**Student Council Agenda 05.02.2020 – 2pm – 4pm**

Ayr Room – **Committee Room 1**
Lanarkshire Room **– 3.0.11**
London Room **– Room 1**
Paisley Room  **- G240**

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved with no changes
3. Senior Management Question Time with Vice Chancellor Steve Olivier

The Deputy Vice Chancellor gave a short introduction to his role stating he is the Deputy Vice Chancellor and has a broad remit including managing the School Deals. Upon arriving at the University he made some initial developments in Classrooms and closed those which were not a suitable learning environment (around 30%) and noted there has been a marked improvement in the buildings and classrooms. He is also responsible for strategic developments and reports this to UWS Court.

*Q: What was the thought process in increasing Masters fees from £5500 to £6500, taking it outside Sass funding.*

A: Promised to **get back with a fuller answer.** There were a number of reasons including benchmarking against other Universities while ensuring market value for the courses. We don’t want to be a ‘bargain basement’ University as this comes with risks to reputation and undercutting doesn’t work. We also have to consider the costs involved with delivering the programmes and we are a ‘not for profit’ organisiation (we are a Charity) and reinvest any income back into the University to benefit students such as Sport and Leisure facilities. We also receive very little Capital funding from the Government.

*Q: Rebalancing has quite badly affected disability services and has left some students waiting a month for a reply to their enquiry to the team. Others have been impacted by a lack of equipment and support. How will the Uni address this?*

Steve: We will come back to the Union on this, however rebalancing was a necessary activity to ensure sustainability. We have received flat funding from the Scottish Funding Council in real terms for the last 9 years. There have been rising staff costs (approx. 2% each year) and pension contributions have increased too. We have tried to ensure that the Academic service provided to students haven’t been affected by rebalancing and we are above the percentage threshold for Professional Staff to Academic Staff compared to other Institutions. There is also a certain amount of automation that we can do to save money too however our priority is person to person support.

The rebalancing exercise had a number of aims:

• To improve structures

• To increase income generation for Continued Professional Development for Industry

• To increase efficiency of systems, for example the external examiner travel costs

• To cut external expenditure, for example printing, stationary and storage and to reinvest savings

• To address continued governmental funding cuts

*Q: Last year we requested more Gender Neutral toilets, there has been little to no progress on this, what are the plans moving forward?*

A: Will look into it and report back through the Union

*Q: Lanarkshire Campus has some ‘green space’ across the road from it, does the University own this land?*

A: There are legal checks required for this area and staff have been assigned to look into it.

*Q: Lady Lane suffered a power cut for about 2 days, what compensation per person has been set aside?*

A: Currently unclear but don’t take this as suggestion that compensation has been set aside. Dan and other sabbatical officers offered a “vigorous and prompt” response, and university staff worked hard throughout that period. Some of it was out of our control as it was external powercuts.

Clarification was offered from VP Education - the power was off for 3 2 hour periods therefore no compensation will be provided.

*Q: Why have EIS voted to strike?*

A: They share concerns with us about the difficulties the HE sector is facing, but I don’t represent them so can’t say for sure! EIS (and UCU) are striking across the country, this is in relation to salaries, funding and working conditions, we will work with Unions to ensure as little disruption as possible.

*Q: Uni currently advertising through Dixon Walter for new members of the executive team. The universities own data shows that the executive team is currently a boys club, what steps are being taken to ensure a diverse range of candidates?*

A: UWS feel strongly about equality and have direct involvement with consultants. Consultants have explicit instructions on addressing gender balance. Recruiting for head of registry and a record in diversity an element of the procedure. Some issues are outside of our control but if we don’t get a diverse field we can send them back to look again.

*Q: It is currently difficult to look at very top in gender pay gap figures in the uni. The student had asked for equality act provision data, but was only directed to PSE brochure. Of four deans three are men, nearly 2/3 of applicants are male. What’s going wrong? Why aren’t we attracting female applicants, why aren’t they making the top of hierarchy, why aren’t the uni publishing the figures?*

A: Not sure something is going wrong, will get back to you on the final part of questions. Gender issues exist as a societal level and so are not a specific UWS issue, and we would strongly argue we are doing our best. In UK numbers of male professors outnumber female professors in unis, and so problems with gender balance are UK wide. There is no endemic or systemic bias within the institution.

*Q: Why do we still have Graduation Fee’s, other institutions have managed to remove their fee, why can’t UWS do it?*

A: We are working closely with the Union to address this, we know it’s an important issue to students. A review group has been set up to look at all of the costs involved and see where we can make savings for students. Students value the ‘pomp and ceremony’ of their Graduation. Although some Universities have removed their fee, it’s often hidden somewhere else and they don’t tell students – for example, some institutions ask for a payment in a student’s 1st year, this is then used to pay for graduations, some have removed the fee and then reduced staff to cover the graduations costs. We have to ask ‘what do we stop doing’ to remove the fee? This is also happening at a time when there are many other cost pressures, not least government cuts to institutions.

Following the work students and the Union did last year we introduced the Hardship Fund for Graduations to help our students as much as possible

*Q: The Hardship Fund isn’t available to international students and this doesn’t seem fair.*

A: It’s actually against legislation as international students can’t access Scottish Public Funds – it’s a government issue.

*Q: Have you received the signatures from the scrap grad fees petition?*

A: Not yet but we are in discussions about receiving them.

1. The Chief Executive of the Union, Sinead Daly, spoke to members regarding the Unions priorities and strategic plan, following online and in person feedback survey with 1300 responses we have developed our Vision and Mission and would like Council members input and consideration to this.

States the Value of the Union will be…….

States the Mission of the Union will be……

The CEO will have the Values and Mission shared with Council for consideration from members and would welcome any feedback at all.

Comment from Lanarkshire Campus - member explains that they don’t feel they have a Union and that depending on who you talk to, different answers are given. They want events to be held but there is no provision for this.

CEO explains that with the new structures we’re hopeful the issue can be addressed however appreciates that the offering is not the same as the other campuses – we have considered a temporary bar for the Union space for events but transport is an issue, we need to be able to get students home safely after events where alcohol is involved. We can look to work with bars/clubs in the Hamilton area to address this though and would welcome comments on that.

Council member in Paisley suggests that we should seek the Reps support in putting on different events, CEO thanks member for this and will take them up on the offer.

1. Holding Sabbatical Officers to Account.

*Q: To VP Welfare and Wellbeing – How many places have been filled for the Mental Health First Aid Training as the dates are not suitable, and Liberation Officers were not included in the invitation.*

A: The dates were the only dates available so we had no choice, we either went with the dates or not had it all. We have moved the first date and compressed it into the other dates as a result of feedback. We have also had issues with our emails going out and it’s possible that some were delayed, this included the liberation officers. 9 places of 20 have currently been filled.

Q: All sabbs – any responses to Steve comments regarding grad fees? The campaign asked for the £40 fee and the £10 in absencia fee to be removed, this hasn’t happened, also has the petition been handed over to the Uni?

President: Meet with chief exec every month. True grad review going on, we are not satisfied with how far we have got. We did a petition and presented concerns to court and had meetings with exec. Need to keep on pushing it. Going to arrange a date and time to get petition to Steve and everyone gets informed about what’s happening. It is going to be a hard fight and we promise to keep on fighting it. Need to look at options.

*Q: On Franklins holding officers to account it says the uni has created a forum but petition was about scrapping £40 and £10. Has this been a step down as we are not campaigning on those points?*

VP Education: We found out about the options appraisal last week, and it sounds as if they don’t want to do anything.

President: We did hear about options, need to just push. In terms of the vice chancellors executive group are going to look at fees and how they could be brought down. It doesn’t look that they will just scrap it, looking at options, so we can say they need to cut fees.

*Q: To Franklin, you say you meet every month and you’ve been proactive. But those signatures haven’t been passed over which doesn’t seem like being proactive on what you were elected for.*

President: I don’t think the signatures will go far enough. There are already 2000 sigs online, this is 700, it needs to be given in but personally it’s about the conversations we’ve been having.

VP Education: This was student led and student pushed. We need a steer from council, where do we go further with this? Is it right for the student body to carry the campaign? We can moan but might create more pressure if we set up a campaign.

President: We will take a steer from council. Didn’t get a lot of responses from students those we have are being fed back.

1. Aishwarya Tiku was ratified as a student trustee.
2. Police Debate and Voting – 36 members in attendance, 19 votes needed for policy to pass
3. Designated smoke areas
Votes in favour:
Paisley – 22
Lanarkshire – 8
Ayr – 2
Total – 32
Policy passes
4. Congratulate Professor Mahoney on his new role as a chair elected of British Universities & Colleges Sport
Votes in favour:
Paisley – 19
Lanarkshire – 8
Ayr – 2
Total – 29
Policy passes
5. Representation for students in student's accommodation

Votes in favour:
Paisley – 19
Lanarkshire – 8
Ayr – 2
Total – 29
Policy passes

1. Fix SAUWS policy comment board

Votes in favour:
Paisley – 15
Lanarkshire – 6
Ayr – 2
Total – 23
Policy passes

1. Implementation system to report facilities issues
Votes in favour:
Paisley – 16
Lanarkshire – 8
Ayr – 2
Total – 26
Policy passes
2. Hold Liberation and school officers for their manifestos. Submitted by Ellie Gomersall
Votes in favour:
Paisley – 0
Lanarkshire – 2
Ayr – 0
Total – 2
Policy does not pass
3. Electric Vehicle charging (Paisley)
Votes in favour:
Paisley – 18
Lanarkshire – 5
Ayr – 1
Total – 24
Policy passes
4. Timetable notice. Submitted by Ross Clark.
Votes in favour:
Paisley – 13
Lanarkshire – 5
Ayr – 2
Total – 20
Policy passes

*Note: at this point we reduced to 32 students as some members had to leave, making the number of votes needed to pass a policy 17.*

1. Point students to help even when the Union closes. Submitted by David Laffan
Votes in favour:
Paisley – 13
Lanarkshire – 6
Ayr – 0
Total – 19
Policy passes
2. Cheerleading
Votes in favour:
Paisley – 0
Lanarkshire – 1
Ayr – 0
Total – 1
Policy does not pass
3. Lack of study space in the Ayr Campus.
Votes in favour:
Paisley – 21
Lanarkshire – 5
Ayr – 1
Total – 28
Policy passes
4. Stop straws at the Union. Submitted by Sola Ne Deuvaux
*Council agreed that this policy has not had the time required to debate it properly and so would be discussed again at next student council.*
5. Allow us to access our own money for free. Submitted by David Laffan
*This policy was not discussed due to time constraints and will be put on the agenda for next student council.*