

Annual Members Meeting – Thursday 19th February

Agenda

Item	Owner	Timing	Minutes
Welcome	Chair - LA	5 min (17:05)	Chair welcomes everyone
Intro to Student Council	Chair	10 min (17:15)	Chair goes through conduct
Approval of previous minutes & ratification of December Council	Chair	5 min (17:20)	Minutes approved
Affiliations	Trustees	10 min (17:30)	Affiliations approved
FTO Updates	Full-Time Officers	30 min (18:00)	
Policy Renewals			
Supporting Trans & Non-Binary Students and Campaigning for Gender Justice	Motion Proposer, Chair	10 min (18:10)	Policy renewed
Muslim Prayer Room	Motion Proposer, Chair	10 min (18:20)	Policy renewed
Sanctuary Scholarship Legal Fund	Motion Proposer, Chair	10 min (18:30)	Policy renewed
BREAK – 15 mins			
Motions			
Raising Awareness for gambling harms on campus	Motion Proposer, Chair	10 min (19:00)	Motion passed
Cuts to Medical Leave for Part-Time PhD Students funded by UoB Scholarship	Motion Proposer, Chair	10 min (19:10)	Motion passed

Regulate the use of Generative AI in Bristol SU in order to safeguard students and their futures	Motion Proposer, Chair	10 min (19:20)	Motion passed
AOB	Chair	10 min (19:30)	Don't forget to nominate yourself for elections!
END / PIZZA			
NUS Referendum	Chair		
GUILLOTINE - hard stop in case the meeting overruns. Nothing further will be discussed after this point. We will still aim to finish the meeting by 19:30.		20:00	

Welcome

- Welcome from the Chair

Intro to Student Council

- Safety and housekeeping
- Code of conduct
- Microphone etiquette
- Procedures of AMM

Approval of previous minutes & ratification of December Council

- No vote on approval and ratification as we are not in quorate, will be ratified in the next student council meeting.

Affiliations

- Ismail Zarif (IZ) and Allan Allison (AA) present list of affiliated groups and discuss governance and role of trustees.
- Student trustees take students opinions into account, but act on their own personal opinions.
- External trustees are independent professionals, are currently in the process of recruiting another external trustee.

Questions

Q: regarding fee of NUS affiliation cost (£30,090) - what do we get out of this membership, and students have not seen much from it?

A: Trustees refer to figures on PowerPoint, pointing out there that there are two, NUK UK and NUS Charity. NUS UK is a campaigning political org, NUS Charity supports training and staff, policies, structure, rights. There will be a referendum happening in March.

Q: Who is responsible for interpreting the articles and byelaws

A: Unsure how to best answer this question.

Q: Does approving affiliation count as policy under the byelaws?

A: The bylaws are there – NUS referendum needs to be held every three years, there is not a law that says we must, it is a student decision.

Trustees point out that if there are any concerns with affiliations, this can be discussed in this meeting.

There was further clarification to students that this vote is not for the NUS, not about the referendum on the NUS UK affiliation.

Vote for affiliation

Affiliations approved

FTO Updates

Union Affairs – Katie Poyner (KP)

- Society Forums: Katie hosted 5 of these categories and spoke about issues and challenges around engagement, events and SU processes.
- Society ambassadors were introduced in each of these categories to communicate feedback to the Union Affairs Officer and will be chairing the next network society forums.
- Worked with Lucy Pears to reopen the SU Hatch for cheap meals at Hawthorns.

Postgraduate Education Officer – Sharan Khemlani – (Mia Stevens spoke on the behalf of Sharan)

- Mia and Sharan have been working together on rebranding the Student Teaching Awards and making sure students can get involved in all aspects.
- Sharan and Jessie have been working with the Global Engagement Team on the Mumbai campus to ensure that there is SU presence and access to resources for students.
- Working on Blackboard evaluation project.
- Collaborating with university for summer activities for students who will be there here around that period.
- Lobbied the university regarding winter graduation for PGT International students who would need visas to attend their graduation so working around restructuring dissertation period so that graduation can be moved earlier to overcome visa restrictions.

- Expanded Bristol mentor skills to support 40 postgraduate students and pairing them up with 40 professionals.
- Has been part of PG research committee, working to better support disabled students.
- Consulting with Student Success Advisors on inter-cultural accessibility and compassionate communication.
- Sharan has been attended many postgraduate events such as Postgraduate Pints and Yoga.
- Designing surveys to learn more about postgraduate events in societies.

Undergraduate Education Officer- Mia Stevens

- Secured student representation in universities optimisation timetable project, to make teaching timetable work better for students. Has successfully lobbied for prioritised earlier release of timetables.
- Advocated to make timetables more accessible for commuters, students with disabilities and part time students.
- Assessment Feedback Fellows programme is up and running to improve feedback.
- Working on university wide overhaul of marking criteria, rewording descriptors and making it more explicit and useful for students.
- Personal tutoring reform to make it work better for students.
- There has been progress in Bristol SU to campaign for joint honours to stop clashes and has been considered within the timetable optimisation project.
- Researching experience of commuter students and will be presenting this work.
- Planning academic society showcase in April.

Equality, Liberation and Access Officer – Linlu Ye

- Hosted S.H.A.G Week (Sexual Health and Guidance Week) with Lucy, this included pub quiz, outreach and STI testing kits.
- Secured second round of Gender Expression Fun – Linlu hopes this fund will be ongoing.
- Working the SU Digital Team on venue accessibility information being available with SU venues on the website.
- Attended Disability House Meeting and thanked attendees and lifts will hopefully be fixed and more information around alternative accessible routes are available.
- There will be a Study Recharge fest in April and will be working with Student Wellbeing Service on better signposting for students.

International Students Officer – Jessie Yeung

- Has been on Bristol SU's submission on International Student Levy and Earned Settlement lobbying, advocating for international students against government hostility towards migrants.
- Launched a letter to write to your MP to get students voice heard nationally, to show politicians that students are key players in democracy.
- Continuing work with the Mumbai Enterprise Campus to see what will be offered and what that campus will look like, ensuring that student wellbeing and student experience are at the forefront.
- Secured more support for students with English as an Additional Language: now 4 additional EAL teachers.
- Secured 10k funding for Chinese international student in engineering school, those findings will be used to support international students further.
- Jessie has written an update after consulting with students regarding arms trade companies.
- There will be an Anti-Racism Definition motion, has been working on bringing these into important universities committees to further embed this work.
- There was a 1-1 work with international students from migrant backgrounds.

Sport and Student Development Officer – Ella Lovibond

- Derby Day, the biggest sports competition will be on the 18th of March.
- Secured another round of funding for the Injury Support Group
- Ella is working on alternative options to the University Crest (featuring Colston dolphin) for sports kits SU Shield.

Student Living Officer – Lucy Pears

- Looking to give back to students with the SU Hatch, looking into loyalty cards for students.
- Expanding swap shop/ pantry – there will be an upcoming poll to get students opinions.
- Swap shop will be opening at Langford.
- LP showcases ongoing work around housing; there are now more affordable beds for students.

Questions for Officers:

Q: What will study spaces look like in Temple Quarters?

KP answers: More study spaces, looking at a booking system for Temple Quarters. There will be bookable study pods, group spaces, adjustable lights and quiet zones. Still waiting to find out any further information.

Q: Timetabling changes for students with disabilities and commuters- are there considerations for accessible location when placing lectures for disabled students?

MS answers: Yes, this has been raised as part of the timetabling optimisation project. The university has not been considering this but there will be a series of quality control to see which builds that are assigned to students are accessible.

Q: Accommodation – is there a reason that bus passes has been taken away for those living far away from campus?

LP answers: The university has stopped this due to it being expensive, we have not managed to get it reinstated but is now being consolidated into getting more support for students. Lucy has been doing regional lobbying with southwest SU's around buses and urges students to campaign and complaint to university about the buses.

Q: Guarantor services: housing hands still has a lot of drawbacks of guarantor services; one being needing a co-signer.

LP answers: Aware of issues with housing hands. Have previously tried to push to university to provide its own guarantor scheme, will be meeting Housing hands to discuss this issue. We are exploring Bristol SU making their own guarantor scheme, will be a long process. We are putting pressure on Rent Guarantor and Housing Hands to improve their services and lower prices. Encouraging students to send this feedback to Lucy.

End of question time – Chair directs students to email officers if they have any additional questions.

Policy Renewals

Supporting Trans & Non-Binary Students and Campaigning for Gender Justice

Proposer Speech:

Statistics about abysmal trans healthcare waiting list. Leads to expensive or risky access to healthcare for trans people. It is a national and international crisis. This policy has been in place for the past three years and has led to support such as Gender Expression Fund, lobbying student health services, lobbied to allow students to change their names more easily. This policy will ensure that the SU continues to work with supporting trans students.

No Speech Against

No Questions

Vote: 4 abstentions, rest in favour

Policy is renewed

Muslim Prayer Room

Proposer Speech

Proposer has been working with Katie for a few years, and overall work has been ongoing for upwards of 7 years prior with the goal being creating a permanent praying room for Muslim students. The required space must be accessible as students need to pray multiple times a day and must adequate capacity for 800+ Muslim students at Bristol. University has proposed for students to go to local mosques but there are none near enough to campus for students to attend prayer time and lectures. Want SU to continue with supporting to deliver these spaces.

No Speech Against

Questions:

Q: As this is an ongoing motion, what have been the barrier to achieving accessible and adequate praying spaces?

A: This is the question we have been asking the university, they have not been acting and thus having to renew the Motion to sustain pressure.

W: Would the focus be on getting one space for everyone, or multiple spaces spread across campus?

A: Main goal is to have an appropriate and adequate space that houses all Muslim students.

Q: Why aim for one central space, was there research conducted to see if it was better in one location or spread across?

A: The smaller spaces across the university cannot accommodate the number of students who need access prayer space.

Q: Is there anything the wider student body can do to make sure this campaign is heard and supported?

A: Yes, the Islamic Soc page is where campaigning will be happening, check it out.

Vote: unanimous in favour

Policy renewed

Sanctuary Scholarship Legal Fund

Proposer Speech:

University of Bristol of Sanctuary. Asylum seekers face a variety of barriers to accessing education and support. Study bans have a huge negative impact on students attending the university as Sanctuary Scholars. The legal aid support fund allows students to access legal aid that they would otherwise not be able to afford. The policy allows the SU to commit to fundraising to continue this fund and to support sanctuary students.

No speech against

Questions:

Q: Why do students receive study bans?

A: Immigration enforcement sometimes cuts short asylum cases, rescinding the right to study in the UK, so receive a study bans. This fund allows for these students to receive legal support to appeal such bans.

Q: How will the university fight the immigration laws when it is a legal and national problem, not a university specific one.

A: Question goes beyond this policy, but Jessie can discuss. We are lobbying MPs such as Carla Denyer to push back against anti-immigration sentiment and policy. Jessie encourages students to get politically involved, writing MP letters and registering to vote. Many international students can register to vote, make our voices heard.

Q: How many students require the fund and support; how many students does the fund support?

A: Jessie not allowed to disclose but confident that through fundraising, we can support students who need it.

Speech against motion:

Many people that need more support are local Bristol residents. Students who receive study ban may have come to the UK illegally.

Proposer replies:

This policy renewal is specifically about the legal fund, as an SU we can only support UoB students, there are lots of people who need support, but this fund is specific to this issue. There are a lot of other organisations that support local group such as STAR.

Jessie adds that the far-right rhetoric is damaging, nobody wants to leave their home country, they come here for support and to access education and deserve support.

Vote

One against

No abstention

Rest in favour

Policy renewed

Motions

Raising Awareness for gambling harms on campus

Proposer Speech:

There are a lot of students who are turning to gambling to deal with stresses. They are experiencing serious harm; missing lectures and their mental health is deeply impacted. Gambling harms are barely on the radar whilst alcohol and drugs are. This motion is not about judgement, but about awareness and support. Proposer is asking the union to implement the following actions: recognise gambling harm, partner with gambling awareness organisation, working with university wellbeing services, and work alongside societies to increase awareness and provide resources. They want to embed information in SU communication, work with gambling charities to develop training for SU staff, officer and society leaders. They want to create a judgment free space to support student who may be struggling with this issue and get ahead of the curve to support students early before reaching a point of crisis.

No speech against

Questions

Q: Are there any considerations for how this can affect student groups such as Poker Society.

A: Not currently planning for how this interacts as the issue is not with gambling itself. We want to raise awareness for the harms that can stem from gambling – not to prevent it.

Q: Gambling online and digitally, it is a quickly changing landscape, how to can the SU support and ensure that relevant advice is being given.

A: Will work with gambling support organisations who have expertise in these areas.

Q: What are the motivations for this motion?

A: I have worked in bookmakers and saw some of the harmful impacts of gambling. When speaking to affected groups, they started when they were at university and this can be a good point of intervention.

Vote

Unanimous vote in favour

Motion passed

Reverse Cuts to Medical Leave for Part-Time PhD Students funded by UoB Scholarship

Proposer speech:

Raising awareness of discriminatory policy regarding medical leave for part time students. Part time PHD students receive much less medical leave access compared to full time students. The changes are financial exclusion with many part time students having protected characteristics and this will disproportionately affect women, people with disabilities. There has also been a lack of communication that medical leave has been cut, has not been clearly communicated for part time students and has also been applied retrospectively. Proposer wants to SU to support their lobbying and call for ethical medical leave for all students regardless of their studies.

No one speaks against motion.

Questions:

Q: What was the universities justification for this change?

A: There was no justification given nor was report conducted to reach this decision. This came from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

Q: How can the wider student body support?

A: Go to Instagram @uob_ndpgr and sign our petition.

Q: Can you research while on medical leave?

A: No, while on medical leave, you do not have the energy or are capable to do research. This means that a lack of medical leave impacts your research outcomes. It also endangers students' source of income, as they are forced to take unpaid leave.

Q: Can there be any potential legal issues with retrospectively applying this policy?

A: We are starting by trying to get the university to understand the issue and removing the policy. If they do not, we can escalate and be more forceful and potentially pursue legal pressure if that does not work. The purpose of the motion is to allow the SU to work with UCU to push against these cuts,

Speech against motion:

130 days is more than 1/3 of the year, if you are unable to do research while on medical leave then the money should be spent elsewhere. People could find funding from other sources.

Proposer responds:

PhD stipend is less than minimum wage, and this is our job we are paid for. The issue at hand at hand is the inequitable treatment of part-time student's vs full-time; your feelings about whether PhD students should be paid is another issue.

Vote

One against

Rest in favour

Motion passed.

Regulate the use of Generative AI in Bristol SU to safeguard students and their futures

Chair: we have suggestion to split the motions into two parts, action 1 and 2 are separate from action 3. The debate will be whether to split the motions.

Proposer speech:

Proposer gives background on Generative AI, such as ChatGPT and asking the SU to create guidance around using AI safely and ethically. AI has disastrous environmental effect including the use of water and mining of minerals and that is set to double by 2030 and is also damaging the livelihoods of those in the creative industries. The motion is not about banning AI but creating resources and support on the topic. Also wants to survey students and use this to inform the SU's support around AI, and to use that information to lobby the university.

Speech against splitting the motion into parts:

The motion would not be productive as they feed into each other. Action 2 is about the SU gathering feedback from students, finding out what they think about AI. Action 2 is about asking whether university can fund the research and any findings used can be used to negotiate with the University.

Speech for splitting motion into parts:

Action 3 focuses more on teaching and assessments and is not in line with the purpose of this motion which appears to be wellbeing and sustainability. Assessment and teaching should be taken separately so that can be spoken about more in depth. AI is now a part of teaching and assessment and does not want to jeopardise the motion, focus should be on wellbeing and ethical use of AI.

First proposer:

The motion is not solely about wellbeing – it covers a range of issues. We can't separate the ethical use of AI from the use of it in assessment and teaching.

For splitting motion:

We should discuss the use of AI in wellbeing and teaching, but these are two separate things. Voting to split is about having more time to discuss and elaborate on the ideas.

Against splitting the motion:

Ethics and wellbeing are strongly linked to academics; you cannot separate these. It's valid that it's important to have an in-depth discussion, but this doesn't mean that this should be separated out.

Vote on whether to split the motion into parts:

Majority vote not to split the motions

Speech proposing the motion (as a whole)

The motion is not about telling students what they can or can't do with AI, it is about finding out what we think as students the SU's policy and guidance on AI should be. AI is very present in our society, so it is important, so it's past due to have guidance and support from the SU.

No speech against

Questions:

Q: How would the research be structured? PGR students have a very different outlook when it comes to assessments and AI therefore will have a different guideline on how to use AI – would you look at the use of AI spitting out taught and research students?

A: we've not planned out the research yet, but this could be considered as an important aspect of the research. Research would get account from all student bodies.

Q: on action 3 – what feedback do you hope to gather? How students use AI – any other aspect?

A: Aim is to gain an understanding of how students use AI, and how they view it. The purpose is to inform the SU's guidance, and how the SU works with the Uni on this. We'd want to gather a broad range of feedback.

Q: Once the research is done, what would the pipeline towards action be?

A: One of the challenges is that the motion at AMM doesn't necessarily create policy such as a ban on using AI creatively – it would use the feedback to create resources for students, and to inform the SU on how to communicate with the University on this.

Vote

7 abstentions

1 against

Rest in favour on motion

Motion passed

Any Other Business

- Chair reminds students that election nominations close tomorrow
- The SU is also running a referendum on whether we should stay affiliated with NUS UK and if anyone is interested in campaigning, to come to speak to Chair