

**Student Council Meeting Minutes**

**14/04/2021 1pm, Online on Teams**

**1. Welcome, Introductions, Apologies**

**Present:**

Student Voice Chair - George Williams

President Exeter – Cara Chittenden

President Falmouth – Lizzy Marshall
President Welfare & Inclusivity – Charlotte Agnew
President Experience - Amelia Banton

Community Officer - Kira Orchard

Education Officer (UG Exeter) - Jack Wilkins

Environment & Ethics Officer – Eilish Calnan

Open Officer (Falmouth) - Ellie Ricks

Volunteering Officer - Bethan Hone

Liberation Officer – Henry McCornish

Widening Participation Officer - Emma Waldron
Accommodation Officer - Sophie James
Mature Officer - Julz Preece
Fundraising Officer - Lauren Taylor
International Officer - Patricia Lopez
Societies Officer - Mia Terra St Hill

Gwen Scolding - Student Voice Staff

**Apologies:**

Education Officer (UG Falmouth) - Isabelle Kinghorn

Open Officer (Exeter) - Joshua Ordu Peters
Education Officer (PG Exeter) - Maariyah Najeeb

**Observers:**Caitlin McGee – Falmouth NUS Delegate

1. **Welcome**

Congrats to those who were re-elected to a PTO position for next year.
Thanks to Officers who were involved in GW’s Review of Council

**2. President Updates**

Cara, President Exeter
*“We’ve closed the decolonising the curriculum survey and I’m going through the results and will report on the findings soon. I’m going through BRM feedback and working with Exeter on the IT issues of the website. Eg. the calendar opening on a separate browser. I’ve been reviewing details of the new Exceptional Circumstances policy with the University of Exeter. This policy is a part of the No Disadvantage Guarantee and should give students a greater sense of control and ownership over their academic outcomes this year, if they feel they’ve been extraordinarily impacted by the pandemic.”*

Charlotte, President Welfare & Inclusivity

*“Prayer spaces: This is urgent as we don’t really have those spaces on campus so we’re seeing if we can do something temporary. Especially because it’s Ramadan at the moment. Regarding women’s safety, we did contact the police but I need to chase it up as we still haven’t heard back, so**we still haven’t had a chance to speak to them*. *We are running focus groups for decolonising the curriculum, but on the Falmouth side as this is separate from the work Cara is doing on the Exeter side*.

*Together Wherever is drawing to a close. The focus for the incoming term is on helping students to integrate with in person activity. FXPlus is doing a piece of work on Mental Health where there will be the opportunity for student involvement, especially with council. Trying to work out a way around the FIKA being for Exeter only. And please send me your pictures and intros for the Liberation Committee.”*

Lizzy, President Falmouth

*“Me and Cara have been working with other justice groups for Ease The Fees because NUS aren’t fighting hard enough and we want to campaign for reduction in tuition fees. We’re doing an event this Friday to encourage students to send letters to the MPs. I’ve also been working with Falmouth about what to do for graduation. I’m also working on Falmouth’s Student Support Service roles.”*

Amelia Banton, President Student Experience

*“Exeter are running a Festival of Discovery to bring students back to campus on the W/C 24th May to close skill gaps and for the SU to run a programme of events for all Exeter and Falmouth students. Eg.; Crazy golf on campus and other events that allow people to meet other people. It’s a way of rounding off a not-so-fabulous year. We’re going to ask societies to run some events. We’re also going to ask the Green Committee if there’s anything they can do. There will also be a Student Members meeting at that time.”*

# **Committees**

# **Green Committee** – EC said they now have a Waste and Recycling Officer. Still on the hunt for a Transport Officer.

# **Liberation Committee** – HM said that he and CA and had a meeting a couple of weeks ago with Liberation Officers and voted for the election of Jedd Kulis as Open Liberation Officer. They’re hoping to raise awareness of the Liberation Committee and increase the social media reach and have spoken about ways of informing Freshers.

# **Review on the Support Policies during the Pandemic – Term 1**

CC confirmed she has nearly finished the document having gathered info from each team. It includes little blurbs about each section of what the SU has done: Voice, Ops, Advice, mental health, Welcome Week, on-campus presence, digital presence. Finishing with a table of what went well and what could have been improved.

**Action: CC will circulate to everyone via GW**

# **5. On Campus activity in term 3**

AB: Activity has started. Sport started on the 29th March and societies started on Monday 12th April. Only 3 more events are happening this month and we’re hoping groups will do focus on the Festival of Discovery period. The Festival of Discovery is a programme of events that Exeter are doing to encourage students back onto campus. As part of that we’re getting societies to do events. Societies will be given info about how to do an event and how to get money for the activity.

GW asked about the ‘health’ of socieities and AB gave the following stats:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Completed elections and results already sent | 39 |   |
| Part of your campaign & results being sent 23rd April | 15 |   |
| Groups who have been in touch but are still to complete elections | 31 |   |
| Groups who didn’t respond by the deadline so *assume* folding | 6 | Arab Society, Chess, Film Soc, Geology for Global Development (GFGD), Wave Project, Kosel,  |
| Groups who started this year and committee want to continue so are not running elections (will find out after Affiliation deadline in June) | 6 | (will find out after Affiliation deadline in June) |
| Informed me already they are folding | 5 | Harry Potter, Les republicains, Green Party, Reclaim, RnB, Fem Soc |

JW – asked if there’s an update about graduation. AB said Ian wants to speak to Presidents tomorrow morning.

GW asked ‘Did the SU do anything for Trans visibility on the 31st?’ CA said they didn’t but they’re looking at putting something in the calendar and being proactive about these events in the future.

# **Online Protests**

LM and CC said they wanted to continue Ease The Fees because of the lack of NUS involvement. The Presidents have collaborated with Write off Right Now (a Bristol group fighting for financial help from the government). The Presidents helped the group write the letter to the MPs which has also been sent to the Advice team for tweaking. They’ve also written a Code Of Conduct with NUS for the WORN event from 12 – 2pm on Friday at which they’re pointing students in the direction of the mailing list. 1.4K students have signed up to a mailing list so they plan to share the letter so students can sign it and send the letter to their local MPs.

# **Student Voice Awards**

# AB: No in-person awards this year. It’ll be online. The awards have been reviewed and slightly updated. There are 9 awards for each of Opps and Voice. An email will go out to students on Monday. There will be independent panels reviewing the nominations. The awards will be the first week of the Festival of Discovery. It will be an online format for presenting winners.

GW – questioned starting the return-to-campus festival with an online event.

EC – asked about the trophies from last year’s awards. Presidnets confirmed they’re in the Office.

**UPDATE – AB is now discussing the possibility of an in-person event for the SU awards.**

1. **Student Members Meeting**

AB - The idea of the Student Members Meeting is an opportunity to tell students about how they could get involved with the SU as many students don’t know about the SU and what they do. The next meeting will be on the 26th May at 1pm when the SU24 will be discussed, which is the consultation on SU strategy. The local MP Cherilyn Mackrory has also been invited to try and engage more students although they haven’t received a reply yet and the PA to MP George Eustice said ‘no’.

**Action: GW to try and contact MP George Eustice through Archie**

1. **NUS national conference**

Update from the SU NUS Delegates Jack Wilkins (Exeter), Caitlin McGee and Ellie Ricks (Falmouth)

JW – *The NUS national conference was an opportunity for lots of student representatives from across the country to come to a conference over 3 days. There were a couple of sessions about student policy. Eg. Eramus and course fees. The policy-making sessions gave the opportunity for delegates to scrutinise the policies and vote on motions. The sessions I went to included:***Tuition Fees** – *it gave me a bit of a new perspective because the first session was talking about tuition fees and how they’re funded by the government and how this has changed over the last 25 years. And then they pitched to us that a refund of tuition fees would make a difference to 95% of us as students would still pay back the same amount. They wouldn’t pay any less money back. Maintenance loans are written off after 30 years. It’s to do with how the interest is worked out. If there was a 6K refund from this year it wouldn’t make a difference. However a motion was still put to the conference and support for refunds should become come NUS policy.*

ER – *It was impossible to go to all the sessions but I went to many including those about student housing and Erasmus. There was a lot of discussion about student mentor schemes as these are really beneficial so they’re better represented locally and nationally to be thoroughly supported.* **Erasmus** *– the new system is a lot worse than Erasmus with a focus on students going abroad and not coming here. There was also a lot of interest in activism and the use of art and creativity to create campaign movements and I think this would help people joining a movement who might not feel safe doing this personally. For future conferences I think it would be really useful for President Elects to go. I found it a lot more useful than JW and CM because I’ll be working next year on some of these points*.

# CM – Attended sessions on Sexual Violence, Relationship abuse and NDAs, Mental Health, as well as Decolonising The Curriculum Campaigns.**Sexual Violence**: *The focus has been on research across universities and they found that one third of Unis had got students to sign a NDA form. Universities are very reluctant to publish their statistics. Dual campuses are the worse for dealing with these complaints as the complaints are often about students from the other university. Sexual Liaison Officers can help with this as they can liaise between Universities.*

# **Mental health:** *Many students are waiting 3-4 months for support. There was discussion about starting a petition to the Universities so that students don’t need to wait more than 1-2 weeks to be seen. There is also a push for more diversity amongst councillors – especially LGBTQ and BAME as students often feel like they’re dismissed. Some student Reps are taking MHFA as it’s easier for them to reach out to their course reps and they’ve found that since introducing this the student’s relationship with their mental health has improved.*

# **Decolonising the Curriculum:** *There was discussions about the need for dedicated committees for decolonising the curriculum.*

# GW – Asked the delegates which aspect of the NUS national conference was most useful and the answer was both making policy and the information.

# **AOB**

# CA – Mental Health Awareness Week is coming up and the theme is nature. Is there anything you particularly want? JW – Said that be it would be a good opportunity to introduce the FIKA ambassadors. He said they’ve had the training for signposting. However at the moment only Exeter can only use this app but hopefully it will be opened up for Falmouth too. FIKA is a really good app as it’s about mental fitness.

# GW – 6th May is local elections so please register to vote.

MTH – You can vote in your university area and at home if you’re registered to vote in both elections.

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:**

The final Student Council will be at 1pm on 14th June as this date and time had the most availability.

**GS – to invite the President Elects.**