

Student Council Motion Proposal

Voting Rights for Societies in Education Council and Welfare and Inclusion Council.

Policy Number:	2020-21_001	Policy Date	30-11-2020
Policy Proposer: (Include name and student number)	Meg Price (President)		
Policy Seconder: (Include name and student number)	Harry South (Vice President Education)		

Summary:

The motion proposes that Faith and Cultural Societies should be granted full membership and voting rights for Welfare and Inclusion Council as well as Academic Societies being granted voting rights for Education Council.

Student Council Notes the Following Facts:

Faith and Cultural Societies are invited to and can contribute to Welfare and Inclusion Council. Similarly, Academic Societies are invited to Education Council and provide contributions. Both society groups are unable to vote at either council as Bye Law 4: Governance, Decision Making and Academic Representation only allows them to attend but does not give them membership of either council.

The current membership of Welfare and Inclusion Council all have seats on Student Council where in comparison the other two sub-committees of Student Council send only a number of representatives to Student Council.

Student Council Holds the Viewpoint That:

Student Council notes that Faith and Cultural and Academic Societies all make positive contributions to the councils they are invited to. The current and previous chairs of Education Council have fed back that lacking a vote can disenfranchise society committee members who attend, and they believe that it has proven a barrier to increasing Academic Society attendance at Education Council. They also fed back that while attendance is low the Academic Societies that do attend provide valuable insight and a different point of view on the issues discussed. This engagement is something the SU should continue to develop and encourage.

Widening the membership of Welfare and Inclusion Council, in particular, would ensure that this sub-council has a wider membership than just the Networks and ensures that those societies who represent our different religious and cultural groups have a voice on issues relating to diversity and inclusion. Building strong relationships between these groups is vital to ensure the success of both the Networks and the Societies.

Society representatives are democratically elected and represent the views of their respective groups. Therefore, they should be empowered with voting rights to be able to fully engage and represent those who elected them.

Student Council Resolves to Take the Following Action(s):

Mandate the Union to propose amendments to Bye Law 4: Governance, Decision Making and Academic Representation to allow Faith and Cultural Societies voting rights in Welfare and Inclusion Council and Academic Societies voting rights at Education Council.

Given the current low attendance of societies at these meetings and in line with best practice at other Students' Unions that base quoracy on key members of committees, the quorum of both meetings should remain unchanged with society attendance not included. As engagement by societies in the two councils increases Student Council may wish to review this in the future.