

**Minutes:****Student Council**

Confirmed

Meeting 3 of the academic year 2021-22

Date / Time:

30/03/2022 – 18:30 – 19:30

Location:

MS Teams

Chair:

Executive Officers facilitated the meeting

Attendees:

**Attendee Name****Role of Attendee**

Aashni Sawjani (AS)

Student Opportunities and  
Engagement Officer

Benjamin Smith (BS)

Welfare Executive

Nyashadashe Nguwo (NN)

Academic Executive

Puja Subramanian (PS)

Equality &amp; Diversity Executive

Amir Iqbal (AI)

Open Zone Member

Navi Kura (NK)

Open Zone Member

Shamsia Qadir (SQ)

Open Zone Member

Toby Smith (TS)

Academic Zone Member

Anna Maria Sikora (AMS)

Academic Zone Member

Stephanie Glazebrook (SG)

Academic Zone Member

Anna Maria Sikora (AMS)

Opportunities Zone Member

Leonardo Venturi (LS)

International Liberation Officer

Nicole Sibanda (NS)

LGBTQ+ Liberation Officer

Toby Smith (TS)

Academic Zone Member

Alex Scown (AS)

Student Voice Coordinator

**1. Introduction and Apologies for Absence**

NN Welcomed everyone to the Student Council Meeting.

Introduced the Executive Officers and ALS to council. Moved away from introducing each member of council due to constraints. No objections.

Apologies were received from:

- Victoria Pulka
- Izzy Walden
- Megan Maw
- Sofia Costa Marques
- Meera Dasani
- Feyisayo Promise I Bidenmoye
- Kay Walker

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting (08/02/2022) were confirmed by those present.

### 3. Chair Announcement:

ALS Announced the results of the vote for Chair of Student Council. The results were as follows:

- Reopen Nominations (RON) received 0% of the results
- Amir Iqbal received 35% of the votes
- Sofia Costa Marques received 65% of the votes

Therefore Sofia Costa Marques was duly elected Chair for Student Council. As she was not present, ALS informed Council that she would be emailed with the results and would receive training in preparation for the 4<sup>th</sup> Zones & Council Meeting this academic year. ALS suggested that for now the Executive Officers continue to facilitate this meeting. No Objections

### 4. Election Update.

Congratulations were given to the Executive Officers and Liberation Officers that were elected for the next academic year.

### 5. NUS Conference Update

Elected to skip NUS update due to JDH not being present and it being her agenda point. No Objections

### 6. Discussion on filling vacant positions on Zones and Council

BS There are currently positions for different Zones that are vacant with no process to join outside of the Zone elections. This was to be a discussion with council on what changes can be made and also how to get people involved in Zones.

PS Suggested that action could be taken to replace disengaged Zone members with students that want to participate in Zones & Council. PS suggested a method to give members notice should they miss multiple meetings.

AI Brought up the Committee Elections and suggested changing Zone Elections to be similar to those. AI also suggested a Co-option process where Zones could accept new members into the Zone when there are vacant spaces.

PS Agrees with AI as she has spoken to students that only learnt about Zones & Council after the elections. Also empathised that this was an open discussion and would be an ongoing process.

TS Agreed with AI. Suggested that there should an option for re-election and that members shouldn't be kicked out immediately. They would be given an option to step-down gracefully and then the position would be given to someone who wishes to take the position.

BS Asked for clarity on what current process is for removal of Zone Members from their

respective Zones. ALS gave confirmation of the Bye-Laws (9.6) which details the formal removal of Zone Members.

- PS Suggested creating an Action on updating the Bye-Laws on the removal of a Council Member
- BS Asked AI for further clarity on the Co-Option method mentioned earlier. AI used the example of his role in Nintendo Society to explain. People would put their name forward if interested then a vote would be cast from present members.
- TS Argued that better communication on the responsibilities and benefits of being a zone member should be given to potential candidates during elections. Mentioned the valuable experience and the benefit of having this on a CV.
- AI Agreed with TS and said that reaching out to specific societies that match the criteria required by certain Zone Members would also be beneficial in increasing engagement.

## 7. Discussion around the use of the term BAME

- PS Wishes to open a discussion with Council around the use of the word BAME. Mentioned that this was already a point of topic amongst students and staff at DSU. The discussion was on whether or not BAME as an inclusive term when representing all ethnic students. PS has already a discussion on the matter during Equality & Diversity Zone with split opinions from members. Asked for Council Members opinion.
- NK Mentioned that her dissertation features a discussion on the term heavily. How it excludes ethnic and minority groups such as Romani. Says that the word is problematic.
- PS Thanks Navi for her feedback. Mentions that many institutions including DMU have begun to exclude the word from their guidelines and Bye-Laws. PS believes that word is misleading and provides more attention to Black and Asian people but not others such as Romani people. Asked if this discussion should be taken outside of Council.
- TS Agrees that this should be taken outside of Council. Also makes note that the UK government website does not make use of the word BAME. Mentions he cannot speak with authority on the matter so recognises the importance of collecting feedback from the wider body. AM agrees.
- PS Wants to see if there is the appetite for a wider consultation. A working group consisting of DSU staff and zone members. Happy to send emails to students who are interested in joining the discussion.

### **ACTION 1**

ALS would send email to all Council Members to update them on the topic of BAME. PS will begin communication with wider student body and begin a wider consultation.

## 8. Mental Health Policy Vision

- BS Empathised the scope of the topic in the wake of Covid. Mentioned that DSU doesn't have policies on mental health. Wants to create a mental health policy that is shaped by the Council.
- TS Mentions that quicker response time as it takes too long to get an assessment. Support should be given faster when in a crisis.
- AI Made note that support for students with protected characteristics are vital. Mentioned a discussion around this at the NUS conference. BS asks for clarify on protected characteristics if this would focus on ethnic minorities. AI responded that it should focus on wider groups as well as ethnic minorities. Presented examples such as carers, mature students, religious students. Emphasised that accessibility is the key.
- AM Drew attention to the DemonFM programme that focuses on mental health. Said that having a third-party specialist at the union would be a good thing for students. BS asked if this would be something as a first point of contact or would provide longer support. AM said that it being a first point of contact that could lead into further support would be more feasible.
- TS Drew attention to the Tea and Chats that Course Reps have and wondered if that could be expanded to the wider student body.

### 9. Embedding EDI in employability Policy vision discussion.

- PS Begins by clarifying the different between a policy vision and a policy. Has an idea for a policy vision that draws attention to diversity about employment. Currently there are annual programmes at DMU that target minority groups and people with protected characteristics to promote employability. Mentioned 'Leicester Future Leaders' as an example. Wants to expand this to include a wider demographic. Mentioned LGTQ+ and disabled students as examples. PS shared her screen of a Policy Vision she has created. Asked council for feedback of if they suggestions on it.
- TS Agrees with Policy Vision and says it should apply to all groups with protected characteristics.
- PS Suggested that this document should be forwarded all to Council Members before being taken to the university

#### **ACTION 2**

ALS will forward the Policy Vision on the topic of Embedding EDI in employability to all Council Members and ask that if they have feedback, they forward it to PS. PS will then take this policy vision to the university.

### 10. Consent Training Policy Vision Discussion

- BS Wishes to create a policy vision as well on consent training at DMU. Has done research on other university's policies surrounding consent training and wishes to embed similar practices at DMU. Wants Council Members thoughts on the matter
- AI Mentions that there was a policy workshop at NUS that covered gender-based violence. Say it would be relevant to this.

- BS Asks Council whether consent training what its format would look like and when it would take place in the academic year.
- AI Suggests a mixture of online and in person training at the beginning of the year.
- AS Mentions that training must not clash with other training. Notes that for many societies and sport clubs that training is done throughout the year and so whatever is implemented can't clash with that. Also suggests a hybrid approach where it is done in person but also available online.
- AI Suggests doing training at the beginning and end of academic year. Also suggests incorporating Mandala into this. BS agrees.

### 11. A.O.B. / OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- AM Wishes to talk about racism at the university. Says there isn't enough information on what to do when you are a victim of racial behaviour. There is a focus on specific minorities whilst ignoring the experience of others. Mentions that she was a victim of racism but felt she couldn't say anything about it because of her ethnicity. BS apologies for her experience and brings attention to support system at the union and university. Offers to have a personal meeting with her surrounding this event to tackle it. PS, AS and NN likewise offer their support and involvement. AM thanks them but says she doesn't see the point in focusing on her experience at the time.
- AI Offers thoughts on NUS conference. Talks of overall discontent shown by attendees to NUS. Mentions that certain people would benefit from going to the NUS conference more than others and expresses thoughts that electing candidates might not be the best way to choose representatives. Said that overall it was OK to him.
- ALS Mentions that the Executive Officers have not done their Update to Student Council and suggested that they all email that to all Council Members as a short paragraph. No objections.

#### **ACTION 3**

All Executive Officers will write and email their Executive Updates to Zone & Council Members prior to the next Zones & Council.

Thanks were given to Student Council members for their attendance and the meeting concluded