

Student Council

05/10/20

Present:

Beth Robinson – BR

Briony English – BE

Chelsey Grooby – CG

Chris Dow – CD

Huba Ali – HA

Jasmine Grewal – JG

Laura Pickering – LP

Muhammad Tahir – MT

Niamh Burton – NB

Olivia Bartlett – OB

Rachael Chapman – RC

Rachel Powell – RP

Rebecca Mills – RM

Vinay Verma - VV

Staff Present:

Lucy Smith – LS

Absent with Formal Apologies:

Joseph Nelson – JN

Absent without Formal Apologies:

Dorina Glejdan - DG

Item 1 - Welcome from the Chair

VV welcomed to first Council meeting of the year

VV moved to postpone appointment of Vice Chair to end of meeting

VV moved to talk about SEC – explained and asked who would be interested

RC raised hand

JN entered meeting to apologise for non-attendance

JN exited meeting

RP asked what SEC do

LS and CG gave brief overview

RP said she would like to take part in SEC

VV said RC and RP to be appointed to SEC

Item 2 - Approval of minutes from the previous meeting

VV asked CG CD and RC to approve minutes from last year's meeting

VV signed off

Item 3 - Matters Arising

VV moved to Item 3 and asked what was and was not working well so far this academic year

RP outlined emails received from students with learning difficulties or on autism spectrum RP expressed concern that even though students are wearing sunflower lanyards, they have been asked forcibly to wear a mask

CG said CG and CD have had conversations around this – they have experienced this although they are exempt

RM expressed concerns about people not paying attention to guidance or being careful on campus including social distancing and wearing masks

VV said perhaps the rules need more reinforcing and asked if there were people around campus enforcing them

RM responded she hadn't seen anyone

CG noted there were staff asking to put masks on but this feeds into staff asking students to do so despite wearing sunflower lanyards or being exempt

VV asked if there were any sunflower lanyards available for students on campus

CG responded that there weren't and that these would usually be sourced by students on an individual basis online

VV asked if, as a Union, we could direct students to these

CG asked LS to check if sunflower lanyards was a policy last year

LS checked if this had been passed as policy and confirmed that it hadn't

CG suggested RP to put an idea on Student Say

Action: RP to add Sunflower Lanyards idea to Student Say

RP suggested the University could make cards for students

CD noted that NHS produce exemption cards and showed that they are downloadable to students' phones

RM suggested that SU communications should be available for this

CD agreed

CD suggested that Student Council produce videos about keeping campus safe as speaking student to student may be more effective

RM agreed that this would help and expressed concern regarding the amount of students using lifts at one time

CG noted that it should be only one household per lift so if someone doesn't have a mask or isn't in households then within rights to ask to leave, although acknowledged this may be difficult for some students

RM felt that a video would help with students feeling anxious about this

CD asked for show of hands to action video

RM, RC, RP, BR, BE and LP asked to be involved

Action: CD to email above students regarding video

CG asked to move to Item 5 and explained the feedback needed (see item 5)*

Item 4 - Action Tracker and Attendance Log

To be reviewed at next meeting.

Item 5 - Feedback from Council on student groups' response to campus reopening

* CG asked to go to each student one by one to get feedback on face-to-face vs. online teaching.

RP explained that as a disabled student with a physical disability and due to personal health circumstances, online teaching has been very helpful

CG asked how online accessibility has been

RP said was great

CG moved to RC

RC noted that blended approach has worked well but that there have been technical issues with Panopto and Microsoft Teams. Course mates think Panopto is generally working well but there have been issues with it that mean students have missed out. RC glad that there is still on campus teaching as well

CG moved to BR

BR stated that blended approach has worked okay but feels impersonal on campus and therefore prefers online teaching as learning more and feels more personal

CG moved to RM

RM explained that online teaching has led to some difficulties including lectures not always being recorded. Noted that there had been a lack of cleaning products for an on-campus lecture

RM noted that an online approach felt safer but on campus students felt stuck in their rooms

CG moved to BE

BE stated that in person lectures are not currently recorded but that they should all be recorded for at risk students who cannot attend lectures on campus

CG moved to VV

VV stated online learning working relatively well and preferred Panopto to Microsoft Teams

CG moved to LP

LP explained that course has timetables are changeable which makes it difficult when organising work shifts. Also noted that students and staff had removed visors and masks in lectures

CG moved to OB

OB acknowledged the difficulties there have been with technology and particularly breakout rooms

CG moved to JG

JG agreed that lectures are often held up by technological difficulties. Echoed concerns around working patterns and people not wearing on campus

CG moved to HA

HA expressed finding online learning quite convenient despite an overload of emails

CG moved to MT

MT explained he would rather be at University as it is easier to be distracted from online lectures

CG moved to NB

NB concurred with MT and noted that it is easier to talk to lecturers after physical lectures

CG thanked all for feedback and explained she would collate it

RM added that lecturers are asking students to be involved in group work who have exemption from this

RP raised World Cerebral Palsy Day and asked councillors to wear green on Teams or on campus

VV praised RP's WCPD video which CG echoed

Item 6 - Sabbatical Officer Reports

VV moved to reports

CG directed council to reports at bottom of agenda and explained how officer reports work

CG took goals as read

CG summarised what she is working on now Freshers is over and asked if there were any questions

MT temporarily left meeting

CD took goals as read

CD summarised what he will be working on and explained what had happened over Freshers

CD updated on GP surgery campaign and other events (World Mental Health Day, World Cerebral Palsy Day, Black History Month)

VV thanked officers and congratulated them on Freshers' Week engagement

Item 7 - Motions Debate

VV moved to item 7 and asked BE to talk about Motion 024 – Gender Neutral Bathrooms

BE introduced and explained Motion 024 and noted that she had spoken to Trans and non-binary students at University who feel unsafe due to the lack of Gender Neutral Toilets (GNTs). BE explained that there should be GNTs in each block of the University.

CD updated BE on a response he received from University staff

VV asked for clarification on whether these would be additional or adapted toilets

CD explained there would still be male and female toilets but some of these would be converted to GNTs. Yvonne Patrick (YP) responded that there is only one GNT. CD floated the possibility of changing labelling of accessible toilets

JG suggested having sanitary products in male toilet as part of this campaign

CD responded this was part of the Free Periods campaign which he will be chasing up with the University

HA asked if students would have a say in which toilets are adapted on campus because some of toilets on the ground floor (noted toilet near AG55) are useful for female Muslim students as they are near the prayer room

CG responded that this will all be taken into account and washing/changing spaces won't be changed

CD responded that it was a lot to do with signage and changing terminology from accessible to gender neutral

HA accepted and thanked for explanation

RP noted that a lot of disabled toilets say "Disabled and Gender Fluid" so that could be an option

VV asked if anyone had anything else to add to debate

BE added that GNTs not just for trans and non-binary students – anyone can use them so they are inclusive for everyone

VV moved to a vote

Council voted with 13 votes for and 1 abstention

Item 8 – AOB

VV moved to any other business

VV asked OB to be Vice Chair

OB accepted

CG reminded Council to tell everyone about Student Say to increase motions and policies

RP inquired about possibility of working with University staff to support students with dyslexia. Suggested changing PowerPoint slides to a blue background

CG explained she had a meeting with staff from AKLC and discussed the programmes and guidance available to improve accessibility for dyslexic students. CG following up this week

Action: CG will email RP with response from AKLC and set up a meeting

RP mentioned that assistive technology had been unavailable at home

Action: CG requested RP summarise problems in an email, send to IT helpdesk and CC Chelsey in to action further

CD asked if there were any ideas or campaigns that councillors wanted to discuss

RC expressed concern that lecturers are not aware of students with learning difficulties

LP explained Meat free Monday's plan to help University and SU be more sustainable. LP spoke to NB about menstrual cups.

Action: CD, LP, and NB to work together to promote these

LP took a photo of student council

BE raised her idea on Student Say, relating to staff wearing badges with gender pronouns on, explained it received enough votes between agenda going out and meeting

CG noted he was in talks with University staff about including pronouns in email signatures and expressed support for BE campaign

BR raised World Mental Health Day and idea currently on Student Say relating to coasters with mental health contact information on

BR asked CD about likelihood that a different (previously discussed) design of coasters would be available for WMHD

Action: CD will check post room and send BR design via email

RP raised her intention to put up a Student Say regarding Sunflower Lanyards and one around accessibility on campus. RP asked for councillor's support

CG raised idea on Student Say relating to improving heritage halls on campus and asked for support

CD ran through his actions from meeting, adding the following:

Action: CD email BE this week regarding motion 024

Action: CD email RP and LS regarding Sunflower Lanyards

CG confirmed own actions from meeting

VV asked councillors to approve action points

Council unanimously approved action points

VV closed the meeting