

Meeting:	<b>D&amp;S Exec</b>
Location:	<b>1 East Meeting Room, 3.20</b>
Date & Time:	<b>Wednesday 23 October, 13:15 – 14:05</b>
<b>Present:</b>	
Eesha Ganesh	D&S Exec Chair
Benjamin Orford Thompson	SU Community Officer
Ishita Khattar	LGBT+ Chair
Isobel Shone	Disability Action Group (DAG) Chair
Daisy Henderson	External Coordinator (Nightline)
Michael Chan	Internal Coordinator (Nightline)
Dani Stec	D&S Exec Treasurer
Katie Keith	Chair of Bath Exchange Network
<b>In attendance:</b>	
Melissa Oram	Student Voice Co-Ordinator
Niamh Grundy	Student Voice Admin Assistant
<b>1. Welcome from the Chair</b>	
<p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and introduced the newly elected treasurer, Dani.</p> <p>Apologies were noted from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ela Sidhu, Chair of Race Equality</li> <li>• Perina Woods, Chair of Feminism &amp; Gender Equality</li> <li>• Emma Ogborn – Chair of Mature Students Group</li> </ul> <p>The Community Officer provided an overview of the new <a href="#">Officer Top Ten</a> for the 24/25 year, and highlighted some of the key priorities that are interlinked with EDI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve connections – Asking the University to update old systems and ensure systems ‘talk to each other’, especially to reduce instances of deadnaming.</li> <li>• Housing Strategy – Asking the University to fully commit to new accommodation to be accessible to all students, including low-income students.</li> <li>• Inclusive Teaching Policy – Asking the University to form and enforce a teaching policy that enforces the recommendations of recorded lectures, notes in advance, and the ability to self-record.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other SU updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolling out of the <a href="#">Gender Expression Fund</a>, with 11 applications received so far and positive feedback from all applicants.</li> <li>• While <a href="#">low sensory hours have been introduced</a> across campus, the Community Officer is lobbying the university for some of these to also be put during peak hours so members of staff can experience them.</li> <li>• Key awareness days coming up – Disability History Month and Transgender Day of Remembrance, for which work is being organised by DAG and LGBT+, respectively.</li> <li>• It is confirmed that the Mature Students Group has been established again after many years without a committee and now has a full committee. Emma, the new chair, will attend the next meeting.</li> <li>• Freshers’ week was successful with high turnout rates and with 80% of the events provided being alcohol free, so more inclusive. The SU Voice Team also ran 7 mixers for underrepresented groups which saw more than 200 students attend in total.</li> </ul>	

### 3. Issues/Concerns from Groups

#### LGBT+

##### Issue 1 - Deadnaming

- Specifically, lots of people have raised issues over deadnaming on library cards and the group has been redirecting their members to the library.
- Complaints about members of staff using deadnames in emails even though they have signed off using their preferred name in the original email.
- The Community Officer recommended reporting these instances through [Support & Report](#), where students can report this behavior anonymously.
- The Chair noted how disappointing this is to hear, especially considering that they raised this issue two years ago. But they're hopeful that now this is a Top Ten priority, the University will prioritise this issue and work to make changes.

##### Issue 2: Pronouns

- Currently, students are unable to add more than one set of pronouns or add new ones to library cards, as the only options are he/him, she/her or they/them (i.e. can't have she/they or neo-pronouns)
- This has not been specifically raised this year but is an ongoing issue.

**ACTION – The Community Officer will follow this issue up and raise it with Council.**

#### Disability Action Group

##### Issue 1 – Taxis/Transport to universities

- The DAG Chair raised concerns around the inconsistency and lack of support surrounding transport to university for disabled students.
- Specifically discussed the lack of consistency on the types of transport offered under the [Disabled Student Allowance \(DSA\)](#), i.e. some people can pre-book taxis while others are told to use Uber and expense the cost.
- The Chair recommended that it would be useful for more advice from the University on this issue, which needs to highlight that during your DSA appointment you can specify your preference instead of being allocated something at random.
- The Chair also raised that DSA applications can take months to be approved leaving those that are dependent on DSA struggling to get to university before it is approved.
- Another area for improvement is supporting people during their DSA appointment so they are aware of what they can ask for.
- The Community Officer suggested that it could be beneficial for the University to create a step-by-step process to support students.

**ACTION – The Community Officer will follow this up and raise it with Council.**

#### Nightline

No issues to raise.

#### Bath Exchange Network (BEN)

Issue – more information to exchange students before start of semester.

- The BEN Chair raised the concern that it would be more beneficial if exchange students could receive access to their emails before the start of semester.
- Also mentioned that despite being 4 weeks into term they have only just been told information like

emergency phone numbers. The Chair expressed concerns that while information around accommodation is readily available before exchange students arrive, smaller but still useful information (i.e. NHS insurance, visas) would also be useful earlier on.

- The Community Officer confirmed that he has contacted Lilith (International Mobility Coordinator) about this, and she is currently on annual leave, but he will follow up to book a meeting so that BEN can raise all these issues.

**ACTION: Community Officer to set up a meeting with BEN and Lilith.**

#### **Raised by The Community Officer – The New SU Website**

- The Community Officer wanted to check if there had been any specific complaints about the new website's accessibility.
- None of the groups had currently received any complaints on this.
- The Chair commented that external groups to this committee had complained about the colour contrast but was unsure if this had been directed to the correct place.
- The Student Voice Co-Ordinator confirmed that complaints need to go directly to the SU Web email ([suweb@bath.ac.uk](mailto:suweb@bath.ac.uk)). She also explained that the web team had done colour contrasting checks and checked for accessibility, but that the SVC had also been in contact with the web team about implementing an accessibility tool. She also mentioned that there will be the possibility to do focus groups to have direct conversations and raise these concerns in person.

**No other groups were represented so no other issues raised.**

#### **4. SUMmit**

The Chair confirmed that every group was aware of who their rep for SUMmit is. These have all been confirmed with the Student Voice Coordinator.

The Student Voice Coordinator gave a quick overview of [SUMmit](#) – The SU's highest student leadership committee, which is seen as the next step above executives and is The SU's version of student council. All of the student leaders come together and discuss standpoints, which are issues and beliefs that the SU has on key issue. Every exec can send up to 2 members and other reps are put forward. There is currently a strong EDI aspect, so we need to keep and enhance that. The biggest change this year is that while usually standpoints are debated, then voted on and written down there is no action afterwards. This year action plans will be made, and officers will be assigned to them to ensure we progress and push the university to make those changes.

The Chair commented that they believe it's important for this executive to discuss priorities for SUMmit, as before it has been difficult to get an agreed agenda due to lack of coordination. Also raised that the number of propositions that can be put forward have lowered from 5 to 3, which means they need to be well considered.

**ACTION - The Student Voice Coordinator will share around the SUMmit resources and recommended that members read through them to generate some ideas.**

Members discussed ideas for possible Statements of Issues.

#### **Idea 1 – Consistent and good quality lecture recordings**

- A member of Disability Action Group suggested that while it's positive more lectures are being recorded, in smaller/older lecture theatres the quality of these recordings are a lot lower. This has

meant that when lecturers use whiteboards instead of visualizers it can't be seen on the recording.

- The Chair raised that this could lead to push back from lecturers who prefer interactive features like whiteboards rather than visualizes, but that this is a DDAT issue which is currently underfunded. The Chair confirmed this is a priority to look at.

### **Proposition idea 2 - Deadnaming**

- The Community Officer suggested that while deadnaming is already a Top Ten item, it is still important to show it's a student facing issue so this could form the basis of a standpoint.
- The Chair commented that they previously submitted a standpoint related to trans student rights which missed becoming a standpoint by one vote. The Chair highlighted the importance of carefully considering how we approach this as the past two standpoints related to trans student experiences were not voted through.
- The Student Voice Co-Ordinator clarified that when Statements of Issues are submitted, if they are voted up to become a standpoint, the Voice Team will provide a briefing which will provide information and context about the issue for all members to familiarise themselves with. Also suggested it would be important to set some time aside at a meeting or meet outside of them so either The Chair of LGBT+, The Exec Chair or The Community Officer could raise it with the backing of the Exec.

## **5. Follow up on Collaborative Agenda/Priorities for the Year**

The Student Voice Co-Ordinator encouraged the Exec to use some time now to set the key objectives for the year and agree on priorities.

### **Publicity Officer Role:**

- The Student Voice Co-Ordinator confirmed that there is no longer a publicity officer, but that they and the Community Officer have discussed whether the role needs to be replaced or if there is enough capacity amongst the group so the responsibilities can be shared.
- There was a quick discussion about this where a few members agreed it would be good to replace the role but that they can cope without.
- One member raised that a possible reason the role should be replaced is to remove pressure from the members of the exec. The Chair agreed that members of the previous committees had become quite overstretched so believe a publicity officer would help relieve this.

**ACTION – If anyone has a strong view on this, please email The Community Officer who will have final decision powers as the Area Returning Officer (ARO).**

### **Housing Mixer**

The Community Officer asked the members for opinions and feedback on how a Housing Mixer could be more inclusive, potentially creating a mixer just for marginalized communities.

- The Chair commented that previous housing mixers they attended were not inclusive or accessible for neurodivergent students or appropriate for people with anxiety, due to it being crowded and loud, meaning they were unable to have an in-depth conversation. The Chair also suggested that if there was one specific for marginalised groups, additional work will be required to figure out who will be attending to plan adjustments. Also suggested that it might be worth pairing people up with others whose needs are similar. But overall, The Chair did not find the mixer effective, and believes extra support needs to be put in.
- A member suggested that marginalized communities are typically disproportionately represented in

those mixers as they usually might be more isolated or struggle to find others with similar needs to themselves.

- The Community Officer commented that it can be difficult to know the level of involvement they should have during these events.
- Another member commented on the importance of these mixers needing to happen very early on in the year to allow the students to get to know each other more before having to sort a house, which usually needs to be sorted by the end of December. They suggested handing out information during the mixer about how students should get housing to provide a starting point for the conversation.
- A member also suggested the potential positive impact if it was more activity-based, i.e. board games, which could take the pressure away from just socialising, reduce anxiety and allow conversations to flow more naturally.

**ACTION: The Community Officer will follow up with the Chair about suggestions for housing mixers.**

**Accessibility/Disability Training:**

- DAG had a meeting today with Anette (SU Skills and Development Manager) and agreed Dani will be taking the lead on this project with Isobel supporting. In the meeting they agreed they are going to aim to roll this out across the SU for student leaders and staff in Semester 2.
- Commented this was still at the very early stages and aim to involve both people from disabled communities but they are also interested in the perspective of other students/communities. DAG will give a more detailed update at the next meeting.

**6. Any other business**

**Nightline storage space**

The External Coordinator raised that Nightline have recently discovered that in their storage space there are also lots of items that belong to other groups and want to ensure that the right groups can gain access to it. The difficulty is that it is currently stored in a confidential area, so over the next few weeks they will take stock of the items and share with the groups, so altogether they can create a plan with the other groups about what items they want to keep.

The Chair supported this idea but also raised the issue that the groups don't have any other storage available to move these items into.

The External Coordinator also suggested that any items that are only needed infrequently can remain there for now, however, because it is a confidential area, it would not be appropriate to store items groups needed frequent access to. This member also raised that donations to the SU are also stored there, which these groups can use. Currently, there are lots of sanitary products the groups can use, either all together or for individual events/groups.

**ACTION – The Community Officer will investigate if there is any storage or anyway D&S can get storage.**

The Chair closed the meeting.