

Student Members Meeting Minutes; 28th November 2024 13:30 – 15:30

			PAPER
<p>Attendance P = Present, A = Absent</p>			
<p>Members and Presenters</p>			
Priyanshu Srivastiva - PS	Student Chair	P	
Ramees Nazar - RN	President	P	
Rohan Rajesh - RR	Vice President: Arts, Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences	P	
Sreya Dileepan - SD	Vice President: Business & Law	P	
Jeena Thomas - JT	Vice President: Health Education, Medicine, & Social Care	P	
Gawdham Melath - GM	Vice President: Science and Engineering	P	
Farwa Rida - FR	Vice President: Healthcare Practice	A	
Amelia Harris – AH	Vice President: Writtle	A	
Farangiz Salieva - FS	B&L Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A	
Tegan Fulker - TF	HEMS Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A	
Chinedu Eze - CE	HEMS Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A	
Athul Anoop - AA	S&E Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A	
Sophie Pettit - SP	S&E Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A	
Sophia Keaveney - SK	AHESS Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A	
VACANT	AHESS Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	X	
Sam Fouracre - SF	HEMS Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	P	
Liam Pinney - LP	HEMS Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A	
Shriya Chhabra - SC	B&L Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A	
John Valerkou – JV	Chief Executive Officer – ARU Students’ Union	P	
James Coe – JC	Senior Partner – Counterculture	P	
Louise Green – LG	Assistant Director, Financial Services - ARU	P	
Rachel Geeson - RG	Assistant Director, Customer Services - ARU	P	
<p>Observers</p>			
Demi Smith - DS	Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator	P	
Katie Martin – KM	Communications Manager	P	
Tony Bickley – TB	Director of Commercial and Communications	P	
<p>Welcome to the Student Summit PS welcomed those in attendance to the Student Summit and invited the officers and attendees to introduce themselves.</p>			
<p>Minutes of the last SMM/AGM The minutes were looked through and checked over for accuracy. No questions or corrections were raised.</p>			
<p>Statement re: May 2024 policy JV introduced himself to the SMM.</p>			

<p>JV explained that the two policies that went through in the Student Summit held in May 2024 – Israel/Palestine Policy and Ethical Financing Policy – were approved by the Summit voting and were then passed onto the SU Board of Trustees. JV gave an overview of the content of both policies.</p> <p>JV explained that the Palestine/Israel policy was declared <i>ultra vires</i> by the Board of Trustees; this means that the policy is outside of the scope of the Students’ Union, but that several aspects of the policy would be implemented with a focus on care, compassion, and support for students. JV explained that the Ethical Financing policy focused on the purchasing habits of the SU. The Board of Trustees noted that the number of votes was low, although it did meet quoracy. The Board of Trustees recommended that a voluntary Ethical Purchasing Group should be formed, which the SU will be introducing in due course.</p>	
<p>Executive Committee Minutes of Executive Committee Trimester 1 2024/25* * No requests to read this item were received. Taken as read.</p>	SMM/24/18
<p>Officer Updates</p> <p>RN spoke about The Food Pantry campaign: RN explained that this campaign would result in a free food pantry for students on campus who are struggling financially.</p> <p>GM spoke about the International Fee Structure Campaign. This campaign aims to change the fee payment structure for international students from 60%/40% to 60%/20%/20%. A petition to support this campaign is available on the Students’ Union website.</p> <p>GM handed over to RR to speak about the One Voice campaign. This campaign aims to improve the student experience within the university through a number of sub-campaigns including a lobbying campaign that aims to improve communication efficiency between students and staff, and a campaign to improve the existing attendance monitoring model.</p> <p>JT spoke about the Library Opening Hours campaign. This campaign would lobby the university to increase the opening hours of the library during the dissertation submission period.</p> <p>SD spoke about her campaign to embed referencing skills sessions into timetabled sessions; currently these sessions are voluntary and delivered by Study Skills+.</p> <p>RR spoke about the Housing Campaign, which aims to increase awareness of tenancy rights for students. He also mentioned a collaborative campaign, Rights Beyond Borders, which focuses on improving employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for international students. This campaign is in collaboration with Kent Union.</p> <p>RR is also working on a campaign based on AHSS SSLC feedback which aims to provide improvements to the Ruskin building. RR claimed that he has achieved 80% completion on this campaign so far.</p> <p>RR encouraged students to contact the officers whenever they would like to if they have feedback or want to get involved with their campaigns.</p>	<p>SMM/24/19</p> <p>SMM/24/20</p> <p>SMM/24/21</p> <p>SMM/24/22</p> <p>SMM/24/23</p> <p>SMM/24/24</p>
<p>Students’ Union Development</p> <p>JC explained that Counterculture has been working with the SU over the past 6-8 weeks, looking at two things; the future of the strategy of the SU, and the future of the democracy of the SU. JC took the attendees through the current democratic structure of the Students’ Union, summarising that the officers are elected as representatives, that students are represented on their academic programmes, and that they are able to advocate for themselves at meetings such as AGMs/SMMs.</p> <p>JC acknowledged that students in 2024 are busier than ever with co- and extra-curricular activities, work, and their courses, and that the student population of ARU is more diverse than ever before. The identities of students in ARU vary based on the students, including their interests, their backgrounds, their campus, and their course; JC acknowledged the difficulty in one SU representing such a diverse group.</p>	SMM/24/27

<p>JC presented multiple models of democratic representation used in other students' unions. These are presented in full in the paper related to this agenda point but in summary these models were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portfolio based officers with an overarching President, part-time identity officers, and multiple Student Members Meetings. - Portfolio based officers where students submit ideas which are evaluated and scrutinised by reps. <p>JT asked whether a model for multiple officer teams per campus would be something they would consider.</p> <p>JC clarified that this balance is tough to strike, and that a model that allows for part-time campus officers surrounding a balanced full-time officer team would be beneficial.</p> <p>JT further explained that the current officer team is unique compared to others that she has encountered at conferences.</p> <p>SD asked whether portfolio-based officers, e.g. an Activities officer, would result in a difference in workload for the officers.</p> <p>JC explained that this model would allow officers to work across a whole campus on an existing issue, rather than one faculty, and that it would embed officer work within the SU and allow for the improvement of the role of faculty reps also.</p> <p>JC will be bringing proposals for the SU's development to the SU's Board of Trustees within the next 2 weeks following the SMM and encouraged officers to contact him regarding any feedback they had about his proposals.</p>	
<p>Student Discussion Topics</p> <p>SF raised a discussion topic around the appeals process for students who have failed a section of their studies, and asked who she would need to speak to regarding clearer advice on the appeals process.</p> <p>JT answered that students should contact the SU Advice team in the case of an appeal and the link to booking an appointment was shared by SD. JV and RR emphasised that the SU advice team is free, confidential, and available to all students.</p>	
<p>Executive Committee Updates</p> <p>SF gave an update about the work that she has done so far;</p> <p>SF and Tom Heald are introducing a question and suggestion box at YST for nursing students. SF is focusing on issues primarily facing dual-course nursing students, particularly timetabling. PDT handovers are another focus that SF is working on, which will be implemented from September 2025; these will allow tutors to handover relevant information about tutees when changing from one PDT to another. In particular this should help to alleviate the issues around the use of preferred names and pronouns.</p> <p>Accessibility on campus is another piece of work that SF is working on, mainly around broken or otherwise non-functional T-loops for those who use hearing aids, and lighting. Mental health is a further focus, as well as EDI issues including the use of preferred names and pronouns in the HeMS faculty.</p>	<p>SMM 24/25</p> <p>SMM 24/26</p>
<p>Update from Student Services</p> <p>RG and LG introduced the Efficiency Programme to the SMM. They explained that the Efficiency Programme aims to simplify and streamline processes within ARU.</p> <p>RG explained that a redesign of ARU's professional services is a planned aspect of the Efficiency Programme, and that they are looking for student input into how these services can be improved. LG explained that they are looking for feedback into any of the non-academic professional services and shared a QR code with attendees that linked to a short survey.</p> <p>LG explained that all student comments would be</p> <p>SD asked a question around the payment of international student fees and the use of a third-party apps to pay their fees, which can result in delays and lack of access to student services for</p>	<p>SMM/24/28</p>

students. SD asked whether, once fee payment is initiated but not completed, students could access Canvas, or whether LG took notes and would take the question away to that she can find out more information.	
Any Other Business None raised.	



Food Pantry

The goal of this project is to establish a food pantry at our university to provide free food and basic items to students in need. This initiative aims to address food insecurity, reduce financial stress, and create a healthier and more welcoming campus environment. So far, we have completed research on similar food pantries at other universities and developed a detailed project plan. I spoke with the Director of Student and Library Services about involving university staff in donating food and essentials to support our campus community—she is fully on board. I also presented this idea at the USU meeting, and they agreed to support it as well. We expect to launch the food pantry at the start of July. For the next trimester, our focus will be on involving the wider campus and local community in donating and volunteering to help run the pantry successfully.

University and Students' Union Services Introduction Videos

This project aims to improve student awareness and accessibility to university support services by creating a series of short, informative videos. These videos highlight key details like location, hours of operation, contact information, and the specific services offered. So far, we have filmed 15 services, established good relationships with university staff, started editing, and posted five videos on the officers' Instagram page. Feedback from students has been positive, with many finding the videos simple and helpful. Moving forward, we plan to complete filming, share the videos on more platforms (e.g., the university website and Instagram), and create a central page for easy access. Additionally, we will host Q&A sessions with service representatives, collaborate with academic departments to promote the videos, gather more student feedback, and showcase the videos during key student events.

Extra-Curricular Participation (Societies, Sports Clubs, and Elections)

This initiative focuses on encouraging students to join societies, participate in sports clubs, and take part in elections to foster community engagement and skill development outside academics. So far, I have been working closely with the Engagement Team to prepare for the October elections, collaborated with Team ARU to promote both sports clubs and campus sports, and built strong connections with society members, especially during Fresher's Fair. Moving into the next trimester, I will continue collaborating with all relevant teams and stakeholders to further promote participation in these activities.



Campaigns Completed

- Campaigned for promoting Turnitin policy update to promote good academic writing practice and making sure that tutors don't place a threshold on the similarity score.
- NHS placement bursary campaign – To spread awareness about placement bursary for domestic placement students.

Projects Completed

- Collaborated with VP of FBL, Sreya Menon Dileepan and conducted Movie Week 2024 in Chelmsford which screened 18 movies from 8 different languages and genres across campus with an engagement of 100+ students in total.

Ongoing Campaigns

- To extend library opening hours to 24/7 during dissertation period.
- Collaborating with Holly Amber Fradgley (student) for Night safety campaign which would include a volunteering group, Poster Competition and collaboration with charity.
- Collaborating with Tegan Fulker (student/faculty rep) for conducting a Skills session for students in HeMS.
- Collaborating with faculty to improve career opportunities for AHSC students.



Ongoing Projects

- To collaborate with AHES faculty and the officer team for conducting a Mini Film Festival within campus.

Ongoing Campaigns

Housing Campaign

Aim: Ensure ARU students are informed and empowered regarding housing issues.

Achievements:

- Updated renter's guide on the SU website.
- Promoted awareness video in Instagram.
- Participated in 'No Guarantors' Lobbying week conducted by NUS. Met with MPs to discuss on the same.

Next Steps:

- Discussions for affiliation with ACORN.
- Educate students on tenant rights by organising an information session.

Rights Beyond Borders

Aim: Collaborating with Kent SU to increase part-time weekly hours and entrepreneurship opportunity (Rights Beyond Borders) to an extend for student visa holders.

Facility Standards

Aim: Enhance facility standards, particularly for the Ruskin Building, based on student feedback.

Achievements: Successfully addressed specific feedback from SSLC Meetings and has raised the standards approx 70% to 80%.

Next Steps: Gather additional feedback from students, and the newly elected course reps and faculty reps for further improvements.



Ongoing Campaigns

Student Aid Campaign (Cambridge and Chelmsford):

The student aid campaign continues in both Cambridge and Chelmsford campuses, offering don't dump donate support to students in need. The program is nearly complete, with final steps being taken to ensure all eligible students receive the necessary products.

International Elective Placement:

Efforts to secure international elective placement opportunities for students are progressing. A proposal letter has been sent to international partner universities, aiming to create more global learning opportunities for students in their respective fields.

YST Young Street Furniture Project:

The YST Young Street Furniture Project is ongoing, focusing on the design and installation of innovative street furniture for campus and public spaces. This project aims to enhance the aesthetics and functionality of student areas.

IPL (Interprofessional Learning):

Interprofessional Learning (IPL) is an ongoing initiative designed to encourage collaborative learning among students from different disciplines. This project aims to improve communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills across various fields, preparing students for real-world, interdisciplinary collaboration.

Timetable and Ramadan Timing Adjustments:

Discussions are in progress regarding the adjustment of class timetables and exam schedules to accommodate the needs of students during Ramadan. The adjustments will ensure that students who are fasting can balance their academic responsibilities with their religious practices.

Campaigns Completed

Launch of Placement Society:

Initiated the launch of the Placement Society to streamline placement activities and enhance communication between students and clinical team .

Drop-In Placement Sessions:

This service was set up to provide a platform where students can voice their concerns, share feedback, and raise any issues they encounter during the placement process.

Student Aid Program:

The student aid program is nearing completion, with final preparations being made to ensure all eligible students receive the necessary support.

Proposal Letter to International University:

Sent a formal proposal letter to an international university regarding opportunities for international elective placements for students.

Common Room and Prayer Space Issues:

Discussed the need for dedicated common room and prayer space facilities to accommodate students' personal and religious needs on campus.



Completed but Ongoing Campaigns

Expanding Career Fair Opportunities

We successfully raised the need for broader career fair representation within the Faculty of Science and Engineering by working closely with employability teams to attract more companies across various fields. This campaign's initial goals have been met, but we continue to coordinate with faculty to ensure ongoing support for students' professional growth and increased job market exposure.

Advocating for Practical-Based Learning

Based on feedback from the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) last year, we prioritised the push for more practical, hands-on learning experiences within our courses. This effort has reached a promising phase, as we're now actively working with faculty to integrate practical elements into our curriculum, aligning educational outcomes with industry needs.

Ongoing Campaigns

International Fees Fairness Campaign

Building on the essential work begun by former officer Adora, we're pressing forward with a campaign for international fee fairness, with an open petition currently gathering support. This initiative seeks to establish a more equitable tuition structure for international students, and our engagement with university administration is progressing well.

"Our Bar, Our Space" – Cambridge Campus Initiative

Recognising the need for dedicated social spaces, particularly on the Cambridge campus, we launched the "Our Bar, Our Space" campaign. This effort aims to secure a welcoming communal area where students can relax and connect. I am actively advocating for this across various university committees, pushing for the creation of this essential student space and working on more campaigns.

Improving Communication Response Times

Students have raised concerns about the university's five-working-day response policy for communications. To address this, I am leading a campaign to shorten response times, which will promote student wellbeing and ensure faster, more effective support.

"Rights Beyond Borders" – Freelance Freedom Campaign

In collaboration with Rohan, VP of AHES, and Kent Union, we are advancing the "Rights Beyond Borders" campaign. This initiative is focused on increasing freelance opportunities for international students, providing them with more flexible options to gain experience and earn income during their studies.

In addition to these campaigns, I'm also working closely with societies and events team and initiatives that foster student engagement, build community, and enhance the university experience across all campuses.



Campaigns Completed

Employability drop-ins in SU space in both the campuses to promote future's week and use of handshake app.

Adding referencing classes in timetable faculty mentioned classes went in this trimester, will be coming in timetable from next trimester as mentioned by the faculty.

Projects Completed

Collaborated with VP of Hems, Jeena Thomas and conducted Movie Week 2024 in Chelmsford which screened 18 movies from 8 different languages and genres across campus with an engagement of 100+ students in total.

Ongoing Campaigns

Collaborating with the big green internet project team to have tree planting days for students from ARU.

Collaborating with external team for skill developments workshops in campus.

Personal Tutors in PGT students.



Student Summit Update - Faculty Rep

Name

Liam Pinney

Position

HeMS Faculty Rep Cambridge

What do you study?

MSc Physiotherapy

What have you done in your role so far?

So far I have been reflecting upon my experiences as a student in placement, gathering information from my peers on how they feel the first year may have been improved in lectures and support outside of class. I have been working on a buddy system, and thinking of the best approach for this system that supports new students.

What are you planning on doing with your role this academic year?

I hope to be able to bring the buddy system to light as a main priority. And start to integrate an MDT day with all courses coming together, to have an inclusive experience, which allows collaboration and learning opportunities for each course.



Student Summit Update - Faculty Rep

Name

Samantha Fouracre

Position

HeMS Faculty Rep Cambridge

What do you study?

Child and Mental health Nursing

What have you done in your role so far?

Discussed having access to pronoun badges @Young street
Discussed with Tom having a comment/suggestions box at Young Street
Have arranged a meeting to discuss the Dual course requirements to ensure clarity for students and tutors. Within this clarification of proficiencies needed in dual course that need completing and around students understanding what they can / cannot do on wards.
Asked for PDT handovers to be completed appropriately when a change of PDT is expected
Raised issues with an email sent out regards attendance - a trial that has caused panic among some students.
Raised issues around hearing aid users _ T - loops etc
Raised room appropriateness and access to yearly timetable for students - for clarity and planning

What are you planning on doing with your role this academic year?

To see through all the ideas and issues raised above so all have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and find solutions that suit all involved.

Promote the voice of the student in being able to voice concerns and deliver compliments

Promote student well being and discover how students want to communicate with reps

Make the appeals process easy to understand and clear to follow.

Have all information and links for every resource at the university in one clear easily accessible document.

Some ideas for
democracy reform:
Counterculture at
Summit

Your Officer Team

Gawdham Krishna Melath
VICE-PRESIDENT S&E



A portrait of a man with short dark hair, wearing a light blue polo shirt and a yellow lanyard. The background features abstract yellow and teal geometric shapes.



Jeena Thomas
VICE-PRESIDENT HeMS



A portrait of a woman with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a light blue polo shirt and a yellow lanyard. The background features abstract yellow and teal geometric shapes.



Ramees Nazar
PRESIDENT



A portrait of a man with short dark hair, wearing a light blue polo shirt and a yellow lanyard. The background features abstract yellow and teal geometric shapes.



Rohan Rajesh
VICE-PRESIDENT AHES



A portrait of a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a light blue polo shirt and a yellow lanyard. The background features abstract yellow and teal geometric shapes.



Sreya Menon Dileepan
VICE-PRESIDENT B&L



A portrait of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a light blue polo shirt and a yellow lanyard. The background features abstract yellow and teal geometric shapes.



Abu Shaikh
VICE-PRESIDENT LONDON



A portrait of a man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a light blue polo shirt and a yellow lanyard. The background features abstract yellow and teal geometric shapes.



Amelia Harris
VICE-PRESIDENT WRITTLE



A portrait of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a light blue polo shirt. The background features abstract yellow and teal geometric shapes.



Farwa Rida
VICE-PRESIDENT HCP



A portrait of a woman wearing a black hijab and glasses, wearing a light blue polo shirt and a yellow lanyard. The background features abstract yellow and teal geometric shapes.



Patricia Daniels
VICE-PRESIDENT LONDON



A portrait of a woman with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a light blue polo shirt and a yellow lanyard. The background features abstract yellow and teal geometric shapes.



Be an Officer

The only elected paid members of the Executive Committee. They represent an entire faculty and all students at ARU.

Be a Faculty Rep

Elected to represent all the students in one faculty on one campus.

Be a Course Rep

Elected to represent their year or tutor group of their course.

Be a PGR Rep

Elected to represent Post Graduate research students in their faculty.

What is The Student Summit?

As your Students' Union, we are committed to making sure everything we do is as representative and as student-led as possible. The Student Summit is your space to let us know about your experiences and what big issues you feel need fixing! You will also get the chance to find out what your elected representatives have been up to since being elected into post and asking them questions to make sure we are representing your best interests.

The next Student Summit will be on **November 28th at 1:30pm on MS Teams**.

How do I get involved?

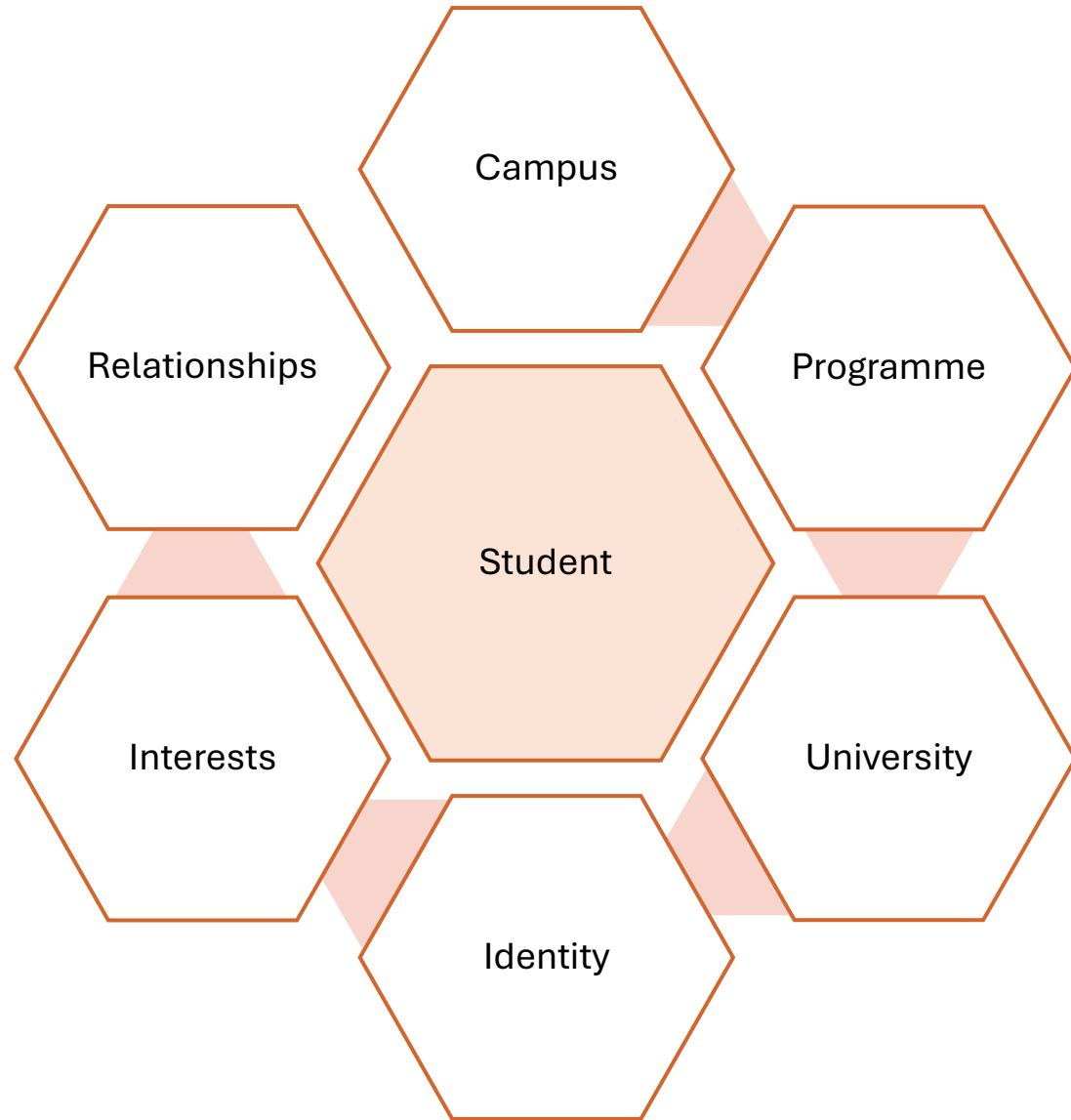
You can come along and have your voice heard. You can vote on policy and our annual reports. You can tell us about your experiences at ARU. And most importantly, you can vote on the policies that are presented to Student Summit, guiding the SU to do exactly what students want!



Vote for the officers
to represent you

Represented on
your programmes

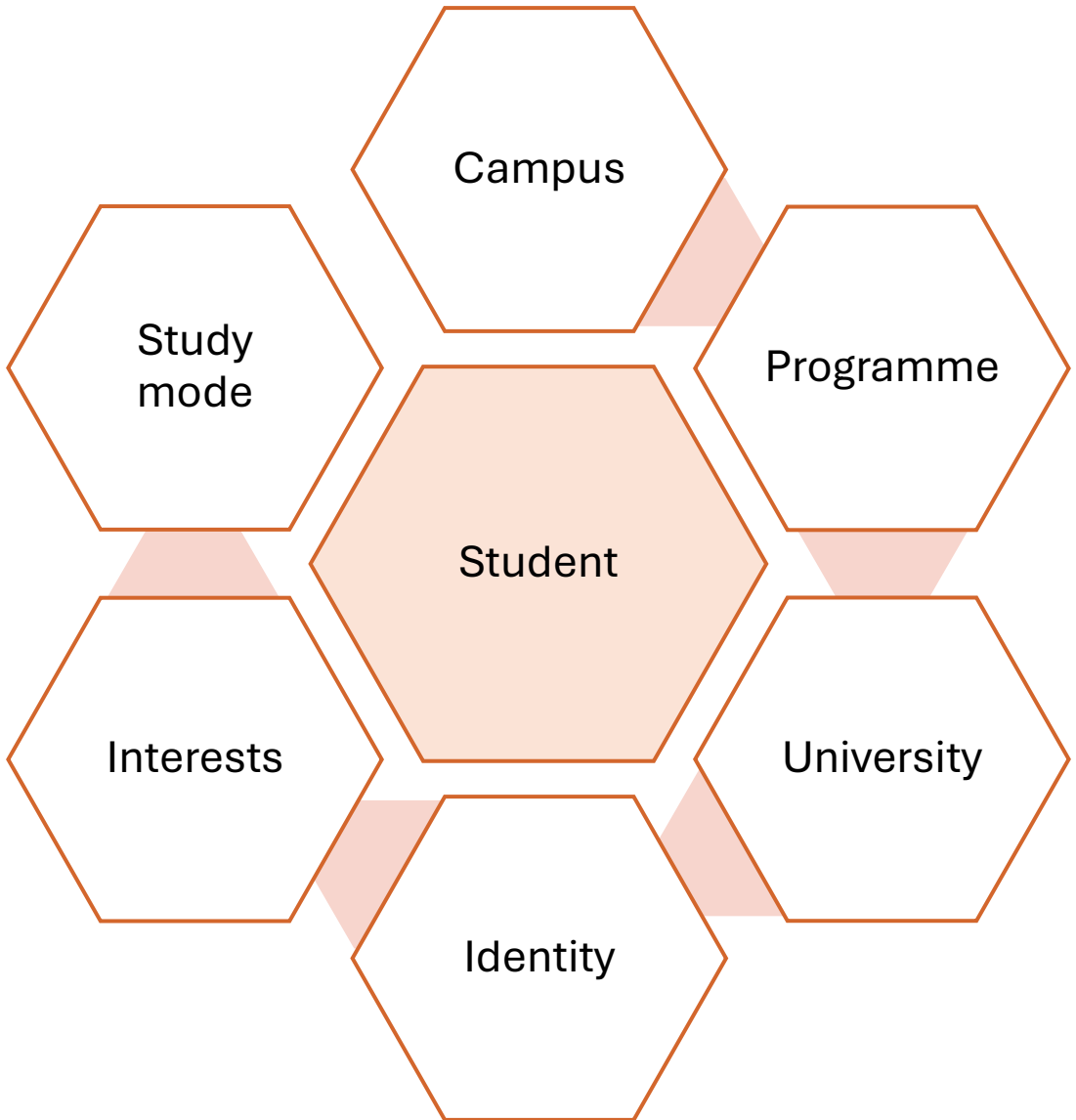
Advocate at
student summit/all
member's meeting



What can the Union afford to do

What is equitable and encourage equality

What can the Union legally do



What does the University expect the Union to do

What works across all campuses

What do students expect the Union to do

**What models work elsewhere and what might work here- Officer
(standard teams)**

President

Vice President
Education

Vice President
Union Affairs

Vice President
Welfare

Part-Time Officers
(identities/faculties)

Summit (s)

President

Vice President
Education

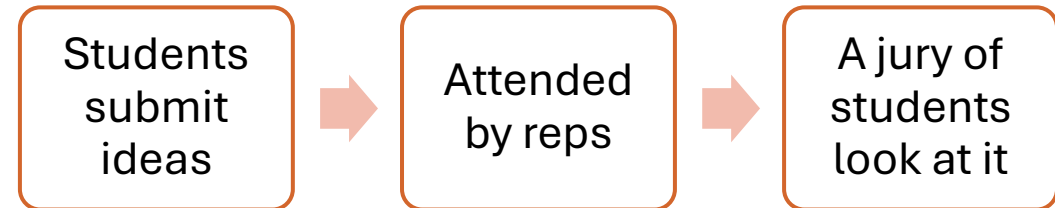
Vice President
Union Affairs

Vice President
Welfare

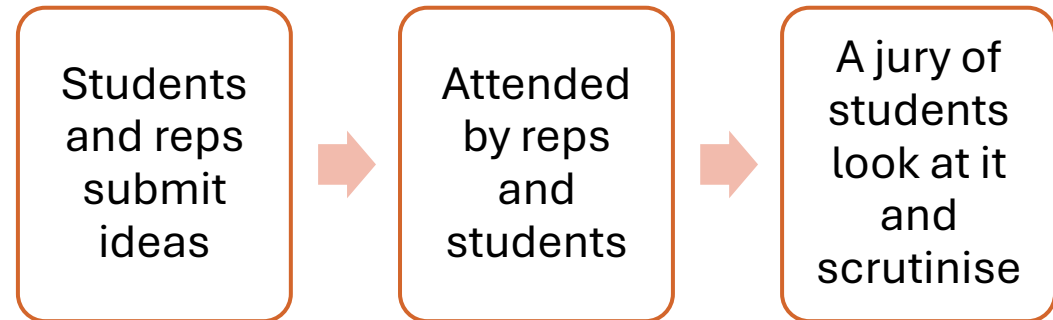
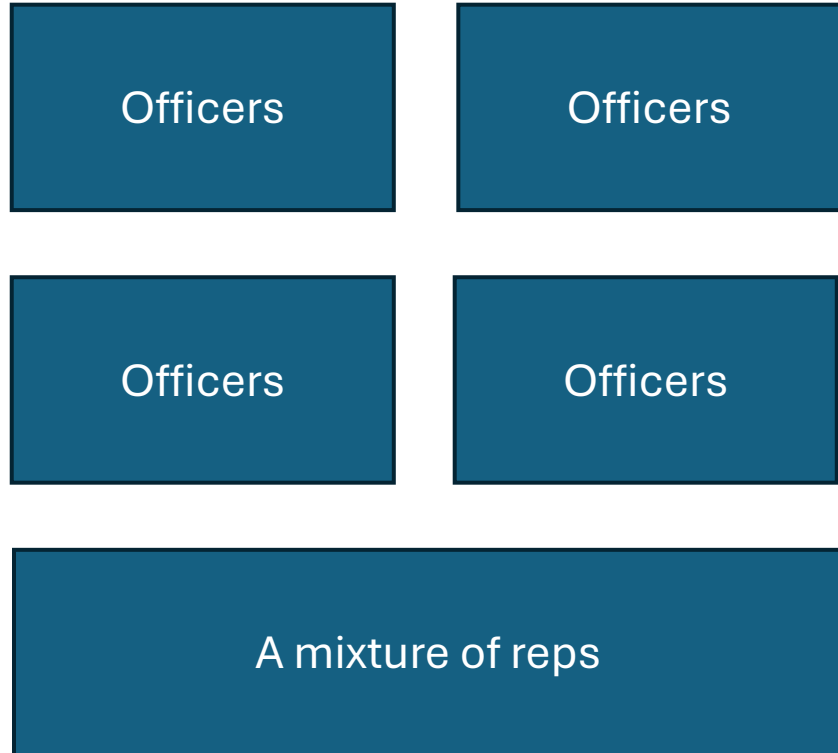
Part-Time Officers (faculties/modes of
study/campuses)

Summit (s)

What models work elsewhere and what might work here-Mix and match



What I think feedback to date looks like





Efficiency Programme

What is the Efficiency Programme?

What does this mean for students?

Professional Services Redesign.

What are Professional Services?



Improving Student Experience

Student experience is very important at ARU

Taking an opportunity to review how our student experience can be improved and we need your input

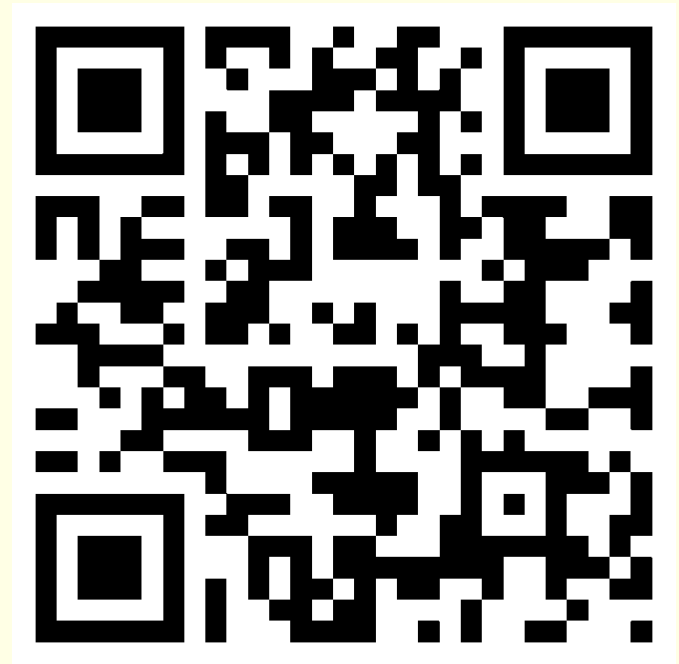


Interaction at ARU

Thinking about your Student Experience and your interaction with Professional Services (non-Academic) at ARU:

- What are the challenges experienced by Students?
- What one thing would you recommend ARU improve?

[Padlet - Student Interaction at ARU](#)





What will happen next

Feed into Efficiency Programme and especially our Professional Services Redesign workstream.

Sorry, we can't directly respond to people.

Thank you for your participation