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# **Union Council**

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| **Date:**  | 30.11.23 |
| **Time:** | 5.00pm |
| **Location:** | S3.01 and Online |

## **Minutes**

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| 1.0 | 1.1 | **Present:** Brandon Tester, Jess Bradbury, Sruthi Subhash, Amy Pile, Natasha Neal, Lucy Ryan, Will Deeley, Grace Paisley, Bethany Jackson, Dee Whyte, Erin Cook, Marissa Leyden, Camille Da Fonseca Teixeira, Esther Stephenson,Bethany Leale, Adrian Gasik, Lauren Milne, Kamil Bilski, Jasmine Young, Erika Von de Vyver, Laura Eustration, Ellie Lynn, Lucy Holmes, Ana Timoteo, Eva Dzybenko, Amber Ogles, Evie Mehrtens, Felix Swallow, Tricia Glassborow,Harry Copeland, Luca Annibale, Rishab Jindal, Matt Santalovs, Adam Hussain, Will Haynes, Jack Donoghue, Emily Pannell, Madhav Jayalal, Reece Newey,Femi Ogunde, Vytautas Kravchenka, Rafael Pantaleon, Rita-Mary Benny, Peter Ashiagbor, Joy Dellahgu, Bethany Hirst, Ayesha Chaudhry, Monique Powell,Olivia Stocco, John Heatley, Wren Sell, Ciaran Bond, Vivian Owobu, Oliwia Milkiewicz, Eleanor Lee, Samuel Shepherd, Deborah Koumah, Nikola Milkiewicz, Kristen Clarke, Ashleigh Chirenda, Rita Ekokotu-odigie, Samuel Norton, Tasha Noble, Emily Crawshaw, Om Dhadwal, Patrick Fillingham |  |
|  | 1.2 | **In attendance:**  |  |
|  | 1.3 | **Apologies for Absence (Union Officers only):**  |  |
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| 2.0 |  | **Opening and Key Dates** | AT |
|  |  | * Welcome and introduction to meeting from AT.
* Introduction to new structure of meetings
* Run through of key dates, available on what’s on page
* 4th December: Christmas Volunteer Week
* 5th December: Spill the Tea with Sabbs
* 6th December Repcon
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| 3.0 |  | **Updates** |  |
|  |  | Sabbatical OfficersBTe:* UET and Sabb catch up talking about additional costs, was a positive meeting with actions being made with changes expected soon.
* Movember: Thanks to all who were involved. There was a walk from Missenden Abbey to High Wycombe on the 30th November attended by Brandon and 5 students.
* Brandon attended the University Council where he spoke about accommodation however no updates will take place this year.
* Brandon is looking at a ‘What Students Think’ General election campaign for the likely upcoming election. Brandon is working with the National Union of Students to encourage students to vote.

J.B:* Student loans are running out – there is financial aid available from the University which is based on eligibility criteria. The SU Advice team can support via meetings or via the financial page on the Unions website.
* The SU is open from the 27th-29th of December. However, students can contact union@bnu.ac.uk over the closure period to get support.

SKS:* Sruthi is preparing for Senate (an important University Education meeting) and RepCon (annual conference for students to support their employability.)
* Running a Tea with the Sabbs Campaign -. Where students can come and provide honest feedback and share experiences with the Sabbs.
* Working on a project with the University looking at awarding gaps between different student demographics and graduate outcomes.
* She has also been meeting with the University’s Executive Team to feedback on the student experience.

AP:* Raising money for RAG charity Stokenchurch Dog Rescue and Save the Children, running from the 4th-8th of December. There are activities running each day that students can get involved with including PJ days, wear your favourite jumper, name the teddy and much more.
* Project Aylesbury: Amy has developed a permanent Students’ Union area at the campus. There is a TV to advertise the Unions offer. There is space across a large area on the ground floor where students can meet and chat with the Union team as well as shelves that will provide information on support services societies, library books
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|  |  | Trustees * Peter who is a second-year trustee who sits on the Finance and Staffing meeting provided an update. There has been a Finance and Staffing committee meeting, a review of the Sabbatical Officers pay (which has not been changed for the upcoming year) as well as a Trustee selection meeting to fulfil the 2 vacant lay trustee positions that are available.
* Peter also attended the Unions Environmental and Sustainability Committee as an observer.
 | PA |
|  |  | Executive Officers* Ellie the Unions LGBTQ+ Executive Officer provided an update on behalf of the Execs.
* Ellie is working on a document to support students who are closeted and would like some support.
* Ellie attended a meeting about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion where feedback was given that the new atrium being very loud, and it would be useful to have a sensory room.
* There were no updates from the other officers this time.

 BAME Executive Officer Rename * JB provided an update on this. The Union has received feedback from a number of students with different views about what should happen with the roles name change.
* The Union is pausing the BAME rename whilst undergoing a restructure of the Executive Officer Programme and looking further at what the roles do and how this can enhance the student experience.
* If students have feedback on the BAME rename they can come in and speak to any member of the SU team.
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|  |  | AU and Societies Council Chairs |  |
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| 4.0 |  | **Guest Speaker/Discussion** |  |
|  |  | Javier Laso (Accommodation Manager)* Javi provided an update on a new initiative to help find private accommodation; where to look, when to look and how to do it.
* There is a website called Student pad that students can use on the University website which has listings in Uxbridge, High Wycombe and Aylesbury.
* The accommodation team can review your private sector contracts and provide support if you are having problems with your neighbours and landlords or flatmates.
* Javi provided some top tips to look out for when renting such as: does the windows have condensation around them; check there is a gas and electricity certificate; make sure you know what the cost is – are bills included or not; speak to students who are currently living in the property as they can give a guide as to how much they pay to live there. Keep an eye out if you have a joint tenancy, you may be liable to pay if one of your colleagues
* When to look: End of November – January is when private sector providers advertise for August 2024.
* If students have questions, they can email the accommodation team.
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| 5.0 |  | **Question of the Month** |  |
|  |  | How can BNU make student life more affordable for students?* Multiple requests for cheaper food in beeches.
* Ask for more free food: if students are from Uxbridge and Aylesbury please contact Amy as she is working with Gather and Gather to diversify the offer and look at pricing.
* Students mentioned the portion sizes are too small for an actual meal for the free SU meals.
* Job shop Opportunities: Encouraged students to make the Union aware of any jobs that are available. We are currently hiring for a Barista role and there will be four new roles coming soon. There is student ambassador roles in the University that are paid. Jess Hughes from our training team can support you with looking for dogs.
* Paying for Prescriptions: AP is going to investigate. Students can also consider HC1 forms and talking to the Advice Centre about this.
* More free transport: We are looking into this as a Union. A conversation has been had with the University’s Executive about this however it takes time.
* Lower Accommodation Laundry: Circuit Laundry prices to be reduced in Halls. Brandon is working with the Uni Accommodation team about this and ran a campaign on this last year.
* Cost of private living: BT suggested to consider this when voting in the next general election.
* Sensory Issues and Hidden Disabilities: Amy is running a sunflower campaign to provide a space for people to go that is supportive of sensory experiences. She is working with Jacob the Students with Disabilities’ Officer to extend to a national campaign.
* JB: Launched Bucks SU Celebrates – different events that different students can take part in and celebrate throughout the entire year.
* Refreshers Fair: Are things being geared to students on the new curriculum? There is a September, February or April intake, the April students felt completely forgotten – it is going to be held in the atrium and mainly focused on the new student intake as their first opportunity to engage.
* Future plans for Aylesbury: plans to expand volunteering, events and activities. Students all pay the same fees no matter what campus so they should be feeling included. Amy will be there every Monday and Tuesday going forwards.
* Uni promotion of MH services – BT confirmed we will take this up and we do have the Advice Centre. They can do online, in person or teams chats. SKS explained that there is also the Unis report and support service that has been launched.
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| 6.0 |  | **Sabb Hot Seat** |  |
|  |  | **What was in your manifesto:*** AP: Course costs, health matters campaign, Aylesbury SU area, sunflower campaign. All of which are being worked on.
* BT & SKS: Since Brandon and SKS run as a slate with the same manifesto. Lobbying the Uni to tackle hidden costs, ensuring international student support is open (there is a role now but still work to be done), ensuring campus are accessible inclusive and diverse, supporting students with graduate jobs, cost of circuit laundry (can’t be changed), continue cost of living campaign.
* JB: Expanding on last year’s EDI calendar and making sure students are celebrated the whole year, pushing sustainability across the whole union and creating a safe environment for students to be themselves

**With seven months left in the role what is your top priority:*** SS: Graduate Outcomes and looking at the awarding / attainment gaps between different student demographics
* AP: Placement paper with the University – looking at car sharing and a positive financial impact for students
* BT: Ensure the SU is in a good financial position for the next budget round so we can continue to offer all service
* JB: Isn’t sure as a lot in the works at the moment.

**How possible is a day care space for students:*** JB: The SU would love to do this but is difficult due to risk assessments. Mentioned the inclusion fund

**Can you improve student parking:*** JB: You cannot bring a car if you are in halls. You should not be parking at the University as you will get a ticket. The SU is trying to work with the University about this. AP has worked with the councils but as they don’t offer anything for residents, they don’t want to offer anything for students.

**Can you improve period products for students?*** JB: There is low stock, and she is chasing the University about this
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| 7.0 |  | **Any Other Business** |  |
|  |  | * Volunteering – there is currently a biodiversity survey – this will help the Union get funding in future.
* Next week is Christmas Volunteer week and International Day of Volunteering – check out the What’s On page and get involved.
* AP: Is looking to expand the B.E.T.H. Anti-Bullying campaign she ran last year and encourages students to get in touch.
* Regarding parking – Dovecot by McDonalds is £3.50 roughly for a day.
* There was an encouragement for AU members to complete an annual feedback form.
* Are you registered to vote – click the link.
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| 8.0 |  | **Date and time of subsequent meetings:** 18th January 2024 at 5.00pm, Room S3.01 and Online |  |