Student Senate

Tuesday 15th May 2018

5pm,4J Students’ Union

Senators in Attendance:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Amr Alwishah | George Baldwin | Adarsh Bansal |
| Alani Padzil | Catherine Chamberlain | Aditi Gupta (*Chair*) |
| Jane Hobbs | Catherine Iannucci | Henrietta Page |
| Joshua Prior | Connor Radcliffe | Lewis Rigley |
| Cameron Rose | Jessica Warren | Joshua Lewis |
| Taz Jones | Janet Williams | Hanin Abou Salem |
| Jo Tan | George Watkins |  |

Academic Rep in Attendance:

Chile Fernandez

Sabbatical Officers in Attendance:

Hollie Cooke (SU President)

Nick Fox (VP Welfare)

Students’ Union Staff in Attendance:

Steve Ralph (Head of Student Voice)

Holly Thomas (Student Voice Coordinator)

Vicki Groves (Student Voice Assistant) - *Minutes*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I. | **Standard Items:** |
| A. | Apologies  Apologies were received from Niall Yasseen, Lochan Sidhu, Gabriella Gropper, Julian Herbst and Kabira Suleman. |
| B. | Minutes from previous meeting  HC made the following amendments to the minutes:  Page 2 – HC and SR presented information on Student Senate reforms  Page 3 – Lewis Rigley and Niall Yasseen were asked to leave the room for the vote.  The minutes were then approved as a true record. |
| II. | **Students Union Items:** |
| A. | Election of Chair (for next year)  Josh Prior presented why he should be considered for Chair.  Nick Fox presented why he should be considered for Chair.  *Nick Fox was elected as Chair.* |
| B. | Senate Review Outcomes  HC and SR explained there are 3 remaining options for the Senate review, and these have been brought forward from lots of focus groups:   1. The online system is used to gather votes, which is then followed by a Senate vote. 2. The Online system is used to gather votes, which is then followed by a Senate vote with an increase in the number of randomly selected students. 3. Abstain.   JPrior asked if it would be an up or down vote system.  SR replied it would be eventually.  PB asked if individual students could still submit motions.  SR replied it would have to go through the upvote system.  PB commented that students can already submit motions.  HC replied that the research shows students like this idea of engaging remotely and to be encouraged to be involved in debate. Is widely adopted across other SUs.  Student asked why you would need 200 votes.  HC replied that is the system across the country.  GB commented that the Welsh assembly only requires 50 votes.  SR replied that it was originally 500, the same as a referendum but then it was lowered from feedback.  HC explained they are happy to reduce the threshold to 50 online votes.  Student suggested it would also be good for students to also be able to submit a motion without 50 votes.  HP suggested this could be brought to a future senate.  JW suggested trialling the current option first to see if there are any issues.  HAS commented that there could be issues with motions that only represent a small minority.  AA commented that pressure to get votes could cause less students to engage.  HC replied that having it online would encourage students to be involved without having to go out the way to find a Senator. Resources will be fed into this system and these options have been based on lots of previous feedback.  JW commented that lots of Heath students are away on placement and they still need a voice and want to engage.  *Option 2 was chosen.* |
| C. | Amendments to Bye Laws  SR explained there are now guidelines on how to call a general meeting and also some changes on supporting campaigns for future referenda.  PB asked why referendum guidelines were not readily available already.  SR replied that there was no Welsh Language Policy previously for translation. The previous Head of Student Voice ran a referendum but did not write anything down.  *Bye Law amendments were passed.* |
| D. | External Trustee Ratification  HC explained that the external trustee needs to be ratified, due to the resignation of a current trustee. Denise Rich was chosen as the best candidate.  *Denise Rich was ratified.* |
| III. | **Submitted Items** |
| A. | Ensure the SU’s and the University’s investment policy does not support illegal Israeli settlements.  Proposed by: Cameron Rose  Seconded by:  CR spoke for the motion and explained the illegal centres in Palestine are against human rights. Not investing in these settlements has been taken up by several other universities. These settlements are still viable because they are funded. The University has a policy about arms dealers but want this to be extended to illegal settlements themselves.  No speaker against.  *Debate*  HC explained the University policy prohibits investments based on companies without a code of ethics but the SU doesn’t invest. Asked for list of companies and what it will be based on. Asked about relationship with ground floor tenants in the SU, as can’t tell them what to do.  CR replied that the motion is to lobby the University to not take investments from companies in settlements, the ethics policy is more general than this. Replied that the list would be from BDS UK and the relationship with the ground floor depends on current agreement and contracts would depend on the SU. Want this motion to begin the conversation.  HAS explained that students voting on BDS policy risk being reported.  HC explained charity commission was interested in BDS policies but found no particular outcomes. The issue would be if we were to actively lobby these companies as this would be outside of our charitable purposes, related to Cardiff students.  HAS commented that this vote should be anonymous as Senators run the risk of being labelled anti-semitic. Has happened before and could impact students.  SR explained the voting log is only available so students can hold senators accountable.  *Senators voted that names should be removed from voting records and they will be uploaded anonymously.*  HC commented that there could still be a risk of Senate being labelled as anti-semitic.  CR explained that this is why lots of language has been changed from the original motion.  CR summated for the motion.  *Motion passed.* |
| B. | A Compassionate Deadline.  Proposed by: Joshua Prior  Seconded by: Catherine Chamberlain  JPrior spoke for the motion and explained that the zero marks for late submission policy is unfair and Cardiff is only one of a few universities that holds this policy. This was heavily voted for in Democracy From Day One, so has student backing.  No speaker against.  *Debate*  JPrior submitted an amendment to add a Senate Resolves 3 of “That the relevant Sabbatical Officer should lobby the University to standardise an extenuating circumstances policy throughout its Schools.”  CR asked about the sliding scale  JP replied it has come from student feedback but can’t comment on exact penalties.  AP asked how they will lobby lecturers to change their deadlines.  JP suggested that there could be documents outlining the policy.  HC commented that the University will set a policy for the whole University.  HC also commented that Sabbatical Officers have picked up on this already this year and it was included in student written submission and they are actively campaigning. Asked whether the policy would be stronger without the new resolves, as the earlier information does not represent this.  JWarren commented that the notes and believes sections do push for a better extenuating circumstances policy.  HC proposed an amendment to add a Senate Notes 5 of “That there is a disparity across the University in the way that Schools deal with extenuating circumstances.”  JPrior accepted the amendment.  CC took over as Chair.  AG agreed that there should be a standardisation but it should be based on evidence, ie doctor’s notes. Proposed an amendment to add ‘evidence based’ to Senate Notes 5. It now reads “That the relevant Sabbatical Officer should lobby the University to standardise an extenuating circumstances policy, based on evidence, throughout its Schools.”  JPrior agreed each case should be on an individual case by case basis and accepted the amendment.  AG raised concerns that standardising could make it harsher.  JWarren commented that standardising would make it fairer between schools.  AA commented that there could be standardised evidence based on case by case.  HAS commented that standardised evidence could cause further problems.  JPrior replied that the motion does not specify about what evidence is required.  JPrior summated the motion.  *Motion passed.* |
| C. | Holding referenda to reach positions on industrial action.  Proposed by: Paulina Backs  Seconded by:  PB spoke for the motion and explained that it is a controversial issue and lots of students felt that they were not represented by the SU as the SU went against the NUS statement. Want a clearer mandate to future Sabbatical Officers to know what stance to have. This is an important step to making the student voice heard.  HP spoke against the motion and explained that Sabbatical Officers already have a mandate and were elected by students to represent them. An assembly of campaigns would further distract students. Many students were apathetic and another referendum would waste resources that could be better spent elsewhere on support services. Students can form their own stance on issues and should be encouraged to do so. The SU having a stance would alienate some. Noted that 372 students is less than 2%.  JPrior proposed a procedural motion to go straight to a vote.  JPrior spoke for the procedural motion and explained that this motion is the same as last Senate and it did not pass, due to time constraints it should go straight to a vote.  PB spoke against the procedural motion and explained this topic won’t go away. It is not the same as last Senate. It is about how to proceed in the future. The procedural motion is shutting down debate and controversial issues need debate.  *The procedural motion falls*  Student spoke for the motion and explained that lots of students supported the strike but there was no platform for them to represent staff. It is a good way to formalise the student voice for the future. We want more students to be represented, should try and engage students via a referendum.  JPrior spoke against the motion and explained that the petition that ran for 2 weeks only reached 375 signatures. It is not our place to dictate to future senators on how they should react. It also undermines senate’s decision from last meeting and running a referendum is very expensive.  *Debate*  PB explained this is how democratic parliaments work, it is not making a decision for future senators. It might cost money but lots of money is spent and will not be wasted. Sabbatical Officers already have a mandate but lots of students disagreed with their decisions this term. The SU can be political and can’t escape by being neutral.  CC explained that students can submit a referendum if they want to but don’t need to have a motion to have one if students don’t want.  Student explained that senate should represent the student body and it is not democratic. Senate are not elected to make all the decisions and the communication to the student body is poor. Students aren’t engaged if they don’t know both sides of the argument.  JW commented that there is no need for lots of referenda, last elections had the lowest voter turnout for a few years, and this was the annual elections. More voting could disengage students.  AA commented that all opportunities for students to get engaged should be taken forward. Promoting it is not bad.  HP explained that senators are elected to represent students. When senators receive agenda we speak to students about opinions. Upset by accusation and is accountable to students.  JL asked if there is an issue with the word ‘assumption’ in Note 3 and if the question in Resolves 5 is too leading for a referendum.  PB commented that ‘actively support’ can be interpreted differently.  PB proposed amendments to Notes 3 and Resolves 5 and to add a Resolves 6.   * Notes 3 will now read “This decision was based on the SU receiving emails that some students are supportive of the strike while others are not.” * Resolves 5 will have “stand in solidarity with and” removed. * Resolves 6 will read “If the referendum ends with a majority yes vote then this should lead with a statement of solidarity being issued by Sabbatical Officers as representatives of students.”   HC commented that there are 3 ways to bring a referendum and asked how this will fit in.  PB explained she spoke to the Director of Engagement and Participation about this and a majority vote in senate should trigger a referendum.  PB summated for the motion.  *Motion fell* |
| D. | Supporting Student Carers.  Proposed by: Janet Williams  Seconded by: Hanin Abou Salem  JWilliams spoke for the motion and explained it is to support student carers and maybe staff carers. Want a carer’s awareness week, in conjunction with various Sabbatical Officers. Like mental health awareness campaigns, this also affects mental health and wellbeing. Carers are a minority group and can often feel isolated. There is an international aspect where it can be seen as a duty, but they should still be supported. Want to be a carer friendly institution recognised by Care UK.  No speaker against.  *Debate*  CR asked if parents are included.  JWilliams replied that parents are carers technically but this motion refers to other carers too. Parents/carers association has been suggested in the motion.  JWarren asked about the carer’s passport.  JWilliams explained it is to identify you as a carer and is done in a very structured way. Department will recognise it like a protected characteristic.  AA commented that JWilliams has put a lot of effort into representing students.  HAS commented that students may not actually know they are carers, so raising awareness will be important.  JW summated for the motion.  *Motion passed* |
| E. | New Student-Led Services applications.  JH explained that 3 new student lead services are being created; Housing Action, Mind your Head and Talk it Out. Housing Action and Mind your Head are campaigns to run all year round, giving targeted advice at critical times throughout the year. Talk it Out is a listening service to address loneliness.  HAS asked what is different to what is already being offered and how much will it cost.  JH replied that it will not cost anything, all self-funded. It is not a counselling service. We do currently signpost but this will be new services.  AA asked about what support would be required from VP Welfare and Campaigns  HP explained she would like the VP to get involved if he wished (help with social media shares and signposting etc) but will be student run and wouldn’t require lots of work.  JS asked if there will there be a campaign for housing action.  JH replied they will include this in the plan going forward, would like it to become much wider.  AP asked if students will come to the services and if it is different to student mentor scheme.  JH replied it will be specifically for housing issue etc. mentors are more general.  CC commented that there is a need for this. Mind Your Head Week has been run successfully for a few years but this will work well throughout the year. Nightline have wanted to make a daytime service, could be good to support them to do this, as they are already trained. Rather than starting a new system, could focus on current schemes and make them work well.  HP replied that they want to make services even better and volunteers can still get involved. Will free up VPs and makes it more accessible throughout the year.  HC asked about how societies need 20 members.  HP replied that each SLS has a committee and wants them to be elected democratically. |
| F. | Amendments to Bye Laws: Scrutiny Committee changes.  CC explained Scrutiny Committee have struggled to be chorate this year, and nothing official could have been done. Recent bye laws passed that senators could be drawn in, but half elected and half selected would encourage lots more to be involved and help to reach choracy. Will give lots of students experience of a useful skill.  HAS asked on what criteria they would be selected.  CC replied that it could be read by Student Voice, Senate, current Scrutiny Committee or whoever is suitable can help to decide.  HAS commented that committee members who don’t come should also be scrutinised, shouldn’t just be able to put it on a cv and not come.  CC hopes the desire would be stronger with the new changes.  HP asked who selects them as it can’t be Sabbatical Officers.  CC replied it could be Chair of Senate and career staff, past scrutiny committee members could also look at candidates.  JW asked if they will be elected for one meeting or the whole year  CC replied for whole year  CR asked about how this would be better than just electing a larger community.  CC replied that the application processes show effort. Could elect more but then choracy would increase too.  JS commented that there could be a representative sample, for example Heath students for VP Heath Park and postgraduate students for VP Postgraduate, could try to get a good spread of population.  CC agreed, could consider this in applications but not elections.  HAS expressed concern about the selection, should go through senate.  JL replied that it would be hard to go through Senate as lots of Senate are Sabbatical and Campaign Officers or Scrutiny Committee.  HC commented that standing in an election also requires confidence. Application is more private.  HAS asked if support will be provided to students who want to apply.  SR commented that all job applications go through EDI criteria already. |
| IV. | Any Other Business  TJ thanked AG for being chair.  SR explained there are 2 external trustees to ratify but will be sent electronically in next few weeks.  JL thanked Student Voice for their hard work over the year.  AG thanked senators for the year and explained she has learned a lot. |