



Student Council Minutes

For the meeting: Thursday 26th January 2017 – 6:30-8:30pm

Present:

Chante Joseph	Chair of Student Council
Kerensa Phelps	DSC
Hongjia Xu	DSC
Shubham Singh	DSC
Laura Ho	Postgraduate Education Officer
Jamie Cross	Union Affairs Officer
John House	Sports and Student Development Officer
Zoe Backhouse	Undergraduate Education Officer
Stephen Le Fanu	Student Living Officer
Hannah Dualeh	Equality, Liberation and Access Officer

There were 41 voting members in attendance and 9 observers.

1. Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order at 18: 40 and announced that the meeting was **inquorate**. The Chair welcomed everyone and introduced herself and the agenda.

2. What is Student Council?

The Chair explained how Student Council works, the members of Student Council and what happens in a meeting. The Democratic Standards Committee introduced themselves. The Chair then explained the Code of Conduct.

3. Motion 1 – More Student Voices: Integrate Voter Registration and Enrolment

Rebecca Filer spoke for the motion.

No speech against.

3 students asked questions.

Question 1: Has there been any research suggesting this system improves voter turnout?

RF replied that she didn't think so but it will encourage voters because it makes voting much less difficult, as students don't have to worry about registering.

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Question 2: How would this policy work in practice?

RF replied that there would be a link when students register with the university that will allow them to register to vote.

Question 3: As the proposer is a member of Bristol Labour Students, could this motion help Labour with voters?

RF replied that it was not possible for her to pick how people vote! The important thing is that this policy will increase voter engagement.

The **motion passed**.

4. Motion 2 – Integration in halls

Lucky Dube spoke for the motion.

Stephen Le Fanu spoke for the amendment.

7 questions on amendment 1.

Question 1: The amendment says that economic background, not just state school or private school background would be considered, how would this sit with expensive rents in halls?

SLF: We would want to have this as a consideration, and include more affordable rooms in halls.

Question 2: What do you mean by algorithm and how would this be applied?

LD: Halls allocation is going to be done soon with an algorithm, we don't know what this is yet so we want to find out how it works.

Question 3: How does selecting people from different backgrounds sit with being impartial?

LD: We're not sure how impartial halls allocation is right now and that's why we want to find out more.

Question 4: Would this be working within halls – would the motion affect which flat you are placed in or just your halls?

LD: We were thinking in terms of halls as in general, people at the moment get put with people they get on with in flats and this generally works well.

However there is scope for looking at this if it is an issue.

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Question 5: Could the amendment proposer clarify where they have got the idea that students like living with students from a similar background?

SLF: In our Bristol Bursary Consultation survey students from low backgrounds talked about having poor experiences in the more expensive halls, and having better experiences in halls where there were more students like them. This is why any moves to improve integration need to be large scale, with affordable rents so students have more choice.

Question 6: Are you worried about integration on a black by block basis as there is a tendency for students to stick to their one blocks?

LD: I'm more inclined to say that we think about proportions of students in halls themselves rather than in flats.

Question 7 (John Finn): Should we conduct a survey into the wider student body to see how big an issue this is before we start lobbying for changes and trying to find out the algorithm? This could be a second amendment.

Amendment 1 passed.

2 questions on amendment 2.

Question 1: Do you think it would be good to know about the algorithm in general?

JF: Yes that makes sense but it would be good to have more research on whether a lack of integration is an issue for students.

HD: We did a Bristol Bursary Consultation survey last term which has data on this issue and we also have data from the Bristol SU Annual Survey but obviously it never hurts to have more information.

Mason Ammar: We have had feedback that in Wills a lot more students are from private schools, and in riverside students are mainly from state schools, so there is a lack of integration.

Question 2: Is this lack of integration down to an algorithm or down to a price difference between halls?

MA: If this is a problem with price then we would want to introduce bursaries or subsidise halls.

Amendment 2 passed.

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The Chair moved to a vote on the motion as a whole.

1 comment on the whole motion.

Tyrone Falls: This is not necessarily a speech against the motion but I do think the motion depoliticises the issue, it will be a bad situation if the outcome of this is that a small number of state school students get put in a hall that will isolate them.

The **motion passed**.

5. Discussion topic – how should rent be set in University residences

The meeting broke out into four smaller groups to discuss a series of questions posed by Hannah Dualeh and Stephen Le Fanu, who are currently attending rent setting meetings at the University.

6. Motion 3 – Supporting Student Rent Strikes

Eleanor Wright spoke for the motion.

No speech against the motion.

7 questions on the motion.

Question 1: I have a bit of an issue with actions 7, 8, and 9 – using rent strikes for non-housing issues seems a bit extreme.

EW: If students are rent striking for these reasons, the SU should back them.

Question 2: There's some quite far reaching financial implications in this motion, could this mean that it would be rejected by the trustee board?

Jamie Cross: If there is anything that would be financially risky the trustee board would pick it up but this would just be lifted out of the motion rather than the whole motion being voted down.

Question 3: With this motion we don't really know what we are voting for, as we could be supporting rent strikes on any issue.

Question 4: It seems undemocratic to support anything students are striking for, people should come back on separate issues.

The Chair suggests that the meeting votes for this motion in parts, voting on actions 1-6 and then 7, 8, and 9 separately.

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The meeting voted on whether it should vote on the motion in parts, **the vote passed.**

Question 5: How likely is the university to kick people out for not paying rent?
Tyronne Falls: There is some threat of eviction but it would damage the reputation of the university if they were suddenly to evict 100 students. Students should be properly informed of the risks however.

Question 6: What is the timescale for the rent strike?

TF: So the rent strike was going to go ahead this month but not enough people signed up, but it may still happen in the future.

Zoe Backhouse: This strike will probably happen so this motion basically means that the SU would support the strike.

Question 7: Perhaps there should be an amendment that the SU will only support rent strikes if students are well informed of rent strikes?

The Chair moved to vote on the amendment.

Amendment 1 passed.

The Chair moved to vote on the motion in parts.

Actions 1-6 – **Passed.**

Action 7 – **Did not pass.**

Action 8 – **Did not pass.**

Action 9 – **Did not pass.**

7. Officer updates

John House

Currently working on Varsity and making it bigger and better than ever before. The series now has more individual events than any other Varsity series in the country. A review into the sports pass is currently underway though John is not able to talk about it at the moment. There is also discussion around redeveloping existing sporting facilities, but again this information is currently embargoed! On the student development side John is continuing to work on Bristol Futures. No questions for John.



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Zoe Backhouse

Currently working on tackling course costs including more hot water in study spaces and second hand books. There is also an exciting announcement on printing credits coming soon! Lobbying the University for bursaries for refugees and asylum seekers and also working on getting a year in industry for arts and social sciences students. This week Zoe presented the results of our student support survey to the Student Experience Committee and Zoe is also doing lots of lecture shout outs next week for the boycott the NSS campaign. Two questions for Zoe.

Question 1: How many students have pledged to boycott the NSS so far?
ZB: 100 students so far, and our aim is 300 students.

Question 2: How do we get our exam scripts?
Exam script return is currently running as a pilot programme but if you are a course rep you can put pressure on your school to take part in the pilot at your SSLCs.

Jamie Cross

Currently working on elections and have created a day in the life of an officer video to promote them. There is now a prayer room on the 4th floor of the Richmond building, which is a piece of completed policy for a few years ago. Prices in the Balloon Bar have gone up so Jamie is fighting the University on this. There are lots of exciting events coming up in the Balloon Bar including the 6 Nations and the Superbowl all-nighter. Jamie is also lobbying for some SU space on campus, has created an action plan for trans students with the Part Time Trans Officer Spencer and has fed back to the NUS democracy consultation. One question for Jamie.

Question 1: What's going on with the NUS democracy review?
JC: For the first stage of the consultation we created a survey and sent it out to all students, while we only had 10 responses these responses were really good and we sent these on to NUS. For the second stage I consulted with our full time officer team and wrote a detailed response to the NUS's proposed changes, which include getting rid of the Society & Citizenship Officer, something we are concerned about because this officer can currently campaign on things that SUs can't because of charity law.

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Hannah Dualeh

Hannah first made a statement about the recent reports of racism at the University, and told the meeting that it was important that all students are thinking of these students and thinking about how we can challenge racism. Hannah then discussed the work she has been doing in her role. Hannah has been working a lot on getting the University to follow the new Universities UK guidance on sexual violence. She has also secured £5000 funding for research into the BME attainment gap, and has got the library to buy 40 books by authors of colour, as well as some SAD lamps for students to use. Hannah has also been lobbying the University to act on some of the key equality challenges for students at the University, including supporting student sex workers and student carers.

Stephen Le Fanu

Stephen has been sitting on a rent setting group at the University with Hannah and has also been planning the Mind Your Head campaign. You can join the Facebook group [here](#), there is also a Facebook group for rent setting [here](#). Stephen is also going into halls this week and next as part of the pastoral review to ask for feedback on support in residences. Stephen and Hannah also secured accommodation bursaries last term for low income students. The University is also trialling a guarantor scheme for international students. Stephen was also involved with the DIGs protest, has secured some divestment from fossil fuels from the University, and is involved in setting up a new student led farmers market. One question for Stephen.

Question 1: In an earlier meeting you said that the Mind Your Head support group needed more funding which meant it wasn't running this year, does this mean it is up and running?

SLF: Unfortunately not, the Mind Your Head campaign is going to be running but not the support group yet. We're putting in a bid for funding for next year which we hope will be successful.

Laura Ho

Laura has been working on improving the experiences of part time students, including giving courses with part time students' priority when it comes to timetabling. The SU has sent out a survey to Arts PGR students about improving the social and study space they currently have, and Laura is also working on getting some designated space for postgraduates in Senate House. Laura has also working on improving integration between international

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and home students, and is putting a case together for a full time international students' officer that she will take to AMM. Laura has also been supporting the NSS boycott because marketization affects postgraduates too!

6. Any other business

The Chair drew the meeting to a close at 8.30pm.

Student Council Chair: bristolsu-council@bristol.ac.uk

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