

## Minutes

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**Meeting:** Academic Council (Taught)

**Place:** 1W 2.101

**Date and Time:** Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016 12.15pm – 1:05pm & 1:15pm – 2:05pm

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**Present:** Lucy Woodcock, Students' Union Education Officer

**Apologies:** *Available as an appendix to minutes.*

**In Attendance:** Annika Theilgaard, Academic Representation Coordinator  
David Woolley, Departmental Representation Coordinator  
Suzanne Snook, Representation Administrator  
Amy Young, Representation and Engagement Manager

### **1. Register for Attendance**

Attendance register available as an appendix to minutes.

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

All received noted in appendix.

### **3. Matters arising from previous minutes**

None.

### **4. Notice of Any Other Business (A.O.B)**

None

### **5. Report from the SU Education Officer**

### SU Referendum:

Voting closes tonight (21.04.16) at 10pm. All University of Bath students can vote in the referendum regardless of nationality. The Education Officer is aware that there has been some controversy over the referendum and not having an option to abstain. She reminded Reps that the University has followed a national campaign. If you are not happy with the outcome you may still campaign your own personal views. The outcome is based on a majority vote.

### SU 3 Year Big Plan:

The plan is used to determine key priorities with a focus on four key themes: development of student leaders, postgrad experience, peer to peer support and the active student voice. Students can feedback ideas on Bathstudent. The deadline for this feedback is Friday 6<sup>th</sup> of May. The Ed. Officer reminded Reps that all current services the University offers will remain in place, the plan will just shift priorities.

### 10 West:

The new 10 west building will open in early May. The building will mainly be used for Psychology teaching and research labs. There will be two floors dedicated to PGT and PGR study space. Information regarding revision space around campus for use over the exam period will be released within the next couple of weeks.

### Exchange Conference:

The conference will take place on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May. It is a one day Learning and Teaching Conference. Students can go to individual sessions if they prefer – they do not have to attend all day but will need to register beforehand.

### Institutional Skills Review:

A Skills Operational Team has been set up focusing on marketing and communications, a skills hub (search engine available to students, although this will take some time to develop) as well as quality assurance. They are thinking of splitting the provision into professional, personal and academic. There is concern that the lines between professional and personal skills will become blurred however. Some students thought it was best to separate the two, whereas some students felt there was overlap on both – for example personal and professional communication.

### NSS:

The survey closes on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April. All final year students should push students one last time to get them to complete the survey.

### Academic Rep Awards:

Congratulations to all nominees and winners. There is an article with a full list of winners and pictures on Bathstudent.

Academic Reps survey:

The link will be sent out on 22.04.16. The survey gives you a chance to comment on your own experiences, whilst helping us improve the system for future Reps.

**Group work working group:**

The working group included student and staff Reps from each faculty/school. The group have set seven recommendations/guidelines for group work across the University. These recommendations will be made to the ULTQC in May. The recommendations cover group allocation mark allocation, peer to peer assessment, development of teamwork skills, clear criteria and mark schemes. The full list will be circulated when the guidelines are finalised.

**Placement hub:**

Placement Hub was set up a year ago by the SU. To reach the Hub students need to log on to Bathstudent. The Hub shows students that are doing placements close to you, tips on housing, doing a placement abroad as well as providing discussion forums. The Hub also gives you a chance to rate your placement and offer tips to those searching for a placement. The Hub is step up to help students before, during and after their placement and is just as relevant to those on internships. Feedback from students suggested that it sounds great but needs far better marketing and communicating to students. Details will be sent to Placement Officers and Placements Reps to send out to students.

**Top tips for SSLC Annual Reports:**

The template is now ready. The Ed. Officer will send the template out to all SSLC chairs and secretaries. Please give a good level of detail but keep it concise. The Reports must be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> July. If anyone is unsure of how to write the report, the Ed. Officer is happy to look at any drafts.

**Q&A/Accountability discussion with the Education Officer:**

(Discussion at 12.15 led by Chair of SU Academic Exec)

**Q: What did you think your biggest issue would be? Have you tackled it successfully?**

A: There have been lots of issues to tackle throughout the year. It has been very important to be flexible and move away from my manifesto where necessary. Some of the Top Ten issues were on my manifesto anyway so these have been a focus. As well as this, some issues have cropped up as huge issues for students which have required further addressing. The housing crisis was unprecedented, and therefore has been a huge focus this year. As an SU Officer it is important to be flexible with your goals as your priorities can change very quickly.

**Q: Did you have to take on any issues left by the previous Education Officer?**

A: There are often issues which require continued development. Last years Education Officer spent a lot of time working on Panopto lectures and this has

continued to be a focus this year although not a priority. This will likely be further developed into the next academic year.

**Q: What will be the main issues that the new Education Officer will have to face?**

A: Post Grad support and engagement will continue to be a focus, including support for Post Grads who teach. In terms of space the library and other study space will continue to be a huge issue. The use of Panopto has continued to rise but it's not perfect everywhere – this will still need work. The new Education Officer will also need to increase awareness of SSLC's and the Academic Rep system as a whole.

**Q: Who in the University decides what we champion as an institution?**

When a policy is not passed we are not mandated or obliged to make that issue a priority although students are still able to campaign. Although it may seem that the SU (EU) referendum is a priority, it is not the only policy that is being dealt with. Many issues can be dealt with behind the scenes but this particular issue requires a referendum to produce a result which is why it has been so thoroughly promoted. The SU will remain neutral on this issue until an outcome is reached.

**Q: Has there been any development in fees for foreign students?**

A: An update did go out in January on this. The SU President's aim was to introduce fixed fees but he was heavily outvoted. At this point in time fees cannot increase more than 5% year on year. More and more universities are introducing fixed fees so we hope that this will influence a chance at Bath in the future.

**Q: Will the issue with the lack of space be alleviated with the new buildings?**

A: 10 West will increase space on campus by 9%. This space is for Post Grads and will provide further office and teaching space so the focus won't be on Undergraduates. The library space will be stretched hugely during exams. There are many students who reserve spaces for others – this is frowned upon and an issue that the SU is aware of. The University is almost at capacity as it is surrounded by Green Belt land. The Careers move to Manvers Street will provide more space in the SU but we are still unsure how this will be allocated. It is not an issue that can be solved easily but a campaign in the next semester could help raise awareness for the lack of space.

**Q: What has the University done to improve the housing crisis?**

A: The University has taken the issue seriously, and has been buying up bed stock in Bath. Therefore, the problem with First Year accommodation will be reduced in the coming year, although some students may be sharing rooms. The issue will now be with PG students – for example the PG House Hunting weekend will not be able to go ahead this year as there just aren't any houses. There will also be issues with students that have been complacent when it comes to housing, as well as returning placement students. Landlords have a complete monopoly at this moment in time and the council are restricting HMO properties. If students are going to be forced to live further away, transport and parking on campus will need improving.

**Q: Can you name one thing you wish you had changed or taken a different approach on?**

A: A more active student led campaign over the issue of space would have been good. The University are taking the issue more and more seriously but lots of steps still need to be made on the issue. A student led campaign could have a bigger impact.

**Q: How are you improving mental health provision?**

A: A more accessible self-referral form has been created and waiting times for counselling have been reduced. Mental health provision isn't perfect but it is improving and work will continue into.

**Q: Is the impact of Panopto across the University measured? This could provide useful information for student led campaigns.**

A: We know that Panopto is increasingly used by both staff and students. We still need investment in rooms that don't have good Panopto provision. There is still variation across departments. Panopto recordings need to be stored on a server – the more recordings there are, the more storage is needed so this will require investment in the future. It would be very useful to have statistics from departments over use of Panopto so students can put pressure on those who don't use it. **Action:** Education Officer to get in touch with Audio Visual for statistics.

**Q: Why does sustainability seem as though it's not been taken seriously? When Rep was trying to complete a sustainability project she was blocked from senior management.**

A: It's a shame to hear that this has happened. A sustainability group that the Activities Officer has set up might be of interest. Rep advised to contact Activities Officer. There are a significant number of groups working on Green initiatives across campus. Sustainability did not feature in the Top Ten as there wasn't a specific direction to focus on. The SU would like to hear feedback from students regarding this issue.

**Q: Why does the University have a 'Go Green' policy but students still have to travel in to University to print and hand in hard copies?**

A: We are continually pushing for online submissions without the need to hand in hard copies. The Education Officer requests that Reps continue to champion online submission, and put their concerns in SSLC Annual Reports.

**Q: Has the bike provision in Combe Down been improved?**

A: The Education Officer is unsure of when this was discussed. The Rep was requested to leave an email address so the Education Officer can look into this further for her. **Action:** Education Officer to email Rep with further information.

**Q: Management students have been given assignment deadlines over revision week. Why is this still an issue when students should be focusing on revision?**

A: This is an ongoing issue across all faculties although the compromise would be to have a deadline before revision week which would give students less time to complete their assignments.

**This is the final Taught Academic Council of the year. Once again, the Education Officer would like to thank all Academic Reps for their continued hard work over the last year.**