**20/01/2021 Student Council Agenda**
13:30 – 15:30, held via zoom, 70 members in attendance

1. **Welcome**

Chair welcomes members to the meeting and thanks guests of Council Craig Mahoney, Principal, Lucy Meredith, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Jonathan Powles, Vice Principal of Learning, Teaching and Students for attending.

Welcomes members to use the Chat function to ask any questions or leave comments during the meeting.

1. **Principals Update**

Chair invites Principal Craig Mahony to provide an update

The Principal provides members with an overview of the current UWS league table standings, achievements and financial position. Outlines the UWS Strategic priority areas to 2025 including Learning and Teaching, Research and Excellence and Community and Society. Explains the pandemic had a massive impact on how UWS work and were the first to close its doors even before government lockdown. To deal with the challenges of Covid 19, UWS developed ‘Creating strength from adversity’ workstreams to look at key activities and what needed to change or improve. During this time UWS also supported the NHS with research projects, PPE and other equipment for the Louisa Jordan Hospital.

Chair notes the guillotine will fall for the presentation to allow time for questions. The Principal notes he is nearly finished.

Principal carries on explaining new workstreams are being set up for the year ahead including focus on developing and enhancing the Hybrid model of learning and teaching, health and safety and Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity, sustainability and environment. UWS are also looking to provide additional support and resources for digital poverty and hardship as well as campus estates upgrades.

Chair thanks Principle for their overview and opens members questions. Invites guests to answer questions.

**Questions**

Q: Member asks if the University plan to have physical teaching in September or if it will be hybrid or all online.

A: Craig Mahony notes term 1 will begin on 6th September and this won’t change regardless of the circumstances at the time. We don’t know exactly what it will look like however, we need to wait for government advice and guidance closer to the time.

Comment: Member notes with Principal that his response to the guillotine falling was disrespectful to Council as they are guests in a dedicated student space. Member is thanked for this by other members, Chair moves to next question.

Q: Member notes that some students are only being allowed one week extension instead of 21 days.

A: Lucy Meredith notes it is up to 21 days which we’ll provide clearer guidance to staff on.

Q: Member notes they are a 1st year Rep and their class are worried about support from teaching staff for extensions, adds that tutorials are only 1 hour long and everything else we are required to learn ourselves with little guidance.

A: Johnathan Powles asks for the details to be forwarded for follow up.

Comment: Member comments that the issue of 21 days extension is not resolved, using the words ‘up to’ is causing confusion and this needs to stop. Lecturers do think it’s at their discretion to allow or not allow this and this must be clarified.

Q: Member asks what the Senior Management think the student learning experience look like in a couple of years, will it still be hybrid or will it go back to fully on campus

A: Craig Mahony responds that it will be face to face in different forms, face to face teaching is an embedded part of UWS but how much we can do and in what form is unknown. The hybrid model is in recognition that online learning materials are not ready, Aula is helping with this and will support a better experience. Notes UWS is a ‘practice based’ University but our learning and teaching model will all depend on government guidelines and best practice.

Q: Member notes they appreciate senior management time in coming to talk to Reps, explains that they have spent most of term seeking clarity of what the rules are for extensions, ECS or if both can be used and waiting a long time for answers, adds the mental health of students is also deteriorating because of this. Managed to arrange an extraordinary SSLG to discuss the matters and still no real clarity on what is allowed, can you clarify if ECS is available after the extension?

A: Johnathan Powles notes ECS is unaffected by requesting an extension and the up to 21 days extension request is automatic upon request if affected by covid. Notes for clarity, it is up to students to decide what will work for them and this should be automatically granted, it is not at the lecturers discretion. Further notes each School has Leads to support answering these questions, it’s disappointing that the message isn’t getting through, we’ll work to improve this.

Chair asks if guests can answer questions outside the meeting if they are forwarded on. Lucy Meredith notes they are happy to do this.

Chair thanks guests for their time and answering questions.

1. **Review of previous minutes (Paper 1)**
2. January Council Minutes

No items are raised, minutes approved

1. Extraordinary Council Minutes

No items are raised, minutes approved

1. **Strike action Update – Verbal – David Devlin**

David Devlin, Head of Union Support Services, provides an update on Strike Referendum. Notes with members he is the Returning Officer to oversee the referendum and with the agreement of both sides, we postponed campaigning to allow UWS Senate time to change the algorithm.

We’re now looking for a steer on whether to continue with the Strike Referendum, we believe the agenda for the strike has been met and if members choose to continue it will be slow as we have to follow very strict and clear guidance.

Explains that in terms of action, from the survey results, most students didn’t want to strike however were prepared to do so if the ‘asks’ were not met, this was the algorithm change, free graduations and removal of statue at the front of UWS Paisley campus.

VP Welfare and Wellbeing notes he was off when some conversations were happening around the strike action, the algorithm change is a big win although there is more to be done. Adds that as the proposer, he wouldn’t now agree with strike, the parts not met could be campaigned on through the year, the big thing was the algorithm change and this has been achieved.

Member notes this is a big win and agree with the points raised, the January Council was really strong and was discussed at SSLG’s, it’s all contributed to the change. Adds that in the President’s report there is potential updates and progress being made in other areas as well and we don’t need to strike now, it helped create some of the change we wanted.

President notes this is a great win and notes with members there are big changes coming up with Grad Fee’s and we should be able to share some information in April, positive changes are being made, we are just waiting for confirmation

David Devlin notes with members this change wasn’t a Student Union win, it was a Student Council win and members should all be proud, it’s a great example of how Council can work at its best.

Chair asks members for an indicative vote on whether to continue with the Strike Referendum. The question posed was ‘do you support a referendum on a student strike’.

Yes: 6

No: 41

Abstain: 4

Members vote not to continue with the Strike Referendum.

1. **Sabbatical Officer Reports (Paper 2)**
	1. President

Report taken as read. Notes that at the last Council there were some heated debates around the Strike Referendum and he expressed his views and opinions on the matter which members were disappointed by. Explains that it wasn’t that he didn’t want the referendum to go ahead, just felt there were other ways to go about it. Adds there should be an announcement soon for Graduation Fees. Notes he has been busy with planning and budgeting for the next few years and we launched strategic goals, focusing on the governance of the Union to get a full Board of Trustees

Asks members to post questions in the chat box and will respond as soon as possible.

* 1. Vice President Education

Report taken as read. Notes the degree classification change is very positive but the 3 week extension has caused confusion and will get clarification. Also been working on Decolonising the Curriculum and will update members as things progress.

Asks members for questions or post in the chat box and will respond as soon as possible.

* 1. Vice President Student Development

Report taken as read. Notes that Societies are doing really well, there has been an increase in engagement this year and an increase in Academic Societies which is very positive.

Asks members to post questions in chat and will answer them as soon as possible.

* 1. Vice President Welfare & Wellbeing

Report taken as read. Notes that the Mental Health Advisory Group has started. Attended NUS Scotland Conference with some good discussions around an Erasmus replacement. Reminds members the Thriving Learners closes soon and to please fill it in, it’s the largest Mental Health survey for University students in Scotland.

1. **Approval Request for New Board Members (Paper 3)**

President notes that Council are required to ratify the appointment of Board of Trustee members. We have two new appointees, these are Karuna Shivani Rinck as a Student Trustee and Mark Hamilton as an External Trustee.

Approving Karuna Shivani Rinck

Yes: 37

Approving Mark Hamilton

Yes: 37

Both appointees are ratified

President thanks members for confirming the Trustees appointments, notes there are still three vacant student trustee positions and we are looking to advertise these soon, would welcome applications from women students to keep gender balancing on the Board.

1. **Policy debate (Paper 4)**
	1. An Enhanced Academic Safety Net for UWS Students (No Detriment Policy)
	Submitted by Luke Humberstone
	*A series of recommendations designed to support students as part of the response to the Coronavirus pandemic.*

Proposer notes policy has been submitted for a while, asks for the University to go further with an enhanced Academic Safety Net, including more proactive wellbeing support for students, improved communications, establishing a Key Resources Fund among other things. Adds this is also a manifesto pledge and would like Council to pass it to continue to work on it next year.

President notes he supports the ideas, but asks if it’s achievable, explains a 24hr helpline for access to Student Services has been trialled with very low uptake. Would like more clarity on how it could be implemented as it would involve more than just Student Hub.

Member ask if some of this is similar to what the new Buddies are doing.

Proposer notes what is being asked for is different as it’s more accessible and as students require it.

Chair moves to vote. *The Student Representation and Policy Co-ordinator, Sabina Lawrie, notes some students have left and the new quorum for Policy to pass is 27.*

For: 34

Policy passed

* 1. No Detriment
	Submitted Anonymously
	*For any non-accredited degree to cancel exams in favour of course work*

Chair notes the Proposer is not in attendance and welcomes members to speak to the policy.

Member notes the University have already cancelled a lot of exams and feels this may undermine the previous policy passed.

There are no further comments, Chair moves to vote

For: 11

Policy rejected

* 1. COVID-19 Student Panel
	Submitted by Jonathan Gibb-Walsh
	*Create a student panel to respond to specific issues related to Covid-19, modelled on the UHI panel.*

Proposer notes this is an idea from the University of the Highlands and Islands, it’s asking for a student panel specifically to discuss Covid 19 concerns and moving forward. Once we’re allowed back on campus there would still be a need for a panel, there is a disconnect between Senior Management and students, it would give another dimension to representation and another avenue to hear students voices.

VP Welfare and Wellbeing supports the policy, students talk about their experiences and how it could be improved, the impact of Covid will be felt for some time.

Chair moves to vote

For: 37

Policy passed

* 1. Individual Marking for Group Assessments
	Submitted by Finlay Haggerty
	*Allow students to attach their banner numbers to their group work contributions so they can be marked for their own work.*

Chair notes the Proposer was unable to attend but has submitted a statement to be read. Statement notes that every student should be awarded for their efforts and contributions in group work but some don’t put in any work and remote working hasn’t helped. The policy asks for students to be able to attach their Banner ID to the parts of group work assignments they complete or contributed to.

Member understand the point of the policy, however notes students would need to meet all the assessment criteria and it would give lecturers more work. Adds an amendment could be to have Peer Review added but feels groupwork is a fundamental aspect of learning.

Member agrees with the policy, notes individuals not doing anything and getting the mark is unfair, understand the point of group work, however you should be credited for the work you do and individual marking would be beneficial.

Chair notes with members an amendment or new policy could be submitted, a new policy would need to be different in title and ask, we can only vote on this policy as it is.

Member notes there are ways to mitigate students not contributing, like contacting the module co-ordinator or other staff, the policy would create more work for students and staff if passed.

Chair moves to vote*.* *Student Representation and Policy Co-ordinator, Sabina Lawrie, notes some members have left the meeting and the new quorum for Policy to pass is 25*

For: 15

Policy rejected

* 1. Let our voice be heard at NUS
	Submitted by Ellie Gomersall
	*For the Students’ Union to elect delegates to NUS conferences with sufficient time for delegates to fully participate*

Proposer explains that during the Big Elections students are also asked to vote for their NUS delegation, because of the timing delegates only had a couple of days to prepare and we couldn’t submit policy or participate in the priority ballot, the policy asks to elect delegates earlier in year.

Chair moves to vote and notes the Union are already looking at this.

For: 34

Policy passed

* 1. COVID-19 Support for Keyworkers with Children
	Submitted by Kimberleyann Boyce
	*For clearer information and more assistance for students who have key worker status.*

Chair notes the Proposer couldn’t be in attendance and welcomes members to speak to the Policy.

Member notes keyworker students are doing a great job and this comes down to communication again, this should be voted for.

Chair moves to vote

For: 37

Policy passed

* 1. Extra time for students with disabilities also on dissertation
	Submitted Anonymously
	*For extra time for assessments and exams to apply to dissertations too*

Chair notes the Proposer is not in attendance and welcomes members to speak to the policy

Member notes this should be covered by the Disability Review meeting each year and should be covered by equalities laws.

Member further notes for students with disabilities, Disability Services should be able to help resolve this.

VP Welfare and Wellbeing reminds members of the Union Advice Service who can support students having difficulties in accessing the correct support.

Chair moves to vote

For: 28

Policy passes

* 1. Making all our policies more inclusive
	Submitted by Ellie Gomersall
	*To amend all current Union policies to replace all instances of the phrase “he or she” or similar with “they” or similar.
	Note: The original proposer has sought an alternative route to amend SU policies and recommends this policy is rejected by student council.*

Proposer notes this has been resolved outside of Council, asks members to reject the policy as it’s not needed

Chair moves to vote

For: 3

Policy rejected.

* 1. Library Books to be posted to students homes during Covid-19
	*Students should be able to take out library books by post during Covid-19, with a potential amendment considering more copies of e-books and a wider range of journals.*

Chair notes the Proposer is not in attendance and welcomes members to speak to the policy.

Member notes the Proposer would like the policy removed and asks for it to be rejected.

Chair moves to vote

For: 5

Policy rejected

* 1. Replacement Certificates for Surname Changes
	Submitted by Travis McRoberts
	*Provide a mechanism to update student certificates to reflect name changes after an award has been issued*

Member notes he has had difficulty changing their name on their degree after graduating and asks for a mechanism to change your name on certificates if received in the past. Adds the obstruction is at UWS as they were able to be changed for the College certificates, but seems unable to change it at University and now has a confusing academic profile with two different degree’s with two different names.

Member notes this policy should pass it’s also an issue for some LGBT+ students.

VP Welfare and Wellbeing explains work on this has started and the University are looking for guidance as it has implications for Scots Law, NUS are also looking into this. Asks members to pass the policy

Member notes the Womens Group support this as it has an impact on women too

Chair moves to vote*. Student Representation and Policy Co-ordinator, Sabina Lawrie, notes some members have left the meeting and the new quorum for Policy to pass is 21.*

Vote

For: 36

Policy passed

* 1. Pass for students who classes were cancelled
	Submitted by Anonymous
	*If a student has had fewer than 50% of their classes delivered they should receive an automatic pass or be allowed to repeat the class for free.*

Chair notes the Proposer is not present and welcomes members to speak to the policy.

Member notes they aren’t sure if this is a good policy, you still need to do the class, you still need to learn the material.

Member notes they think the policy would devalue our degree’s.

Member adds this is worrying if it’s happening and feels the complaints route is the best route for this or they can seek support from the Union Advice Service.

Chair moves to vote

For: 2

Policy rejected

* 1. Debate Procedure to improve democracy and efficiency
	Submitted by Ellie Gomersall
	*Introduction of a new structure for debates within student council, featuring alternative speeches for and against the policy of less than a minute.*

Member notes this was submitted to change the way we debate policy at Council to make it more formal, in an ordered way of For and Against speeches. Adds that the debates here today and at previous Councils have been really good and taking advantage of the thumbs up and down on the website has made a difference, adds they now aren’t sure if this is still needed

Member doesn’t agree with the policy, they aren’t concerned that some policy isn’t getting heard, it just means we are covering what is important using the thumbs up and down, feels a more formal debate procedure would be counterproductive.

Member notes there are Issues of time constraints to speak and hidden disabilities, we want people to engage and feel this would do the opposite putting students off submitting policy and speaking on it.

VP Welfare and Wellbeing notes this is similar to how other Student Unions do it and how NUS do some of their debates, it was also how we did it in the past. Doesn’t think this would work now.

Chair moves to vote

For: 1

Policy rejected

Chair thanks members for attending, notes the next meeting will be Wednesday 12th May at 1.30pm