

STUDENT COUNCIL MINUTES

15.10.2026

Item	Owner	Timing
Welcome	Chair	5 min (17:05)
Intro to Student Council	Chair	10 min (17:15)
Ratification of previous minutes	Chair	5 min (17:20)
FTO Updates	Full-Time Officers	30 min (17:40)
Motions		
Showers in the Richmond Building	Motion Proposer, Chair	15 min (17:55)
AOB	Chair	
Expression of Dissatisfaction	Chair/Proposer	10 min (18:05)
END / SAMOSAS		
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 19:00.	19:30	

Welcome and Intro

- Chair welcomes attendees
- Safety information and housekeeping
- Chair displays the Code of Conduct
- Shares microphone etiquette
- Outlines the process for debate, speeches, Democratic Standards Committee, and voting

Ratification of previous minutes

- Chair explains that we will vote to ratify the minutes from the previous Council. Minutes were sent out ahead of time, and no contestations to these were received.

Vote: Majority votes to approve the minutes, minutes approved.

FTO Updates

Jessie - International Students Officer

- Free English support for international students. The pilot run was successful, so these resources are now available. There will be additional workshops to supplement oversubscribed workshops.
- Free cooking classes and cheap grocery at the Multifaith Chaplaincy. This is part of the Officers' Priority to fight student poverty.
- Working with other South West England SUs on transport and night time safety. Working to strengthen regional collaborations and increase our political lobbying potential.
- National SUs work: Fighting for more equitable International student experience, from graduate visa to UKVI visa refunds to the incredibly racist and xenophobic visa brake.
- Working on various social and climate justice initiatives - including right to protest, supporting Palestinian students, transparency in defence companies partnership, climate mitigation and sustainability.
- Update about UKVI visa refund here: has worked with MP Carla Denyer's caseworker, NUS and other Students leaders at Russell Group students Union more on the UKVI refund. We have updated our guidance on applying for refunds.

Sharan - Postgraduate Education Officer

- Hosted Postgraduate Research students Symposium
- Held a workshop for postgraduate taught students working on their dissertations over the summer period.
- Met hundreds of students during Welcome Week and Welcome Fair! Was loads of fun and I look forward to meeting more students at 'PG Explore' events throughout the year. These will allow postgraduate students to try new activities. Postgraduate students can feed in to what these programmes will look like.
- Have interviewed and supported the Induction for the new cohort of Feedback Engagement Fellows! They will be working on 6 teams in groups to improve feedback culture within the University.

- With Jordan, has been speaking with university stakeholders in our various committees about our priorities for the year to see if there are shared interests and determine how we can work collaboratively.
- Have been taking part in Assessment Design Workshops in different schools to bring forth the student voice and am trying to get more course reps involved in this work! If you're interested in representing students' academic interests, please do reach out so we can connect you with the relevant organizers!
- Office for Students (OfS) panel (Students in Series) for 90+ OfS staff to highlight the Bristol student experience and talk about how cost of living affects students engagement in classes/ extracurriculars.
- Presented at the University Executive Board (UEB) Conference with fellow officers on our goals for the year and agreed on actions with University leadership to improve the student experience through championing academic confidence, empowering our communities and fighting student poverty.

Becky - Sport and Student Development Officer

- Looking at reducing barriers to participation: worked with Sports, Exercise and Health (SEH) to put QR codes with "how to" videos on all the machines in the gym in the indoor sports centre and to make the option for booking a free gym induction when buying a membership easier on the website.
- Working hard with the SEH to launch the Comeback Community (re-vamp of the previous Injury Support Group). We ran educational workshops with coaches and club captains last week and then the first session with Connor Grant, the Mental Fitness and Wellbeing Consultant is on the 16th of October, 3-4pm in the Indoor Sports Centre with free coffee at Source after! Please contact Becky at su-sport-development@bristol.ac.uk for more details and to get involved!
- Working with the SU development team to launch the Sports Social Secs Hub (launch on the 20th of October), a space where social secs can share ideas for socials and be equipped to run a fun, safe and inclusive socials, both with and without alcohol.
- Lobbying the university to explore ways in which students can be rewarded for walking to mitigate (but not solve) student frustrations around between campuses, accommodation and extra-curricular venue travel.
- Working with the officers to research student travel patterns to work with the university for them to provide support to students that directly fit students needs.

Varenya - Union Affairs Officer

- Piloting the launch of paid society ambassadors! Varenya worked alongside the Development team to recruit and train 9 society ambassadors across 5 society categories. They will host society forums over the coming weeks and escalate the feedback. Society forums have free food, so come along to give us feedback, gain an accreditation point, and socialise with other committee members! You can view your ambassadors here: [Society Ambassadors @ Bristol SU](#)
- Lobbying the university to open a new Living Room in the Richmond Building. With balloon cafe no longer operating in the evening, a new Living Room will be a third space for students to socialise and commuter students to relax between lectures.
- Working with the university to open more activity spaces! This will run alongside bringing together the innumerable booking systems into one central webpage where you can view the capacity, facilities, and availability of the room before you book.
- Collaborating with the university to open one new sensory room on campus and exploring how to make libraries more sensory-friendly!
- Working on the SU Badge with the Uni's marketing team, to replace the University Crest, and remove the Colston Dolphin
- Successfully negotiated to keep the Hawthorns Hatch running

Jasper - Equality, Liberation and Access Officer

- Black History Month: Jasper has helped to put in place a range of events, including shea butter workshop, Stapleton Road shopping Street Tour which was led by Jessie and him, career and leadership panel which we've invited Black alumni to come share their experiences with current students and a movie night which will be happening in our new living room at temple quarter.
- Have secured a budget from the university to run more events next year.
- Working with the university on a campaign that is focused on mental health, positive masculinity, consent matters and exploring ways to get our students involved as active bystanders. Goal is to ensure that it's an all-year-round campaign.

Elliot - Student Living Officer

- Negotiated to keep running the Hawthorns Hatch for this year, with affordable meals. Continuing to look at expanding the availability of affordable food on campus.
- Swap Shop in Living Room 1 has been expanded, plus a new one opened at the Sloane Robinson SU Living Room. Working on improving these further with a wider variety of food.

- Met with the university's Climate Action Committee to discuss how to implement their Climate Action Plan, as well as the possibility of creating an SU specific Climate Action Plan.
- Looking at the best way to set up a guarantor scheme for students, including it being SU-owned rather than University-owned, and securing funding for the Housing Hand Scheme to continue in the meantime.
- Meeting with both Fairshare and Hungry Caterpillar to look at how we can support them both to provide students with sustainable and affordable food. Close to an agreement with Fairshare to add leftover supermarket food to the swap shop
- Met with the National Union of Students to start planning a campaign around pushing for maintenance loans that reflect the actual cost of living in the area you study in. For example, the maintenance loan doesn't match with how expensive Bristol is to live in.
- Meeting with the accommodation team to discuss the rent setting process, to ensure the university continues not to profit off accommodation, and looking at ways to better match students to rooms in line with their budgets.
- The officer team are reaching out to nearby Student Unions (UWE, Bath, Bath Spa) to collectively lobby for affordable and effective bus transportation in the region.

Jordan – Undergraduate Education Officer

- Speaking with university stakeholders in our various university committees about our priorities for the year to see if there are shared interests and determine how we can work collaboratively.
- Continued supporting personal tutoring changes at the university, with the pilot scheme expanding to more schools. Working on the basis of a motion previously passed at student council.
- Launched recruitment for Feedback Engagement Fellows, creating paid opportunities for students to help improve assessment and feedback across the university. We now have more than 20 paid students to be involved!
- Timetabling! The university is dedicated to release teaching timetables 2 weeks prior to the start of the teaching block, starting from September 2027. Jordan is part of the monitoring group to make sure the backend is on track to match our ambition!
- Been part of assessment design workshops to explore active learning and the assessment structures in this technologically advanced era.

- Organised the inaugural commuter student meet-up during Welcome Week, which had a good turnout. This is a great start to boost academic confidence and stronger communities!
- Initiated new commuter students research to build on existing knowledge (find last year's research piece [here](#)), supported by the university.
- There are lockers for commuter students available in Senate House, as well as day-use lockers at Temple Quarter.
- Brainstormed the establishment of SUs West with the Full-Time Officer Team, we are now working closely with other SUs in the West of England Region to boost experience on transport and commuting.

Questions for Officers

Q: Question for Jordan and Sharan. Would you consider working on resources for students in supplementary years (eg taking modules for half the year, classed as being on suspended studies for part of the year); it's really hard to access university support services (such as disability support and wellbeing services).

A: (Sharan) It's something Jordan and I would be happy to raise with the university, we can take your contact details to talk further about the issue so that we can work on this.

Q: Election campaigning is very tough. There should be a gathering to share appreciation for all reps.

A: (Jessie) Faculty Reps and Student Community Organisers feedback at Student Representatives Assembly. There is a structure of feedback between the different types of reps, so please do talk to your reps.

Q: Could you clarify if the co-chair of the board of trustees is supposed to represent students?

A: I was elected as a student trustee, by the students previously. I have now been elected by students as Union Affairs Officer and feel my previous trustee experience helps me to be a more effective representative and trustee now.

Q: There was a society social at Channings which had an unpleasant/violent feeling. I was wondering how the SU will protect other societies from facing the consequences of the bad behaviour of this and other societies.

A: (Becky) I raised at club captains' forum the issue of Wednesday Nights socials and disruptive and unpleasant behaviour. I'll be feeding this back to the development team as well to look at how we address it.

Q: Question for Union Affairs Officer, re society forums; how often will these be and how much can we engage with other societies at these forums?

A: Each group will have two meetings per year. To feed back to the SU on what works and what changes could be made. I also have 1:1s with society ambassadors before and after these forums, to collect this feedback and act on it. You can contact your society ambassadors with any questions or feedback.

Q: For Jordan, thank you for your work on timetabling. Does this apply to assessment timetables?

A: I have raised issues with assessment timetables with the university. They claim this is more complex, we are looking to improve this in the future, but will be a longer process. Feel free to contact me, or your course reps, to feed back your thoughts on assessment timetables.

Q: Transparency on closure of the Merchant Ventures building – it has affected students and wondering why and what is done to mitigate this, especially for evening study space.

A: (Jordan) restructuring of university spaces due to introduction of Temple Quarter. I am in conversation with Campus Division about this. I will be giving updates at upcoming democratic meetings.

Q: Please elaborate on new bus arrangements

A: (Jessie) I am a commuter myself, so understand the problems. As an immediate option, you can apply for a bus pass to get a discount, or download FirstBus app for student discount. It's not something we can solve overnight, so we are working on building strong lobbying power among South West SUs. If you have any suggestions or thoughts on more short term changes please get in touch.

Motions

Showers in the Richmond Building

Background

Students joining martial arts societies in the Richmond Building face significant barriers to socialising, due to being unable to shower immediately after training. We are not allowed to use the swimming pool facilities and staff showers; leaving us one singular shower behind the carpenter room, for up to 50 disgustingly sweaty people at a time.

Proposer Speech, Hannah Beetlestone:

I have come straight from a sports society activity, and will be commuting home after this meeting. The choice that students like me have to make is to skip out on activities and engagements or skip out on a shower. Anyone who uses the rooms in this building

for activities faces the same issue. We can't access the pool or staff showers. We are sometimes forced to choose between engaging in activities or lectures, due to lack of showers. There is currently one single shower behind the Carpenter Room, which is not sufficient for the students who use the rooms at the Richmond Building. The university mission statement aims to protect students' comfort. Student hygiene is important for preventing the spread of disease. £240million went into TQ campus, so we are not asking for too much, but instead looking at adapting existing facilities to add showers.

Speech Against: no speech.

Questions

Q: This didn't need a motion – could they not have asked you to put it on the ideas board?

A: Yes, bringing it as a motion helps to create a strong basis to lobby the university.

Q: would you be replacing disabled toilets?

A: no, just adding showers to these (they already have foot washing facilities). Would remain fully functional as disabled toilets.

Q: If hundreds of students are using the shower facilities, this would reduce access to disabled bathrooms.

A: We would also aim to be adding four additional showers to the Carpenter room, and no more than 50 students at a time would be using the facilities when it's not Derby Day, so it wouldn't overwhelm capacity.

Q: Why could you not access existing showers, eg in the sports centre?

A: There are showers in other buildings, but it's about time constraints; we need showers at the location of the activities to allow students to return to lectures or other engagements.

Q: Why not target the building the building where activities are happening. Why can't you use the pool showers?

A: Yes, this building is where we don't have access, and where activities are happening. Because the pool is a separate business, we aren't allowed. Staff showers kept for staff use.

Q: For the disabled toilets, would a disabled person need to wait to use the toilet for someone showering?

A: Would only convert 2 out of 3 toilets on that floor, and there are disabled toilets on other floors as well.

Q: Would 7-8 showers be sufficient capacity?

A: This is aiming to be an initial request, we would hope to build more in future.

Q: Is there a specific order you see the actions of the motion being carried out? Eg, would you build new showers first or convert the existing facilities first?

A: No specific order. Conversion would probably happen faster as it requires less resource.

Q: How would the showers be managed, in terms of cleaning? Will this require additional cleaning staff?

A: I haven't fully considered this. There is one shower already being maintained, but would hope students would respect the facilities.

Q: Re: the additional 7-8 showers – how would the showers be gender segregated?

A: Proposed fully gender-neutral shower facilities.

Vote: 3 Abstentions, no votes against, majority vote in favour. Motion passed.

Any Other Business

Expression of Dissatisfaction

“Council notes the limited number of motions available for debate at this meeting and expresses regret that members had insufficient opportunity to submit items for consideration.”

Proposer Speech, Ned Gardner-Thorpe:

Three questions: if there was insufficient time to submit motions, if this is bad, and whether this motion will change this. The deadline was on the first day of TB1, which was unreasonable, it didn't allow time for freshers to submit motions. We didn't have opportunity to raise items for consideration, particularly around the articles which govern the students' union. This matters whether members can easily or predictably submit motions to be discussed at student council. The rules are made to fit the answers that the SU wants to give. Concerned for students who do not feel able to battle with the system to have their ideas heard.

Speech against, Union Affairs Officer, Varenja Mehrotra:

The schedule was created due to the changed dates of the elections of DSC – this was moved to TB2, so that they could be trained over the summer, and motions that were submitted over the summer could be considered and brought to Student Council 1. Then, motions submitted from the start of term could be brought to Student Council 2 in December. This allows proper time for training and to allow all motions to be brought. If you have any views on this system and think it could be done better, please get in touch, I'd like to hear your feedback.

Questions (for proposer or to the speaker against)

Q: Your first point mentioned that submission deadline start of TB1 doesn't give time, which dismisses the importance of motions submitted over the summer and minimises the effort of the students that study over the summer and wish to submit motions.

A, proposer: I agree that ideas submitted over the summer should be heard. This doesn't mean that we couldn't have had additional motions submitted. We had time for more motions, submitted both over the summer, and during term.

A, speaker against: when motions came in from the start of term, DSC would not have had time and capacity to review all motions before this student council.

Q for proposer: could you clarify how holding student council now discriminates against first year students, when they can still submit them for future democratic meetings?

A, proposer: This would suggest that this meeting is not for freshers, which I disagree with. Freshers could be having issues from the start of term which should be heard. If DSC doesn't have time to consider more than one motion that should be scrutinised.

A, speaker against: Capacity of DSC is to have a two hour meeting that everyone can attend, scrutinise the motions, meeting again with proposers to review amendments – it's an extended and detailed process.

Q for speaker against: Do you not think that this timeline might result in overloaded Student Council 2 and overwhelm DSC capacity then?

A, speaker against: We don't anticipate Student Council 2 being overloaded, but this is the first year we are trialling this schedule of democratic events. If you feel it isn't working well we are open to that feedback and can change it for future.

A, proposer: It's not about DSC's workload, DSC can review more than one motion. They aren't meant to be meeting with the submitters of motions. They are meant to be impartial. There is discrepancy in the type of motions that are brought to student council, eg motions regarding the constitution that are not brought to student council.

Q: I understand the capacity issue for DSC, but had we been given more time, it would be easier to create more concrete motions to submit. Once we'd agreed on the idea we wanted to submit as a society, the deadline had already passed. An extra week would have made a difference for us, and not impacted DSC's schedule.

A, speaker against: That's valuable feedback, to hear how the timeline affected you, we'd love to discuss how this impacted you and look at making changes in the future.

A, proposer: Vote against this motion if you would prefer informal consultation as a method of making change. Student council should be treated as an actual chamber.

Q for proposer: are you aware that we have Student Council 1 in October, Student Council 2 in December, Annual Members Meeting in February, and Student Council 3 in April. Student Representative forums are also available as spaces to raise issues and for elected officers remain accountable? Additionally, DSC being able to work with proposers is important, to ensure that they are adequately prepared for the challenge of speaking at Student Council.

A, proposer: this doesn't address the core point of this expression of dissatisfaction; we shouldn't need to wait three months between meetings. We shouldn't accept that Student Council 1 should be a dud. Saying wait for the next one isn't good enough.

A, speaker against: The next student council isn't three months away, it's in December, before students get busy with assessments. All the motions that have been submitted since the start of term can be brought to this council. But if you're unhappy, you can absolutely discuss this with us.

Q for speaker against: You expressed that we could talk to you outside of student council to make change, but then the proposer of the showers motion was told to bring it to student council – is this not circular?

A, speaker against: The reason to ask students to approach me after council is to make sure that I'm understanding student needs – both in council and in my everyday work. Regarding the showers motion, showers have been actively lobbied for by the officers, the motion has been brought to support this lobbying work and to give us more negotiating power with the university to work on these changes, as it shows that students have democratically decided that this is an important issue.

A, proposer: It is circular in my opinion, as some things are not able to come to student council, and some things that must come to student council. The big level constitutional stuff should be allowed to be brought to council.

Chair clarifies voting process.

Votes are cast, but it is not clear by eye, so Chair asks attendees to cast their votes again to be individually counted.

Votes: 48 in favour, 29 against, 35 abstain

Item passed. Council notes the dissatisfaction.

END