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Students’ Representative Council

Minutes

Air Bar, 15th of November 2022

Attendance

Mavis Whytock (Disabilities), Bailey Hope (LGBT+), Arshman Rehman Sahito (Facilities), Christine Odaro (General), Victoria Simpson (Mature), Eamonn Custance (General), Aaron Fernandez (Employability), Priya (Learning and Teaching), Mahh Ashraf (General), Parissa Robinson (SRC Chairperson).

School Presidents

Liam Brown (Business), Helena Drylie (Business), Ayush Laddha (Dentistry), Elena Gastaldo (Humanities, Social Sciences and Law), Louise Warburton (Life Sciences), Dominic Lee (Medicine- SRC Vice Chairperson), Leia Ainscough (Science and Engineering).

Executive

Nyasha (Ash) Mutembwa (President), Amarachi Ejim (Vice President of Student Wellbeing), Zining Li (Vice President of Student Activities), Jazmine Bennet (Vice President of Community), Hasan Mahmood (Vice President of Fundraising).

Guests/Observers

Cameron Irons (Policy and Research Officer), Chris Gourley (Head of Operations – Student Experience), Keith Harris (Rector), Matthew Kallarackal (2nd Year Medic and proposer of the ‘Mature Medical Student Bus Travel Bursary’ motion), Mohammed (Nigerian Students Society), Muhammad Hamza Liaqat (Student Voice Support Officer), Vrinda Narain (Student Voice Support Officer), Alex Roberts (Student Voice Support Officer), Lea Salles (Student Voice Support Officer), Valerya Krumova (Student Voice Support Officer), Anna Broggi (Business Support Officer).

Minute-taker

Loukia Morari (Policy and Research Officer).

Apologies

Audrey Oko (BME), Bhuvana Sai Rheddy Komaragunta (Equality, Diversity and Welfare), Aishwarya Jayakumar (Women’s), Ligin Mathew (Taught Postgraduate), Simone Bairstow (Health Sciences), Obiozor Okoro (Vice President of Representation).

Absent

Sai Rakshith Gupta Somisetty (Housing), Swasthik C R (First Year), Talha Iqbal Shahid (International).

1. Chair’s Welcome
   1. The Vice-Chair, Dominic Lee, introduced himself and explained that he would be chairing the meeting this month as Parissa, the Chair, has brought forward three motions to the SRC.
   2. The Vice-Chair announced special welcomes to Mohammed from the Nigerian students Society, Matthew a medical student who brought forth a motion and our Rector Keith Harris.
   3. The Vice-Chair reminded the council that audio and visual recording were taking place. They also reminded the council of the code of conduct and SRC values – to be respectful to fellow council members.
   4. Parissa, the Chair, thanked the council for their participation and to the vice-chair for chairing the meeting as the Chair has brought three motions to the meeting. The Chair hoped this could motivate and inspire the council members to bring forth their own motions.
   5. The Chair then set an optimistic but achievable target of two motions to have been submitted per subcommittee by the SRC scheduled for January to help improve student experience.
   6. The Chair reminded councillors that SRC headshots would be taken to be posted for socials along with the councillors’ testimonials. She stressed that these should be submitted via the appropriate links by Wednesday the 16th of November.
   7. The Chair iterated the importance of attendance and has been monitoring attendance closely as two SRC members are in close contention to losing their positions on the SRC.
   8. The Chair took attendance and tracked SRC email access.
2. Minutes from the 10th of May - Paper A

2.1 Objections: The Chair expressed that the roles of two observers should be defined; Chris (LBGT rep of Abertay) and Steve (Student Parent rep of Edinburgh University). Additionally, she emphasised that on the action tracker Dimitris (DUSA President 21-22) had a campaign she asked for follow up. Cameron expressed that is something DUSA is still working on.

The Chair requested that this be updated on the action tracker with what exactly the campaign is. The Chair expressed that acronyms should be expanded for accessibility.

2.3 Proposer: The Chairperson

2.4 Seconder: Eamonn Custance

1. Minutes from the 18th of October – Paper B

3.1 Objections: The Chairperson expressed that VPA- Zechariah had sent his apologies and should be removed from absence. Student president survival guide should be added to the action tracker.

3.2 Proposer: The Chairperson

3.3 Seconder: Eamonn Custance

1. Action Tracker Update – Paper C

4.1 The Chairperson expressed that the action tracker had not been updated since the 8 of April SRC. They requested that a ‘Completed or not’ column be added to the action tracker. Additionally, a student mental health charter to be added to the action tracker, as well as the student president survival guide.

1. Co-option

5.1 The Vice-chair invited two guest speakers to give two-minute speeches on why they wanted the position. Amira introduced herself, explained why she was running and how her experience would be beneficial for Research Postgrad rep. Andre Costas introduced himself and explained why he was running for Environment and Sustainability Rep. He also explained why he would be an asset to the Scrutiny Committee.

5.2 The Vice-chair asked council members to vote. The vice-chair announced the votes and the Vice-chair welcomed Amira as the new Research postgrad rep and Andre as the new Environment and Sustainability rep.

1. Student Parent Rep – Paper D

6.1 The Vice chair invited the Chair to present this motion. The chair reminded the council of the research conducted by Steve Anderson (UoE Student Parent rep). She highlighted that there is an underrepresentation of research conducted on this demographic of student, 7% of students are parents (in Scotland). Therefore, she raised the importance of expanding representation within this area.

6.2 Eamon asked what the figure for student parents was within Dundee. The Chair could not give a figure as access to that information breeched confidentiality. Secondly, Eamon asked if this position would be voted on by students who are parents or would every student be eligible to vote for this candidate. The chair expressed that any student would be able to vote.

6.3 Victoria agreed that there is a need for this representation role as mature student’s needs are different to student parent needs. However, they asked if there would be anything in place to support student parents in this role with e.g., childcare during SRC meetings. The Chair expressed that the role would help to establish issues faced by this demographic. That the person within this role would not have to be a student rep, but it would be beneficial if they were.

6.4 The Vice-chair asked the council members to vote. The Vice- Chair announced the votes and declared the motion passed.

1. Trans and Nonbinary Rep – Paper E

7.1 The Vice chair invited the Chairperson to present this motion. The Chair expressed their motivation for the proposition of this motion following the success of the trans, and nonbinary swimming group motion passed last academic year. The Chair then stated that, with the support of the current LGBT rep, Eamon and VPA- Zechariah, a new role for Trans and nonbinary rep should be created to take into consideration the needs of trans and nonbinary people separately from the LGBT rep as their needs are not entirely encompassed by LGBT rep.

7.2 VPC- Jazmine raised the issue of trans and nonbinary people not feeling represented by someone outwith those groups and questioned the effectiveness of this role. The chair expressed that the motion supports the establishment of a trans and nonbinary rep and would hope that someone of that demographic would run for that role.

7.3 Christine raised potential consequences of creating this role e.g., cultural, and religious beliefs that oppose this role. The chair understood the concerns however, they expressed that the motion does not encompass changes to the university for these groups but the creation of this role to increase the inclusion and diversity within the LGBT rep. The VPC stated that the denial of trans and nonbinary experiences is unacceptable and gave a reminder that gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under UK law.

7.4 The Vice-Chair asked the council members to vote. The vice- chair announced the votes and declared the motion passed.

1. Trans Day of Remembrance – Paper F

8.1 The Vice-Chair introduced Eamon to present this motion. Eamon communicated that this was a supporting motion. He introduced Trans Day of remembrance as the 20th of November, a nationally recognised memorial for trans people who are killed every year and gave the location of this year’s vigil - organised by Dundee Pride.

8.2 The Vice-chair asked the council members to vote. The Vice- Chair announced the votes and declared the motion passed and SRC endorsed.

1. Multi-Faith Prayer Space – Paper G

9.1 The Vice-Chair introduced the Chair to present this motion. Her motivation for this proposal came from witnessing Muslim students praying in inadequate spaces within the dentistry school. She proposed multiple multi-faith prayer spaces on campus to reduce travel times while on a student schedule.

9.2 Aaron suggested that the SRC could go one further by encouraging multi-faith prayer spaces to be registered on the website to make existing spaces more accessible to students. The Chair suggested that there needs to be an official multi-faith prayer room rather than makeshift spaces that are often provided.

9.3 VPF- Hasan raised the potential logistical aspect of the motion; to consider fluctuation of prayer taking place e.g., Ramadan when far more students require prayer spaces. He suggested an amendment to the motion proposal that temporary multi-faith spaces can be introduced during holy months.

9.4 The Chair expressed that the president of the Islamic society supported the motion as it stands. However, following a conversation with the director of estates the motion is limited by how many and how big these spaces can be. Aaron followed up with their previous statement and asked if there is potential to pass over the responsibility to each school to create these spaces while passing a ‘fit for purpose’ criteria. The Chair seconds this idea and suggests that if the motion is passed collaboration and support of the school presidents can take place to action this motion. Eamon inquired whether Ninewells and Kirkcaldy were considered in this proposal. The Chair responded that this motion is for schools on campus at this time.

9.5 The Vice-Chair asked the council members to vote. The vice- chair announced the votes and declared the motion passed with the amendments.

1. Mature Medical Student Bus Travel Bursary – Paper H

10.1 The Vice-Chair introduced Matthew Kallarackal to present this motion. Matthew introduced his motion for the introduction of financial aid for medical students who are over twenty-two years old and are exempt from national free bus travel.

10.2 Andre asked if students from other school would be included e.g., School of Life Sciences must go to Ninewells at points. Matthew agreed with this statement and has spoken to nursing and dentistry students who this also applies to. Amira suggested that it applies to too many students. Mavis suggested that the discretionary funds is available. However, Matthew highlighted that the discretionary fund is available for economic hardship, while the travel bursary would exclusively be for travel and fuel costs and not financial hardship.

10.3 Matthew highlighted that there are discrepancies between other universities; Aberdeen University introduced a bus service for post graduate students, Glasgow University and St Andrews University cover 75% of the bus travels for their medical students to travel to learning hospitals. Cameron suggested that it is something that could be implemented within the cost-of-living crisis measures.

10.4 Louise questioned how financially viable it is to implement this motion, and suggested a short-term alternative, like a shuttle bus. Matthew had been exploring short term ideas but raised that there is still a financial burden that is not covered. Matthew gave a rough estimate of the financial breakdown; £550 per student per academic year, 20/30 postgraduate students per academic year (level 1-4) and all of 5th years fall within the over twenty-two brackets.

10.5 VPF-Hasan followed up by asking if the proposal could realistically, considering the housing and cost-of-living crisis, be broadened to a unified and holistic service for all students.

10.6 The Vice-chair asked the council members to vote. The vice- chair announced the votes and declared the motion passed with the amendments to include medical, nursing, and dental students.

1. Sub-committee Updates

11.1 Equality, Inclusion and Diversity: Bailey expressed that there had been dialogue and a comprehensive approach to address the overlap between LGBT students and students with disabilities.

11.2 On Campus: Liam summarised; focused on the transition from remote to on campus learning. Student engagement and DUSA events, highlighted the utility of Dunfess as insight to student voice.

11.3 Education: Aaron summarised; dialogue to develop student’s soft transferable skills and what resources can be used within the school itself and identify gaps of what the student services have to offer.

11.4 Engagement: Ayush summarised; foodbank and food wastage management across campus. Promotion and actioning of the multifaith prayer room that had been passed at this meeting. On Promotion; better utility of socials potentially introducing Instagram pages for each academic school and moving away from emails.

1. Exec Update- Questions

12.1 VPC- Jazmine: Preliminary stages of adding/ altering DUSA governance to support student led campaigns outwith the SRC, this is open to student consultation. They reminded the council of Trans day of remembrance and DUSAs Got Talent events. They continue to work on the DUSA pride working group and Community Action Forum and invite students to get involved if they wish.

12.2 VPF – Hasan: Fundraising events; Festive dinner – dates yet to be confirmed, however aims for the week before exam week an alternative. The 55hour marathon will start on the 27th-29th of January – WRASAC is the main charity.

12.3 VPA- Zechariah: Academic skills week, addressing issues with the new combined school, 365 Microsoft Champion Program, QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) Institutional review and SLTAs (Student Lead Teaching Awards). He welcomed students to come to him with any queries regarding these projects.

1. SRC Question time

13.1 The Vice-Chair invited the Chair to the floor. She addressed the issue of implementation and the legacy of motions from past academic years e.g., sustainability rep, supporting sex worker motion and the trans and nonbinary swimming group approved by the SRC in 21/22 term. She questioned why they were not in place today. Cameron presented a rebuttal and highlighted that it does depend on the type of motion (supporting motion). However, he continued to state that some motions (actioning motions) required SRC councillors to act following their approval, the onus is not on DUSA to action motion, but on the SRC. The SRC must hold themselves to account and reach out to DUSA for any additional support e.g., any promotion or spaces booked.

13.2 He reminded the council that non-attendance to the subcommittees is non-attendance to the SRC and the SVSOs (Student Voice Support Officers) are SRC supporting staff that have had trouble with subcommittee engagement. The Chair addressed the difficulties of internal communication e.g., active communication of motion state once it has been discussed at board meetings.

13.3 Eamon, the proposer of the supporting sex worker motion, highlighted that there were specific actioning points for the EXEC to carry out following the approval of the motion at the SRC to work with specific external organisations. However, he had not had any updates regarding this and requested for better communication re board meeting affairs.

13.4 VPC – Jazmine apologised on behalf of the EXEC for the lack of information regarding this specific motion and expressed their frustration regarding the lack of actioning of this motion. VPF – Hasan reminded the council that the motion past six months ago and in terms of academic time it had been 2/3 months. He welcomed a chat with Eamon to make up for the lack of communication.

1. AOCB

14.1 The Vice-chair reminded the SRC to have their headshots taken and their testimonials submitted by the 16th of November at 6pm.