Meeting:	**SUmmit**
Location:	**CB 3.16**
Date & Time:	**Thursday 27 April 2023 17.15-19.30**

Present:	
Luca Volentir	Chair of Summit
Alex Robinson	SU President
Elizabeth Stacey	Sports Officer
Blake Walker	Community Officer
Julia Kildyushova	Education Officer
Jura Neverauskaite	Postgraduate Officer
Viktor Toshev	SU Activities Officer
Zizis Tzifas Kratiras	Academic Exec member
Mahikha Murali Sundar	NUS Liberation Conference Delegate
Jesse Dipple	LGBT+ Group Member; alternate for Jordan Sweeny
Andrei Linguraru	Open Place Member
Luke Ackerley	Peer Support Member
Peter Irvine	Media Exec Member
Eesha Ganesh	Feminism & Gender Equality Group member
Amber Snary	Disability Action Group member
Britt Flanderijn	Senate Rep
Bayu Patten	Hall Rep Member

In attendance:	
Charlie Slack	Head of Student Voice and Engagement/Interim Deputy Chief Exec
Amy Young	Insight and Engagement Manager/Interim Head of Student Voice & Engagement
Mandy Wilson-Garner	Chief Executive
Scott Raven	Change & Inclusion Manager
Melissa Oram	Student Voice Co-ordinator (Change & Inclusion)
Petar Tabakov	Student Voice Admin Assistant (Minutes)

Item	
1.	**Welcome from the Chair** The Chair of SUmmit welcomed members to the fourth meeting of SUmmit for 2022/3. The Chair informed members that this SUmmit meeting is adopting the timing system trialed at the previous meeting to ensure that all of the agenda items are addressed in good time.
2.	**Apologies** Apologies were noted from: Beatrice Clementel Shourya Gupta Esther Kirk Tudhgeet Kaur Ada Sadowska

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		Refilwe Radubi Pradhyumna Abhijit Lunkad Lucy Acheson Youssef Asaad Andre Jek Harry Wynne Jamie Cubitt Charlotte Foster Emma Aldred
3.		**Minutes of the last meeting** The minutes from the last meeting were approved by the members.
4.		**Actions and outcomes from previous meeting:**
4.1		**Standpoint proposals – vote outcomes** The Chair summarised the outcomes of the last meeting, in which seven Standpoints were discussed and following in-meeting polling six progressed to voting. Only one met quoracy and had its votes counted. The Standpoint in question was *The SU believes the University should lobby the UK government to offer more financial support to students during the cost-of-living crisis.* The Standpoint passed with 19 votes cast, 17 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 0 votes abstained. The Chair urged the proposers to resubmit the Standpoints which failed to meet quoracy next academic year (if they are continuing students), as most did not meet quoracy by one vote.
4.2		**Standpoint proposals – referred to briefing from Head of Student Voice & Engagement** The Standpoint *The SU believes students deserve autonomy in deciding the structure of their studies in accordance with their circumstances and supports that students know what is best for their welfare and progression.* The decision of SUmmit at the March meeting was to call for a briefing from the Head of Student Voice and Engagement. The briefing had been provided and circulated to SUmmit members. Following the briefing and the previous discussion at SUmmit regarding the wording, the Proposer requested that their proposed Standpoint was reworded: **Previous proposed Standpoint wording:** **The SU believes students deserve autonomy in deciding the structure of their studies in accordance with their circumstances and supports that students know what is best for their welfare and progression.** **Reworded proposed Standpoint wording:** **The SU believes that the autonomy and dignity of all students should be respected by the university and that this should be central to decision making.** The Proposer was asked to briefly summarise the changes for the others. They shared that following the previous meeting's discussion they were now proposing wording

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which would provide guidance in decision-making rather than forcing an obligation. The scope had also been broadened, as the proposition could now cover issues such as Director of Studies approved extensions (the original rationale was related to transferal between full-time and part-time study).

In the discussion that followed, one Member of SUmmit expressed the necessity for clarification on the meaning of the word autonomy. Without further explanation the term can be understood with ambiguity (for other Standpoints a glossary, or explainer of specific terms, had been included). The Proposer defined autonomy as the likelihood of the student understanding what is best for them, whilst dignity is the acknowledgment of this awareness.

Another Member of SUmmit joined the discussion by asking for specific guidelines on how to change to part-time study due to individual circumstances, citing on previous instances in which it had felt that students were required to accept the decision of the Director of Studies rather than having a conversation about what was best for the student.

One Member of SUmmit agreed and commented that this Standpoint could be used as a springboard for discussion on this issue with the University.

SUmmit members were polled on next steps for this new wording. 16 members voted that the standpoint should proceed to an online vote, one advocated for determination that the standpoint doesn't sufficiently impact members or community to become a standpoint and one called for statements.

Decision: The Standpoint proposal: *The SU believes that the autonomy and dignity of all students should be respected by the university and that this should be central to decision making* will progress to an online vote of SUmmit members.

5.	**Standpoints discussion:**
5.1.	**Standpoint 1: The SU believes a wide range of free environmentally friendly menstrual products should be supplied in publicly accessible university buildings.**

It was noted that this has been submitted as a Standpoint proposal at a previous meeting (February 2023) and SUmmit members chose to send it to an online vote, but it did not meet quoracy. Another member of SUmmit had resubmitted it.

The new Proposer commented that they would not go into detail regarding the rationale for this Standpoint proposal given that it had already been discussed at length at a previous SUmmit but asked if there had been any changes since the original proposal within the University. The Community Officer confirmed that there had been no notable changes since the original submission.

A Member of SUmmit asked for more clarity about how that will be operationalised. The Proposer said that all bathrooms should be equipped with dispensers. The NUS Liberation Conference Delegate (and original Proposer) joined the discussion by sharing experience from the NUS Liberation Conference, in which it became evident that other universities are beginning to operationalise dispensers which charge for products. This Standpoint proposes to make these supplies free.

SUmmit members were polled on next steps. 17 members voted that this Standpoint should proceed to an online vote.

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	Decision: The Standpoint proposal: *The SU believes a wide range of free environmentally friendly menstrual products should be supplied in publicly accessible university buildings* will progress to an online vote of SUmmit members.
5.2	**Standpoint 2: The SU believes in trans-inclusive feminism and that trans' rights do not conflict with women's rights.**
	The Proposer of this Standpoint referred to the contextual document that had been shared with Members of SUmmit prior to the meeting. They referred to the culture wars in which trans people had been targeted, outlining major legislation changes such as Section 35 and the Equality Act. Considering this, the Proposer believed that this is a timely message to support trans people and their rights.
	One of the members agreed that this is an important message to send to students at the University and thanked the Proposer for the useful and informative document which accompanied their Standpoint proposal.
	The Chair highlighted a discussion which had taken place before the meeting between SUmmit members in the committee's Teams meeting. A suggestion had been made that rather than being voted on by SUmmit this should go to an all-student referendum. A Member of SUmmit spoke against a referendum on the grounds that this could bring out hateful rhetoric to the surface and be potentially dangerous to the trans community. On the other hand, they recognised that previous Standpoints had failed to meet quoracy. The Proposer also mentioned that they believed that the wider student body is likely to be uninformed and apathetic about the issue, leaving only allies and enemies of the trans community who would take active participation in a referendum.
	A Member of SUmmit asked what would be done to raise awareness in the student community regarding this issue if the Standpoint was to pass. The Proposer replied that there is no currently procedural way to approach this, especially with the sensitive nature of the situation.
	The Head of Student Voice & Engagement//Interim Deputy Chief Exec also highlighted that this is a sensitive issue and that SUmmit have the option to request statements from the trans student community should Members of SUmmit feel that they are not informed to decide.
	A Member of SUmmit responded that SUmmit should be sufficiently informed as representatives of the student community's interests and illustrated this by mentioning the universal support from the Feminism and Gender Equality Group. Another Member asked whether an official statement from the Group could be added alongside the Standpoint if passed.
	A Member of SUmmit inquired whether there might be a reason for somebody not to support this Standpoint. No reasons were given.
	SUmmit members were polled on next steps. 11 members were supportive of the Standpoint proposal proceeding to vote, 1 member determined that the proposal did not sufficiently impact members of the student community to become a Standpoint, 4 members called for statements.

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	Decision: The Standpoint proposal: *The SU believes in trans-inclusive feminism and that trans' rights do not conflict with women's rights* will progress to an online vote of SUmmit members.
	Members of SUmmit took a 10 minute break
6.	**Terms of reference:** Members of SUmmit had been invited to two workshops to discuss changes to the Terms of Reference and had also had the option to complete an online form to give feedback. Following the collection of this feedback there were a number of suggestions which were focused on the operation of SUmmit that would be considered as part of the planning process for next year's meetings, and others which were suggestions for changes to the Terms of Reference. No suggestion was attributed to one particular member of SUmmit.
6.1	<u>**CHANGE:**</u> **At least one, and up to three, representatives from each Executive Committee (Activities, Sports, Academic, Diversity & Support, Doctoral, PGT, International, Media)** Currently, Exec representation was *At least one, and up to two…* the proposal was to change this to up to three members from each of The SU's Executive Committees. A Member of SUmmit underlined the importance of this change as key communities such as Activities and Sports were disproportionately represented. They also outlined that it is not optimal when two representatives from the same Executive Committee come to meetings with identical views. A Member of SUmmit had concerns that increasing numbers of representatives would also increase the supermajority needed to be quorate for voting, which would make meeting quoracy even less feasible than in the current situation. They mentioned that there is current capacity for up to 5 Open Place Representatives on SUmmit that are available in the election at the beginning of the year which could be an opportunity for those communities to have more representation. A Member of SUmmit supported the view of the first member as they insisted that the addition of two people in the SUmmit Membership (+1 for Sports and +1 for Activities) would not affect the supermajority substantially, whilst in theory providing two more dedicated people to the committee. A Member of SUmmit countered that with the current membership of the SUmmit, there are too many members, and members who are not engaging, to hit quoracy. A Member of SUmmit agreed with an earlier comment that the addition of new, hungry and dedicated members would increase the efficiency of the SUmmit. They also suggested that the ratio could be redistributed since large and complex communities don't have adequate representation. A Member of SUmmit argued that the increase in the membership would inevitably increase the time that these meetings would take as more discussion would take place. The Member questioned whether this would improve efficiency.

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A Member of SUmmit returned to the point raised previously regarding multiple representatives from the same Executive Committee having same views, seeing this as logical as they represent the same community.

A Member of SUmmit therefore suggested that this would be counter-efficient, and downsizing should be suggested rather than adding members.

Due to the large communities that members of SUmmit represent, two members of the same community should, or could, represent the different viewpoints of the communities.

A Member of SUmmit asked which groups currently have 2 representatives at the SUmmit. The Insight & Engagement Manager/Interim Head of Student Voice & Engagement referred members to the current Terms of Reference, which had been distributed to each member at the meeting. Each Executive Committee has at least one and up to two members on SUmmit, there are also members from other Student Groups and representatives.

6.2	<u>**REMOVE:**</u> **and Politics and Activism from the list of Executive Committees**

This amendment was housekeeping as this SU Executive Committee no longer exists as the Politics and Activism Student Groups are now represented by the Activities Exec.

Consensus in the room that members were happy for this line to be removed.

| **6.3** | <u>**ADD:**</u> **An Executive Committee can nominate representatives to fill their empty memberships.** |

The original intention of this proposal was for full time SUmmit members not ad hoc alternates for a single meeting.

A Member of SUmmit commented that whilst at least one member (for an Exec representation) should be from the Exec, it is good to open the doors to others if there is no further interest. This was also reinforced by another member who said that if there was someone really passionate who is not on Exec they could be nominated. A third member agreed.

A consensus was reached to include this point.

| **6.4** | <u>**ADD:**</u> **Up to 10 student observer seats will be reserved for each SUmmit meeting to increase visibility, transparency and to create a learning opportunity for those interested in getting involved. These are first come, first served and can be requested through the Chair/Vice-Chair.** |

A Member of SUmmit commented that they really liked the idea as it would be beneficial for SUmmit to be transparent and for students to witness what happens in the meeting. This could also inspire students who might want to become SUmmit members in the future.

Another member seconded that statement, citing examples in Councils and Government for transparency and commented that SUmmit had felt like a closed group this year.

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	Another member added that such a change will raise awareness about Standpoints and encourage students to submit more proposals. A clarification on the procedural operationalisation of this was required. It was confirmed that spaces should be reserved in advance on a first-come-first-served basis. A Member of SUmmit suggested revising the number of seats in accordance to student interest in case more than 10 request to observe. It was agreed that this would be monitored to see numbers of interest before looking at revising. Overall, a consensus that this is a good idea was reached.
6.5	<u>**CHANGE:**</u> **The Chair is selected through a selection process** A Member of SUmmit insisted that the selection process should also be in Terms of Reference. Other Members highlighted that a selection process would help to support the recruitment of a Chair with the required skills to chair SUmmit, and asked what the procedure would entail for the recruitment. The Head of Student Voice & Engagement/Interim Deputy Chief Exec shared that an option would be to have a nominations committee made up of elected student members of SUmmit. The nominations committee would receive applications and interview candidates for the role. A Member of SUmmit inquired whether this would impact next year's first meeting, the timeline would be considered as part of the operational delivery of a selection process. A Member of SUmmit suggested that the SU President could chair the first meeting to help set the standards of how the committee should be run to help lead from example and also asked for more detail of the interview style. A Member of SUmmit expressed concerns that putting the exact process in the Terms of Reference might not be the best ideas as it will affect the flexibility for the operational delivery of the selection process (if all details are in the Terms of Reference then any changes to the process would have to be approved by SUmmit as a formal change to the Terms of Reference once a year). The overall consensus was that having a selection process for the Chair is a good idea.
6.6	<u>**CHANGE:**</u> **The Vice-Chair is elected by members of SUmmit from members of SUmmit** This represented a change compared to the current Terms of Reference where the Vice-Chair is the runner-up in the cross-campus election. There were no comments on this proposal and the members were happy to proceed.
6.7	<u>**Discussion: There need to be more repercussions for non-attendance.**</u>

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		The Change & Inclusion Manager noted that there had been no clear steer from the feedback collected from SUmmit members about what this should be. Given struggles to improve turnout and engagement this academic year, new strategies for incentivisation are welcome.

A Member of SUmmit commented that repercussions might be effective as well as transparency regarding who is attending or not.

Another Member of SUmmit reminisced that these discussions had been circulating since the review of Terms of Reference last year where a section had been added in for 2022/23 and inquired about the "policing" of it during this year.

The Chair admitted that there has been little oversight with regards to the monitoring of attendance.

A Member of SUmmit advocated for removing benefits (for instance making the missing member an observer with no voting rights during the next meeting). This was countered by another member who highlighted that the chief objective should be to incentivise engagement rather than punishment for non-engagement.

Another Member of SUmmit suggested sanctioning the requirement of sending of an alternate if a member is unable to attend a meeting. The Chair responded that this can be incorporated when apologies are being noted but not if a member does not send apologies.

A Member of SUmmit commented that any alternates should be from within the same committee that the absent member is from.

A counter viewpoint was offered from a Member of SUmmit that if someone has sent apologies and is still engaging online in proposing Standpoints and voting when needed, they should still be able to engage with SUmmit.

The Chair inquired whether this element of the Terms of Reference could be updated throughout the year to allow for the Chair and Vice-Chair to make decisions on any repercussions dependent on individual situations. It was agreed that Terms of Reference should be fixed and not changed throughout the year.

A final suggestion was made by a Member of SUmmit who suggested that there should be a check-in with non-attendees and that non-attendance should also be communicated to all members of SUmmit so that they are aware of the situation. |
| 6.8 | | **ADD: Members should have the option to "spoil" their vote.**

A Member of SUmmit asked for clarification of the term "spoil", to which the President replied that it is the conscious decision to not vote, to boycott the vote by 'spoiling' a ballot paper. This underlines the decision not to vote (and is different from abstaining) as a vote. Whilst this is still not supported by the current voting system within The SU's website provider, The SU is currently looking at other providers as part of a tender process so can ask about this option as part of the voting software. |
| 6.9 | | **ADD: Meetings should be quorate. In the case where meetings are not quorate, discussion can take place, but no voting. Quoracy for meetings should be** |

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50%+1. In this instance, the proposed Standpoints will need to be re-submitted for the next meeting.

A Member of SUmmit highlighted the importance of this change as evident from the countless opportunities lost during the year to add to The SU's Standpoints document due to the inability to meet quoracy.

A Member of SUmmit agreed in principle but expressed concerns regarding the ability to vote without attending and overall had reservations against this.

A Member of SUmmit also highlighted the potential frustration of members travelling from distant locations only to find that the SUmmit will be without voting due to the meeting not being quorate and posed the question of what will happen should consecutive meetings fail to meet quoracy.

A Member of SUmmit agreed with the concern regarding the frustration for those traveling to campus from a distance and said that voting should be utilised as an incentive for attendance.

Another Member of SUmmit asked whether some forward thinking cannot be incorporated in the light of the received apologies and advance notice therefore of whether the meeting would be quorate or not.

It was noted that whilst apologies are useful and indicative, currently some members do not send apologies and therefore the assumption is that they will be attending, and it is not until the meeting starts that true numbers are known.

A Member of SUmmit commented that, even without voting, the meeting can still have merits in terms of discussion around the Standpoint proposals and the issues that they raise. They also commented on the two different rounds of voting and the fact that many Standpoint proposal votes have not met quoracy highlights a bigger issue with The SU's democratic procedures.

Another Member of SUmmit proposed that the attending of the meeting didn't need to be in person as hybrid meetings had been adopted during this year to support a remote learner. They also agreed that it made sense for there to be quoracy for a meeting and vote to happen.

| 6.10 | __ADD:__ **Standpoints should be sufficiently researched before submission** |

A Member of SUmmit asked for clarification on "sufficiently". There was a suggestion to incorporate a form with questions for proposers to fill in to give detail of the context and background of a proposal.

| 6.11 | __CHANGE:__ **Voting on Standpoints takes place within SUmmit meetings** |

A Member of SUmmit agreed with this and argued that if there is a quoracy in the meeting then this is the same number for quoracy for voting on a Standpoint anyway.

A Member of SUmmit proposed that voting could be done during and after the meeting for those unable to attend, which would help with meeting quoracy.

Another Member of SUmmit expressed concern that if voting is to be opened during the meeting, the current flexibility of changing the Standpoint wording in response to

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SUmmit's comments before voting may be lost.

A Member of SUmmit countered this by highlighting the ability to go directly to the proposer with changes before the meeting takes place. They also advocated for the availability of minutes straight after the meeting in order for those not attending to be able to vote so that they can make informed decisions. They also stated that there is an importance not to have multiple rounds of voting in order to avoid ambiguity and confusion.

Another Member of SUmmit supported voting during and after the meeting on the grounds that research post-factum wouldn't be substantially different.

A Member of SUmmit liked the idea of voting in the meeting as it would incentivise more people to attend. Other members, however, highlighted that the opportunity of being able to vote online was an important consideration for people not being able to attend due to unforseen situations as opposed to systemic lack of engagement.

6.12	<u>**ADD:**</u> **Executive Committee members should report at SUmmit.** Members welcomed the idea as it would be an interesting opportunity for communication between Execs. However, concerns were noted regarding time management issues as meetings are currently long and it is difficult to give everything adequate time.
6.13	<u>**ADD:**</u> **Time will be provided for written questions submitted to Officers by any student via the Chair to be answered during SUmmit** The concerns regarding time management of an already busy meeting resurfaced. A suggestion was made that maybe there is a need for a SUmmit Day to cover all the content required. It was noted by a Member of SUmmit that Officers are already available for questions from students via email. The Sports Officer, however, appreciated the ability to receive questions and have direct engagement with students, something which SUmmit does not facilitate. The Officers welcomed the opportunity for scrutiny from students at SUmmit. **ACTION: Each of the above proposals would be added to an online vote and those passed would be included in the Terms of Reference for 2023/24, care would be taken to ensure that there were no contradictory parts following the changes.**

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7.	**NUS Liberation Conference Update** The NUS Liberation Conference Delegate shared an update regarding the NUS Liberation Conference that they had attended along with the SU Community Officer. Three main points were discussed at the conference:
7.1	**International Students Rights:** A key topic at the conference was a proposal for a policy to increase the work limit (20-hours) imposed on some international students. This upper limit has been seen as an oppressive restriction towards the life of international students who require a visa, pay tuition fees twice the amount of those of home students and lack funding opportunities. A Member of SUmmit had concerns that raising the limit may lead to exploitation of the students and a detrimental work-life balance. This was supported by another member who believed that 20 hours a week were already too much. The NUS Liberation Conference Delegate clarified that meeting these hours was voluntary rather than mandatory and these changes are aimed to accommodate students who would like to work more.
7.2	**Trans Rights:** Key themes revolved around resource sharing between students' unions and communities and creating networks to facilitate that. Legal challenges have also been addressed regarding the freedom of expression on the topic within universities.
7.3	**Accessibility:** Some of the concerns regarding accessibility that were raised were: gender-neutral toilets, postgraduate accommodation and spaces on campus, international student sabbatical officer positions.
8.	**Round up of the Year:** Prior to the meeting, the SU Officers had circulated their Officer reports for SUmmit members to read and consider. Due to time-constraints, the SU Officers gave a quick round-up of key highlights of the year. The overview included: • The voting in Officer elections, in which 4600 students participated (23% of the student body) • 6th consecutive Varsity win against the Cardiff Met • Successful organization of the SU Awards • Training of new committees • The Blues awards (in which over 100 students were awarded) • Organizing events for International Women's Day • Successful approval of a pilot to increase postgraduate engagement in Student Groups for 2023/24
9	**Any Outstanding Business** No additional business was raised.
**The meeting ended at 19:23.**

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