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| Meeting: | Summit |
| Location: | Council Chamber |
| Date & Time: | Tuesday 19 November 2024 17:15-19:00 |
| Present: | |
| NAME | ROLE ON SUMMIT |
| Jackson Peace | Chair of SUMmit |
| Jimena Alamo | SU President |
| Zuber Lakhani | Postgraduate Officer |
| Amber Snary | Education Officer |
| Benji Orford Thompson | Community Officer |
| David Lam | Activities Officer |
| Oliver Warner | Sport Officer |
| Huw Ford | Senate Rep |
| Htanshi Nirmal Kumar Jain | Activities Exec |
| Sam Ellis Hunt | Activities Exec |
| Angus Gueterbock | Sports Exec |
| Emily McManus | Sports Exec |
| Robbie Altham | Academic Exec |
| Isobel Shone | Diversity & Support Exec |
| Eesha Ganesh | Diversity & Support Exec |
| Maria Awan | Race Equality Group |
| Lauren Wright | Feminism & Gender Equality Group |
| Ella Rathgeber | Bath Exchange Network |
| Ishita Khattar | LGBTQ+ Group |
| Star Dootson | Disability Action Group |
| Penn Mackintosh | Peer Mentor |
| Oliver Piff | Peer Assisted Learning Leader |
| Sharon Herath | Open place member |
| Helen Slater | Open place member |
| Lili Illman | Open place member |
| Jojo Darling | Open place member |
| Dom Vald | Open place member |
| Xandi Drysdale | Open place member |
| Jian Xin Lim | Open place member |
| Rama Alassaf | Open place member |
| Phoebe Heath | Open place member |
| Ahalya Nair | Open place member |
| Yitz Sheinfeld | Open place member |
| Erik Bardenhewer | Open place member |
| Dani Stec | Open place member |
| William Riddell | Open place member |
| Aanchal Vijay Chawla | Open place member |
| Jacob Hanley | Open place member |
| Josh Freer | Open place member |
| Tori Omamogho | Open place member |
| In attendance: | |
| Charlie Slack | Director of Student Leadership & Support |
| Ryan Bird | Chief Exec |

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| Amy Young | Insight and Engagement Manager |
| Heather Doon | Student Voice Consultant |
| Emily Attinger | Student Voice Admin Assistant (Minutes) |
| Henry Steele | Student Voice Admin Assistant (Minutes) |

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1. Arrival

2. Meeting start and Welcome

Welcome from the Chair

The Chair welcomed members of SUMmit to the first meeting of 2024/25.

Noting of apologies

- Christopher Wahlen – Media Exec
- Tianyu Xiang – Doctoral Exec
- Gioriga Shahu – International Exec
- Ishwar Suresh – International Exec

Quoracy

39 in attendance therefore the meeting has met quoracy. Quoracy for a vote to pass is 26 for a Standpoint and actions to pass.

Notice of any other business

The SU President requested to inform SUMmit members of an upcoming opportunity to meet with local councilors.

3. Appointment of the Vice-Chair

The Chair updated the membership that no one had applied to be the Vice-Chair of SUMmit. As a result there was no appointment of the Vice-Chair, with the SU President acting as Vice-Chair for this SUMmit meeting.

4. Updates from Officers

The Chair confirmed that updates from each SU Officer had been sent to members in advance of the meeting, and invited members present to ask questions.

Questions to the Postgraduate (PG) Officer:

A member asked the PG Officer to explain his updates in more detail, as well as asking that future updates from the PG Officer have more detail included within them.

The PG Officer responded by explaining further his upcoming work, covering the creation of PG buddying programs with UG students as a form of community-building, as well as working towards making non-term-time more suitable for international and postgraduate students as many remain in Bath.

A member asked the PG Officer if he was aware of the new regulations for the University surrounding harassment and if the SU Officers in general are aware of these policies when it comes to their upcoming work, focusing upon the PG Officer’s plan for greater cohesion between PGs and UGs (e.g. the proposed buddying program).

The PG Officer responded by saying that he is aware of the changes that are coming through for

PGR students (Post Graduate Researchers), with the Doctoral College currently looking into this.

Questions to the Community Officer regarding buses:

A member asked the Community Officer for more information regarding the current issues experienced by students with the buses.

The Community Officer responded to this question by stating that the communication between himself and First Bus has been both positive and frequent which enabled him to update on concerns from students. He went on to outline many of the changes that First have made since he became Community Officer such as the frequency of buses on both U1 and U2 routes, the doubling of 22 buses per hour, and the local 'Birthday Bus' campaign which gives under-21-year-old students two months of free travel, and over-21-year-old students one month of free travel in their birthday month (although it was acknowledged that for some students e.g. those over 21 and those whose birthdays are out of term time they will not benefit from the scheme).

A member then asked the Community Officer about the overcrowding of buses and the, often, lengthy queues particularly outside St James's Cemetery (U2) and the bus station (U1).

The Community Officer responded saying there is not much that can be done to reduce this, although the changes to the bus stop at St James's, which allows for three buses to pick up at once, has been a positive step.

The Community Officer offered updates surrounding the University Travel Action Plan, however he noted that First Bus have shown little, if any, interest in this, with the Community Officer's recommendation for shuttle buses during exam season.

A member asked about the possibility of certain buses, namely the U2, starting at a later stop so that buses are not full by the end of the route, for example at the bottom of Bathwick Hill.

The Community Officer responded by saying that this has been trailed before, however it is unlikely First Bus will change the procedures at present.

Questions to the Education Officer:

Regarding IMCs (Individual Mitigating Circumstances):

A member of the Disability Action Group commented that there was a current backlog with DAPs (Disability Action Plan) and therefore likely to be more IMCs being submitted, as well as a more general question about any proposed changes to IMCs.

The Education Officer responded that she is currently working on an IMC phrasebook, a document to help students be more effective when applying for IMCs including examples of evidence suitable for different types of IMC. Another member then asked the Education Officer about whether housing problems were suitable grounds for an IMC, with the Education Officer answering yes, they would be.

A member also raised a personal experience with the IMC process to the Education Officer, in which the member was told she needed a doctor's note regarding mental health issues.

The Education Officer responded by saying that a doctor's note should only be asked for in situations where a student, for example, attends A&E (Accident and Emergency) or doctor. As a result of the Education Officer's work surrounding this, she has sought to look for less formal evidence options for students, particularly regarding mental health issues.

Another member brought up the issues surrounding the different ways that different Faculties processed IMCs, with some Faculties utilising different systems and processes. The Education Officer agreed that this was an issue, saying that a universal accessible system is needed.

Regarding the Virgil Building and study spaces:

A member asked the Education Officer about the Virgil Building, stating that whilst it is an incredible space, the removal of around twenty computers to accommodate space for the loss of space from Dartmouth Avenue (space was created for Cue Sports to have their pool tables) has caused the building to become more cramped than it already was.

Another member raised the issue of a lot of the issues with the computer equipment in the building, for example computers not turning on or not even being plugged in in the Virgil Building, with the same member bringing up that in room 3.6, for example, two of the eight desktops were not even plugged in.

The Education Officer responded to both questions by saying she was not consulted on the matter of removing many of the desktops and said she will bring it up to the relevant individuals.

A member commented on the lack of study spaces in Oldfield Park and in town, with the Education Officer responding that there has been no recent movement surrounding new study spaces in town. Another member commented that more study spaces in the city/Oldfield Park would alleviate some of the pressure on the buses, a point the Education Officer agreed with.

Question to the SU President:

As part of her update, the SU President mentioned utilising student information and feedback on the Renters' Reform Bill, with a member asking if she could expand on this.

The SU President responded by explaining that the Bill was at the stage whereby evidence could be presented to the House of Commons surrounding its impact on renters, and she believes that student feedback could benefit this process and make the Bill less harmful to student tenants.

5. Statement of Issue Discussion – The Education Officer (engagement monitoring)

The Chair introduced the main segment of the meeting, the discussion of the submitted Statement of Issue and development of a Standpoint and actions.

For this meeting of SUMmit one Statement of Issue had been submitted regarding the development of Engagement Monitoring at the University of Bath.

The Chair introduced the Policy and Programmes Officer (PPO) from the Vice Chancellor's Office who had been invited to attend to provide additional background and context.

Policy & Programmes Officer presentation

The PPO spoke of improving the current engagement monitoring system to improve both the staff and, particularly, the student experiences. The tool of engagement monitoring was first introduced during COVID-19 when students were studying remotely and a process needed to be in place to ensure that students were being supported, the tool was basic and monitored student engagement with Moodle, for example.

Since COVID, the system has barely developed and, as a result, the University is behind much of the sector in this regard, with other universities, including Bristol, Lancaster and York, having much more advanced engagement monitoring systems.

At present the system collects data points surrounding engagement with Panopto and lecture recordings, coursework submission, Moodle logins, SAMIS logins, attendance in Teams/Zoom meetings, however the system can see not what students are accessing or how long they are accessing the resource for, just date and time of access.

With the current system working through the process that once a student is flagged as disengaging, a Director of Studies or Academic Advisor will then reach out to the student, with

Student Safeguarding also able to access this data if the department flags concern.

Members of SUMmit were invited to ask questions before the PPO would be asked to leave to enable the Education Officer to present their Statement of Issue and for a wider discussion to take place.

A member asked whether students can, at present, see their own data, with the PPO stating that currently students cannot do this, which is one of the main reasons why the University is seeking to improve the system, in line with the more sophisticated systems seen across the sector.

A member raised that students are not particularly aware that engagement monitoring happens now, as well as flagging that on Moodle, students can view all the other students on a module and see when they last accessed it. The PPO responded that he was unaware of this, but would raise with the Centre for Learning and Teaching to query if this should be occurring.

A member asked if the systems other universities utilise are actually better for student experience, with the PPM answering that research has shown that these more advanced systems do lead to higher student engagement and retention.

Another member asked about whether the system at present can differentiate between a student logging in for 20 seconds or 2 hours, for example, with the PPO responding that the system cannot currently differentiate between these due to its basic nature.

The final question to the PPO came from a member who asked what students would be compared to regarding engagement, would it be to their peers, or a set parameter set by the University.

To this the PPO responded that the idea is to help students, it is not meant to be used in this way, instead students are measured against their own record instead of against each other.

The PPO was thanked for their presentation and answering questions on this issue. There will be further opportunities for students to provide feedback as Engagement Monitoring processes and policies are further developed.

Members of SUMmit took a short break

Proposer introduction

The Education Officer introduced her Statement of Issue regarding Engagement Monitoring and provided a initial proposed wording for a Standpoint on this issue: 'The University must continue to constantly seek student feedback on engagement monitoring.'

The Education Officer highlighted to members of SUMmit that this is not about Attendance Monitoring (i.e. monitoring of student attendance at lectures, tutorials, labs etc).

The Education Officer spoke of the recent history of Engagement Monitoring, including the fact that it was brought to Academic Council (meeting of Academic Representatives) in 2022, as well as the future plans. The University's Senate Committee recently approved Engagement Monitoring and, thus, piloting is expected in 2025/26 with the full roll-out in 2026/27.

Regarding student input, the Education Officer's had discussed Engagement Monitoring with the UG Academic Exec (meeting of UG Faculty Representatives and the student Senate Representative) on 21/10/2024, Academic Council (first year UG Academic Reps only) on 06/11/2024, and is currently ongoing within Faculty Forums (all years of Academic Reps within each Faculty/School).

Following the submission of the Statement of Issue a briefing paper had been created and

circulated to SUMmit members as per the SUMmit processes.

Discussion by SUMmit members

A member argued that whilst the initial proposed wording for a Standpoint was a good start, the Standpoint does not go far enough, as whilst student feedback is crucial, it is also vital to understand how to engage with students who are not engaged who may have thoughts and who Engagement Monitoring, may, impact the most. A need for 'checks and balances' upon what the University does with this information should be front and centre as well, one member put.

A member raised the worrying possibility of the University extending Engagement Monitoring in the future and implementing Attendance Monitoring if Engagement Monitoring is successful, the Education Officer said she has worked hard to make sure this focus lies with Engagement Monitoring and does not turn to wider Attendance Monitoring, but that this is something that The SU would need to continue to monitor in the future.

Another member asked for a clear definition of engagement, the Education Officer said that it regarded engagement with academic systems, e.g. Panopto, Moodle, etc., whilst attendance monitoring would focus more on physical attendance.

A member asked whether this data could be used a punitive measure for students, with the Education Officer saying that when the concept was first raised, she asked the PPO about this and found that, in theory, the system would only become un-anonymised if a problem has occurred. The SU President added to this saying that the official University stance would state that this cannot be used against students, as it is out of the formal processes, so if the University attempted to do this, the SU would push back against this.

A member asked about the possibility of the University using this data for purposes other than enhancing the student experience, asking the University to fully disclose the type of collected data and what it is used for, with the Education Officer agreeing with this.

Another member asked about how long this data would be used for, in terms of is it year-by-year or the entirety of a student's degree, with the Education Officer saying that it should be year-by-year, however this has not been confirmed.

The Standpoint wording was therefore amended and agreed by members of SUMmit for proceeding.

'The University must continue to constantly seek student feedback on engagement monitoring and data collection.'

Following the discussion, the SU President had formed four actions to accompany the Standpoint:

1. The organisation of a Q&A session with students and University leaders on Engagement Monitoring and the plans moving forward.
2. The Education Officer to ask the University for clear definitions of attendance and engagement, as to differentiate between the two.
3. Once next steps have been proposed, The SU is to organise ongoing events for students to provide feedback.
4. The Education Officer to request a clear list from the University about what data will be collected and how this will be used.

Overall, it was agreed that Engagement Monitoring's purpose should remain as being a tool to support students.

As per SUMmit's processes members were asked to first vote on what action they wished to take

regarding the Standpoint and actions.

Members were asked to vote on the three options: proceed to a vote for adoption of the Standpoint, call for statements on the issue from the student community, or recommend to the Board of Trustees that a referendum takes place.

Outcome of vote:

- Proceed to vote on adoption of Standpoint and actions by The SU 35
- Call for statements from the student community 2
- Recommend to the Board of Trustees that a referendum be called 2

Therefore, with 35 votes SUMmit proceeded to vote on the adoption of the Standpoint and actions by The SU.

Members were asked to vote whether they agreed that The SU should adopt the Standpoint and actions. The options were, SU to adopt, SU to not adopt, or Abstain.

Outcome of vote:

- The SU should adopt the Standpoint and actions 34
- The SU should not adopt the Standpoint and actions 2
- Abstain 2

Therefore, the Standpoint and actions have been voted as being adopted by The SU. SU Officers will provide updates at future meetings of SUMmit.

6. Any other business and close of meeting

The SU President informed attendees that on 26 November there is a forum in Scala, with local councilors, for students to ask them about local issues, with 12 councilors confirmed as attending. This is a prime opportunity to raise concerns regarding topics such as buses and student housing. The SU President also highlighted her desire for this to be run bi-annually.

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and engagement with the meeting and closed the meeting.

The SUMmit meeting finished at 19:05