

Student Parliament 5 - 27.2.2020

Chair: Lewis McDermott (Democracy Convenor)

Staff in attendance:

Leo Howes (Head of Student Engagement), Adam Crawley, Policy & Campaigns Coordinator), Thomas Fairbrother (Student Engagement Staff)

Officer in attendance:

Matt Crilly (President), Eyram Ahadzie (VP Education), Rachel Cairns (VP Inclusivity), Maddy Watson (VP Sport), Savvina Kritharidou (Faculty Rep Business), Sophie Gwynne (Faculty Rep Engineering), Benn Rapson (Faculty Rep HaSS), Chelbi Hillan (Faculty Rep Science), Christine Tambe (International Students Rep), Vinny Williamson (LGBT+ Rep)

Apologies received from:

Kayla-Megan Burn (VP Community), John Agbonrofo (VP Welfare), Gillyan Cullen (Disabled Students Rep), Clodagh Halliday (Womens' Rep)

Students in attendance:

Ru Wallace.

Meeting start 5:10, due to setting up video recording. Unfortunately, this did not work and will look into setting up livestreaming for the next meeting.

DC welcomes everyone to the meeting and moves to the actions.

1) Approval of the previous minutes

Minutes passed.

2) Executive Committee Meeting Minutes.

President: A little short on minutes, Exec assistant on maternity leave, will get the rest of the minutes.

Benn: Who is the lead on the Student Mental Health Agreement?

Maddy: I am

3) Executive Accountability

a. President

Matt: Achieved third year in a row of rent freeze, real term decline. Strike Action - making students voice clear, trying to minimise impact on exams etc. Nationally, UUK moved into another day of talks, hoping UUK will offer another deal. Strath Union supports strike. PhD students on strike had been threatened

with having their funding removed if they took action, sought assurances on this, University say that this is not the case. Strikes will continue for another 2 weeks. Been informed that Strathclyde was one of the few that were in favour of a better deal - 84% of unis voted against. New place for SUMSA. Circuit - partial victory, hoping to achieve better, looking to get more money. Sexual health clinic - looking to expand provision. Running for NUS Scotland President. Legacy campaign - leaving building behind, finding out historic things that happened in the building - looking for people to get involved

Savinna: Strike action, a person wants to apply for grant but the supervisor is striking, what advice would we give?

Matt: Go to dept., then get in touch with Advice hub.

b. Vice President Education

Eyram: February busy with external engagements and supporting students, incl. strikes. In Edinburgh for policy briefing around migration policy - asked questions about how gaps in trade filled by international students, and how it affects students. Members of advanced race HE board - looked into reports on racial harassment in the UK, looking at racism in Scotland. Attending SPARQs advisory group, does class rep training. Looking at Equality & Diversity as a whole, how to support protected students.

c. Vice President Sport

Maddy: Not at last parliament, lots going on. Sports Ball - v. successful 850 attendees. Raised £850 for local boxing club. Working on Clubscore, health checker for clubs e.g. community engagement. Up on portal ready to launch for students in a few weeks. Secured some funding for top performing clubs for development. Storage containers for Strathclyde sport.. Taxis cup coming up - varsity. Hopefully will be a growth. Rugby varsity - hosting at Scotstoun - gonna be huge.

d. Vice President Inclusion

Rachel: LGBT History month, incl. open mic. Pronoun awareness stall, including work with LGBT+ Rep - interesting conversations. LGBT icons stall downstairs of Union. Women & Enby Swim sessions. Gender Based Violence work - did some work on trans inclusion, swim sessions used as good example. Reportathon and work done on report and support - pulling together report for better funded resource and system. Some Universities have been using NDAs - been in touch with other unions to work on this. Accessibility - pulling together a map with a small committee. Working for a more accessible website for the Union. Women in Leadership awards dinner - 5th March, £20 for 3 course meal at the Hilton.

Chelbi: Been talking about swimming - what about a women's weights space? Can be quite intimidating. Could this happen.

Rachel: Was aware of this.

Maddy: The weight space is not bookable -this would need to be changed. Have fed this back but happy to take this forward. Would probably during the day.

Non-Executive Officer Accountability

DC: Welcomed non-executive officers to provide updates on what they've been working on.

Vinny: LGBT History month - had a meeting with principal about LGBT History month, and this meeting was positive. May have updates on Gender Neutral toilets and a staff-student support group.

Benn: Changed committee structure in HaSS - first meeting of Faculty Student Experience Committee works well, incl. dept. reps. Set up HaSS Student committee - very open setting, reps enjoyed it. Been working on Mental Health in relation to Personal Circumstance. Working Vice Dean Academic with HaSS - looking at doing study on use of group chats. Have course related societies, though HaSS less so, reformed politics society.

Chelbi: Been working with Care Experienced students to set up a new society, trying to make it more of a peer led thing. Pulling together document about care experienced student but also other needs that students may experience, so to provide extra information and support. Chelbi and Andrew made LGBT cocktails, to raise money.

Savinna: Dept. reps in business school, formed FB page to share info. Asked for more info on late submission to share with other depts. New marking system, different classes of marks introduced, looking for more tiers to be more representative. Trying to organise careers fairs. trips for business school students at end of semester, Belfast & London.

Sophie: MH policy in faculty, looking for feedback and trying to get through – incl. in faculty review. Aware of complaints about catcalling from builders- taking this up, from a couple of weeks ago. Quite a few external contractors coming in.

Maddy and Rachel currently aware of this. Matt recommended using Report and Support tool to make sure there's proper reporting.

Benn: Where is John (VP Welfare)?

Matt: is away on leave.

Matt presented information from a transport survey, which was presented to the Glasgow Student Forum.

Matt: Glasgow Student Forum - council of Students' Union from around Glasgow. Found transport was an issue. 8606 responses - meeting director of education at council will representatives. Third place in term of responses, mainly Scottish. Train most popular - can see how often students commuting. £16-20 a week - Strathclyde are paying more than most institutions - paying more than Glasgow. UWS, college and Strathclyde reliant on trains, so this is a widening access student. A lot of people used combinations. Students travel in more regularly. 43% spending more than £21. a third have missed class due to transport. of the free-text comments, majority was about cost (6000 responses)

4) Policy Proposals

a. Freeze the Fees Act (2020)

Benn: Outlines number of concerns as a Faculty Rep - specifically around international students, they feel like cash-cows. Union has commitment to free education, but can't have commitment at an institution level, as this is a governmental issue. Ultimate goal is free education, but the minimum should be that as long as we have fees, they should not be constantly raised, though argument could be made for inflation. When fees go up exponentially, can be problematic. Fees could go up by 2k. Our minimum should be to freeze fees.

Chelbi: So checking, this policy isn't about getting rid of fees?

Benn: Already have policy about committing to free education, so this is not about that. This states that, at an institution, we should stand against constantly increasing fees. The time limit is 3 years, and will re-evaluate at this time.

Savinna: Talking about importance of free education - this could get a bit confusing and we're looking at different things. Only point wanted to talk about was Believes 2 - might be too absolute. We may not know all the economic mechanics about marketisation - maybe things like accreditation is useful. E.g. Business school students come to Strathclyde because high in the rankings, good for employability, and has accreditations.

Benn: Understand what you're saying - we have policy against marketisation. The point of believes 2 is to restate this. Understand that some courses are reliant on current position.

DC moves to a vote:

Abstain: 1

Against: 0

Approve: 9

Motion Passes.

5) Discipline Procedure

Matt: For information and comments. Strath Union could improve on disciplinary stuff. This is not a common occurrence, and is only really used in really poor behaviour. Officers have gone through this and it needs firmed up, to ensure that things are dealt with properly. May get amended as it goes. Drafted by Advice Hub. This is good at it makes sure that staff do ground work but students decide. Any comments?

Benn: Good to have a window to submit comments.

Matt: Comments until Monday.

Vinny: Very much in favour of this.

Maddy: Pretty much identical to Sports Union one, which works.

Chelbi: Does this extend for the full building? As I work in the bar, we see things such as graffiti.

Matt: This is a legitimate issue. Some of the behaviour is not from Strathclyde students. Would say that students may have been let down by the lack of structures.

Maddy: Covers activities outwith the Union as well.

Savinna: All students have Strathclyde have union membership.

Ru: Does this only impact if it's done during their activities as societies?

Matt: If it's nothing to do with Union, then it would be referred to the University.

6) Student Parliament Discussions:

a. Policy Proposal Template

DC: Had discussion on how to make template. Trying to make less clunky. Needs to have the format updated. Keep statement short. Difference between Statement Policy and Action Policy. Statement is an expression, action need instructions and how it could be used.

DC welcomes comments:

Savinna: Actions could include statement.

Matt: Structured for action. Is easier, but could be tidied up.

DC: Could change instructs/states. Through format, action motions would be clearer and less vague. This then links to accountability, so we can see where it is.

Benn: Not a fan of the statement/action differentiation. As sometimes this includes both.

DC: Action motions should include statements to support them - to differentiate between statements. Could change 'action' to 'campaign'. Have seen some that only have statement in the past.

Benn: If the point is to make policy more accessible and searchable - difficult to find things at a moment. Could have a tag system, and use keywords.

Chelbi: Preferred the old one.

Benn: Agreed.

Ru: it was quite straightforward.

Benn: Raised this up because previous motion wouldn't fit in the format, as it could breakdown. Which is

why I was advocating policy statement, to provide in-depth.

Vinny: Could then include mission statement.

Eyram: Was quite indifferent, looking at it from point of view from someone who was not involved, I think this is simpler. I think it's better we keep this with tweaks.

Rachel: Agrees. using more accessible language - the old format isn't really accessible.

ACTION: AC to amend current language and circulate.

b. Non-Exec accountability report template.

DC: Talked about Non-exec accountability - just what has already been spoken about it written format. If don't want to do in text, could do as an oral or video report. Needing something to codify and ensure that accountability is kept.

Ru: Wording - Change to not just manifesto but, including any other campaigns.

DC: keen to keep manifesto pledges.

Savinna: Last section, what other support do you need.

Maddy: How relevant is the campaign section?

DC: Just to make sure that it's included - could explain that have been busy working on other matters.

Benn: Don't think we need a template - could just speak fluently.

Leo: Part of good practice we were given was using more templates and using impacts, but it's up to you.

Eyram: Change to what impact the work you have done has had.

DC: This isn't the only way to submit - could include as guidance, instead of just using a template. Could remove the boxes.

Sophie: Could remove campaigns, as faculty reps don't necessarily 'campaign'. Change campaigns/work.

ACTION: AC to update current template and circulate

7) AOCB:

Benn: Mentioned that there was a post on the website for a forum. Wonder about whether this is actually more engaging - looking at live-streaming and the policy proposals have gone down. Even external ones have gone down.

AC explained process.

Matt: Needs to be more digital.

Benn: Feels like we have not had the right engagement.

Rachel: The old format was also not engaging - there might not have been an improvement in terms of engagement, but definitely in atmosphere. This may not necessarily have more to do with actual format - what can we do. Maybe there is more work to be done with advertising as well.

Chelbi: Up to individual people to get traction. You need 50 for the forums -

DC: Could be 50 votes regardless.

ACTION: AC to check schedules and circulate for information.

Vinny: First time heard about the forums, could do more with advertising. Posters - more public posts.

DC: Onus is also on us as well. As much as a lot of these meetings are slow, there would have been other people who would have been interested in other things like transport. Encourage students to attend.

Matt: May not have done this if it was livestreamed. Needs to be a bit more open and electronic - though would argue still has more democratic legitimacy than previous structures.

Savinna: Forum, could include in the home page of the Union e.g. using the banner. FB page - putting up the agenda for this to share. Could invite more dept. reps for their information.

DC: Remind that these are open meetings, but there is more that we could do. Tailor content of the meetings to the meetings.

Matt: Could move to the front page.

Savinna: Upvote-downvote. Neutral button, could look into.

DC closes the meeting