By-election discussion and vote for Student Council Tuesday 10th March 2015

In last week’s SU leadership election, there were no candidates for the following part-time positions:

Chair of Student Council   
LGBT Officer  
Minority Ethnic Officer  
RAG Officer  
Student Disability Officer  
Sustainability Officer  
Welfare Officer  
Women’s Officer

This situation occurs quite regularly at Worcester and there is almost an expectation that there is always a by-election and potential candidates for part-time officer positions may even deliberately put off nominating themselves until the by-election.

We have a provisional timetable for running a by-election, with nominations opening on Wednesday 11th March and closing on Friday 20th March, with voting taking place week commencing Monday 23rd March. Given the lack of interest in most of the part-time officer positions, there is of course a risk that there will still be no nominations for some or all of these positions and a second by-election may then need to be arranged.

It may be sensible for Student Council to consider an alternative approach, which would separate the election of full-time officers from the election of part-time officers, with part-time officer elections taking place near the beginning of Semester 1. This would mean that, in future, the March election would be exclusively for full-time officer positions. An autumn by-election for part-time officer positions and NUS Conference delegates might encourage first-year students to stand and to vote and could be promoted from Freshers’ week onwards. It would also allow these roles to be promoted more clearly as volunteering opportunities, rather than promoting them alongside full-time, paid positions. It may be that an autumn election could also provide an opportunity to incorporate Student Council positions in a cross-campus ballot.

The options which Student Council are asked to consider are therefore:

1. To run a by-election for the unfilled part-time officer positions in late March and a further by-election later in the year if all roles are not taken up.
2. To change the timing of the election for part-time officer roles, NUS Conference delegates and Student Councillors to Semester 1 (October), commencing in October 2015.