

26/10/2022 Student Council MINUTES

(13:30 – 15:30)

Held online via Zoom

96 Council Members in attendance

Guests: Jonathan Powles.

Sabbatical Officers: President, VP Education, VP Student Development, VP Welfare and Wellbeing

Chair: Ameer Hamza

1. Welcome – *Union Chair and SR&PC will welcome attendees and explain the council meeting.*
2. Senior Manager and Sabbatical Officer Question Time - Our guest will be Jonathan Powles, Vice Principal of Learning, Teaching & Students.
3. Review of Previous Minutes.
4. Motion to Approve Name Change
5. Policy Debates
 - 5.1 Add the TNE Voice to Student Council

1. Welcome – *Union Chair and SR&PC will welcome attendees and explain the council meeting.*

Union Chair Ameer Hamza welcomes everyone to the meeting. He also welcomes the Sabbatical Officers: Subuola - Vice President of Education, Ovoke - Vice President of Student Development, and Omoleye – Vice President of Welfare and Wellbeing. Thanks our guest Jonathan Powles – UWS Vice President of Learning and Teaching for joining the meeting today.

The Representation and Policy Co-ordinator provides an overview of how Council will run explaining that Sabbatical Accountability and Question Time, then members will debate the policy ideas submitted by students and voting will take place via Polls on Zoom.

2. Senior Manager and Sabbatical Officer Question Time - *Our guest will be Jonathan Powles, Vice Principal of Learning, Teaching & Students.*

Jonathan provides an update on UWS activity; very pleased to be regaining a sense of normality after the pandemic through welcoming students back on campus, and highlights that this new hybrid learning has presented a mix of opportunities and challenges for both students and staff. While many students are appreciating being back on campus, many have found the new flexibility given to them through the opportunity to engage in online tutorials and recorded lectures to be a reasonable expectation that helps to reduce travel costs to campus during the cost-of-living crisis. Jonathan is looking forward to exploring with the Sabbatical Officers the extent to which the University should make these available. Suggests that if anyone has an issue with any particular person, it would be best to discuss the matter privately via email rather than airing it out publicly.

Questions for Jonathan:

Jonathan notes with members he may need to step away from the meeting for a very short while and apologises for this, notes that he'll answer any questions upon returning and questions not answered, including those in the comments box if we don't get to them, will be emailed and responses provided.

Q: How many hours of training to lecturers receive on Aula and Moodle and what is the training, as it seems that some lecturers are not familiar with how to operate these?

A: We have something called a Presidential Certificate in Academic Practice which teaches new academics not only how to run software like Aula and Moodle, but also how to teach high quality lectures, however, not every lecturer chooses to complete it, therefore the answer is that it is variable. He thanks student for raising this issue as useful feedback.

Q: It can take students a while to adjust to all the systems that the University uses. Would it be possible to invite students to have access to these systems earlier so they can practice with them? Some students are feeling in the nursing schools that remote learning and the placements are not entirely what students expected.

A: Not answered

Q: Students are saying that there are too many platforms and no agreement on how to use them. Some modules are giving us assessment information via teams, some via email, some via AULA.

A: We are currently running a project to reduce programmes to either Aula or Moodle that should make online learning more streamlined.

Q: Is there any training for lecturers on using inclusive language, as there have been instances of lecturers using insensitive/offensive language towards students?

A: Not answered

Q: How is the graduate apprenticeship programme fitting into the rest of the University? It feels quite disjointed and not connected to other things in the University, with it being evenings and two days.

A: There is inconsistent satisfaction across the campuses, we have appointed a member of staff to work across the campuses to address this issue.

Q: Is there anything in place for lecturers to have good quality technology for recording lectures? I've had lectures where it's hard to understand what is being said due to poor audio quality.

A: Not answered

Q: Question about the inconveniences of blended learning: having to travel to campus for one or two hours a day is not cost-effective, and students are struggling to get answers from lecturers if classes are only online.

A: It can be very expensive to attend a lecture in person, so sometimes the ability to watch a recording is preferable. It is a principal concern for all programmes to work on timetabling classes to be convenient for students, admits that we didn't get that right this year.

Q: We are looking forward to enjoying the new facilities at Dumfries and Galloway College but our concerns are the lack of information we have received regarding this move. Many students voicing concerns about the lack of socialisation/ student facilities we have currently with UWS, which we feel is vital for student well-being and mental health, at the moment we have to use other facilities if we want to socialise or even work in groups.

A: Not answered

Q: We are wondering if you have any information on whether the new resources will be of a similar standard to the other campuses? Many students were disappointed that the Dumfries campus was left out of the breakfast club, considering we have several students travelling up to 2 hours to get to classes this would have been a welcome service for them to enjoy.

A: Not answered

Q: The cost-of-living crisis is affecting us - students cannot afford to come in and stay on campus. Nurses have voted for strike action - is there provision for the University to support the students who may be affected by lack of placements because of this.

A: Answering privately

Q: Although it is important not to force people to come on campus, there are currently so little students attending in person lectures that eventually those who do will also gradually stop attending if they feel like they are the only ones. Video lectures are several years old with out-of-date information.

A: 75% of students will find it more convenient to attend classes online – the 25% who choose to be on campus. When we timetable a student to be on campus, we need to make it worth their

time. There is no desire to see us becoming an online University, however we do see a desire from students to access classes that they've missed online – it seems like we haven't got our communication around that just right yet.

Chair thanks Jonathan for joining the meeting and answering Reps questions, notes that unanswered questions will be emailed and responses provided in due course.

Questions for the Sabbatical Officers:

VPWW:

Q: Are period products offered to all students, not just women?

A: Yes.

VPE:

Q: Additional classes that we are required to take are clashing with our tutorials – could there be flexibility for students in when we attend some of these classes to fix this problem?

A: You should send an email to speak to your course coordinator as students should not be missing out on classes.

Q: We would prefer that technical classes should be in person rather than online as students come from different backgrounds and some need more time to process information.

A: You should contact your course coordinator in the first instance to discuss your problem, if there is no resolution then it is acceptable for you contact your student representatives.

Q: I would like to commend Subuola for the work she has done, however, filling out the questionnaire I noticed that there is no space for students to provide any additional feedback aside from answering the questionnaire questions.

A: If you have any feedback, feel free to send an email or talk to us at the Union anytime.

VPSD

Q: What is initialisation?

A: A lot of international students have banking issues – for example, it can take six-eight weeks to get funds from Nigeria to the UK, so there is a backlog of people waiting for their money to be transferred, therefore the University gave international students an extension on their fees.

3. Review of Previous Minutes

The previous minutes have been approved.

4. Motion to approve name change

This is a technical motion – a few years ago the Students' Union changed from being an unincorporated to an incorporated charity – now we're looking to change our name back to something that is appropriate for us – changing from SAUWS 2018 to UWS Students' Union. Approval from the Student Council is the last step in this process to make the name change official.

The motion has been approved with 63 votes for 5 against (92%).

5. Policy Debates

5.1 Add the TNE (trans-national education) voice to the student council.

Union chair welcomes proposer Brijo Joy, who is studying MA Creative Media Practice as a home-based international student.

Brijo explains that UWS students studying from outside of the UK don't have student reps in the same way as UK students do, and feels that as UWS students, they should be entitled to the same student rep experience as those in the UK.

Policy has passed with 57 votes for 4 against (93%).

Union Chair would like to thank everyone that attended and contributed to this meeting and explains that it would be very useful for people to answer the survey that you will be directed to after you leave the meeting to give feedback on your student council experience.

End of Meeting.