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**Union Council and AGM Minutes 28-04-17**

1. **Attendance and apologies**

Attended: Ruqiya Ali (RA); Habiba Amjad (HA); Andy Aston (AA); Dale Bennett (DB); Nicole Berroa (NB); Gemma Gessey (GG); Shazab Islam (SI); Issic Romel (IR).

Apologies: Rebecca Baker (RB); Joshua Barden (JB); Stewart Boyd (SB); Jessica Edwards (JE); Sohaib Farooqui (SFa); Latoya Goldbourne (LG); Iman Hussain (IH); Ziya Mohamed (ZM); Jenny Plant (JP); Daniel Raw (DR); Joshua Richardson (JR); Afsheen Saleem (AS); Liam Slough (LS).

Absent: Steven Fellows (SFe); Ewelina Florczak (EF); Joshua Largent (JL); Ashley Lovell (AL); Katie Minchin (KM); Nishalini Ravindran (NR).

1. **Minutes of the last union council**

 The minutes were unable to approved due to not being quorate.

**2b. Minutes of the AGM**

 The minutes from the previous AGM weren’t accounted for.

1. **Matters arising**

 Matters arising were addressed through officer reports.

1. **Audited accounts**

IR ran through the accounts explaining income and expenditure highlighting specific figures including the block grant, NUS card sales and NUS affiliation. AG explained how the cost is broken down within those figures to offer extra clarity.

AA asked if the surplus could be used to helping our D(d)eaf and Hard of Hearing students. IR said it’s University provided service and we should concentrate on lobbying them to provide that and we should define clear expectations of what services the Union offers. Adding these services due to unbudgeted surplus would lead to a lack of quality and we as a Union do not possess the expertise or experience to deliver these services. RE explained that the surplus is from staff wages that were budgeted for but left earlier.

IR explained the cash reserves and the need for having them.

1. **Impact and accountability**

**HA ran through her report for the year.**

A student asked why, as a rep, he hadn’t had an email around the meetings around communication. The student also said that the course committee was poor with the majority of the meeting being spent on going through minutes rather than the issues students currently have. HA said this is one of the factors leading to the Student Voice Policy review so student opinions can be heard. This will put more of the responsibilities on the Union to allow students to raise more issues and successfully create change within their courses. The student said the time used on the minutes could be drastically reduced by providing students with the papers in advance, enabling more time for students to actually hold the university to account. HA said these issues are being addressed for the next academic year within the policy.

**IR ran through his report for the year.**

No questions were asked.

**NB ran through her report for the year.**

A student said that societies are great for helping students from abroad integrate into the University community and said that language lessons would be a fantastic addition. NB and IR said we have a volunteer who already provides this. Bee also explained that we’re also addressing this through the Connect scheme.

A student asked as a society asked how they can get funding. HA explained that we have a Support fund and that she will put them in contact with the relevant staff member or they can apply online.

A student asked what the limit is and if the budget can be increased. A staff member explained it depends on the money provided by the University and how many applications are actually submitted. HA said that societies are also expected to fundraise themselves to help them sustain themselves.

A student claimed that marketing was free for societies last year but they have struggled to get the same support this year. A student staff member responded saying that marketing have struggled with societies this year due to indecisiveness around events making design slots and promotion hard to plan. HA said that part of being a society is budgeting and fund raising and that marketing costs should be a part of that process. Another student said that marketing only post a couple of times to promote events. A member of student staff explained that we have to be careful because of spamming. A student stated that more support from marketing would really help them promote themselves. AG said she would personally take on the project of communication for societies.

1. **Student Issues**

A student raised that she had course issues last year that went through the complaints procedure but the problems are still there. Is there anything we can do to improve the process so it actually carries weight? HA said that the University regularly don’t follow procedure properly and it’s something we’ll address with University management. The student explained the issue in more detail stating that a deadline for their dissertation was pushed back that they were left with only a month to complete the assignment.

**HA actioned to raise the issue with University management**

RA said that some assignments are very close together which is unfair on students. HA said that this happens and it comes down to students managing their time. RA said that the information needed to complete the assignment is being changed or withheld till very late on in the module which doesn’t enable students to fairly manage their time. HA said that RA should talk to the faculty advisors or put in a formal complaint addressing the issue.

The (ask Phoebe) system is really beneficial for students and offers lots of flexibility.

AA raised the online forum idea for disability students to communicate. IR said a lecturer has created an informal communication channel for students to collate feedback from disability students. AA said the university seemed keen but didn’t follow through. HA said it should be actioned.

**IR actioned himself to look at the forum.**

A student said that feedback from one of her lecturers was an example of good practice, feeding back on assignments using detailed slides to feedback to the class.

**4 Hour lectures -** DB discussed how he believes that everyone he has spoken to has suggested that 4 hour lectures are not well received by any students. DB believes the SU should lobby against 4 hour lectures. HA raised that the university staff are not required to do 4 hour lectures but often choose to do these through ease. IR has suggested that new guidance will be out on how to deliver a 4 hour lecture appropriately. DB said there should be more emphasis on educating lecturers on how to better manage their time. HA said it is a project that is currently being addressed.

Safety and security – MK is still a security problem for arts students due to lack of substantial personnel. HA said that it is card entry to get to the higher floors. A student and DB said that people tailgate so it’s still a huge risk. IR said that Uniguard is an initiative to try and ease students concerns and that we should promote it. HA said that the performance hub in Walsall is more secure as it requires access to even enter the building with more card access points to prevent people tailgating as easily. IR said at around closing time they do patrol for a substantial amount of time.

A student asked if the work stations could be opened longer to allow students more access. HA said it’s more of a health and safety issues due to some of the resources in the space and also that some students work cannot be securely stored so closing later allows more opportunity for vandalism due to lack of supervision.

**HA will look into this.**

A student said that the MX building only allows staff access after 5 but a lot of students need access for lecturers.

A student raised that on North Road the fire alarm often goes off but security often take a long time to address the issue leaving students out in the cold as most of the alarms are caused by cooking. IR explained the time delay could be due to procedure.

**IR to raise concerns to accommodation.**

GG raised her issues with the open campus referring to an example of a drunk and disorderly member of the public putting students at risk. HA also said members of the public have also come in taking pictures which is unnerving. AG stated that the open campus policy came from the VC but the SU and staff have been against the initiative since it began. AG worries that unless something serious happens nothing will change. If any students have any evidence or experiences of feeling unsafe we need that as an SU to compile a report to lobby the University to revert the policy.

DB raised that from a postgraduate point of view the university is very undergraduate centric and the university needs to better consider part-time postgraduate students. Only FoSS has a dedicated advisor for these students with other faculties having no support for these students.

AA said that a sensory room should be provided for students that need it.

1. **Policy Motions**

The meeting was not quorate so no motions could be voted on.

1. **National and Regional activity**

HA and IR gave an update on National Conference including election results and explaining where the motions can be found.

1. **Any other business**

HA thanked the reps for their effort throughout the year.

1. **Chair’s closing remarks**

The meeting closed at 16:45.