

Student Parliament 5 Minutes

24/02/2022

Online/Offline Meeting



Officers in attendance:

Kyle McGettigan (Democracy Convenor), Benn Rapson (President), Ru Wallace (VP Community), Nesha Malone (VP Inclusion), Kirsty Bannatyne (VP Sport), Nathan Epemolu (BAME Rep), Arran Lamont (Faculty Rep Business UG), Atif Sattar (Faculty Rep Business PGT), Charlie Wilson (Faculty Rep Engineering UG), Hemanth Babu Dhulipalla (Faculty Rep Engineering PGT), Lily Ziqing Yin (Faculty Rep Engineering PGR), Louise Nicolson (Faculty Rep HaSS PGT), Jushuai Song (Faculty Rep HaSS PGR), Abdullah Nadeem (Interfaith Rep), Jiani Chen (International Students' Rep), Sean Jamieson (Part Time Students' Rep), Eva Curran (Women's Rep), Abdul Eneser (Halls Rep)

Officers Apologies:

Savinna Kritharidou (VP Education), Aspen Lynch (Disabled Students' Rep), Liam Mosson (Faculty Rep HaSS UG), Ailidh Hamilton (LGBT+ Rep)

Absent Officers:

Callum Barclay (Faculty Rep Science UG)

Staff in attendance:

Leo Howes (Head of Student Engagement), Adam Crawley (Policy & Campaigns Co-ordinator), Aidan Connor (Student Engagement Support Staff)

Students in attendance:

Quinten Stol (Representing the Climate Emergency Action Group), Eamonn McClay (Representing the Housing Action Group), Zoe MacPherson.

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

2. Approval and noting of previous minutes

a. Student Parliament Minutes

These minutes are approved

b. Executive Committee Minutes

No comments on the Executive Committee Minutes

The Democracy Convenor invites the Executive Officers to provide an update.

Benn Rapson talks about how he has been working on the return to campus for students and trying to find the right mix of online and offline learning. Benn also talks about how they are organising a bus to London for the National Student strike.

Nesha Malone talks about how she has been working on the mural for black history month and that they now have an artist.

Lewis McDermott will be discussing their relevant policy proposal's today in parliament

Ru Wallace continuing to work on his proposals, in particularly on sustainability.

Kirsty Bannatyne talks about how sports union wellbeing week is next week and there will be activities to get involved with throughout the week.

3. Action Groups Update

Eamonn McClay from the housing action group spoke about how they have been gathering testimonies from people on housing horror stories. There is a link on the Union website where you can go and add to this.

Quinten Stol from the Climate Action Group spoke about sustainability month in March and how they are organising events and working with the university to try and incorporate student voice and participation more. They are also working on starting the community garden again as well.

4. Policy Proposals

a. 30% Tuition Fee Refund for PGT Business courses

Atif Sattar spoke about how they are trying to implement a 30% reduction fee for graduates on business and PGT courses. The reduction is due to the lack of in-person teaching which has hampered the networking and leadership qualities of the masters. Furthermore, international students have paid for accommodation in Glasgow however not had in-person teaching. Some students have also complained about the effects on the mental health and physical well-being. So far, they have collected 170 signatures over 7 masters courses.

Benn talks about how he submitted an amendment to it to change it to all self-funded students at Strathclyde. Furthermore, he added another policy to it that Strathclyde always believes in free education for all who attended the university.

Ru Wallace asks why a 30% reduction for the policy. Atif talks about due to other courses receiving a 30% reduction to other degrees, this is the precedent set by the university.

Nathan talks about students will eventually pay student loans back through government and wonders if language should be given for students living at home and the optics behind it. Benn talks about how this is inclusive already even if they are being funded by student loans. He talks about how they should be grants and not loans but agrees with what he is saying.

Sean Jamieson asks if the wording of the policy can be changed to include how students over the past 2 years have been facing these issues and backdate this. Benn says there is nothing that could stop taking that position.

100% voted in favour of this policy. This policy is approved.

b. Strathclyde Students Demand Better Student Housing (2022)

Lewis McDermott talks about how year on year this is an issue with rampant homelessness and rate increases across Glasgow and believes that it is time something is done about this. They believe this policy will be a stand for the university against bad landlords and give students some support. They encourage people that in order to take the campaign forward that they should support them with this policy.

100% voted in favour of this policy. This policy is approved.

4. Change It – Presentation and Proposal to amend Schedules

Benn talks about how it introduces a system where any student within the university can propose an idea or propose a policy, and then it goes on to the website for clearance before being put forward to a vote.

If it is a simple proposal such as 'extra microwave in the union' then it will be passed, however if it is something that needs to be brought to parliament and be campaigned over, if it receives 300 votes +1 then it will be passed. If the vote does not get 300, however gets over 50 +1, then it will be brought to parliament for discussion. He believes this can be game-changing for the Union.

Nesha Malone thinks it's a good idea because it offers people that just want to propose an idea to do so, without attending parliament.

Sean Jamieson asks when it will be implemented and if it will replace that traditional way of proposing policy. Benn says if approved today and approved by the trustees he would like to implement it before the end of the academic year.

Zoe MacPherson asks if there is a way of students contributing to each proposal that someone posts. Benn says the policy will go through moderation before being implemented so it is something they can look at.

Sean Jamieson asks if a proposal gets the required votes is there a section where you could check what has passed and what actions have been taken. Benn says an update from the VP who is taking it forward will be posted and the policies will lapse unless it has a significant effect and go to parliament to decide if the proposal should be kept.

Attendees asks if there are steps that will be taken to make sure students do not get confused about the system. Benn sates that he believes this will become the place were proposals will be offered as it is much easier for students to put forward something instead of coming up with large motions to accompany the policy.

Attendee – You will be able to find students online who will support your policy and grow support for a policy much an easier than trying to find a campaign behind it.

100% voted in favour of amending the schedules. These schedules will then be passed to the Trustee Board for joint approval

5. Discussion – Learning & Teaching Building

Benn speaks about how this is an opportunity for students, reps and staff to give their opinions on what they think about the learning and teaching building so that he can give these opinions to the university and make it the best it can be.

Attendee states that they are confused about the design of the Union and learning and teaching building and where the Union starts and learning and teaching building ends. Benn explains the locations but explains how confusing it can be and says areas should be more clearly marked out.

Nesha Malone explains how more space is needed for societies and it is very difficult to book rooms and feels like there is much less space than the old union. Benn explains it is slightly smaller however the use of the space is much more and explains there is not a lot of area for clubs and societies. Originally the plan was that university would allow these rooms to be booked throughout the building after classes would stop at 6PM, however this has not been the case due to COVID.

Attendee states that they believe there is no space to put flyers etc. Benn says there are plans to introduce such measures and that he believes that this should be the student building and explains how in London they a similar set have up with the union connected to the university and it was night and day difference with Strath Union in terms of quality.

Nathan notes the negative and hostile feel of the library as you can't meet with people to study, and it is difficult to group study. Benn states the Strathclyde was operating at strict operational guidelines and with the Omicron virus, it was not a good idea. However, as Covid reduces, the University reviewed its guidelines and stopped mandated social distance. He believes masks will remain when measures start to reduce. He says it is important to keep education accessible as possible.

Democracy Convenor thanks everyone for attending and draws the meeting to a close.