Student Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th May 2014 at 17:15 in EE2035

1. **Student Councillors present:** Kynton Swingle, Tom Clarke, Zac Pritchard, Wesley Hudson, Luciana Blaha, Emily Saunders, Shakil Ahmed, Cathy Sutcliffe, Val Turner, Elliott Nixon, Katie Vass, Deborah South, Helen Manners, Alexandra Girigan, Charlotte Goss, Ellen Joyce, Erik Berglund, Sara-Jayne Boughton, Hugo Sugg, Amy Stringer, Charlie Young, Philip Brookes.

**Also in attendance:** Stephanie Johnston (Chair), Paul Johnston (SU Chief Executive), Ruth Christie (SU Membership Services Manager, minute taker), Ella Thompson

1. **Apologies:** Lee Collyer

**Resigned prior to meeting:** Luke Hennessy, Lauren Adams, Mike Wright, Chris Adlem, Chantal Vinyard, Jessica Burger

1. **Absent:** Papi Viselova, Holly Fields, Joe Lee, Letitia Rodgers
2. **Minutes of previous Student Council held on 1st April 2014**These were approved as an accurate record.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising.

1. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

1. **Officer reports**

Kynton presented a report which can be found [here](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2013-14\2014-05-13%20Sabbatical%20officer%20report.docx)

Questions were invited from Councillors:

Debbie: Did the part-time officers record their volunteering hours this year?

Kynton: Some did, some didn’t.

Debbie: Is there any news about the proposals to develop a Nightline service?

Paul: This is due to be up and running by September 2014.

Debbie: Is there an update in relation to mental health services?

Kynton: Unfortunately, Lee had to give his apologies for this meeting, so we don’t have an update.

Emily: How will next year’s part-time officers be held to the requirement to undertake a minimum of 50 hours volunteering in their roles?

Kynton: It’s up to Student Council to hold the part-time officers to account.

Emily: Will training be provided for Student Councillors next year, so they understand what their role entails and how Student Council works?

Kynton: Probably, but this will be for Wes (President elect) and Ellen (Student Council elect) to discuss and decide.

Debbie: Have any of the part-time officers present logged 50 hours of volunteering in their current roles?

Wes: Not yet, but I will have by June.

Zac: I haven’t been recording my hours in a V-Record.

Luciana: I know I’ve done over 50 hours, but I haven’t been recording these in a V-Record.

Kynton: When part-time officers are being trained, the sabbatical officers will need to reinforce this requirement.

Katie: In relation to the reported increase in membership of sports clubs and societies, how much has the number increased in societies?

Kynton: The breakdown is not to hand, but the increase is around 70 in societies.

Tom: A paper was discussed at the University’s Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC) and the University is committed to setting up a working group tasked with encouraging the establishment, with support from academic staff, of more academic societies.

Debbie: What news is there of the National Student Survey (NSS)?

Kynton: The NSS has now closed. There has been an increase on last year’s completion rate of around 2% at Worcester.

Emily: What plans are there for improving the support for societies?

Kynton: This will be a matter for the new Executive Committee to consider. The SU hopes that the University will agree to fund a full-time post which would have responsibility for societies support as well as volunteering. It’s important that students take ownership of and responsibility for their own societies, though.

Emily: If we have suggestions about how the SU can support societies better, where should we send these?

Kynton: To the new officers from 2nd June, or to Lee before that date.

International Students’ Officer report

Recently, we’ve been helping to support Savannah in readiness for her new role as non-UK Students’ Officer. She’s very excited about starting. Lessons have been learned this year. There has been more collaboration with Chinese students, who have traditionally been a less engaged group. A number of events have been attended by UK students too this year and the activities provide a good stepping stone. Student Council input has been very useful.

Diversity Officer report

Attended the NUS LGBT conference with other representatives from Worcester last weekend. Plan to continue to lobby for the provision of a gender-neutral students’ toilet which would be welcomed by a number of our students. The University will consider its response to the cuts to the Disabled Students’ Allowance recently announced by David Willetts. The Electoral Commission will be running training during the summer to help students’ unions encourage students to register to vote. It would be good to get a new rating from Stonewall in relation to support for LGB students at Worcester. Dyslexia support remains a focus and students should feel confident about “coming out” as disabled. The liberation activist training was very good – the Women’s Officer should go next time.

Q. Is there any progress on the proposed introduction of halal meat?

Paul: The conversation is continuing with the University and its catering contractor, with a view to start offering alternatives from September 2014.

Ellen: For information, the SU shop already stocks halal sandwiches.

Vice President Education report

Tom presented his report, which can be found [here](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2013-14\2014-05-13%20Vice%20President%20Education%20Report.docx)

Comments and questions from Councillors were invited:

Ellen: Many teachers seem to be unaware of the SLTAs too.

Charlie: Are Drama and Performance leaning towards e-submission?

Tom: Don’t know.

Debbie: When there is only one copy of a book available for 150 students, extending the short-term loan period would make it even more difficult for students to access the publication. If students are fined by the hour, they’re more likely to return the book promptly. There are problems with e-submission – every time I’ve tried, I’ve received a “non-submission” email and the lecturer now asks for paper submissions too.

Val: Would there be an option to submit paper copies too?

Ellen: Surprised that ISE have been singled out as resistant, as in my experience, science lecturers seem really keen on e-submission.

Sara-Jayne: Would there be an option for students not to submit online?

Tom: I don’t know.

Charlotte: ISE are much more aware of e-submission this year.

Tom: It seems that there is currently a problem concerning file sizes, but the University can help with this.

Helen: In relation to the 24-hour loan, would it not be better to provide more e-books, provided they can be accessed by multiple readers simultaneously? It was disappointing that, out of around 500 StARs, only 15 received accreditation.

Debbie: Are any changes being proposed in relation to feedback?

Tom: Not aware of any.

1. **Student Trustee approval**

Kynton explained that as a registered charity, Worcester Students’ Union has a board of trustees made up of the three officer trustees (sabbatical officers), three external trustees and four student trustees. Three of the four current student trustees are about to finish their studies, so three more have had to be recruited to replace them. The new trustees will start their terms of office on 1st June. The constitution states that Student Council needs to approve the appointments. Zac left the room while Council was asked to approve the appointment of the following students as student trustees:

Diane Noble

Nicki Le Page

Zac Pritchard

These appointments were unanimously approved.

1. **Motions**

Debbie put forward a motion proposing that the SU bar’s practice of producing and distributing multiple copies of posters to promote events be reviewed. Staff are paid to deliver posters to halls of residence and, when events have happened, the posters are disposed of in the general waste. The motion can be found [here](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2013-14\2014-05-13%20Motion%20to%20review%20poster%20production%20and%20disposal%20Pear%20Tree%20Bar.docx)

There was some discussion about this practice, with Student Councillors asking whether there was any evidence that the production and distribution of so many posters was effective in increasing participation in events. Kynton agreed that the practice should be reviewed and said that there often seemed to be too many posters around campus.

**The motion was unanimously approved.**

Zac presented a motion proposing that the new executive committee should work towards the adoption of a “zero tolerance” policy in relation to sexual harassment. The motion is [here](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2013-14\2014-05-13%20Motion%20to%20develop%20zero%20tolerance%20policy.docx)

Katie asked whether such a policy would extend to events at Tramps and whether it could be made a condition of the commercial agreement with Tramps that they sign up to a zero tolerance policy. Zac said he knows there are students’ unions who will only enter into commercial arrangements with external venues which agree to abide by the union’s zero tolerance policy. A number of Student Councillors expressed their concern about the atmosphere at Tramps, citing examples of semi-naked women walking around with snakes and being told by door staff, when complaining about being groped twice that she should expect this if wearing shorts. Kynton commented that the SU has recently made a formal complaint to Tramps about some of their marketing material. Hugo acknowledged that a zero tolerance policy takes a non-gendered approach, but asked why this forms part of the NUS women’s campaign, when men are also victims of sexual harassment. Zac explained that NUS campaign, whilst being driven through the women’s campaign, acknowledges that men are victims too, but research, including the [Hidden Marks report](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\NUS\NUS%20Research%20and%20reports\NUS_hidden_marks_report_2nd_edition_web.pdf), provides evidence that women are more likely to suffer sexual harassment than men. Ellen asked what a policy of “zero tolerance” would actually mean. Zac said that this would have to be discussed with a range of stakeholders. Wes asked if we know how much sexual harassment there is locally. Zac said that there were some recent examples, including men following women into the ladies’ toilets in the Pear Tree and looking over the tops of cubicles and men stripping naked. He suggested that the Women’s Officer might investigate further next year. Kynton said that the SU could meet with Tramps to explain how seriously we’re taking the issue. Charlotte asked which staff might be trained and Zac said all staff should undertake training. Debbie commented that, through her volunteering with Worcestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre, she knows that the number of cases reported and the number of convictions for sexual harassment is low, because the offence is under-reported and very difficult to prove. Hugo remarked that sexual harassment on social media and Snapchat is often termed “banter”, but it is more serious than that. Emily said that it would be unrealistic to expect the SU to police social media, but a zero tolerance policy would be a positive first step. Charlotte added that the SU should provide advice for students about how and to whom to report sexual harassment and where to get help.

**The motion was unanimously passed.**

Zac then presented a [motion](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2013-14\2014-05-13%20Motion%20proposing%20opposition%20to%20cuts%20in%20DSA.docx) proposing that the SU lobbies the University to ensure that the university experience of students with a disability is not adversely affected by the cuts to the Disabled Students’ Allowance recently announced by the Government. Katie suggested that it might be helpful to raise awareness amongst students by publishing case studies of students who have benefitted from DSA funding.

**The motion was unanimously passed.**

1. There have been no new sports clubs or societies since the last Student Council meeting.
2. There was no other business
3. The date of the next meeting will be decided by the new President and Chair of Student Council.

Helen proposed an official vote of thanks to all of the outgoing officers and in particular to the Chair, Stephanie Johnston, for doing a brilliant job.