

Student Council Minutes
25/04/16

Item No		Action
1	<p>Attendance</p> <p>1.1 Present Grace Anderson (GA) – Academic Officer (Chair) Leigh Rooney (LR) – Experience Officer Essex (Vice chair) Guy Stepney (GS) – Head of Student Engagement & Communication Jo Harbrow (JH)- Head of Student Opportunities and Services Alun Minifey (AMi)- Student Opportunities Manager Chris Pursell (CP) – Rep Co-ordinator Cambridge Emma Howes (EH) – Rep Co-ordinator Chelmsford Georgia Elderkin (GE) – Peterborough Students’ Union Co-ordinator Matthew Ensor (ME) – Chief Executive Officer Daniel Login (DL) – Democracy and Representation Manager Fiona Caslake (FC) – Digital Communications Co-ordinator Debbie Paradise (DP)- Head of Student Advice and Academic Quality Alyssa Millbrook- Administrative Assistant (Clerk)</p> <p>1.2 Apologies Sammi Whitaker (SW) – President Sarah Haider (SH) – Experience Officer Cambridgeshire Sophie May (SM) – Communications Officer</p> <p>1.3 Absent</p> <p>1.4 Declaration of Interest</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of the Annual Members Meeting held on 9 February 2016.</p> <p>2.1 Accuracy 2.2 Matters arising – None. The members voted and accepted the minutes as a true record.</p>	
3	<p>Amendment to Bye Law 4 – LR discussed the proposed amendment to Bye Law 4 that would alter the timing for the term of office for Executive Officers and Campaign Reps to allow for a longer period of time to settle into their roles and attend NUS and internal training during the summer. The floor was opened for questions and none were asked. Attendees were asked to vote on the measure on the website.</p>	
4	<p>Executive Officer Reports</p> <p>4.1 President – LR discussed SW’s report, highlighting Green Week, and directed any questions to SW.</p> <p>4.2 Academic Officer – GA discussed her report, including the development of the Peer Mentoring scheme, attending the NUS National Conference, and working on improved access to the Medical Centre. The floor was opened for questions and none were asked.</p> <p>4.3 Communications Officer – LR discussed SM’s report, highlighting the Where My Rent Went campaign and Open Mic. She directed any questions to SM.</p> <p>4.4 Experience Officer (Cambridgeshire) - LR discussed SH’s report, highlighting her efforts to secure activity and social space and the launch of</p>	

	<p>Creative Minds.</p> <p>4.5 Experience Officer (Essex) - LR discussed her report, including the implementation of the Feedback Board, the developments happening in Chelmsford, and Festival Croatia. The floor was opened for questions and none were asked.</p>	
5	<p>Minutes of the Executive Committee held Friday 5 February 2016 and Thursday 7 April 2016 – Selina Burdett wished to clarify that she set up the gardening and wildlife society on her own.</p> <p>The minutes were accepted as a true record.</p>	
6	<p>Update from the Executive Committee- GA gave an update from the Executive Committee. The floor was opened for questions and none were asked.</p>	
7	<p>Update on Policy Previously Passed by Student Council</p> <p>7.1 Trans* Participation in Sport- Stewart Watson is putting together a strategy to make sports more inclusive using data gathered from other universities with the aim of implementing it in individual sports and eventually team sports. The floor was opened for questions and none were asked.</p> <p>7.2 ATOS/MAXIMUS – GA stated that more research needs to be done as to whether they are actually recruiting on campus before anything else is taken forward.</p> <p>7.3 Closing Inactive Clubs and Societies – LR informed members that this had been completed.</p> <p>7.4 Where My Rent Went- LR informed the council that there are current efforts to have the university act as guarantor for student who need it.</p> <p>7.5 Gender-Neutral Toilets- GA has written a paper to take to the Campus Operations meeting to lobby for gender-neutral toilets on all campuses</p> <p>7.8 Living Wage – GA reported that the Employment Bureau is now paying their staff the living wage and the goal is to make sure this is rolled out throughout the university.</p>	
8	<p>Lapsed Policy</p>	
9	<p>Policy</p> <p>9.1 MORE –SB introduced this policy as a result of feedback from the Faculty Rep forum. More than one exam per day is not practical, and there is not currently regulation governing the timetabling of exams. The policy proposes to lobby the university to ideally limit exams to one per day and if it is necessary to timetable more than one exam on one day, to have a minimum of a three hour break.</p> <p>It was suggested that resit exams be taken into account as they do not appear on regular timetables.</p> <p>9.2 Socially Responsible Investments- GA discussed this policy proposed by SW to mandate the Students’ Union to lobby the university to be transparent in their financial handlings and to commit to socially responsible investment and banking policies.</p> <p>9.3 Unrestricted Elections – This policy would remove the requirement to self-define to vote for certain campaign rep positions (Disabled Rep, LGBT+ Rep, etc). KY stated that there had been no proposal to extend this policy to Faculty</p>	

	<p>Rep positions and that this seemed inconsistent. GP agreed and added that he would not feel comfortable electing a rep for a group he does not belong to and thus whose needs he does not understand.</p> <p>No further discussion was had on policy and members were reminded to vote online.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Democracy Review- GA presented the results from extensive research and focus groups conducted with the aim of rebranding the Students' Union and strengthening democratic participation.</p> <p>10.1 Executive Officers- GA elaborated on some of the survey data, including that only 25.7% of students surveyed felt they understood what all of the full-time officers do, and only 51% surveyed felt they can hold officers to account. The recommendation for the Executive Officer structure is to keep the role of President, as the research indicates that students identify with the role, and to have the other four roles as Vice President by constituency. The constituencies would not be fixed, but could change based on the university culture at the time and could include faculty, interests, level of study, etc. This would require candidates to campaign on a broader set of issues and encourage joint working among the officer team.</p> <p>The floor was opened for discussion. Some concerns raised about this structure included the ambiguity of the officer roles. This could lead to duplication in responsibilities and missing other areas altogether. There may be confusion for students about who to talk to, and the elections logistics may be difficult when campaigning for ambiguous roles. This structure also relies on the ability of all five officers to work collaboratively, which can be difficult if there are strong differing opinions.</p> <p>Arguments in favour of the model included its holistic and representative nature, allowing officers to work together as a team to accomplish common goals. Differing opinions can result in a better outcome, and a way to mitigate the broad scope of the roles would be to have larger group discussions with individual officers taking the lead on specific projects, much like the way the Executive Committee operates currently. Candidates would have the freedom to campaign on issues that they are passionate about rather than being restricted to solely academic issues or an exclusively experience-related platform, etc. VP positions would have a set job role, but also the flexibility to work on diverse projects and represent their constituencies appropriately.</p> <p>10.2 Executive Committee- GA informed the meeting that only 29.6 of those surveyed wanted to take part in implementing a decision within the decision making process. She stated that the Students' Union recommendation based on the research is to reduce the number of members on the Executive Committee, which currently stands at almost 60, to the full-time officers and two part-time officers, one for Cambridge and one for Chelmsford with Peterborough to be developed further.</p> <p>The floor was opened for discussion. There was some concern that this model would remove rep roles. It was decided that there would be options to keep these roles in some form, either by keeping the roles but not having them as part of the exec committee, or by creating volunteering projects or committees for campaigns like Environment and Community.</p> <p>10.3 Student Council- Based on survey feedback, the Students' Union recommendation is reduce the formality of the decision making process. The goal is ideally less formal policy and more discussion-based meetings. Voting can be done through the app. All-student meetings would only be held twice per year and would be less formally run with the aim of being more empowering for</p>	

	<p>students and fostering engagement and discussion. Students are able to submit ideas for consideration, as well as support ideas. There is the possibility of holding a referendum via the app open to all students when particularly controversial issues arise.</p> <p>One key idea that was raised was the addition of an independent chair for the ASMs. Currently, full-time officers chair the meetings which is problematic in terms of bias. Electing, appointing, or otherwise selecting an impartial student outside the officer team without any personal ties to proposed policies to chair the meetings would improve the transparency and accountability of the process.</p>	
11	<p>Ideas- GA detailed the actions assigned to the ideas submitted through the website. This type of written feedback along with the opportunity for students to support submitted ideas is helpful when feeding back to the university and offers transparency in what the full-time officers are working on and can serve to hold them accountable.</p>	
12	<p>Debate: Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union? –GA opened the floor for discussion on the impending EU referendum. The discussion focussed largely on the perception of the issue pertaining largely to immigration, but the reality of the EU as a body for working and trade. It was pointed out that a Brexit would cause food prices to increase, as there is currently no tax on goods imported from within the EU. It was also brought up that importation of food goods is necessary, as the available agricultural land in Britain is maxed out. There was also some concern around education; students from other EU countries were concerned about their studies being interrupted, and British students who were considering postgraduate study elsewhere in Europe were concerned about the need to obtain student visas.</p> <p>A number of points were raised, but there was a general consensus that the UK should remain in the EU and there were not any dissenting arguments.</p>	
13	<p>Any other business - None</p>	
14	<p>Date and time of the next meeting – TBC</p>	