

Student Council minutes- 17th January

Victoria introduced herself as the chair of student council and went through the agenda for the meeting. The meeting was not quorate so the proposals could not be formally voted on. There were no officer updates due to office closure and annual leave over the winter break.

Hot Topic

Jack introduced the hot topic and the feedback for the questions can be found below.

- Does the SU effectively represent students?
 - Some points were raised that some student experiences aren't represented e.g., international students
 - Some channels of communications are unclear so students don't know who to contact
 - Emailing isn't the best way to communicate with students as students don't always open their emails
 - There should be more SU introductions from the first week of welcoming e.g., introductory sessions during the first week so students know about the SU in person. This means that all key information would be provided and people know who to contact
 - Yes overall but the biggest area to improve is to allow individual students to run campaigns so they can make change themselves and the SU should empower students to bring ideas forward and get money to make change. This could be a more streamlined way to get student ideas implemented quicker
 - There is a general issue of communication between students. One example includes advertising for events. This means that students don't see what is going on until late. Most events are advertised on the What's On page and students don't know where to look and it isn't as well seen.
 - In regards to the first question, one student thought generally they do try and cater to students of diverse backgrounds (although you could argue that's necessary considering the makeup of the student body). In general they do try and reach out to certain groups too however it always feels like they fall short and part of that is to do with poor communication strategies.
 - Make everyone more aware. Some students don't feel represented enough
 - Need to make more events inclusive because there are so many different societies celebrating different cultures and ethnicities
 - Some societies don't have the reach for all students so many events aren't spotlighted and students don't know what is going on. The SU should collaborate with societies to help them get a larger audience
 - Generally the SU does try to cater to different diverse backgrounds but fall short due to poor communication strategies e.g. Black Students Network Conference ran by Jade, there weren't as many students aware on the first day which was a shame considering the attendance on the second day

- What do students want to see from Welcome and Freshers?
 - Some events only target certain demographics so different students' interests aren't represented through the events that are put on

- Most promotional events promoted partying/clubbing/drinking from Rockstar which wasn't inclusive to students who do not drink or do not like doing those activities
- Victoria mentioned that ResLife do free events for students that are inclusive and try to represent as many students
- Freeman's Common events could be collaborated with the SU during Freshers so more students turn up
- Better signage for Freshers would be better so students know exactly where to go
- The one-way system wasn't very effective
- Are student arts effectively being supported?
 - Any art/music facilities are neglected and many of the equipment and rooms on campus aren't looked after if they are not a part of David Attenborough Arts Centre.
 - It feels like musicians are restricted in where they can practice and musicians don't feel like the facilities are maintained well enough
 - Jack mentioned that the university has been working on an audit to improve this
 - Definitely not. Students should have more opportunities to amplify their creativity e.g., there should be more plays or poetry nights/ artwork nights or competitions which shouldn't be directly linked to societies

LGBT+ Officer proposal- Providing inclusive and accessible facilities

Key points included:

- University facilities are not fully inclusive and many disabled toilets need radar keys. Many toilets are part of the radar scheme and mix with gender neutral facilities so some students are not able to use these facilities.
- The library is one area in particular that needs improving
- All buildings should have facilities should be inclusive and accessible
- Mattie the LGBT+ Officer did an audit of the disabled toilets with red cords that aren't always kept to the code which is illegal and dangerous so better care should be made to make facilities more inclusive
- Every cubicle on campus should have sanitary bins to be more inclusive
- This idea was passed through the ideas system but wasn't followed through
- Engineering building has braille print which is impractical for blind students
- Some disabled toilets are only accessible via steps, which isn't fit for purpose
- Mattie asked that buildings are made to be designed to be accessible and inclusive and existing buildings with inaccessible facilities should be redesigned

Accessibility Officer proposal- Promotion of inclusivity and accessibility

Key points included:

- Inclusivity is highly important. Many students have accessibility needs including mental health and physical and hidden disabilities

- Proposal looks at how many students have disabilities and if students disclose these when applying to university
- Students with neurodiverse students included in data but not students with physical or other disabilities
- Most important findings are that students with accessibility needs should be used within the university's language
- Many students aren't comfortable with disclosing their disabilities so the SU has to improve this by running campaigns for students with accessibility needs to raise awareness about different experiences
- The university should make events advertised a few days in advance to make it more inclusive for students with accessibility needs so students can take measures to get to events and students with these needs can thrive at university

Full-Time Officer structure proposal

Key points included:

- Archie explained this vote will be used to go to the Trustee board to consider before the governance review, who will review the officer structure externally
- Jack explained the remit within his role and how it overlaps with the Sports and Wellbeing roles
- Archie explained the process of the governance review and that the proposal would like to only keep the officer rearrangement in place until the suggestions and feedback from the governance review are implemented
- Jack explained that Wellbeing Officer is an outdated role so it makes more sense to split some of the Wellbeing Officer's role amongst the current Activities Officer role
- The Wellbeing Officer is usually given a lot of casework which they are unqualified to resolve, so ensuring that this casework is separate from the officers and taken to the Advice team is better to protect who ever who is in the role

The indicative vote revealed that the majority of students voted for the idea with the majority vote having 18 for the proposal out of 20. This data will be taken to the Trustee board.

Policy lapse

Victoria explained that some policies are due to expire this year, so if students would like to renew them they need to email su-council@leicester.ac.uk before 22nd January. The policies that are brought back to student council will be voted on again and reinstated for another 3 years if there is a majority vote for the proposal. The document of expiring policies can be found on the [Students' Union website](#).

Executive Elections

Victoria explained that the Executive Elections are upcoming, with nominations opening on 1st February.

The roles available to vote for include the Full-Time Officer roles, which will be confirmed in due course, as well as the 10 Part-Time Officer roles including: Sustainability, Mature and

Part-Time, Distance Learning, Postgraduate, International, LGBT+, Trans and Non-Binary, Women, Accessibility and Ethnic Equity.

There is another role that students can vote on which is the Pro Chancellor (Students) which is role that advocates for students at all levels, and the candidate list is pre-determined and can include previous alumni. The list of candidates will be released in March and students are encouraged to vote for this role so that the Pro Chancellor will represent students. If students would like to express their interest or recommend a friend they can fill in the forms on the Elections webpage.

Attendance list

Ahaan Cabral

Reed James

Matthew Simpson

Abby Simpkin

Shirita Aboagye

Faye Whitmore

Joshua Edwards

Cordelia Taylor-Byne

Kriti Singh

Holly Saini

Ayo Akinsinmide

George Price

Hannah Salt

Mary Edwards

Rianna Kelly

Shiva Patel

Natalie Hayward

Koki Ogawa

Zayba Hassem

Kobina Armah-Tetteh

Molly Mather

Beatrice Jackson

Melissa Barwell

Vanessa Sylvester

Beatrice Jackson

Jessica Ryan

Rajkumar Samarasam Alagiri

Ansel Ong

Mikaela Thornton

Jade Thomas

Archie Robinson

Joe Hyett

Prachi Bhatt

Jack McDonald

Minutes compiled by Amelia Jones on 18th January 2024.