

**Union Council Minutes – Draft**

**29th November 2016**

**1. Attendance was acknowledged and apologies noted.**

RA welcomed everyone Union Council and each member introduced themselves. Attendance was noted.

Attended: Ruqiya Ali (RA); Andy Aston (AA); Rebecca Baker (RB); Dale Bennett (DB); Nicole Berroa (NB); Sohaib Farooqui (SFa); Steven Fellows (SFe); Ewelina Florczak (EF); Gemma Gessey (GG); Rachael Healey (RH); Ziya Mohamed (ZM); Jenny Plant (JP); Nishalini Ravindran (NR); Daniel Raw (DR); Afsheen Saleem (AS); Sophi Turner (ST); Liam Slough (LS), co-opted within the meeting.

Apologies: Habiba Amjad (HA); Joshua Barden (JB); Stewart Boyd (SB); Jessica Edwards (JE); Latoya Goldbourne (LG); Iman Hussain (IH); Shazab Islam (SI); Joshua Largent (JL); Ashley Lovell (AL); Katie Minchin (KM); Joshua Richardson (JR); Issic Romel (IR).

Absent: None

Staff present: Dave Anson (SEM), observer; Robin Eves, Chair’s aide (SV&DC); Thomas Swainson, secretary (C&DA)

**2. The minutes from the last meeting were accepted.**

MA abbreviation in matters arising section to be changed to matters arising to avoid confusion.

**3. Matters arising.**

**Smoking outside of buildings** - RH asked to discuss how we can tackle the issue as the signs are not visible and there is no designated sheltered smoking area which could tackle the problem. RB raised the issues with Walsall facilities who replied saying they aren’t adding anymore on that campus. AS said that the bus shelters near the street shouldn’t be used either as they are in use by the public. RH suggested a shelter off the road. GG raised the point that the bin is removed on a night and they nearest bins are close but can be off putting to use on a night time due to through traffic from the subway. JP also raised the bin issue due to facilities moving them. RH claimed that IR is working with the council around littering. GG said that the bins aren’t a council issue until they’re fining students for littering. **Action: SV&DC to look into the issues raised.**

**Other actions are ongoing due to the responsible officers not being present.**

**4. Student Issues**

NR asked why the UC meeting was being held in a closed space and not publicly. RE responded saying that due to the furniture changes we couldn’t host it in the social space for this occasion and to also consider the balance of accessibility and professionalism. NR said the library was an ideal space for students to see what Union Council is and get involved. Council agreed that the door to the meeting room should be opened as a compromise for this meeting.

JP fed back the issues raised in the education committee for Union Council members who don’t hold a position on the Education Committee.

In the MK building there aren’t adequate printing provisions for arts students as they are low in quality so not suitable for assessment work.

There’s no additional funding towards printing whereas other departments get more printer credits as standard.

Security staff members aren’t entering the building in an evening and the card lock isn’t turned on which has led to work to being damaged and non-students using the building. This is also a huge safeguarding issue.

No subsidising for students’ assessment materials and the art shop closes early.

The computers aren’t adequate or don’t have the necessary software for arts students. The library also has very limited access to design packages. Access to workshops is also severely restricted due to a new lock being installed on the door.

JP was asked by the chair to suggest some solutions. In regards to the building being open on an evening JP stated that security used to have a staff member present in the building and students could only gain access with an ID card. JP also stated that if students had access to secure storage then the damage of projects would be minimalised from other students using the space or from transit. AS suggested that students on FSE courses have a storeroom in MI. JP has claimed that this doesn’t resolve malicious damage. AS asked if it is a matter of respect. JP said it seems to be but that doesn’t help the issue in the short term for students whose grades are suffering. AA asked if card scanners recorded who was in the building. SFa said he’s sure they don’t.

NR suggested we should be promote council physically outside the meeting to invite people in. RA asked for examples for solutions and NR suggested online advertising. C&DA assistant said that the council meetings were already being advertised on the website, social media and advertising screens around the campus but welcomed input from officers.

NR raised that the policy around appeals aren’t fair too students as they don’t take treat them on a case by case basis. Councillors generally agreed that the appeals process should treat students as individuals. DB disagreed saying that the rules should be consistent for all students to remove any unconscious bias but that awareness of the process and support through the process should be increased. Introducing more steps to the process could have negative implications as it could delay all appeals. NR disagreed stating they were contesting the deadline date of the appeal only and not the process itself. GG said students are often scared to put an appeal in due to worries of negative repercussions from the lecturers and because of this some students feel it’s safer for them to put the appeal after they have received grades or graduated. DB said that conduct and appeals are separate units and shouldn’t impact the students if they were to appeal. RE asked if the cause is the problem or the process. NR said they don’t want to scrap the processes but make it fair for students who feel vulnerable. ST claimed we should be more focused on the support offered to students before they feel they need to appeal. NR said that some students don’t want to raise the issues. AA said that there’s the risk that students will feel their process could be handled subjectively.

C&DA reflected on the officers’ points but suggested that more research needed to be made into the appeals process both at Wolverhampton and across the sector as well as getting student feedback on the issue before making any decisions around lobbying the University to change the processes. C&DA also gave some insight into a campaign being organised by NB around academic misconduct and support for students. **Action: All union officers to engage with students around appeals. Staff to look across the sector.**

LS claimed there are issues for students accessing software in Telford. RE said he would look into it. SFa claimed this issue affects students on other satellite campuses.

ZM raised providing evidence for extenuation circumstances was unfair in the time frame especially for bereavement. SV&DC suggested where he could get support.

AS raised a problem with student lockers in the MB building but they are temperamental. SV&DC said he would help AS with the issue. **Action: SV&DC to investigate issues with the lockers.**

RH said that some students working in the labs are using outdated equipment that aren’t adequate for the course.

JP raised heating in the MK building, RH said it’s could be down to the quality of the windows and insulation. DB said the heating is also an issue in MU and MX.

JP raised the art store closing times and the quality of the food in the canteen in MK. **Action: RH and NB to investigate food provisions in MK.**

SFa claimed students are having a problem in Randall lines due to poor ventilation in the kitchen resulting in fire alarms. SFa would like help to resolve the issue for those students as there is no Accommodation officer currently elected. AS suggested contacting the university accommodation reps to try and resolve the issue.

**ST left the meeting at 16:00.**

GG asked about the deadline for transitioning to the new building names and wondered if the officers had had any communication from the university. NB said there is a timetable group where she has been raising issues with all things timetabling including building names. GG said we need to have this deadline soon before causing more confusion for students. DB said that even though the buildings have been named they’re still referred to by their old names too. GG said it’s an accessibility issue because buildings have no physical signage. DB said that even staff didn’t know the new names. SV&DC asked if the room names would change. DB said no, that’s the issue with changing the building names with some buildings being unnamed. AS said this should be lobbied for changes to be made before January students start. **Action: NB to get a deadline from the University on the changes or to get signage for the original names to be displayed.**

**5. Executive Officer Reports**

RH’s report was accepted.

NB’s report was accepted.

In relation to her report Nicole asked reps if they had any comments around the noise in the library. AS said it can be an issue with bookings of the booths for the quiet space. EF said that the law books stocked in the library aren’t always current and is creating personal costs to students. GG suggested going to the course leader stating this so the course leader can take the issue further before raising it at the faculty board.

LS stated that the survey didn’t have an option for those caring for adults.

IR’s report was accepted.

HA’s report was accepted.

AS asked if HA had completed her action around the BDS. SEM stated that the action was for a meeting with SI and the FTOs but no meeting has been organised. GG asked if BDS affects students as students.

**ZM and NR left at 16:40**

SFa’s delivered a verbal report updated us on his work with the officers. Questions were asked around international student integration into the University community, NB and SFa said they’re trying to build these networks through events.

AA’s report was accepted.

**Due to some members having to leave early agenda items that required voting were brought forward.**

**8. Policy Motions**

GG described the policy she is bringing to the next council around a PG rep for FEHW and other ideas she has had for the faculty. C&DA gave some information on why the motion had been delayed till the next council meeting.

**9. Co-option**

LS introduced himself and gave a short speech on why he wished to be co-opted into the Telford Campus Officer positions. GG asked if his priorities around student carers were already covered by another role. RE said that Liam was more stating his motivations.

AS asked how he would represent Telford student issues as he hadn’t covered it in his speech. LS said he covered the carer issues because it gave him the drive but it wouldn’t influence how he represented students at the Telford campus. AS asked how he would engage. LS said he has already engaged with students through current roles. DB asked if he physically had the time due to his caring commitments and LS responded by saying he would make the time. JP said she has similar commitments and that doesn’t restrict people from being able to be effective in the role. NB asked if LS was willing to collaborate with other part time officers over policy around carers. LS said he is looking forward to working collaboratively with other officers on projects.

**LS was asked to leave the room so officers could vote. LS was co-opted with a majority of 69% of the vote becoming the Telford Campus Officer.**

**AS left the meeting at 16:55.**

**13. Election Committee**

Officers were asked to volunteer as members of the election committee for the upcoming elections. SEM explained what was expected from officers in the role and several officers put their names forward. Due to HA not being able to run for election, officers agreed she should hold a place on the committee in her absence.

**AA, DR, EF, NB, HA were the agreed members.**

**5. Executive Officer Reports**

RB’s report was accepted.

AF’s report was accepted.

**6. Faculty Rep Reports**

GG’s report was accepted.

**Steven Fellows left at 17:00. The meeting was no longer quorate so reports couldn’t be accepted.**

**Rebecca Baker left at 17:05.**

**Raqiya Ali left the meeting at 17:05. Due to the chair leaving GG was elected as temporary chair for the remainder of the meeting.**

DB delivered their report.

JP delivered their report.

EF delivered their report. EF sked for help from the Students’ Union to support them in contacting the course representatives as they are struggling with getting student buy in. SV&DC said he would provide support and assured EF that the issues she is having isn’t a reflection on her work and that she shouldn’t be disheartened. NB reassured EF that student voice is a priority for the SU. GG said that if email isn’t their preferred method of communication then there’s a need to educate them on the importance of managing them for the world of work. DB said that the email system has improved but if there are still problems reps need to feed it back. There should be education on emails for students to help them transition to the University’s preferred communication method.

RE suggested a communication working group which will be circulated via email. **Actions: SV&DC to email reps about the workgroup**

DR delivered their report.

NR’s report was delivered on their behalf.

ZM’s report was delivered on their behalf.

SV&DC gave a description of Infopath and stated he is willing to help support students set up new ways of engaging.

**7. Council Rep Reports**

AA’s report was accepted earlier in the meeting.

**10. Charity of the Year**

Due to the meeting being no longer quorate it was decided that the vote will be cast electronically.

**11. National and Regional Activity**

The TEF was mentioned earlier in the meeting.

**12. Executive Committee Minutes**

No minutes were received due to the executive committee being non-quorate.

**14. Any other business**

DB asked about officer hoodies. SEM explained there will be some ordered.

**15. GG closed the meeting 17:30**