**01/11/23 Student Council Minutes**

13:30 – 15:30 (5-minute break at 14:30)

Location: Teams

89 total in attendance

Guests: Colin Dewar

Sabbatical Officers: President

Chair: Sabina Lawrie

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| **1** | **Welcome** *Union Representation team will welcome attendees and explain the council meeting.* | **Verbal** |
| **2** | **Senior Manager Question Time** *Our guest will be Colin Dewar from Student Services* | **Verbal** |
| **3** | **Sabbatical Officer Question Time** | **Verbal and Paper 3** |
| **4** | **Review of Previous Minutes** | **Paper 4** |
| **5** | **Policy Debates** | **Paper 5** |
| 5.1 | Lobby the University to Give Students Access to More Scientific Journals Through the University Library and Access to Bloomberg Terminal and LinkedIn Learning (Policy lapse) |  |
| 5.2 | Mature Student Representation (Policy Lapse) |  |
| 5.3 | Notifications for Distance Learning Students (Policy Lapse) |  |
| 5.4 | Stop Penalising Students Attendance (Policy Lapse) |  |
| 5.5 | Why is UWS Making it So Hard to Find a Room to Use? (Policy Lapse) |  |
| 5.6 | Sell White Poppies Alongside Red Poppies (Policy Lapse) |  |
| 5.7 | Skolestrejk for Klimat / School Strike for the Climate (Policy Lapse) |  |
| 5.8 | Microwaves at Paisley and Lanarkshire (Policy Lapse) |  |
| 5.9 | Mindfulness Pods/Rooms (Policy Lapse) |  |
| 5.10 | More Halal Food Options (Policy Lapse) |  |
| 5.11 | Stop Advertising High Interest Private Loans (Policy Lapse) |  |
| 5.12 | Votes at 16 (Policy lapse) |  |

***Close –*** *Date of Next Meeting: 06/12/23*

### Welcome - Union Representation team will welcome attendees and explain the council meeting.

The chair explains that Student Council is responsible for setting our Union policy and explains that a policy is where students tell us as an organisation what we should be working on, sometimes easy things that we can change ourselves and other times more complex issues that we then lobby the university to commit to.

The chair also explains that sabbs are elected student officers that take time away from their studies to do work to support students.

### Senior Manager Question Time -Our guest will be Colin Dewar from Student Services.

Colin intruded himself as the Student Services manager and acting head of the department. He explained that Student Services are part of a wider department of the Student Success Team, including Registry and Student Experience Engagement Team. The Student Experience and Engagement Team includes The Hub and Student Success.

Student Services are made up of 6 teams: Academic Skills (academic writing, dissertation support referencing and avoiding plagiarism), Careers and Employability (career advice during and after university), Counselling and Wellbeing (working in collaboration with the Union to support students’ wellbeing), Disability Team (personalised support for those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, Funding and Advice (discretionary funding, scholarships/bursaries, money management), International Student Support (student visas, bringing dependants to the UK, working during and after your studies).

The International Student Support Team and the Union have planned the upcoming International Students’ Day, which is shaping up to be really exciting. The Counselling and Wellbeing team are about to be in touch with union about 16 Days of Action, which aims to raise awareness of the support available for gender-based violence.

*Questions for Colin:*

Q: What support do we get for applying/funding a post-graduate degree?

A: Colin stated that it will vary depending on the student’s circumstances and directed them towards the Careers and Fundraising teams. Some post-graduate courses, for example, teaching, are fully funded, and some are largely funded. There are also repayable funding options. It would depend on what area you’re interested in.

Q: What is the time frame to get a reply from Student Services as I have been waiting a long time for a response?

A: Colin said to send him an email as you should have had a response by now. Sometimes there are factors like the time of year and the cyber-attack that slow down certain processes, but he would have expected it to be resolved sooner.

Q:For students who are not on campus, contacting the Hub can be a slow and robotic process. Are there any other ways for us to speak to the Hub except WhatsApp?

A: Colin understood that WhatsApp can feel a bit robotic for some and encouraged the student to try either using the Hub portal or phoning to get in touch.

Q: A student was concerned about the size of the Union office at the Lanarkshire campus, as there is no space to have a private conversation with an advice worker about a sensitive issue.

A: The chair stepped in to say that this was more the Union’s issue than Colin’s and that we are aware that the space isn’t of sufficient size. The meeting chair asked the student to leave us this feedback formally so that we can take it to the University.

Q: Students have been asking how to organise a graduation ball and what support/guidance is available from staff.

A: The Union can provide some support for organising a graduation ball if you send an email to societies@uwsunion.org.uk.

Q: A student has been told that they have no choice but to re-sit an exam because the University lost his results but the student doesn’t think this is fair.

A: The chair stepped in to say that a Student Union advice worker would be the best person to get in touch with for this issue as the Union is independent from the University and our advice is impartial. You can get in touch with an advice worker through [advice@uwsunion.org.uk](mailto:advice@uwsunion.org.uk). Colin also added that the Student Experience and Engagement Team are early intervention specialists who are linked to each academic school and help students to have a good student experience. You can get in touch with them through the Hub.

Q: A student was worried about the poor internet signal in University halls since the cyber-attack, especially given that many classes are still being held online.

A: Colin stated that this concerned doesn’t sit within Student Services, but that he has contacts in the IT department, so will bring the issue up with them. He said that the IT department have a list of priorities areas to work on after the cyber attack and that network access is up there. He is happy to feed back that Student Council are not happy with it.

Q: What support do international students receive in terms of cultural integration?

A: The Students’ Union has many societies, including culture-based societies, that hold events throughout the year. From a Student Services perspective, the International Team offer a range of events, trips and community initiatives throughout the year. There are dates to be confirmed in London, too. The International Team also offer drop-in services throughout the year.

Q: All the students on a hybrid course in Lanarkshire have been asked to attend a class onsite, when many of the students have never been on campus before. How does this work when ID cards are only available to collect in person but you need an ID card to come onto campus?

A: Colin would hope we could reach a solution here. The Hub has been distributing physical ID cards this week. Colin asked the student to send him an email and he would pass onto Nina. He was sure there could be a way to pick the card up on the day. They can either liaise with you or with the whole programme.

Q: A student received an email saying they could collect their student ID card, then when they went to collect it they were told that was incorrect information.

A: Colin said his understanding was that cards were available to collect this week, but he would ask for clarity about the issue of ID cards and feed this back.

### Sabbatical Officers Question Time

**Union President: Uchechi Agbaraji**

*Who I am:*

Uchechi says hi to the council stating that it’s been an interesting few months as she’s been settling into her new role and that it is truly an honour to be your President. She explains that her role is to work for every student to help solve their issues both collectively and individually, and that part of that role includes attending all Student Council meetings. She ensured the council that the sabbatical team are here for them and all students, to work for you and serve you as best as we can, so feel free to reach out with any feedback or suggestions.

*Questions for Uchechi:*

Q: A class group don’t understand one module of online lectures - they tried to sort it out with the professor but are not getting the solution we’re looking for. It’s getting tough as they are not able to understand the material.

A: Uchechi said that academic excellence is one of his department’s priorities – they try to ensure that every student gets the support they need. He asked the student to send him an email so we can investigate the learning experience and raise it further with the University.

The student asked if they could contact the Union about the issue, and they were assured that they wouldn’t face any consequences for sharing their feedback with us.

Q: What can we do for students who might not be able to attend on campus if public transport is not available?

A: The school decided to move classes to being in-person because of the current Wi-Fi issues, however, if you are struggling to afford transport, there are discretionary funds available. If there are any other issues, Uchechi asked that the student share them with him so they could be taken up accordingly.

Q: There is a class in which even the students who speak English as their first language struggle to understand the wording of material, therefore it’s likely that international students would struggle even more to understand what is being said in lectures. Are there any resources to help?

A: Simplifying communications is directly related to learning and teaching. If students are experiencing difficulties, this should be raised with us, and we will raise it with the school to make sure something is sorted out.

Q: What plans does the Union President have to address the current cost-of-living crisis, especially as students in halls are paying a higher rent that previously and internet access is unsuitable?

A: Uchechi suggested that the student get in touch with her to write a policy on this issue.

Q: Nursing students aren’t encouraged to take on additional work during placements, but what if some of us need to be earning money?

A: I would not recommend you to work more hours while on placement. You can go to the discretionary fund, come to the Union or University Funding and Advice Teams.

Q: Is it possible to ask that all of our tutorials are scheduled on the same day, as travelling into University for only a couple of hours on multiple days is time consuming and expensive.

A: You can talk to lecturer or raise at Student Staff Liaison Group, if you don’t think your response is acceptable you can raise it with us.

Q: Is there a student officer at the London campus?

A: We don’t have a student officer specifically based in London, but there are drop-in sessions available with our London staff member, Nathan.

Q: An international student was asking about the 20-hour work-week law which excludes holidays and was asking whether Saturdays and Sundays count as holidays.

A: You can absolutely work up to 20 hours per week, but the weekend unfortunately doesn’t count as a holiday, so any hours worked on Saturdays and Sundays would count towards the 20-hour work week.

**Key manifesto points/my priorities**

* Ensuring that every student experiences a good learning experience.
* Wellbeing and Welfare issues.
* Supporting students during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

### Review of Previous Minutes

Chair asks if anyone wishes to raise any inaccuracies in the previous minutes. No responses and minutes are approved.

### Policy Debates

The chair explains that policies tell the Union what to work on and what is important to students. There are no new policies today, but we have lapsed policies to decide on (policies that we need to decide whether they are still relevant).

The chair explains that the policies being voted on today were put in place five years ago, and therefore need to be reapproved by the current student council to avoid being lapsed. A voting form is sent into the chat box of the meeting for attendees to vote to either pass, reject or abstain each of the following policies as they are discussed.

5.1 Lobby the University to Give Students Access to More Scientific Journals Through the University Library and Access to Bloomberg Terminal and LinkedIn Learning (Policy lapse) – **Passed**

* Yes 98
* No:
* Abstain: 2

5.2 Mature Student Representation (Policy Lapse) - **Passed**

* Yes: 79
* No:
* Abstain: 21

5.3 Notifications for Distance Learning Students (Policy Lapse) - **Passed**

* Yes: 70
* No: 11
* Abstain: 20

5.4 Stop Penalising Students Attendance (Policy Lapse) - **Lapsed**

* Yes: 57
* No: 16
* Abstain: 27

5.5 Why is UWS Making it So Hard to Find a Room to Use? (Policy Lapse) – **Passed**

* Yes: 72
* No: 9
* Abstain: 19

5.6. Sell White Poppies Alongside Red Poppies (Policy Lapse) - **Lapsed**

* Yes: 46
* No: 40
* Abstain: 15

5.7 Skolestrejk for Klimat / School Strike for the Climate (Policy Lapse) - **Lapsed**

* Yes: 25
* No: 24
* Abstain: 51

5.8 Microwaves at Paisley and Lanarkshire (Policy Lapse) – **Passed**

* Yes: 84
* No: 6
* Abstain: 10

5.9 Mindfulness Pods/Rooms (Policy Lapse) – **Passed**

* Yes: 87
* No: 4
* Abstain: 9

**Policies to be carried over to the next meeting**

5.10 More Halal Food Options (Policy Lapse)

5.11 Stop Advertising High Interest Private Loans (Policy Lapse)

5.12 Votes at 16 (Policy lapse)

### Meeting Close

The meeting chair thanked everyone for attending this Student Council meeting and for all of the nice comments in the chat. She stated that we are open to constructive criticism and that if there is anything we can do better, we want to know about it. There will be a link to a feedback form sent out and we encourage you to complete it.

*End of Meeting.*