

Worcester Students' Union's - All Student Meeting -

14/02/2023 11:15-13:15, EE 1057

Attendance

Panel

Al Linforth (AL (SU President), Gemma Allcott (GA (Vice President Education), Meg Lee (ML (Vice President Student Activities)

Members

15 current students at University of Worcester and 3 Officer Trustees (listed above)

Also, in attendance:

Sophie Williams (Chief Executive), Antonia Rossiter-Eaglesfield (Director of Democracy & Representation), Robert Cox (Director of Finance & Commercial), Clement Servini (Marketing, Communications and Commercial Manager), Jack Appleby (Student Voice Assistant and Minute-taker), Shona Williams (Venue & Events Supervisor), Sophie Smith (Student Activities Manager), Barney Blake (BUCS Sport Administrator), Anna-Symone Bateman (Student Communities Coordinator), Tom Mandall (Academic & Welfare Advisor), Mollie Parker (Academic & Welfare Advisor), Casey Rann (Creative Content Coordinator), Aimee Robison-Clayton (Marketing & Communications Assistant), Hannah Heskin (Student Groups Assistant)

Apologies:

Apologies received from:

- Antonia Rossiter-Eaglesfield (Director of Democracy & Representation)

There were no further apologies for the 2022/23 ASM.

Notes of meeting

Welcome

Prior to starting the ASM, GA gave an explanation of the current student-wide consultation that the SU is doing to understand students' perspectives of their University experience. All responses received will shape and contribute to our strategic planning. GA encouraged all those who haven't already completed the insight survey to scan the QR code provided.

ML encouraged members once again to be as open and honest as possible, even if it means being brutal or negative.

AL welcomed all to the formal part of the All-Student Meeting and thanked them for taking the time to come, learn more about the priorities of the SU, and to offer feedback for how the SU is run in the future.

AL gave an overview of the Union's vision to represent and support students to develop and achieve. AL explained that as a student led organisation, the SU strongly believes in ensuring that its members are at the heart of decision-making processes and have regular opportunities to hold officers to account. AL encouraged students to ask questions and to help us set the future priorities of the Union and ensure the SU is doing the things that matter to you.

What is the purpose of the All Student Meeting?

AL explained that during this meeting, students would be updated you on what the Union achieved in the last full academic year: all the key achievements it has made, the challenges we have faced and most importantly the successes of our students. The panel will also update you on what is going on currently.

AL explained that after each section they would open the floor to questions and clarifications throughout the meeting, noting that there would also be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the meeting.

AL explained the notion of quoracy and how an ASM (which is the Union's annual general meeting) needs to have a certain number of students present to be considered quorate i.e., valid. We need students excluding full time officers to be here. We have 15 students here, which means the meeting isn't quorate. AL noted that due to not hitting quoracy we will continue with the ASM, but we will not vote on approval items.

Approval of minutes

The minutes from last year's ASM held on 15th February 2022, were brought to the screen.

AL opened the floor to questions, there were none received.

The 2022 ASM minutes were not put for approval due not being quorate.

Students' Union Accounts 2021-22

GA gave an overview of the accounts, explaining both the overall income and expenditure from August 2022 to July 2022. GA explained that the SU's largest source of income is from donations and these largely come in block grants from the University with other smaller grants for specific projects. The second largest source of income came from student activities, which is in the majority from club and society memberships and our third came from The Hangar bar. Other incomes include commercial activities such as our contracts with Tramps and NUS Extra (Totum) sales.

GA explained staff costs and how these are split across different areas, depending on which area members work in. GA then explained that the biggest area of expenditure was on Student activities, which is split roughly 50% between what clubs and societies spent themselves and 50% on support to student activities on things like staff, grants, RAG and funding for sporting fixtures around the country.

The second biggest areas of expenditure are the costs to run the bar and management costs for the SU's commercial activities. The SU spent the third largest amount of money on representation and which includes Course Reps, Elected Officers, campaigns and our governance meetings like this one and Student Council. The SU spent over £60,000 on advice and a relatively small amount on affiliations.

GA then summarised the accounts explaining that the Union had total income of £1,028,780 and spent a total of £1,004,865 leaving us with a small profit of £23,925 for the year. SW explained that Clubs and Societies' individual accounts are restricted and this year their total balance closed on £189,244.

GA opened the floor to questions, there were none received. The Unions' accounts were not put for approval due not being quorate.

Affiliations of the Students' Union

ML outlined the three organisations with whom the SU currently affiliates to and the benefits of doing so:

- ***National Union of Students (NUS)***

The expected cost is **£13,225**. ML provided members with an overview of the Union's affiliation to NUS, explaining it provides the Union with access to training and development for officers and staff, a voice at the national level, the Totum card, and its associated income and by purchasing through their national consortium, the Union can reduce the cost price of items sold in the bar.

ML opened the floor to questions, there were none received.

The affiliation to NUS was not put for approval due not being quorate.

- ***British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS)***

The cost this year will be **£11,430**. ML provided members with an overview of the Union's affiliation to BUCS, explaining it allows students to take part in a wide range inter-university competitive sports and access to support for sports development.

ML opened the floor to questions, there were none received.

The affiliation to BUCS was not put for approval due not being quorate.

- ***Advice UK***

The cost is **£263**. ML provided members with an overview of the Union's affiliation to Advice UK. Being an Advice UK member means the SU is a part of the biggest network for independent advice centres in the United Kingdom. We have access to specialist training courses, professional insurance and case management software at reduced rates, which all enables us to run an effective help and advice service.

ML opened the floor to questions, there were none received.

The affiliation to Advice UK was not put for approval due not being quorate.

- ***Clubs' and Societies' Affiliations***

ML explained that the SU's clubs and societies affiliate to a variety of organisations to help them run, some of which are free and some of which have fees which are paid by the club or society from their funds. ML noted that the SU is the legal entity affiliating to these organisations we also need to approve annually these affiliations. These are to the following organisations as follows and on screen:

- Archery GB
- Basketball England
- British American Football Association
- British Fencing
- British Mountaineering Council
- British Rowing
- British Wheelchair Basketball
- Coppafeel
- County of Worcestershire Archery Association
- England Athletics
- England Volleyball
- Rugby Football Union
- Students Rugby Football Union
- UK Ultimate
- West Midland Archery Society
- Worcestershire FA

ML opened the floor to questions, there were none received.

The affiliation to NUS was not put for approval due not being quorate.

Students' Union Activity Report from the Board of Trustees

ML, GA and AL presented key highlights and achievements of the 2021-22 academic year:

- Achieved **69% student satisfaction** in the University's Course Experience Survey
- Ranked in the top **20 out of 130 Students' Unions** in the NSS
- Achieved **68% satisfaction rating** in the Big Worc Survey
- Recruited **350** student to the Academic Representation System
- Received **5169 votes from 1863 voters** in our Leadership Elections
- Supported 10 student-led representative Networks.
- Raised **£31,629** for RAG (Raise and Give)
- Helped **85 students volunteer 6,032 hours** of their time.
- Supported **39 Societies and 38 Sports Clubs** throughout the year.
- Had over **10,000 students** attended The Hangar
- Delivered a range of events throughout the year, including **Welcome Week, Varsity & Celebration Week**
- Contested an **extremely competitive** Varsity against the University of Gloucestershire

Each Officer then outlined their personal highlights for the 2022-23 academic year so far and what is still to come.

Joint Success:

- Speak Week
 - In November, visiting all campuses ensuring that students voices were heard.
 - 328 students throughout the weeks
 - Collated all feedback and presented back to the University SMT
- Cost of Living
 - £1000 of the Full-Time officer's budget has been put towards tackling the cost-of-living crisis facing students.
 - The introduction of Breakfast Club
 - Officers noted that it is important that students can come and go as they please, Breakfast club is not used as a ploy to gather student feedback. It was important to the SU to do their bit on tackling 'cost of living' which is impacting all students.

AL included:

This Year So Far

- Bring back Pets as Therapy Dogs
 - Worked with Student Services to relaunch pets as therapy, teaming up with Fancy a cuppa.
- Updating the website to make it more inclusive and accessible.
 - Worked with SU Marketing team to make the website more accessible to students
- Wellbeing Wednesday Campaign
 - Introduced a Puppy Walk & Talk initiative.
- Launched Community Cupboard
 - £900 worth of donations with over 500 units donated.
 - Promoted externally to local community and received a generous donation from the WR2 St Johns community.
- Black History Month
 - Intersectionality workshop in collaboration with LGBTQ+ & Women's Network
- Networks
 - Introduction of Network of the Month
 - 2 successful protests ran by our Networks.
 - Introduction of Network we to understand why students may or may not get involved in
- Go Green Week
 - Lots of students engaged in our Sustainability fair at The Hangar, where students could learn more about being sustainable, including trying lots of yummy fair-trade products.
 - Air Quality Forum - Hosted by David Green
 - Lots of students got involved.

What's coming up:

- Write a report to the University and local council about the community cupboard donations and usage to assist in campaign for more support to help our students.
- Continue to provide cost of living support to our students - such as Breakfast Club and look at alternative formats for delivering these (e.g., lunch club/meal kits).
- Continue to lobby the University for gender neutral toilet facilities.
- Begin work on making campus an Autism Friendly Campus, following feedback from an autistic student.
- Installation of Vape recycling bins across campuses.

GA included:

This Year So Far

- Trained 100% of School Reps and 97% of the 392 Course Reps.
- Implemented a new reward and recognition scheme to highlight and recognise the great work that our reps continue to do each year.
- Recognising both School & Course reps monthly for their continued commitment to their roles and for going above and beyond to support their students.

- Advocated for better learning and communal spaces at City Campus
- Ran a successful Rep Conference at The Hive, we had over 40 students actively engage in our 5 sessions across the day hosted by a range of hosts including NUS VP Liberation & Equality)
- Gathered and collated feedback to form the Student TEF submission.
- Worked with SU colleagues to address Cost of Living issues facing students, looking at different ways to support students best.
 - o Breakfast Clubs
 - o Met with local MP Robin Walker about issues facing students.
- Supported the University to improve their current PAT system.
 - o Creation of University PAT forum
- Lobbied the University to get on board with our 'Decolonising the Curriculum' campaign.
 - o Ran a successful session at Rep Conference
 - o Lobbied the University to put decolonisation on their agenda.
 - University have now added decolonisation to the University course design framework, ensuring that decol will be at the forefront of all new course designs.
 - o New Degree Algorithm guide
 - Worked with SU Academic & Welfare advisor to develop a guide, to ensure students feel that understand the changes.

What's Coming Up:

- Work with students to gather feedback on mitigating circumstances.
- Work with both course and school eps to pick shortlists and winners for the SCA's.
- Support the team to deliver a successful 2023 SCA's!
- Run two more Course Rep forums and two more School Rep forums.
- Continue to work with the University to improve the PAT system and feedback.
- Continue to work with University and Students' Union on plans for Welcome festival 2023.

ML included:

This Year So Far

- Committee training -
 - Meg and Activities team felt it was important to include the inclusion of EDI.
- BUCS showcase.
 - A great opportunity for us to showcase some of the fantastic teams we have at Worcester with BUCS fixtures featuring Netball and Basketball
 - Invited local primary school to be a part of the event.
- BUCS - conference, BUCS strategy session, Wednesdays
 - BUCS Strategy session looked at how we as SUs across the UK can best students.
 - Attended BUCS awards evening where one of our students won an award for Volunteering.
- Society social
- Varsity planning
 - #proud2play campaign launched
 - Launched a Varsity forum to allow all sports to be included in the Varsity prep.

- SU drive
 - 50% of donations went to the SU community cupboard.
 - 50% of donations went to the local foodbank, to support the local community.
- TeamWorc TV
 - 5 episodes of TeamWorc Tv have been recorded.
 - Keep your eyes peeled for new episodes will be out soon.
- WorcStar
 - So far this year 16 students have been awarded WorcStar.

What's Coming Up:

- Creating an employability guide for students
 - All of the students which are involved in our sports, societies, Networks and student reps do so much in their roles. We want to help these students recognise the skills they've learnt and support them recognising these new skills.
- The development and running of Battle of the Socs
 - Meg & Hannah have been working closely to make this a fantastic event.
- Varsity! LET'S BRING THE TROPHY HOME!
 - Meg and sport captains travelled down to Gloucester to the pledge signing.
 - There will be 22 sports competing.
- BUCS Active Networking Day
- The induction and handover to the new VPSA

The officers opened the floor to questions, there were none received.

Question Time session

The officers explained this is the final opportunity for students to ask any questions to any of the Officers, noting that the SU Management Team (SW and RC) will also be available to provide any clarifications as required.

- **Q: Battle of the Socs? To the sports who do not take part in Varsity, how are you going to engage them?**
 - **A:** This is something we are hoping to include within Battle of the Socs, perhaps a name change could be considered to ensure all students feel involved.
- **Q: Can there be a sports day style event at the end of the year?**
 - **A:** ML thinks this is what we try to achieve already through Varsity, but I would happily welcome a conversation with you outside of the ASM to see what other avenues we could explore.

- **Q: Could there be more opportunities for students to challenge the University, when their initial response isn't sufficient enough?**
 - o **A:** GA - an initial objective was to run an Open Panel discussion where students could raise direct conversation/queries to University SMT. This is something we would like to explore more, and the support of students will help us challenge the University. AL noted for transparency that the officers meet with the Vice Chancellor 4 times per year and meet with the Pro Vice Chancellor twice per month.
 - A student felt that there is worth in providing more opportunities to students to speak directly to VC/University SMT. It was noted that he felt that no students know who David Green is, so would these types of meetings spark interest in students?
 - A student suggested that to address the lack of visibility of University SMT, could it not be useful for these members of staff to attend key students facing events such as Welcome Week, Inductions, Awards evening etc.
 - Suggested that if University SMT are unable to commit time to students. Would it be possible for HoS to be available to meet with students and to get an understanding of the student experience?
 - One student agreed with the above statement and suggested that perhaps an invitation to an 'open forum' could be extended to HoS so they can hear what their students are saying and what issues are facing them.
 - A Student noted that in her role as a School Rep, she had met the Provost on the rep training day. So, she would be able to identify Ann Jordan but would struggle with identifying other members of SMT.
 - Another student felt that it is important for students to know who they can hold to account. University SMT are the decision makers and students should have the opportunity to challenge changes and decisions as and when needed. This student also felt that there is a need to try and refocus the support and attention to the issues that are facing students. University SMT needs to be more receptive to students and allow more opportunities for direct feedback to be shared and discussed.
 - o **A: (SW):** A first step process could be, hosting a Union led meeting for students to attend with a member of University member of SMT to attend?
 - The consensus of those in attendance at the All- Student meeting felt that this could be a good first step.

- **Q:** In regard to ML employability guide, within WBS there had been previous work and support given to students about CVs, applications etc. look like.
 - o **A:** ML - Thanked the student, ML noted it would be useful to meet up outside of this meeting to get an understanding of what support you found useful.

- **Q:):** Student concerned about the impact that the Office for Students Spelling, punctuation and grammar policy. How will this affect students and potentially disadvantage some students.
 - Felt that this is the kind of thing which the University should step up and speak out about and express concerns on how this policy will disadvantage certain groups of students, making higher education less inclusive and accessible.
 - o **A: GA** - felt it was important to note that the Union regularly stays connected with NUS and WonkHE (higher education community) who provide relevant guidance and support when needed. The Union will continue to monitor what kind of effects this policy could have on our students at Worcester.

Students' Union - Insights

GA noted that we as a Union have just told you what we've achieved and what we're aiming to achieve. Now it's your turn as students to tell us what you want. A final plug of our insights survey encourages students to give their feedback as this is what will really shape how the SU will operate in the coming years and ensure that our future priorities are your future priorities.

The link to the Unions Insight Survey can be found here - bit.ly/tellushowyoureallyfeel

Closing Remarks

SW reminded students about the upcoming Students' Union elections. Recommendations and nominations are currently open. SW encouraged all students to vote in the upcoming Leadership Elections taking place on 7th - 10th March.

AL thanked everyone for attending the ASM, AL reminded members that their voice and feedback is what allows the SU to make progress and provide students with the best University experience. Your voice really does matter, and you are all so important to everything we do as an organisation.

The All-Student Meeting was brought to a close.