

## Union Council

Minutes from the meeting on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 13:00 held in W115

### Persons Present

#### Chairs

Amy Coughlan (Chair)  
Matthew Vaux (Deputy Chair)

#### Councillors

Abigail Harper	(Sport & Exercise)	Matt Boreham	(Sport & Exercise)
Adam White	(Photography)	Michelle Bowden	(Fine Art)
Annemarie Sewell	(Graphic Design)	Mitchell Cook	(ECS)
Carly Whiting	(Interior Design)	Nathan Kempster	(Youth Studies)
Emmet Todd	(Radiotherapy)	Patricia Jones-Thompson	(ECS)
Hannah Coleman	(Interior Design)	Phillipa Maju	(Photography)
Jeffrey Obieze	(All Sciences)	Rares Chirita Philip	(CDG)
Jemma Chatten	(English)	Robert Roue	(NCT)
Jon Bruce	(Psychology)	Sam Lawson	(Sport & Exercise)
Joseph Phillips	(Sociology)	Shamaya Robinson	(Sociology)
Kimberley Birch	(Business Mgmt.)	Sian Mortimer	(CYPP)

#### Executive

Jonathan Wright (President)  
Sam Bennett (Vice President)  
Ben Buck (SOBLAE)  
Christina Wise (SOSTAH)  
Sophie Millard (SOASS)  
Zoe Porter Watson (SOAAH)

#### In Attendance

Chantalle Hawley (Head of Student Support)  
Donna Grant (Academic Support Office Manager)  
Jen Mackness (Director of Academic Services & UCS Academic Registrar)  
Kirsty Martin (Course Administration Co-ordinator)  
Laura Doggett (Infozone Manager)  
Lee Pugh (UCS Union General Manager)  
Matt King (Democracy & Representation Co-ordinator)  
Robert Lister (Infozone Advisor)  
Usman Ali (NUS VP HE)

#### Apologies

Grace Harwood	(Dance)	Jemma Yarnton	(Radiotherapy)
Jan Armitage	(Photography)	Athina Britton	(Wildlife Mgmt.)
Joseph Kinglake	(CGD)	Nicola Berncastel	(Business Mgmt.)
Pride Mukungurutse	(Radiography)	Alex Rawlins	(Graphic Design)
Katherine Mills	(Social Work)	Kirsty Gaffigan	(Nutrition and Human Health)
Rachel McGarry	(Youth Studies)	David Sullivan	(CDG)
Cara Moran	(English)	Amy Birrell	(Events Mgmt.)
Rachel Selmes	(Health & Wellbeing)	Siobhan Clapson	(ECS)
Georgina Arthur	(Interior Design)		
Katie Wright	(Criminology)		

## **Section A: Reporting Back**

### **1) Minutes from the Previous Meeting (AC)**

No objections or alterations were called for.

### **2) Matters Arising (JW)**

JW explained that due to the constitutional requirement of Student Trustees being approved by Union Council and the timing of the 25<sup>th</sup> January Trustee Board meeting being hours before the Union Council Meeting of the same day, an extra meeting was required to ensure that the Student Trustees could attend the meeting.

### **3) Update on Motions Passed at the Previous Meeting (JW & NK)**

#### **Online Submission**

JW has discussed with Andrew Ramsden, Head of the UCS Elevate Team who has stated that a confirmation e-mail following an online submission is not feasible with the current system. The two will meet to discuss this matter further.

#### **Written Feedback**

JW informed Council that UCSU Exec will discuss how to take this matter further in their next meeting.

#### **Laptops & Phone Use in Lectures**

JW and NK fed back. NK is currently conducting a trial on a student led course charter with his course leader. JW raised the issue at Student Experience Committee with the idea of re-induction it for returning students.

#### **Social Space in the Waterfront**

LP in conjunction with Estates is logging/mapping details of all available social space in order to compile a definitive document.

#### **Cash Machine in the Waterfront**

LP is investigating on three fronts:

- Seeking a view from Estates on costs and arrangements
- Liaising with Cash Machine suppliers
- Carrying out a financial analysis on the cost implications of removing/lowering the £4 limit based on card use from other UCSU outlets.

### **4) By-elections Report (MK & JW)**

Two more Schools Officers for the School of Business, Leadership and Enterprise, and the School of Science, Technology and Health have been elected.

Due to the different nature of the courses for students in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCS Union Exec will discuss how best to get students from this school represented.

Next year, Executive Officer positions would be elected in one elections period in the spring as well as appointing the Student Trustees before the summer to ensure that those elected/appointed can benefit from training provided by NUS during the summer period.

### **5) Executive Officer Reports**

JW fed back on his Report. SB fed back on her report and the joint sabbatical report.

### **6) Course Rep Reports**

KB reported that many of her course mates hated the idea of not having laptops in class. AR commented that dyslexics need laptops in class. JW cited weighing up the balance between the need vs. the convenience of laptops in class. NK fed back on the developing the safeguard policy.

## **Section B: Action**

### **7) Safeguarding Policy (JM)**

JM, UCS Safeguarding Officer, explained policy in the context of students being Vulnerable To Radicalisation (VTR). JM noted:

- UCS thinks it important to have a policy on how to address the issue
- The policy is about knowing where to report any concerns
- UCS has been offered Community Cohesion Training by the Police and was keen for UCSU to be involved as well.

JW explained that David Weir (Head of School of Business, Leadership & Management) has concerns over the policy amendments from an academic integrity perspective, and in regard to protecting students who are accused.

Council noted:

- Appendix 1, Article 3 would affect student ambassadors (RCF)
- Highlighting VTR as a potential issue, that this could lead to students stereotyping others (NK)
- Perhaps a preventative strategy would be preferred (JP)
- Concerned that no evidence would be required for an accusation to be made on reasonable doubt (SR, NK)
- Policy may discriminate towards accused students (JC)
- Police could be involved in induction, however this could draw unnecessary attention to the issue (PJT, RCF)
- Whilst the Policy may be implemented, students would not be fully aware of its existence (ZPW)
- Concerns that there was a single point of judgement within UCS about due process for the accused (JP, JW)
- Concerns in regards to academic freedom and teaching of a historical perspective or political activities that could be labelled as extreme (SM)

JW made it clear that UCSU would want to defend both sides if students were involved on both sides, as both sides would have UCSU members, and therefore be entitled to representation.

***Union Council voted to refer back the policy for further review. JW and Jen are to set up a focus group on this matter.***

## 8) Group Discussions and the Resulting Motions

### Students as Consumers (NK)

#### What

Students are consumer learners

#### Why

The price of education is rising and the perception of what a student is seen as, is changing.

#### Action

UCSU to hold a forum on this issue

*Motion Passed*

### Post-Graduate Fees (MB)

#### What

Students feel pressured to carry on to Postgraduate studies to pursue better career opportunities, but are put off by the cost of studying.

#### Why

Students are not fully aware of the financial support available through Scholarships, Commercial Loans etc.

Students are put off by the fact that they are not able to take out Government Funded Loans

#### Action

UCS Union to contact UCS and NUS about possible/already existing Scholarships Library  
To join the NUS Campaign on resisting postgraduate taught course fee increases

*Motion Passed*

### Bursaries and Fee Waivers (JC)

#### What

UCS will no longer be offering bursaries to students with lower income backgrounds or who qualify in some other way; they will instead be offering fee waivers

#### Why

This takes money out of the pockets of students who need it most, thus making it even harder for them to study as they won't be able to afford books, equipment, food, accommodation, clothes etc.

#### Action

For the Union to campaign UCS to provide bursaries instead of fee waivers.

*Motion passed*

## **Section C: Discussions**

### **9) Forum with UCS Infozone**

Council noted:

- Infozone staff are very helpful (SR)
- Infozone works well as a good first port of call for all queries (ZPW)
- Infozone is soon installing a new Enquiries System
- A review into space utilisation is taking place, which may result in more soft seating and a Self-help Station being installed.
- A place to seek Legal advice would be appreciated (ZPW)
- Infozone would look better if it looked less like an office space which may make it appear unapproachable (RCF, ZPW)
- Whilst the booths upstairs can be used when asked, the Infozone needs more confidential space (ZPW)
- A re-introduction session about the Infozone would be useful for returning students (NK)
- Opening times were discussed, with staying open till 6pm all week suggested, whilst being open until 19:30-20:00 during busy periods and possibly Saturdays were also proposed (
- The Infozone will be open all year round

### **Forum with Academic Support**

Council noted:

- Students are unsure about the role of the Assessment Office (JW)
- Assessment Office closes daily between 14:00-15:30 for staff lunches. This was not seen as an issue as it falls during lecture periods does not affect deadlines (ZPW)
- All students can hand-in assignments at Reception/Security & the other Assessment Office in the Arts Building
- Students would like an assignment receipt e-mailed after online submissions (JO & SR)
- Training for Online Submissions for all students was suggested & for it to be managed/delivered by Academic Support to reduce multiple training
- Online results are well received by students and Council were happy with the current system
- The text service of lecture cancellation is a useful service. Receiving a cancellation notice via text at least an hour in advance of the lecture was preferred, where possible
- There is not enough group study space around the campus. The idea of a system that would allow students to book the smaller teaching rooms and the study pods was suggested (KB)

### **Guest Speaker: Usman Ali, NUS Vice President (Higher Education)**

Explained the downsides of students as consumers and seeing themselves as consumers – citing the USA's Ivy League as an example.

Because of the changing make-up of the student demographic, the nature of student learning methods is changing

UA gave his personal experience as a student rep from course rep at Salford to NUS VPHE.

### **10) Any Other Business**

None

### **11) Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

18<sup>th</sup> January at 13:00 in W115