**Student Council**

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

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| 1. **Present**   **Student Councillors**: Wes Hudson (President), Tom Clarke (Vice President Education), Abi Clarke (Vice President Student Activities), Savannah Ju (Non-UK Students’ Officer), Jack Buczynski (RAG Officer), Vanessa Gordon (Sustainability Officer), Georgie Bull (Welfare Officer), Chantal Vinyard (Women’s Officer), Joe Hayes (Societies), Joshua Ware (Sports), Thomas Beale (RAG), Sarah Meyrick (Institute of Health and Society), Nicki Le Page (Institute of Science and the Environment), Connor Allen (students with a disability), Jane Abbott (sustainability), Jeremy Hanley-Keeley (commuting students), Victoria Maybury (students in private rented sector)  Also in attendance: Ellen Joyce (Chair); Paul Johnston (Chief Executive); Ruth Christie (Membership Services Manager); Val Turner, Philip Brookes, Zac Pritchard, Luke Hysted (to be approved – students living in University-managed off-site accommodation); three members of The Voice society    Apologies: Helen Manners (Mature Students’ Officer), Claudia Calin (non-UK students), Sarah Meyrick (Institute of Health & Society), Mihaela Getzova (WBS), Morgan Koronis (St Johns halls), Nicki Le Page (ISE) – absent for first part of the meeting  Absent: Tina Wootton-Porter (Societies), Allie Gentle (RAG), Alice Underhill (Institute of Education), Ben Norris (mature students), Munifa Rauf (BAME students), Rebecca Jones (sustainability) |
| 1. **Approval of co-opted Student Councillors**   The Chair explained that there are three students, all of whom were Student Councillors in 2013-14, who would like to continue. They are Philip Brookes, Val Turner and Zac Pritchard. Once Student Council had heard why they wished to be co-opted, all three were asked to leave the room. Student Councillors voted unanimously (17 votes) to co-opt all three, who were then invited to join Council. |
| 1. **Approval of the minutes of the previous Student Council meeting held on Tuesday 14th October 2014**   The Chair asked if Student Councillors agreed that the minutes were accurate. Chantal proposed acceptance of the minutes and Tom Clarke seconded. |
| 1. **Annual General Meeting to be held on Tuesday 11th November**   Wes explained that the AGM has been postponed for a week as he, Abi and Paul will be attending NUS Zone Conferences in Harrogate on Monday 3rd and Tuesday 4th November. The AGM will be held in EE1061 from 13:00 – 14:00. Wes outlined the purpose and content of the meeting and explained that 75 members are required to be present for the meeting to be quorate. He asked whether Student Councillors have suggestions as to what might draw students to attend the AGM. Last year, quoracy had been met at the third attempt through emphasising to sports club members that a majority vote at the AGM was required in order for the SU to continue to be affiliated to BUCS. Some suggested that free pizza should be provided but others felt that more effort should be made to promote the AGM as an event all students should want to attend. Whilst 75 students are required to achieve the quorum, it would be better to have a much bigger turnout if possible. Wes asked all Student Councillors to come and asked everyone to try to bring five other students with them. Chantal asked if attendance at the AGM was counted as volunteering hours and Paul explained that this would count only for student trustees. |
| 1. **By-election**   Ruth reported that nominations are currently open for the three new part-time officer positions agreed by the previous Student Council: Student Disability Officer, Minority Ethnic Officer and LGBT Officer, plus the two NUS Conference delegate places. Nominations close at midday on Friday 31st October and voting will take place from Monday 3rd – Friday 7th November. Ruth reminded Student Councillors that any student, including those who already hold an elected position, may stand as a candidate for the NUS Conference delegate roles. |
| 1. **University harassment policy**   The Women’s Officer reported on developments since the [motion](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-10-14%20Student%20Council\2014-10-14%20Motion%20Harassment%20Policy.docx) passed by Student Council. The following day, it was discovered that the University is already developing an amended harassment policy. Chantal met later that week with Julian Bancroft-Martin, Senior Project Manager – Corporate Policies to discuss this. Julian is also working with Ruth Jones on a domestic violence policy. Chantal has explained to Julian and Ruth Jones that the SU wants to develop a zero tolerance policy and charter. Student Councillors are now invited to join a working party being set up by the Women’s Officer to develop this initiative.  The Welfare Officer said that she has arranged to meet Julian on Monday 3rd November and invited the Women’s Officer to join them. |
| 1. **NUS manifesto**   The Chair invited Zac to introduce [this document](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-10-28%20Student%20Council\2014-10-28%20NUS%20New%20deal%20for%20the%20next%20generation.pdf). Zac said that NUS worked with students’ unions to develop this list of priorities. He did not know whether Worcester had been involved in the discussions. He suggested that Student Council might use this document to cherry-pick the issues most important to students at Worcester. Zac asked whether there were any plans for events and actions in the run-up to the 2015 General Election.  Wes explained that he has spoken to NUS’s policy officer about the document, which was put together prior to the commencement of his term of office. Wes suggested that there might be an online survey, inviting students to pick their “top ten” from the 30 issues identified by NUS.  In relation to voter registration, Wes said that there will be a “tear out” registration form in The Voice and students will also be able to register via SOLE. National Voter Registration Day is on Thursday 5th February and the SU already has materials including the “Voter Registration Toolkit” which could be used.  Tom said that 130 students signed up last year, using the toolkit. Zac explained that much more effort will be needed this year, as people can only register individually, rather than as a block.  In relation to the proposed online survey exploring students’ priorities, Connor pointed out that some very important issues might be missed from the “top ten” because they affect a relatively small number of students. The proposed cuts to the Disabled Students’ Allowances are an example.  Zac asked if the SU has any plans for more political engagement.  Paul said that the SU had hosted a hustings event in 2010, which was interesting but was not well attended. As there will be local elections on the same date as the general election (7th May 2015), there should be interest from candidates in listening and responding to students’ issues, as there are potentially around 5,000 student voters in Worcester. Wes said that the Vice Chancellor has already expressed his support for the idea of hosting hustings at the University.  There was further discussion about the tensions between students and the local community and the fact that Worcester boasts that it is a “University City”. As one of the largest local employers, the University and its students should be seen as a vital part of the local economy and society.  Luke asked whether Student Council would be able to name its preferred candidate, but Paul explained that, under the Charities Act 2006, the SU is legally barred from doing this. There have been major concerns raised about the effect of the constraints imposed by the Lobbying Act and NUS has recently produced [guidance for students unions](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/news/article/anewdeal/Lobbying-Act-update/).  It was generally agreed that students should be encouraged to engage with the political process, with the Vice President Student Activities saying how powerful she thought [this video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zruGBWLk9s8) was in helping people who think they don’t “do politics” to recognise that they do. |
| 1. **Food Bank**   Georgie presented the [proposal](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-10-28%20Student%20Council\2014-10-14%20Foodbank%20campaign.docx) from third-year Human Nutrition students, who are asking for support from the SU to raise awareness among students of the Worcester Food Bank and to ask students to consider donating non-perishable food items to the Food Bank, particularly in the run-up to Christmas. This project forms part of a module for the students, who have been privileged to visit the Food Bank and find out more about how it works and the people it helps. The students would like to be able to set up two collection points, one at City campus and one at St Johns, so that students can easily make donations. Student Council voted to support the project, with 20 Student Councillors voting “yes” and one “no”. |
| 1. **Clubs and societies**   Harry Potter Society  The society has sent through a [revised constitution](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-10-28%20Student%20Council\2014-10-28%20Harry%20Potter%20Society%20amended%20constitution.docx), which is more detailed than the one presented at the previous Student Council and references to affiliations have been removed. Student Council voted to approve the society, with 21 Student Councillors voting “for” and one abstention.  Education Society  Student Councillors were puzzled by [this constitution](file:///\\Staff.worc.ac.uk\shared\Students%20Union\Governance\Student%20Council\2014-15\2014-10-28%20Student%20Council\2014-10-28%20Education%20Society%20constitution.docx) as it’s not clear what the purpose of the society is, nor what kind of students might join. Abi explained that it’s intended to be an academic society for students in the Institute of Education. Student Council agreed that it should be sent back to the committee for clarification and they should be advised to delete the reference to Tramps Nightclub. |
| 1. **Any other business**   Abi explained that the Cheerleading Society has approached her as they would like to produce a calendar, financed through sponsorship from local businesses, with profits going towards the club itself and RAG. They are asking advice on where they should “draw the line”. Abi said that a number of sports clubs and societies from other students’ unions have produced “semi-naked” calendars. She said that the idea was to publish the calendar online and take orders, with hard copies being produced once ordered and paid for.  There was a lively discussion which included the following points:   * Possible risk to the reputation of the Society, the SU, the University and sponsors * Any students participating would need to give their consent before photos were taken and also afterwards, once the calendar was ready for publishing * All profits should go to RAG (in which case the charities benefiting from RAG fundraising would need to be consulted prior to the calendar being produced) * Who would be the photographer? * The welfare of those involved is important and no students should feel under pressure to take part * If the calendar and the images are to be made available online, are there additional risks for those taking part? * Would it be better to consider producing a calendar involving all societies, or a #TeamWorc calendar which could feature sports clubs and StARs too? * It seems unlikely that Cheerleading would be able to produce a calendar quickly   Tom gave a verbal report on the StARs framework. He said that 495 StARs are now listed on SOLE. 231 booked places on the training which took place during Worcester Week 1 and 205 attended. An additional introductory session will be put on if there is demand for it. During Worcester Week 2 there will be further training opportunities, including more Level 2 development workshops. So far, 80 StARs have signed up exclusively as StAR volunteers through the website. Institute Reps would like a list of all courses in their respective institutes.  The Sustainability Officer reported that she is meeting with Katy Boom, the University’s Director of Environmental Sustainability, to discuss the proposed “blackout” event to be held in February. Connor pointed out that turning off the electricity supply, even for a short time, would mean that electronic doors and pull cords would not operate, which would be of special concern to students with a disability. The Sustainability Officer explained that the event would be situated in a particular location and there are no plans for the whole of the campus to be affected.  Josh said that members of a student society have been attacked by people living at the YMCA. The Chair advised him to talk to the relevant elected officer about this.  A representative from The Voice asked what the SU is doing to improve the image and reputation of students in the community. The President said that there is a meeting later this week with the PCSOs to discuss what might be done. He and the Vice President Education attended the Community Forum recently. He said that one way of countering complaints about students is to publicise “good news” stories. The President also commended the Vice President Student Activities for the letter she’d written which was published in the Worcester News. The Vice President Education said that the SU is working with the University and the local bus company to outline the positive impact students have in the community. In answer to a question, the President explained that students who cause a nuisance are dealt with by the University and may be excluded. The Vice President Student Activities added that, when students are excluded from continuing with their studies, if they are in private rented accommodation their contracts remain in place. The Women’s Officer said that she understands that a Community Liaison Team is to be formed, but she added that students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a proper manner. Zac commented that, in his experience, the main complaint from local residents concerns car parking. Abi reported that the PCSOs have worked with students and local residents in Nuffield Close, where a car-park share is now successfully operating.  Hugo Sugg came to talk about the [Be Real campaign](http://www.berealcampaign.co.uk/home/), which campaigns to change attitudes about body image and to support people with low body confidence. He is looking for support from the SU to promote the campaign and to hold an event, such as inviting students to wear swimming costumes and sit in a ball pool. Most Student Councillors thought this was not an appropriate way of encouraging students to feel more confident about the way they look. The Welfare Officer outlined the previous discussion about the proposed calendar (Hugo had not been present during that discussion) and there was further debate about these two proposals. The Women’s Officer suggested that a working party might be set up to consider the Be Real campaign and Hugo welcomed this proposal.  Finally, the Chair urged all Student Councillors to complete the Freshers’ Survey and to encourage students to do the same, so that the SU has useful feedback which can be used to make improvements for next year. |