



## **Student Parliament 2 Minutes**

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October, 17:00 – 18:30**

**Via Zoom**

### **Officers in attendance:**

Nesha Malone (VP Inclusion, Chair), Benn Rapson (President), Kirsty Bannatyne (Vice President Sport), Callum Barclay (UG Faculty Rep Engineering), Arran Lamont (UG Faculty Rep Business), Charlie Wilson (UG Faculty Rep Science), Liam Mosson (UG Faculty Rep HaSS), Savvina Kritharidou (Vice President Education), Aspen Lynch (Disabled Students' Rep), Ailidh Hamilton (LGBT+ Rep), Nathan Epemolu (BAME Students Rep), Sean Jamieson (Part-time Students Rep), Ru Wallace (VP Community), Louise Nicolson (PGT Faculty Rep HaSS), Abdullah Nadeem (Interfaith Rep)

### **Officer apologies:**

Kyle McGettigan (Democracy Convenor), Liam Mosson (Faculty Rep HaSS UG), Lewis McDermott (VP Welfare)

### **Officers not in attendance:**

Daksha Sharma (Faculty Rsavep Business PGT), Iman Chaudry (Faculty Rep Engineering PGT), Eva Curran (Women's Rep), Dorothea Hinrichs (Postgraduate Rep)

### **Students in attendance:**

Joe Jarvis, Ezra Wilson, Jo Brown, Zoe MacPherson, Haroon Tarar Muqadas,

### **Staff in attendance:**

Leo Howes (Head of Student Engagement), Adam Crawley (Policy & Campaigns), Aidan Connor (Student Engagement Support Staff), Daniella Theis (Strath Union Comms)

### **1) Welcome and Code of Conduct**

Nesha Malone welcomes everyone and proceeds with the code of conduct, reminding everyone to respect each other, create an environment where everyone can speak and refrain from becoming too personal.

### **2) Approval and noting of previous minutes**

- a. Extraordinary Student Parliament Minutes**
- b. Executive Committee Minutes – September to October**

Notes that Charlie Wilson and Callum Barclay's roles are noted wrong in previous Student Parliament minutes. These minutes are **approved**

### 3) Ratification of the removal of non-executive officers

#### a. Faculty Rep Engineering PGT

Chair notes that Ashwet has graduated

VOTE to remove the Faculty Rep Engineering PGT: **PASSED**

- Approve 91%
- Abstain 9%

#### b. Interfaith Rep

Removal of Abdullah Nadeem as rep for missing 2 parliament meetings. Abdullah attends meeting at explains reasons for non-attendance

VOTE to remove the Interfaith Rep: **NOT PASSED**

- Against 100%

### 4) Climate Crisis – Strath Union’s Area of Focus

Submitted by climate emergency action group. The chair of the group Joe Jarvis speaks. He speaks of how they have developed a list of 4 policies and has asked the union to adopt these. He believes with COP 26 this is the perfect time to implement these policies and with the support of the Union substantial change will occur in the university.

Ru Wallace backs these policies stating how the policies put forward are solid are can help to clarify and strengthen the unions' position on a number of climate change issues. He believes it would be a powerful mandate to be able to take to the university to commit change and can show a visible commitment the union has towards climate action, especially with COP 26.

VOTE to adopt these areas of focus: **PASSED**

- Approve 100%

### 5) Referenda Proposals

#### a. Referendum on Learning & Teaching in Semester 2

Benn Rapson presents both referenda proposals. He talks of how the motion is a referendum regarding learning and teaching in Semester 2 in-response to the 'return to campus' survey the student executive carried out earlier this year. He talks about how the mass majority would like to see a return to campus teaching in-person and how they have made this aware to the university quite conclusively. He acknowledges how some students prefer online learning and how some want more online teaching,

however shown by the questionnaire the majority want change. He believes the referendum would allow a firm position as a students' union to go into discussions with the university on what semester 2 should look like. Benn does also acknowledge that as they are going into discussions, he acknowledges all the good things that online learning does bring and has brought and acknowledges how it has been good for students who are unable to come in for face-to-face teaching at the current moment.

Sean Jamieson states asks how the information will be given to students. He noted that both proposals are potentially 'one-sided' and would want more information given on both options and states how some students have not experienced 'pre-Covid' learning. He states that the risks and concerns need to be more clearly identified with the risks and what the referendum will affect.

Louise Christine Nicolson states when going back to more normal teaching in semester 2 how some master and post-graduate courses begin in January before Semester 2 and wants to clarify if student experience and post-graduate events will be provided in order to integrate students into campus life.

Benn states how he would happily welcome post-graduate events and any other January starting courses and would be keen for the Union to support this on-boarding process as there was in September. He also hopes more of hands-on approach also replies to Sean stating how he agrees with him. Benn says can be taken by the Union as there will hopefully be fewer COVID ramifications than there was in September.

Benn notes that information in the motion is just for the purposes of the motion and are not necessarily for distribution and all referendums would have a campaign team for and for-against to make sure there is a fair vote and all information is given to the students. In-regard to the question being bias he says the question is based off the information received from students. He says the question could be changed as it still needs to go to the returning officer, and they need to make an evaluation if the question is too complex or biased. He says the returning officer is also external to the Union.

#### **VOTE to approve the referendum proposal on Learning & Teaching in Semester 2: PASSED**

- Approve 100%

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

Benn explains that the UCU (university and College Union) is planning a strike. He talks about the on-going dispute and proposes the question if the union should support the strike action. He proposes how a student questionnaire on the strike action should be proposed as well.

Ailidh asks if more support would be given to more students as in the last strike she states how she does not believe this support was provided and students grades suffered she knew as well as her own. She asks the question if as much support to the students to the lecturers would be given.

Savvina states that students should be informed about what the strike by the union would entail.

Nathan states how it is important it be put to students but also asks how the union will give information on the strike.

Benn Rapson states how if students oppose the strike action it could still mean that lectures and the union still strike as it is their choice to strike. Benn Rapson has said how there is an FAQ that has been

designed in preparation. The union would support the lecturers by providing food and drink and would host teach-ins etc. to support the strike.

Benn also responds to Ailidh how it is the lecturer's choice if they would like to strike or not and students cannot stop their strike. He does state how lecturers do tend to accommodate the strike in exams.

Benn responds to Savvina by stating how the FAQ created will provide answers to students and they have predicted these questions and any questions brought up in this meeting will also be included in the FAQ.

Ailidh responds acknowledging how it is the lecturer's choice but asks if the Union can mandate any actions in support of students and their classes.

Zoe MacPherson acknowledges Ailidh comments on how students miss crucial learning and asks how the union can enforce action to make sure students are not left to 'self teach'.

Benn answers Zoe and Ailidh questions together stating how some unions around the county have provided policies in support at the start of the pandemic. Benn states that if this happens, he will go speak to the Union and asks for the 'no-detriment policy' to be changed in-order to support strike action to act as a student safety net.

#### **VOTE to approve the referendum proposal on UCU Strike Action: PASSED**

- Approve 92%
- Against 8%

#### **6. Action Groups Update**

Ezra Wilson is chair of the Cost of Learning group and is looking for more members. They want to create a student survey talking about an array of topics including accommodation, student sexuality and the affects this has and on learning. They ask if the group can be supported and how to get their campaign started.

Jo Brown is the chair of a mental health action group and wants more support to grow awareness of her action group and would like to collab with 'hear to listen' group. Jo would like more engagement to be made and wants to find a way to target specific groups and are made aware of her action group. She would like the university to provide more resilience days as there was in the pandemic and would like more mental health groups for specific groups of individuals.

Ru Wallace states how the Climate Change Emergency Group (CCEG) has experienced a period of growth and states how they have become involved with other climate change groups and are taking part in the youth climate march next Friday and are creating banners for this event. They have also started Facebook and Discord pages for these events and urge people to get involved.

#### **7. Strath Union Democracy – Discussion**

Benn states how new policies are being proposed by the Union to give students more of a voice and empower students to have more of a say in day to day running in the union and make parliament more effective.

Benn talks about 'Change it' which would be a new route for policy creation online and students can up-vote on the policy, and it would go to the wider student body. He says thresholds can be created and if it does not make a certain amount then it would go to the student body for a decision.

He also states how new committees will be created and one will be made for 'commuting students' and more support be given to students and getting involved in the Union, especially with night-time events. He also talks about new working committees being created and especially a new side project called "Give it A Go" as well as an entertainment committee.

He also talks about a new 'evolving student parliament'. He states that it would be an all-officer committee together and they can answer questions from students and university student management together. Policies that came to the meeting would also be able to defer to an all-student vote or be put towards meetings like this.

He also states how a new student parliament name could be given could be created to get more students involved and a change in the number of threshold numbers in order to hold a meeting.

Benn also talks of other changes including a look at the equal opportunities policy and a development of a 'no-platform' policy. Also looking at disciplinary structure and a review of the officer structure.

Callum Barclay asks how he will slim down policy book. Benn Rapson states that it is up to the discretion of parliament to add and get rid of policies. He states how the policy book should be looked at in the now and not in the new year and they can make stronger policies and can get rid of out-to-date ones as the policy book has over 100 currently.

## **8. Any other business**

Nathan asks what the best way to get information out about events associated with Black History month for reps. He asks if there is a way to toggle students to be sent information on their student issues and asks if information is properly being sent out and if there is any other ways for information to be sent out. Benn responds stating there is an email for this and he believes this email can be used more in order to allow more targeted emails and proposes a comms committee in-order for students to reach out more.

Louise asks when graduation dates will be. Savvina responds that these will take place in November and for those who graduated in November and Summer 2020 and Summer 2021 graduation days will take place.

Savvina asks if there is any feedback any reps found from students. Ailidh and Aspen state how there is no sanitary products offered from the union in any of the toilets and how the gender-neutral toilets look too similar to disabled toilets. Nesha states how sanitary products are on the way. A point is also raised about the disabled door breaking. Benn has raised this issue with the compliance officer and plan to fix this door and other broken doors around the union and these have been flagged to be fixed. Nathan also brings up accessibility issues on the grass area near the John Anderson Business Building. Ailidh also acknowledges Nathan's statement about accessibility in-regards to the University. Aspen also states how these accessibility routes for disabled students aren't properly identified and need to be.

**Nesha closes the meeting.**