



Student Parliament 4

19/2/2019

Alex Brock	Emily McIlhatton	Matt Crilly
Andy Cunningham	Eyram Ahadzie	Max McKay
Benn Rapson	James Ferns	Nicola Biggerstaff
Bohdan Starosta	John Agbonrofo	Sara Cowan
Callum Oglivie	Kyle Scott	Thomas Craig
Claire Getchell	Lewis McDermott	Titi Farakuoye
Daniel Awomukwu		

DPO: Daniel Awomukwu

Staff Support: Leo Howes, Adam Crawley, Kyle Scott

In attendance: Professor Sara Carter, Associate Principal (Learning & Teaching)

1) Introduction

Chair introduces meeting. Chair notes that if the meeting is not quorate then policy motions will not be discussed.

Chair re-arranges the agenda to cover items that do not require quoracy.

The minutes were not discussed as they were not approved.

2) Executive Accountability

a. Vice President Education

Benn: Point of order: stating that the motion regarding the Student Partnership Agreement not being amendable was unconstitutional.

Chair recognised this as a point of order. However, as the meeting wasn't quorate, it could not be voted on.

VPE: Since the last Student Parliament, been working with PG doctoral school. Been in touch to improve provision and support in the Union, following concerns with representation and Union events do not feel suitable for them. Working with students on course costs and students not receiving feedback. Working on careers and employability, student congress workshop for reps and volunteers.



i) Student Partnership Agreement

It is very important to us to have the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA). We work with the University on a lot of levels, it is sort of like a tenancy agreement and it is necessary for us to have this partnership. It solidifies how we work with the university on many different issues. Raises the example of Graduation fees, which we took to Student Experience Committee and we weren't happy with it. We then took it out of the working group and escalated it as a democratic exec.

The Chair invited the Professor Sara Carter, Associate Principal (Learning & Teaching), to speak on the Student Partnership Agreement.

Professor Sara Carter: The SPA was initiated by the Student Exec last year, as many other UK Unions have done in recent years. They sought advice from sparqs, looking at various partnerships from various unis; ones we liked and ones we didn't like. They normally have two parts; first part is about representation and participation. Second part is more about priority action areas that we work in the next year or so. Working group of faculty reps and staff members, draft agreement had priority areas and then went to consultation and it is still up for consultation. The SPA is the framework that provides the guidance to the student experience committee, chaired by Union president and we have seen a lot of success in this committee. The work around Strath Sports, mental health provision and grad fees all came through this. Students and staff are all part of this community and this SPA would be great to foster that.

VPVD: If a student didn't want to take it to student experience, what other avenues?

Professor Sara Carter: Certainly, the SPA will outline all the different committees and different representation structures. Student experience committee is an addition.

VPVD: Would just be great to know that we have other channels and facilities.

Professor Sara Carter: Student Experience Committee is very new, we created a working group with students and staff. The proposal came back and neither side were happy with it.

Benn raised his point of order:

Benn: I had intended to submit a procedural motion, but as Parliament is not quorate it cannot pass. The SPA was presented at the first Student Parliament as policy set by the last exec and was first rejected by that parliament and therefore it is amendable policy. Today this is down as an item for discussion. Amendment was rejected because this was supposed to be a ratification, I made the case that we should be able to amend it. It feels like the rules are being changed as they go along, I have been part of organisations whose structures were outdated and rather than solve the issues they choose to ignore them.

The Chair acknowledged this point.

b. Vice President Diversity

VPD: It is currently LGBT+ History Month. Had an LGBT campaign panel last night, it was excellent taking lessons from the stonewall riots. However, we had one incident of a small hate crime, which shows that we still have a problem in society. Vagina Talks was great, this time we had a chat about queer bodies. Been working on swimming lane in sports, no female only swimming lanes and this is



inaccessible for students, as well as the faith fund, events coming up soon. For the first time we have reached out to part-time students. Equality and Diversity, roles and prospects for part-time officers who will be paid in an honorarium. Working with SUMSA about their location and where they will be, ensuring they have a secure place on campus.

James: Have previously brought up a point around having disabilities disclosed to staff in the university last Parliament, what has happened since then.

VPD: Took it to SEC and spoken to Annie and Gill Watt, some faculties have things in place but others don't.

James: As it is marking season, still don't know what students have learning disabilities. I will end up discriminating against them if I mark them. We need guidelines for marking to ensure students aren't discriminating against and its shocking that the University is taking so long to get something fixed which could be fixed easily.

VPD: It is difficult to identify students with learning disabilities but with the University things do take a long time become policy.

James: Other unis, such as Sheffield have done this overnight, and I'm glad you are pushing.

c. Vice President Sports & Wellbeing

VPSW: Students competed in BUCS nationals with 53 students bringing home 7 medals, not bad for a University without a track! Been working with the exec on Wednesday afternoons policy; a poll received over 1300 votes and 83% and Brian Greening is very on board, especially so with the employability aspect. We have big potential for a win. Meeting with Scottish Disabled support, strath support etc as we have one of the most accessible buildings in the UK. Under the Equalities Act 2017, we are going to reach out students to identify sports in which those with disabilities can become involved. There's a £15-20 million proposal for Stepps, including creating a number of tennis courts because tennis teams are now playing in English leagues. We could do a lot more, though we've just got the flood lights and we are saving students and clubs money.

d. Vice President Support

VPS: Been working on welfare week and the share the love and share the smiles outreach. Have hosted a series of events providing up to date information with regards to health, wellbeing, employability, legal rights, housing, financial support in collaboration with support staff. Also had our monthly birthday celebration to foster a community here at Strathclyde. Held a workshop, improvement for the design of the library with students and staff. It was focused on customer excellence.

Benn: What has been done around student financial support?

VPS: There are many facilities already, one of the issues is the lack of the awareness and information. There is already access to a discretionary fund, EU fund, and scholarships.

Benn: What has been done around study skills support for students and 24-hour access?



VPS: Member of library board, been discussing with library and that is ongoing and soon we will get good news about 24-hour space for the librarying.

Benn: What has been done on living conditions at halls and cheaper fees?

VPS: Have taken a varied approach to makes things better. The approach is trying to explore for alternative housing arrangements. Have been aware of students raising issues of housing complaints.

Benn: Are fees going up or down?

VPS: This will be negotiated in march.

James Ferns: Good talking about awareness, but run the risk of playing the victim and blaming students. There is a crisis of services here at Strathclyde and the University isn't taking action on many issues, especially homelessness. We need to pressure the University in investing and challenge Universities, especially on mental health and study skills.

e. Vice President Volunteering & Development

VPVD: I have been working on a few projects, including going on the Go Global trip for widening access students. Organising STAR awards for volunteers. Have also been discussing lecture captures and pre-recorded lectures. Have also been gathering info on the Rottenrow gardens, concerns around green space and air quality and bringing it to campus identity committee. Vagina Talks have been great. Been working on stuff around divestment, attended the climate strike last week led by school children. It was a really cool strike and looking to set up a working group with the university to tackle divestment.

Max: Is the plan for the divestment campaign to target Strathclyde specifically or is it across other unis?

VPVD: Currently, we are the only ones in Glasgow that haven't and many others have already done it. The campaign focus for now is only at Strathclyde and this campaign will be in the running for years. The focus for now is the money they invest in fossil fuels. The divestment group themselves are working with other unis and campaigns on the wider issues.

f. President

President: The campaign on graduation fees was a success; last time at parliament I said it was going to happen but it wasn't actually plain sailing. They wanted to charge £20, saying that international students had already booked but that was a mistruth. There has been massive media coverage. Presented on the new Union building at Senate. Its fine as but could more could be done. We asked for raised platforms, mezzanines, etc. Got the designers to mock it up, but its not in the budget and we'll find out if they think it looks great. Have also been to the council on private student halls, I was only student rep and the other unis didn't turn up. Lots of cons, some positives, but we are putting together research to submit to the council. Went to a meeting with representatives from Scottish Parliament and raised PG fees, but didn't get to ask everything. Met with new recharge manager and halls reps, going to challenge the fees for the laundry.

Student (name not recalled): What else were you were going to say there?



President: Earlier this year, during the strike action, when you go on strike you forfeit your wage. One of the first things I did was go after that cash, we got 125k which is around half of the money. The funds are now up and running. We are still working out the process. Now we are in the position that we may have to reject people, tricky thing to navigate but it could be really positive. Been looking into SUMSA space, meetings with SUMSA space and the University has been quite crap on this. The future of St. Pauls is uncertain, along with other buildings on campus which means that the future of SUMSA and MSA are uncertain. Looking at space at the bottom of Graham Hills, needed a car to access it and now we're discussing it with the university.

Max: I have heard that the James Blyth Building is sitting empty. With halls prices are going up, feels odd that there are empty halls that are also closest to the reopening of Aldi.

President: Last year, 80% occupancy rate and James Blyth court was a complete mess and thus shut it down. Now they have 100% occupancy. The whole building is not fit, they haven't decided about it at all. We are in the position to push on something, if you want that to be a housing cooperative. We have heard that the halls rent might be going up. They raise the rents when students are moving out, making it difficult to challenge and we did get the cap this year. The halls are a joke, when ground floor flats have mould and bugs.

Max: How do you appeal to students who are going to be students next year?

President: I honestly don't know, my hope was to get students to withhold their last rent payments.

Quoracy is still not met, so motions cannot be discussed. Chair asks Parliament if they would like to proceed to Parliament Sub Committee. Parliament decides to do so:

3) Updates from Parliament Sub-Committees

a. Education Committee – 12.2.2019

VPE: Was held last Tuesday, we had less than ten students and the discussion was mostly around class reps support. For example, when they are not getting support from the university, what do we then do to help them. Suggestion was to make the University aware that these reps are mandated by students, at that point if they suggest a student is talking rubbish we will escalate it and consider complaints. We are planning TEAs (Teaching Excellence Awards), with non-teaching staff as a suggestion for awards. Hosted Congress and workshops, and have noted that the structure for congress has changed and ask the principal event was separated.

b. Equality & Diversity Committee – 31.1.2019

VPD: Has been going really well, due to the designated roles and the meeting was fully attended with one apology. We discussed the accountability of the roles. We discussed Brexit and issues faced by EU students. Had SUMSA come in, heard reports from an islamophobia conference. We discuss a lot of liberation issues.

Bohdan: Has the University invited you to Brexit committee?

VPD: Yeah, they don't really understand or know what's happening and just chat about BBC headlines.



Student (name not recalled): Have they spoke about provisions for students in event of no deal.

VPD: They are trying to come up with plans but there is nothing concrete, don't communicate any decisions and they leave it open the different potential outcomes.

Matt: Originally, there University were writing guidance on Brexit, it was torpedoed when May's deal came out and then changed again when the deal was rejected.

Bohdan: Maybe this needs Scotland wide approach.

VPD: Even though the University is against Brexit, they are not a campaigning body and they would not release a statement. I asked for commitment to protecting Strathclyde students from the fallout, they didn't want to take political action.

c. Clubs & Societies General Meeting – 28.1.2019

VPVD: Doing a full review of funding and representation, consulted with committee members on what they want funded etc. We have 6 positions on Clubs Exec but we do not currently have roles, we will take that to Clubs & Societies AGM. We are looking at how we elect Clubs & Societies Exec members and will be discussed at next AGM. Consultation with clubs & societies around Rottenrow and the new Union building, including discussions around more locker space etc.

d. Sports general meeting – 29.1.2019

VPSW: Had a several items on the agenda including a Presidents welcome, externals from Enable Scotland, doing a big push for Glasgow Kilt walk Sunday 29th election. Wednesday afternoon policy etc, club mark, discussed elections and my own role and encouraged people to run for my role. Looking at role review for my sports exec, I don't think it has worked as well.

4) NUS Scotland Policy Submission Update

Chair invites Benn to provide an update:

Benn: Brought forward a policy at the last meeting (NUS Scotland Supports a Living Income), had a change of heart and we are no longer submitting it to NUS Scotland Conference.

Chair closes meeting and updates on meeting. The chair thanks for coming and confirms that withstanding motions will be treated at next parliament.

5) AOCB

None.

*The date of the next meeting is **Tuesday 19th March 2019, 17:00**. The deadline for agenda items and papers is **midday, Friday 8th March**.*

