

Student Council Minutes – November 2024



Facilitator (s): Viljo Wilding (they/them) & Jayden Rushton (she/her),
Democratic Procedures Officers)

Secretary: Em Harvey (she/her, Representation Project Manager)

Minute Secretary: Rhian Lister (she/her) and Rebecca Mosley (she/her)

Location: 5X107 (Frenchay Campus, X Block) and [Online](#)

Date: 21 November 2024

Time: 17:00 – 19:30

Welcome, Apologies & Housekeeping

Viljo Wilding welcomed those in the room and online to Student Council and confirmed the housekeeping of Student Council, reminding observers that they do not have automatic speaking rights.

Introductions and Quoracy Check

Student Council Members in attendance:

Aasrit Durbha (ASI)
Amin Alhawary (NFI)
Anya Brentnall (Sport)
Charlie Moon (ASI)
Freddie Holt (ASI)
Jonathan Ayiemba (NFI)
Julienne Chipesia (Reps)
Leila Powell (Sport)
Lily Lassiter (NFI)
Skyler Kearsey (ASI)
Sofiiia Shargorodskai (NFI)
Yanko Yankov (Sport)
Yash Kapoor (Reps)
Yeva Sokoliuk (NFI)

Apologies received by:

Kristian Baxter (ASI)
Megan Schmidt (Reps)
Mia Welton (Reps)

Others in attendance:

Adelaide Miles-Nilson (LGBT+ Officer)
Becca Mosley (Minutes Secretary)
Em Harvey (Secretary)
Fayaz Abdul Kareem (Men's Welfare Officer)
Jayden Ruston (DPO)
Khadiza Hossain (VP Education)
Lubyna Gardezi (VP Comm & Welfare)
Muhammad Habib (VP Sports & Health)
Mohammed Muhit (International Students' Officer)
Noah Gouveia Gois (Disabled Students' Officer)
Rhian Lister (Minutes Secretary)
Sam Olure (SU President)
Viljo Wilding (DPO)
Umar Abbasi (VP Socs & Comms)

Not attended:

Ella Jones-Williams (Reps)
Jessica Jaszek (Sport)
Sheik Njie (Sport)

Accountability Session

VP Education

- Main manifesto point is to restructure representation
 - Changed structure and improved Rep Training
 - Changed Reward & Recognition system that outlined skills used
 - Working with doctoral academy so that PGR reps are truly represented in the system
- Working on reasonable adjustments to deadline
 - University reduced RA from 14 days to 7 days
 - VP Ed raised this in Academic Board to open the discussion again
 - Collected student feedback on this through a survey – over 400 responses
- Presented a piece on delayed feedback from student feedback to partnership board
 - Board accepted it and VP Ed will be having a discussion with them
- Working in the virtual career fair which will start from next spring
- Working with VP Comm & Welfare to create a distress zone during exam period

Questions:

- **International Careers Fair – will there be a focus on ethical (sustainability wise and defense wise) and companies being invited to the fair?**
 - One manifesto point is ethical careers and ensuring students make informed decisions on companies that have associations with countries currently engaged in conflict that are invited onto campus.
 - Working with People and Planet to understand how we can approach this as once graduated it isn't the university's responsibility anymore. Working with careers team to include awareness in the making of the courses. SU's values

include sustainability. Ethical careers are quite low in priority for UWE but working with careers team on this.

- **Are you open to ideas for the distress zones? Neurodiverse students would make a lot of use from this, could get inspiration from sensory rooms.**
 - Ideas are welcome. Looking to create a space of different activities and freebies. Planning on getting some free food vans. Ideas would be very helpful.
- **Is it possible to have open lectures? Similar to the ones in Oxford on different subjects.**
 - This can be looked into and brought to the university. Updates in next Student Council meeting
- **Why was the HEAR report taken away from Reward and Recognition for Student Reps**
 - Certificate notes transferrable skills and is accredited by The SU.

VP Community & Welfare

- Working to establish student welfare committee and have successfully recruited this group
 - Purpose of this fair is to engage students in community and wellbeing
 - They will receive a certificate and be invited to Student Experience Awards
- Working on Drugs and Alcohol week, taking place on all 3 campuses
 - Drink, Rethink – encourages students to reflect on their alcohol consumption
 - Working closely with Becky on YouTube videos to make this information as accessible as possible
- VP working on accommodation fair
- Presidents visited parliament and met with MPs on international rights and cost of living
- SW Regional Sabbatical – met other Officers and how they work.
- Working on an event in March, inviting alumni to share their experiences, encourage students to have discussions for employability

Questions:

- **Elaborate of People and Planet and Fossil Fuel Careers.**
 - Meeting with Dean of Engineering on the cause and effects of different employers for students.
- **Could a cooking event be possible?**
 - Looking into this and seeing what is available.
 - Idea to cook foods from different cultures.
- **Any plans to ensure the wellbeing of Muslim students or islamophobia awareness?**
 - SU managerial staff have attended islamophobia and antisemitic awareness training hosted by Solutions Not Sides and have disseminated the information from this session to their staff.
 - Organising event to raise awareness to students to know what facilities are available.

VP Sports & Health

- Organised an event in the interest of inclusivity
- Pushing for sport facilities on other campuses site e.g. basketball hoops on Glenside, gym facilities on City Campus
- Organising a workshop for mental wellbeing
- Attended BUCS in London

Questions:

- **Are you planning on running any other events to include students of other ethnicities/students with disabilities/those impacted by cost-of-living crisis? How will you evaluate the success of these and ensure their impact is meaningful?**
 - Working on this.
- **What work have you done regarding disabled athletes so far?**
 - Organising a skills workshop. There will be a workshop on mental wellbeing and physical wellbeing.
- **How will you raise awareness on sports facilities?**
 - In person and through having one-to-one sessions, posting on social media, Welcome Fair.
- **How will you create a safe space for LGBT+ students and make this inclusive?**
 - Working on this and planning in place. Looking to make sports clubs accessible to all genders.
 - Council Member reminded group that some communities need gendered sessions to engage in sport. Another suggestion to add another mixed gender team to sports clubs which VP Sports said would speak to clubs about it.
- **Where are the testimonials supporting your work? Why haven't you posted achievements of sports clubs?**
 - You can find this on Instagram on individual social media sites
 - VP was physically at matches e.g. basketball team.
- **What have you done to ensure more collaboration between sports clubs?**
 - Working on this.

VP Societies & Communications

- There was a reduction in societies from 200 to 72 so researched into why this was the case
 - Found that a lot of students were at their final year of study
 - Pushing for more active societies
- Looking to guide societies on how to collaborate together – going well
 - Some societies are collaborating with societies in UoB
- Looking to hold a diversity week, which will include a cultural food tasting session in collaboration with societies
- When visiting other campuses, gathered feedback from students who wish to see more society opportunities on their respective campus sites, so working to push activities on Glenside and Bower
- Working on Employability

Questions:

- **Society and committee member found it difficult to announce a collaboration they are doing. Can VP help with this promotion?**
 - VP is happy to promote via social media e.g. Instagram, so encourages societies to reach out through email to request this and support each other – reshare each other promotions.
- **Bower and Glenside are difficult to get to on the weekend especially – difficult to host societies at these times. Is it possible to talk to First Bus to support?**
 - Can't personally request a weekend bus but attends other campus sites to raise awareness on different societies.
- **Does diversity week include neurodiversity?**
 - VP would love to have more societies participating on this, so would really like to involve neurodiversity.
- **Is NFI Sports Leagues happening?**
 - It is happening. VP shared this on social media. In contact with Hub Radio on this.
- **You say you organised a speed friending event but was organised by the society**
 - Supported the societies to help, organising own events for all students to get involved in.
- **During diversity could we encourage people to dress according to their culture?**
 - Great to get this idea and feedback, VP welcomes this.
- Studio space in new accommodation used for MOVE sessions and Student Life, can societies use it
 - Not sure how to access this space, will find out if students can use it

SU President

- Organised meetings with First Bus and discussed students concerns.
 - Still waiting for their actions.

Questions:

- **Question about transport and buses. What collaboration with local councils and UoB have happened?**
 - All concerns have been raised to First Bus and requested to be included in discussions on bus fares.
 - Bus issues were part of what President discussed when meeting with the MPs. Spoken to UoB on bus issues.
- **Do you know the NUS' definition of Black? It is Asian, Black and people who identify themselves as Black. Why were there no Arab or Asian people in the Black Hall of Fame? Was it clear what the parameters were?**
 - They were no Arab people nominated. NUS are also relooking at this definition.
 - Black History Month is open to anyone.
- **What is happening with cost of living meals this year?**
 - Encouraging community larder. Using the grant (£3000) so this is more accessible. We open it randomly across all campuses

Questions to Student Council from President team:

- **What does Council think of the term 'global majority' which UWE now use instead of 'ethnic minority groups'**
 - Term is technically correct as non-White makes up majority of population, feels that it doesn't matter what it is called so long as action taken to tackle marginalization.
 - Lumping a lot of students together who have very different experiences, feels too broad
 - We need a term because global majority groups are minoritised and there is a lack of equality, so it is important to have terminology. You need to recognise the status quo to fix it.
- **What methods of communication do you think the university should use when communicating with students?**
 - A lot of friends don't read emails. Best to get information relayed from lecturers themselves in person.
 - One student says to keep Instagram quite structured e.g. with weekly posts on updates on what is happening within the university.
 - Some students do not use social media, but different groups will have different ways of communicating. E.g. programming society run mostly on discord, Islamic society at Friday prayer. Find the best points for each group. More face to face. Appointing reps for different groups e.g. student reps.

- Electronic videos online could be more catchy.
- **The name Union 2 is undergoing a name change to 'The Brunel'**
 - Brunel did a lot for Bristol so it's nice to remember that.
 - It's no more descriptive than SU bar.
 - Could we call it The Union or would it be confusing with the main SU building?

Student Trustees Ratification

As Student Council was not quorate the vote to ratify Student Trustees was not able to take place, short online meeting with Student Council Members and nominated Student Trustees to take place before winter break to vote.

Student Ideas Voting

There are currently no Student Ideas to vote on, open Student Ideas can be found [here](#)

Discussion: Reasonable Adjustments to Deadline (30 mins)

- Meeting during summer with UWE, UWE staff said they don't have capacity for additional adjustments
- Suggested to use Student Consultation Panel to consult students but was not utilized.
- Was originally put down to 5 days but now 7 days with still push for more.
- Staff argue students abuse the system as currently no mechanism to review cases meaning all are approved, were not able to provide stats to show this was the case as only given raw data on all 11,000 + cases.
- Confirmed to be around 10,000 identified disabled students although noted that not only for disabled students to apply
- Uncapped retake provided as alternative, but this is not feasible for international students
- Automatically extra time in their exams for those eligible
- Policy normally goes through the meetings e.g. LTSEC, academic board
- Purely Chair's decision
- 400 + students completed survey about the impact on students for changes to reasonable adjustments to deadline
- Have had first meeting on 18th October – introductions
- Upcoming meetings
- Don't want any student disadvantaged
- Suggested a separate system for disabled students but was rejected at meeting

Noah – Disabled Student's Officer

- Presented data supporting negative impact at meeting
- Felt this wasn't fully taken onboard

Feedback on this from Student Council

- Importance of the 2-week extension, might have failed without this last year
- Uni of Winchester provided 6-week bereavement extension for dissertation
- Those who "abuse system" will still use this 7-day extension, no evidence they are abusing it anyway
- Presidents providing data backed argument, this is met with no evidence and claims of abuse of the system
- 5 days reduced to 2 also had negative impact
- School of Social Science trialing changing mode of assessment

Any Other Business

No other business brought forward

Date of the next meeting

The dates of the next meetings of Student Council are:

- Monday 17 February 2025, 17:00 – 19:30
- Thursday 24 April 2025, 17:00 – 19:30

Please contact suelections@uwe.ac.uk if not able to attend next meeting