

Student Members Meeting Minutes; 28th November 2024 13:30 – 15:30

			PAPER
Attendance P = Present, A = Absent			
Members and Presenters			
Priyanshu Srivastiva - PS	Student Chair	P	
Ramees Nazar - RN	President	P	
Rohan Rajesh - RR	Vice President: Arts, Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences	P	
Sreya Dileepan - SD	Vice President: Business & Law	P	
Jeena Thomas - JT	Vice President: Health Education, Medicine, & Social Care	P	
Gawdham Melath - GM	Vice President: Science and Engineering	P	
Farwa Rida - FR	Vice President: Healthcare Practice	A	
Amelia Harris – AH	Vice President: Writtle	A	
Farangiz Salieva - FS	B&L Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A	
Tegan Fulker - TF	HEMS Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A	
Chinedu Eze - CE	HEMS Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A	
Athul Anoop - AA	S&E Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A	
Sophie Pettit - SP	S&E Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A	
Sophia Keaveney - SK	AHESS Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A	
VACANT	AHESS Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	X	
Sam Fouracre - SF	HEMS Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	P	
Liam Pinney - LP	HEMS Faculty Rep (Cambridge)	A	
Shriya Chhabra - SC	B&L Faculty Rep (Chelmsford)	A	
John Valerkou – JV	Chief Executive Officer – ARU Students’ Union	P	
James Coe – JC	Senior Partner – Counterculture	P	
Louise Green – LG	Assistant Director, Financial Services - ARU	P	
Rachel Geeson - RG	Assistant Director, Customer Services - ARU	P	
Observers			
Demi Smith - DS	Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator	P	
Katie Martin – KM	Communications Manager	P	
Tony Bickley – TB	Director of Commercial and Communications	P	
Welcome to the Student Summit PS welcomed those in attendance to the Student Summit and invited the officers and attendees to introduce themselves.			
Minutes of the last SMM/AGM The minutes were looked through and checked over for accuracy. No questions or corrections were raised.			
Statement re: May 2024 policy JV introduced himself to the SMM.			

SMM 24/16

<p>JV explained that the two policies that went through in the Student Summit held in May 2024 – Israel/Palestine Policy and Ethical Financing Policy – were approved by the Summit voting and were then passed onto the SU Board of Trustees. JV gave an overview of the content of both policies.</p> <p>JV explained that the Palestine/Israel policy was declared <i>ultra vires</i> by the Board of Trustees; this means that the policy is outside of the scope of the Students' Union, but that several aspects of the policy would be implemented with a focus on care, compassion, and support for students. JV explained that the Ethical Financing policy focused on the purchasing habits of the SU. The Board of Trustees noted that the number of votes was low, although it did meet quoracy. The Board of Trustees recommended that a voluntary Ethical Purchasing Group should be formed, which the SU will be introducing in due course.</p>	
<p>Executive Committee Minutes of Executive Committee Trimester 1 2024/25* * No requests to read this item were received. Taken as read.</p>	SMM/24/18
<p>Officer Updates</p> <p>RN spoke about The Food Pantry campaign: RN explained that this campaign would result in a free food pantry for students on campus who are struggling financially.</p> <p>GM spoke about the International Fee Structure Campaign. This campaign aims to change the fee payment structure for international students from 60%/40% to 60%/20%/20%. A petition to support this campaign is available on the Students' Union website.</p> <p>GM handed over to RR to speak about the One Voice campaign. This campaign aims to improve the student experience within the university through a number of sub-campaigns including a lobbying campaign that aims to improve communication efficiency between students and staff, and a campaign to improve the existing attendance monitoring model.</p> <p>JT spoke about the Library Opening Hours campaign. This campaign would lobby the university to increase the opening hours of the library during the dissertation submission period.</p> <p>SD spoke about her campaign to embed referencing skills sessions into timetabled sessions; currently these sessions are voluntary and delivered by Study Skills+.</p> <p>RR spoke about the Housing Campaign, which aims to increase awareness of tenancy rights for students. He also mentioned a collaborative campaign, Rights Beyond Borders, which focuses on improving employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for international students. This campaign is in collaboration with Kent Union.</p> <p>RR is also working on a campaign based on AHSS SSLC feedback which aims to provide improvements to the Ruskin building. RR claimed that he has achieved 80% completion on this campaign so far.</p> <p>RR encouraged students to contact the officers whenever they would like to if they have feedback or want to get involved with their campaigns.</p>	<p>SMM/24/19</p> <p>SMM/24/20</p> <p>SMM/24/21</p> <p>SMM/24/22</p> <p>SMM/24/23</p> <p>SMM/24/24</p>
<p>Students' Union Development</p> <p>JC explained that Counterculture has been working with the SU over the past 6-8 weeks, looking at two things; the future of the strategy of the SU, and the future of the democracy of the SU. JC took the attendees through the current democratic structure of the Students' Union, summarising that the officers are elected as representatives, that students are represented on their academic programmes, and that they are able to advocate for themselves at meetings such as AGMs/SMMs.</p> <p>JC acknowledged that students in 2024 are busier than ever with co- and extra-curricular activities, work, and their courses, and that the student population of ARU is more diverse than ever before. The identities of students in ARU vary based on the students, including their interests, their backgrounds, their campus, and their course; JC acknowledged the difficulty in one SU representing such a diverse group.</p>	SMM/24/27

<p>JC presented multiple models of democratic representation used in other students' unions. These are presented in full in the paper related to this agenda point but in summary these models were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portfolio based officers with an overarching President, part-time identity officers, and multiple Student Members Meetings. - Portfolio based officers where students submit ideas which are evaluated and scrutinised by reps. <p>JT asked whether a model for multiple officer teams per campus would be something they would consider.</p> <p>JC clarified that this balance is tough to strike, and that a model that allows for part-time campus officers surrounding a balanced full-time officer team would be beneficial.</p> <p>JT further explained that the current officer team is unique compared to others that she has encountered at conferences.</p> <p>SD asked whether portfolio-based officers, e.g. an Activities officer, would result in a difference in workload for the officers.</p> <p>JC explained that this model would allow officers to work across a whole campus on an existing issue, rather than one faculty, and that it would embed officer work within the SU and allow for the improvement of the role of faculty reps also.</p> <p>JC will be bringing proposals for the SU's development to the SU's Board of Trustees within the next 2 weeks following the SMM and encouraged officers to contact him regarding any feedback they had about his proposals.</p>	
<p>Student Discussion Topics</p> <p>SF raised a discussion topic around the appeals process for students who have failed a section of their studies, and asked who she would need to speak to regarding clearer advice on the appeals process.</p> <p>JT answered that students should contact the SU Advice team in the case of an appeal and the link to booking an appointment was shared by SD. JV and RR emphasised that the SU advice team is free, confidential, and available to all students.</p>	
<p>Executive Committee Updates</p> <p>SF gave an update about the work that she has done so far;</p> <p>SF and Tom Heald are introducing a question and suggestion box at YST for nursing students. SF is focusing on issues primarily facing dual-course nursing students, particularly timetabling. PDT handovers are another focus that SF is working on, which will be implemented from September 2025; these will allow tutors to handover relevant information about tutees when changing from one PDT to another. In particular this should help to alleviate the issues around the use of preferred names and pronouns.</p> <p>Accessibility on campus is another piece of work that SF is working on, mainly around broken or otherwise non-functional T-loops for those who use hearing aids, and lighting. Mental health is a further focus, as well as EDI issues including the use of preferred names and pronouns in the HeMS faculty.</p>	<p>SMM 24/25</p> <p>SMM 24/26</p>
<p>Update from Student Services</p> <p>RG and LG introduced the Efficiency Programme to the SMM. They explained that the Efficiency Programme aims to simplify and streamline processes within ARU.</p> <p>RG explained that a redesign of ARU's professional services is a planned aspect of the Efficiency Programme, and that they are looking for student input into how these services can be improved. LG explained that they are looking for feedback into any of the non-academic professional services and shared a QR code with attendees that linked to a short survey.</p> <p>LG explained that all student comments would be</p> <p>SD asked a question around the payment of international student fees and the use of a third-party apps to pay their fees, which can result in delays and lack of access to student services for</p>	<p>SMM/24/28</p>

students. SD asked whether, once fee payment is initiated but not completed, students could access Canvas, or whether LG took notes and would take the question away to that she can find out more information.	
Any Other Business None raised.	