

UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD STUDENTS' UNION

Minutes

Meeting title: Student Senate meeting 1

Location: Boardroom 1, University House

Date: 25 November 2014

Time: 2pm

Councillors present: Fiza Ikram, Marina Hristova, Joe Kelly, Rebecca Hearne, Ayesha Breithaupt, Simona Draksaite, Alex Davidson, Mohamed Hourmatalla, Tom Goldstraw, Liam Marrett, Beth Byrom, Jasmine Pokuaa, Ramal Hassan, Alex Thorp, Todd Hewitt, Adedoyin Abegunde

In attendance: Julie Byrd (Chief Executive), Rhiannon Cruse (Student Engagement Manager), Luke Newton (Clerk)

Absent: Ali Wilson

1. Rhiannon Cruse welcomed all in attendance to the first Student Senate and outlined how the meeting would run.
2. A ballot was held to elect a chair and **Alex Davidson was elected chair** for Student Senate 14/15

3. Sabbatical Officer Reports:

The Sabbatical Officers presented a verbal report on their work to date.

Alex Thorp (Vice President Science & Technology) updated on his work in the social bonds strand of the sabbatical year plan. He had been working to present a paper to the University to keep Wednesday Afternoons free.

Jasmine Pokuaa (Vice President Health & Social Care) had attended a meeting of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and updated on her work on psychology placements.

Fiza Ikram (President) was working on the employability strand of the sabbatical year plan and was working with Jasmine to develop a consent campaign for the Union.

Marina Hristova (Vice President Business & Law) had been tackling issues being faced by dyslexic students and confirmed that the library would have manila paper available to print from in Semester 2.

Todd Hewitt (Vice President Arts & Media) was working on improving student representation, teaching and learning quality and was developing a strategy to enable students to register to vote in the 2015 election.

Questions: Alex was questioned as to why Wednesday afternoons and not another day should be kept free, it was explained that Universities across the country kept Wednesday afternoons free to coordinate sport activity so it was logical to do the same.

4. Forum updates:

There were no updates from the forums

5. Policy decisions:

5a. Zero Tolerance to sexual Harassment

It was discussed that there should be a clear definition of when the proposed sexual harassment policy would apply and when the bullying and harassment policy should apply. It was discussed that this policy would form part of a wider campaign by the Students' Union aimed at a wide range of students.

The policy passed unanimously.

5b. Two year work visa for international students

The motion was introduced by Jasmine Pokuaa who outlined the benefits that international students brought to the UK. There was discussion on the logistics of how the visas would work.

The policy was passed

5c. Academic misconduct and BME students

There was discussion around the turnitin system and what help could be provided with referencing.

The policy was passed.

5d. Campus Infrastructure

There was discussion over longer opening hours for shops and services. A new catering company were taking over the catering contract which should lead to an improvement in services.

The policy was passed

5e. Cross Campus Activities

It was clarified that there should be at least two activities on each campus twice a semester.

The policy was passed

5f. Module and Programme Handbooks

There was discussion about how the proposed audit of handbooks would take place; it was clarified that this would be conducted by student reps and supported by the students' union.

The policy was passed

5g. A welcoming-hand

Senate members were informed that the Union was working with partner colleges to support these students before they arrived on campus. It was clarified that these students were counted as students from Salford for the years before they arrived on campus.

The policy was passed

5h. Gender Neutral Toilets

There was discussion about current provision of gender neutral toilets on campus and who would be allowed to use them. It was clarified that there would still be at least one set of toilets in each building. It was noted that trans* people experienced discrimination based on what their perceived gender was if this didn't match the toilet they were in.

The policy was passed

5i. Industrial action on campus

There was discussion on whether all students should be able to vote in a referendum to support industrial action. It was discussed that the College forum Chairs and Vice-Chairs should consult with their college forums and bring those views to Senate and that a referendum would take too long to organise.

The policy was passed

Senate voted to extend the meeting to discuss all the remaining motions.

5j. Reaffirmation of support for UCU

Senate discussed the impact that this would have on students and how far the Union should go in its support. It was noted during the debate that Senate would have to reconfirm its support at each meeting.

The policy was passed with over 60% of members voting yes.

5k. Sexual Orientation monitoring.

It was noted during discussion that the gay by degree scheme from Stonewall had had issues at other Universities with incorrect data being provided. It was also noted that Stonewall were not a trans* charity. There was discussion about the privacy implications of recording Sexual Orientation.

The policy was passed

5l. Social Media use by schools

It was noted in discussion that students should also have training in how to use social media.

The policy was passed

5m. Timetabling

The policy was passed

5o. Social Spaces and common rooms

The policy was passed

5n. Security on campus.

Debate was had over the effectiveness of the current security arrangements on campus. It was noted in discussion that there should be consultation with students when designing any safety messages.

The policy was passed

5p. Lockers and car parking

Add amendment: "To lobby the University to introduce designated notice boards for the Students' Union so societies and activity groups can display material without fear of them being taken down. "

Amendment passed.

The policy was passed

Appendix: Policy Passed

5a. Zero tolerance to sexual harassment

The Union notes:

1. The Hidden Marks report, published in March 2010 by the NUS Women's Campaign, revealed that 68% of women students have experienced sexual harassment while a student at their current institution.
2. Many women students reported experiencing persistent harassment in pubs and club nights of the type held by many unions both on and off university premises.
3. A number of sexual assaults and rapes in the Salford area have recently been reported in the press
4. That the NUS definition of sexual harassment is as follows:

Unwanted and/ or persistent behaviour of a sexual nature. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include: b. Unwanted sexual comments (including comments about your body or private life) c. Unwelcome sexual invitations, innuendos, and offensive gestures d. Wolf whistling, catcalling, or offensive sexual noises e. Groping, pinching or smacking of your body, such as your bottom or breasts f. Having your clothing tugged, pulled or lifted without your consent g. Someone exposing their sexual organs to you without your consent.

5. The Zero Tolerance Campaign aims to help unions create an environment where all students are able to enjoy the University, Union and any events these institutions run without experiencing, fearing or expecting sexual harassment as defined above.
6. That a number of other students unions, have already successfully implemented a Zero Tolerance policy in their union.

References:

<http://hiddenmarks.org.uk/2010/about/hidden-marks/>
<http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/news/article/endingviolence/1341/>

The Union Believes:

1. That no student at Salford should be forced to tolerate sexual harassment, and that action must be taken to ensure that all students are able to enjoy the University, Union and any events these institutions run without experiencing sexual harassment.
2. That sexual harassment should not be tolerated by the Union, and those who commit acts of sexual harassment should be stopped and disciplined for their actions.

The Union Resolves:

1. To adopt a 'Zero Tolerance to sexual harassment' policy – becoming a 'Zero Tolerance Union'
2. To raise awareness of and engage students in the Union's stance through a student-focused campaign

3. To audit and review all Union policies for both students and staff in light of this adoption
4. To lobby the University to review their own procedures in the same manner
5. To lobby the University to create a 'sexual harassment' policy that is distinct from its generic 'bullying and harassment' policy
6. To provide training on this policy to all Union staff, Student Reps, activity and sport group committee members and volunteers.

5b. 2 year work visa for international students

The union believes:

- International students pay a huge amount of money to study in the UK. They contribute both economically and culturally to their communities they move into.
- The University of Salford has students from over a hundred countries.
- The university's new priorities include internationalisation, which will see an increase in international students.
- Changes to the tier 4 visa include stringent guidelines on international students and has resulted in the complete eradication of the 2 year post study visa. "94 per cent of international students said the ability to have 2 years work experience with a Post Study Work visa after graduation was important to their UK education experience and global employability. 75 per cent would not have come to the UK without the option of Post- Study Work visa".
- The UK higher education system treats its students as cash cows.

The union resolves

- The University of Salford students' union should join the NUS campaign to lobby the government to stop treating international students as cash cows and treat them with dignity.
- Work with the NUS to lobby the government to offer international students an opportunity to gain work experience to increase their job prospects once they go back home.
- We will encourage students in the commonwealth to vote in the general elections as students have such a big influence on what governments they want to see.
- The union will oppose any victimisation towards international students.

<http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/pageassets/about/policy/Black-Students-Campaign-Live-Policy-final.pdf>

5c. Increase in academic misconduct especially within the Black minority ethnic (BME) demographic

The union notes

When comparing the overall student breakdown of academic misconduct cases there is an over-representation of Black minority ethnic (BME) students. These BME students are not just international but also home students too. This is consistent within the higher education sector and not just at the University of Salford. There has not been a clear analysis into why this is the case.

The union resolves

- The university needs to understand that there is a need for improved academic support for students that may have experienced different educational systems around the world. The union will lobby the university to develop for international students an easy transition to UK based study experiences.
- Will ask the university to change their focus on just purely detecting plagiarism but rather help students understand what is expected from them frequently throughout their time studying (e.g. during assessment periods).
- Lobby the university to create an analysis based on the data to find out the underlying reasons why students find themselves involved in academic misconduct procedures.
- The data should have an action log of how these problems can be tackled.

5d. Campus Infrastructure

The Union believes:

- The University's Peel Park campus is growing substantially due to the building of new academic buildings and accommodation blocks
- This growth will see an increase in the number of students on campus
- Campus infrastructure needs to be ready to cope with this increase i.e. more cash machines, open spaces, outside seating etc.

The Union resolves:

- To lobby the University and relevant banking partners (Santander specifically) to place additional cash machines on campus
- To liaise with the Property and Estates department at the University, ensuring students are kept informed and engaged in decision making on issues like open spaces and seating.

5e. Cross – campus Union activities

- The Union believes:
- Students who study at the Frederick Road, Adelphi and MediaCityUK campus sites feel isolated from University and Union activities
- Attempts by the Union to hold activities at these sites have had mixed responses
- Students should feel part of the Students' Union community wherever they study

- The Union resolves:
- To use the College Forums to ascertain interest in the variety of activities delivered by the Union (including sport, social events, Union meetings etc)
- To deliver at least two site-specific activities per semester

5f. Module and Programme Handbooks

The Union believes:

- Module and programme handbooks lack accuracy which means students can't keep referring to them throughout the semester for information regarding lectures/seminars and potential deadlines and exam dates.
- Students are having to ask their lecturer questions which could and should be found in the handbook.

The Union resolves:

- To ask Student Reps to undertake an audit of their handbooks, to determine accuracy and relevance
- To work closely with the Dean of Students and Colleges/ Schools to ensure that electronic versions of the handbooks are updated if changes are made and that students are made aware of this.

5g. A Welcoming Hand

USSU Notes:

1. The University of Salford has a number of degree programmes that allow entry in Level 5 or Level 6 after previously studying at an affiliated institution.
2. These degree programmes are referred to as 1+2 and 2+1 degrees.
3. There are a significant number of students from various affiliated institutions that arrive at the University of Salford each year.

USSU Believes:

1. That the Welcome and Induction process needs to take into account the fact that although these students are students at Salford that they should be regarded as "new" to the institution when they come to study here.
2. That if the University of Salford is prioritising a Students First policy it must make every effort to welcome these students so that they can become integrated to life at Salford as quickly and easily as possible.

USSU Resolves:

1. The Students' Union should lobby and campaign for students who are on 1+2 and 2+1 degrees to be given a larger degree of care into how they transition into life at the University of Salford.

5h. Gender Neutral Toilets

USSU Notes:

4. That there are a significant number of students at the University of Salford who identify as trans* or do not identify as one of the commonly accepted binary genders.
5. That there are no gender neutral toilets on campus (barring disabled access toilets).
6. Students who do identify as trans* or do not identify as gender binary can feel stigmatised or uncomfortable with using the current gender binary toilets on campus.
7. That there are moves towards introducing gender neutral public toilets by councils across Britain.ⁱ

USSU Believes:

3. That the promotion of gender neutral toilets will begin to challenge commonly accepted genderism.
4. That one of the toilets within University House should be converted into a gender neutral toilet.
5. That there should be at least one set of gender neutral toilets in every building with more than one set of binary gender toilets.

USSU Resolves:

2. The Students' Union should lobby and campaign for the immediate conversion of one set of the toilets within University House to gender neutral toilets.
3. The Students' Union should lobby and campaign for the implementation of converting at least one set of toilets in every building with more than one set of gender binary toilets.

- i. <http://www.visitbrighton.com/plan-your-visit/accessibility/accessible-toilets>

5i. Industrial Action on Campus

USSU Notes:

1. Industrial action is a tactic used by many trade unions including those that represent staff on campus.
2. Industrial action can have adverse consequences on the student experience.

USSU Believes:

1. That there are many causes that USSU and trade unions present on campus share.
2. Students at the University of Salford need to have a balanced argument and all the information available to them about any potential industrial action.
3. That the stance of USSU on any industrial action should be decided by a greater number of students than just the sabbatical team.
4. Students would want USSU to support industrial action so long as it receives a mandate from Student Senate.

USSU Resolves:

1. In the case of potential or actual industrial action then USSU will provide students with information on the reasons for the action and details of the action. USSU will also ask for statements from the relevant trade union(s) and from the University of Salford and will display those alongside the a neutral statement of background information.
2. Until a vote by Student Senate the position of USSU on any industrial action will be a neutral stance.
3. In the case of potential or actual industrial action Student Senate will be asked to vote on whether USSU should support the industrial action. If the result of the vote is more than 60% “yes” to support the industrial action then USSU will voice its support to the University of Salford and take measures to support the action. If the vote is between 40%-60% of “yes” then it will interpreted as there being no consensus and USSU will take a neutral stance on the case of industrial action and will continue to provide information and the opposing statements to students. If the vote is above 60% for a “no” to supporting industrial action then USSU will condone the case of industrial action and will make representations to the relevant trade union(s).
4. Student Senate must be quorate for the ballot to take place.
5. In exceptional circumstances the ballot of Student Senate can be taken electronically however the number of votes received must exceed the number of members that a meeting of Student Senate would require to be quorate.

5j. Reaffirmation of Support for UCU Marking Boycott & Strike Action

USSU Notes:

8. There is currently a series of negotiations taking place between Universities UK (UUK) and Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) regarding changes in terms of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS).
9. Many of the lecturers and academics as well as academic support staff are affected by the changes in their pensions.
10. The UCU and UUK have agreed suspend industrial action at this early stage until after the Joint Negotiating Committee to be held on the January 15th 2015.
11. The changes to the USS pension proposed by UUK include:

- a. Ending final salary payments and offering instead for an average career earning pension with a cap at £50,000 and increasing employer contributions from 16% to 18%.
- b. Those earning above £50,000 will receive a contribution of 12% from their employer into a defined contribution scheme.
- c. Employers will contribute 6.5% regardless of how much employees earn.

USSU Believes:

1. That we support the right of any union to take industrial action as a method of negotiation.
2. That we should support the action of the UCU in regards to this issue.
3. That we will continue to support the action of the UCU so long as it is mandated by Student Senate with reaffirmation being asked for at each subsequent meeting.
4. That we want to see our staff here at Salford properly rewarded for their work and to feel motivated whilst teaching at our university.
5. That any industrial action including an assessment boycott will potentially cause much disruption for students studying at Salford.
6. That industrial action will have detrimental consequences to students if continued for a long period of time.
7. That there has to be a fair outcome for all those involved in the dispute.

USSU Resolves:

4. The Students' Union should continue to support the UCU in its negotiations for a better deal on pensions.
5. The Students' Union must ask for continued support at the next meeting of Student Senate.

5k. Sexual Orientation Monitoring

USSU Notes:

3. *There is a variety of sexual orientations amongst the students of the University of Salford.*
4. *That currently no sexual orientation monitoring is done by the University of Salford.*
5. *Stonewall identifies student sexual orientation monitoring as one of its required items on its 'Gay by Degree' checklist that it uses to judge the provision for LGBT students at most Higher Education institutions in the UK.ⁱ*

USSU Believes:

5. *That it is crucial that the University of Salford begins to monitor the sexual orientation of its students as it is only by doing so that it can begin to really understand and cater for students of all sexual orientations.*
6. *It is important for the reputation of the University of Salford as a gay-friendly university to ensure that it completes all points on Stonewall's 'Gay by Degree' checklist.*

USSU Resolves:

6. *USSU should begin to lobby and campaign for the immediate implementation of student sexual orientation monitoring by the University of Salford.*

i. <http://www.gaybydegree.org.uk/about/>

5l. Social Media

USSU Notes:

12. *Social media is not disappearing in the near future and the University should embrace this.*
13. *Students' yearn for a personalised communication approach; social media opens a friendly portal between students' and their lecturers.*
14. *Students' frequently open up course based Facebook groups and communicate regularly, the sabbatical officers observe, learn and where appropriate take action from these groups.*

USSU Believes:

6. *The University should adopt a social media policy that encourages schools to be more interactive.*
7. *Students' are making a bigger use of social media not just to communicate with each other but to learn and work with one another, it is imperative the University changes with the times.*

USSU Resolves:

6. *The students' union will encourage the University to adopt a social media policy.*

5m. Wednesday afternoons

USSU Notes:

15. *Leaving Salford with a degree is simply not enough, it should be noted that being involved within societies/activity groups/sports clubs is beneficial for the student and desirable by the job market.*
16. *Students should not have to decide between a lecture and an extracurricular activity, Wednesday afternoons is a time for students to get involved with their hobbies, interests and anything classed as extracurricular.*
17. *Some cohorts of students' are currently timetabled to attend 3-4 exams in quick succession; this isn't the way it is done elsewhere.*

USSU Believes:

8. *That Wednesdays should be free of timetable commitments, unless unanimously agreed by the cohort in question.*
9. *Students' should not be timetabled for exams in such a way that is detrimental to their studies i.e 3 exams Monday-Wednesday.*

10. The University should adopt a ‘smart timetabling’ policy that is capable of overcoming the current issues of timetabling.

USSU Resolves:

7. The students’ union will lobby and fight for a smarter timetabling system that allows more freedom during exams and Wednesday afternoons.

5n. Security on campus

This union believes

Students should have the right to feel safe and secure on campus. There is a high student population in Greater Manchester and as a result of this the city has the highest crime rate (outside of London). Students are usually an easy target and fall prey to crime. Students should feel safe in their environment of study as well as throughout the community.

Regional Crime Statistics – North West of England

• University or College	• Burglary	• Robbery	• Violent Crime	• Total
• Edge Hill	• 6.56	• 0.25	• 4.72	• 11.54
• Chester	• 6.52	• 0.15	• 7.90	• 14.57
• Cumbria	• 4.51	• 0.20	• 11.71	• 16.43
• Lancaster	• 6.81	• 0.30	• 10.16	• 17.27
• Bolton	• 7.91	• 0.81	• 10.10	• 18.82
• Central Lancashire	• 5.73	• 0.52	• 12.62	• 18.87
• Liverpool Hope	• 7.83	• 1.24	• 10.73	• 19.80
• Liverpool	• 9.59	• 1.36	• 13.53	• 24.49
• Liverpool John Moores	• 9.82	• 1.44	• 13.83	• 25.08
• Salford	• 11.50	• 2.76	13.11	• 27.37
• Manchester	• 12.77	• 2.81	• 13.01	• 28.58
• Manchester Metropolitan	• 12.77	• 2.85	• 13.05	• 28.66
• Royal Northern College of Music	• 12.87	• 2.87	• 13.13	• 28.87

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/crime-in-university-cities/regional-crime-statistics/>)

The students' union resolves

- The union will lobby the university to make sure students feel safe on all campuses, between campuses and its surrounding areas.
- The union along with the university will lobby Salford city council to generate a harmless community and safer routes in Salford, further lobbying for better safety precautions such as more lighting between campuses.
- The union will lobby the University for a better and efficient bus service between campuses especially as there is such an emphasis on car parking on other campuses.
- The union will lobby the university to create a zero tolerance policy on hate crimes on and off campus. In addition the union will ask the University for designated areas to support the victims of racism, homophobia, transphobia, religious hate incidents or disability hate incidents.
- The union will work with the security team to construct a campaign highlighting and educating students on how these crimes of burglary, robbery and violent crime against them could easily be avoided.

5o. Social spaces and common rooms

The Union believes:

- Students need sufficient space on campus to relax, mingle, hold informal meetings with class mates and eat their lunch
- University catering areas are strict about the consumption of food not purchased at the catering outlets
- Many students choose to bring their lunch to University with them, for a range of reasons

The Union resolves:

- To lobby the University to produce a list of all 'social 'spaces available to students across the campuses
- To promote the use of existing spaces, ensuring students are aware of their existence and potential for use
- To lobby the University to prioritise the creation of further social spaces where possible – especially during the current phase of building work

5p. Better facilities on campus - parking and storage space

USSU Notes:

- The storage space currently available on campus is not enough for Salford students. As lockers are assigned on first-come, first served basis some students are not able to access appropriate storage. As 52% of the students in the University of Salford are commuting the lack of storage space is affecting them as many of them are also involved with student activities and sport groups. Locker spaces are a change that needs to be acted on urgently as many of these students do not have the space to put their books, kits, etc. Parking on campus also needs to be improved. Lighting is an issue that has to be resolved in terms of car parks on campus. Parking spaces also need to be increased and parking fees reduced as this is impacting on the students' experience negatively.

The Students' Union believes:

- Facilities on campus need to be increased and improved for students commuting to campus.

The Students' Union resolves:

- To lobby the university to increase the number of lockers for all students in the library and provide lockers in other university buildings.
- To lobby the University and local Councils to improve transportation to and around campus so that more students can make use of schemes such as park and ride etc. To Lobby the University to implement a transport policy which means that those students that need to park on campus are able to do so
- To lobby the university to improve the lighting and security for the car parks on campus