**STUDENTS’ UNION AT BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY**

**Student Members Meeting (SMM)**

**[24 May 2022]**

[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*  *Omuwa Ayomoto (OA) SU VP Opportunities*  *Dylan Lintern-Mole (DLM)*  *Ellie Jones (EJ)*  *Tanya Bellows (TB)*  *Jodie Cobb - LGB+ Officer*  *Tiffany Carrington*  *Lauren Francis - Women's Officer*  *Lizzy Graham*  *Ellie Baldry*  *Tanya Andrewes*  *Leon Cambray (LC) - Trans and Non-Binary Officer*  *Rhys Smith*  *Oluwatoyin Adesuwa Aguele*  *Paula Angel*  *Other BU Students* |  | **IN ATTENDANCE**  *Samantha Leahy-Harland (SLH) Chief Executive*  *Kerry Dean - Head of Student Participation*  *Eleanor Davis - Student Voice & Insight Manager*  *Hayley Butler - Liberation and Campaigns Coordinator*  *Fatmata Durkin (FD) Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator*  *Stephen Dowson (SD) External Consultant* |
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**1. Welcome and Introductions, for noting**

* 1. NL extended a formal welcome to all members in attendance.
  2. NL stated that 180 votes had been submitted via proxy prior to the meeting and these would count towards the 100 quoracy requirement for the SMM.

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

2.1 There was a presentation of SUBU’s Safe Space protocol to members.

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

Democratic Procedures.

**3. Ratification of Minutes from the previous meeting (13 May 2021)**

3.1 **13 May 2021 Student Members Meeting** **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 SMM:

* The past year had been dominated by the global pandemic.
* Focus for the Trustee Board had been around ensuring the financial future and viability of SUBU.
* SUBU received a block grant from the University and also generated its own income through its commercial outlets. The combination of both these income streams ensured that the Union could operate.
* During the pandemic all commercial outlets had been closed. In addition, current footfall on Campus was down in comparison to normal years; this had had an impact on the Union’s finances.
* Work had been taking place internally with regards SUBU’s new three-year Strategic Plan and involved working in collaboration with the Executive and other stakeholder. This had been launched in August 2021 and could be viewed on the SUBU website.
* The Union was transitioning from the ‘pandemic way of working’ to ‘business as usual’ but it had been recognised that ways of working and student needs had changed over the past two years. As a students’ union, SUBU had to understand how students had changed, what their priorities now were, how students wanted to socialize and study.
* SUBU had to work with its members to understand what had changed and move forward in a positive way.
* There was a renewed focus on re-engagement with members, ensuring that SUBU would re-emerge from the challenges of the past few years to become a leading Student Union.
* SUBU was approaching year-end in a more stable financial position. Thoughts were now turning to the future direction of the Union, which would be informed by students, by engaging with the membership physically and online.
* SUBU was back in the office, running in-person events; returning to a new normal but recognizing that things had changed.
* Over the next few months SUBU would be planning for a great year ahead.

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

5.1 Presented by SLH

Key points noted by the SMM:

* SLH explained that it was a requirement mandated by the Education Act that as a Student Union, SUBU was transparent about its financial affairs.
* SUBU was a charity, registered on Companies House. SUBU also had a trading subsidiary. Through both of these mechanisms SUBU had various legislative requirements. SUBU was legally obligated to report its accounts to Company’s House and the Charities Commission.
* 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 at the SMM. 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. The Auditors ensured that SUBU was fulfilling all of its charitable objectives.
* Once prepared the Audited Accounts had undergone various layers of approval, which included sign-off by the Directors of Feelprime – SUBU’s trading subsidiary - before ratification at the Board of Trustees, and presentation at the SMM.
* SLH highlighted a number of areas from the accounts, including the operating spend across student facing departments (this excluded spend on staff). The accounts covered the period from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.
* Money went predominately to students. For example, Democracy and Campaigns spent £17,156.58, 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 £47,206.38. The majority of this money went directly to students to support the running and operation of clubs and societies. Community, Volunteering and Sustainability spent £3,113.63. Student Voice and Representation spent £4195.80 and SUBU Advice, £1770.68.
* The Audited Accounts also reported on the outcomes and deliverables from each Union Department. For example, The Advice team fielded 1554 enquires and helped students save a total of £53,148; the Representation (Rep) Team collated and analysed nearly 4,900 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.
* SUBU still managed to run an Election online.
* Other highlights included the Student Opportunities Team being awarded ‘Excellent Standard’ in the Green Impact Students’ Union submission.
* The Audited Accounts provided a summary of the overall financial health of the organization.

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

pandemic and closure of the commercial outlets the Union’s income was reduced.

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

by SUBU and the Trustee Board within the period in question. This

included: the restructure and redundancy programme; significantly

leveraging available government support (e.g., furlough); minimizing

operational spend between August 2020 and July 2021. The Union was also able to secure Arts Council funding. This ensured that the Union’s loss at year-end July 2021 was only circa £52,00.

SLH confirmed that the Union had cash Reserves, which meant that this loss could be absorbed. Overall, SUBU maintained a strong position despite all the challenges faced.

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

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

taking onboard SUBU’s current status and year-end position.

Consequently, the Auditors had declared that SUBU could be considered a ‘going concern’ for the period in question.

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

6.1 Presented by SLH

Key points noted by the SMM:

* SLH explained that SUBU required approval at the SMM for the continued affiliation to the National Union of Students (NUS).
* The NUS was a national association of approximately 600 Student Unions representing about seven million students and 95% of Student Unions across the country.
* SUBU had been a member of the NUS for many years.
* Being a member of the NUS was about more than just discounts. It ensured that SUBU remained an active part of the student movement and provided opportunities for lobbying, campaigning, training, research, and it offered support during student elections.
* 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. This meant that SUBU could sell items in the shop at a lower rate than it would otherwise be able to.
* Continued NUS membership was expected to cost circa £28,113 for the next academic year. Cost of membership was linked to the level of block grant received from BU.
* The NUS had been in the national news recently: The NUS UK Board had worked closely with the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) to launch an Independent Investigation into Antisemitism within the NUS.
* SUBU was keeping updated on the progress of this issue through attendance at relevant networks and meetings.
* SLH stressed that SUBU existed for students at BU, and it was for the students to drive the direction around any decisions made. Both the Full-Time Officer and SUBU staff teams were engaging with NUS at a national level with regard the NUS’ response to the situation.

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

**7.** **Open Questions to Trustees, facilitated by OA**

7.1 No questions received.

**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

All ideas were outlined in full on the SUBU website.

8.1 **Motion 1**: **BU should allow students to retake Semester 1 exams during Spring Break.**

Proposer – Dylan Lintern-Mole (DLM)

Summary: DLM referred SMM to the final point of the problem*: ‘It would also*

*provide reassurance for prospective PGRs, given the Reassessment Board is*

*held in the first week of September.’*

DLM stated that there was only a couple of weeks maximum between then and the return of the academic year. On top of that, if a student failed a first semester exam, twice, the student would have to retake it again in that period between the first week of September and the return of the academic year – which did not allow much time.

DLM also referred to the third point around international students: *‘This can pose a problem to some students (such as International Students) who will have to travel back to Bournemouth to sit this exam. Travelling can also mean extra costs for students, who may not be able to afford to do so.’*

DLM stated that semester two resits had not been discussed for obvious

reasons.

NL added that this idea would be implemented by the SU VP Education.

8.1.1 No comments or opposition were noted for Motion 1.

8.1.2 **Motion 1: BU should allow students to retake Semester 1 exams during Spring Break – Motion PASSED / RATIFIED**

8.2 **Motion 2: Meat Free Catering at BU and SUBU.**

**Amended Proposal**: ***Low Meat, Veg First* Catering at BU, and SUBU.**

Amendment suggested by: TA (SU VP Welfare & Community)

Summary: TA recognised the merits of the original proposal which had

highlighted sustainability and individuals doing their part in helping to sustain

the planet with regard meat intake. TA went on to suggest that this transition

should possibly be conducted incrementally rather than the immediate

cessation of meat products from SUBU outlets. For example, it could start

with a focus on vegetables.

The amendment advocated an increase in the quantity of vegan and

vegetarian options on Campus and steps would be taken to prioritise vegan

and vegetarian options. However, as a student-led organisation that aimed to

satisfy the needs and wants of its members, SUBU had to also recognise

that unilaterally ceasing to sell meat products without similar action from the

University would not significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the BU

student body; it would only transfer the purchases from SUBU outlets to BU

outlets. This could have a direct impact on SUBU’s revenue and significantly

affect the running of the Union.

NL also suggested that there could be issues with removing meat from

Campus entirely for people with differing dietary needs and preventing these

students finding anything suitable to eat on Campus.

TA stressed that reducing the amount of meat sold in SUBU outlets was the ambition. This would help the Union work towards its sustainability goals and encourage students to become engaged with the plant-based options available. No Student Union had gone entirely meat free before and although this was not a reason why SUBU should not, it just meant that SUBU needed to think very carefully about making that step. The amendment provided the Union scope to become meat free in the future whilst allowing time for students to become aware of that intention.

**Against the Amendment**:

The following comments were noted:

8.2.1. Tanya Bellows (TB): The original proposal was not a meat ban. Individuals were free to bring in their own food to Campus. It was around the University taking responsibility for its carbon and ecological footprint. Looking at the Paris Agreement, which was about carbon emissions etc. livestock would produce up to 49% of this footprint by 2030 and BU was looking to become carbon neutral by 2030.

TB commented on economic security – SUBU was concerned about losing money and needing to ensure it did not lose revenue. There were a lot of universities and schools that had implemented policies around going vegetarian and had increased their footfall and their profits as well. The most recent was the Lady of Scion School which had gone 100% plant based. Although it was recognised that a vegetarian catering system may be extreme, other universities and schools had gone fully plant based. There had been concerns people would leave, but more students had joined. There had been an overall increase in profits, and not just catering profits.

TB stressed that there was going to be more of a shift towards this way of thinking with new student intakes and concerns around climate change. Goldsmiths’ University had increased their footfall, University of Cambridge dramatically decreased their environmental footprint in a short time whilst increasing sales and profits. Oxford University said it was a very feasible and effective strategy and had done their bit towards this as well. SUBU had to recognise that it was beyond them. Whilst people may make the argument around freedom of choice, SUBU needed to look at it from a long-sighted point of view, protecting and considering climate migrants, global biodiversity, food security, SUBU needed to have a more holistic view on Human Rights rather than just thinking about what an individual was going to eat at university. Students could bring in different food, this did not have to infringe on a person’s Human Rights, it was looking at working in a collective and collaborative way.

8.2.2 Ellie Jones (EJ): Although the amendment was great, it was not dissimilar to an idea passed by the SUBU Summit in December, which talked about having better plant-based options on Campus; to improve sustainability. This was already a very close idea and not a lot had changed in five months. It would be nice to see a greater change to address climate change which was happening now, and the original idea would be a good step for the University.

**For the Amendment**:

The following comments were noted:

8.2.3 BU Student - LC: suggested that the original idea as it stood did not address everyone. It talked about being long-sighted in terms of sustainability, but it forgot the people. There were so many reasons why some people could not go meat-free, and it was ignoring that. There were people with eating disorders and allergens that the idea would ignore. There were people on Campus who needed to eat ‘safe foods’ and these were sometimes the only foods these individuals ate and a lot of the time those foods contained meat. The impact on disabled students was guaranteed to be significant and movement towards sustainability needed to be inclusive of disabled people. There were better ways to do this rather than impacting people’s diet and making people have to put more time into finding food for themselves, when people especially those with disabilities struggled to deal with diet and feeding themselves already.

8.2.3.1 FD clarified that the SMM would be voting on the

amendment to the original meat free proposal. If the

amendment passed this would be the idea being voted

on. If the amendment failed, then it would be the original

idea that would still be voted on.

8.2.3.2 NL further clarified that the original idea was to go meat-

free but SMM were focusing on the amendment.

**Student Questions**:

8.2.4 TB stated an understanding about Leon’s concerns, which were very valid. A recommendation in this respect was that there were two proposals going through SMM and one was for low meat. TB informed that as an environmental student TB had learnt so much about the sustainability side of things and how crucial this was with regards climate change. Looking at it from other perspectives, if students felt more comfortable supporting the low meat, veg first proposal that would be great. If people had their safe foods, would it not be more likely that these individuals would bring these in.

The no meat idea and the other similar proposal around increased

vegan and vegetarian options, had had a survey attached to them, which had highlighted the problems people were facing with regards dietary options on Campus. The point of the proposal was to be inclusive. Meat-free could be inclusive, but the approach had to look at the long-term. The idea would encourage people to get involved in the conversation, it was not a straight flight of fight situation, it needed to be talked about and ways of including more people in a meat-free society needed to be considered. TB suggested that more to the point, it was about how an institution was taking responsibility for its carbon ecological footprint whilst being inclusive.

8.2.4.1 SD explained about the job of helping SUBU put all the ideas together from a democratic point of view for the SMM and explained that there had already been a proxy vote on both the amendment and the original idea. What would happen later in the meeting was that the SMM would vote on the amendment. If the amendment passed it would be merged into the original idea and there would then be a separate vote later to discuss the entire idea with the amendment added. It the amendment failed the SMM would then revert to the original idea and would then undertake speeches for and against it and a vote would take place. SD informed that there would be a break/delay whilst the votes from the SMM were tallied with those who had already voted (proxy votes). For clarity, SMM were voting on whether they wanted the amendment to go forward, not on the whole idea. For members who wanted the original idea, the question was whether they wanted the original idea to have the amendment included: yes or no. If SMM passed this amendment it got added to the original idea and this would then form the whole idea.

*Meeting was paused for voting to take place.*

8.2.4.2 FD informed SUBU did not have an exact number of votes and still needed to wait to hear back from a couple of anomalies around the proxy votes.

8.2.4.3 FD declared that it was clear that the amendment had failed, therefore the original idea would be voted on.

8.2.4.4 **Amendment: *Low Meat, Veg First* Catering at BU, and SUBU - DID NOT PASS / NOT RATIFIED.**

**8.3 Motion 2**: **Meat Free Catering at BU and SUBU**

Proposers: Ellie Jones (EJ) and Tanya Bellows (TB)

Summary: EJ stated that the proposal was not dissimilar to the amendment except that all meat would be removed from catering outlets in BU and SUBU. The reason for this was because meat was one of the biggest causes of global emissions and with the Paris Agreement targets it would take up to 49% of the allowance the country had.

BU’s  Climate and Ecological Crisis Action Plan (CECAP) was committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030/31, but not enough is being done to decarbonise food options. Despite other environmental achievements, BU fell behind other universities in the "Carbon Management" ranking, which was largely comprised of food procurement.

There would be a good range of dairy, vegan and gluten-free selections all available on Campus at no extra cost, ensuring the options were inclusive. Lots of dietary needs were not catered for at the moment.

TB added that there was a group called ‘Plant-Based Unis’ who had offered to support BU with a three-month trial to make this change, at no charge. This could assist with regards any economic hurdles that may or may not be encountered. Based on existing research from other unis, industries, and schools, this approach, was a method to increase both footfall and profit. Despite the challenges around meeting everyone’s needs it was still achievable. It was about having a conversation and finding a way to get this done because it was an issue that was beyond the individual and had dire consequences for the future if it was not achieved.

8.3.1 **Motion 2 – Meat Free Catering at BU and SUBU – Motion DID NOT PASS / NOT RATIFIED.**

8.4 **Motion 3**: **The University and Union Should Stop Banking/associating**

**with Barclays**

Proposer: Tanya Bellows (TB)

Summary: TB explained that Barclays was the biggest funder of fossil fuels in Europe. Student funds were supporting the climate crisis. Barclays was also involved in a lot of warfare and supplying of weapons. BU’s ethical assets were behind every other university in terms of ethical investments. BU were doing well in other areas of sustainability but not all.

8.4.1 No comments or opposition were noted for Motion 3.

8.4.2 **Motion 3 – The University and Union Should Stop Banking /**

**associating with Barclays – Motion PASSED / RATIFIED.**

8.5 **Motion 4**: **The Allyship Policy**

Proposer: Toluwa Atilade (TA)

Summary: TA explained that this idea was to ensure that the Allyship work

continued from an organisational stance, irrespective of the imminent

personnel changes to the Full-Time Officer Team.

It would also give students an array of tools to push Allyship.

TA stressed that there was a certain demographic of people, whether

because of gender, race, social and economic status, who were in need of

allies. Through campaigns, some of the work being done thorough the

Allyship commitments and strategy and working with BU, the objective was to

make sure this work continued, through SUBU and BU.

8.5.1 No comments or opposition were noted for Motion 4.

8.5.2 **Motion 4 – The Allyship Policy – Motion PASSED / RATIFIED.**

**9. AOB**

9.1 None recorded.

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. NL wished everyone the very best of luck with any upcoming exams or assignments.

9.4 NL informed that this was the last SMM for NL, TA, and CB. NL thanked the members and stated that it had been a pleasure serving the students at BU.

9.5 NL introduced president-elect OA, who would be taking on the role from July 2022.