

## Minutes

### Student Parliament

**Monday 14 October 2024**

Location: Level 8, Strathclyde Student Union and Online (Zoom)

Attendees: Hemalatha Lingadeeranahalli Honnappa (Democracy Convenor, Chair), Ashleigh Bruce (LGBT+ Rep), Hope, Alex McDougall-Page (Faculty Rep Engineering UG), Zoe, Akshay, Willow, Divya Harish Sharma (Mature Students' Rep), Matthew, Natalia Koziol (Faculty Rep Science UG), Charlie Wilson (VP Education), Anna Edvaldsson (VP Sport), Salma Ghazal (Part Time Students' Rep), Hema (Democracy Convener), Jamie Campbell (VP Community), Ramisha Mujahid (VP Inclusion), Johnnie Anderson (Faculty Rep HaSS PGR)

Apologies: Eva Curran (President), Esther Chioma Uwanda (Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Rep), Jo Fitzpatrick (Disabled Students' Rep)

Absentees: Abbas Hayat (Faculty Rep Business UG), Tapas Hari (Faculty Rep Business PGT), Shayesteh Moghadas (Faculty Rep Business PGR), Leng Kuan Yun (Faculty Rep Engineering PGT), Wasiu Emmanuel Ogunkoya (Faculty Rep Engineering PGR), Alaya Khare (Faculty Rep HaSS UG), Chijioke Hycinth Uzoechi (Faculty Rep HaSS PGT), David Smith (Faculty Rep Science PGT), Avinash Ethiraj (Halls Rep), Md Noor Ahmed (Interfaith Rep), Darshana Vispute (International Students' Rep)

Staff: Leo Howes (Head of Membership), Alison McNaughton (Voice Manager) and Niamh Molloy (Student Engagement Assistant)

#### TLDR

- Welcome to the student parliament, introductions and reminder to attend on time where possible and please send apologies in advance
- Executive Officers provided updates on their manifesto points (main focus on Strategic Alliance Framework, upcoming Safer Gambling Week and Sexual Health and Guidance Week, class representative training and Black History Month events)
- Discussion about reviewing policies and a general consensus that a group will do a bit of background research on policies for review (3 or 4 policies reviewed each parliament). Reading will be sent out to all parliament members in advance of each parliament so that informed discussions and voting can take place

#### Action Points:

**Everyone:** If interested, please reply to the email that will be sent out looking for participants in the Policy Briefing Research Group.

**Everyone:** Please note that the next student parliament meeting is on Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> of November at 5 pm and will be hybrid – you can either join on Zoom or in person on Level 8 of the Union Building. Please email in advance if you would like the Zoom link, try and attend on time where possible and send your apologies if unable to attend.

## **1. Call to Order**

**Democracy Convenor**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first student parliament meeting of the year and asked all the attendees to introduce themselves. There was a reminder and request made for all members to attend on time where possible.

## **2. Date and Time of Student Parliament Meetings**

**Voice Manager**

The dates and times of Student Parliament Meetings for the 2024/2025 academic year were outlined as below

- Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 5 pm
- Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 5 pm
- Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 5 pm
- Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 5 pm
- Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 5 pm
- Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March 5 pm

Alison (Voice Manager) noted that these dates and times have all been uploaded to the website and all will be running in a hybrid format with students having the option to attend via Zoom (please send an email to the student democracy email [strathunion.dem@strath.ac.uk](mailto:strathunion.dem@strath.ac.uk) requesting a link in advance if possible) or in-person on Level 8 of Strathclyde Student Union. Student parliament members were reminded to please send apologies in advance if they are unable to attend a meeting and an expectation for members to attend all meetings but that they can miss up to 2 meetings in post.

## **3. Reports**

**President and Executive Officers**

### **a. President**

The President was unable to attend the meeting so no updates were given.

### **b. Vice-President Community (VPC)**

Discussed their updates regarding their manifesto points and work within their role.

- Refreshers': VPC has been having regular meetings with union staff to discuss how we can produce the most successful Refreshers' Week for incoming and returning students. They are working with the university with a focus on events and information more tailored for international students such as culture trails, visits to parks and information about the weather in Glasgow. January the 13<sup>th</sup> has been confirmed for the Society Fair.
- Ethical Investment Policy: These meetings and discussions have been going well and there will hopefully be a draft produced for the end of this month or end of November at the latest.
- Freshers' Week: There was a real focus this year on hybrid events which had mixed results. Online speed-meeting for example had no attendees but the hybrid crafting events were particularly successful. Freshers' Week generally was very successful and there was a lot of great society involvement.

- Safer Gambling Week: The VPC confirmed there will be a Safer Gambling Week 18<sup>th</sup>- 22<sup>nd</sup> November with a particular focus on online gambling and gambling in video games. They are in communication with Ygam to create greater awareness, start conversations and improve signposting for students who may be affected by gambling.
- Societies General Meeting: The first Socs GM was a success, lots of people in attendance.
- Student Pantry: General information given about the need to update and improve the current model and the hope to make this a volunteering opportunity for student development and improvement.
- NUS Events: Took part in the NUS Liberation and Lead and Change events and was able to network with other sabbatical officers.
- SHAG Week/Sexual Health: Due to there being no VP Welfare this year, each officer has taken on part of the VP Welfare's remit. VPC has taken on sexual health so is working on SHAG Week. Confirmed there will be a SHAG week 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> January. Terrence Higgins will be on campus offering free sexual health testing. VPC is also involved in Fight For The Night and 16 Days of Action and there is a real push to get other sabbatical officers and universities across Glasgow involved in this. VPC has also been in touch with Rape Crisis Scotland and Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis Centre and discussed the possibilities of workshops being run during SHAG Week and discussions are going well.

#### c. Vice-President Education (VPE)

Discussed their updates and manifesto areas. Main updates involved the Strategic Alliance Framework (SAF).

- The Feedback Loop on Personal Circumstances: As part of the SAF, there is an agreement to work to fix the feedback loop on personal circumstances. The current system of waiting until the exam board means that students are being left without support or updates for a long time and there is a move to see if interim measures can be put in place and actions can be taken as and when these issues are raised rather than just at the exam board. VPE is also looking at broader work on personal circumstances, pastoral support and extensions for example and is keen for students to get in touch if they have any suggestions.
- Fee Administration Review: Several aspects of this are being explored such as looking at the possibility of having smaller monthly fee instalments to make payments more flexible and sustainable and improving communication between the Advice Hub and the university Finance Team to offer greater support for students. There is also a push to review fee transparency as flexible/part-time students sometimes end up paying more than full-time students and this is greatly affecting widening access students.
- Exam Resits: Revisiting when resit exams are as current international students often face visa issues
- Sustainable Development in the Curriculum: Current auditing is being done at quite a high level but it would perhaps be more helpful to get student input into what sustainability would look like in the curriculum
- Working with Reps: There's a real focus this year on cross-departmental collaboration to make change as wide-reaching as possible. Also focusing on making sure reps are involved in the change this year, not just providing feedback

#### d. Vice-President Inclusion (VPI)

Discussed their updates regarding their manifesto points and work within their role.

- Diverse Food Options: Developing a focus group and also kitchen demonstrations where students can share home recipes so that we can develop a food option and menu that is more representative of the diverse range of backgrounds our students come from.
- Cheaper Meal Option: Working with catering to discuss the possibility of including one very cheap meal a day on menus for students to really feed and nourish themselves
- Purpose Built Student Accommodation: Once the NUS survey data is analysed there will be a consultation to see if government can create regulation for private government too
- Black History Month: This month is Black History Month and there have been two successful events so far, more to come, with the aim of making ethnic minorities feel more confident about themselves and more supported in the employment landscape
- Decolonial Academy: Next session is the 16<sup>th</sup> of October. Sessions running about microaggressions, how students feel, seeing how we can decolonise the university
- Strategic Alliance Framework: Push for the employment of people of colour as counsellors/advisers in the Advice Hub as they might have a greater understanding of shared experiences
- Ramadan Support: Working on ensuring there is support for students throughout Ramadan so that students can be part of their religious communities and student communities

#### e. Vice-President Sport (VPS)

Discussed their updates regarding their manifesto and role.

- Outreach Programme: Currently trying to get the business plan to the Young Strathclyde group to see if they can work with them on improving outreach
- Sport for Everyone: Continue to develop a sustainable funding model for sport rather than the current one-off funding system
- Sports Leadership and Development: Market this as a route to Higher Education through sports and physical activity. Opportunities for students to take sport out to local schools and communities, will be a strong development for Widening Access Students
- Space for Sport: Currently not enough Strath Sports space for all of the activities we hope to offer. VPS looking at how to utilise current space most effectively but also working with the local community to look into alternative space as well as ensuring that financial difficulties don't act as a barrier
- Sabbs across Scotland for Sport: Looking regionally (University of Glasgow, Strathclyde, GCU etc.) to work together on what institutions can do next to support students through the cost-of-living crisis
- Budgets sent out to club committees
- Girls Night In: Looking for alternative dates near International Women's Day for Girls Night In as the Saturday wouldn't be ideal

### 4. Review of standing policies

Leo (Head of Membership) stated that there are five policies due to lapse within the 2024 – 2025 academic year. He suggests three options: a) the lapsing policies are looked at in the final student

parliament meeting, b) the student parliament spreads the lapsing policies for review at different student parliament meetings across the year or c) a specific group is created to review policies and they bring their thoughts on the lapsing policies to parliament.

VPE notes that all policies are easily accessible on the website and can be found [here](#).

General group consensus seemed to be it would be good to review all the policies across the year, with an aim to group similar policies together where possible.

There was also a suggestion to create a focus group who undertake a little bit of background research on the policies for the next student parliament who can then communicate with staff at the union about the kinds of topics and resources they feel are important to understand for reviewing the policies. Union staff can then support and collate these resources which would be shared around to all student parliament members to be read before parliament so that everyone can make informed decisions and suggestions about policies.

There was a discussion about how to make the most representative group possible and although it was not confirmed, there seemed to be quite a shared agreement that it could consist of one executive member, two faculty representatives and two inclusion representatives such as part-time representatives. There were also discussions about potentially bringing in other students for certain weeks who might be able to offer unique perspectives or lived experiences on specific policies. Questions were raised about whether students not part of the student parliament could be included in this group and it was thought that they could be a great addition, they just would not be able to vote on any policy changes.

An email asking for people to sign up for these slots will be sent after parliament.

## **5. Ratification of Trustees**

**President**

President was unable to attend the meeting so this did not occur.

## **6. New Business**

**Democracy Convenor**

- Nothing currently in democracy mailbox to discuss
- VPI keen to reiterate that all students can join action groups if keen to make a difference
- Discussions about how we can increase outreach and raise awareness as a lot of communication happens through social media and newsletters, but these might not be the best way to reach people. Some representatives suggested drop-in sessions/office hours to

## **7. Adjournment**