?  
VP S+C will pass this on and investigate.

All members to all: how can we ensure that all Presidents are present at the SCM.  
All say that this needs to be through improved communication and ensuring that all Presidents appreciate the importance of the SCM.

Derya to VP Ed: can you update on the printing credit review?  
VP Ed reports he is having a meeting with the PVC Student Experience to discuss course costs including the review of printing credit.

David to all: are there any updates you can give on varsity?  
All will take this request for information to VP S+H and ask for a clarification either to Council or through a public statement via the website.

VP C+W encourages all members to ask more questions of the Presidents.  
All SCM members say that the missing Presidents is extremely disappointing when they knew there were questions to be asked of them; SCM expresses its frustration at Presidents not taking their responsibilities to democratic oversight not as seriously as they should.

**003:** The Secretary set out the proposals for changing the election of members to the SCM and detailed the pros and cons of each proposal. Members agreed that the minimum number of meetings should remain at three but that the Secretary should schedule these so as to allow for a fourth meeting should the need arise. SCM voted on the proposals as follows:

1. 0 in favour
2. 7 in favour
3. 6 in favour

Proposal 2 was thus endorsed and the Secretary will inform the necessary committee and conference staff to put this in to effect and continue to develop ways to ensure the effective running of the meeting.

**004:**Commit to reducing the number of leaflets/flyers at Freshers' Fair

David, Chelsea, Derya, Patrick and Oliver: this would be a good way to open new pathways for promotion. But what will actually happen? What will clubs and societies have to do to achieve this. The SU already has power to achieve this but won't use it against their commercial partners.

Henry and Shay: encouraging groups to reduce their amount of flyers is good but his Idea is ill-defined. It should left up to individual committees.

Outcome: **Veto**

The SU should commit to using Triodos Bank

Derya: the SU should not play politics with the financial stability of the organisation.

Patrick: this change appears to be complicated and offer few benefits to the membership.

Outcome: **Veto**

Condemn the Prevent Agenda

Bharath: the Idea holder has removed the words members had previously objected to and so Council should not veto this now.

Derya: passing this could be potentially damaging to students and have repercussions beyond UWE. The policy is not racist and is designed to protect students. There is strong feeling against having such a blanket policy and this could impact freedom of speech.

Patrick: victimisation creates ostracisation which can lead to radicalisation. That is the situation now and that is opposite of what Prevent attempts to achieve. As an SU, we should be petitioning the University to be open in their attitude and activities about this.

Alastair: this is a positive first step and there is more to the Idea than simply just condemning.

Derya: Students Not Suspects agree that they do not have a problem with the policy itself but with its implementation.

Patrick: the implementation affects the lives of our students which condemning acknowledges.

Derya: if we want to reject it then we should. This has been NUS national policy for two years and has achieved nothing. This Idea is not conducive to driving change.

Patrick: condemning sends a strong message to our students who feel oppressed by this and they should be our priority.

Outcome: **Pass** (5 against, 6 in favour, 2 abstentions)

**005:**Serve curly fries at The Students' Union bars

Outcome: **Pass**

More food options for diabetic people

Outcome: **Pass**

More healthy food options

Outcome: **Pass**

Put in more signposting for the community garden

Outcome: **Pass**

Don't get rid of books from the library

All members firmly believed that a library needed to have books.

Chelsea: digitisation of books is not always helpful for students with specific learning differences.

Outcome: **Pass**

Consider the introduction of an elected Women's Officer

Chelsea: members should be aware that there is only one woman at this meeting and take this account when voting.

Simon: women can already run for all roles equally and do win those positions already.

Patrick: this is about a dedicated person for women's issue and ensuring female students can comfortably access that person and that help.

Tristan: what is the specific need for this role?

Derya: a "Gender Equality Officer" would be preferable; there is a distinction between democracy and representation.

Oliver: this should not be an issue; as a human being I am capable of representing other human beings. Although there are clearly issues, this does not address or solve them; a Gender Equality Officer would be more beneficial. It is also not appropriate to prioritise a binary conception of gender. This Idea will receive significant backlash from students.

David: this role could encapsulate other conceptions of gender and gender related issues. Members at the meeting should be aware of their own privilege.

Chelsea: there is more to the role than "just women" and UWE is one of the few SU's not to have an equivalent position.

Henry: there is clearly resistance to this Idea so even if it was passed with good intentions, there would be a backlash.

Patrick: members should support this Idea on its own merits and not other concerns.

Alastair: it appears that female students want this and thus the other positions are not meeting their needs.

Bharath: does this not all ready fall under the remit of VP C+W which is a gender neutral role and thus accommodating to all students?

Tristan: this seems disproportional to the issue. Can this Idea be amended as at present it is not inclusive?

Derya: sending this back for amendment is a good idea. If we as a Council do not like then we should try to make it workable. This is the time to raise such issues if the Board of Trustees intends to examine this; the views Council has expressed deserve to be heard. Members should not be afraid to vote a certain way because of how it might look.

Oliver: an additional PTO would offer no more representation than already exists and they would not be accountable to SCM.

Outcome: **Pass** (2 against, 10 in favour, 1 abstention)

**006:** The meeting agreed unanimously to pass the proposed amendments; these will be sent to the next meeting of the Board of Trustees for ratification.

**007:** Members agreed to ratify the appointment of Mariam Amini as a student trustee but expressed frustration that they were expected to ratify an appointment they had no say over or involvement with and that information was lacking. Members wanted to know what would happen if they refused to ratify the appointment and requested clarification of the overall process.

Members reiterated their desire to ensure that future meetings were well attended and that all the Presidents were present to be held accountable. A further request was made to examine ways to ensure that the SCM better reflects the diversity of the student population.