



## Freshers' Parliament

19.9.2019

Adrian McKechnie	Hannah Zaharuddin	Ozias George
Aineer Kaliyeva	Holly Hill	Pei-lin Huang
Asra Shakur	Iain Paterson	Rachel Cairns
Bekzod Ulugov	Inga Busuioc	Rajat Arora
Ben Taylor	Joel Budu	Robert Childs
Benn Rapson	Kayla Burns	Rocio Lopez Perez
Bohdan Starosta	Lam Yih Zhen	Rosie Smith
Daniella Theis	Lewis McDermott	Scott Thomson
Deep Patel	Maddy Watson	Sharlujar Rajendram
Dilnavoz Kuldashova	Matt Crilly	Stuart Jones
Emad Alkhadi	Max McKay	Thomas Craig
Emma Dobbin	Michael-Sam Vidza	Umunnakwe Ebenezer
Eyram Ahadzie	Mohammad Heidari	Vaihler Magoo
Gillyan Cullen	Mojgan Gharakhanlou	
Hamidreza Kamali	Nathaphonh Khounsaknalath	

**Democracy Convenor:** Lewis McDermott (DC)

**Staff support:** Andi Anderson, Leo Howes, Adam Crawley

### 1) Introduction

DC welcomes students to the meeting. Pointed students to the online resources. Reminded attendees to introduce themselves to the meeting.

Will approve previous minutes once quorate

Going straight to meet your officers

### 2) Meet your officers

DC welcomed officers to present.

#### a. Vice President Education – Eyram Ahadzie

**Vice President Education:** Over the summer, worked on different things, can find out more in exec committee minutes. This included in PG Fee campaigns, PG students not getting paid. Has been working on the decolonise the curriculum campaign, which includes reforming the curriculum at Strathclyde. Keen to organise alumni engagement sessions, to develop skills. Has organised PG events for Freshers' Week, including coffee morning, which was success. Tomorrow (Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September) is PG pop quiz. Will keep supporting and working closely with class reps and faculty reps.

DC reminds students to sign in for the Parliament. Reminds attendees that live updates are taking place. Use #StrathParl, will also be taking comments on sli.do

#### b. Vice President Community – Kayla Burns



**Vice President Community:** Has been helping with society re-organisation, assigned to QR codes to make joining societies easier. Been looking into academic communities, for adequate support throughout degree, which includes looking at PDAs (Personal Development Advisors). Been looking at common rooms for every department - not necessarily possible, a working group has been formed to review and put in place. Been working on environmental initiatives, inviting senators to Climate Strike on 20<sup>th</sup> Friday, looking to introduce a domestic flight ban. Change in society culture, getting more work between societies.

#### **c. Vice President Inclusion – Rachel Cairns**

**Vice President Inclusion:** Been working on liberation room, which is getting painted. Been working on the Women and non-binary swimmers proposal, which was a project from the previous Vice President Inclusion, hoping to get passed this year. Launched Own Voices project, which is taking place during black history month. Written up first draft of accessibility paper to review and overhaul current accessibility provisions. Vagina Talks, first one during freshers, will continue throughout the year. Will be taking on History Months and Fight For The Night. All events are planned and in motion for BHM. Gender based violence stuff, will be doing a lot of campus based stuff, to ensure students are safe on campus.

#### **d. Vice President Sport – Maddy Watson**

Vice President Sport: Looking after Sports Clubs, work closely with Strathclyde Sports Staff. Working on Club Score, which is a club development check project, to change from previous version (Club Mark), new Club Score will be going live from next week. Which looks at things like finances and behaviour, social media, qualification etc. Trying to make clubs more inclusive. Been doing training, wanting to put on more for sports. Hosted SafeTalk Suicide training, goal to have one person from every club trained. Been doing work on initiations culture, someone coming into speak on that, looking at doing more inclusion training. Will be doing events such as Sports Ball.

More updates will be coming from exec members yet to arrive. DC opens up to Questions to the officers. No questions.

Meeting is now quorate. Moving back to approval of previous minutes.

## **2. Previous Minutes**

DC takes it as read and moves to a consensus vote. Minutes approved.

## **3. Exec Committee Minutes**

Available online, just to accept the receipt. No questions.

Moved late motion submission (University Property Development Act 2019) from AOCB to the policy proposals. Approved.

## **4. Ratification of Student Trustees**



VPE gives overview of why they were selected. VPE explains process, all students able to apply, one exec on interview panel, explain group of undergraduate and postgraduate. To ratify, needs a two thirds majority vote, but take as consensus. All four student trustees are approvals.

## 5. Policy Proposals

DC explains policy proposal process, including how to draft, what it entails and what each parts include. Explains how voting works, including how to log into sli.do. Gives an example of how it might work using the example of banning pineapples on pizza.

a. In support of Strathclyde Union staff.

### *Speech for*

**Benn Rapson:** Welcome to Parliament. Been told that Strath Union staff have been facing pension cuts. This is because the block grant is based on funding which doesn't include international students. This means that Union has to split its funding, this means that the Union doesn't have enough funding to operate consistency. Trustee have taken a position to cut pension. Union has previously taken strong stances on supporting Unions. Calls for Sabbs to stand behind staff and for the Union to campaign on the bigger issues to ensure that block grants increase. Does not want pensions cuts. Not involved, so this may have changed, but believes that the rest of the motion still stands. Even if staff pensions are safe, need to make sure they're safe, push to increase.

Questions to proposer. No questions.

### *Speech Against*

**Vice President Education:** Clarify that this was during the summer and that it is no longer at this stage. Point on funding, in talks with the University to increase funding. Specifically relating to international students' fees, this encourages the marketization of education, using international students as form of income. Wants to make the university and Union an accessible place for everyone.

**Vice President Inclusion:** Speaking against the motion. In relation to supporting staff, and appreciate the sentiment behind. Have issues to point three, which is in breach of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Supports that Exec state unequivocal support, this is a conflict of interest as they are on the Trustee Board.

Questions:

**Ian:** Point of clarity, might be a problem with marketisation. Is this necessarily still an issue if this is about the number of students enrolled. Understand point if specifically linking to international.

**Vice President Education:** President is pushing for this with Scottish funding council, wanting to increase block grant for all institutions, this is a welcome suggestion to look at all students.

**Ian:** Would this implicitly support marketization?



**Vice President Education:** Exploring options for funding, also outside of the block grant.

DC moves to summation

*Benn:* Initial point still stands, has to support staff. Have taken issue but no amendments have come up, this isn't great for Parliament as it means amendments aren't made. Even if it wasn't a formal amendment, if someone could have got in touch.

DC moves to a vote.

**APPROVE: 50%**

**AGAINST: 37%**

**ABSTAIN: 13%**

This motion passes. Note that this policy also requires trustee board approval.

b. Brexit Sh\_tstorm ACT 2019

*Speech for*

**Benn:** Calling motion what it is. Summarises that Prime Minister who was not elected who is trying to push through measure that no one wants and would suppress student vote. Launching a voter registration drive and campaign to cancel classes on voting day if a general election is called. As part of that voter registration drive, it should be part of the messaging that students can register to vote in the area or at home. The title is the only way to sum up fear anger and anxiety.

No questions or speech against

DC moves to a vote:

**APPROVE: 83%**

**AGAINST: 14%**

**ABSTAIN 3%**

Following this vote, DC notes that there is no longer quoracy.

**Ian:** Commented that it is standard practice to have quoracy at start of meeting.

### **c. Motion for a student-led democracy review**

*Speech for*

Proposer waives to the floor

**Ian:** Having gone through previous reviews, these have a tendency of being rather closed. The wider process of student participation is essential. A number of years ago, there was difficulty getting people to run, officers would run unopposed. Having a broader structure that more people can come along to would be better, giving people competitive democratic process. The more people involved, the more likely the outcome is going to reflect the general will. The process is a major democratic exercise of itself.

DC moves to questions



**Robert:** What is democracy review?

**Ian:** Looks at how this works and if its working properly.

**Adrian:** Does this proposal restrict votes?

**Ian:** Has been done in the past. It could be.

**Benn:** Current democracy review states that students can turn up and submit policy. Would lead to voting by the exec.

*Speech against*

**Vice President Education:** A bit of lack of clarity. Current democracy has gone under, been going for 2 years. Looked at extensively to form new structures. Looking at creating forum, policies are proposed or supported by one person. The structure that is being proposed includes forums that include much wider representation. Reps are over 20 people, already elected, gives a bit of democratic legitimacy that those who regularly. Not much is changing.

DC moves to questions.

**Vice President Inclusion:** Notes that Democracy Convenor shall create a working group of interested students. Doesn't have much democratic legitimacy. What does it mean by interested students?

**Ian:** Students who want to come along, as simple as that. Does have democratic legitimacy.

**Vice President Community:** Interested students is the same refined pool of the last couple of the years. Same pool which struggles to which quoracy.

**Ian:** This is better than anything that has been reach before. The pool is better than at the time. Not as many as we would like, but better.

**Vice President Community:** Is this room as representative as using new technologies as using forums.

**Ian:** Not the same question, no problem with that. Would students be representative, would it be representative of 22000 people, no but better than more. This doesn't have a particular outcome.

DC moves to another round of speeches

*Speeches in Favour*

**Bohdan:** Content of the motion is not to have a democracy review, to have with more students included in it. It's been in the works for two years. Done through a very narrow focus group, arguably lead in not a great way by a person outside of the Union. Absolutely needs a review, but needs students involved to make the changes, instead of making decisions with have focus group with only a few people at the worst times. Urge to vote.

Point of clarification from Benn: Says it should go ahead, just relates to Parliament.

*Speech against.*



**Vice President Inclusion:** Issue that we're having is lack of diversity. Not just people who are invested. The turnout for election was record breaking. Ask for questions to the proposer.

DC moves to questions.

**Adrian:** A refined group would be representative, if start looking for people to have their own voice and vote. In my view, those forums would have representation that in this room. Good source of representation and value.

**Vice President Inclusion:** Understand point and valued and taken into account, but there is still a lack of diversity. Don't think that this is the best way to review.

**Vice President Community:** We're not setting out to remove voting rights, if hit quorum in forums. Want more referendum and voting, instead of just those in the room.

**Robert:** Confused as to why more people in the Union would be less inclusive.

**Vice President Education:** Looking at all representatives, considering all students at a faculty level etc. Looking at other liberation groups, using them to engage their concerns. How many PG, International, Women, more representative.

DC moves to one round of questions:

**Bohdan:** To those speaking against. Framing debate in a different way. Why is it a problem not just to widen out consultation. It's not just about Parliament, it's about wider consultation. Focus groups not representative either. Because it's been going over a number of years, previous exec members have represented different people. Why can't we just have consultation.

**Vice President Community:** Seems to be misunderstanding. Not that we don't want more people involved, we're acknowledging the structure does not work. By drawing out process could lead to more confusion. The proposed model is more representative. By elongating we're just going to cloud it more. Get it done, get more people in, have a representative student body.

DC moves to summation:

**Ian:** Want to answer one particular point. Lack of diversity in the room; don't go back to the previous system. Get more students involved. Don't narrow down.

DC notes that the room is no longer quorum. Looking at advice from UK government Charities website and previous Parliaments, Parliament cannot have a vote on this as Union Policy.

DC proposed three options: 1) Indicative vote then meet under quoracy. 2) Not take a vote as under quoracy. Or 3) adjourn when we reach quoracy. Would need three more to reach quoracy if happy to reach quoracy. Passed to the room, majority decided to have indicative votes

DC move to non-binding vote:

**APPROVE 50%**

**AGAINST 38%**

**ABSTAIN 13%**



Passes but notes that this is not binding. Urges to re-submit.

DC notes that as Parliament is not at quorum and decided not to consider other policy proposal.

DC notes President is now in attendance so moves to Presidents accountability.

**President (Matt Crilly):** Looking at underpayment of PHD students in the university, 76% of PG students not paid at all but underpaid, not being paid for marking or prep time. Got commitment from institution to pay PHD students for marking and prep time. Bringing down circuit laundry in university halls, expensive and don't often work, leading a national campaign. Looking at transport across the city, including looking at commuters. Partnership with other institutions, going after the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport as they grant all the funding in the city. Will push to get free for students. Pro-Life groups have just released a media statement. Doing more as well.

Questions:

**Benn:** Is there anything else you wish to say.

President: Walked into discussion about democracy review. Need to be bold and need to change stuff, not quorate at the first parliament of the year. Think that students are happy with some sort of representative function to take care of things with the democracy functions. Want to have more debates and have big debates on issues. E.g. banning army, would have loved a massive forum on that issue and have that as the issue. Whatever we can do to be bolder view. The proposal is not perfect. Exec have spent hours looking at it, good step forward. Stuff would have to be tied in to make it radically democratic. Should use things like referendum. Wouldn't mind a representative format in some way, but enshrine it within schedules that any high level discussions go to high level meetings. Open to discussion.

DC moves to next agenda item

## 6. Democracy Review

DC notes that information is available to view on the website right now. Have a look if you want to go over. Outlines why the Union did a review, why the changes are proposed and what is happening next.

**President:** Making sure that it's a dynamic democracy. Might not solve the problems but liked the ability to call forums. This is an inaccessible format, if you're new to it. Find it quite easy to engage. If were to hold mass issues, not on stuff that's easy to implement or boring. Forums are tied up into the democratic. Representative functions not necessarily amazing. Similar amount of people. Maybe those people would have constituents and have democratic legitimacy. Making the most of the structures as they are. A lot of the policy proposals came from the same few people, including me. Would like to make way more use of the referendums. Current Parliament is easy to promote but people don't vote. However, having open discussion on issues and frame issues around meetings would be really good.

DC invited questions:

**Rocio:** Would any students be able to submit a policy proposal?



**President:** The answer is yes. Any student can submit. If the system isn't working, still avenues to take that further, including referendum and forum.

**Rocio:** How would it be decided which way it would go?

**President:** Would go to the representative function to have a referendum, or can call a referendum.

**Max:** Wanted to ask a generic question, why do we think turnout was low. As someone who comes to Parliament regularly, have written motion to include. Have included food and drink, why do we think turnout is low, even after measures?

**President:** Multitude of reasons. Not sure, was a Parliament enthusiast. Don't know why it's not working, but don't know if students want to come along to this or not. Even the name Parliament indicates it's a representative function. This is a problem across Students Unions in the UK. Students get involved when it's easy to do so. Facebook polls have issues, but students engage. E.g banning Meat had 1200 students get involved and say they don't want to ban. Also people don't want to turn out. Want to be bold. Want more online system. If go to representative parliament, would like to have things streamed live online, so people could watch at home. Proposal has things streamed online and get people to have indicative votes. Would like to see it become binding, we need to digitise.

**Ian:** Question and concern regarding forum. Like the idea, but may have the possibility of not having people not turn up. Compared to previous years' attendance at Parliament looks great. Biggest turnout seen outside of sports AGM have been student parliament, for example, on big issues.

**President:** When were those forums taking place?

**Ian:** Throughout the year, 2015, and at different times. Had to get rid of it.

**Bohdan:** Couldn't get passed at policy council as it wasn't quorate at the time.

DC asked to finish the questions

**Ian:** Where are these people for the forums going to come from?

**President:** Notes Policy Council is different, more of a scrutiny council

**Bohdan:** It could pass policy:

**President:** Don't know, but still maintain that if we maintain a general meeting on issues such as banning military. Still a danger that the forums are crap. Fear that start calling forums on things were people don't turn up, but when we have military.

DC moved to next question.

**Adrian:** What has the union itself done previously that has tried to drive up numbers? If looking at online aspect, some people may have a lot of interest, if people have binding vote online, people could flood that vote. Currently people could vote with their feet. Changed vote though was intended to vote a certain way but don't think that would happen with online.

**President:** For example, pro-lifers won a vote because they got people to the Parliament. Hears concern from student, thinks that current method might take up too





much time. If streamed online, could do votes as it's being streamed. None of this is perfect but has good faith.

Going to be following session next week, will then be a referendum. Will be circulating date of meeting and discussion.

DC confirms that the next meeting discussion meeting.

Ian: Indicative vote was passed that the issue should go to broader student referendum.

DC notes that this will be a large influence in the discussion.

DC moves to next item though not quorate, so moves the Student Partnership Agreement to the next parliament session.

### **7. Date of next meeting**

DC confirms date of the next meeting (29<sup>th</sup> October) and that the deadline Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October.

DC thanks everyone for attending. DC and staff will be around outside of meeting if anyone wants to discuss anything about Parliament.

DC closes meeting