Meeting Minutes

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student Council | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date: 02.04.25 | | Meeting Time: 5-7pm | Meeting Location: Coleraine (H113A) Magee (MD008A) Belfast (BA02-012) / Online | | | | | | | |
| Chair | Caitlin Lowry | | | | | | | | | |
| Clerk | Mark Francos (GPC) | | | | | | | | | |
| Attendees  (Student Councillors) | To be noted in due course. | | | | | | | | | |
| Apologies |  | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Rollcall and Quorum | | | | | Presenter: Chair | | | | | |
| Key Points | * The Clerk of Council recorded the attendees who were attending in person to reflect in the attendees box above. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Apologies | | | | | Presenter: Chair | | | | | |
| Key Points | * The Clerk of Council recorded the attendees that have submitted apologies and are reflected in the apologies box above. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting | | | | | Presenter: Chair | | | | | |
| Key Points | * Proposed by: Lee Doran * Seconded by: Callum Crummey * The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Matters Arising | | | | | Presenter: Chair | | | | | |
| Key Points | * No matters are arising. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. President’s Communications | | | | | Presenter: Chair / President | | | | | |
| Key Points | * Expressed his emotion as this being his final Student Council meeting. He looks forward to seeing the work continue going forward, especially around reform. | | | | | | | | | |
| Question(s) | | | | | | | Question from | | Question to | |
|  | | | | | | |  | |  | | |
| 1. Student Officer Updates | | | | | Presenter(s): Chair / Student Executive | | | | | |
| Key Points | The Chair welcomed the officers to provide an oral report to each of the student councillors in attendance.  VP Belfast   * Provided an update on the further work that the Union is taking part alongside the University Sustainability Team. * Issued a big thank you to everyone who voted and engaged throughout the election process. * Been involved in multiple engagement weeks for students, including on Irish Language Week, where I have been engaging with senior figures from the School of Irish. * Been engaged on work for Student Safety, including developments in developing the Safety App to work outside the direct university environment. * Been engaged on work on accessibility on campus, including door access that has been passed to the estates team in Belfast as well as ensuring that vending machines on campus is accessible to all. * Been collaborating on World Mental Health Day with Student Wellbeing to deliver jointly on an event that went incredibly well. * Celebrated St Patricks Day and was involved in promotion of safety initiatives to support students during that time. * Was involved in the launch of the Charter Tackling Violence against women and girls. * Lots of work has been involved in the development of the Student Pantry on campus and delighted that it has now been launched on the Belfast Campus. * Been involved in the delivery of repair cafes, all contributing towards a welcoming and inclusive environment, ensuring that items aren’t just thrown away but given a new lease of life.   VP Equality and Belonging   * Attended the winter graduations, supporting and celebrating graduating students. * Supported the launch of the NeuroNetwork on campuses * Provided an update on the development of the International Student Conference which is to be postponed to the next academic year. * Currently analysing responses around discrimination and harassment that we have got back from our recent survey. Working with SV to look at next steps for awareness and look at this as part of the transition with incoming VP. * Been engaging with the Dean of EDI to support high level development of policy objectives including on Bidet’s, gender neutral toilets and others. We have experienced challenges especially around Bidet implementation. * Been working with colleagues in SV and the university to develop training for School Reps to support diversity awareness on campus. * Met with the Mayor of Derry and Strabane around supporting the work of the Mayor’s chosen charity and linking the student population to their work. * Highlighted events that have been on campus including collaborations and events that have took place around cultural holidays such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. * Been engaging with Finance teams around flexible fees payments. * Been engaging on anti-hate policy that will be put to council at the start of the next academic year. * Been engaging with USI and sat on a panel promoting the work of SWANN and its implementation within UUSU. * SWANN continues to take a significant amount of time and is currently being worked upon alongside our new Engagement Coordinator.   Question raised around implementation of Gender Neutral Toilets – VPEB outlined that Estates Department are not willing to implement more resources into putting more gender neutral bathrooms onto campuses due to vandalism and protest.  An discussion ensued around support for Transgender students with a consistent theme of support for transgender and non-binary students with a theme that across all campuses is that the current provision is not acceptable. The VPEB fielding multiple questions from Councillors.  The Executive confirmed that this is a major priority item and will be raised with SMT, the university and collectively discussed as a team via SE.  CC proposed an extension of guillotine to half 7, seconded by LD. Guilatine extended via vote to half 7.  VP Coleraine   * Takes report as read, highlighted work on safety for students being a priority, especially around road safety and nightlife safety.   VP Magee   * Report unavailable as of the meeting.   VP Sport and Wellbeing   * Provided an update on the challenges on engaging with Sports Provision within the University, with an update on the fact that meetings are now up and running with appropriate staff across the campus. * Focused on providing an update on the delivery on supporting Clubs across campuses. * Provided a brief update on what is currently happening in relation to the keep Wednesday afternoon Free Policy that is a union mandate. * Sports Club Forums took place during Refreshers across each campuses, sports committee members were provided an update on what to expect during this semester. * Provided a brief explainer on the current financial difficulties facing clubs across campuses, with an emphasis on the requirement for fundraising to support engagement in the latter stages of tournaments and competitions. * Lighthouse Project has been a major focus to support wellbeing on the Magee Campus working with Foyle Search and Rescue to launch as of last week on campus. Keep an eye out in bathrooms for the stickers to find out more. Currently engaging with ResLife to ensure they can be put into DSV. Currently exploring options to look at delivery for other campuses. * Provided an update on the Sports Survey that has been developed alongside Student Voice, to provide an update and gather feedback on the recent move of sports club from UUSU control to the University. Been developing additional video content and recordings from clubs to support advocacy work with university partners. Currently developing material which is to be delivered directly to university partners. * Highlighted the success of the Neurodiversity inclusivity quiet hour in Coleraine to be able to use the gym facilities. This included creating an atmosphere of calm, dimming lights and noise and reducing the number of people who are able to attend. The pilot has been a success and we will be lobbying for permanency and inclusion of this within Magee and Belfast campuses. * Currently engaged in support work for the upcoming Colours Awards due to take place next month in the Titanic Building in Belfast.   VP Education   * Provided an update on Educational Policy developments as well as the requirement to have a policy day post elections between the whole officer team and SV. * Provided an update on the Student Voice Forums and the campaigns that have developed from those, including Thriving Not Surviving and the drives that have been provided from direct on the ground conversations. * Engaged with the Student Panel. * Our LTA Awards Nominations Process is now live, promoted the nominations process. * Launched the Social Work Conference on campus with attendees numbering over 120. * Women’s Empowerment Network election is ongoing. * Irish Language Week was a big success across campuses. * Been engaged with external accommodation providers providing support and advocacy advice for students. * Led on ensuring that transparency for students is at the heart of work on SeATS. * Been taking an active role in the Officer Role Review and work that has been taking place around the Article and Bye Law review process. * Been working and got guarantees that exams are to be removed in courses that have no direct legislative or accreditation requirements from later in 2025. * Provided an update on work that is ongoing to support students in the Coleraine area, including the work to support challenging violence against women and girls. * Been engaging with the team in the university around the risk of withdrawal process to ensure the process is clearer and student friendly. * In Module Assignment Recovery – Provided an update on developments that when a student is close to a grade boundary they will be given the opportunity to resubmit while not directly having cost or implications on transcripts. * Engaging with a new working group supporting the development of new buildings on the Magee Campus * Highlighted the incredibly high number of students engaging directly with the green dot training taking place on campus. * Working alongside the rest of the team and UUSU on multiple projects. * Provided an update on the work that took place to support the expansion of Student Loan limits in NI. * Highlighted the incredible turnout for the Student Movement Charter against Violence against women and girls within NI and thanked all who helped to get it launched and over the line. | | | | | | | | | |
| Question(s) | | | | | | | Question from | | Question to | |
| Q. | | | | | | |  | |  | |
| 1. Lapsing Policy Review | | | | | Presenter: Chair / GPC | | | | | |
| Key Points | | * The Chair introduced the policies that are up for renewal as part of the process outlined by the Clerk of Council. A yes vote indicates a desire to lapse the policy, on the contrary a no vote indicates a desire to lapse the policy. * Inclusive Protection and Sexual Health Education Policy   VP Education outlined the reasoning behind the proposal to lapse the Inclusive Protection and Sexual Health Education Policy, due to the success of this policy and requirement of the Council to bring forward new ideas.  Proposed by: Lee Doran  Seconded by: Ethan Davies  Council votes to Lapse the Policy.   * Changemakers Assemblies Policy   Proposed by: Emily Roberts  Seconded by: Ethan Davies  Council votes to lapse the policy. | | | | | | | | |
| Question(s) | | | | | | | | Question from | | Question to | |
| . | | | | | | | |  | |  | |
| 1. UUSU Reform (Article Review Group) | | | | | Presenter: Chair | | | | | |
| Key Points | | The Chair outlined that no further meetings had taken place since the last council meeting. The Chair outlined that the first meeting of Student Council in the next academic year should have some substantial updates and items for the Council to approve. | | | | | | | | |
| Question(s) | | | | | | | | Question from | | Question to | |
| . | | | | | | | |  | |  | |
| 1. Senate Update | | | | | Presenter: Senate Representatives | | | | | |
| Key Points | | * The Chair outlined that the University Senate had not met in the time in between Council meetings. | | | | | | | | |
| Question(s) | | | | | | | | Question from | | Question to | |
| . | | | | | | | |  | |  | |
| 1. Cross Campus Concerns | | | | | Presenter: Chair | | | | | |
| Key Points | | The Chair outlined that this section having provided a great opportunity to highlight challenges facing our membership across campuses would be remaining in place.  VPB provided a brief update on the SafeZone app and the developments that allow students to use the app off campus. | | | | | | | | |
| Question(s) | | | | | | | | Question from | | Question to | |
| . | | | | | | | |  | |  | |
| 1. Tabled Questions | | | | | Presenter: Chair / GPC | | | | | |
| Key Points | | We have received one tabled question:  Q. Rachel Hasson – VPEB “I am wondering what has been done to advance SWANN in Belfast in the last few months?”  A. VPEB – Highlighted that SWANN is currently in a separation stage, with each campus having ownership over it’s own direction under the main committee.  Currently working on building a community in Belfast before moving to the development of more events on the Belfast campus. | | | | | | | | |
| Question(s) | | | | | | | | Question from | | Question to | |
| . | | | | | | | |  | |  | |
| 1. Any Other Business | | | | | Presenter: Chair / GPC | | | | | |
| Key Points | | The Chair outlined that there was no business brought forward under this agenda item. | | | | | | | | |
| Question(s) | | | | | | | | Question from | | Question to | |
| . | | | | | | | |  | |  | |
| 1. Date of Next Meeting | | | | | Presenter: Chair | | | | | |
| Key Points | | * The next meeting is currently scheduled for the next academic year. The Chair thanked Councillors and staff for their contributions over the last year. | | | | | | | | |