**07/02/24 Student Council Minutes**

13:30 – 15:30 (5-minute break at 14:30)

Location: Teams

41 total in attendance

Guests: James Miller

Sabbatical Officers: President, Vice President Education, Vice President Student Development

Chair: Rui Jin

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| **1** | **Welcome** *Union Chair and SR&PC will welcome attendees and explain the council meeting.* |
| **2** | **Senior Manager Question Time** *Our guest will be James Miller.* |
| **3** | **Sabbatical Officer Question Time** |
| **4** | **Review of Previous Minutes** |
| **5** | **Policy Debates** |
| 5.1 | Alumni tuition fee discounts should be offered to our Ph.D. students |
| 5.2 | More Halal Food Options (Policy Lapse) |
| 5.3 | Stop Advertising High Interest Private Loans (Policy Lapse) |
| 5.4 | Votes at 16 (Policy Lapse) |

***Close –*** *Date of Next Meeting: 27/03/24*

# 1. Welcome

The chair welcomes all attendees to this Student Council meeting and wishes them well. The chair explained that the purpose of Student Council is to decide on Union policies. A policy can be something small that we can change internally or may be a larger issue that has to be brought to the University for resolution. The chair then invited present Union staff members to introduce themselves:

David Devlin: Head of Student Union Support Services

Eilidh Riddell: Support Services Administrator

Claire Lumsden: Student Representation & Training Coordinator

Sabina Lawrie: Student Representation & Digital Communications Team Leader

Uchechi Agbaraji: Student President

Subuola Elufioye: Vice President of Education

Ovoke Adams Adamatie: Vice President of Student Development

The chair then gave a warm welcome to our guest, James Miller.

# 2. Senior Management Question Time

I’m Principal and Vice Chancellor, and I’m happy to be here and take any questions. Please call me James. I’m happy to take away any questions you can’t answer and come back with an answer from the University.

Q: A student was frustrated by the fact that some of their colleagues were seemingly able to get away with abusing AI to complete assessments, and receiving better marks than those attending classes regularly and putting the work in. Do you have any words of encouragement for these students?

A: Many universities are now dealing with this issue. We have set out a set of principles on how AI can be used ethically in coursework and assessments. Students need to be aware that using AI inappropriately is a form of plagiarism and will be met with a disciplinary process. AI can also be a power for good – that is why we have been designing assessments that are designed specifically to involve the use AI, as well as those which remove the opportunity to abuse it. We must accept that we can’t ban AI, but if students are abusing it, they will be caught out. It would be a good idea to talk with your programme leader or school dean of your school and they will tell you why your results are what they are.

Q: A student expressed that bus companies still not accepting digital ID cards, and that they didn’t know of any update on the University distributing the physical ID cards.

A: I know there was an issue with this last semester, but I thought it had been resolved by now. Let me look into it and I will let you know where students are able to pick up their physical ID card.

Q: A student questioned the rising number of students on the midwifery course in comparison to the lecturing cohort which has not increased with student numbers, asking when a new professor will be reinstated.

A: A number of months ago they were struggling to get a suitable member of staff. The number of staff hasn’t changed but I believe the number of students has gone down.

Q: A student brought up a technical issue that was present in the marking of their course’s assessment, stating that some students had to complete an extenuating circumstance submission (ECS) to cover for it.

A: Everything was on schedule for the results to be released at 9am, but there was an issue in the system just last night. There are around 25 modules that still need to be checked out of approximately 1000, so this will be done soon, and the results will be sent out.

Q: A student asked for an update on the progress of booking study spaces on campus since the cyber-attack.

A: Is this done through Celcat? I thought this had been resolved but I will check.

Q: A student reiterated the issue of teaching staff on the midwifery course, stating that previously when the course size was much smaller, the number of staff was the same as it is now. The staff size hasn’t increased in line with the number of students.

A: The staff-student ratio for midwifery is dictated by its governing body. We may have already exceeded the number of staff that we are allowed, but I will check.

The student said they looked online, and it looked as though there is no recommended staff-student ratio for midwifery. James assured the student that he would look into this.

Q: A student asked about opportunities for post-graduate researchers (PGRs) to teach within the university, and about how UWS can help them to build a teaching portfolio at other institutions.

A: PhD students should be able to access career opportunities within UWS, and should consult their supervisor or programme leader if not. Teaching at other institutions is something that we don’t have control over, but at UWS there will be opportunities to teach.

Q: Another student expressed a similar issue with the staff-student ratio on their project management course.

A: We need to be clear that some professional programmes have controlled staff-student ratio. That is not the case for project management, but we have hired a new member of staff for project management this week.

Q: A student on the adult nursing course raised the issue that their 40-hour virtual placement wasn’t able to go ahead because of the cyber-attack, and now students are expected to make up the hours on top of their already 40-hour week. This impacts people who have jobs and childcare and is exhausting and unfair.

A: I don’t understand why students must make up the hours. We clearly have a responsibility here, so let me pick this up with the school dean.

Q: Student suggested that post-graduate researchers (PGRs) in the School of Business and Creative Industries (BCI) should be given priority of study space as this is an important time in their careers, and it is often difficult to find study space.

A: I will work something out here specifically for BCI.

The principal summarised the issues that he will investigate as a result of students’ questions:

* Status of physical ID cards
* Appointment of new midwifery professor and staff-student ratio
* Ability to book rooms via Celcat
* Responsibility of students to make up 40 hours of lost adult nursing placement time
* BCI opportunities for PGRs

The principal thanks the council for having him at the meeting and leaves.

# 3. Sabbatical Officer Question Time

The chair explains that the Sabbatical Officers are student elected officers who take time away from studies to represent our students and help to resolve their issues.

## Union President: Uchechi Agbaraji

Welcome everyone again to Student Council. Most of my work this term has been around student support – making sure all enquiries that come to me are solved. If you have any issues, don’t be afraid to reach out – we are here to help you.

Some things I have noticed are that most of my enquiries are coming from PGR students who are not allowed to change optional modules if they change career paths. Students have also been talking about wellbeing issues – we are promoting counselling sessions that the University are putting on. The issue of student loneliness was raised at a meeting with all school deans, where it was suggested that this should encourage the formation of more academic societies to bring students together.

We unfortunately had to close our Ayr and Paisley bars as engagement with them has dropped significantly. I am working with Voke to test other methods of engaging with students and driving student engagement. I have written a survey about social events that would interest students and would appreciate if you could fill it in and share your opinions.

## Vice President Education: Subuola Elufioye

Welcome back to Student Council. I will now give a rundown of my manifesto points.

The academic skills team is always available if you need support. We’ve seen an increase in the use of AI – if you need support with this, you can book an appointment with academic skills.

I am happy to announce that peer-assisted study has been approved by the University – we are really hoping it goes well.

We are planning a project for undergraduates to be able to partake in paid research for the University – we need four students to sit on the committee to let us know what kind of research you would like to undertake and how it would be beneficial for students.

We are still struggling to amend issues with the Lanarkshire transport. If this affects you, it would be great if you could write a letter about it so that we have more evidence to present.

When you go to student rep meetings, please speak up. When students make a complaint at student-staff liaison groups (SSLGs), the schools take it on board. So, if you have any problems, no matter how small, take them to your SSLG meetings and they will be solved.

Now is the time to nominate your lecturers for the Big Awards if you believe they have done a good job.

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) is next week, so please sign up and come along!

## Vice President Student Development: Ovoke Adams Adamatie

Hi everyone, welcome to Student Council. Our bars have been closed since Christmas time; however, the venues are still open. If you and your friends, or a society want to make use of the space, it is free to book, just get in touch. We are also planning a couple of events in the near future, so keep an eye out on our social media pages for more information.

# 4. Review of Previous Minutes

There were no issues with the previous minutes and so the minutes were approved.

# 5. Policy Debates

5.1 Alumni tuition fee discounts should be offered to our Ph.D. students – Passed

5.2 More Halal Food Options (Policy Lapse) - Lapsed

5.3 Stop Advertising High Interest Private Loans (Policy Lapse) - Passed

5.4 Votes at 16 (Policy Lapse) - Lapsed

# Meeting Close

The chair thanked the council for attending this Student Council meeting and encouraged them to continue making our Union better.

*End of Meeting.*