

Student Council Agenda

Tuesday 28th April 2020, 17:15-19:15 (online on Blackboard Collaborate)

Agenda

Item	
1.	Welcome and introductions
2.	Apologies
3.	Declarations of interest
4.	Minutes of previous meeting
5.	Matters arising
Approval Items	
6.	Approval of new Clubs and Societies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sober Socials Society
7.	Process for Societies approval over summer
8.	Climate Emergency policy motion
9.	Cost for Placement Students to join Clubs policy motion
10.	Fit to Study Policy
Reporting Items	
11.	Outgoing Clubs and Societies
12.	Update from Education Council
13.	Update from Executive Committee
14.	Update from the Board of Trustees
15.	Update from ASM on Governance Structure
16.	Student Charter
17.	Officers' reports – questions/comments
Any other business	
18.	City Campus Update
19.	Live Policy Update
20.	NUS National Conference
21.	Covid-19 Update
22.	

Attendance

Councillors present:

President	Harry Lonsdale	HL
Vice President Education	Meg Price	MP
Vice President Student Activities	Mike Harris	MH
International Students Officer	Samuel Kyei	SK
LGBTQ+ Officer	James Gould	JG
Women's Officer	Alia Moorhouse	AM

General Interest Societies Rep	Danielle Jones	DJ
Non-BUCS Sports Clubs Rep	Luke Quinlan	LQ
Postgraduate Rep	Afoma Obidinnu	AO
UWIC Representative	Jorson Deep Singh	JDS
School of Education Rep	Kelly Chamberlain	KC

Also present:

Student Engagement Manager	Tim Hewes-Belton	THB
Chief Executive Officer	Sophie Williams	SW
Student Voice Assistant (minute taking)	Abbie Banner	AB

Apologies received:

Student Council Chair	Katie Watts	KW
Student Disability Officer	Nadine Baxter	NB
Welfare Officer	Amelia Price	AP
BUCS Sports Clubs Rep	Sophie Davies	SD

Not present:

Sustainability Officer	Claudia Gutierrez	CG
Academic Societies Rep	Karl Stanfield	KS
School of Psychology Rep	Janne Vollan Tollefsen	JVT

Minutes

1.	Welcome and introductions
	HL welcomed all to the final Student Council meeting of the 2019-20 academic year and thanked councillors for attending online. HL explained that he would be acting as Chair of this meeting as KW had sent her apologies.
2.	Apologies
	Apologies were received from Katie Watts, Nadine Baxter, Amelia Price and Sophie Davies.
3.	Declarations of interest
	MH declared an interest in clubs and societies so would be abstaining from voting on clubs and societies approvals. DJ declared an interest in societies, so would be abstaining from voting on societies approvals.
4.	Minutes of previous meeting
	Vote to approve the minutes of the previous meeting: For: 10 Against: 0 Abstain: 0 The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting

5.	Matters arising	
	Action	Update
	01. THB to inform MP of feedback from Law course.	Complete
	02. HL to update Council at next meeting on NUS National Conference including the outcome of the National Elections and the 8 policies to be discussed.	HL to update in agenda item 20.
Approval Items		
6.	Approval of new Clubs and Societies	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sober Socials Society 	
	<p>MH ran through the application for Sober Socials society, noting that the group of students who put in the application had been advised to keep the full name of Sober Socials rather than abbreviated to SobSoc.</p> <p>There was a brief discussion around the name and purpose of the society, points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could symbolising themselves with the word sober give the wrong impression - These students are hoping to create a safe space where it is overtly clear that there is no social pressure to drink alcohol at an event of this society - Initial questioning if the name insinuates that this is the only space for socialising without alcohol - This would appeal to a specific set of individuals who take pride in their sobriety, and provides a space where people hopefully feel comfortable expressing this - DJ pointed out that this might appeal to commuter students. SW noted the SU is planning an event specifically for commuter students on Welcome Weekend 2020, depending on Covid-19 circumstances, and so the SU could encourage the Sober Socials Society to get involved in this <p>Vote to approve Sober Socials Society. For: 8 Against: 0 Abstain: 1 The Sober Socials Society was approved.</p>	
7.	Process for Societies approval over summer	
	<p>THB noted that without Student Council meeting, there is currently no method for approving new societies until next academic year. THB explained that within the new governance structure the new Executive Committee, with a membership of just the three Full Time Officers, will have responsibility to approve societies applications. THB asked Council to approve a pilot of the proposed new governance process until the Governance Review passes in June.</p> <p>Vote to approve the 3 Full Time Officers as jointly responsible for approving applications for new societies until the new structure is passed or the next Student Council, whichever is sooner. For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain: 2 The process for societies approval was approved by Council.</p>	

<p>8.</p>	<p>Climate Emergency policy motion</p> <p>HL noted that CG could not attend this meeting, so as the policy seconder he would be speaking on behalf of her.</p> <p>HL explained the University has declared a Climate Emergency, and he feels that the Students' Union should align with this notion. HL ran through the policy, picking up on key points, such as the University being awarded Sustainable Institution of the Year, the SU participating in the Responsible Futures accreditation scheme as well as continually achieving Green Impact status.</p> <p>HL noted that if this policy were to be approved by Council, due to the financial implications of becoming carbon neutral, the policy would be put forwards to the SU Trustee Board for approval before becoming a live policy.</p> <p>JG questioned if the policy could set out the SU's aim to become carbon neutral sooner than 2030. SW explained that the University set 2030 as a fairly ambitious target, and that to aim for sooner than this could be unrealistic. SW also noted that there are only certain elements of working towards carbon neutrality that would be within the SU's control. For example, the utilities use of the SU building is managed by the University's estates department. Thus, if approved the SU would work closely with the University to ensure an action plan was drawn up.</p> <p>JG noted that as an Environmental Science and Ecology student, he is supportive of the idea of becoming a more sustainable organisation, but that he would hope the policy would be backed by a plan of action to work towards.</p> <p>THB reassured that if it were to be approved, as a live policy it is the responsibility of the SU to work towards the aims of the policy and that it would be periodically reviewed. Student Council would be able to hold the SU to account over ensuring this policy is implemented.</p> <p>For: 9 Against: 0 Abstain: 1</p> <p>The Climate Emergency policy motion was approved by Council.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Cost for Placement Students to join Clubs policy motion</p> <p>MH explained that this policy motion arose from an initial conversation with paramedic students who wanted to be part of the SU's Football club, but felt that the cost of joining the club did not reflect the value they receive as a placement student, due to being unable to commit to BUCS fixtures.</p> <p>MH ran through the key points of the policy motion, which proposes to offer a 25% discount for placement students and explained the SU has consulted clubs to find their thoughts and University staff to find which courses they believe would qualify for having a large placement.</p> <p>Consultation revealed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students on placements felt clubs' memberships were not aimed at them - Some clubs concerned over having lost of cost. - Some clubs were very receptive of the idea, have placement students already and able to empathize with those students who were unable to play at BUCS fixtures but paying the same as those who were - Comparing our prices for Sports Clubs memberships to other SUs - Perhaps clubs can review how much the offering reflects true cost <p>JG asked if Council approved this would it be applied to all student groups? MH clarified this was policy is proposing the change to only clubs, not societies.</p>

	<p>DJ noted that societies generally meet one day a week on the same day every week so this policy wouldn't necessarily apply so much, as students are either able to attend or not.</p> <p>Vote to approve Cost for Placement Students to join Clubs policy motion For: 8 Against: 0 Abstain: 2 The Cost for Placement Students to join Clubs policy motion was approved.</p>
10.	Fit to Study Policy
	<p>MP explained that a 'Fitness to Study' policy focuses on protecting students and their welfare, ensuring students can engage with their studies fully, both academically and outside of this without detriment to their own wellbeing or others in the community. MP noted other Universities have similar 'Fit to Study' policies in place already and this policy would mandate the Union to lobby the University to implement a similar policy at Worcester.</p> <p>The University has a 'Fitness to Practice' policy in place already, which ensures students have to uphold a certain standard of behaviour to be on a professional course with placement elements, such as Nursing or Paramedic Science. However, there is currently no policy in place as of yet around the welfare and behaviour of students within the University community.</p> <p>This policy proposes the VPE lobbies the University to create a Fit to Study policy in a similar manner to other universities.</p> <p>For: 8 Against: 0 Abstain: 2 The Fit to Study policy motion was approved.</p>
Reporting Items	
11.	Outgoing Clubs and Societies
	<p>MH noted the following clubs and societies that are due to fold based on their current situation. Clubs: Golf, Cycling. Societies: the Arts Collective, Bhangra Society, Horror Society, Indian Society, Nature Society, Nutrition Society, Lithuanian Society, Polish Society, Sports Coaching Society. MH noted he feels it would be a shame to lose both the Indian Society and Bhangra Society, in the year where there has been an influx of Indian students through UWIC, which could continue to increase next year.</p> <p>There was a discussion around Clubs and Societies, highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SW questioned if this was a normal level of societies to be folding when compared with previous years - THB noted that it is often a regular occurrence for cultural societies, i.e. Lithuanian, to come and go every academic year - The SU works hard to keep in contact with all societies, noting committees are often enthusiastic but there may be long periods between contact. - Societies tend to be more cyclical, and they come and go quite a lot compared to sports clubs as they do not have the same set of goals, and there is a whole host of reasons why they may fold - Societies are student led, so up to the students to take the lead on. - The Student Engagement Coordinator has been tasked to work on the ongoing sustainability of societies over the summer period.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some general interest societies are quite niche, which may be why they are not getting high levels of memberships, could suggest to them to become more general - THB, MH and the Student Engagement Coordinator meet on a monthly basis to go through every society and plan interventions for those struggling - SK questioned if there is a possibility for the SU to support these societies by enhancing the promotion of these societies on SU pages and social networks at least every month or so - MH continues to promote societies who may be struggling for members, but that there could be scope to create a more consistent and concise marketing plan around this. - Difficult to promote all societies consistently and fairly, due to the sheer number of societies meaning there would be so many posts. - MH explained there are ongoing discussions within the SU beyond just promotion of societies and with students around the purpose and value of societies. For example, could increasing society membership costs to provide more value to the members, as opposed to the model many societies follow currently to - THB noted many societies have folded are new societies, changes have been made in the new Bye Laws to support new societies and ensure there is an efficient process to get them off the ground <p>ACTION: VPSA to look into and review the sustainability and longevity of societies, and to review the level and methods of support for new societies.</p>
12.	Update from Education Council
	<p>MP updated council that the last Education Council was held at the beginning of the changes during Covid-19, when online teaching had just begun. The group discussed students' experiences of transitioning to online learning, which has helped to inform the discussion that MP and HL have had with the University such as shaping online teaching methods and how the university communicates changes with students.</p> <p>Education Council also discussed the last push on National Student Survey and the Course Experience Survey before these surveys close. MP noted that it will be interesting to see how the results of these surveys may be affected and interpreted given the surveys have been conducted throughout the Covid-19 outbreak and a period of intense change. The results will be discussed at Education Council in the 2020-21 academic year.</p> <p>Education Council also discussed Harry South who has been elected as Vice President Education for 2020-21, how MP was planning the handover for Education Council.</p>
13.	Update from Executive Committee
	<p>HL updated that no Executive Committee meeting has been held since the last Student Council due to availability of members.</p> <p>HL noted, as Council is aware that the Executive Committee membership will reduce to just the 3 Full Time Officers under the new Constitution, pending the University's Board of Governors approval in June.</p>
14.	Update from the Board of Trustees
	<p>HL updated that the Board of Trustees met on 24.03.2020. The following was discussed at this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The new Constitution and Bye-Laws were discussed at length, in particular the Lay Trustees

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approved delegated responsibility to make changes to the constitution as per discussion with the University if required - A review of the SU's financial procedures - Updates on SU's activities overall
15.	Update from ASM on Governance Structure
	<p>HL updated that the All Student Meeting was held on 23.04.2020 virtually as an online Zoom meeting. HL explained that the ASM is the SU's Annual General Meeting, and thanked all councillors who attended the meeting. 170 students attended, which is the highest attendance for the SU's ASM on record, which is particularly positive given the current situation.</p> <p>At the ASM discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approving the 2018-19 accounts - Approving the Auditors - Approving the SU's affiliation fees - Approving the SU's proposed new governance structure and constitution <p>All of the above were voted to approve by the student body. Ross Renton the University's Pro Vice Chancellor Students attended the meeting and praised the SU for the way in which this was held and conducted so successfully.</p> <p>The proposed new governance structure will be taken forwards to the University's Board of Governors meeting on 29th June, at which MP will be in the role of President taking this forward. HL noted this is a big change and really positive step forwards for the Students' Union.</p>
16.	Student Charter
	<p>MP updated council on the Student Charter, explaining that the University's aim is to ensure the Student Charter becomes a more accessible and usable document, to the benefit of all involved. THB explained that the Registrar, Kevin Pickess had been invited to this meeting of Student Council, but was unable to attend so he will attend in the first meeting of the 2020-21 academic year.</p> <p>THB clarified the purpose and content of the Student Charter for those councillors who may not have been aware of it previously, explaining that this document lays out what students can expect from the University as well as the University's expectations of students. THB noted that students can access the Student Charter through their Course Handbooks.</p> <p>HL noted that an update will be provided at the next Student Council meeting,</p> <p>Action: VPE and President to give an update on the Student Charter at the next Student Council.</p>
17.	Officers' reports – questions/comments
	<p>HL explained that officers' reports had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting and that they would therefore not go through each report given the large agenda. HL asked if there were any urgent questions on the reports. There were none.</p> <p>HL encouraged all councillors to contact any of the officers directly after this meeting if they have questions regarding their reports.</p> <p>HL noted that he is aware it is difficult in the current situation to implement changes or events in roles as officers due to lockdown, but that he really appreciates all Part Time Officers' efforts on this.</p>
Information Items	
18.	City Campus Update

	HL noted there is no update on City Campus as the SU has not met or discussed with University regarding this particular topic since the last Council meeting. HL noted that he hopes this will continue to be lobbied for throughout the following academic year by the incoming officer team, as an ongoing project that requires continuous work with regards to engaging students based at City Campus.
19.	Live Policy Update
	HL explained there are no live policies to be updated on until November 2020, noting that students can find all these policies on the SU's website under the Student Council section.
20.	NUS National Conference
	HL updated that the NUS National Conference was delivered online on 31 st March and Wednesday 1 st April, and the following outcome, with Larissa Kennedy elected to be the new NUS President, and Hillary Gyebi-Ababio elected as the new NUS Vice President Higher Education.
21.	Covid-19 Update
	<p>HL gave an update on the current and ongoing Covid-19 situation, highlights included:</p> <p>Academic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic queries – number of cases dealt with by the Advice Service has increased, with approximately 30% of cases Covid-19 related - 'Meg's Study Club' interactive sessions held online, promoted via social media with students attending able to chat while working on assignments - Online teaching – lectures and seminars held online, with positive feedback thus far that lecturers are willing to help and ensuring sessions are accessible - Heading into exam week, all to be held online for the first time - If any issues, all students are encouraged to contact their Course Rep or School Rep with queries or to get in touch with the SU - Course Reps and School Reps continuing their roles virtually, with the representation system functioning and receiving feedback to the SU through this <p>Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A letter was sent on 3rd April to Robin Walker, the MP for Worcester regarding student private rented accommodation. The SU has heard back twice to say that this is being discussed within the relevant government departments, but there has been no formal response. The SU is chasing this. - HL is looking into next steps, looking at different options, such as writing a statement or pledge to speak to landlords, or talking to the Universities minister - The SU is currently advising students to pay their rent monthly, reminding students of the access to learning fund which is open to applications from students experiencing hardship, and encouraging students to keep lines of communication open with their landlords to ensure a fair working relationship <p>Online Presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1360 student members of the Coronavirus Community Facebook group. Engagement is starting to reduce slightly, encouraged councillors to engage with the page or send through ideas to officer - Wellbeing blog with top tips to keep positive as well as via the Officers' social media accounts <p>Volunteering & RAG</p>

- Here2Help is a project set up jointly between the SU and the University, highlighting all the volunteering opportunities available throughout the Covid-19
- Raise and Give – the #Walk4Worcester challenge involves walking or running 4km and donating £4, which has so far raised nearly £400 for the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust

Staff, Finance, Admin

- The SU is continuing with recruitment of staff positions, with the team continuing to work really hard and keep up morale while working from home
- Stock checks been completed and cleaning of pipes in bar undertaken as the bar is closed

HL is looking at potential event in summer as a Celebration Week.

No detriment policy, MP has been working with the University on creating a statement to communicate to students their position on this particular topic and the surrounding situation. MP explained to Council what a No Detriment Policy means, explaining she felt it is important for students to see the full picture surrounding this. The general principle is to ensure that students are not put at a disadvantage, ensuring you can only do the same or better than your achievements thus far in your degree.

In other Universities where this kind of policy has been implemented, they work on a 'grade point average' system, whereby every assignment contributes to final grade. The University of Worcester's degree classification system (which can be found on the SU's website) means that students can compensate and still come out with a good grade, even when they have not achieved so well in a particular year. Other systems are also in place at the University, such as mitigating circumstances to ensure students are supported.

Students are encouraged to contact their Personal Academic Tutor if they are finding this confusing or have any issues regarding degree classification, SOLE degree classification calculator.

MP and HL are confident in the University's approach to this, but it is important for the US to ensure it is conveyed to students that there are systems in place to ensure students are supported and not at a disadvantage throughout this.

Any other business

22. Any other business

DJ raised a question regarding if the Code of Conduct is in the Course Handbooks provided to all first years at the beginning of University. THB noted that the Course Handbook refers to the student disciplinary procedure and the Code of Conduct is embedded within this. DJ raised the point that several councillors had not heard of the Code of Conduct, so it is likely that the wider student body is not very aware of it either. DJ asked if there is a way the Code of Conduct could be made available to students and communicated in more accessible and easy-to-digest formats such as a Facebook post with an infographic highlighting the key points. DJ felt that not a lot of students would read through a lengthy 15-page document

MP noted that she agrees and feels it is important it is accessible and explicitly communicated to all students. MP is discussing this with the Registrar and the University regarding how the Student Charter is communicated with students, as well as ensuring the Code of Conduct is communicated in a positive way alongside the community values.

	HL thanked Student Council for all of their efforts throughout the academic year, highlighting how many positive changes have been made through these meetings and the hard work that goes on behind the scenes from all councillors and officers.
23.	Date of next meeting: 2020-21 academic year

Matters Arising:

Action 01: VPSA to look into and review the sustainability and longevity of societies, and to review the level and methods of support for new societies.

Action 02: VPE and President to give an update on the Student Charter at the next Student Council.