

Student Members Meeting/Annual General Meeting Minutes; 16th May 2024 13:00 – 16:00

		PAPER
Attendance P = Present, A = Absent		
Members and Presenters		
Kathleen Hughes - KH	Student Chair	P
Muneeb Iqbal – MI	President (Chair)	P
Arya Shaji – ASh	Vice President: Arts, Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences	P
Neelima Muraleedharan Menon - NMM	Vice President: Business & Law	P
Nithin-Raj Govindan-Krishnan - NR	Vice President: Health Education, Medicine, & Social Care	P
Adora Siqueira - AS	Vice President: Science and Engineering	P
Sharmeen Jawad – SJ	Vice President: Healthcare Practice	P
Kanchana Jhonson – KJ	B&L Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A
Evangel Onwuaso – EO	HEMS Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A
Greeshma Sindhu Lalkumar - GSL	HEMS Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A
Babatunde Bello - BB	S&E Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A
Zayeem Sahib Mitayeegiri – ZSM	S&E Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	P
Shell Meads - SM	AHESS Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A
VACANT	AHESS Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	
Henry Giles – HG	HEMS Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A
Osama Saeed – OS	HEMS Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A
Abhyuday Mahadeva - AM	B&L Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A
John Valerkou – JV	Chief Executive Officer – ARU Students’ Union	P
Observers		
Demi Smith - DS	Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator	P
Emma Howes - EH	Engagement Manager	P
Welcome to the Student Summit KH welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced herself as the Business & Law PGR Rep and Chair of the Student Summit. KH explained that SJ was delayed in joining the meeting, but she will be arriving soon. The Executive Officers introduced themselves. KH explained the online voting for Student Summit, as well as expectations of conduct for attendees and comments on the voting website.		
Minutes of the last SMM/AGM KH counted through each page of the minutes and asked for any comments or questions. None were submitted.		SMM/24/02
Trustee Report and Accounts		SMM/24/03

<p>KH introduced JV to present this paper. JV explained that the paper focused on the strategic development of the SU and briefly explained the four strategic aims of the SU. JV confirmed that the year ending July 2023 was a successful one for the SU with over 500 course reps, over 150 societies, and 1442 individual students using the SU advice service. Financially the Students' Union produced a surplus which went into SU reserves. Savings were made in staff salaries and projects; an increase in income from media sales also contributed to the surplus. No questions received.</p> <p>Affiliations JV introduced this paper and read through the list of affiliations. No questions received. SJ arrived at this point.</p>	SMM/24/04
<p>Executive Committee* * Starred items are for information only. Members wishing to discuss a starred item should request that items are unstarred at the beginning of the meeting.</p>	SMM/24/05
<p>Officer Updates MI gave an overview of the work he has done this year, as detailed in his officer update paper.</p> <p>NR gave an overview of the work he has done this year, as detailed in his officer update paper. NR confirmed that the auto-enrolment of student voters will be going ahead as planned from September 2024.</p> <p>SJ gave an overview of the work she has done this year, as detailed in her officer update paper.</p> <p>ASh gave an overview of the work she has done this year, as detailed in her officer update paper. She confirmed that changes to UNSILENCED that she wants to ensure are implemented include the addition of additional forms of discrimination that students can report via the UNSILENCED platform. ASh added that she has also been working alongside the university on GP registration for students and worked with the Women's Society for a breast cancer awareness campaign.</p> <p>NMM gave an overview of the work she has done this year, as detailed in her officer update paper. NMM added that she has also been working on equal opportunities initiatives for the Peterborough campus. NMM agreed with MI's previous point, adding that officers sit on over a dozen committees. And that students do not always see the extent of the work that officers do. NMM added that she feels she has achieved things to be proud of in her time as an officer. An online attendee asked how NMM helps international students who are struggling financially. NMM confirmed that there are some hardship funds available for international students. AS added that this fund is called the Emergency Fund and that the officers have worked on a number of lobbying opportunities with the university.</p> <p>AS gave an overview of the work she has done this year, as detailed in her officer update paper. An online attendee asked for a progress update on the international fees instalments campaign. AS confirmed that the university is working on this and that if it is going to be implemented then it will not be this academic year. An online attendee asked if there was data available of the number of students who have used these funds. MI confirmed that these funds are run by the Library so we are unable to access the data. An online attendee asked what work has been done to promote the funds. AS confirmed that ARU communications oversee promoting the support services available. NR and NMM added that promotion of the support services has taken place in several places and events run by the SU.</p>	<p>SMM/24/06</p> <p>SMM/24/07</p> <p>SMM/24/08</p> <p>SMM/24/12</p> <p>SMM/24/14</p> <p>SMM/24/15</p>

<p>An online attendee asked about the provision of food in the SU space and how AS's involvement has changed what was already provided.</p> <p>AS confirmed that her involvement resulted in a review of the food items provided, ensuring that the items stocked were things that students preferred.</p> <p>A short break was called in the meeting following the Officer Updates.</p>	
<p>Executive Committee Updates</p> <p>KH welcomed people back from the short break and introduced the Exec Committee Updates section.</p> <p>ZSM introduced himself as the FSE Chelmsford faculty rep.</p> <p>ZSM confirmed that his campaigns have mostly been around FSE faculty structure and around money and finances for students.</p> <p>ZSM also talked through his STEM policy which was introduced to FSE, including plans for an online STEM hub and certification for STEM course based societies. An FSE app is also under consideration by the faculty based on ideas from ZSM. Other initiatives such as a cross-campus FSE collaboration initiative were suggested by ZSM.</p> <p>ZSM spoke about his experiences running the STEM society in Chelmsford and working with other FSE course-based societies; ZSM confirmed that he is working with the societies' coordinator on the Chelmsford campus about an initiative to increase specialist training for the committees of course based societies. ZSM encouraged any committee members of course based societies to reach out to him if they would like to be involved with this.</p> <p>ZSM also added that any active course reps in FSE currently should consider running as a course rep again in the future.</p>	
<p>Policy Submissions</p> <p>KH introduced the policies section and confirmed that voting on policies is open and will remain open until 13:30 on Sunday May 19th.</p> <p><u>Ethical Financing & Investments</u></p> <p>SJ read the content of the policy document.</p> <p>Several online attendees supported the policy in the Teams chat.</p> <p>MI encouraged the attendees to share the voting link and information about the policy with other students. SJ agreed and said that the student voice is the most important aspect of this, as students would be part of the ethical financing committee that would form because of this policy.</p> <p>An online attendee asked whether the mention of Coca-Cola extended to not supplying Coca-Cola products in ARU outlets.</p> <p>SJ confirmed that the policy itself only affected the SU but could eventually be used to lobby the university through the formation of the ethical financing committee.</p> <p>An online attendee asked whether students would have a say in which products should be boycotted.</p> <p>SJ confirmed that the student voice aspect of these policies would depend on the formation of the student committee and the Trustee Board's approval.</p> <p>An online attendee asked how the selection process for the committee would work.</p> <p>SJ noted that the selection process for committee members would be decided after the policy was passed and approved by the Trustee Board.</p> <p><u>Palestine-Israel</u></p> <p>SJ read the content of the policy document.</p> <p>An online attendee asked what the university's stance on the policy was, and whether any senior leaders within the university had made statements.</p> <p>MI confirmed that the VC refused to release a similar statement on the Palestine-Israel conflict as he had done for the Ukraine-Russia conflict.</p>	<p>SMM/24/09</p> <p>SMM/24/10</p>

SJ encouraged students to get in touch with ARU leadership themselves if they would like to. An appropriate contact for this will be posted in the online comments.

An online attendee asked what the current official stance on the crisis was from the SU.

MI noted that the policy will mandate a position on the conflict from the SU. SJ added that there have been some differences of opinion within the SU due to regulations that make it difficult for the SU to express certain beliefs, but that the policy should help to clear this up.

An online attendee asked if healthcare students could hold meetings for Palestine, similar to those held by the British Islamic Medical Association.

SJ said that the SU does not hold any specific wellbeing meetings currently, but students can access help from places like UNSILENCED, ARU Chaplaincy, and student support.

An online attendee noted that students have been threatened with disciplinary action for speaking about the current crisis.

SJ is aware of this and is working on this with the university, but mentioned that, like the policy, a student mandate would help these conversations to hold more weight.

AS asked whether this policy could be used for any future crises that would arise.

SJ confirmed that this policy is only aimed at the current humanitarian crisis in Gaza, but that students are welcome to submit similar policies in the future.

An online attendee asked who they could contact to provide a better understanding on ARU's stance.

SJ will find a suitable contact and share that on the online comments on the policy.

The Spirit of Accountability

ZSM read the content of the policy document.

An online attendee noted that she has been a class rep for several years and found that there is a large divide between the support offered to reps in Chelmsford compared to those in Cambridge, and asked how this divide would be bridged going forward.

ZSM confirmed that the accountability system introduced by his policy would eventually expand into impacting course reps as it would ensure that faculty reps are better at communicating with the course reps in their faculty, and would encourage and inform course reps about the different ways they can submit and relay feedback, as well as providing them with mentoring and knowledge.

NMM asked why the policy focused on officers specifically, when the accountability aspects of the policy were meant to focus on the wider Executive Committee. NMM also pointed out that Exec Committee meetings were mostly attended by officers, and asked how ZSM would ensure that those absent FRs would be held accountable.

ZSM confirmed that the policy applies to all members of the Executive Committee and that the policy document reflects this. ZSM also mentioned that Faculty Reps are not publicised as much as the officers, so students do not reach out to them or even know their roles exist.

An online attendee asked how course reps can hold their Faculty Reps to account. This was determined to have been answered in the previous question.

ASh pointed out that officer campaigns and initiatives are approved internally by SU Senior Management before they are launched and asked for clarification on ZSM's assertion that campaigns have not been sensible.

ZSM explained that student feedback he had received indicated that students are questioning the impact of Executive Committee campaigns at the start of his term as Faculty Rep, for example, campaigns on hard-to-solve issues that may need over a single academic year to campaign on.

Officer Policy

AS read the content of the policy document.

SJ asked whether AS/ASh could clarify which roles specifically they would want to replace the faculty VP roles.

AS confirmed that the role names would be confirmed through the review to ensure that students had a chance to have their say on what they should be.

SMM/24/11

SMM/24/13

<p>ZSM asked AS/ASh to expand on their point about FRs being the same as VPs. AS confirmed that her comment on this was around the duplication of work. ZSM made a comment that FRs were not trained as extensively as the VPs and so had less influence than the officers. AS clarified that the VPs roles were more diverse than the FRs, and that the fact the roles are faculty-based means that VPs and FRs often duplicate work in terms of providing feedback to the faculty, whereas different VP roles would allow for more flexibility. NMM added that some students assume that the faculty VP roles are only for academic issues, and that a review of the roles would allow for the SU to show that they care about all aspects of student life, as well as only academics. An online attendee asked whether some kind of support head would be something that the SU could do. AS confirmed that a full-time Wellbeing Officer was one of the ideas for a new role. An online attendee noted that there seems to be a core issue of students being unaware of what services and support is available to them, leading them to come to their VP in the first instance. ASh agreed with this statement. ZSM asked whether having a VP for Education would increase bureaucracy and would reduce the quality of feedback from students. AS said that the quality of feedback from students would likely improve due to the VP being focused solely on education. MI noted that ZSM’s policy would also benefit from this as accountability would be easier with specific job descriptions for VPs. An online attendee noted that the VP of HEMS had a lot of work last year and asked if there was scope for another one. SJ clarified that the HeMS faculty already had two VPs, with the part-time HCP VP; the review suggested by this role could result in better representation and a better split of the work with the university. MI also noted that as there were no campus specific roles that meant that there could be a case where all officers were based in Cambridge or Chelmsford. ZSM asked whether marketing for the services already on offer would be better than new roles. AS confirmed that the VP roles are not a form of marketing, and that marketing could not replace them. ZSM clarified that he believes officers should focus on marketing ARU services to students. AS asked ZSM if he could suggest how they should do this. ZSM made a suggestion about improvements to SU marketing which was noted.</p>	
<p>Any Other Business An online attendee asked what was being done about placement funding for HeMS students. SJ elaborated on her ongoing campaign, which would involve a bursary available for placement students that could be awarded to students on a case-by-case basis. This is still under discussion with the Practice teams within HeMS.</p>	

ACTIONS

Action	Owner	Date
Provide a contact email for students to ask ARU SMT about their stance on the Palestine-Israel humanitarian crisis.	SJ	31/05