



# Student Parliament 3

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021, 17:00

## Online & Mandela Auditorium

### Officers in Attendance:

*Kyle McGettigan (Democracy Convenor, Chair), Benn Rapson (President), Ru Wallace (VP Community), Savinna Kritharidou (VP Education), Neshia Malone (VP Inclusion), Kirsty Bannatyne (VP Sport), Lewis McDermott (VP Welfare), Arran Lamont (Faculty Rep Business UG), Atif Sattar (Faculty Rep Business PGT), Charlie Wilson (Faculty Rep Engineering UG), Hemanth Dhulipalla (Faculty Rep Engineering PGT), Lily Ziqing Yin (Faculty Rep Engineering PGR), Liam Mosson (Faculty Rep HaSS UG), Louise Nicolson (Faculty Rep HaSS PGT), Jushuai Song (Faculty Rep HaSS PGR), Callum Barclay (Faculty Rep Science UG), Jiani Chen (International Students' Rep), Sean Jamieson (Part Time Students Rep), Abdul Eneser (Halls Rep),*

### Apologies received from:

*Aspen Lynch (Disabled Students' Rep), Abdullah Nadeem (Interfaith Rep), Eva Curran (Women's Rep)*

### Students in attendance:

*Quinten Stol (representing the Climate Emergency Action Group)*

### Staff in attendance:

*Leo Howes (Head of Student Engagement), Adam Crawley (Policy & Campaigns Co-ordinator), Sophie Tine (Student Engagement Support Staff)*

## 1. Welcome and Code of Conduct

*The Democracy Convenor welcomes attendees to Student Parliament, explains the procedure, goes over the agenda, and reviews the Code of Conduct.*

**Kyle**, the Democracy Convenor welcomes all attendees, explains the procedure, goes over the agenda, and reviews the Code of Conduct. He also informs new officers are joining for the first time and that some are attending the meeting online.

Code of conduct available [here](#).

## 2. Approval and noting of previous minutes

- a. **Student Parliament 2 Minutes**
- b. **Executive Committee Minutes – October to November**



*These are records of meetings held by the officers. Student Parliament minutes need approved by a vote, and the Exec Committee minutes are for information only.*

**Benn** Rapson gives the minutes of the previous parliament. He highlights it has been a busy time with the COP in between meetings. He encourages attendees to reach out if for a discussion or any clarification. He goes over the main themes of previous meetings:

1. COVID-19 uncertainty
2. Elections and Referendums
3. Weekly reviews of issues and campaigns

**Savvina** Kritharidou offers a friendly amendment of the minutes:

*From*

“Savvina Kritharidou will help students understand...”

*To*

“Savvina Kritharidou states how she hopes students are informed what the strike by the union would entail.”

### **3. Welcome to newly elected officers**

*This is a chance to meet the officers who were elected in the November elections.*

Kyle informs there are newly elected officers and welcomes them to Parliament.

### **4. Policy Proposals**

#### **a. Referendum on Learning & Teaching in Semester 2 – Results**

**Kyle** nominates **Benn** to introduce the first policy proposal.

**Benn** explains they have previously asked UoS to increase in person teaching if government regulations allow it. Thee result were overwhelming (75% voted Yes). However, given a low student turnout (5%) the results were not binding.

The motion is therefore brought back to parliament. The motion calls for an increase in in-person teaching and to be in line with the conditions placed on wider society. Additionally, UoS will be lobbied to ensure students that cannot attend classes in person will not fall behind.

**Abdul** suggests lobbying for a blended approach from the feedback collected from students he has spoken to. It means students that still haven't been able to travel to can prepare for it and makes it fairer on students that are paying thousands to be in town. He explains it gives a better balance for all students.



**Benn** clarifies that this is the aim of the motion. It is not pushing to go back to the traditional ways (return to status quo) but move forward. Students that cannot travel to campus or having a difficult time should benefit from online lectures.

**Abdul** says it seems like the university is intending to stick to the same model next semester (pre-recorded videos online/tutorials on campus) which is quite unfair to the students paying £9K a year.

**Ailidh** highlights transcripts are mandatory with all lecture materials. How would the teaching model be fair to disabled or neurodivergent students.

**Abdul** explains it can be requested from the disability service

**Benn** responds that although there is a majority in favour of in-person teaching, the aim is to preserve the accessibility gains COVID has brought. It doesn't seem there is an appetite to get rid of them and the union will prevent this from happening.

**Kyle** states a question was asked in the chat by Louise. How might this be impacted by the UCU strikes?

**Lewis** answers. If the lecturers strike goes again, it is definitely impact teaching and learning. However, the strike will not affect the push for a safe return to campus. They also add that the big question is whether students support the strike.

**Benn** confirms students will be impacted either way (online or not). It would be better if the UCU strike doesn't go ahead.

**Nathan** wonders what percentage of classes are being taught in-person currently. He suggests finding out this number and set it as a baseline to have a target that will make the increase in in-person teaching noticeable to most students.

**Atif** asks what the chances are to get more in-person learning for next semester.

**Benn** answers 17% of surveyed students, said that all their learning was delivered online. This mainly concerns postgraduates.

Most learning delivered online was 67% and an equal balance of online and in person learning was 11%. Finally, most learning delivered in person as at 4% and all learning delivered in person 2%.

To simplify the issue, he explains both UoS and the government need to be pushed. The government has encouraged universities to keep things as they are which complicates the issue. It is likely a push for more in-person teaching for postgraduates will stick given they are the least on campus.

If the motion passes, **Benn** will draft an open letter to the university and will ask all reps to sign it.



**Nathan** suggests discussing the room allocation policy as it seems some lecturers would be willing to do things online but are restricted by the policy

**Savvina** informs the timetable is made in a way to maximize student capacity. Given the timetable all classes are used in accordance to the policy. In order to increase in-person capacity, UoS has decided to keep lectures online but allow tutorials in-person.

**Liam** says commuters struggle with the blended model which affects them financially, emotionally, and physically. He also wonders what a realistic proposal would look like and what steps will be taken to lobby UoS.

Additionally, what will be done to increase library capacity and study spaces with more people on campus?

**Benn** explains the main argument is higher education is over restricted compared to other segments of society. In terms of increasing capacity, the library is being managed like any library in the country, the University doesn't have direct impact. More space in the Union can be 'hacked' (ie. The venue).

Pushing the University to be more flexible should also benefit commuters.

**Abdul** asks if the University is doing as much as they can with current restrictions.

**Ru** affirms UoS is quite keen to discuss these issues and help resolve them. However, they are bounded too the guidelines they have set at the start of the pandemic. They are not planning any more restrictions as of today.

Savvina explains the room capacity depends on social distancing rules which restricts the amount of students that can be in a room.

**Ailidh** highlights it doesn't seem lecturers are following the new class timing (class begins 10 minutes later and finishes 10 minutes earlier).

**Savinna** explains it should already be the case but it will be reinforced. **Benn** recommends addressing the issue to the class reps for local resolution.

Results

**100% For**  
0% Against

**This proposal passes**

## **b. Referendum on UCU Strike Action - Results**

*These are proposals that set the direction and actions for the Union. These policies will be discussed by attendees and then voted on by the elected representatives.*



**Benn** explains the goal is to decide whether Strath Union should support the UCU strike action. It is likely strike action will be proposed next semester.

Historically, UoS supports strike action when certain conditions are met.

53% of students voted in favour of strike action but the threshold was not met which is why it is being discussed today.

The aim is to lobby UoS to ensure that they are pressures on universities UK, which is the national representative body of universities, to come to an agreement with the UCU to prevent strike action. The motion also calls for measures to ensure students are not academically disadvantaged and that departments align for equity reasons.

**Benn** clarifies the Union is not encouraging the strike action but rather evaluating that all steps are taken to prevent it in the first place.

**Ailidh** agrees that the strikes would be detrimental to learning if it was to go ahead and vouches for a peaceful resolution.

**Liam** wonders if there is has been a study to certify the support that came with the referendum to clarify things. He admits this is a tough discussion but says that his position makes him naturally inclined to put the wellbeing of students first.

**Benn** says there's not Strathclyde specific survey but 73% of students support the strike nationally. He also adds that not supporting the strike is likely to have positive benefits in the short term but will have repercussions in the long run.

**Ru** adds that the strike is driven by the following issues:

- Cut to the pensions
- Real-term pay is 20% less than what it was
- Casualization of contracts
- Lack of diversity
- Stress and mental health

**Lewis** reinforces the aim of the motion and explains the push for fair academic treatment.

**Nathan** acknowledges it is a lot to ask students to support the strike when many are unhappy paying thousands of pounds for the service currently delivered.

**Benn** explains the strike would be happening in late January which doesn't allow more time for resolutions. He understands student position but reassures the goal is prevent strike from happening and get UoS to push Universities UK to find a solution.

**Charlie** suggests to revisit the way the information is downscaled to students as it sounds like the Union wants the strike to go again which **Abdul** agrees with.



**Benn** and **Abdul** discuss the unfair University system which is the root cause to a dissatisfaction from a lot of international students.

**Benn** reinforces that whether we support the strike or not, it is going to happen. He suggests it is better to support the policy to allow the Union to have a better fighting position.

Results

**86% For**  
14% Against

**This policy passes**

## **5. Action Groups Update**

*The chairs of each of our Action Groups (Mental Health, Housing, Cost of Learning, and Climate Action) will provide an update about their areas of focus.*

Quinten provides a short update about the Climate Emergency Action Group's plans.

## **6. Any other business**

*This is for anything else attendees would like to discuss at this meeting.*

**Please note that this meeting will be taking place online and in person – find out more and get your free ticket to the event [HERE](#)**