

## Student Council Minutes – 11/12/25

Item	Owner	Timing
Welcome	Chair - LA	5 min (17:05)
Intro to Student Council	Chair	10 min (17:15)
Approval of previous minutes	Chair	5 min (17:20)
FTO Updates	Full-Time Officers	25 min (17:45)
<b>Motions</b>		
Mission Mandir – Bristol Hindu Prayer Room	Motion Proposer, Chair	20 min (18:05)
<b>BREAK – 10 mins</b>		
<b>Motions (cont'd)</b>		
Move Democratic Standards Committee elections into Teaching Block 2	Motion Proposer, Chair	20 min (18:30)
<b>AOB</b>		
Expression of dissatisfaction: Bristol SU Trustee Board Override Student Council decision	Proposer, Chair	20 min (18:50)
Any Other Business	Chair	10 min (19:00)
<b>END / PIZZA</b>		
<b>GUILLOTINE</b> – 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.		<b>19:30</b>

## Welcome

- Introduction from the chair
- Safety information
- Please maintain a respectful debate, and adhere to the code of conduct
- Microphone etiquette

- Democratic Standards Committee available for questions, requests, or procedural questions
  - Student asked about quoracy, Louis confirmed that attendance is being monitored.
- Chair explained voting process
- Order of the motions has been set by DSC, and according to the voting on the ideas board
- DSC has set a guillotine to the meeting at 7:30 – we will still aim to finish by 7pm.

## Intro to Student Council

### Approval of Previous Minutes

- No concerns with previous minutes raised.

### FTO Updates

Union Affairs Officer, Katie's updates put on screen – contact her via email, or raise your question and leave your email so she can respond. Her update read:

- 🦷 Unfortunately, I cannot be at Student Council because I am getting surgery to have my wisdom teeth removed (after being on the NHS waiting list for 3 years!). If you have any questions about my updates – please do email me and I will get back to you when I can.
- I've created an external spaces list – to make finding an activity space for groups easier. From pubs to theatres, the Student Activity Space Finder is now live on the website, see it here: <https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/student-groups/student-activity-space-finder>  
 You can browse venues, see how to book them and update info if something changes. And if your group finds a new spot that works well, add it to the list - so other groups can benefit.  
 \*\*And no businesses pay to be included, and the SU doesn't earn anything from it.
- Signage for the Bristol SU Basement has been installed to make finding the new space I secured easier. You can see it opposite Senate on Woodland Road.
- Society Forums at the start of TB2 (end of Jan), look out for an email from me for dates! In this, I will ask for feedback/edits on the draft society representation structure I'm currently working on, to have societies be able to escalate issues, work together to solve problems and be represented in our byelaws. If you are wanting to know or get involved beyond attending Society Forums, please reach out to me :)

- You can use empty teaching spaces as study spaces – I worked with university to keep these rooms open, so you can use them for silent or group study. See the list and what is available here: <https://www.bris.ac.uk/where-is-my/find/free-room/table>
- I'm also working with the university to increase bookable society spaces, and you can keep up to date with any progress here: [Bristol SU | UEB Agreement](#)

#### Postgraduate Education Officer, Sharan's Updates

- Met with sustainability team, confirmed she can put on a climate fresh workshop. Event for students to think about sustainability in their own lives and with regard to their academics.
- Building postgraduate community and connecting people from different cohorts.
- Focus groups to research how the careers service supports PGR students.
- Financial Assistance Fund is an emergency fund for students in hardship - short term support. She has got the university to increase the amounts granted in each tier.
- Foundational work on disability initiatives. Eg postgraduate research disability forum, university disability work that Linlu is also working on – Sharan has been feeding in PGR experience input to this.
- Events: Postgrad Pints events – have run several of these, and planning more plus a range of other postgraduate events.
- Postgraduate Research study space: this is a key concern, that Sharan has been raising with campus division.

#### Equality, Liberation and Access Officer, Linlu's Updates

- Fostering consent culture. Conducted a focus group with the SU Research and Insight team – looking to create better training on consent. Also looking to put on events during SHAG week.
- Working with Russel Group SU unions on 16 days of action regarding gender based violence. Students can scan QR code on screen to fill out the survey on this.
- Campus accessibility – a map which you can use to find accessibility information around campus.
- The university has signed the Disabled Student Commitment, which concerns improving the experiences of disabled students. Looking to co-create these plans and will compensate those involved.

#### Undergraduate Education Officer, Mia's Updates

- Letter writing campaign regarding government plans to align tuition with teaching quality. Unfortunately, this has gone to the budget now. This creates further inequality. The government is running a consultation on this, students getting involved in this to inform future plans on this.
- Assessment feedback and engagement fellows – this project is embedded on an institutional level so it will continue to run and involve student voice in this.
- Update from last student council – the joint honours motion passed. Looking for examples of good practice regarding joint honours students experience.

#### Sport and Student Development Officer, Ella's Updates

- Movember closed – thanks for everyone who was involved in fundraising. At Bristol University we raised over £43k!
- Hosted two club captain forums, shaping Derby Day.
- Injury support group still making positive impact, open to new members.
- Working with SEH on student access to sports
- Attended BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport) meeting in Derby

#### Lucy's Updates

- Laundry: on top of 15k funding secured last year, which is about to be distributed, Lucy has pushed the university to make a commitment to capping prices at £3.80.
- Working on changing the affordability and quality of halls accommodation, aiming to close the gap between the cheaper and more expensive accommodation options, so that there isn't such a jump.
- Exam buses to Coombe Dingle – we are running these again after students fed back that it was useful.
- Increasing number of sensory rooms, including getting one at Langford. Great feedback from the Student Community Organiser forum Siân ran on this.
- Working with the university to embed accessibility focus in the university's strategy

#### International Student Officer, Jessie's Updates

- Hosted international students week – distributed lots of free food! And karaoke and global food fair. Another karaoke will run in refreshers!
- Went to parliament to platform international student voice. Talked about anti-migrant narrative, international student levy, and how much international students being here improve the financial situation for every U citizen.
- Sanctuary students work – have increased funding and support.
- Russell Group SU meeting regarding the government budget – lobbying against anti-migrant narrative.

- Budget and white paper have brought up lots of issues that impact international students; starting letter writing campaign to Bristol MPs to ask for support for international students
- Mumbai enterprise campus – looking to support this project.

#### Questions for Officers

- Q: Trustees overrode last student council decision – on what grounds did you make this decision?
- A: Lucy: Can't remember the specifics of the articles on this decision, but you're welcome to email so that I can give you the appropriate level of detail in response to your question.
- Q: Sensory rooms – as someone who uses them, issue with it being occupied by people studying or holding meetings in there – are there plans to address this?
- A: Lucy – yes, plans are underway to solve this. The issue is lack of spaces on campus more generally – first thing is to increase number of sensory rooms. This takes time, so we are also trying to identify other quiet rooms that can be used. Second, rooms should not be being used in this way – we are increasing signage, we are open to feedback so will put further work and thought into this. We won't police the room as it's an important space to be open, but we will keep reiterating the purpose and importance of these rooms being available. Aiming to get it written into university strategy long term that there will be further sensory rooms available.
- Q: what's causing delay in getting the laundry money to students? Will it only be new accommodation that has the £3.80 cap?
- A: Lucy: Yes, unfortunately the cap is only on new accommodation. But the university is moving away from lots of the existing accommodations so it's a gradual move away from the leased properties with the more expensive laundry options. Some leases are until 2030, but it's on leases that are up for renewal where the cap is being introduced.
  - Q: (follow up) why is the money delayed getting out to students though?
  - A: administration by the university has been holding this up, but it is in progress.
- Q: you're doing some amazing and relevant work, but I feel there's an information barrier – it's hard to find out what you guys are working on. How can wider students be better informed about your work?
- A: Mia: Fortnightly officer updates by email – each time a different officer heads that email. This is a quick summary of the updates, but if you click on these through to the website, you can access more detailed updates and track our progress. If you have any feedback on how to make it more relevant and accessible, please email us or share that here.

- A: Jessie: you can also keep up with our work on Instagram, talk to the SCOs, and come into the office to speak to us.
- A: Lucy: Campaigns page coming soon on the website for more info on students campaigns which will also include officer work.
- Q: How do you need help with the Mumbai campus work?
- A: Jessie: initial stage of engagement on this, looking to organise focus groups to research experiences of students who have studied in India – we'll be calling out for this, or you can email.
- Q: new accommodation – is this for first years?
- A: Lucy: Yes, a lot of accommodation is advertised to new undergraduates.
- Q: [follow up] if there'll be more first year accommodation, how will this impact 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> year private accommodation? Any work on making this more affordable?
- A: Lucy: the university does civic engagement work in the city, which includes strategy regarding private accommodation. The cost coming down in our halls does have a small impact on this. I also attend Bristol fair rent campaign who are working on this. SU Lettings are seeing private beds not being taken up and therefore prices coming down. Also Renters Rights bill should impact. Bristol city rent commission are also working on living rent.
- Q: will the rent work be only on new halls?
- A: Lucy: all halls! Looking to improve affordability across all accommodation, or at least to reduce the gaps between prices.
- Q: Bristol Future Research Leaders project on housing and transport – does this relate to your work?
- A: Sharan: the SU has been working hard on a project that will have a lasting impact, this year we are working with Housing Matters (housing advice service in Easton).

Chair notes that we are not quorate, so any decisions made in this meeting will be ratified at the next democratic meeting, Annual Members Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

## Motions

### Mission Mandir – Bristol Hindu Prayer Room

Speech for: The speaker introduced themselves as the Vice President of the Hindu Society. Representing not just the society, but rather to represent all Hindu students on campus. Asking attendees to vote in favour, not simply as a small step to create a new room, but to progress towards fairness and wellbeing, and towards the university's inclusion statement. Hindus are the third largest faith group on campus, growing with a

62% relative increase. Nationally the Hindu student population is also rising. Not enough universities have proper provision for students of Hindu faith. There's no locally available prayer space for Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Jain students – the nearest is a 45 minute walk away in Clifton – this is simply too far away. Our SU is part of NUS – in 2019 NUS passed a motion for equal access to provisions for non-Abrahamic faiths. Muslim students have dedicated prayer space, Christians have lots of access to churches and faith space locally. Voting yes is in favour of the SU and university to commit to the provisions that the university's EDI statement describes. Requirements of the room are not currently met by multi-faith spaces, so Hindus on campus are compromising. Asking not for special treatment but equal treatment.

Nobody wishes to speak against the motion.

## Questions

Q: I'm involved with the multifaith chaplaincy. The chaplaincy is looking for more involvement and input from Hindu students, and wanting to appoint a Hindu chaplain. Are you working with the multifaith chaplaincy?

A: we've spoken to the head of the multifaith chaplaincy, he's supported this motion. We've also spoken to the recently appointed Hindu chaplain who also supports.

Q: No prayer space for a range of faiths (eg Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists etc) - are there plans to address this?

A: Looked at examples from other universities, such as King's College London where there are spaces open for all of these faiths. We are also hoping to create a space that is open for all of these faiths.

Q: [one of the Student Community Organisers spoke] The Student Community Organisers are in support of this. Do you have an idea of where you'd want the space located, and how much funding do you think it will require?

A: We don't know where exactly, but we are hoping to work with estates department to find an appropriate space. Not looking to construct a new space, but to use an unused space. Funding: we think at the max £1-2k, which pales in comparison to the university's overall spending. Mumbai campus – they're putting money into a campus in a Hindu majority city, so should be able to support their Hindu students who are here.

Q: regarding organisation and logistics – if it's a space to be used by students of different religions. Who will handle the organisation of this space, especially if it's being

used by 4 different groups. And should it be named Hindu space if it's catering to other groups as well?

A: a good question – we could name it differently according to the needs of the groups using it, to encompass all of the faiths using it. Hindu soc is a big society, and there are Sikh and Buddhist societies – we could involve all relevant societies in organisation of the room. Chaplains at the multifaith chaplaincy could also assist with this.

Nobody wants to speak against the motion.

Vote on whether to have an anonymous vote: we will not vote anonymously.

Vote on the motion: Motion passed. (1 abstained, 0 against, rest of the room in favour).

Chair reminds the room that as we are not quorate, we will need to approve these votes at Annual Members Meeting.

## Move Democratic Standards Committee elections into Teaching Block

### 2

Speech for: Democratic Standards Committee (DSC) look after the democratic standards of our democratic meetings. The SU holds Term 1 elections and Term 2 elections – there's a much bigger promotional push on the Term 2 elections, as it's in education law that we must notify students of these elections. Want to move the election for these roles into term 2 so that they can be trained earlier and they can be trained with the rest of the representative roles. Would also mean we can move our democratic meetings earlier in the year to better suit student schedules.

Speech against: This motion has some good and bad points. I had submitted an amendment which was rejected as DSC didn't understand what it was trying to achieve. Only 3 members are here today, we need better engagement. We should have a referendum on DSC. The motion is badly worded, there are parts mentioned in the actions and not the purpose, which is poor practice. Action 4 is wordy, removes ability of DSC to vote in these meetings, which they already don't do by convention. The motion puts DSC members in a separate section of the byelaws to other similar roles. Mandatory members of student council (Full-Time Officers (FTOs), Student Community Organisers (SCOs)); this motion creates a new section which would make DSC the only mandatory members that the Union Affairs officer can influence. Worried that DSC will want to keep in Union Affairs officer's good books, which could influence their decisions.

Questions:

No questions on the motion.

Speech for:

Comment on DSC being unable to figure out the amendment – I think we are united on the positive impacts of the motion. Apologies on the writing of the motion. I didn't cover some things in my proposing speech, but the information is available in the motion, I aimed to just highlight key points.

Speech against:

We've not heard a reason for point 4 – the purpose is not clear on the impact of the motion and the actions. I will probably vote in favour of the motion because it does more good than harm, but I think the motion is not good practice.

Speech for:

DSC members are unpaid – they're separated from SCOs and FTOs in the byelaws to allow them to be paid in future. The union affairs officer wouldn't have control over DSC, but the motion would allow the Union Affairs officer to campaign for them to be paid in future.

Against: the motion isn't about DSC being paid – this is misdirection. Having them in the same place in the byelaws should be consistent. The byelaws do not mention payment.

Vote on whether to vote anonymously: Not voting anonymously

Vote on the motion: Motion passed. (3 against, 5 abstained, rest of the room in favour).

## Any Other Business

### Expression of dissatisfaction: Bristol SU Trustee Board override Student Council decision

Chair: we received a motion of censure regarding the Trustee Board overturning Student Council's decision from the last meeting. DSC agreed the motion of censure was not appropriate, as it is usually used in response to inappropriate conduct. DSC will now focus on how students can raise dissatisfaction. We've decided to make space in this meeting, to allow students to debate, and the vote will be on whether students are dissatisfied, the outcome of which will be published on the website.

Chair confirms that Ned (Speaker for this item) didn't propose this.

Speech for expression of dissatisfaction: It hurts that we couldn't have the censure motion, and I've complained externally about this. This is our space to express dissent. I

would assume we will hear about how the trustees are allowed to take this decision. The issue is whether student council should be allowed to debate a motion when we know it will be overturned by trustees. Vetoing the motion was them telling us that they would close the issue; that Student Council's opinion has been rejected. The overturning of decisions should be for issues of emergency. We gave our time to represent students and it's inappropriate if the trustees decide in advance to overturn these decisions. Frustration that trustees can't remember the articles that governed their decisions. Asked that student council be allowed to discuss it further.

Speech against: I'm open to feedback – there being no space for dissent is disproved by your speech. The original decisions regarding the removal of associate membership happened as a result of student requests to take action against sexual misconduct complaints. The decision was made to protect the safety of students in societies. There's no format which would allow trustees to make decisions without proper consideration of safeguarding. The decision was made at a strategic level to ensure this safeguarding. The motion at student council was brought to introduce the changes to the byelaws to enable changes going forward, after associate membership was already abolished.

Speech for:

Completely understand concerns Lucy raised, but don't think the answer to these concerns was to remove associate membership. Incidents of complaints against associate members were lower than against students. Societies have long-term relationships with associate members, I think it would be better to do this through other processes.

Speech against:

Decision regarding associate membership was made by the SU – whether we were happy or not, it was scrapped. The motion at Student Council was around putting in more support for societies after this decision was made. It would only have benefitted societies. Moved the SU closer to its charitable aims – to support students, not those who've already graduated. The Women's Hockey club raised concerns – you (speaker against) don't know what their concerns were, and therefore can't say that the move to abolish associate membership doesn't address these.

Speech for:

This isn't about ladies hockey society, or removing associate membership. This is about the overturning of the vote at student council. Overriding the motion was about suppressing dissent. The decision will change if we continue to register our dissent and apply pressure.

Speech against:

[Lucy, Student Living Officer] This is taking a lot of time. There will always be a difference of opinion. If you ask me as a student my opinion it would be different to my opinion as a trustee. This motion is about dissatisfaction regarding overturning student council decision.

Speech for:

The decision on associate membership has been made. There are 6 people here today who feel one way, there were 74 at Student Council who felt another. There will be a chance to campaign on this during TB2 elections, and apply pressure. SUs are built on applying pressure to make change. Associate membership should continue to be a topic on the agenda. I'm frustrated that the motion of censure was not allowed. The motion is about trustees overwriting student council decision. The point of the motion is to express your dissatisfaction with the trustees overturning the decision.

Speech against: the message to take away, is that you can come to speak to Lucy, or contact her to discuss more. The decision wasn't taken lightly. 11 of the 16 trustee members are elected. You're welcome to continue scrutinising this system.

Vote on whether to vote anonymously: we will not vote anonymously

Vote on whether you agree that you're dissatisfied with the actions of the trustee board in this instance: vote in favour, motion passes.

**Any Other Business**