

Agenda

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Minutes

1. Introduction to AMM

- Chair welcome
- Largest democratic event at the SU, chance for all students to vote
- Will hear about officer team, affiliations
- Housekeeping
- Kind and respectful debate
- Democratic Standards Committee (DSC) will moderate the debate
 - Also available for any procedural questions
- Motion submission process
 - DSC (elected students) make decisions about which motions that are submitted reach the AMM meeting
 - Amendments can be submitted in the run up
 - Now the motions (with or without) amendments are up for discussion and voting

2. Updates from Elected Officers

Katie Poyner – Union Affairs

- Society Forums: following the format of club captain meetings. 2 hour meetings, to discuss any issues you're having as committee members.
- Visited Westminster last week: working on guarantors, and maintenance loans. The campaign started by York SU, open letter to Rachel Reeves. Secured Evelyn Welch's backing on this. Working towards geographical variation in maintenance loans.
- Working on previous motions from student democratic meetings, including end to the forced swim test which was voted on at Student Council in November.
- No Questions for Katie

Ella Lovibond – Sport and Student Development

- Derby Day: big sporting event with participants from different universities
- BeActive parasport takeover week
- Launched the Injury Support Group: secured funding, it launches this week. Community for students to meet who are having similar experiences with injury. Meetings with sports psychologist. Can join through UoB active app.
- No Questions for Ella

Lucy Pears – Student Living

- Working towards bus service to Coombe Dingle for TB2 elections
- Working on financial support for laundry
- Epigram Break the Mould campaign
- SU Housing Advice Service
- Working on the SU Climate Action Plan
- Motion coming up on Rent Guarantors
- No Questions for Lucy

Bakhtawar Javed – International Students

- Bak's last AMM!
- International Student Survey with RGSU open now!
 - Please fill in or share
- Campaigning against the existence of rental guarantors – spoke on behalf of students at Westminster
- Conducted focus groups on International Student Support and Experience – report is finished and being circulated
- Working on streamlining arrivals for international students. University launched a coach service for students to travel to Bristol.

- No questions for Bak

Linlu Ye – Equality, Liberation and Access Officer

- Working with Ella on the parasport takeover starting 7th March
- Facilitating reparative futures event – round table event tackling racism in the university
- Working with student on anti-Palestinian racism definition motion that was brought to student council in November
- Successfully lobbied the university to begin 3 month trial of free period products on campus (Senate, Richmond, Beacon, ASSL)
- No questions for Linlu

Mia Stevens – Undergraduate Education

- Assessment feedback – held focus groups, presented to Teaching Excellence Framework Board. Calling for faster release of assessment feedback, and time to discuss marking criteria. This has been approved and should be starting to be implemented.
 - Instituted feedback champions (?) to bring student perspective in these conversations on improving feedback
- Personal tutoring – met with senior staff to share experiences with personal tutoring. The university has drawn up new models to begin next year, including timetabled meetings, increased academic support, time to supplement curriculum.
- Question: what are your thoughts on using AI for assessment feedback?
- Answer: This is something I asked about in focus groups – there was a range of responses to this. The university is looking at this particularly in more empirical subjects. This is an ongoing discussion at various university committees.
- Question: some schools moved away from personal tutors to study support – has this been a part of conversations on it?
- A: schools who've moved towards timetabled group sessions supplementing curriculum, where the role is redefined to be more academically focussed, with wellbeing support then being directed more from trained wellbeing staff in wellbeing services
- Question (same person): the size of the study support team relative to the school – this means it can be difficult to get in touch with the pastoral support team. Problem with waiting times.
- A: (Lucy Pears, SLO) the wellbeing process has moved to self-referral, so waiting times shouldn't be more than 3 days.
- Question: how can we be a feedback champion?

- Answer: these have been recruited now for the current roles, but it's an ongoing project that will continue next year. The existing champions are always looking to work with students on this.
- Question: assessment feedback coming faster – when will this be implemented?
- Answer: the restructuring of the year impacted assessment feedback this year, but hopefully faster feedback (15 days) should be implemented for TB2.
- Question (same person): any consideration for joint honours students – I only have one personal tutor in one of my subjects.
- Answer: I'll bring this up in the next meeting.
- Question: 2nd yr undergraduate music – small course, our course affected by universities system that units must have 12 people. Means that we are having to do compulsory units and have no choice
- Answer: this is a really live discussion – understand how frustrating this is when you come to university wanting to make choices among the range of units.

Gurvin Chopra – Postgraduate Education

- Part-time work fair: highlighting job opportunities within the university and the city that are accessible to students. Trying to alleviate stress of job searching
- Culture change: trying to ensure that staff understand that working is a necessity for students to pay rent etc. Highlighting the skills being gained through part-time work, and support for those working part-time. Highlighting student experiences to staff.
- Borrow a Blazer scheme has been launched – this is where if you need a blazer for an interview etc, you can access on the careers website
- Looking into self-plagiarism issues that PGR students are experiencing
- Question: timetable management – we have a gap in our timetables and then have to come back onto campus for late lectures.
- Answer: we've been talking about this with the university – hopefully should be resolved by next year
- Question: (same person) uni stationery shop?
- Answer: please email me on this and I can see if I can support

1. Intro to Trustees

Kreeshi to introduce trustees and Byelaw 10/affiliations

- Bristol SU governed by trustees: officers, student trustees, external co-opted trustees, nominated trustee – they ensure the SU complies with the law and charitable objectives

- Ensuring students are at the heart of what the SU does
- Ensuring the SU remains financially stable
- Taking legal and operational decisions
- Trustees aren't involved in day-to-day running, but are responsible for it
- Please nominate yourself in the upcoming elections!
- No questions on this

2. Byelaw 10 approval

- Changed our complaints policy through the code of conduct review. Changes to byelaw 10 to refer to complaints policies and election rules. Approved by the trustee board. Explains that complaints are dealt with under these two policies rather than in the byelaw

Questions on the byelaw 10 approval

Question: what are we voting on?

Answer: (chair) whether we change this byelaw. Byelaws govern how the SU runs.

Question: would this require 2/3 majority to pass?

Answer: Yes.

Question: looking through the original byelaw – about appeals for complaints – is this covered under the other policies?

Answer: yes, they've just been moved to other areas

Question: (repeat of the previous question)

Answer: the change has come about to make our complaints process more effective, please email if you'd to discuss further.

Answer: (Chair) there is still an appeals process – it has just moved to the other policies out of this byelaw.

Question: summary of the differences?

Answer: no actual change to the substance of the rules – we are just moving it out of the byelaw and into other policies.

Moving to a vote:

Majority approve the update, update passes.

3. Affiliations

- Trustees are responsible for approving affiliations between the SU and other organisations
- Question: What is Avonmouth Old Boys, £2000?
- Answer: a rugby group.

Vote:

Majority approve the affiliations, affiliations pass.

4. Debate Process Demonstration

5. Motion 1: Championing the Wellbeing of Student Groups

Proposer: Ella Lovibond Seconder: Katie Poyner

Proposer speech: putting wellbeing at the heart of student groups. Importance of having a dedicated person in each student group who focuses on wellbeing. These roles often already exist but are not standardised and therefore don't receive support. They will not be therapists, but rather checking on group members and signposting towards support. Groups will have flexibility to decide how this is implemented best tailored to your group. We are making the change as seamless as possible for committee members. This isn't about creating more work, but rather creating more support for the students already doing this work.

Technical issue with mentimeter, in person questions

Question: do we then need 5 people on the committee?

Answer: no, it can be combined with another role.

Question: what would training for these roles entail?

Answer: we currently have SU training already – support pack and resources. Importance of supporting people in these roles, ensure that it's not a therapist role.

Question: will there be additional funding for wellbeing events in student groups

Answer: this is a great idea – doesn't relate to this motion specifically but we can feed back this idea

Question: how fluid is the implementation?

Answer: yes it's designed to be as flexible as possible, and can change from year to year.

Question: reaffiliation means selecting 4 core roles – will the system allow this? Our equalities officer is already combined with another role.

Answer: I agree that the reaffiliations portal is often a nightmare – it should definitely work, but we will also ensure there is support with the process.

Question: soc constitutions – the motion says minor changes. Are there considerations for the process of making these changes?

Answer: we will work with the Student Development team to make sure it's easy to change.

No speeches against the motion, will move to vote.

Vote:

Vote majority in favour, motion passes.

6. BREAK

7. Policy Renewal: Lobbying an in-house guarantor scheme

Proposer: Lucy Pears Seconder: Bakhtawar Javed

Proposer speech: This is already policy I've been working on. 28% of students in this country have experienced homelessness, and 14% of these have been international students. The rental market is particularly difficult for international students who don't have a UK based guarantor. We want the university to take responsibility for supporting students.

Question: what is an in-house guarantor?

Answer: guarantors commit to paying if a student is unable to pay their rent. An in-house guarantor would mean that the university takes this role. Examples of this from other universities – only one case of a student who couldn't pay, at which point the university was able to give them the necessary pastoral support and agree a repayment plan.

Question: all students or just international?

Answer: this would be for all students! It affects international students disproportionately though. Also other marginalised groups are especially impacted.

Question: Could this have negative effects on their studies if they can't pay?

Answer: No – it would be about support.

Question: what progress has already been made in lobbying on this?

Answer: I've been working with Bristol Fair Rent campaign to write up NGO statements to influence government work. We've been having regular meetings with the university. We are exploring options for the SU to become the guarantor in order to bypass difficulties at the university.

Q: Would the university be able to act as a guarantor for private accommodation?

Answer: yes.

Q: Is it free?

Answer: I would be pushing for it to be free.

Vote:

Majority in favour, motion passes.

8. Policy Renewal: Supporting students who have experienced Sexual Misconduct

Proposer: Linlu Ye Seconder: Lucy Pears

Proposer speech: this motion is about supporting students. It has been passed but is due to expire. A past survey said 40% women felt unsafe walking home at night compared to 19% men; 52% of women had experienced sexual harassment. The university has created a new Sexual Violence Liaison Officer team to deal with the issue. Working on SHAG week campaign. Want to renew the motion to keep up work on this area.

Questions:

Question: what are the clear actions taken?

Answer: the motion dictates the SU works towards an SVLO team. Also consent training and bystander training.

Q: was the university not supporting students who had gone through this before?

A: No – the SVLO team used to sit within the wellbeing service, but now they have a dedicated team with more staff and resources. The wellbeing process used to be lengthy and complicated. The new team is dedicated to this issue.

Q: What policies have you introduced to make women feel safe walking home at night?

A: Bristol Nights campaign around the city. Lift the curfew events – such as to enable women to go running at night.

Q: what is bystander training?

A: training SU and university staff to help prevent harassment and assault.

Q: Why was Bristol Uni named by Everyone's United?

A: (Lucy Pears, SLO) I'm not sure why in particular, this is something that happens everywhere. We won't deny that there's a problem, but it's not specific to Bristol.

Vote:

Majority in favour, motion passes.

9. Policy Renewal: Fossil Free Careers

Proposer: Lucy Pears Second: Trixie Panatti-Reeve

Proposer speech: example of this policy in action – BP wanted to work with the SU and was denied due to this motion.

Trixie: concerns about connection to fossil fuel companies with the uni. This contradicts sustainability credentials of the uni. Oil and gas companies huge impact on the environment, driving climate crisis. Climate crisis impacts most on those who contribute to it least. Highlighting support from students to promoting ethical careers.

Questions

Q: Does this policy apply to all careers within the companies, or just careers involved in fossil fuel extraction?

A: all companies listed on the Carbon Underground 200 list. Not specific on careers, but on the companies.

Q: does this include environmental impact of arms companies?

A: not covered in this motion, but is covered in other work by the officers (SLO)

Q: Does this policy infringe on students' rights to explore employment opportunities?

A: No – students can be proactive still to find job opportunities. Also the policy is already in action. The university is an independent body - the motion dictates the actions of the SU and the work of the full-time officer team.

Q: does it stop societies partnering with oil and gas companies?

A: Complex – stops them from using the logo, but not encountered issues with this in the past. I don't think so, it's more to dictate the SU's lobbying.

Vote:

Majority in favour of the motion, motion passes.

Break

10. Motion 2: Implement recycling soft / flexible plastic at Bristol University

Proposer: Anna-Rose Pearce Second: Ned Gardner-Thorpe

Seconder speech: single use plastics that are used for a range of purposes, they need to be recycled in a specific way – usually only at big supermarkets. This means that they don't get recycled, or people have to expend a lot of time and energy to recycle them. Other universities have a scheme for recycling these, and the motion asks the SU to lobby the university to work with the council on implementing this. Looking to make an amendment to the motion later on to increase the push for bins in different places.

Questions: Where will you send the soft plastic to be recycled?

Answer: to the council. I don't know the answer on the specifics of how this would work. The motion aims to make life easier for students – for the university to work with the council.

Q: will this just be in SU spaces or university buildings as well?

Answer: the motion says accommodation. As it stands, probably just catered kitchens, but later down the line would aim to bring it to more places.

Q: why doesn't this motion cover more than the university accommodation?

A: issues with the writing/submission of motions/amendments. We'd hope to extend this later.

Q: how will you signpost the bins

A; the motion dictates a poster to explain the system

Q: how would the collection area and procedure be carried out?

A: a bin - the council would deal with the procedure beyond this

Q: why just soft plastics?

A: they need to be separated in order to allow them to be recycled.

Vote:

Majority in favour of the motion, motion passes.

11. Motion 3: Transition to Sustainable and Affordable Catering as a Students Union by Adopting a Plant-Based Menu

Proposer: Agnes Sales Secunder: Nathaniel Joyce

Proposer speech: Bristol can, through gradual changes, make a huge climate impact. The university prides itself on sustainability. But the climate impact of animal agriculture is frequently overlooked. We need to transition to plant based food system to stay below 2 degree warming. This campaign has support from Carla Denyer, the Green Party MP for Bristol. Universities can act as a leader in making this change. Source can improve

particularly on the expensive prepackaged food. Aim to increase amount of affordable prepackaged plant based food in university spaces. Want to make plant based food more accessible. Want to set an example for other universities to follow.

Questions

Question: Will meat options still be available?

A: Yes. This motion focusses specifically on prepackaged food. Focus on increasing plant based options and making them more affordable, not restricting meat options. The SU doesn't control catering, the motion just dictates that the SU lobbies the university.

Q: doesn't mandate 100% plant based?

A: no, just wanting to expand and make more accessible plant based options

Q: how would it support packed lunches, or work during international food fairs?

A: the motion's only impact on student groups would be through accreditation.

Q: endorsing plant based universities campaign?

A: not necessarily endorsement of the whole campaign – specific at Bristol to expanding prepackaged options.

Debate

Opposing Speech

Cheaper plant-based food doesn't increase sustainability as there will be more processing infrastructure needed for vegetables. There's nothing wrong with eating meat. We already have vegan options at university spaces – the cost is only £1 different, so it will not make a huge difference.

Speech for

I support this motion for its climate impact. But it will help people right now – demand on water for growing animal feed has a huge impact. More affordable food would also have a positive impact. This motion helps students to make choices to stay nourished, while leaving enough for everyone else.

Speech against

Critiquing the motion rather than speaking against it. It's not as straightforward as plants=good, animals=bad. 'Source' is sourced from local farms, we can't just replace this farmland with plants.

Speech for (Lucy Pears, SLO)

Talking about operational aspects of the motion. I agree that prepackaged plant based options are overpriced. While they may seem marginal price differences, they have an impact. I am already in my role working on these issues – the motion is in line with student priorities.

Speech against

Talking about food provenance and meat consumption: the use of land for arable or other farming varies wildly. On the point of water consumption – stopping consumption of local meat will not have a large impact on water availability in sub-Saharan (?) countries.

Speech to delay the motion

Want to delay on the basis of outside political influence. My concern is the involvement of an outside political party telling us how to vote – we are a politically neutral organisation [This was with reference to support from Carla Denyer mentioned in the proposing speech]

Speech against delaying the motion

I agree, the SU shouldn't be affiliated with any political party. The reason I mentioned Carla Denyer's support of the campaign is to show that people with expertise in the area support this motion, it doesn't mean endorsing anything that any political party does. We want to talk to anyone with any concerns or questions about the campaign.

Vote to delay the motion:

Majority against delaying the motion, will move to vote on the motion now

Vote on the motion:

Majority in favour of the motion, motion passes.

12. Motion 4: Extending the eligibility criteria for students doing non-modular professional programmes as second undergraduate degrees.

Proposer: Naryce Anderson Seconder: Susie Webster

Proposer speech: Students undertaking their first undergraduate degree can access a bursary, that those who are on their second degree cannot access. There is a programme within the veterinary school that you can only take if it is your second undergraduate degree so we want to extend the financial support for these students. One of the criteria for the bursary is that you must have a tuition loan, which we cannot access. It would make a huge difference to students having to work on top of an accelerated vet degree. It's hard to meet the requirements of the course if working alongside it.

Questions

Q: where will additional funds come from, will other things need to be cut?

A: this bursary comes from the university, nothing would need to be cut. There's only 50-60 people on the course, about 30 of them international who wouldn't be eligible, and only a small number of the remaining home students would be eligible.

Q: would financial support for those doing mandatory placements be extended to 5 year as well as intensive programmes?

A: this is really important that this support would be more widely available

Vote:

Majority in favour of the motion, motion passes.

13. Any Other Business

- a. TB2 Elections