

Student Council Minutes

Tuesday 3rd May 2016

Attendance

Student Councillors present: Wesley Hudson, Lewis Arnold (Chair), Hemaka Pathirana, Claudia Calin, Tim Brown, Matt Sargeant, Euan Morrison, Amy Wigley, Michael Sherratt, Tabitha Bridgwater, Danny Gregory, Very Postlethwaite, Junjie Wu, Sichao Du, Jo Hunter

Also in attendance: Debbie Doyle, Fran Story (attended end of the meeting), Sophie Williams (Chief Executive), Samina Fiaz (HR & Admin Co-Ordinator, minute-taker)

Minutes

1. Welcome and introductions

Welcomed Samina to meeting who will be minute-taker now instead of Ruth.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Margetts and Beverley Clarke. The International Students' Officer and the RAG Officer had apologised for the fact that they would both be arriving late, due to having evening lectures.

3. Declarations of interest

NUS Women's' Committee (Debbie Doyle)

4. Minutes of the previous meeting approved.

5. Matters arising from the minutes/action points

- a. WH – EU referendum still liaising with UW
- b. LA – EU referendum meeting, putting manuscript together
- c. CC – Debate Society
- d. MS – went to Debate Society, lots of relevant information

6. Update from Executive Committee

NUS Referendum – Aware of the Bye Law 6, NUS election, SU's to hold referendum on affiliation with NUS and Student Council to discuss in this meeting. WH mentioned we pay 19K for the year for our affiliation fee. Exec feel that NUS doesn't represent the student body at UW and that they don't like the idea of boycotting the NSS. WH is 'for' holding a referendum. WH to look into whether students would still be able to purchase NUS extra cards if leaving NUS. SU could probably still sell as other external companies such as banks sell them and there are other organisations looking into selling the cards. Exec are aware the new NUS President has made anti-Semitic comments, most discussion has occurred due to these comments. NUS doesn't serve its purpose here at UW.

NSS – 87% satisfaction & UWSS – 50% with better feedback provided this year. Now seems a good time in the academic year to hold a referendum. It sends a strong message to NUS, even if we are not successful in the referendum. One student councillor asked do we gain anything out of being affiliated with NUS. LA said that we do get officer training however they are quite expensive and are an additional cost to the affiliation fee and that there are other training providers available. NUS also offer campaign resources and materials but these don't necessarily always apply to us. DD asked why these issues were not raised at AGM and LA said they were very recent issues and took place after the AGM. Students are not likely to leave NUS according to LA but now is the appropriate time to discuss/hold a referendum. Q23 of NSS would be omitted, LA is for NSS. One PT officer said that this is a good way to send a message to NUS displaying that we actually have a voice and are more

than just an affiliation fee. The NUS want to boycott the NSS and if we don't agree with this then why should we have to pay fees to them. Another PT officer said we are a high performing University that offers the best bursaries. HP mentioned that NUS doesn't support the SU to develop sports/societies we use other organisations such as BUCS. We also go to other SU's for help and guidance often as opposed to NUS. One PT officer asked how disaffiliating would affect students. It was discussed people felt NUS cards were the biggest factor. It has been decided that there will be sufficient enough information for both arguments within the debate. The SU will be responsible for informing students. LA said it would be undemocratic to not involve the student body on the decision regarding the referendum. We would also no longer have the NUS Jiscmail or SU subscriptions. DD expressed concerns regarding timescales, there will be two referendums coinciding each other. Students will be getting ready to leave campus for the end of the academic year. DD said we could not rush it. SW said that unions have been able to pull it off within 6 weeks, we just need to ensure we are very organised to achieve it within our small timeframe. EU and NUS referendum through a small union, SU will only be able to get involved at promotion level. It is possible we may not achieve quoracy. Both referendums are important but concerned whether both will be given equal importance. Vote for referendum took place: Yes, and referendum take place now – 11, yes and referendum take place in future – 3, no – 0 and Abstain 1.

7. Update from the Board of Trustees

It has been a very busy month and there has been no meeting since the last Student Council. Student trustee interviews next week and external trustee also. TB board meeting on 31/05.

8. Officers' reports

These had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Chair asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none. LA said there has been 497 nominations for the SCA. The event takes place on the 24th May.

9. Sustainability Officer

MS has a plan for EU referendum, so far plan is one-sided and against leaving the EU but would need a representative for the leave campaign in order to be fair and representative. SW explained there isn't enough time or resources for a EU referendum debate WH said last year during the general elections they struggled to get students engaged. WH said it was proven to be difficult and therefore may not be worthwhile. WBS rep said there is likely to be a student for the leave campaign within the business school so will keep an eye out. A film proposal was put forward to help engage students in the referendum, however some people felt it may be scaremongering and with strong views from both sides which may not achieve anything. WH said he will see if there are any films out there already etc. and SC all seemed to agree with this.

10. Other P/T Officer reports

MS and HP discussed the money issues regarding clubs and societies at open days. SW will chase University Communications, if not SU will have to fund it. DD has attended 3 conferences and has been working on fresher's week. JH hasn't been involved much as she is currently on placement. MS is looking to tackle LAD culture. FS has started an NUS campaign which is currently under discussion.

11. Approval of New Clubs and Societies

First new academic society: Education Enhancement. With this, it now means there is an academic society within each institute. Vote took place, yes – 11 abstain – 2.

Second was a Creative Writing Society which is affiliated with their institute. Vote took place, yes – 14 and abstain – 1.

12. Student Councillor Motions

FS put forward a motion on supporting Muslim students (and other faiths). FS said that some students had been having residential issues, there are also 12 prayer spaces which is not enough, there are no adequate washing facilities. Their dietary requirements have been met in the shop, however they haven't been met in the hot food outlets. The food often lacks labelling which is

causing issues. We want to be inclusive and this is why this motion has been put forward. DD said that it is necessary to cover all faiths so we can be multi-cultural. MS suggested holding a SC meeting with different faith students for more information. SC agreed the motion, however have said they would need a focus group moving forward with this. Vote, yes – 14 and abstain – 1.

FS put forward a second motion which is looking at a buddy system for disabled students and students with mental health issues. FS said that due to culture shock, the transition to university is very difficult as the level of support is much less than that of a college or a school. As of Sept there are changes to the DSA. It was discussed volunteers could potentially help 2nd and 3rd years and there would need to be commitment to supporting this. DG said there is a support system already in place but it needs to grow and expand as the student population does. HP said that if it were undertaken by volunteers they would need some form of training. SW said this is something the SU can discuss with Student Services. SC can't resolve this issue as it is a project not a policy to take forward. SW said we can discuss this more, however no promises can be made as it requires volunteers. MS proposed a disability society and SC fully supported the idea and the SU staff will explore the option.

13. Any other business

None.