Student Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 23rd September from 17:15 – 19:15 in EE1107

1. **Present**

Student Councillors: Wes Hudson (President), Abi Clarke (Vice President Student Activities), Jack Buczynski (RAG Officer), Savannah Ju (Non-UK Students’ Officer); Chantal Vinyard (Women’s Officer); Helen Manners (Mature Students’ Officer); Joe Hayes (Societies); Tina Wootton-Porter (Societies)

Also in attendance: Ellen Joyce (Chair); Paul Johnston (Chief Executive); Ruth Christie (Membership Services Manager); Claudia Calin; Alessia Dal Fara; Amy Stringer; Val Turner; Zac Pritchard

Apologies: Tom Clarke (Vice President Education)

Ellen introduced herself as Chair of Student Council for 2014-15 and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She explained that only those already appointed as Student Councillors are eligible to vote, but all students present are welcome to join in the discussions.

1. **Minutes of previous Student Council held on 13th May 2015**

These were read by everyone and, once a typo had been corrected, agreed by those who were present to be an accurate account of the meeting. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Val Turner.

1. **Matters arising from the minutes**

There were none. The Chair explained that “matters arising” is one of a number of terms and procedures relating to Student Council which students may not be familiar with. She plans to produce an explanatory document in advance of the next meeting to help students and Student Councillors understand what these all mean.

The Chair went on to say that there are currently only 9 elected Student Councillors, but there are 44 places in total. It is hoped that, by the time of the next meeting, many of these places will be filled through a combination of elections and selection.

1. **Officers’ reports**

President’s report

Wes introduced himself and presented his report, which can be read [here](file:///O:\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\Council%20Reports\Pres%20council%20report%2023-09-14.docx)

Vice President Education’s report

In Tom’s absence, the Vice President Student Activities presented the report, which can be read [here](file:///O:\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\Council%20Reports\VPE%20council%20report%2023-09-14.docx)

Vice President Student Activities

Abi introduced herself and presented her report, which can be read [here](file:///O:\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\Council%20Reports\VPA%20report%2023-09-14.docx)

RAG Officer’s Report

Jack introduced himself and presented his report, which can be read [here](file:///O:\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\Council%20Reports\RAG%20Report%2023-09-14.docx)

Women’s Officer’s Report

Chantal introduced herself and presented her report, which can be read [here](file:///O:\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\2014-09-24%20Women's%20Officer%20report.docx)

Non-UK Officer’s Report

Savannah introduced herself and presented her report, which can be read [here](file:///O:\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\Council%20Reports\Non%20-%20UK%20council%20report%2023-09-14.docx)

Mature Students’ Officer’s Report

Helen introduced herself and presented her report, which can be read [here](file:///O:\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\Council%20Reports\Mature%20council%20report%2023-09-14.docx)

Zac asked whether the SU had a plan in relation to encouraging students to register to vote in next year’s General Election. Wes said that he has had communications from NUS, which is campaigning for student participation in the democratic process and will be working on their guidance.

1. **Student Charter**

The Chair asked Paul to explain the background to this item. He explained that the University and the Students’ Union worked together to compile this charter, which sets out expectations of students, the University and the Students’ Union. The document has recently been reviewed and Student Council is now asked to approve the amendments, which will then go to Academic Board (a University committee), after which the revised document will be published. The Student Charter, with proposed amendments, can be found [here](file:///O:\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\AB13%2057%20Student%20Charter%20paper%202014%2020140709.pdf)

The document was scrutinised by Student Council and there was general agreement that the proposed phrase:

**Staff will usually provide feedback to students within twenty working days.**

was not acceptable to students. After a thorough discussion, it was agreed that Student Council would propose that this phrase be amended to read as follows:

**Staff are expected to provide feedback to students within twenty working days or communicate with the students details of any mitigating circumstances.**

The amended version was approved unanimously by Student Council. The President will send the proposed amendments to the Academic Registrar for consideration by Academic Board and will report back to the next Student Council.

In response to a question about the move to e-submission, Student Councillors were told that the University plans to introduce e-submissions and e-feedback as the norm from the 2015-16 academic year, although it is accepted that this will not be feasible for certain courses or assessments.

Joe commented that this year’s strikes had resulted in some lectures being missed and not repeated by lecturers. Ruth said that the University’s policy states that staff should ensure that students do not miss any lectures due to circumstances such as these. Staff should follow the class cancellation policy which can be found [here](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/classcancellationpolicy.pdf)

1. **Approval of clubs and societies**

Student Council has responsibility for the approval or otherwise of new SU clubs and societies. The Vice President Student Activities presented constitutions from the following groups for consideration:

Social Sports

The constitution can be found [here](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\Council%20Reports\social%20sport%20const.docx)

Abi proposed that the constitution be approved and Wes seconded. Student Council unanimously approved the Social Sports club.

Jogging and Running

The constitution can be found [here](file:///O:\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\Council%20Reports\jogging%20and%20running%20const.doc)

Helen declared an interest and abstained from the vote. Abi proposed that the constitution be approved and Chantal seconded. Student Council approved the Jogging and Running club, with 7 votes for and one abstention.

The Voice

The constitution can be found [here](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\The%20Voice%20Constitution%20September%202014.docx)

Joe declared an interest and abstained from the vote. There was some discussion about whether The Voice should aim to be “impartial”, as the purpose of the society is to encourage students to write articles which express student opinions. It was agreed that the committee should be recommended to remove the word “impartial”. Chantal seconded. Student Council approved The Voice society, with 7 votes in favour and one abstention.

Pheonix Pole Society

The constitution submitted elicited considerable discussion. One Student Councillor explained that there are many health and safety issues which need to be addressed and risk assessment needs to be rigorous. The constitution, which can be found [here](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\Council%20Reports\CONSTITUTION%20pole.docx), ties the group to a particular, named instructor, which is not an acceptable arrangement for an SU society. It was decided that the Vice President Student Activities should meet the committee and explain the changes which would need to be made to the constitution in order for it to be acceptable.

Student Parents and Carers Society

The constitution had not been presented in a state which enabled Student Council to consider it, so the committee will be asked to submit a finished constitution in time for the next Student Council meeting on Tuesday 14th October.

1. **Zero tolerance policy**

A draft “Zero tolerance policy”, prepared by Wesley, was discussed. Click [here](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\Draft%20Zero%20Tolerance%20Policy%202014-15.docx) for the draft policy. Wes explained that, whilst the draft policy may be considered narrow, he felt it was important to start with a code which will cover the SU’s buildings. Comments included the following:

* The policy begins with an un-ascribed quotation which refers to visitors and staff members, but not students or members
* The description of unacceptable behaviours is too prescriptive
* Referring to “the opposite sexes (sic) toilet” is problematic in terms of how people choose to define themselves – the SU should provide gender neutral toilets
* The list of behaviours should be preceded by “including, but not limited to, the following behaviours”
* The list should be in line with the one described in NUS’ [Hidden Marks](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-09-23%20Student%20Council\NUS_hidden_marks_report_2nd_edition_web.pdf) report
* The policy needs to be discussed and developed with a range of stakeholders
* There are many initiatives out there – it makes sense to associate the policy with an existing campaign
* The Women’s Officer has had discussions with her counterparts in a number of SUs and there is a lot of good practice which Worcester SU can use
* The current draft includes the suggestion that students should be able to report incidents through an email address which would be accessible only by certain members of staff, all of whom are men
* What about other University locations such as The Hive?
* The Women’s Officer has suggested that there should be a “Zero Tolerance Charter”, which should be developed in collaboration with the University
* Having a policy and implementing it are two different things
* Who would provide the training?
* Would StARs be trained too?

The Chair suggested that the President and Women’s Officer should arrange to meet to discuss this issue further and establish a working group of stakeholders to take forward the motion to develop a Zero Tolerance Policy, which was approved in May 2014.

1. **Recruitment and selection of Student Councillors**

The Membership Services Manager outlined progress on the recruitment of more Student Councillors. Those elected officers who have responsibility for the election of certain positions should aim to complete these by Monday 6th October. Students interested in the more “general” positions should also submit applications by Monday 6th October.

1. **AGM**

The President explained that AGM stands for Annual General Meeting. The SU’s constitution (governing document) requires it to hold an AGM every year and the date set for this year’s is Tuesday 4th November.

1. **Approval of appointment of new trustees**

The President explained that Worcester Students’ Union has a board of trustees made up of the three sabbatical officers (known as officer trustees), four student trustees and three external trustees. The SU has been recruiting for two new external trustees, following a resignation and a re-location of previous trustees and, following meetings with them, two candidates are recommended for Student Council’s approval. The President outlined the two candidates, Rob Hill and Richard Bishop and asked for Council’s approval to appoint them as trustees of the charity. The appointments were approved unanimously.

The Chair reminded elected officers that their reports for the next Student Council meeting should be forwarded to her by Monday 6th October. All reports, motions and any other communications relating to Student Council should be emailed to [studentcouncilchair@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentcouncilchair@worc.ac.uk)

1. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 14th October at 17:15 in EE1104.