

Meeting:	<b>SU</b> mit
Location:	<b>Council Chamber</b>
Date & Time:	<b>Monday 02 December 2024 17:15-19:35</b>
<b>Present:</b>	
<b>NAME</b>	<b>ROLE ON SUMMIT</b>
Jackson Peace	Chair of SUmit
Jimena Alamo	SU President
Zuber Lakhani	Postgraduate Officer
Amber Snary	Education Officer
Benji Orford Thompson	Community Officer
David Lam	Activities Officer
Oliver Warner	Sports Officer
Huw Ford	Senate Rep
Sam Ellis Hunt	Activities Exec
Angus Gueterbock	Sports Exec
Robbie Altham	Academic Exec
Isobel Shone	Diversity & Support Exec
Eesha Ganesh	Diversity & Support Exec
Ishwar Suresh	International Exec
Ella Rathgeber	Bath Exchange Network
Star Dootson	Disability Action Group
Oliver Piff	Peer Assisted Learning Leader
Penn Mackintosh	Peer Mentor
Sharon Herath	Open Place Member
Helen Slater	Open Place Member and Vice Chair of SUmit
Lili Illman	Open Place Member
Jojo Darling	Open Place Member
Dom Vald	Open Place Member
Xandi Drysdale	Open Place Member (arrived later in the meeting)
Jian Xin Lim	Open Place Member
Phoebe Heath	Open Place Member
Yitz Sheinfield	Open Place Member
Dani Stec	Open Place Member
William Riddell	Open Place Member
<b>In attendance:</b>	
Charlie Slack	Director of Student Leadership & Support
Amy Young	Insight and Engagement Manager
George Newham	Student Voice Coordinator
Emily Attinger	Student Voice Admin Assistant (Minutes)
Henry Steele	Student Voice Admin Assistant (Minutes)
Niamh Grundy	Student Voice Admin Assistant
<b>1. Arrival</b>	

## **2. Meeting start and Welcome**

### **Welcome from the Chair**

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

### **Noting of apologies**

- Emily McManus – Sports Exec
- Tianyu Xiang – Doctoral Exec
- Lauren Wright – Feminism & Gender Equality Group
- Jacob Hanley – Hall Rep
- Ahalya Nair – Open Place Member
- Erik Bardenhewer – Open Place Member
- Ishita Khattar – LGBT+ Group

### **Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting 19 November 2024 were approved as correct by members of SUMmit.

### **Matters arising**

#### **Appointment of the Vice-Chair**

Two members of SUMmit had put themselves forward following the first meeting to take the role of Vice Chair of SUMmit.

Both members were given the opportunity to deliver a one minute speech to introduce themselves and why they wished to be Vice Chair.

The first member, Yitz, argued that his connections within the committee and ambition within current student roles, which show his ambition to drive change at the University, as well as his ability to make the committee productive through previous experience in philosophy society and MUN, make him an ideal candidate.

The second candidate, Helen, wishes to make more meaningful contributions to the University this year, using skills as academic rep and other positions within the university to facilitate meaningful debate and further the work of the chair and SU President.

Members of SUMmit were invited to vote:

#### **Results of Vice-Chair vote**

Helen Slater 19

Yitz Sheinfield 8

Abstain 1

Therefore, Helen Slater was elected as Vice-Chair of SUMmit.

### **Quoracy**

28 in attendance at the start of the meeting therefore the meeting has met quoracy (quoracy is 50%+1 of membership). Quoracy for a vote to pass is 20 for a vote relating to a Standpoint and actions to pass.

### **Notice of any other business**

The Community Officer requested an item of other business at the end of the meeting.

## **3. Updates from Officers**

### **Question to the Community Officer:**

A member asked the Community Officer about the long-standing private sector accommodation issues for Business and Architecture students, due to their 6-month placement programs. The Community Officer responded by saying that the issue has been raised with both faculties, with the possibility being raised to move away from 6-month placement programs by both faculties for future students, not affecting current students. This year the University had been able to house students who had been unable to find a 6 month contract in University accommodation due to spare rooms being available.

### **Questions to the SU President:**

The Chair asked the SU President to report on the recent session held for students to talk to local councillors. The SU President said that whilst attendance was low, possibly due to the traffic, the councillors found it to be both enjoyable and engaging, asking for this to be continued. The SU President concurred, saying that greater advertisement of the event was needed.

A member asked the SU President, in relation to the recent local councillors meeting, whether the University of Bath SU could work closer with the Bath Spa University SU so as to present a united student body across Bath. The SU President stated, in response, that there is already good communication and collaboration between both SUs, naming, as an example, the housing survey and the Student Community Partnership.

The Chair asked the SU President about the possibility of doing more surrounding student interaction between the universities, is there a more official way we could share events and meetup with other students. The SU President said they would take on this comment.

### **Questions to the Postgraduate Officer:**

A member asked the Postgraduate Officer for an update on the postgraduate survey results he had mentioned in his update at the last meeting. The Postgraduate Officer responded saying that the last Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) had a far lower participation rate than previous surveys and when compared with the National Student Survey of undergraduate students, and promised to make sure students are aware when the survey is run again and make their voices heard.

A member referred to the last meeting where the Postgraduate Officer had been questioned whether he was aware of new University regulations regarding harassment and whether there were further updates. The Postgraduate Officer would update at the next meeting of SUMmit.

### **Questions to the Education Officer:**

A member asked the Education Officer about how students' academic rights information that had been created is being disseminated to students. The Education Officer asked SUMmit members how they became aware of IMCs (Individual Mitigating Circumstances), with most saying it was either through introductory lectures or the need to get an IMC.

Another member asked the Education Officer about IMCs and if there were any updates on the issues students had faced, with the Education Officer responding by saying that there has been an increased discussion of the new IMC system regarding how they are to be implemented and applied for.

The Chair asked the Education Officer to keep the committee updated on the issue.

## **4. Statement of Issue Discussion**

### **a) Late submission penalties:**

#### **Proposer introduction**

The proposer represented the argument that late submission penalties, at present, are both too strict and inconsistent, with the focus of this particular standpoint proposal being on coursework.

The proposer stated that many UK Universities that Bath is compared with, e.g. St Andrews and LSE, have a system of incremental penalties, whereby marks are deducted incrementally depending on number of days late.

The proposer also stated that, at present, there is too much inconsistency between departments at the University.

#### **Discussion**

A member asked about what exactly was meant by this inconsistency between faculties, with another member responding by stating that some faculties allow for, for example, late application for IMCs and extensions after the deadline, whilst some other do not.

A member raised concerns surrounding incremental penalties, arguing that the system could encourage students to delay submitting work or not submitting it on time, however this member also agreed that the system needed to be more consistent.

Another member counter responded that the idea of incremental penalties is a really positive idea, a system whereby students are docked marks rather than being capped at 40% if they are one second late, is one that is particularly positive for student experience and welfare.

A member raised the issue that the current system has on students that deal with short-term notice issues, with this member focusing specifically upon disabled students, it is unfair that the current system punishes so severely in this regard. To this point the Education Officer added that IMCs do not fully support students in this situation either, so a change to penalties is certainly needed.

A member asked if the idea of 'delayed/retroactive extensions' would be a possibility, with this being so that if a student runs into short-term issues, e.g. with Wi-Fi or health issues, that an IMC cannot cover, the student would be able to extend their deadline by an appropriate length of time.

The same member also said that it cannot be a system that acts in a way where 'the world stops' for a student, there is a compromise between being fairer but also reflecting a real-world environment.

A member add to the point that the University should represent real-life working environments where employers would be less flexible with deadlines, also pointing out how rare it is for something to happen that close to a deadline, stating that this was perhaps a situation for an IMC. The Chair reflected that employers can often be far more flexible than they are seen to be.

A member stated that, regarding this 'real-world' point made by other members of SUMmit, student welfare should come first.

A member stated that an issue arises for non-disabled students to prove illness or mental health difficulties and self-certification could be proposed, agreeing with the idea of scaling penalties for late submission rather than capping a grade.

Another member brought forward a possible solution to the 'real-world' discussion thread, this being a system that becomes more detrimental throughout a degree, with the incremental penalties in first year being less than the penalties in final year.

Another member brought forward the idea that all students have a set number of 'extension days' they can use throughout the year, with disabled students being given additional days in line with their Disability Action Plan, a simple, yet effective, way in managing students and their differences.

A member brought forward the proposal of Standpoint wording that had the standardisation of the University system. Another member spoke in challenge of this regarding the difference types of coursework and assessment and how this work timing-wise, weary of calling for a standardised approach.

Another member responded that there could be a ratio in terms of the number of days late, for example a week late on an assessment that takes a week or on an assessment that takes a year to complete is different regarding the unfair advantage it gives a student.

A member said that the Standpoint should support student wellbeing as well as supporting the academic equity of the University.

SUMmit members moved towards the creation of Standpoint wording and resulting actions, finalising on the following:

### **Standpoint wording agreed**

'The University should prioritise student welfare and academic equity with a standardised response to late

submission of assessment.'

### **Actions agreed**

1. Explore the intricacies of the submission penalty system across Departments regarding the length of coursework
2. Come up with alternative ways of how else this could look and bring it back to SUMmit

SUMmit members initially voted on what action should be taken (19 required for a pass):

### **Voting outcome (proceed to vote/call for statements/recommend to BoT for a referendum)**

- Proceed to vote on adoption of Standpoint and actions by the SU 26
- Call for statements from the student community 2
- Recommend to the Board of Trustees that a referendum be called 0
- Abstain 0

SUMmit voted to proceed to a vote to adopt/not adopt the Standpoint and actions (19 required for a pass):

### **Voting outcome (SU to adopt/SU to not adopt/Abstain)**

- The SU should adopt the Standpoint and actions 26
- The SU should not adopt the Standpoint and actions 2
- Abstain 0

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

**A short break was taken by SUMmit members.**

### **b) Transgender student inclusion and safety:**

#### **Proposer introduction**

The first proposer began by putting forward proposed Standpoint wording that read: The SU believes that the University shares responsibility with the SU for ensuring the inclusion, dignity, and safety of trans, non-binary and gender diverse students, addressing systemic barriers and promoting a culture of respect at all levels.

In the briefing provided for SUMmit members in advance of the meeting it said that the University had an identity system of student names and identities, with the SU creating a system whereby a student's name is changed when it is changed in the University. Despite this there needs to be greater change, as many students and staff are changing their names, however this is not consistently being changed across the University.

The second proposer said that the broad nature of the Top 10 point <https://www.thesubath.com/campaigns/topten/ten/> is purposeful, the changing of names whether they be for transgender students or any other member of the community. Moreover, there is a need to expand the pronouns to be placed on library cards, at present only he/him, she/her, or they/them is offered, ignoring mixed or neo pronouns.

Approving this Standpoint will hold the SU to account in the future surrounding the importance of transgender students, with the University needing to be held account that their actions to meet both the legal frameworks, e.g. GDPR and the Equality Act, and their own statements on this publicly.

#### **Discussion**

A member stated that the briefing mentioned the idea of voluntary staff coming in to support staff, with the same member also asking whether the library card pronoun system is the best way for individuals to present their pronouns.

Another member said that Student Support has pronoun name badges that students can use, something that must be furthered and advertised more by the University.

The proposer spoke on staff training to stop exam invigilators from misgendering students, with another member putting forward that this could be an action to put forward increased training for staff members.

A member asked about what the training is currently provided for staff, asking if the training is a wider problem, or if it just an issue for trans individuals. If it were the former, then training would require its own change. With members replying that there is no explicit training for casual hours staff, with the action being wider to focus on all students not just trans students.

A member asked for a push regarding the guidelines in sport, specifically eligibility for students who may be transgender, making it clear when eligibility applies, but the proposers responded saying that this is not part of their intended Standpoint. The Chair asked about the creation of a report surrounding the questions raised regarding access to sport due to it not being part of this specific Standpoint discussion.

The Community Officer said that the current system for updating names and pro-nouns is both outdated and underfunded, due to the wider underfunding for DDAT, with another member saying that they have heard from staff that databases, surrounding name-changing, have not been able to merge due to privacy and security concerns.

SUMmit members moved towards the creation of Standpoint wording and resulting actions, finalising on the following:

### **Standpoint wording agreed**

'The SU believes that the University shares responsibility with the SU for ensuring the inclusion, dignity, and safety of trans, non-binary and gender diverse students, addressing systemic barriers and promoting a culture of respect at all levels.'

### **Actions agreed**

1. Explore an alternative way to display pronouns other than library cards including considerations of language options
2. Lobby the university to push for mandatory training for contracted and casual staff on interaction with all students
3. Further explore the name changing process for all students in relation to transition, marriage, divorce, etc.
4. Request that the university expand the list of pronouns on the library card including mixed pronouns
5. Lobby the University to increase resources for DDAT for improving mixed databases that allow for better integration of data

[Note: during the discussion another member of SUMmit joined the meeting, bringing those in attendance to 29, however they did not vote on this item].

SUMmit members initially voted on what action should be taken (20 required for a pass):

### **Voting outcome (proceed to vote/call for statements/recommend to BoT for a referendum)**

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| • Proceed to vote on adoption of Standpoint and actions by the SU | 27 |
| • Call for statements from the student community                  | 0  |
| • Recommend to the Board of Trustees that a referendum be called  | 0  |
| • Abstain   | 1  |

SUMmit voted to proceed to a vote to adopt/not adopt the Standpoint and actions (20 required for a pass):

### **Voting outcome (SU to adopt/SU to not adopt/Abstain)**

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| • The SU should adopt the Standpoint and actions     | 25 |
| • The SU should not adopt the Standpoint and actions | 2  |
| • Abstain  | 1  |

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

## c) Fossil Free Careers:

### Proposer introduction

The first proposer put forward three policy changes:

- 1) refusing all new relationships with oil, gas and mining companies,
- 2) decline to renew any current relationships with oil, gas and mining companies after the contractually obligated period ends, and
- 3) adopt a publicly available Ethical Careers Policy that explicitly excludes oil, gas and mining companies from recruitment opportunities.

The same proposer also put forward INEOS, Glencore, and BP, as examples of companies the University works with that have carried out incredible levels of emissions in recent years, also making reference to the issue of climate change.

The second proposer said this is line with previous targets set by the University, however, the University is falling far below its targets by 2030, with little improvement so far. Feels there is no voice at the University for those who have supported green transition, with the first proposer having been given a disciplinary action by the University for simply for holding up a placard against companies like INEOS outside of the careers' fair.

For reference, the proposers are utilising *The Carbon Underground 200* as their reference for dangerous fossil fuel companies. Link: [Carbon Underground 200 | Fossil Free Funds](#)

### Discussion

A member brought up that they do not think it is the right approach to do this, as many subjects have a higher skew towards fossil fuel producing companies, with these roles only be higher paid. Moreover, saying that this shouldn't focus entirely on fossil fuels but also mention other 'unethical' workplace practices. The same member spoke of the impact this can have on certain degrees in particular, whilst they understand not promoting these front and centre, it can impact engineering, for example, which is a major discipline of the University.

The proposer responded by saying that the plan to move away from promoting these companies can be a brilliant image for the University, believing that this is only a move in the right direction. Also stating that the fact that the University does not have its own careers policy is confusing in and of itself.

A member asked for a definition of a fossil fuel company, because a broad definition of this would harm many companies who are slowly moving to greener practices. The proposer responded by saying these are defined as one that is there to provide a source of energy through burning hydrocarbons, focused on producing energy.

A member stated that because this can have a disproportionate response across the different departments and faculties, a structured transition is necessary and not a sudden quick all-encompassing change, with the proposer saying that student feedback is essential to this.

A member stated that whilst this could impact students, the University should take a strong stance. If this does not happen, the University will just kick the 'proverbial can down the road', and so is pushing for a strong immediate action and no gradual transition.

A member asked if there is a risk to the research funding of the University into green energy research, and whether the impact on those students with low household income has been taken into account. A member said that the University of Bristol Students' Union had backed a similar resolution and Standpoint.

A member stated that this can cause serious challenges to those who the money from a placement at one of these large-scale companies would be life changing.

A member stated that a point of action should be brought for students to have an independent voice on climate change, due to one of the proposers having been given University disciplinary action for sharing their views.

A member brought up the potential of donors to the University withdrawing due to certain business interests with these companies, possibly harming scholarships and student experience and development within the University.

The proposer said that they are not trying to stop students from joining fossil fuels job, due to this being illegal for the University to prevent students from getting a certain job or role, it is about stopping these companies from being at the careers fair, which glorifies them.

A member spoke of the need to change this quickly, as if the University is given control over a transition, being able to draw out the transition to suit its own interests. With a member rebutting this saying that this cannot change overnight. If a hard quick-change stance is desired, a referendum is preferable. The same member speaking of the subjectivity of morals, with this leading to a suggestion of a referendum of the student body to make sure a student voice is heard and not just that of SUMmit.

A member argued that the University is more likely to listen to a referendum and suggested calling for statements from students first to gauge student opinion of whether a referendum would be necessary or desirable, and further suggested adding the holding of a referendum to the actions attached to this Standpoint. The Chair highlighted that to recommend calling a referendum is an option that SUMmit members would need to vote on.

SUMmit members moved towards the creation of Standpoint wording and resulting actions, finalising on the following:

### **Standpoint wording agreed**

'The University to take immediate action to more ethical practices in their careers offering in relation to the climate crisis, with continuous student consultation'

### **Actions agreed**

1. The SU should support students to have a voice and campaign about climate change issues
2. Explore alternative offerings to the Top 200 companies that are more in line with students' environmental ethics

Due to the complexities with the proposed topic, SUMmit members were first asked their views on whether this should be asking for an immediate change or a structured transition (21 required for a pass)

### **Preliminary Vote (which of the following do you wish to adopt as part of wording?)**

- Structured transition 9
- Strong immediate action 19

SUMmit members initially voted on what action should be taken (21 required for a pass):

### **Voting outcome (proceed to vote/call for statements/recommend to BoT for a referendum)**

- Proceed to vote on adoption of Standpoint and actions by the SU 17
- Call for statements from the student community 6
- Recommend to the Board of Trustees that a referendum be called 5
- Abstain 2

The threshold to pass was not met to take any action and concerns were raised regarding numbers of votes cast, therefore another vote was actioned by the Chair also in recognition that members of SUMmit were very engaged in this topic and the initial vote outcome would leave with no resulting actions. This revised vote focusing on whether the Standpoint should be adopted or a referendum of the student body recommended to the Board of Trustees.

### **Second round of voting (proceed to vote/recommend to BoT for a referendum)**

- Proceed to vote on adoption of Standpoint and actions by the SU 19
- Recommend to the Board of Trustees that a referendum be called 4
- Abstain 5

The threshold to pass was not met.



**Therefore, the Standpoint and actions did not passed.**

**5. Any other business and close of meeting**

The Community Officer informed members of SUMmit that the Officer team had been approached by Student Support, with Student Support pitching to close the Roper Centre, the Student Support building, on the weekend, and allocating their two weekend staff members to the week, leading to up to 170 more students being able to be seen per week.

Responses on Mentimeter from the committee were, on the whole, positive about the plan, although there were some lingering questions. With one member stating that this was limited support for “students who do not have support elsewhere.”

With another response reading “Will the working hours on weekdays be extended? Furthermore, can appointment times be synchronised to uni timetables.”

SUMmit members were asked to continue to leave comments, concerns, or questions regarding this proposal on the SUMmit member Teams group.

**The SUMmit meeting finished at 19:35**