**STUDENTS’ UNION AT BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY**

**Annual Student Members Meeting [13 May 2021]**

[18:00PM] [via Zoom]

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

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| **PRESENT** *Naomie Lebe (NL) SU President - Chair**Chiko Bwalya (CB) SU VP Education**Toluwa Atilade (TA) SU VP Community and Welfare**Ugo Andy-Eke (UAE) SU VP Opportunities**Nicole Chee (BU Student) NC**Kyana Gani (BU Student) KG**Caitlin Maciver (BU Student) CM**Lucy Stevens (BU Student) LS**Magnus Moen (BU Student) MM**Raeburn Crawford (BU Student) RC**Sophie Pelger (BU Student) SP**Sasha Alex (BU Student) SA**Joy Dukuze (BU Student) JD**Callum Ovey (BU Student) CO**Ellie Hamilton (BU Student) EH**Dylan Linter-Mole (BU Student) DLM**Michelle Clark (BU Student) MC**Jennifer Ezeogu (BU Student) JE**Zornitsa Lazarova (BU Student) ZL**Kacper Wozniak (BU Student) KW**Carlo Simone (BU Student) CS**Luci Phalp (BU Student) LP**Other BU Students*  |  | **IN ATTENDANCE** *Samantha Leahy-Harland (SLH) Chief Executive**Charlotte Morris-Davis (CMD) Democracy and Campaigns Manager**Shannon Butler (SB) Digital Communications Executive* |
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**1. Welcome and Introductions**

1.1 NL extended a formal welcome to all members in attendance, this included a presentation of SUBU’s Safe Space protocol.

**2. Meeting Etiquette and Democratic Procedure, for noting**

2.1 NL reminded attendees of the SMM meeting etiquette and the Union’s

Democratic Procedures.

2.2 NL stated that 91 votes had been submitted via proxy prior to the meeting and these would count towards the 100 quoracy requirement for the SMM.

**3. Ratification of Minutes from the previous meeting (19 May 2020)**

3.1 **19 May 2020 AGM** **Minutes were ratified.**

**4. Trustee Board report on the Union's activities since the previous meeting, for noting**

4.1 Presented by SLH

Key points noted by the AGM:

* SUBU’s Trustee Board was an independent Board, responsible for leading on the strategy and governance of the Charity, and accountable for its financial sustainability.
* As a result of the pandemic, over the past twelve months the Trustee

Board had focused and dealt with a significant financial crisis. SUBU’s Commercial outlets (i.e., The Old Fire Station (TOFS), Dylan’s, the Café and Shop) had largely been closed since March 2020, with a loss of approximately £350K in income to the Charity. This income would normally have supplemented the running costs of the Union. As a consequence, these closures have had a substantial impact on SUBU’s finances.

* The Union’s financial position was further compounded by a 10% cut to

its block grant by Bournemouth University (BU).

* As a result, over the last year, the Trustee Board had overseen a

number of difficult decisions undertaken by the Union. This had included a restructure of the Organisation’s staffing and led to a number of redundancies which were, unfortunately, necessary to ensure the financial security and long-term future of the Charity.

* Furlough and other government grants had been leveraged heavily.
* Cost reductions had been made across all departments to minimise

financial losses.

* The Board was currently focused on overseeing the block grant

negotiations with BU, for the upcoming academic year.

**5. Presentation of the Union’s accounts, for noting**

5.1 Presented by SLH

Key points noted by the SMM

* This item gave members an overview of the Union’s accounts for the past academic year, 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.
* SLH reiterated that SUBU’s purpose was to benefit its members, the students at the University. Its aim was to represent the interests and welfare of all BU students. SUBU was the recognised channel between students and the University, and the Union’s key goal was to promote cultural, sporting, and social activities for students throughout the year.
* Each year SUBU presented its accounts to its members. This was a statutory requirement under the 1994 Education Act.
* It was an opportunity for members to explore how SUBU spent its finances.
* The Union’s accounts were externally Audited. SUBU commissioned an external qualified account, who reviewed SUBU’s finances to confirm that they were a true and fair representation.
* SUBU was legally obligated to report its accounts to Company’s House and the Charities Commission.
* SUBU appointed Filerknapper, external Auditors, who would normally undertake site visits to conduct the annual Audit. As a consequence of the pandemic the Audit was conducted remotely this year.
* Once prepared the Audited Accounts had undergone various layers of approval before ratification at the Board of Trustees, before being presented at the Student Member’s Meeting (AGM).
* SLH highlighted a number of areas from the accounts, including the operating spend across student facing departments (this excluded spend on staff). This money went predominately to students. For example, Democracy and Campaigns spent £26,430, most of which was spent on: liberation campaigns; on the work of the Officers; Part-Time Officers; and the work involved in the running of the elections.
* Clubs and Societies saw the biggest spend at £67,354. The majority of this money went directly to students to support the running and operation of clubs and societies.
* The Audited Accounts also reported on the outcomes and deliverables from each Union Department. For example, the Representation (Rep) Team collated and analysed nearly 5000 pieces of feedback from SimOn. As a result of this, the Rep Team and Officers had worked tirelessly throughout the year feeding this information back to the Union and the University which drove the institutions’ actions, activities, and campaigns.
* Other highlights included the Student Opportunities Team being awarded ‘Excellent Standard’ in the Green Impact Students’ Union submission.
* SUBU had also supported a range of liberation campaigns throughout the year including national history months and Black History Month.
* The Audited Accounts provided a summary of the overall financial health of the organization.

 5.1.2 In summary, in terms of financial performance, as a result of the

pandemic, closure of the Commercial outlets and the cut to the block

grant, SUBU’s income had suffered a reduction of approximately £1M

from the previous year.

5.1.3 The final year end position was mitigated by a number of actions taken

by SUBU within the period in question. This included: the restructure

and redundancy programme; significantly leveraging available

government support (e.g., furlough); minimizing operational spend.

These actions ensured that SUBU’s overall losses were limited to

approx. £40K. This was a position the Union could tolerate, but was

working to mitigate against and turnaround over the next financial year.

The outlook would be dependent on a number of external factors

including the national picture generally and the easing of lockdown.

5.1.4 The Auditors had provided SUBU with an unqualified Audit Report.

This meant that the Auditors found no causes of concern around the

finances of the Union, nor how the Organisation was run. The Auditors

confirmed that SUBU had managed its finances in a reasonable way.

5.1.5 The Auditors also needed to look ahead to the next twelve months,

taking onboard SUBU’s current status and year end position and had to

make an assessment. The Auditors needed to judge the measures that had been put in place and evaluate whether the Charity could be considered a ‘going concern’ for the next twelve months. It was important for SUBU to have a clean bill of health and the Auditors had confirmed that SUBU could be considered a ‘going concern’ for the period in question.

5.2 Student question (SA): As a rep from a course mainly comprised of

international students, could these students, including those abroad, get

financial support, from the University for computers, software, and finance

etc.?

5.4 SLH responded that financial support had been a big issue for both Home and

International students and students were eligible. The Officers had been instrumental in lobbying the University to ensure there was financial support in place with very clear guidance on how to access it, to help mitigate the impact of Covid on individual student experiences. There were funds available within BU, and the government had recently announced a further £15M, released to the Higher Education sector as a continuation of support for students during the pandemic. SUBU and the other Student Unions across the country continued to lobby the government to provide appropriate student support during the crisis.

5.5 NL thanked SA for representing students on the course and asking the question. NL confirmed that an email address would be made available to allow any student to make contact about this item. The Officers and the SUBU Advice Team would be happy to follow up on this; (SUBUadvice@bournemouth.ac.uk)

**6. List of Affiliations, for approval**

6.1 Presented by SLH

Key points noted by the SMM:

* SLH explained that SUBU is required to gain approval for its affiliations at the SMM. Currently SUBU is only affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS).
* The NUS was a national association of approximately 600 Student Unions representing about seven million students across the country.
* The current positioning and national crisis that the Higher Education sector faced made membership to the NUS more important than ever. It was integral for SUBU to be part of the national body, not only for lobbying and campaigning purposes but, for access to the extensive training and research resources membership provided.
* Being a member meant that BU students were represented and heard at a national level.
* SUBU had a considerable Commercial operation and being a member enabled the Union to be part of a purchasing consortium. This facilitated access to discounts and procurement contracts that SUBU may not have had access to if it operated alone.
* The NUS had gone through a restructure, had listened to its members and reconfigured its fees. Membership cost £47,000 last year, but the price had been reduced to approximately £26,000 for the next academic year.

6.2 **Affiliation to the NUS was approved.**

**7.** **Open Questions to Trustees, Chaired by CB**

7.1 NL responded on behalf of the Trustees

7.2 Student question (KG): Where did the University stand regarding methods of

teaching for the next academic year?

NL responded that the University wanted to remain cautious and did not want to make any early announcements due to the pandemic and continuing uncertainties. BU wanted to be as transparent as possible but needed to ensure government guidelines were followed. NL reassured that these were questions the Officers were asking during their meetings with the University.

7.3 Student question (RC): Was the University considering split teaching methods, giving students the opportunity to study on-line?

RC explained that NL had partially answered the question in the previous answer but added that their current course had a high proportion of mature students who had benefitted from online teaching and the flexibilities around time management.

NL invited CB to respond.

CB stated that the University were considering hybrid learning and teaching with the opportunities this provided for students to continue to study at home. The issue affected both mature students and international students, many of whom had continued to study in their home countries. The Officers were waiting for updates from the University but hoped there would be the prospect for students to opt in or out depending on their personal circumstances.

7.4 Student question (CM): Was unsure whether this was relevant to the Trustee Board, but asked if there would be a Freshers Fair or just Freshers in general because in other Unis there was an event called OAPs Freshers, where students could socialise and get to know each other like the first year would?

NL invited SLH to respond.

SLH agreed that this was a good point and something SUBU recognised and was actively working on. Current first years would not have had anything like the usual freshers experience they may have hoped for at University. SUBU were exploring and planning what could be done at the next Freshers Fair, to potentially make it wider and broader for those returning students who had not had the’ typical’ experience. SUBU were committed to working on this and more detail would follow.

7.5 Student question (MM): Was there another opportunity to submit questions as it clashed with a course seminar?

CB attempted to clarify the question and suggested that it related to Officer Question Time. CB stated that questions could be submitted in advance and then read out and answered during the recording of the event. So, questions could be asked via Instagram or Facebook beforehand.

**8. Motions (Student Ideas), for ratification**

NL explained that Student Ideas could be submitted online at any time throughout the year. Students were then able to vote and comment on those ideas. Students who submitted ideas were invited to discuss their proposal with a member of staff. The ideas needed to include the following information:

* The Problem- what the problem was, including relevant facts, figures and what was currently in place
* The Solution- what needed to change in order for the problem to go away
* Ideas for Implementation- what needed to happen to bring about this change

NL warned that one of the ideas to be discussed had a content warning due to discussions around sexual assault, harassment, and violence.

NL went on to explain how the debate would proceed and informed that no amendments to Motions had been submitted prior to the meeting, and no new amendments could be presented during the meeting.

8.1 **Motion 1**: Recycling Availability in Accommodation

Proposer – Ellie Hamilton (EH)

Summary: The Problem: EH explained that the issue being addressed was around recycling and the problems being experienced at BU by students. EH was a third year and during this time had seen a massive push by BU around sustainability with excellent recycling facilities on Campus. However, this fell short when it came to student accommodation and offset the strides BU had made on campus around sustainability. During conversations with peers, it had been discovered that there appeared to be a distinct lack of recycling facilities available in privately let accommodation, where waste was not always managed by the council. Additionally, for student halls, the management of recycling points left a lot to be desired, with overflowing bins and litter everywhere. These conditions had been putting people off from recycling their waste because of the desire to avoid these areas. NUS had reported a lower uptake of recycling by students especially those in first year. EH felt these issues were holding people back from living sustainably as students.

The Solution: EH suggested that to address this the policy aimed to assess students’ recycling behaviour through a survey and then provide and promote more accessible recycling options for all students.

Implementation: BU had been moving towards some of these implementations through their sustainability activities. These included providing a bottle bank on both campuses for bottle and glass recycling. SUBU could promote awareness campaigns and a webpage to inform students on what, when and where they could recycle in Bournemouth. SUBU could potentially lobby local student accommodation providers to improve recycling facilities.

8.1.2 No comments or opposition were noted to Motion 1.

8.1.3 **Motion 1: Recycling Availability in Accommodation – Motion Ratified.**

8.2 **Motion 2**: Ending Sexual Harassment, Misconduct and Violence on Campus

Proposer: Toluwa Atilade (TA)

Summary: TA issued a trigger warning.

The Problem: TA explained that the policy was about ending sexual harassment, misconduct, and violence on campus. This conduct did take place within the Higher Education Sector, leaving behind victims and survivors of sexual assault. March 2021 saw the launch of the Instagram account ‘Everyone’s invited’, which shared personal testimonies from Victims. TA was the NUS Delegate this year and also VP

Welfare and Community for SUBU and working with other

Officers across the country was attempting to address the issue

of misconduct on campuses. As a starting point this policy was

being proposed which outlined policies, procedures and

reporting mechanisms that made it easier and more comfortable for those affected to report misconduct, in a way that was supportive to victims, negating the need to re-live the experience and trauma.

The Solution: SU VP Welfare and Community to lobby BU to commit resources to the creation, employment, and training of a dedicated sexual harassment support group, comprised of staff members. SUBU and BU needed to make a stand to dismantle the structures that left BU students vulnerable and unsafe, and that survivors received appropriate support and some form of justice.

Implementation: A dedicated Staff Team would enable any student affected a clear route for reporting and would also offer support. It was proposed that a dedicated staff member would be available to support a student for as long as necessary, particularly during the reporting process.

8.2.1 The following comments were noted:

8.2.1.1 Student question (RC): Would this policy apply to all

types of harassment?

TA responded that this policy was focused on sexual harassment, misconduct, and violence on Campus.

 8.2.1.2 RC asked whether it was applicable to all genders, non-

binary, LGBT+?

TA confirmed that the policy was inclusive and was for everyone.

 8.2.1.3 Student question (SA) asked whether within the policy

there were rules to prevent this as much as possible,

particularly between lecturers and students?

TA responded that this would definitely be the case for the policy. TA stated that the policy was aimed at removing the element of delay in the process so that there were effective mechanisms in place that facilitated a quicker, more efficient response.

 8.2.1.4 SA asked whether it would be better to focus on

preventing the instances happening in the first place.

There had been occasions when things had happened,

and the response had come too late. Rather than being a

support service could it be more preventative?

TA agreed with the comment made and suggested it was also about leaning and educating and ensuring measures were put in place. TA referred to the ‘#NeverOk’ Campaign which raised awareness around consent.

 8.2.1.5 SB asked about Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) and

Whether BU were using these?

TA suggested that the aim would be to steer BU away from using this mechanism. NDAs were used during disputes or after a dispute resolution to stop either party from revealing details of the circumstances. TA stated that some Higher Education institutions were using these to silence victims of sexual harassment and misconduct, particularly if it involved a staff member against a student. As far as the Officers were aware BU had never used this device. The goal was to ensure justice and support for the victim in all cases of sexual harassment and misconduct without the employment of Non-Disclosure Agreements.

 8.2.2 There was no opposition noted to Motion 2.

 8.2.3 **Motion 2 – Ending Sexual Harassment, Misconduct and Violence**

**on Campus – Motion Ratified.**

8.3 **Motion 3**: Improved Inclusivity and Accessibility Arrangements for All students

Proposers: Timothy Albiges and Luci Phalp

 Summary: The Problem: LP explained that this policy was around

accessibility for disabled students. These students faced

numerous challenges and barriers, for example, in academic

work, and could end up with lower grades as a consequence.

There were fewer social opportunities and, unfortunately, some

discrimination. Because disability was such a broad area there

were diverse needs, and this policy brought a number of accessibility actions together.

The Solution and Implementation: One element being

addressed was the Fitness to Study Policy and its removal. LP explained that BU could decide that if a student was being issued with continued extensions due to chronic illness or mental illness it could use the policy to remove a student from a course. Other elements addressed in the policy were: training for staff in the BU Wellbeing Team and SUBU Advice areas; giving disabled voices a platform; giving more funding to clubs and Societies for accessible equipment; education and disability awareness training; disability justice; auditing of accessibility of the campus by disabled people; providing safe spaces for people with allergies; and all student regardless of whether they have a disability or diagnosis should be contacted by ALS so that support options could be discussed.

 8.3.1 The following comments were noted:

 8.3.1.1 Student question posted online: How would this be

monitored? For example, a food free safe space?

LP responded and suggested the possibility of having sections of the Library and open access where no eating was allowed. These areas could be on the lower levels where they could be more easily monitored. And having areas cleaned down by a staff member to ensure there were no allergens remaining.

 8.3.1.2 Student question (DLM): Could clarification be given

around implementation and how a DSA application could be made without it being fraudulent? That is, for example, a person applying for DSA but not disclosing all their disabilities and then medical professionals being unable to show the disabilities were genuine?

LP replied that that part of the policy was not about DSA,

it was about ALS support. DSA was a provision run by

the government and student finance, whereas ALS was

support operated and run by the University. ALS and not

having a diagnosis was problematic. There were a lot of

things diagnosed very late in the University process,

because students may have started to study in a different way, for example diagnoses around ADHD or dyslexia. Students who were undertaking the diagnosis process would not be able to access the support they needed in the first or second year due to financial barriers or being unaware that they required the support. By simply contacting students regardless of whether they needed

support and conducting some form of assessment, enabled appropriate support to be offered to those who needed it, and this would also kick-start the diagnosis process. There were many social and financial barriers to getting a disability diagnosis, and support could be needed long before the diagnosis.

 8.3.1.3 Student comment (LS): Agreed with this idea. There

needed to be more awareness of disabilities and hidden

disabilities, as many were not commonly known about.

This meant that individuals who needed support were

unaware of the support that they might need.

8.3.2 There was not opposition to Motion 3.

8.3.3 **Motion 3 – Improved Inclusivity and Accessibility Arrangements for All students – Motion Ratified.**

8.4 **Motion 4**: Changing MUSE to Allow Mid and End Unit Feedback

Proposer: Rebecca Leeming (Presented by CB)

Summary: CB stated that this proposal was about changing mid and end unit feedback. MUSE feedback was a brilliant tool to ensure students could have their voice heard regarding their experiences with units. However, the quality of teaching and support for assignments, and exam preparation, had reduced across the semester. For many students there was a difference in student experience mid-unit and at the end of a unit. Students needed better feedback opportunities closer to end of unit assessments. Departments needed to be aware of any changes to the learning experience for students. Currently, it was optional for staff to use other methods of feedback alongside MUSE.

 Solution: MUSE should be redesigned allowing students to submit feedback both mid-unit and at the end of the unit.

This feedback should be gathered after the final assignment deadline allowing students to comment on their entire unit experience. Staff should use this end of unit feedback to support their development and improve the experience for future students taking their units.

Implementation: SUBU should lobby BU to change how unit feedback is gathered, making it mandatory for staff to collect and act on end of unit feedback.

8.4.1 The following comments were noted:

8.4.1.1 Student comment (KG): Personally, The MUSE Survey

needed to come earlier in the Semester as students

faced issues within the first few weeks of starting a course and Programme Leaders were unable to help resolve the issue or listen to concerns raised. Having this earlier would help improve the learning experience earlier before it deteriorated.

CB responded that from a SUBU perspective when, feedback was provided as early as it was currently, those things did not get mitigated, and students ended up providing feedback on things they had not had the opportunity to experience. Students were currently giving feedback on things they had not experienced and when issues arose later in the year, they were unable to provide feedback later on. In the current situation, the only reason why students had experienced issues early on in the year was because of Covid and things were constantly changing, but this was only due to the pandemic. It had been an exceptional year in this regard, and there was not usually constant change within faculties and departments during the year. CB could understand the situation from this perspective but also stated that it would be during a normal year where the proposed mid and end of unit feedback would be beneficial.

8.4.1.2 Student question (MM): asked what the timeline was for the final MUSE survey?

CB responded that the policy proposed the final MUSE feedback would be gathered after the final assignment deadline.

MM, a final year student, and had observed that BU students did not respond to surveys later on in the Semester, as focus was on final assignments and exams. Attendance at seminars was also reduced during this period. It might be worth having the final survey take place before the final assignments.

8.4.2 There was no opposition to Motion 4.

8.4.3 **Motion 4 – Changing MUSE to Allow Mid and End Unit Feedback –**

**Ratified**

**8.5 Motion 5:** Create a SUBU Page or Tab on Brightspace

Proposer: Sophie Pegler

Summary: The Problem: SP explained that people were struggling to find all the correct information for SUBU. There were too many links to different pages and there was a lot of confusion for both students and lecturers.

The Solution: This was a simple proposal and was about having something on Brightspace, as this area acted as a one-stop-shop. There had been comments around Brightspace being an academic only platform. SP argued that if it was exclusively for academia, Careers should not feature on it, and it did currently, as this area was not academic it was career progression.

Implementation: A SUBU page or tab on Brightspace would act as a one-stop-shop helping to redirect to the SUBU pages. A dedicated team of people would be recruited to look after the feature. People could be elected from Marketing courses to oversee it, or anyone else who wanted to become involved, and this could be integrated into their global talent programme.

8.5.1 There were no comments or opposition to Motion 5.

8.5.2 **Motion 5 – Create a SUBU Page or Tab on Brightspace – Motion Ratified.**

**9. AOB**

9.1 None

9.2 NL explained the next steps following the SMM. These included participants being contacted within the next 24 hours with the voting results. Participants would be asked to fill in a feedback survey which would help SUBU shape future meetings. Participants would also be asked to fill in a demographics questionnaire which would support SUBU’s understanding around engagement statistics for this type of meeting.

9.3 NL thanked everyone for taking part in the meeting. The Full Time Officers would leave their contact details in the chat section for anyone who wished to contact them and follow up on any questions or queries they might have. All contact email addresses were also available on the SUBU website.