

# Student Council Minutes – 09.03.21



## 1 Welcome and apologies.

A reminder was given to all attendees that the meeting should stay aligned with the SU code of conduct.

Apologies:

- Evelin Sanderson-Nichols, Izzy Bourne, Will Lamb -part attendance.

Present:

- Lucy Morris (Chair) LM
- Will Lamb (Deputy Chair) WL
- Luke Mepham (President) LMe
- Megan Clarke (Education Officer) MC
- Shingai Dzumbira (PG Officer) SD
- Nazifa Zaman (Co-Ethnic Minorities Officer) NZ
- Eseosa Akojie (Co-Environment & Ethics Officer) EA
- Aqsa Akthar (Co-Widening Participation Officer) AA
- Amara Okoye (Women's Officer) AO
- Michael Higham (Sports Committee Chair) MH
- Lucy Rose Nixon (Societies Committee Chair) LRN
- Bede Pharoah-Lunn (Trans Students' Officer) BPL
- Sidney Pycroft (Education Committee Chair) SP
- Fatima Soomro (Co-Widening Participation Officer) FS
- Charlotte Lloyd (Sports Officer) CL
- Adam Gravely (Postgraduate Committee Chair) AG
- Akosua Sefah (Democracy & Development Officer) AS
- Fraser Amos (Democracy Committee Chair) FA
- Olly Barron (Societies Officer) OB

## 2 Announcements & Co-Options

- No co-options reported.
- Democracy staff are not available Wednesday-Friday this week, so any enquiries to be directed to Fay Shorter in their absence.
- Spring election results at time of the meeting are still provisional and will be updated on the SU website when confirmed by the Returning Officer.
- AS announcement about the welfare announcement on the SU website. Unfortunately, the election of our Welfare and Campaigns Officer has been declared null and void by the external Returning Officer. As someone who ran in the election last year, I understand how stressful this

time is and extend my apologies to the candidates for the distress that this has caused and apologise on behalf of the adjudication panel and the SU for the time that this has taken. In hindsight this should have been done on Friday, and hopefully through our bye law review we can put in place the relevant process so that this doesn't happen again.

- I would like to go through the sequence of events so that students can better understand the situation. Three candidates stood for election, and on the Monday that voting started one candidate officially withdrew, but the name was not removed from the ballot and students were not made aware that they were no longer running. The candidate won with a clear majority in the first round. The adjudication panel were made aware on the Friday of the candidate's withdrawal. As a consequence, second and third preference votes were redistributed, which resulted in the election of Charlton Sayer. For the election of an officer to be legitimate 10% quoracy has to be met, and since the candidate who won withdrew, their first preference votes were excluded from the quorate. The SU received a couple of challenges from students, about this election result as, quote 'hundreds of students voted for a non-existent candidate', and this brought in to question the legitimacy in terms of quoracy and how democratic it was deemed to be. The election panel and adjudicating officer judged it to be null and void for those reasons and felt that the elected winner did not have the mandate to be officially elected. Finally, it has been common practice for candidates that have withdrawn after voting has opened to remain on the ballot for the election period, but the election of the Welfare Officer this year has shown this process to be flawed. We are starting a bye-law review, and this is an opportunity to review and change accordingly and members will be consulted on this and motions can be brought to Council. Usually the RO decision is final, and officially there isn't an SU process of appeal in this instance but in this case the candidate has been given the opportunity to go to the BoT to challenge the decision. If the BoT don't overturn the decision, then there will be a re-election in Term 3. Ultimately, we want any officer who is elected to have the legitimacy and mandate behind them which is what a re-election would achieve.

### 3 Minutes from Last Meeting

Vote count for the Impact Assessment motion is noted as 5 in favour and 0 against, this needs to be amended. With this edit the minutes were approved.

### 4 Actions Arising at last meeting

All updated in meeting papers.

### 5 Student Council Reports (FTO/PTO & Chairs of Committees)

Due to the Spring Elections, not all reports have been submitted.

Questions or comments for FTO's:

- In view of poor turnout for the elections, is it thought that the introduction of slates had a positive or negative effect and why? AS responded: we thought that slates would encourage voter turnout this year. Elections can be quite toxic, and the toxicity this year came from external groups. This is something that the SU will be looking at in future.
- 2 questions from Sports Committee Chair: we are currently reviewing how sport is run at the University as students are fundamentally unhappy with the current model. Luke what are you doing to support the review and what is your position. Charlotte, what have you done to ensure that student voice is heard through this process? LM responded: good progress is being made and I have been working with CL to ensure that the student voice is heard. Student consultation is being sought, but from the offset there was a push by Warwick Sport to neglect student

representation in the process, and their preference is to take back club sport in its entirety, which we feel fundamentally wouldn't work. Particularly telling was when the committee asked CL to produce a paper on the views of students, and then continued to write a paper on final recommendations without considering these views. I worked with CL to challenge this with the committee co-chair (the VC) and put the decision on the final recommendation paper back to allow this to happen. This is a huge piece of work crucial to students and will have massive ramifications for sport. We should be taking the path that is best for student sport whether or not it stays with the SU or goes to Warwick Sport. We have seen WS pushing against what students want through the process of this review. CL: To give more detail about the student consultation: I met with 20 other SU's to discuss how they deliver support. I held 3 focus groups with club presidents and distributed a survey to all club members. The outputs from this were presented in an insightful 8-page report. It took the University a while to understand that there were 3 stakeholders in the review not just the SU and Warwick Sport. We are currently undergoing a SWAT analysis of the 3 proposed models, and student experience is central to this. Alongside this we are reviewing the federation fee and consultation closes on Sunday, with 2 options of how we finance clubs. I also have a meeting with WS to review club pass price. The main issue that comes up during student consultation is financing and value for money.

- What happens if the re-election for the Welfare Officer doesn't reach quorum? AS responded - It is a legitimate concern, but we do want to give the candidates opportunity to run again in T3. There is also the possibility that if the motion is passed for the election of student trustees then this can take place at the same time and generate more interest.
- Society participation in exec elections has fallen this year, what happens if societies fail to fill exec positions – how can societies ensure they have full execs? OB responded: I had a few execs get in touch with this concern. I have been talking to execs and officers at other SU's and we have been talking about how we can support execs. I have started a campaign to get people who wouldn't normally get involved in execs to try and get more people in. You can also get socs fed membership for free at the moment to encourage people who would like to stand but aren't society members. Also, I have been meeting with societies who are worried to discuss support needed – thanks to Lucy (chair of Socs Committee) who has been supporting with this. We have also looked at the byelaws regarding the need for President, Treasurer and Secretary, and pushed back the deadline for handover packs, to allow opportunities to get these in place – particularly with the new take of students in T1. We have also tailored advice to different societies.
- The next question was not minuted due to GDPR.
- Democracy Committee has not met ahead of this council, and the papers were emailed on Friday evening which did not give Democracy Committee time to discuss motions. At least 2 of them are relating to democracy matters. Does AS agree that it is concerning that we didn't meet to discuss this and to LM, what is going to be done to ensure this doesn't happen again? AS – the reason why the motions were sent out so late was due to the workload during Spring elections so sorry about this. LM – the papers went out on Friday to the Chairs; it is disappointing that they didn't go to committee members as well. This is disappointing. It was discussed earlier this year with the democracy review, it was agreed that getting rid of democracy committee isn't the answer, but it does highlight purposes of steering motions and whether they should be sent to all committees. I will try and work with democracy team and committee to try and make sure there is enough gap with motion deadline and meetings to clear up for the next council meeting. Apologies from myself and the team that you didn't get the motions this time.
- As part of the elections the **ENE** slate released a statement which blamed Jewish students for their own anti-Semitism which is concerning as the SU ruled that this was hate speech and the

**ENE** haven't taken this down. The Education Officer who was part of this slate has made no effort to reach out to Jewish students that she claims to represent. How does the Education Officer plan to reach out to these students to rebuild relationships with these students who she has victimised? MC: The statement referred to was drafted by a Jewish student on our slate who is a member of JSoc. The statement was approved by the slate and published. Following the receipt of complaints, we were given a warning, but we weren't asked to take it down. The ENE page is now inactive. We did not intend to cause hurt to Jewish students, that was never the case. I am happy to continue to the conversation offline about how we can rebuild that relationship and am aware that I need to catch up with Toby (President of JSoc) to ensure that teaching and exams do not clash with Shabbat now that I am off annual leave. DB – for clarity, FS said that you were asked to take the post down. MC – I will clarify this and is this is right I will take it down.

- After reading officer reports, with the library and MRC now open and the student comms sent out regarding who can return in T3, what will we be doing to ensure that complaints raised this term, will you continue to be addressed. MC – we are still pushing for a Safety Net and bringing it up in University meetings when we can. We are also working with the University to make sure there is a provision on campus for students who do not have suitable facilities for exams at home. LM: also, we have been working to identify spaces in Leamington for study space provision. Also, in a meeting today, around the exam timetable there is a push from students to have an exam timetable earlier than normal.
- Diverse motion: we still have not had any update on our motion that has not been ratified and we have not had any update since the last meeting. We nor our lawyers have not had any update. Can we have an update and also explain why a motion that was passed democratically in November last year has still not been ratified. [REDACTED] firstly, apologies that you have not had an update, I was under the impression that you had been communicated with by the staff team. I can update you as to where we are at now, but please note that you can contact me at any time, and I will be able to provide you with an update. In terms of the motion, even though it has not been ratified it is still active policy. I understand that this is a lengthy process and not ideal we are not delaying the action on it. A lot of the action on divestment has already been actioned. In terms of ratification from the Board we are awaiting advice from a third-party barrister which we agreed previously. I believe we have very recently received this; follow on action on this has been delayed by the elections, but as soon as we have been able to compile this it will be sent to the Board including the advice from your own lawyers for ratification or recommend adjustments if required. Then it will go back to ASV. At the last Board meeting there was a discussion regarding your other recommendations for resolution and this is to be written up and shared with you, along with advice form the barristers. Apologies again for the delay in this caused by the elections.
- Can you give me dates and deadlines for this, as similar promises were made last time? [REDACTED] – I can't provide deadlines as this involves information on staff capacity and workloads so would need to come from them.
- In the last Student Council meeting we discussed the PTO experiences of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I don't know whether to name names, but you agreed to do several things including investigating and sending an email. Again, there has been complete radio silence, when will you start to take this seriously. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] but when will we as PTOs feel that are going to be listened to and have this addressed. [REDACTED] this was discussed at the Board including looking at the suggestions made. [REDACTED] as part of a learning experience and accountability. This

also ties in with the external EDI review. The board took this really seriously and I am sorry that this hasn't been communicated.

- The last communication we had with the Board was that [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] You are now saying that the Board have changed their view - I haven't had any communication to say this. [REDACTED] – it will be minuted in the Board meeting minutes that this was decided as a Board and was an action to be taken away. This is being taken very seriously and we want to work with you as part of this investigation.
- Do the BoT still have oversight of the EDI review? [REDACTED] the EDI review is completely external.
- Were the suggestions for agenda items regarding specific experiences of PTO's tabled? [REDACTED] we did have an agenda items regarding PTO experiences.
- At the last meeting it was suggested that the following steps were taken [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Were these actions taken and what is the update.  
[REDACTED] C – I would like it minuted with reference to the PTO divestment motion that the BoT considered various options on moving forward on the motion, including listening to the demands in the email to the Board, and that was not the final decision of the Board, the have decided to go into mediation with the PTO's – which they didn't ask for. We were not heard in that meaning so I would not say that the whole Board are in agreement with this.
- I have seen that some University outlets are opening for bookings for the 12<sup>th</sup> April (beer garden seats) are there any plans for SU outlets? LM – Potentially Curiositea and Bread Oven will be opening T3 for takeaway. Nothing will be confirmed regarding other outlets and events yet as the Government roadmap keeps changing, but updates will be available nearer the time. The University and SU are keen to reopen asap, and hopefully we will be able to start events soon.

## 6 Board of Trustee Report

Notes from December meeting. Notes from the following meeting are still to be approved and will be shared at the May council meeting.

All of the motions mentioned were ratified and approved. The divestment motion has been discussed already. A point raised at the last meeting was the payment of PTO expenses and this was agreed up to £300 per year.

Can we access the minutes? It is useful to have the abbreviated presentation, but it would be useful to have the minutes. LM – we can make the minutes available online.

Divest motion – this is the BoT meeting that PTO's were at and want to draw attention to the fact that we spoke for over 25 minutes and this has been reduced to 1 line. This is wholly insufficient. The next paper that Council will receive is to be confirmed.

## 7 Motions to Student Council/All Student Vote

Motion 7.1 – Elect Student Trustees

Proposer: Megan Clarke

Secunder: Akosua Sefah

LM spoke against the motion gave clarity around the role of the student trustee role and legal requirements of a charity versus the election process.

Question: One of the current strengths of selection process ensures a wide variety of students are selected, which is beneficial to the SU. If we revert to election does this mean that the vast majority of candidates coming from a 1 or 2 departments. MC – there are issues with the people who get involved with our election process, we would still be advertising the role to the same groups. The role is very different to the political roles, so I don't see this an issue, but we can work to ensure diversity.

Question – do we realistically think people are going to vote for this. Bearing in mind that the election for the welfare officer didn't reach quoracy. Do students care enough? MC- people don't know about the structure of the SU and what the BoT does, and I think this is a way of improving this. I think we can do the work to get people involved.

Question: the idea of electing Trustees isn't a bad one, but my concern is with some elements of the motion. Some of the detail of the motion needs addressing – length of term for example. Also, I have a concern that if we pass this to work out the detail later then we will be shooting ourselves in the foot regarding overall governance. I think we need to go away and look at different options and models to debate and vote on. MC – the motion does not propose to get rid of the 2-year term – I think the consistency is needed. It would also not get rid of existing trustees but deal with the replacement of trustees. Plans are in place for recruitment of Trustees however the motion vote goes today.

Comment – do you genuinely feel that there will be a good turnout for elections when students don't understand what they are voting for considering the poor turnout at recent elections. MC – I think the current process for selection contributes for the lack of understanding of the role of the trustees.

11 In Favor

10 Against

0 Abstentions

Motion - passed.

Motion 7.2 Reducing Restrictions on Student Campaigning in SU Elections  
(Bylaw change)

Proposer: Nazifa Zaman

Secunder: Fraser Amos

Comment: as a candidate this year I found that slates made the process more toxic. Bristol Uni and Oxford Uni have abolished slates. The idea that slates mitigate funding is wrong as slates had access to more funding. It allows for unfairness. It also didn't stop the use of unofficial slates.

NZ – candidates who did run on a slate were given less funding this year. I agree that there were unofficial slates, but allowing slates make it more transparent.

Comment: feedback from slates outside the SU bubble, the reaction from the wider student body wasn't good.

Comment: endorsements – there was backlash this year for clubs and socs to be able to endorse candidates. There should be some student consultation first. NZ – society endorsements are about getting students involved.

Comment: funding – slates got £35 v £50 that individual candidates got. A lot of cultural societies were prepared to give endorsements. IN this election marginalized communities were able to exert their voices, so endorsements were very useful.

Comment: endorsements add to the perpetuation of certain groups of students being really involved in SU politics and doesn't increase representative participation. It is complicated and not necessarily representative.

Comment – I disagree, it does engage with a wide range of students and societies must collaboratively agree to endorse a candidate.

Comment: from an academic rep and society perspective, slates broadly was never popular and have not come across a society that I have been involved in who want to be involved in endorsements. There wasn't a wish to be dragged into student politics. So perpetuates the involvement of students already involved in student politics. NZ – no-one is forcing students to get involved – that is a democratic right. But we should be pushing for democracy in all corners of student life.

Question – is there a regulation in place to say that a slate can't be named after a political party?  
YY- if there is a link/affiliation between the society involved and the political party then it can be allowed.

Question during the vote – are people allowed to vote if they haven't been present for the discussion? YY – it depends on the reason. If we were advised that we would be late, or there were wi-fi issues then that is different. If it is found that they are coming in and out just to vote for or against certain motions without participating in the discussion, then it up to Lucy and Will to decide.

11 In favour  
9 Against  
0 Abstentions  
Motion – passed

Motion 7.3 Resisting Islamophobia Motion  
Proposer: Nazifa Zaman  
Secunder: Rachel Annor-Agyei

Nobody spoke against the motion  
There were no questions or comments

All In favour  
0 Against  
0 Abstentions  
Motion passed unanimously

**A quick note from the Chair that to vote you need to be present for the debate/discussion. So please attend for the whole meeting if you wish to vote.**

Motion 7.4 Payment of Real Living Wage to All SU Employees  
Proposer: Jon Winfield  
Secunder: Izzy Bourne

This is not a by-law change so will go to ASV for ratification.

Comment – Agree that a binding timescale will be useful. A cost analysis needs to be done too and will provide transparency. Other Universities and SU's have already signed up to this.

Comment – as part of the cost analysis we should also look at management pay scales.

## Motion 7.5 Covid Accountability

Proposer: Keir Lawson

Seconder: Leonardo Palma

This is not a bylaw change so will go to ASV for ratification.

Comment – names in the report should be replaced with job titles before going to ASV.

## 8 Policy Review Update

YY presented.

Due to elections, there has been a delay in the issue of policies for review, but these will be sent out shortly. Recommendations to be presented at the next council on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May.

## 8 AOB

- EA: In connection with a comment by LM at the BoT meeting regarding who was accountable and who should be providing apologies – all of the information was clearly provided and was abundantly clear. For clarity here, the first allegation was against LM for misogyny at a meeting where he turned to a meeting chaired by a PTO and he said that as President he should chair the meeting, when it was established that the PTO had been asked by another officer to chair, he went on to undermine the chair through the duration of the meeting, and the ability to chair and the agenda points. Following this LM was contacted and these points were highlighted, and he was asked to apologise. The second incident was around conversations around online teaching campaign there was All Lives Matter rhetoric from LM and IB, IB quote 'I may die and my Mom may die but it would be ok for student consultation on the matter'. We said that this was extremely dangerous, that this was All Lives Matter rhetoric and there was no response to this. In an email SD claimed that 3 black officers were aggressive and we rebutted this saying it was misogyny. I am happy to provide a copy of this to LM. The officer who claimed to bring down legal hell fire on us was SD. There has been no recognition of apology for the distress that this brought on us.
- AG – I appreciate that this is a stressful time and I don't have all of the details, but I understand that this is now subject to an external investigation and fear that naming names and further public discussion could endanger finding a just solution. This all proves that a full external investigation needs to be allowed to occur, otherwise it may endanger the integrity of the report.
- Those named above now have the right to reply to the claims made above and this will now be subject to a formal complaint. Further conversations on this subject to take place outside of Council only.
- For clarification on the points above and the right to reply, can we be clear that this is the last time that this is brought up at council.
- It was suggested that names to be removed from the minutes to ensure the integrity of the investigation.
- Clarification was given by EA on why names were used in this instance. The subject has been discussed at Council 3 times and there still isn't any resolution. Officers should be held to account for their behaviour, should be on record, particularly where Officers will be in post for a second year. If as a SU we are not able to deal with allegations then what is our purpose for



students of colour and marginalised students on campus if we can't bring our real and traumatic experiences on the record. I do believe that the officers have a right to reply. It has been a month since the last communication, I haven't been consulted about the investigation and I doubt the validity of the investigation.

- The chair stated that names would be kept in the minutes, but that no further conversations will take place at Student Council.
- BPL - It is worrying that we can't hold officers to account at Student Council and the thought that we can't bring this up at future meetings is very worrying. This investigation has only been communicated at this meeting and that is worrying. The issues of structural racism have been going on too long, and my sympathy goes out to the PTO's involved for having to deal with the hostility of senior management. One of the goals of Student Council is to hold the SU to account and if we can't do this it defeats the purpose and there is no point in turning up.
- Chair – YY has updated that whilst an investigation takes place there are legal ramifications and while we don't want to silence anyone for legal reasons, we need to restrict discussions around this. If anyone wants to challenge this then email the Chair.
- For clarity the investigation has not yet started, hence the lack of communication.
- AG– I don't know when the investigation will start, we need a resolution to this. We need to ensure there is a fair method of communicating the outcome of the investigation in due course, and for clarity, these are currently just allegations and there is no presumption of innocence or guilt on either side.  
Request from the Chair to be kept up to date on dates and timescales for the investigation.\

- Date of next meeting: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021.