

WSU Student Council Minutes

Tuesday 5th December 2023 at 17:15 (EE 2012)

Members in attendance	Staff in attendance
Al Linforth (SU President and Chair) - AL Issy Price (SU Vice President Student Activities) - IP Kathrine Stone (College of Health & Science) - KS Kate Phillips (School of Arts) - KP Elliot Atkinson (School of Humanities) - EA Swathi Suresh (School of Nursing & Midwifery) - SS Emily Hatfield (Commuter Network Chair) - EH Ronke Akintan (Faith & Cultural Societies Rep/Race Equality Network Chair) - RA Emmalee Swift (Women's Network Chair) -ES Harriet Lawrence (Women's Network Vice Chair) - HL El Grahamsley (LGBTQ+ Network Vice Chair) - EG Benji Robison (Academic Societies Rep) - BR Natalia Taneska (Adventure, High Risk & Social Sports Clubs Rep) - NT	Antonia Rossiter-Eaglesfield (Director of Representation and Membership Services - Chair's Aide) - ARE Sophie Williams (Chief Executive) - SW Vic Presdee (Student Voice Assistant - Minuting Secretary) - VP

Agenda

	Item	Timings	Owner	Paper Attached
1.	Welcome & Introductions	17:30	AL	-
2.	Apologies		AL	-
3.	Declaration of interest		AL	-
4.	Minutes of previous meeting		AL	-
5.	Matters arising		AL	-
Approval Items				
6.	WSU Annual Accounts 22/23	17:35	SW	In Email
7.	Officer Reports*	17:55	AL/IP	In Email
8.	Sub Council Policy Motions	18:10	AL/IP	In Email
Reporting Items				
9.	WSU Executive Committee Update	18:45	AL	Verbal Update

10.	Sub Council Summaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welfare and Inclusion Council Education Council Team Worc Council 	18:55	AL/IP	Verbal Update
11.	Report on upcoming events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elections All Student Meeting Pizza with a PVC NUS National Conference Policy Give it a go Week 		AL/IP	
12.	Update on live (current) policy and ideas progression*	-	AL	Verbal Update
13.	Strategic Framework*	-	AL	Verbal Update
Discussion Items				
14.	Team Worc video		IP/AL	
15.	Current Student Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chartwells/Food Other issues 	-	AL	-
Any Other Business				
16.	AOB	19:15	AL	
Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 22 nd February at 17:15 in EGA G011				

1. Welcome & Introductions

AL welcomed all members to the second Student Council of the year. Meeting was confirmed to be quorate.

2. Apologies

Apologies sent prior to the meeting from Karyna Bludova and Daisy Dymond.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

The Council reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting on 24/10/23 and all present approved.

5. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Approval Items

6. **WSU Annual Accounts 22/23**

SW presented and explained the WSU Annual Accounts 22/23 and their format with the Annual Report from the Trustees of the Union at the start of the document. This details all the activities undertaken by the Union and their impact during 2022/23. This was then followed by the financial details, the key headlines being:

- The block grant from the University remained static from 2021/22 at £600k
- Costs rose significantly over the year, particularly for staffing, as a result of the Autumn Statement in 2022. This resulted in significantly increased wage bills for student and core staff (with student staff all placed on to the Living Wage and any age differential removed).
- Bar income was well below budget, with student engagement and attendance at events good but sales low as students were affected by the cost of living and continue to 'pre-drink'.
- Decreased income generally from sponsorship and media sales, as well as external bookings as all organisations affected by the cost of living and economic downturn.
- SU had to cut back a lot on spend and only buy what was essential, including not replacing staff like for like if they left the organisation.
- The most challenging year yet for the Union, with a deficit at the end of the year of £62k, which, due to financial diligence was lower than anticipated mid-way through the year. A similar deficit is expected for this financial year, as the block grant has, again, remained static and costs continue to rise.
- SU management continue to have quarterly finance meetings with senior University staff and are currently maintaining reserves levels.

A question was asked around what plans there are to try and stop the deficit this year. SW explained that a number of things are being done, including operational opening hours - bar and welcome desk, etc, reducing student staff hours, redistribution of duties for core staff and only focussing on core activities, closely monitoring all purchases, and looking to suppliers for any possible deals or cost reduction, including ceasing the contract with TNT (BT) Sports.

A further question was asked about how clubs and societies could help. SW replied that student groups holding their socials in the Hangar (without breaching any contracts with Tramps) would very much help bring income into the SU, as well as attendance at events such as Varsity and Celebration Week.

All present voted to approve the annual accounts for 2023/24.



7. Officer Reports *

Officer reports approved by all present.

8. Sub Council Policy Motions

(i) Continuing Recording Lectures:

AL presented and explained the policy motion. The overarching proposal was for the SU to work with the University to ensure they:

Continue to record lectures to ensure students have access to comments made during studies and questions or issues developed beyond the information contained within lecture slides.

Members fed back that, whilst they are meant to have lectures recorded in line with their Reasonable Adjustments Plan (RAP) but some lecturers still refuse citing GDPR. AL advised the students to report this to the Disability Support Team within Student Services. Members also stated that lecturers had cited that students will not come to lectures if they are recorded, and that those with RAP will share recordings.

A comment was made that recording lectures was a positive aspect from a commuter students' perspective, but that there should be measures to prevent reliance/prevent people not attending. Another member agreed students should be encouraged to attend as it can affect their record and achievements. They felt that on-line lectures reduces participation, which was witnessed a lot during lockdown.

SW mentioned that the topic arose in a recent EDI Forum at the University and that mixed views were shared about this from University staff. One cited concerns over intellectual material being shared amongst many academics.

A member stated that commuters can commute a long way for just one lecture, so recording could be beneficial to them. Other stated that many students use recordings more as a back up and they will still engage and ask questions. It was felt it could also benefit people who cannot be or have not been diagnosed with a disability to refresh and maximise their learning.

One member pointed out that some practical courses still require you to be in university to use equipment, so it would not be practical to record lectures.

Another felt that if students are paying £ks for University, most will make the effort to come in.

The policy motion was put to a vote, and approved, with the result as follows:

For - 12

Against - 0

Abstain - 1

(ii) Basic life support/first aid for committee members:

BR, the proposer, presented and explained the policy motion. The overarching proposal was:

All society/club committee members must complete basic life support and/or basic first aid training as part of their committee fest training

A question was asked about when the training would be for students be and where the funding would come from. BR stated that that aim was for it to take place during committee training and that funding would hopefully be from the SU or University.

It was commented by a member that the SU are facing a deficit and are unlikely to be able to afford this. They asked for estimated costs to be provided before any vote could be taken. BR suggested it would be for the SU to explore if passed, and that there are university personnel who would have qualifications to train, even if not full formal qualification, but basic training, which could be approached to help.

A question was asked around who would provide aftercare for committee members who may have to deliver this care. BR felt that committee members you take on a duty of care for member wellbeing and that this would give them a tool to help their members and could get support from the SU. AL clarified that the SU doesn't don't have our own mental health services but will refer to STAR services (at Firstpoint).

BR added that it could be more traumatic for students to see a life threatening incident and have no idea what to do. Another member agreed with this point and said that there are people within the University who could probably help give this training, such as nursing students.

Another member stated that they were very in favour and felt it was a necessity for everyone to know basic lifesaving and first aid techniques, and that it was something that many people undertake when they are employed. This member felt that, whilst the SU is in deficit, the cost is overshadowed by the benefits. Basic training would also give peace of mind that someone has done all they can in an incident.

Another member also expressed support and stated not just sports students are physically active and many active societies could benefit from this.

A question was asked who of committee members were intended to be trained. BR suggested social secs due to high interaction, or those who will interact the most face to face with students

A question was raised about what sort of first aid provision was on campus, and if clubs have first aiders. SW clarified that security staff are first aid trained and clubs will only have first aiders at BUCS fixtures.

One member stated that security are always on campus and you can always call them, it's their responsibility for first aid issues not committee. They did not feel that committee members should be responsible for people's lives. Another stated that some society activities were very

sedentary and did not need this sort of measure. BR felt that an incident could occur at any time, regardless of the activity and that it was a good life skill for students to have.

AL made a suggestion that instead of being required for committee members, it could be developed as an optional module in the induction period?

BR felt this was a good idea but that there could be issue in terms of the fact help would be based on who takes up training.

SW stated that the SU struggles to make training mandatory for students as anything mandatory must have consequences for non-completion and attendance and this is not always straight forward when students are volunteering.

A comment was made about Jenny Lind and that if you are in the building, even though Security are trained, there is often no-one around and so they would not know what to do.

BR said that people should always feel able to call 999 as the priority but this is what the policy is trying to promote, giving you the information to know what to do. He said it followed from a successful campaign last year giving everyone accessible defibrillators, which is now in place across the campuses.

A question was asked if this sort of training could be online. BR felt it was better delivered in person to give people a chance to practice on dummies etc and it's not always easy to learn from watching.

A member stated that if you've just saved someone's life, a STAR appointment wouldn't be enough. They felt that we needed to be careful what we are asking students to sign up to as committee members as this could put them off.

A suggestion was made to make it optional but easily available for committee members.

SW suggested that the SU could have some conversations with university colleagues around any staff who may be willing to help resource this. The policy was put to the vote with options as follows:


Vote for the Policy motion as it stands - 2

Vote for the SU to be given time to research practicalities and then the policy be returned to Council -7

Against - 1

Abstain - 2

The vote was for the SU to be given time to research practicalities and then the policy be returned to Council.



(iii) Race Equality Week (6-12 Feb)

RA presented and explained the policy motion from the Race Equality Network (REN), the overarching proposal being:

The need for the university to be racially aware and celebrate its diversity and to support the week, including the SU.

A question was asked about what more societies could do to become more diverse. RA felt that, from conversations, participation is affected by representation, so if a student doesn't see anyone else black in a club, they are less likely to join. If the clubs are more represented people more encouraged to join. It was asked if collaborations with REN network ect help improve this and RA felt it definitely would and that both the Nigerian society and REN have been trying to collaborate more.

A question was asked what the University is already doing. RA said she had been asked the same question which is part of why the policy is being introduced and that the REN also wanted the SU involved..

SW stated that EDI and race equality very important to the SU, that it has an EDI action plan, and explained that there is an annual report on the website that members could read about what the SU did last year. SW explained that EDI was core to what the SU does and that they are determined to be proactive in this area. She and AL and SW are also members of the University's new EDI Forum and race equity forms part of SW's personal objectives. For sport there has been research done into race equity (and a lack of) within HE sport, which members can access at <https://www.bucs.org.uk/resources-page/race-and-equality-research.html>

A member asked if the week be inclusive to all students, encouraging students to come and learn and getting involve and RA confirmed yes and that they want to do workshops to learn but also to celebrate.

AL stated that the SU has a cultural calendar, so it wouldn't be hard to add this week if it's not already there and that it should be the same for the university.

The vote took place as follows and the motion was passed.

For - 12

Against - 0

Abstain - 0

(iv) Accommodation References for international students

RA presented and explained the policy motion, the overarching proposal being:

The need for the university to serve as a guarantor for international student accommodation.



- International students struggle to find accommodation and 70% of the time, it is because they do not have a guarantor

A question was asked how the university can be sure students can pay the rent. RA explained that as an international student you need a proof of funds before you arrive in the UK, so students already have the money but no-one one to 'back them up' regarding reassurance for landlords.

A further question was asked if a financial guarantor is required for University halls and if this could be a better option for international students. RA explained that for a lot of international student's halls is not an option as it is too expensive.

A suggestion was made that there could be a different rate for international students for halls, especially as they pay more in fees.

A question was asked about what happens if someone breaks the trust and cannot pay the rent, if this would ruin it for others. RA suggested here would be a policy around this within the university, with similar consequences to not paying fees if students break this trust.

SW stated that the international experience team have asked accommodation to work with local landlords to educate around international students but have struggled with engagement.

A question was asked if this would be affected by the new legislation that students can no longer bring over families on student visas. RA stated that even without their families some of these people are 40+ and may not be comfortable in student halls with 19/20 year olds.

A question was asked if this could the motion be extended to home students in difficult circumstances where references could be hard to get who have been in halls. RA felt this was also a good idea.

The vote took place as follows

For the motion as it stands - 2

For with amendment of addition of home students in exceptional circumstances - 9

Against - 0

Abstain - 0

The policy motion was passed with the amendment of addition of home students in exceptional circumstances.

After this vote some students left meaning the meeting went below quoracy.



9. WSU Executive Committee Update

No questions were asked.

10. Sub Council Updates

Due to time constraints this item was passed over in favour of an email update.

11. Report on upcoming events:

AL and SU updated members on the following:

Elections

- All Student Meeting
- Pizza with a PVC
- NUS National Conference Policy
- Give it a go Week

12 *Update on live (current) policy and ideas progression

No questions asked.

13. *Strategic Framework

No questions asked.

14. Teamwork Video

This item was delayed to the next meeting due to time constraints.

15. Current Student Issues

- (i) A question was raised around a lack of heygirls period products not in a disabled toilet, but not sure which one.
Action: AL stated they should all be stocked up and would look into it.
- (i) SS raised the issue of transport for nurses on placement which was still an issue with no reliable trains for the next two weeks. Students are being expected to make up hours on placement leave and it is £16 each day for trains to Hereford. Everyone in nursing is distressed, some thinking for dropping the course even and are struggling to afford anything.

SW emailed SM (PVC Academic) and TimJones (PVC Students) in the meeting to discuss in the morning and got an immediate response from Sally Moyles which she passed on to SS.

- (ii) Two members raised the issue of the removal of progress week and concerns they had, as well as the concerns their academics had. They had devised a questionnaire
-
-
-

and planned to ask their cohorts asap and email the Pro Vice Chancellor Students direct. The students were very concerned about the affect this would have on them and on the lack of consultation before the decision was made.

- (iii) A member stated that School Rep Awards for placement students seem difficult and that it can be hard to get past bronze because of things out of their control, such as not being able to attend meetings.

VP confirmed that this has been acknowledged when the SU is looking at rewards/accreditation/bursaries etc and not to worry.

16. AOB

No further business.

Student Council ended 19:30.

