**Student Council**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 28th October from 17:15 in EE1107**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Present**

**Student Councillors**: Wes Hudson (President), Tom Clarke (Vice President Education), Abi Clarke (Vice President Student Activities), Helen Manners (Mature Students’ Officer), Savannah Ju (Non-UK Students’ Officer), Jack Buczynski (RAG Officer), Vanessa Gordon (Sustainability Officer), Georgie Bull (Welfare Officer), Jess Cashin (LGBT Officer), Connor Allen (Student Disability Officer), Christina Harris (Minority Ethnic Officer), Becky-Lou Small (LGBT students), Ben Norris (mature students), Claudia Calin (non-UK students), Madaline Orzan-Dragos (postgraduate students), Allie Gentle (RAG), Joe Hayes (Societies), Sarah Meyrick (Institute of Health and Society), Diane Noble (Institute of Humanities and Creative Arts), Alex Giles (Institute of Sport and Exercise Science), Philip Brookes (co-opted), Zac Pritchard (co-opted) Also in attendance: Ellen Joyce (Chair); Ruth Christie (Membership Services Manager); Chris Newbould (applicant) Resigned since previous Student Council: Morgan Koronis (students living in St Johns halls of residence), Luke Hysted (students living in University-managed off-site accommodation), Victoria Maybury (students living in private rented accommodation in Worcester), Alice Underhill (Institute of Education) |
| 1. **Apologies**

Nicki Le Page (Institute of Science and the Environment), Chantal Vinyard (Women’s Officer), Munifa Rauf (Black and minority ethnic students), Tina Wootton-Porter (SU societies), Val Turner (co-opted) |
| 1. **Approval of co-opted Student Councillor**

The Chair explained that Chris Newbould has applied to be a Student Councillor. He was asked to address Student Council to outline his reasons for wanting to join Student Council. Chris initially explained that, as a contributor to The Voice, he has written an article critical of the decision taken by Student Council to establish three new part-time officer positions in place of the Diversity Officer role. The new edition of The Voice is about to go to print and Chris wanted to be open about his criticisms, but also wanted to declare that he will not continue to write critical articles about Student Council should be become a Student Councillor.Chris was asked to leave the room and Student Council was asked to vote on whether he should be approved as a new, co-opted Student Councillor.With 20 votes in favour of approval and 2 abstentions, Chris Newbould was welcomed by the Chair as a new Student Councillor.  |
| 1. **Approval of the minutes of the previous Student Council meeting held on Tuesday 28th October 2014**

The Chair asked if Student Councillors agreed that the minutes were accurate. Tom Clarke proposed acceptance of the minutes and this was approved. |
| 1. **Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no particular items arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.  |
| 1. **Officer reports**

As these had already been circulated, the Chair asked the officers to report on any updates since the reports were written.[Sabbatical Officers’ reports](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CStudents%20Union%5CGovernance%5CStudent%20Council%5C2014-15%5C2014-11-25%20Student%20Council%5C2014-11-25%20Sabbatical%20Officers%27%20reports.docx)Wes said that the SU is now recruiting volunteers for Nightline. The “Don’t Rent Yet” campaign was launched today and he is working with SU Student Advisors Jane Murray and Kate Gynn to discourage students from signing contracts for accommodation in the private rented section too early. He also reported that 540 students have now registered as volunteers on the SU website.Abi corrected the dates for the LocoShowCo production, which are 13th and 14th December. She also explained that a Societies and Sports Forum is soon to be launched, which will provide the opportunity for committee members to come together to discuss matters of interest. [RAG Officer report](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CStudents%20Union%5CGovernance%5CStudent%20Council%5C2014-15%5C2014-11-25%20Student%20Council%5C2014-11-25%20RAG%20Officer%27s%20Report.docx)Jack said that £120 was raised by the bucket collection in the city centre, meaning that over £400 has been raised for RAG charities so far in November. RAG will also be marking [World Aids Day](http://www.worldaidsday.org/) on Monday 1st December. They will be selling Krispy Kreme doughnuts as well as red ribbons. Tom commented that there is a large quantity of red ribbons in his office if the RAG team need more. Helen asked if RAG are planning to join in [Save the Children’s Christmas Jumper Day](http://jumpers.savethechildren.org.uk/) on Friday 12th December. Wes and Jack were not aware of this but will look into it. The other officers had nothing further to add to their reports:[Non-UK Students’ Officer report](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CStudents%20Union%5CGovernance%5CStudent%20Council%5C2014-15%5C2014-11-25%20Student%20Council%5C2014-11-25%20Non-UK%20Students%27%20Officer%20Report.docx)[Mature Students’ Officer report](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CStudents%20Union%5CGovernance%5CStudent%20Council%5C2014-15%5C2014-11-25%20Student%20Council%5C2014-11-25%20Mature%20Students%27%20Officer%20report.docx) [Student Disability Officer report](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CStudents%20Union%5CGovernance%5CStudent%20Council%5C2014-15%5C2014-11-25%20Student%20Council%5C2014-11-25%20Student%20Disability%20Officer%20report.docx) [Women’s Officer report](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CStudents%20Union%5CGovernance%5CStudent%20Council%5C2014-15%5C2014-11-25%20Student%20Council%5C2014-11-25%20Women%27s%20Officer%20report.docx)[Welfare Officer report](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CStudents%20Union%5CGovernance%5CStudent%20Council%5C2014-15%5C2014-11-25%20Student%20Council%5C2014-11-25%20Welfare%20Officer%20report.docx)[Sustainability Officer report](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CStudents%20Union%5CGovernance%5CStudent%20Council%5C2014-15%5C2014-11-25%20Student%20Council%5C2014-11-25%20Sustainability%20Officer%20report.docx)   |
| 1. **By-election**

The Chair reported that all positions were filled following the recent by-election. The successful candidates are as follows:Ethnic Minority Officer: Christina HarrisLGBT Officer: Jess CashinStudent Disability Officer: Connor AllenNUS Conference delegates: Joe Hayes and Helen MannersConnor said that it would be helpful to have a definition of disability for the University, but Abi explained that it’s important that students have the ability to self-define. It’s possible that, where two students have the same condition, one may choose to self-define as having a disability but the other may not. Helen suggested that an explanation of what could be considered a disability might be helpful.  |
| 1. **AGM**

Wes read from his report on the Annual General Meeting, which was held on Tuesday 11th November. A number of Student Councillors commented that members did not have enough information to understand what they were being asked to vote on. It was suggested that the SU has a responsibility to inform members better. It was agreed that, in order for the meeting to be quorate, many students had been persuaded to attend who did not understand what the meeting was for. Questions about NUS affiliation had not been answered properly and left members poorly-informed. Zac and Tom explained to Student Council that affiliation to NUS brings benefits to students, but does not mean that Worcester Students’ Union has to support campaigns and actions which NUS supports at a national level. Every SU is an autonomous organisation and therefore decisions about actions are taken at a local level. Chris suggested that more thought should go in to preparing for the AGM and that all reports and financial documents should be made available in advance of the meeting, so that members are briefed in advance about the matters to be considered. The President agreed that more effort will be put in to making the AGM agenda more transparent and easy to understand in the future.  |
| 1. **Student disability access**

Connor reported that wheelchair users have reported a number of problems. If one of the lifts is out of order (which is the case currently), there is no alternative means of access to parts of the upper floors of buildings on St Johns campus. There are also issues with the lift in the Pear Tree – it doesn’t meet everyone’s needs. At Riverside, it’s not possible for wheelchair users to access the social learning space independently as the small doors need to be pushed open. Alex added that he had missed a seminar due to being stuck on the first floor of the Binyon building. A number of students took part in a tour of the St Johns campus last week with Mark Hughes (Director of Estates and Facilities), which was helpful in terms of alerting the University to issues with particular rooms and facilities. Unfortunately, Connor wasn’t able to take part, but Abi reported that the University is planning a full audit of accessibility and facilities in the near future. Connor commented that the University is very keen to promote its facilities for disability sports, but is failing to ensure that students with disabilities have reliable access to its buildings. Helen suggested that Executive Officers need to make it very clear that students with access needs are involved in the audit. Zac added that the audit needs to include accessibility of other resources, such as ensuring that hand-outs are available to all students in a format they can access, such as Braille. Abi said that a further discussion with the Head of Student Services, Karen Thorogood, would be a good idea. The Chair asked Connor if he would be willing to set up a working group of students with access problems to report to Mark Hughes. Connor agreed to do so.  |
| 1. **I Heart Consent pilot scheme**

This was not discussed further as the Women’s Officer was not present, but it is outlined in her report (see above).  |
| 1. **Students’ Union recycling policy**

Vanessa reported that she has discovered that the SU does not currently monitor recycling in the SU building. The Chair said that when posters are taken down, they are recycled by Welcome Desk staff to use as notepads. Staff are also considering printing on the reverse side of posters to re-use the paper. Helen explained that Student Council passed a [motion](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CStudents%20Union%5CGovernance%5CStudent%20Council%5C2013-14%5C2014-05-13%5C2014-05-13%20Motion%20re%20recycling%20in%20the%20SU.docx) on 12th May 2014, mandating the President to request that the bar review its practice of producing multiple copies of promotional posters. The bar was made aware of this motion and was supplied with a recycling bin on 13th May 2014. The shop recycles all its cardboard waste (this is taken to the back of the Woodbury building). Vanessa will check that staff based in the SU understand what needs to be done in relation to recycling.  |
| 1. **Motions**

Abi said that she has not prepared a written motion, but she asked if Student Council agree that the SU should stop selling The Sun in the shop. More than 40 students’ unions have already taken the decision not to sell the publication, in support of the national [No More Page 3](http://nomorepage3.org/) campaign. A recent incident involved an SU sports team using pictures from copies of The Sun which they’d bought from the campus shop in a way which may have caused offence and this adds credence to the argument that Page 3 depicts women as sexual objects. There was a brief discussion, followed by the Chair asking Student Council to vote on whether they believe the shop should be asked to introduce a permanent ban on the sale of The Sun. 22 voted for a ban and there was 1 abstention.  |
| 1. **Approval of clubs and societies**

Abi introduced the constitution submitted by the committee members of the [Research Student Society](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CStudents%20Union%5CGovernance%5CStudent%20Council%5C2014-15%5C2014-11-25%20Student%20Council%5C2014-11-25%20Research%20Students%27%20Society%20constitution.docx). She explained that this was an “academic” society, aimed at research students. It was pointed out that the constitution is currently exclusive as it restricts membership to current research students. It was agreed that the society will be told to remove this exclusion and to amend 6.2 to read “Only current **members** shall be permitted to run for a committee position.” It was also noted that undergraduates might be interested in attending the Research Student Conference and the society should be encouraged to provide undergraduates with this opportunity. The Chair asked Student Council to vote on whether to approve the Research Student Society, subject to them making the amendments requested. This was approved unanimously, with 23 voting “yes”. The Education Society has amended its constitution and the society is now renamed “Education Studies Society”. It was unclear to some Student Councillors why students on a particular course should want to form a society and Abi explained that the University is willing to support new academic societies financially, which would enable them to arrange events such as inviting guest speakers to talk to members. There were 21 votes supporting approval of the amended constitution, with 1 Student Councillor voting “no” and 1 abstention. The Education Studies Society is therefore approved.  |
| 1. **Any other business**

Georgie asked for help understanding the rules about what can be done within the SU. She’s aware, for instance, that some students would like to see more opportunities to meet one another and she wondered if it would be possible to arrange a German-style market, where students can share and sell foods typical of their country of origin. Madalina warned that it’s important to be careful when referring to students’ “cultures” and there was general agreement that international students should be encouraged to get involved with a range of events in preference to running an event which emphasises differences. Wes suggested that Georgie work with Savannah on this idea and Savannah explained that there is to be a Christmas party on 5th December for international and home students. The International Students’ Committee is also planning to put on a language café in the Yew Year. Savannah invited Georgie to come to the next International Students’ Committee meeting, which will take place on Wednesday 3rd December at 17:30. Georgie was pleased to accept the invitation.Ben explained that students at the Business School would like to see the canteen paid out in a different way. He also asked whether it might be possible to provide a small discount for students who use the facility, which is also used regularly by employees of Sanctuary Housing. Tom said that discussions are ongoing with Aramark about the pricing policy of catering provision. The Chair remarked that there is a 10% discount in the St Johns dining hall for students using their ID card to pay and she wondered if this discount is also available at City campus. Georgie added that the discount is only available on freshly-prepared food. Most Student Councillors were unaware of this discount and suggested that it should be more actively promoted. Helen said that she was aware that there had been a COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) Day at the University last Wednesday, 19th November. Equipment and tests were set up at the McClelland Centre and these can provide life-saving early indications of lung disease. Only two people were seen all day and Helen wondered why no-one apparently knew about this event. She also questioned whether the McClelland Centre was the best location for this service. Wes said he will make enquiries with Louise Jones (Strategic Director for Health and Wellbeing). Abi said that the University has funding streams for particular projects and sometimes these projects are not well communicated to students and staff. The sabbatical officers agreed to raise this at their next SEM (Senior Executive Management) meeting.Zac commented that it is National HIV Testing Week, which is a campaign which encourages key populations most affected by HIV to consider taking an HIV test.Zac also said that problems with timetabling are frequently being raised. 9:15 starts are particularly problematic for students with childcare responsibilities and the pressure on car-parking can add to the difficulties for commuting students who have to drop children at school or childcare provision before coming to University. Ben supported this and added that evening lectures can also be difficult for certain groups of students. There was general agreement that timetabling results in problems for many students and Tom confirmed that this was a huge issue. It was also acknowledged that expectations need to be managed realistically as, whilst evening lectures and early starts may not be popular with students, they are necessary in order to accommodate the range of courses delivered by the University. There was general agreement that timetabling arrangements are fine for students based on campus and perhaps there is a presumption that the majority are. As a new Student Councillor, Chris explained that he’d expected a longer discussion and debate about the proposal to ban The Sun from the SU shop and he suggested that Student Council should consider the implications in relation to freedom of speech. Zac explained that selling The Sun alongside general goods such as sandwiches and drinks normalises the sexualisation of women, which is what many people object too. People who want to buy The Sun can easily buy it off campus if they choose to. There was some discussion about whether cigarettes should be sold in the shop, but it was pointed out that smoking on campus is managed, by confining smokers to a designated area. Tom explained that consideration was given in the last academic year to the withdrawal of cigarettes from sale in the shop, but the proposal was rejected. Chris then asked if he could change his original abstention to the proposal to ban The Sun to a “yes” vote. This was accepted by the Chair. Savannah asked why there is no expiry date on the student ID card. Many retailers offer discounts and deals to students, but some will not accept the ID card as evidence that an individual is a current student because there is no “expiry” date. It was pointed out that the NUS Extra card costs £12 for twelve months and provides a range of discounts negotiated nationally by NUS. The ID card is not a discount card and it would be very costly for the University to produce a new card for every student every year, although as an alternative, perhaps the University might issue students with a card covering the whole of their studies, with an expiry date matching their final day of study. Vanessa asked whether the Language Café starting next semester will be just for international students. Savannah said that it would be open to all students. Helen suggested that it would be a great idea to include British Sign Language. Jack said he will mention this to someone he knows who teaches it and Connor pointed out that Deaf Direct might also be able to help. Ben asked Savannah and Claudia to send him a message about events targeted to international students so that he can promote them via the new WBS student-led newspaper. Claudia pointed out that Psychology has a newsletter too. It was stressed that these publications are subject- or Institute-specific and are not in competition with The Voice. Wes reminded Student Council that the SU is currently recruiting for a new Student Trustee. The deadline for applications is this Friday, 28th November at 5pm. |
| 1. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of Student Council will take place on Tuesday 13th January 2015 from 17:15 – 19:15 in EE1107.  |