Student Council Meeting Minutes (2024/2025 Term 3)

Date: 03rd June 2025

Attendance:

President: **Enaya Nihal (EN)**

VP Democracy & Development: **Sasha-King Smith (SKS)**

VP Sports: **Louis Gosling (LG)**

VP Postgraduate: **Alijah Taha (AT)**

VP Welfare & Campaigns: **Naomi Carter (NC)**

VP Education: **Muneeba Amjad (MA)**

VP Societies: **Joe Stanley (JS)**

Co-trans Students Officer: **Dorian Valentine (DV)**

LGBTQUA+ Officer: **Ariane Dayes (AD)**

Environment & Ethics Officer: **Raj Hacker (RH)**

Academic Forum Rep: **James Kimmins (JK)**

Academic Forum Rep: **Erin Lewis (EL)**

Academic Forum Rep: **Otto Oldridge (OO)**

Sustainability Forum Rep: **Sophie Scholand (SOS)**

Sustainability Forum Rep: **Jemma Marlow (JMARL)**

Sustainability Forum Rep: **Matthew Scholand (MS)**

Steering Group Rep: **James Varney (JV)**

Steering Group Rep: **Ollie Chapman (OC) and Chair of Council**

Societies Forum Rep: **Katie Todd (KT)**

Societies Forum Rep: **Edward Swann (ES)**

Societies Forum Rep: **Sean Scholand (SES)**

Societies Forum Rep: **Adam Skrzymowski (ASkr)**

Operations Forum Rep: **James Martin (JMART)**

Operations Forum Rep: **Matthew Price (MP)**

PG Forum Rep: **Oscar Renton (OR)**

PG Forum Rep: **Anish Pani (AP)**

PG Forum Rep: **Ashi Singh (AS)**

Welfare Forum Member: **Riann Mehta (RM)**

Guest: **Martin Day (MD)**, **Josh Bradbury (JB), Sam Harris (SH)**

SU Staff:

CEO: **Philip Smith (PS)**

Director of Membership: **Louise Marjoram (LM)**

Policy & Representation Advisor: **Daniel Docherty (DD)**

Student Voice Coordinator: **Celine Al Saleh (CAS)**

Student Voice Coordinator: **Rozena Nadeem (RN)**

Student Voice Coordinator: **Faheel Siddiqui (FS)**

1. **Welcome & Apologies**
   Council Members arrived in the room / joined the meeting online.

2. **Agenda Item 1 – Minutes from the last meeting**

   Some councillors noted issues with the last minutes of the SC meeting – ratification of lay trustees discussion appears twice and JB's speech does not match with the recording and cuts off at a certain point.

   OR – Circulate and approve the minutes via email circulation. Email the SV for inconsistencies regarding the minutes.

   AS – Inquired about procedure for secret ballot

3. **Agenda Item 2 – WSU New Strategy 2025-30 by CEO Philip Smith**

   PS tasked to look at the next iteration of the SU Strategy.

   Started gathering information from Feb 2023, spent 11 years at Nottingham and Leeds Beckett.

   The survey results were showed, and summary was shared with the students. Apologies for not putting the student interests first. We, as Union, have not been good to represent the students.

   Strategy is not everything we do – it's the framework that we operate in

   2023 interviewed in - what Warwick about – Warwick strong reputation for being chaotic union – jewel in crown

   The Union is too focused internally but not outwardly

   PS asked the trustees about what they thought about the Union.

   Did the same exercise with staff about what they thought about the Union

And then asked the students what they thought about the Union

We haven't addressed the problems associated with the Union. Which is the most important outcome for students during their time at Warwick – Survey

What do trustees think students think – PS talked through the points on the slide

Same exercise with staff (words on the slide)

What students actually thought – 946 responses, democracy was very faint

Some staff are hard on themselves – students who bring problems

Q.1 Attendees scanned QR codes - attendees selected "which is the most important outcome for students during their time at Warwick?"

1. Give students voice
2. Support a sense of belonging at Warwick

Everyone session (staff, students and trustee) I run was 'give students a voice'

Asked the members about why they have voted for the particular options for the survey question.

JV - You don't have a sense of belonging. Like unless you can affect the issues that impact you. And that'll be for the issue. And like SSLC for example, like if you don't have a voice then it's kind of no point in belonging, whereas like it's not the other way around like.

DV - Yeah, I kind of thought similarly on the basis of like, particularly with trans students, if an organisation doesn't listen to trans people and talk to trans people, they can't effectively give them a sense of belonging - attendees added their thoughts.

Q.2 As a fundamental principle, Warwick SU should....

Q.3 How important to students is the SU's work in the following areas...

Q.4 By 2030 Warwick SU will be known by our members as: skewed towards student voice

Open poll for students to add any comments / text for feedback.

3. Agenda Item 3 - GRP Report Introduction

OC said please say anything / feedback you have on this report. Feedback will be collated and will go to Board. Feedback and discussion are important

OC split into obvious sections for discussion – Option 1, PTO section, democratic year (led by Sasha), recommendations to discuss

Verbal feedback – elaborating on points that can be summarised and go to board

JV – Can we vote on the options?

OC – Summarise the discussion on this report, they are not council votes.

Feedback will go to board as advisory and not a vote just to be clear.

SKS – It will be positive to talk about the options and consider the implications.

OR – recommendations from Council to Board

OC – discuss options in way that they're presented

AT – go bit by bit – confused when it comes to options – Board paper written to go to options

SKS – focused on little bits of reports – we want to keep report engaging

OC – all proposals will be heard

JV – agree with them

SKS – we want to vote on this – look at options and identify what agree and don't agree on. Do council think this is best way to do this? Not black and white,

NC – also agree that not black and white. NC clarified what we're looking for from Council.

AT – is this being minuted/transcribed?

JS – different policies, some seem more extreme than others. Historical options for GRP were explored

OC – 1st proposed change in option 1 – remove VP DD.

The first proposed change in option one is to remove Vice President, Democracy and development, and the rationale that it aligns with sector norms and focuses on the office structure, focuses the Office of Structures on deliverability, which has unclear boundaries and overlaps with the governance structures.

JV – Like it may be the case currently, the VP Democracy Development doesn't have, like too much of delivering like role, but that doesn't mean it can't. In historic year, development has encompassed housing, brand, cost of living and transport, which are going to be the important issues for our students and as led campaigns. And it's been vocal to key university spaces about those issues specifically.

DV – paid staff doing democracy – students can't hold staff to account

SH - in lots of democratic/governance procedures there's always an element of externality e.g. returning officer not DDO for elections

SH – Explained the process of she went through the options.

OR – reads an element of the Charity Commission about the salaries of staff.

AT – We can't vote on two options.

SKS – It will be beneficial to go through the options.

JV – The options are not a great representation of this discussion

NC – I have to support Option 2, with some concerns on VP PG and renaming my role.

OR – Can I request a procedural motion 2. Can Council vote on this discussion?

OC – Open the discussion on the changes proposed on each option.

NC – It is a difficult dynamic of VP DDO managing the election complaints, it is operational and stressful, and this job should not be done by an FTO.

OO – If the VP DDO is removed, how will the students have a say and how will they have a say in the SU.

SKS – it is not a position in most Unions and removing DDO does not mean eradicating the student voice / officer. I mean this human voice department would still exist. Part of what Sam's been talking about in removing this role is that democracy shouldn't be something that is politicised that warrants you. It's problematic for a politician opposite to be responsible for the carrying out of our elections.

Raj – sustainability? Where will this lie? Sustainability is important.

AS – work is more operational – value among students. Bring opportunities for students? Surplus created from student success

JS – Removing the DDO, what will happen to the role of DDO in Impact Assessment.

AT – what is solved by removing the DDO?

SH – The role should not be politicised. Lots of process mapping that will have to do after this. Role should not be operational. A professional staff can do it. Reimaging will be difficult because you've never seen different

JV – It is failure of the role and job and that does not mean getting rid of that role.

RM - Hi I'd just like to reiterate that loads of students have expressed that the ESU is very bureaucratic. So, whether or not this is a convention for a Union body to have like this VP DD position, it is seemingly a necessity for students in in the current state of things and abolishing the role is not going to achieve anything in light of that. I just think it's counterintuitive. To the position that we're in and it's kind of ridiculous to think that that's going to make any progress in terms of democracy when democracy is inherently a political thing. So this kind of notion that it can be depoliticized by giving it to to staff rather than a particular student. Found counter intuitive to me.

OR – report contains no officer structure. Continued some research – SUs across the country. Charity commission – employees and benefits – pension contributions as well. WSU 2nd highest employee benefits offered in RGSUs – two from MSL. 1st is Imperial. Warwick highest beneficiaries.

OR – shared data about finances about charities. Warwick has second highest benefits provided to employees. Highest is UCL. Warwick also has highest average benefits

SH – one of highest paid salaries for Officers too.

OC – Procedural motion 2 to vote

Votes for procedural motion:

Approval 20

JB – It is important to have an officer for democratic processes and they can look after these processes. How are things gonna move forward if we get rid of VP DDO. How will the processes work? I think it's important that we have an officer that's responsible for political accountability on outlets. So if you want to see I'm a student, what they care about, it is how much alcohol costs, how much full tickets cost, or then James Martin's case. How much curiosity cost.

LG – Second consultancy engaged to advise on officer restructuring, and we have the former deputy CEO of NUS recommending us these governance structures. I think we are just in danger of overlooking fantastic advice from Sam and officer herself (VP DDO).

OC – spent 30 mins on this discussion. SKS happy to take thoughts via email.

OC – Does council want to vote on indicative vote on the discussion

OC – If you are in favour of removal of VP DDO

In favour of indicative vote

Those in support of proposed change (removal of DDO) - 5

16 – no

3 – abstain

OC – Change 2 - Retain VP Welfare and remove Campaigns

DV – The staff campaigns department was abolished and whether this change will indicate any change in the priorities of the VP Welfare.

SH – I think the reality is different and VP Welfare and Campaigns is not doing campaigns. Everyone is focused on campaigning in their own way

JK – another Officer not supporting campaign

MP – Want to support the campaigns of PTO's and support the wider teams campaigns, then, that force on the FTO side will side will inevitably start to die down because people going for that role are not looking for that role title. And we'd have less staff supporting that as well. And I'm worried that that will just mean that PTO's who are still unpaid elect with more of the workload of bringing their campaigns through

NC – It will be a relief that if I was not the VP Welfare and Campaigns, it will be really good if we remove the Campaigns and discussions are going on w.r.t the staff support on campaigns.

JM – It will be nice to have students as representatives and not staff doing campaigns.

SH – In no way I am vouching for staff leading campaigns.

EN – The amount of work pressure it puts on you with having campaigns and welfare, is massive and that should not be the case.

OC – All those in favour of removal of VP Welfare and Campaigns to VP Welfare.

In favour of removal of WC – 17

Against – 4

Abstain – 2

Access Break

OC – Change 3 - Ethnic minorities to Global Majority Officer

OO – Minorities are not considered by this term, and I don't understand this change.

JV – This change is meaningless and does not lead to any change. global majority is more vague

SH – It leads to liberation, and we move towards more affirming language. Helps us to achieve liberation. If ehtnic minorities want it – then thats a win in my opinion. Global mjaority sitll not common term, it may be controversial to some.

DV – I feel like bringing up this in a forum / ASV than in the Student Council.

EN – It is part of the Officer review role process and that is why it is brought up here.

AT – I am a bit confused about terminology

ET – Reframing of the title, put in brackets BAME/ethnic minority

OC – Vote

8 – yes

5 – no

Abstain – 11

<u>OC – Option 2 Move to VP PG to part time role</u>

OR – Comments from the PG non-councillors. Reading those comments. PGs – 28000 warwick students, 10,000 PGs – effect studies and welfare

MA – I think we can make the VP PG role to part-time role with some wider changes. There should be a scope on how we include the PGT and PGR roles.

DV – Compensation could be good idea. There should be a conversation with the GTAs, staff and PGs on this

SES – If we don't have a PGT how will we represent the issues of PGTs.

AT – I think it will be more commitment from part time PG role to look after a massive PG Community at Warwick.

OR – It is not clear how the PGs will be represented if we move towards a part-time role. I can't understand why this decision is being made in a small amount of time.

NC – PG representation – Officer is not the only way to represent PG students. PGT and PGR representation is different.

AT – It is a SU Structure problem than a role re-structuring and won't solve these problems.

JS – I believe moving to part-time role will not solve the problem. Replacing this will not resolve the students' concern. Too much risk for me. Paid representative who will show up etc. PTO may not show up. PGTs – will they run for it? This is too much of a risk to me.

EN – I appreciate all the points and considering the sector wide situation we have quite heavy FTO team. I agree with Muneeba for two part time officer roles (PGT and PGR)

Oscar – I disagree with the point of FTO team being too officer heavy.

OC – Vote VP PG being part-time

Favour – 1

Against – 18

Abstain – 4

<u>OC – Vote on merging two office roles, Merge 2 PTOs into 1 – international</u>

EN – after Brexit happened, there is not point in having two separate roles.

OT – Original GRP report wanted to make a full-time international office role. Original GRP report – maintain two international Officers. Elect them in spring elections – this could improve turnout. Voted against originally.

OC – vote in favour of merging two part time officer roles into one

Favour – 12

Against – 4

Abstain – 8

<u>OC – Merge VP sports and VP socs into Student Activities</u>

SH – I don't think Warwick SU is ready for option 3

LG – It does not make sense in merging the two roles.

EN – I think definitely it should be a separate role of VP Sports and VP Societies.

AP – If we can merge the two roles, we can reduce the costs, and better marketing.

In favour – 1

Against – 25

Abstain – 0

<u>OC – Remuneration of PTOs</u>

SH – Explanation of three options

DV – expenses office – renumeration – not addressing issue as they get budget for events but not for the work that they're doing

Would be good if all Officers are on payroll

Discussion on the risk of different options by the council members

Every bit of advice – against 1994 Education Act

SH – of course it's not perfect but what if they want to do 2nd year

JV – culture of this union. PTOs don't have a relationship with staff

JB – Expense model does not work. The bursary model might work. Let's try a model that naturally works.

NC – Bursary model is more suitable

AP – Bursary model is preferable for PTOs.

JV – Also, I feel in the expenses things a lot of you know anomalies and it I guess takes a lot of time I guess to reimburse so fixed versus your lump sum payment will better and I feel also when you take part in something without you know building how to say without being so accountable also it ensures equity.

EN – It is a lot of unpaid work. I would prefer either a bursary or payroll model.

OR – Can we consider Gibbet Hill & WBS PTO?

SKS – opt in opt out model – would need legal advice on this first

OC – Vote for Options

Option 1

For – 1

Option 2

For – 1

Option 3

For – 22

New option

For – 13

OC – Final Item - AOB (Recommendations from SH Report, Lay Trustee Appointment)

Recommendations and specific points from the Sam Harris's report were discussed.

JV – council expressed disapproval on the electing the chair of the Student Council.

JV – shade on previous chairs – electing chair different way. Is the chair representing us well?

OR – would be good to elect in Term 2. Council has ability to VONC the chair. Can be made clear that the role is neutral.

JB – The report talks about election fatigue. First year no ASV. Getting rid of Forums in favour of assemblies is not a good idea.

DD - increased elections. Summer elections – increased year on year. Spring elections, we broke our previous vote total. We received 6390 votes. Last year we received 5530 votes.

OO - The way we ensure Council is representative of the student body is by electing 4 members to attend council. If you don't have forums, how are we going to do that? If you know it's just whoever turns up an assembly, how is that going to be represented?

JV - So I quite like you are carrying up full half as part time officers because they are all responsible for campaigns. Title, I think it would be good to have that pairing up because that would actually help engage the own engagement, buy out just when I actually meet up with

myself but actually embedded. Is not everyone there is going to be making democratic decisions. I mean, I don't know some interpret this better, but I thought it would be more similar to how academic forums, who are Democratic members, voting members.

MA – I quite like the idea of pairing of PTOs and FTOs. Confused about the Assemblies. Electing council chair – how would this work – would they be elected independently of Forums?

SH – it would be a standalone role

OR – in-person teach outs campaigns – ASV – GRP – this includes the context. Students feel very strongly.

JS – Don't scrap the socs forum. It will be a reputational risk. With PG assembly, last year, the attendance was low, and this year PG Forum was well-attended. Some Forums like Ops forum can be an assembly.

JV – Officers influencing work. This is why societies and sports work so well.

RH – Why the council is not recorded by the BOAR?

DD – response given in terms of confidentiality of councillors. all papers received to be treated as confidential. Email – return email to sender. Councillors not wanting to be on record – no student is allowed to record in Council. To protect Council members.

Policy backlog – circulation email

Ideas platform – circulation email

OC – Ratification of Lay Trustee - Previous council – lay trustee didn't ratify – we can vote on this by circulation or next council

JK – why this is being discussed again since the council rejected this in the previous meeting. Council rejected it – JK – we already voted on this

LM – SU perspective – 1 Lay Trustee down – we wanted the rationale for council rejecting – what further information do you need

SKS - same process as student trustees

Oscar – legal risk

EN – conversations – sessions with NUS

AT – worried because last council meeting when vote happened, we had NUS person come in – any changes and confidence building areas, I don't see a point about a vote at this stage

JV – lots of stuff still up in the air

LG – Please don't reduce the ability of Board to continue to make good decisions by not considering the lay trustee ratification. The person has a decades of experience in financial services.

NC – we need a lay trustee at some point

OR – I am happy to have conversations around the ratification of the lay trustee. up for a vote. Learnt more about charity law so happy to have discussion. Legal risk of using power of

council. Conversation with CEO and Kat Stark – lots of SUs have directly elected student trustees.

OC thanked members for their time and SH thanked the Council members.

Council thanked OC.