**15/02/2023 Student Council Minutes**
(13:30 – 15:30)

Held online via Zoom

54 Council Members in attendance

Guests: Emily McIntosh.

Sabbatical Officers: VP Education, VP Student Development, VP Welfare and Wellbeing
Chair: Ameer Hamza

1. Welcome – *Union Chair will welcome attendees and explain the council meeting.*
2. Sabbatical Officer Question Time – our sabbatical officers are VP Education Subuola Elufioye, VP Student Development Ovoke Adams Adamatie, VP Welfare and Wellbeing Omoleye Kehinde Awolaja.
3. Senior Management Question Time - our guest will be Emily McIntosh, Director of Student Success*.*
4. Review of Previous Minutes.
5. Policy Debates

5.1 Policy Lapse – Poppy Scotland Appeal

5.2 Policy Lapse – Right 2 Education Campaign

 5.3 Policy Lapse – Holistic Support for Care Experienced Students

5.4 Policy Lapse – Vegan Food Options

5.5 Policy Lapse – Gym funding should not fall

5.6 Policy Lapse – Sign Off with Pronouns: Make Sharing Pronouns Common Practice

5.7 Policy Lapse – Speak to Everyone: Use Gender-Inclusive Language

5.8 Policy Lapse – Democratising UWS (University of the West of Scotland)

5.9 Policy Lapse – How much time do we have left? I do not know and at this point I'm too afraid to ask.

5.10Policy Lapse – Promoting Accessibility

5.11Policy Lapse – Campaign for better work opportunities for international students

5.12 Policy Lapse – Stop using sole use packaging

1. **Welcome** – *Union Chair and SR&PC will welcome attendees and explain the council meeting.*

Union Chair Ameer Hamza welcomes everyone to the meeting. He also welcomes the Sabbatical Officers and informs the reps that our guest will be Emily McIntosh, UWS’ newly appointed Director of Student Success. It is noted that Emily will arrive at 2pm, and any questions for her at this point should be written in the chat box.

1. **Sabbatical Officer Question Time –** *Our Sabbatical Officers are Ovoke Adams Adamatie, Omoleye Kehinde Awolaja, and Subuola Elufioye.*

VP Student Development – Ovoke Adams Adamatie

Ovoke gives an update on his achievements since the last Student Council meeting: He notes that there have been more new societies have been registered this year compared to the previous year with a particular success being the Indian Students Society. He is working hard on starting up more academic-based societies, branching societies across different campuses and improving the student experience overall. He is happy to take any questions.

*Questions for Ovoke:*

**Q:** Is there a guide to forming new societies?

**A:** Forming a new society is very easily done; all you need is two more people who share the same interest as you. There is a link on our website for a form to start a new society - <https://www.uwsunion.org.uk/societies/starting/> - the initial starting process is very easy and then you can book into a society training session with our Student Opportunities Co-ordinator, and there is a budget available for societies to spend on holding events.

**Q:** When will we receive information on the dates/times available for society training sessions?

**A:** Instagram is the best place for updates: Follow Your Union @uwsstudents and Ovoke @uwsunionvpsd

**Q:** What are the rules that come with running a society?

**A:** There are certain rules that you will be made aware of during your society training session, but initially it is as easy as filling in the form. Ovoke noted that he is available to help you with socials and branding.

VP Wellfare and Wellbeing – Omoleye Kehinde Awolaja

Omoleye gives an update on his achievements since the last Student Council meeting: She helped to launch the *Hey Girls* project with the VP Education and advice team which gives students access to free sanitary products delivered to your door. She added that she is working on resolving complaints from some students that they have not yet received their products. There is going to be an event with the funding and advice team to help students that need to apply for discretionary funds on the 27th and 28th February, as well as ‘Wellbeing Week’ in March. She is also working on providing free seeds and pots for students to boost mental health by growing their own plants, as well as the popular *Paws Against Stress* around exam time. Omoleye is happy to answer any questions about these upcoming events.

*Questions for Omoleye:*

There were no questions.

VP Education – Subuola Elufioye

Subuola gives an update on his achievements since the last Student Council meeting: She has been in conversation with the University regarding the situation of transport to the Lanarkshire campus and has completed a survey to go out to students next week proposing new times for transport to be available. She has been working on a Student Opportunities Proposal to discuss placement opportunities for students. She is working on a plan with the University to ensure that deaf students’ classes are only timetabled in rooms that are linked to hearing loops. Subuola supported the cost-of-living rally in Edinburgh. She has also started a new series on her Instagram called ‘Education Tuesdays’ where she explains the dos and don’ts of being a student – follow her @uwsstudentsvped. Subuola then thanked us for coming to her *“Ted Talk”.*

*Questions for Subuola:*

**Q:** Should there be an induction for students to teach them about processes like how to appeal or make complaints?

**A:** If you are having any issues with any of these processes, please get in touch with our Advice Team – advice@uwsunion.org.uk – who can advise you about these issues and can also attend plagiarism panels with you.

**Q:** The issue is perhaps more that many students are not even aware that the Union exists, therefore would not know to seek out this help from us.

**A:** Claire Lumsden speaking: During mass intake in September, Union staff and University staff from the counselling team, library, etc. are invited to some classes to give an induction, however if you have started your studies in term two this doesn’t happen as much. If you feel that you would benefit from someone coming to speak to your class, whether that be someone from The Union or The University, send us an email uwsunion@uws.ac.uk and we will be happy to arrange this for you.

**Q:** Student has a list of complaints to share from fellow students: Telling students to go to lots of different links and contact lots of different staff can be extremely confusing, the plagiarism page on our website is not available to all students, the student app is not very clear, was there ever any progress made with providing educational courses for lecturers to use online platforms?

**A:** Claire Lumsden speaking: You have raised some great points, hopefully we can come back to this.

1. **Senior Management Question Time –** *Our guest is Emily McIntosh, Director of Student Success.*

Emily explains that she is new to UWS – she was appointed as Director of Student Success. She noted that everything that has been discussed so far is already on her to-do list. She is excited to work with Subuola, Voke, Claire and others. She agreed that inductions are a fundamental part of the student’s university experience and that she would like to begin mapping various university processes to understand how they all connect. She wants the student voice to be strong; staff should not just be talking about students, but rather, *with* students. Emily feels that we need to understand how we as colleagues see the whole student journey like students do. She has an open-door policy and is always happy to take suggestions from students.

*Questions for Emily:*

**Q:** Student agrees with previous commenter about the danger of the UWS safe app not functioning at campuses other than Paisley. The exclaimed that when they tried to bring up the issue with their classmates, none of them had heard of the app and developed a shared sense of concern once they learned of it and its lack of existence at their own campus.

**A:** What you are describing sounds like a breach of code of conduct and a meeting should be arranged to act on this matter. Emily and Claire to take this further and perhaps put it through the student partnership forum.

**Q:** Many students are asking if extensions can be given due to ongoing strikes; a lot of in-person classes have been put online and sometimes no online material is released for these classes, leaving students at a major disadvantage.

**A:** Emily agrees that there has been a lot of lost learning firstly because of the pandemic, and now because of strike action – she will discuss the matter with Jonathan Powells and then feedback to Claire with their thoughts.

**Q:** Who should students email regarding an extension request?

**A:** It is best to send an email directly to your course coordinator, as it will be escalated to them anyway.

**Q:** Before Christmas there was a project management module which received an extension because the work had to be completed onsite because of software only available on the university computers, and there were not always enough computers to support the class. When it came to the submission date, Turnitin was not working and because the extension date was the 23rd of December, there were no staff available to advise students. This has been extremely upsetting to students who, two months later, have still not received grades for the assessment.

**A:** Emily apologises to the student on behalf of the university, saying that she will discuss this with the student and feedback to Claire and Jorgen.

*Emily thanks the room for inviting her to this Student Council and leaves the meeting.*

1. **Review of Previous Minutes**

The previous minutes have been approved.

1. **Policy Debates**

The Union Chair explains that the policies being voted on today were put in place five years ago, and thus need to be reapproved by the current student council to avoid being lapsed. A voting form was sent into the chat box of the meeting for attendees to vote to either approve or lapse each of the following policies as they were discussed.

* **5.1 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – Poppy Scotland Appeal” as Union policy?**

Passed with 27 yes / 1 no (96%)

* **5.2 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – Right 2 Education Campaign” as Union policy?**

Passed with 24 yes / 2 no (92%)

* **5.3 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – Holistic Support for Care Experienced Students” as Union policy?**

Passed with 26 yes / 1 no (96%)

* **5.4 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – Vegan Food Options” as Union policy?**

Passed with 22 yes / 5 no (81%)

* **5.5 Should Student council pass the “Policy Lapse – Gym funding should not fall” as Union policy**

Passed with 25 yes / 2 no (93%)

* **5.6 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – Sign Off with Pronouns: Make Sharing Pronouns Common Practice” as Union policy?**

Passed with 20 yes / 7 no (74%)

* **5.7 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – Speak to Everyone: Use Gender-Inclusive Language” as Union policy?**

Passed with 22 yes / 5 no (81%)

* **5.8 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – Democratising UWS” as Union policy?**

Passed with 24 yes / 2 no (92%)

* **5.9 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – How much time do we have left? I don't know and at this point I'm too afraid to ask..” as Union policy?**

Passed with 23 yes / 3 no (88%)

* **5.10 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – Promoting Accessibility” as Union policy?**

Passed with 24 yes / 2 no (92%)

* **5.11 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – Campaign for better work opportunities for International students” as Union policy?**

Passed with 24 yes / 2 no (92%)

* **5.12 Should Student council pass “Policy Lapse – Stop using single use packaging” as Union policy?**

Passed with 24 yes / 2 no (92%)

*Further Questions:*

**Q:** Regarding Policy Lapse 5.2: Student asks if we have the power to put such a policy in place and argues that it is not needed since education is already a human right.

**A:** Claire Lumsden: Some of the policies are more principle based rather something that is actionable, meaning that the principle we stand by as your Students’ Union is that everybody is deserving of an education no matter their background.

**Q:** Student rep raises concern that they have missed multiple rep meetings as some of them clash with their classes and asks whether reps are required to attend all meetings.

**A:** David Devlin: If you have meetings pertaining to classes that clash with your classes, please contact Claire Lumsden.

**Q:** International student expresses opinion that a student’s UWS account should not be blocked because of a late payment of fees and fee-paying students should be given leeway for late payments.

**A:** Ovoke Adams Adamatie: A payment plan should be set up in advance to avoid your account being blocked. It can look suspicious if you do not pay your fees, since as international students we have made a deal with the University and have had to prove that we are able to pay our fees.

**Q:** Student raised a concern that some of their peers have struggled to find a job after finishing their course in project management.

**A:** Ovoke Adams Adamatie: If you have negative feedback about any aspect of your university experience, it is vital that you feed this back to the University/Union so that actions can be taken to resolve issues. Societies are a great place to gain employability skills as they give students the opportunity to create practical experience for themselves in the fields that interest them. Ovoke also notes that he will be hosting a LinkedIn workshop next Tuesday 21st February at 12 noon at the Paisley Union Building, Level 2.

**Claire Lumsden:** Our next council meeting is scheduled to take place in two weeks, and as there were no new policies at this meeting, please have a think about any policy ideas concerning the University, the Union or anything else you can think of that you would like to see passed. Claire also stressed generally that if you have any issues or complaints towards the University, we need lots of people to come forward to emphasise the issue and get results. If you have any ideas for policies, or comments regarding your course or the student experience, please email representation@uwsunion.org.uk to discuss this further.

**Jorgen Clemmensen-Floholm:** Apologies for the digital hiccups, this will be sorted in time for the next meeting. This is my first Student Council meeting after being newly employed at the Union, and the overlap created some technical difficulties. Please leave your feedback about this meeting on the feedback form provided, thank you.

**David Devlin:** Please apply for elections – nominations close at 5pm on Monday the 20th February. Also, we undertake an annual survey about what we as a Union have achieved – please fill this out to help us to improve your Union.

Union Chair thanks everyone for attending the meeting and reminds them to fill in the feedback form.

*End of Meeting.*