**04/12/24 Student Council Minutes**

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

Location: Teams

Total in attendance: 42

**Guest:** James Miller, Principal and Vice-Chancellor

**Chair:** Gemma Murrell, Union Chair

**Sabbatical Officers:**

Omowaleola Adebayo, Union President

Timiebi Oyinpere, Vice President Education

Immad Ud Din, Vice President Welfare and Wellbeing

**Union Staff:**

David Devlin, Students’ Union Student Services Manager

Sabina Lawrie, Student Voice Manager

Jamie McDowall, Student Opportunities Coordinator

Nathan Price, Student Engagement and Representation Coordinator

Eilidh Riddell (Secretary)

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| **1** | **Welcome** *Union Chair and Student Voice Manager will welcome attendees and explain the council meeting.* | **Verbal** |
| **2** | **Review of Previous Minutes** | **Paper 3** |
| **3** | **Big Elections** | **Verbal** |
| **4** | **Student Council Consultation** | **Verbal and paper 2** |
| **5** | **Senior Manager Question Time** *Our guest will be James Miller, Principal and Vice Chancellor* | **Verbal** |
| **6** | **Sabbatical Officer Question Time** | **Verbal and Paper 1** |

***Close***

# 1. Welcome

The Union Chair welcomed the reps to the Council meeting. The Student Voice Manager outlined the main sections of Student Council meetings as shown in the agenda.

# 2. Review of Previous Minutes

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

# 3. Big Elections

The Student Voice Manager outlined the process of standing as a candidate in the Big Elections. There are three Student President roles who are the leaders of the Students’ Union. The Students’ Union gives candidates campaign training and workshops as well as financial compensation to be able to run a campaign.

Student reps already have great experience from your work in representing your classmates that puts you in a great place to stand as a candidate. If you are unsure about your eligibility to stand, please contact your programme leader.

# 4. Student Council Consultation

The Student Services Manager updated the Council on sections of the democracy review consultation to say that we will not have a Vice President of the London campus as planned until we find the funding, and due to conflicting opinions from students we will not introduce a student panel this year.

The Council was then asked to vote for the clearest and least biased question to be used for the referendum vote coast to all students.

1. Should the Students’ Union introduce four part-time paid student officer roles to replace the full-time Vice President Student Development and Vice President Welfare & Wellbeing?
2. Should the Union introduce the proposed changes to the full-time officers and democratic structures?

Question one was approved unanimously with no amendments.

# 5. Senior Management Question Time

The Principal and Vice Chancellor introduced themselves to the Council and gave a brief update on the current state of UWS, including the fact that although money is tight, we want to retain our five campuses. They continued that there has been an increase in home student recruitment this year, although some international students are struggling to get their visas sorted out. Students were then encouraged to attend the Academic Year Workshop on the 5th of February and invited to ask questions.

**Q:** A student was concerned that the link between the removal of the free breakfast facility and the Principal and Vice Chancellor’s proposed pay rise.

**A:** The Principal and Vice Chancellor expressed worry that private information has been made public and added that they were against this measure. The free breakfast is being replaced with a low-cost option for two reasons: Firstly, because it was always intended to be a temporary measure, and secondly, because of abuse towards catering staff.

**Q:** Given that Cardiff and Swansea are facing university cutbacks, course closures and staff redundancies, is UWS facing the same stressors?

**A:** We are facing similar financial stressors but have taken more targeted measures than other universities. We’ve seen a dramatic decrease in new students, and therefore we are not filling vacant posts where they are not needed.

**Q:** A Music Technology student does not receive Careers Service facilities on their course. They believe the course leader does not want to work with the Careers Service.

**A:** The Principal and Vice Chancellor will take this up with head of department.

**Q:** If you are removing the free breakfast facility, what else are you doing to help with financial pressures?

**A:** The organisational change programme is undertaking this and will come forward with proposals. If there are any changes that affect students, we will contact the Students’ Union to ensure that a student rep is involved in the process.

**Q:** Having no free breakfast, no microwaves, and expensive canteen food on the Lanarkshire campus will leave some students struggling.

**A:** All the food provided to students is subsidised to a level. If some students are struggling particularly, there are hardship funds from the University and the Students’ Union. The Principal and Vice Chancellor will pick up the issue of microwaves in Lanarkshire to make sure that is covered.

**Q:** There are Wi-Fi issues at the Ayr campus, could you get in touch with the provider to improve this?

**A:** The Principal and Vice Chancellor observed that this has been an issue for a while, so will make sure it is brought to attention.

**Q:** Why can’t students bring laptops off campus?

**A:** The main reason is that we don’t want to risk them being stolen.

## Issues for the Principal and Vice Chancellor to take forward:

* No Careers Service involvement on the Music Technology course
* No microwaves on Lanarkshire campus
* Ayr campus Wi-Fi issues

# 3. Sabbatical Officers Question Time

The Union President gave an update on their recent work including joining a budget cuts campaign with NUS, creating a free breakfast petition and a cost-of-living policy. The president encouraged students to contact any of the sabbatical team regarding ideas for keeping the free breakfast.

The Vice President Welfare and Wellbeing thanked the reps for speaking up about the free breakfast issue before updating on their plan to mount a display screen at Lanarkshire campus to show directions to the bus stop as well as when the next bus is due to arrive.

The Vice President Education updated that they are in the final stages of preparation for the Student Partnership Conference and invited any reps to come along. They are also planning an end-of-year celebration for all student reps to thank them for their hard work throughout the year.

**Q:** Would it be possible for students to start a "breakfast society" and achieve funding through the university for this?

**A:** That is a great idea, and this rep should consider getting in touch with our Societies and Opportunities Coordinator to create this society.

# Meeting Close

*End of meeting.*

*Next Meeting: Wednesday 5th March 1.30pm - 3.30pm online (Teams)*