

Meeting:	SUMmit
Location:	Council Chamber
Date & Time:	Monday 19 February 2024 17:15 – 19:00

Present:

Peter Irvine	Chair of Summit
Jimena Alamo	SU President
David Lam	SU Activities Officer
Hanna Hajzer	SU Community Officer
Amber Snary	SU Education Officer
Abbie Watkin	SU Sport Officer
Aaron Horwood	Hall Rep Member
Akansha Matta	Peer Support Member
Anny Li	International Exec Member
Caitlin Grainger-Spivey	Academic Exec Member
Dhanishtha Upadhyay	Diversity & Support Exec Member
Eesha Ganesh	Race Equality Chair
Jess Smith	Disability Action Group Chair
Jesse Dipple	LGBT+ Group Member
Joyeeta Kar	International Exec Member
Lauren Wright	Feminism & Gender Equality Group Member
Lisa Shaw	Sports Exec Member
Steven Kockaya	PGT Exec Member
Titus Hiller	Senate Rep
Valerie Tsang	Activities Exec & Diversity & Support Exec Member

In attendance:

Charlie Slack	Head of Student Voice and Engagement
Amy Young	Insight and Engagement Manager
Mandy Wilson-Garner	Deputy Chief Executive
Melissa Oram	Student Voice Co-ordinator (Change & Inclusion)

1. Welcome from the Chair

The Chair welcomed members of SUMmit to the second meeting of 2023/24.

It was noted that a vacancy for the role of Vice-Chair had opened and any members who were interested were invited to contact the Chair.

The minutes of the last meeting 27 November 2023 were approved as correct by members of SUMmit.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted from:

- Ryan Bird, Chief Exec
- Kiara Singh, Peer Support Member
- Jura Neverauskaite, SU Postgraduate Officer
- Mahima Yadav, Hall Representative

3. Proposed Standpoints discussion:

3.1. Standpoint 1: The SU believes that the University should provide more financial assistance to students in the form of bursaries and scholarships, in accordance with the Access and Participation Plan.

Discussion:

The Proposer introduced the proposed Standpoint explaining that campus Food and Drink credit is being offered over cash for students.

Members of SUMmit highlighted the following concerns regarding the use of campus Food and Drink credit:

- Costs on campus are high and therefore it feels tactical to make this change,
- Seems dishonest as the money is going back into ahs (University Accommodation & Hospitality Services),
- The value of Food and Drink credit is lower and not equivalent to being able to purchase items in cheaper supermarkets,
- The choice of food options on campus is limited, particularly for those with specific dietary needs, or who are looking for variety and a balanced diet,
- Students find it difficult to use up the Food and Drink credit, and end up wasting credit left,
- The budget £1.50 options on campus were all very similar, and assumption is that students like this offer, whereas students could make similar dishes for a much lower price per portion by buying the ingredients themselves,
- It was unclear as to whether there was consultation, although it was noted that the aim was to try and offer support to more students,
- For international students there were particular financial constraints e.g. merit based support only for first year and restrictions on the number of hours international students can work.

A suggestion was made that if passed, the Standpoint should be reviewed in 1-2 years.

Members of SUMmit took an indicative poll to determine the next steps and with a vote of 17/1 decided to proceed to an online vote of SUMmit members to determine if the Standpoint should be adopted by The SU.

Decision: The Standpoint proposal will proceed to an online vote of SUMmit members.

3.2. Standpoint 2: The SU believes that exam procedures should be continuously reviewed to reflect current provision.

Discussion:

The Proposer introduced their Standpoint proposal, explaining that this had been submitted following the issues which arose in the January examination period with an Economics exam. Lots of other incidences of issues have occurred over the years which causes a lot of unneeded stress for students.

The Chair asked the Education Officer to give an overview of the Economics exam issue for those at SUMmit who were unaware.

Members of SUMmit shared experiences and feedback on the proposal:

- Errors appeared to happen at the last stage of checking and approval, indicating that the current processes were not working,
- There is no clear process when things go wrong with online exams,
- Checkers of exam papers will not necessarily be experts in the topic and therefore may not spot a mistake,
- If just one person is checking at the end is this a clear single point of failure in the process.

Members of SUMmit took an indicative poll to determine the next steps and with a vote of 16/0 decided to proceed to an online vote of SUMmit members to determine if the Standpoint should be adopted by The SU.

Decision: The Standpoint proposal will proceed to an online vote of SUMmit members.

3.3. Standpoint 3: The SU believes that the University should address maintenance issues in their accommodation efficiently, even when such issues occur during non-working hours and on weekends.

Discussion:

The Proposer outlined the background of the issue. They referred to issues that have occurred where students in University managed campus accommodation have been left with no hot water for 56 hours due to the report of the issue being made out of hours (Monday – Friday 9.00-17.00).

An urgent response is only given for incidences of faulty heating during cold weather. Having spoken to Security Services who provide the 24/7 support for students on campus, the Proposer had been informed that Security are unable to deal with other maintenance issues outside of working hours.

Members of SUMmit shared their experiences and feedback regarding this proposal:

- If a similar situation was to occur in a privately rented property the expectation would be for the fault to be resolved quickly,
- A show of hands in the meeting showed that the majority had experienced issues when living in University accommodation, with members sharing that they had waited a month for a roof leak to be fixed in Norwood House, 48 hours to fix a shower in Carpenter House,
- Concern was raised that if a student needed access to lifts, a fridge, or other equipment due to an accessibility need, that the needs of these students are not being considered if an electrical fault is not seen as essential,
- A member of SUMmit highlighted the law regarding repairs and maintenance of privately rented accommodation and questioned why the University, as the landlord, is not complying,
- A member of SUMmit commented that this was part of a bigger discussion regarding the University's housing strategy which should include accountability for standards,
- A member of SUMmit quoted a figure from an open letter they had viewed which suggested that University accommodations run at a £2million loss,
- A discussion took place regarding whether the University make money on accommodation from student residents.

Members of SUMmit took an indicative poll to determine the next steps and with a vote of 16/0 decided to proceed to an online vote of SUMmit members to determine if the Standpoint should be adopted by The SU.

Decision: The Standpoint proposal will proceed to an online vote of SUMmit members.

3.4. Standpoint 4: The SU believes that all students must have access to a fair, equitable pathway to participation in all areas of university life in alignment with their gender identity

The Proposer requested that this Standpoint was moved to the next meeting of SUMmit to allow time for Standpoint 5 which they had also submitted to be discussed.

This was agreed.

Decision: The Standpoint will move to the March meeting of SUMmit for discussion.

3.5. The SU believes that ALL students at the university should receive one week of holiday after 6 weeks of teaching in a semester, and that this is beneficial to student welfare.

Discussion:

The Proposer outlined their proposed Standpoint. The proposal had been discussed at Diversity and Support Exec where some concern had been raised about the impact for international students in being able to travel home. They felt that a universal reading week was not an appropriate alternative as some departments would use that time to assign work and the proposal is to have a week free of academic work.

The Christmas vacation period doesn't give students an opportunity to rest as they are preparing for assessments (mostly exams), and students need time to recuperate. The Proposer asked for a show of hands from those present if anyone felt that the week-long Inter-Semester Break after January exams was insufficient. No-one raised their hands, but it was noted that students who have health conditions may need a longer period.

Members of SUMmit discussed the proposal:

- A member of SUMmit asked for the rationale of a break after a 6 week period of teaching, the Proposer responded that this was based off of an 11-12 week block of teaching and students starting to struggle at around week 5/6.
- It was noted that where reading weeks had been introduced it had made the teaching weeks either side more intense,
- There were also concerns as to whether this would increase students costs e.g. accommodation as the year would be longer,
- The Education Officer informed SUMmit that the academic year chart for the next academic year had already been approved and that feedback from a recent Faculty Forum (attended by Academic Reps) had suggested that students wanted a universal reading week and suggested that this would be a good starting point,
- A suggestion was made to do some research into this area.

Members of SUMmit took an indicative poll to determine the next steps.

2 proceed to online vote

4 the standpoint does not sufficiently impact members of our community to become a standpoint

1 refer to the Head of Student Voice & Engagement to provide a briefing

9 call for statements from the wider student community and discuss at next meeting

1 recommend to the Board of Trustees that a referendum be held to determine student opinion

A break was taken to review the Terms of Reference.

Decision: The Standpoint will proceed to a call for statements from the wider student community

and discuss at the next meeting.

4. SU President's Proposal for Restructuring SUMmit

The SU President gave a presentation (attached to minutes) to members of SUMmit.

5. Officer updates/ Questions to Officers

Officers briefly outlined key aspects of their updates which had been circulated to members of SUMmit in advance of the meeting.

President

- Had attended a tour of Baltic students' unions/associations with staff and officers from other UK students' unions,
- The SU is currently developing its strategy,
- Working with the local Council regarding housing and voter registration and holding the local Council to account on student issues and will be going to Parliament on 21 February to discuss student housing.

Activities Officer

- Looking at increasing postgraduate student engagement in societies,
- Working with FareShare for food parcels for students as part of the financial safety net Top Ten issue,
- Recently took a paper to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee following feedback from student groups on availability of faith space on campus, this was followed up with a meeting with the University's Chief Operating Officer to agree next steps.

Sport Officer

- Apologised for having not been at the last SUMmit due to annual leave.
- Looking at diversity and inclusion in sport, including meeting with Disability Action Group and LGBT+, distributed 400+ rainbow laces as part of LGBT+ History Month, new offer as part of Bath Active.
- Varsity planning is underway, looking to be the biggest yet with new sports included.
- Revised Sports Exec for 2024/25 to increase decision making and make it more student-led, Chairs training has also been revised.
- Top Ten issues progress, match day medics looking to handover to the next Sport Officer, bus Top Ten has progressed with First taking on the 22 route going forwards and a replacement GPS system to be in place in March.

Community Officer

- Following their speech to BANES Council, the Community Officer had met with the local authority and would be going to Parliament with the President.
- Top Ten issues progress, international student early arrivals is working towards a pilot for 2024/25 and has been positively received by the University to trial.
- The recent Multi-cultural Fair joint event with the Activities team had been successful with over 20 different nationalities represented on stalls and with performances.
- A Halls Forum had take place recently with less maintenance issues being reported compared to early in the year.
- The SU currently has a Housing Survey open for students living in non-University managed housing which is a joint survey with Bath Spa SU and Norland College.

Education Officer

- The Education Officer had presented the Standpoint passed at the last SUMmit regarding personal tutoring access for all levels of study at the Senior Tutor Forum.
- Had attended the Director of Studies Forum to discuss lecture recordings and had received a very negative response.
- An AI traffic light system is now in place and students should be being communicated to about this by unit convenors.
- Study space continues to be an issue, the sensory room in the Library has opened but other spaces are still being discussed.
- VC breakfasts were continuing to be held and the Education Officer had attended.

6. Any other business

No any other business was raised by SUMmit members.

The SUMmit meeting finished at 19:00.