

London South Bank University Students' Union Union Council Meeting



UC28112022

28th November 2022 Minutes

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Date: 28/11/22

Time: 17:00-19:00

Location: K2-V404

Agenda

- 1.0 Welcome and apologies
- 2.0 Chair's introduction
- 3.0 Agree the accuracy and approve the minutes of the last meeting
- 4.0 Note any matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda
- 5.0 Election of Vice-Chair
- 6.0 Officer Reports
- 7.0 Items/papers/policies to receive, consider, discuss and approve
- 8.0 Note items for information
- 9.0 Any other business and date of the next meeting

Minutes

Approved on 23/01/2023

Minutes of the Union Council meeting (28 November 2022)



1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations

1.1. Voting members in attendance:

- Devonte James (SU President)
- Abdirahim Ibrahim (Chair of Union Council)
- Mirella El-Jebaili (Students' Union Deputy President and Vice President of Education)
- Fatema Toz Zohora (Students' Union Vice President Welfare and Equalities)
- Anas Khan (Students' Union Vice President Activities and Employability)
- Abdirahim Ibrahim (Chair of Union Council)
- Charlotte Adams (Disabled Students' Part-Time Officer)
- Aaron Miles Mulley (Mature & Part-Time Students' Part-Time Officer)
- Abdur Rahman Tanim (International Students' Part-Time Officer)
- Jamie Jenner (LGBTQ+ Students' Officer)

1.2. In attendance:

- Matt Myles-Brown (Students' Union Deputy CEO)
- Yvonne Quartey-Papafio (Students' Union Community Development Coordinator)

1.3. Apologies:

- Ashik Showrav (Postgraduate Students' Part-Time Officer)

1.4. The Chair brought the meeting to order. All attendees introduced themselves and their role.

1.5. No conflicts of interest were declared.

1.6. Matters arising were introduced by the Chair.

2. Chair's introduction

- 2.1. The chair opened the meeting.
- 2.2. Part-Time officers introduced themselves.
- 2.3. Full-Time officers introduced themselves.
- 2.4. Chair introduced himself and his role in the union council.

3. Agree the accuracy and approve the minutes of the last meeting

3.1. This is the first meeting of this academic year.

4. Note any matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda

4.1. This is the first meeting of this academic year.

5. Election of Vice-Chair

5.1. The chair explained the role of vice-chair

5.2. Fatema put herself forward as vice chair, no one else nominated herself.

5.3. Fatema was announced as vice chair of the union council.

6. Officer Reports

6.1. The full-time officers were invited by the Chair to give updates to Council as to their work on behalf of the union since the beginning of term.

6.2. Devonte explained his manifesto. 1) international buddy scheme for international students. This project is currently still in progress. 2) coloured lanyards. Devonte would like to introduce coloured lanyards for every school. 3) Cost of living- Devonte is currently prioritising the cost of living campaign and is currently gaining insight from students. Chair asked Devonte to pause and would like Devonte to discuss what support he would like from the new international officer in regards to the international students' buddy scheme. Devonte explained that he would like support with promotion. Chair asked about who on the council would be supporting Devonte with his coloured lanyard manifesto. Devonte explained that currently, there is no need for support from part-time officers on this manifesto. Chair asked who Devonte is working with regarding the cost of living campaign. Devonte explained that he will be working with the provos in order to get insight faster. Regarding the Cost of living campaign, Devonte explained that he has worked with the university to increase the amount of hardship funds they are giving to students. Chair asked how the hardship funds would relate to the networks that we have. Devonte responded and asked if any part-time officers get any insight from students regarding financial support that they need, this would be very useful for Devonte. Charlotte asked if Devonte could create a video with a step by step guidance to accessing the hardship fund. Jamie explained that this would be helpful as it will make access more transparent. 4) Devonte is working on enhancing the course experience- This would include having more trips and visual experience. Devonte has worked with the provos and Mirella in order to work on this. Chair asked what information Devonte has got from the provos in order to achieve this. Devonte explained that the information he has got now is the time-table. 5) Devonte is also working on increasing employment opportunities for students. Devonte explained that he has worked to promote the opportunities available at the university and that this work has been completed. In semester two, Devonte will work further on this. Chair asked how Devonte would like the part-time officers to contribute to this. Devonte asked that part-time officers promote the work he is doing and keeping in contact. Charlotte explained that while working at the desk, she has had a lot of students asking about SU employment opportunities, Charlotte asked that Devonte promotes these at the careers hub more.

7. Mirella is working on three big points for this year. 1) Mirella's main objective was to increase student voice by increasing the number of issues recorded and resolved. Mirella explained that she has done this by influencing the content of the course rep training sessions and how the forums are run. Has created 'voice it' for any student to report any issues they have at any time.

Some students have been sending Mirella issues via Instagram which she keeps as an open door for students to get in touch with her. Mirella has been working on creating an effective team to solve student issues. Mirella has sat on the interview panel at LSBU to appoint a new pro vice chancellor of education. Mirella is also on the interview panel for appointing new voice assistants at the union. Mirella explained that she is working with Deborah Johnson on the appointment of a new vice chancellor. Deborah would like Mirella's insight on the skills necessary from the new for the role of vice chancellor. Mirella is also having regular meetings with Deborah to discuss all issues in order to make sure they are being reported quickly. 2) Mirella's second main area of work has been to improve the issue of disrupted IT access at the university. Mirella would like to enhance IT access for students by enhancing student's experiences on LSBU's IT platforms. In relation to this, LSBU is currently working on a project which will launch in January. Chair asked who is running the project. Mirella explained that it is under a large team. The idea of the project is to put all key digital information student's need in one place. 3) Mirella's third main area of work has been to improve academic support. There are two new programs within LSBU, one has been released and the other Mirella has asked to be held off. The first project is to support international students. Classes and programs have been set up to support international students with the English language and also with written work. Second program is that LSBU has discovered that graduate outcomes are low because a large number of home students do not have English and maths GCSE. LSBU would like to provide free courses to allow students to gain their English and maths GCSE. It has been apparent that students raise issues to course directors but students do not receive a response or if they do, the response isn't good. Mirella is working with Deborah in order to improve this with course directors. Chair explained that he has spoken to some heads of schools and has found that there are a lot of complaints from international students regarding work experience. Chair has spoken to the associate dean of education who is willing to work on this. Regarding low graduate outcomes- it has also come to Mirella's attention that a lot of international students do not know the services that are available and that they do not get support from careers hub. Mirella has spoken to the careers hub in order to work towards promoting the services available. Last point within improving academic support is academic communities- a new plan has been put in place to get in touch with heads of departments to see what students want from academic communities and see how full-time officers and SU can cater to that.

Anas has had two main priorities. 1) Faith and culture- Anas explained that there is not a proper prayer space for Friday prayer. Anas has worked with Matt and has been able to book a room for next semester to resolve this issue. Anas has also been working on cultural based communities and has worked closely with the SU to organise meet and greets and also gathers insight. Anas attended the MENA (Middle East and North African) trail event which went well and there will be a SEA (South East Asian) trial event tomorrow. Anas is working to improve engagement at community events by promoting and making posters. Anas would like to look into doing further promotion such as newsletters. Anas has also realised that graduation dates are a big issue for international students as dates are after visas expire. Anas is working on bringing dates forward so that international students can attend their graduations. Anas has also been working on supporting societies with their events. The Islamic society had a charity event which went well. Anas is also having informal conversations with societies in order to see what events they have coming up. Over £1,000 was raised during charity week. International students have 4 months extra on their visa after completing their course. If students go home in those 4 months, they are unable to come back. Anas is working to raise awareness to international students so that they know not to go home in those 4 months. Chair asked the international students' officer how he plans on working with Anas on the visa issues. It was discussed that this is a timetabling issue which is being discussed with the university. International students' officer explained that this also affects retakes as visas do not last long enough for international students to retake their exams. Devonte explained that he is having discussions with Anas on this issue. Mirella explained that if more insight was gathered about the retake issue, this is

something that affects her department too and is something she could also work on. Devonte explained that this issue has been raised with the provos and they will continue to have these discussions. The provost understands the issue and is willing to take action. 2) Anas' second main area of work has been to increase employment opportunities. Chair asked for Anas to work with departments within the university and consult them on how to tackle this issue.

Fatema has a number of priorities. 1) supporting students in the cost of living crisis- Fatema has already started a campaign which is going really great so far. She has loads of support from the university and the SU. Main aim of this campaign is to understand how the cost of living crisis is impacting students. A further aim of the campaign is to see where the university can improve support. 2) Decolonising the curriculum- Fatema explained what decolonising the curriculum means and shared her own experience. Fatema aims to decrease the attainment gap and is in discussion with key people in the university regarding her action plan which is not yet approved. There will be a report very soon from the university, but Fatema is not currently able to speak about this report in detail. 3) Mental health support- Fatema has realised that there is mental health support but this is not visible to students. Fatema is working with the wellbeing team in order to increase this visibility. Chair asked who Fatema is working with in order to achieve this. Fatema explained that she is working with the dean, has spoken to Charlotte, and is also attending networking events in order to gain insight. Charlotte shared that she agrees with Fatema that the support at university is there, but there is a fear around the initial step of getting support. Charlotte would also like to normalise talking about mental health more. Jamie also shared that there is a fear around seeking mental health support within the LGBTQIA+ community as there has not been any education with the wellbeing team around issues that affect that community and therefore this stops the community from accessing support. Charlotte shared that she did a session recently with the wellbeing team- it would be useful for there to be virtual meetings as an option where students can maintain their anonymity. Jamie explained that the visibility of walking into the wellbeing team office creates a lot of anxiety within the LGBTQIA+ community. The option of anonymity is needed.

- 7.1. The part-time officers were invited by the Chair to give updates to Council as to their work on behalf of the union since the beginning of term.
- 7.2. Abdur shared that his main goal is to ensure that every student is treated fairly. Abdur would also like to work on providing more options on how to pay instalments for tuition fees. International students have to pay 50 percent of their tuition fees at the beginning of their studies. Instalments should be made smaller (3 or 4 instalments). Fatema shared that students do have the option to contact the finance team and describe their situation and they will be able to support them with payments.
- 7.3. Jamie is focusing on 1) making the campus more LGBTQ+ visible. 2) Jamie would also like to work on better facilities for trans and non-binary students eg: gender neutral toilets. 3) it is very difficult to change your name on IT systems which is an issue affecting the LGBTQIA+ network. Would like to do a campaign to provide step by step guidance on how to get your name changed. Matt explained that Devonte and Fatema sit on the diversity and inclusion group, the SU can connect both LGBTQ and Disabled students to the staff network. Jamie would like support on raising awareness on what the SU is and what they do and what officers do. Devonte asked how this could be done. Jamie suggested doing this through the course rep program. Mirella shared that she will be able to give course reps more knowledge on the SU.
- 7.4. Charlotte- Would like to raise awareness on how to get support. Did a campaign on this in the form of a poster and a video on social media. Is now working on her second campaign for DHM and has done an exhibition to show how disabled people have become more empowered overtime and It also highlights struggles. Also did free activities- gather and

paint session, and a wellbeing session with the wellbeing session where they learnt that a virtual meeting should be an option. Next will have a movie night- all events are open to all students as she would like to raise awareness about different disabilities. In collaboration with the SU, Charlotte is showcasing 9 different disabilities in order to raise awareness. Going forward- the community made Charlotte aware that the support received at exam period is really bad. Many disabled students do not receive a room ect. Would like to take political action to create a petition in for the full-time officers to take to the university. Charlotte shared that as a registered DDS student, the university gets funding for this, but DDS students are not receiving support that they are entitled to. The DDS team have unofficially shared that they did not expect to get so many disabled students to accommodate them. A Lot of DDS students have to chase the DDS team in order to get the support. The scribes are outsourced and do not know the campus and therefore do not know how to sort rooms out. Charlotte shared that her community is not majorly keen on events and she has therefore changed her agenda to being campaign based. A member of the network suggested making a 'rights as a disabled student card'- This is something that she will be working on next.

- 7.5. Aaron- Has given suggestions about different event ideas he has had for the network such as fitness classes. Would like to tie this in with university services. Would also like to arrange self defence classes. Would also like to have guest speakers. Has been speaking to some students in the network to carry out wellbeing checks. Has been speaking to students on ways to save money and student discount codes. Would like support on increasing engagement in the group chat. Devonte asked if Aaron thinks that there is an appetite for part-time students to engage in events. Aaron suggested that events could be done over the weekend. Chair shared that the hub has a breastfeeding facility which the network may benefit from. Aaron asked how he can make sure that people in the group are coming to events, YQP suggested making events ticketed.

8. Items/papers/policies to receive, consider, discuss and approve

No matters arising from any previous meeting.

9. Note items for information

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10. Any other business and date of the next meeting

Deveonte- Is working on TEF- A workshop will be happening on the 7th of December and Deveonte asked officers to attend.