

Student Council minutes

Welcome meeting 24th October

Chair- Archie Robinson and Victoria Boulton

Staff- Amelia Jones, Megan Robertson, Lucille Gwati

Apologies- Joe Hyett, Prachi Bhatt

Attendance:

- Jade Thomas
- Jack McDonald
- Anisha Syeda
- Alina Vasilenko
- Joshua-Tyronne Seneviratne
- Ankita Raju Shelar
- Ella Chadwick
- Beatrice Jackson
- Thelma Mogopa
- Vanessa Sylvester
- Laura Shawcross
- Sarah Batchelor
- William Davies
- Vaishali Odedra
- Alex Burt
- Sarah Batchelor
- Nayan Patel
- Max Holy
- Lesedi Vellem
- Priyanka Hitendra Kariya
- Suhani Verma
- Nawar Nusaiba
- Jacey Hopps-Grace
- Shareen Rahman
- Janine Samji
- Damoyah Akiboh-Richards
- Jenson Lok
- Sarah Batchelor
- Charlotte Green
- Keith West
- Archie Delacroix-Humphreys
- Matthew Simpson
- Ahmed Ahmed Soliman
- Monika Drobiszewska
- Usama Mahgoub
- Faye Whitmore
- Mikaela Thornton
- Aroa Jemli
- Manprabh Singh
- Trisha Ineza Ndahiro
- Ben Huntsman
- Hana Asmal

- Jahnavi Muniraj
- Afia Asumadu
- Molly Ralls
- Jessica Manuel Paes
- Haleigh Gregory
- Luke Johnstone
- Imenor Oriakhi
- Melissa Barwell
- Will Harries
- Rapha Moulle
- Alice Brunning
- Zainab Asif
- Asma Patel
- Leela Satya Akhil Kundurthi
- Srinidhi Muralidharan
- Reed James
- Priyanka Hitendra Kariya
- Joshua Edwards
- Manshi Liladhar
- Ollie Faragher
- Yusuf Khan
- Mohammad Ismail
- Lamia Faiza
- Devina Patel
- Daljeet Shinji
- Monika Drobiszewska
- J'dyl Vicker
- Joel Shoroye
- Melina Thill
- Muminah Al-Islam
- Manny Kandola
- Charlotte-Lilly Wright
- Evelyn Watkins
- Stephanie Offor
- Hannah Salt
- Lyla Thapper
- Shiva Patel
- Tami Okono
- Samuel Trowell
- Janet Inda
- Abigail Fernandes
- Tami Okono
- Femi Osibemekun
- Roselle Silveira
- Molly Ralls
- Matthew Simpson
- Jahnavi Muniraj
- Ben Huntsman
- Asma Patel
- Imenor Oriakhi
- Zulaiha Ifthikar Cadir
- Vanessa Sylvester

- Isuri Dimasha Mannapperuma
- Devina Patel
- Shivani Chauhan
- Naghman Nasik
- Molly Ralls
- Anne-Marie Ujeyah
- Daljeet Shinji
- Renee Samra
- Jacey Hopps-Grace

Introductions

Archie welcomed people into the meeting as the chair for this Student Council meeting. Attendees were directed to use the attendance QR code posted around the room or use the link in the Teams chat to fill in the form.

Meet your officers

Archie outlined the agenda items then passed onto the Full-Time Officers where they discussed their roles and priorities for the year, how the Students' Union works, including some of the core democratic structures, the strategy and mission of the Students' Union and how to get involved as a student. Prachi and Joe's sections were covered by the other Full-Time Officers.

Archie then opened the floor to the Part-Time Officers who shared their priorities for the year. The officers that spoke included the Sustainability Officer, LGBT+ Officer and the BAME students Officer. Students were told how to get in contact with the Part-Time Officers via Networks.

Archie explained that by 2026, the Students' Union want students to see the SU as an empowering outstanding union the effectively represents their interests. Archie explained that the Students' Union removes barriers, The full diversity of our students should be supported by everything the SU do. And lastly, the SU is radical, bold, innovative and challenges the status quo.

Archie opened the floor to questions and one student asked why there wasn't a by-election to replace Hoor and if the money is there still. Archie explained that Hoor left at the end of September and that money is going to be used to recruit student-staff to act as project officers. A by-election wasn't held because it would mean the student would have to suspend their studies and that the timings involved running elections meant that they wouldn't have been able to take up the post until well into the term.

Another student commented that the accommodation subsidy for students was not promoted very openly. Archie responded by saying that the university could have used more accessible platforms to share resources and that he is working on a Cost-of-Living handbook which could include the relevant information.

A student queried about who is taking on the Wellbeing Officers projects. The officers responded by saying that the team have equally picked up relevant projects and the committees Hoor originally sat on are ones the others already sit in so they have covered

everything since she left. The officer social media account is inactive but the projects are currently in progress

A final question queried about when student staff roles were promoted. Archie responded by saying that students can apply for the roles on the website and there are two roles available for the project officer role to cover Hoor's projects.

Agenda items:

Vote for Trans and Non-Binary Officer candidate

Archie introduced Keith West, who expressed interest in running for the Trans and Non-binary Officer, to give a two-minute speech about who they are and why people should vote for them. Keith delivered the speech and attendees were then invited to scan the QR code or use the link in the chat to record their vote.

Result: Keith West was successfully voted as the Trans and Non-Binary Officer with 50 votes for and 11 abstentions.

The role of Student Council

Archie and Victoria discussed what processes are involved with Student Council. Previous Student Council wins were demonstrated and students were told that these changes are made by putting your voice forward and voting in student council and on the Ideas System.

Student Council Networks

Archie introduced what Student Council Networks are and explained there are seven in total, of which 4 are run by Part-Time Officers including the Accessibility, LGBT+, International Students', BAME and Women's networks.

Archie encouraged students to sign up to a network online. Archie explained that Network meetings are once a month but Networks can meet separately if they want. He also noted that for some networks, for example the BAME, Accessibility, Women's and LGBT+ network, you need to self-identify as someone within that group of people.

Ideas System

Archie informed students that if they have ideas that they would like to see at the University or Union they can submit them online. Ideas can be as detailed as they want, and once posted, they will be notified and have two weeks to obtain the majority of 20 likes or votes for the idea to be brought forward and potentially voted for in a Student Council meeting.

Consultation of meeting style

Archie outlined the proposal about the format of Student Council meetings. Then he directed people to scan the QR code on the slides or use the link in the Teams chat to vote on the meeting style.

Out of 67 votes, 48 people voted for a hybrid format, 10 voted for in-person and 9 people voted for virtual Student Council meetings.

Hot Topic discussion- Cost of Living Crisis

Archie introduced the Hot Topic discussion theme, Cost of Living Crisis, and split the room into groups (and Amelia split online attendees into breakout rooms) to discuss ideas for 5-10 minutes before returning and discussing ideas as a whole. Archie let attendees know that these ideas will inspire what the Full-Time Officers work on this year.

Everyone was invited back to say their points, with one person from each group to discuss their points.

Points that were raised included:

- Staying on campus all day is too expensive e.g., drinks
- The SU should give out more resources on how to save money on things such as travel and advertise them well so they are accessible e.g., Instagram highlights
- Commuting students say because train fares are very expensive, they have to spend all day on campus which can be pricey too
- The hot chocolates have gone up by 60p in a year and people are starting to bring drinks from home
- The SU should provide more links to budget calculators and help people save money in saving accounts- better financial literacy- easy fix with posters
- A suggestion that a loyalty scheme could help with saving money

One student asked if all cafes are run by the Students' Union. Archie explained that they are ran by LSP and this can make changing pricing things challenging because they are separate to the Students' Union.

Another student discussed that there is a price difference in chips across campus and they have to go Freeman's Kitchen to save money. They explained that new students might not be aware of where the cheaper food options are and suggested that items should be the same price across campus to avoid confusion. They concluded by commenting that there should be free cash withdrawals on campus because to do this you would need to go into town or to London Road near the station. Archie responded by saying that the library has deals for toasties that are cheaper than elsewhere and that the difference in prices is confusing. He explained that there used to be a cashpoint on campus but it was removed because it wasn't used much and there was a loss in money so the university removed it. Archie explained he would pass this onto the relevant group.

One group explained that many food outlets other than Freemans close around 3pm which can make it challenging for students who stay on campus all day and need food options in the early evening, especially if they are going to society events later in the night. They explained that they would like to see food outlets stay open past 6pm if possible. Archie responded saying there can be issues with staffing but it is a valid concern and there is a plan to have a vending machine in the library and Global Lounge with hot food available.

Another group explained that bursaries and maintenance loans do not cover their living costs sufficiently. They explained that most of the loan goes on student accommodation/rent and many students go out of pocket for food and other essential living needs. The student asked if there are any bursaries or funds that could help students out generally or even for specific things such as stationary. Archie explained that the free breakfast programme was launched

and can help students who need assistance with paying for food. They also explained that they are looking into hardship funds but it is a slow process because they were expecting a bigger budget so they had to reevaluate. The hardship fund is there but they agreed that there is more that needs to be done.

Another group explained that for international students, there are many things that they are not eligible for so everything has to be self-funded and they struggle to get part-time jobs because most employees don't accept international students. The student also stated that international students struggle because they are in a new environment. They referenced that they had to pay £250 for a dyslexia test despite already paying £17000 in fees to study already. Archie responded by saying that Prachi will add more information to the international student's handbook and they will speak to the careers and employability team about increasing part time jobs for international students.

Another group said that societies can be very expensive, from the classes and the socials, some costs are not affordable for students and that can be isolating for students when they want to get involved. They mentioned that they pay a lot of money on things such as Circuit laundry even for a single spin and you have to upload a lot of money each time which can make budgeting a struggle. They also mentioned that students pay a lot of money for branded food and drink when they don't care about the branding, they just want cheaper options. They also mentioned that they have to leave campus to get cheap food and they raised that paying for a train ticket is expensive for commuter students who come onto campus for just one class. Archie noted the situation to discuss with other officers.

One attendee raised that there is a lack of knowledge about budgeting and knowledge about how to prepare and cook so they suggested hosting cooking classes where they teach students to cook. They also explained that they felt that LSP doesn't hire students and would like to have more opportunities for students to get paid opportunities there. Archie responded by saying that the university have a partnership with the company Blackbullion which is on Sharepoint that can help with budgeting and is useful. They said they could speak to the well-being director who leads on the Cost of Living issues. He mentioned the cooking classes that are to go ahead in accommodation buildings semi-regularly to teach how to cook cheap, nutritious meals. He also mentioned LeicsCook for students to get involved in and that cost-of-living cookbooks will be available where students can collect and find the average price of meals with the instructions.

The final group explained that it is hard for people with food allergies to find food on campus during lunch time so they would like to see more dairy-free or vegetarian options.

AOB and close

Archie let members know that is the end of the items and if there is anything else that people would like to say, now is their chance.

One student asked two questions. The first was about if students could switch to Washpoint from Circuit Laundry in University Managed accommodations? Archie explained that this was something the university could consider. The second question was asking about if Languages of Leicester courses' fees could be subsidized for students. Archie explained how this could come to fruition as an idea.

Archie thanked members for attending and voting on the proposals and let them know that the next Student Council meeting is on 7th November 2023 and the agenda will be posted online beforehand.

Minutes compiled by Amelia Jones and Lucille Gwati on 30th October 2023.