

Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union

Student Forum Minutes

Date	06 May	Time	3:09
Location	SU, Penryn and Online		
Chaired By	Thomas Quinn		
Attendees	In person: 36 Online: 17 (peak); In person: 36 Online: 7 (voting)		
Minutes By	Caitlin Ridgway		

#	Item	Information	Presented by
1	Welcome and introduction	<p>TQ set out the ground rules for Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everyone's welcome, everyone's heard 2. Respect and kindness first 3. One voice at a time 4. Debate, don't dominate 5. Stay on topic 6. Be mindful of accessibility 7. Decisions are collective 8. Keep it transparent 9. Zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment <p>TQ went through the agenda: SU Byelaws update; Sabb priority updates; Union Priority updates; Make a Change proposals (Improving Institutional Inclusion and Representation for Online Students; Reducing AI Topics in Lectures and Seminars; Let's Put a Stop to Generative AI); Voting; Any Other Business; Close; and Pizza.</p>	TQ

	<p>Update: Byelaws (complaints and disciplinary procedures)</p> <p>Voting</p>	<p>HM (SU's People and Governance Manager) introduced the updates to the Byelaws to the Constitution of the SU. Sections on complaints and disciplinary procedures have been reviewed and approved by the Board. Student members must vote to approve as well. Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints against CEO can now be investigated by the Chair of the Board or a nominee of the Chair • 'Student representative' can mean student trustee, sabbatical officer, or academic rep • New potential outcome: removal of right to stand in SU and NUS elections for representative roles • Provision provided for chairing of panels when officers are affected • Individual or groups suspensions can now be made at any stage of the disciplinary procedure • Ongoing complaints can be reported to the universities at any stage of the disciplinary procedure • Number of stages of the disciplinary procedure reduced from 3 to 2 • Policy expanded to cover low-level breaches • Expanded powers to decide outcomes of disciplinary procedures <p>Voting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 46 • Against 1 • Abstentions 0 <p>Byelaws updates passed.</p>	<p>HM</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Officer priority updates</p>	<p>AL explains purpose of updates is for students to hold sabbs accountable and share work on the priorities they were elected on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AL (VP Falmouth) – neurodiverse student support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Year-long research project on neurodiverse students' experience at the university and how staff can better support them ○ Took this to senior university meetings and awareness project for staff was approved 	<p>EXEC</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocating for support for students whether they have a diagnosis or not ○ Includes feedback from students to root project in lived experience ○ Working with Deputy Vice Chancellor to make engagement with the project mandatory for staff ● JL (President Falmouth) – cost of living and financial transparency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Worked with reps to review financial information on all course websites ○ Lobbied course leads to update sites so now information on all additional and hidden costs (e.g. equipment, materials) are broken down as part of the course information ○ Worked with the university to produce a publication with a full financial cost breakdown of what your tuition money is spent on across the university (can pick up a free copy from the SU) ○ Successfully lobbied to make publishing this cost breakdown annually mandatory ○ Working with reps to find further ways to increase financial transparency ○ Exploring including laundry costs within financial breakdown ● AB (VP Exeter) – nutritious food for students and cost of living support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Giving out veg bags with recipe cards Monday-Wednesday next week – will make 6 meals or feed up to 6 people ○ Handed out free pot noodles at awareness raising popups ○ Free Soup Friday back for next 3 Fridays – soup available for 40 students across 2 sittings and food options at event expanded ○ Free £5 food/drink vouchers for Exeter students available ○ Lobbying university staff to make hardship fund more accessible to students ○ Reminder that pantry is available to all students ● IB (President Exeter – presented by AB) – placement support for students 	
--	--	--	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Placement fund is now live – Exeter students can apply to cover things such as travel costs while completing a placement for their degree • Q&A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student member raises issue that placement fund link hasn't been working. SU staff member clarifies that you need to be logged in for the link to work. AL says they will speak with staff to work on fixing this as soon as possible. 	
2	Current Union Priority Updates	<p>AL explains that as we have 6 current priorities, if today's proposals pass as Union Priorities students will have to vote out some current priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student representatives actively support trans students' right to exist as themselves - AB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has been working on name changing on university systems to align with preferred names – making name updates appear consistently across different applications and portals. Highlights there are multiple reasons why students may wish to change their name on systems. Proposed changes are going to Student Experience Partnership Board so will hopefully pass ○ Mentions the High Court decision to overturn the fine issued to Sussex University by the Office for Students over their Trans and Non-Binary Equality Policy Statement – this could have a positive impact on trans+ inclusivity work across universities and making statements ○ Shared LGBT+ history month events success and attendance at Pride ○ Met with Local MPs Perran Moon and Jayne Kirkham to discussing issues including impact of Supreme Court ruling on students – Jayne Kirkham took this to Equalities Minister Bridget Phillipson who is leading on government guidance 	EXEC

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gender Expression Fund is still open ○ Free binders for students – if you pick up a binder you can get a £50 voucher – contact Advice team or AL for information ○ Working with Exeter University to create an interactive map of gender neutral toilet provision on campus ● Buses – JL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working since last summer and have recently achieved big wins ○ Had meetings with key community and university stakeholders including Cornwall Council; Falmouth Town Council; Board of Governors; FXPlus; Cornwall Chamber of Commerce; and Local MPs ○ Faced setbacks when First Bus removed their student bundles and stopped operating in Cornwall at beginning of academic year ○ Advocated to new bus company not to raise bus prices further and highlighted disproportionate impact of cost and fewer routes on students in Cornwall ○ Managed to secure a price freeze this summer and a student discount for a £20/week ticket for students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q&A: audience member asked how you can get the discount to work. Sabbs and another audience member explained that you should use code FALMOUTH27 or log in with your university email address to access the discount. ● Exploring better provision for neurodiverse students on campus – AL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocacy to get better sensory-friendly spaces to support neurodiverse students – limitations due to finite space across the campuses ○ Positive changes include sensory bags for students to loan from the SU and ear defenders in the Stannary and libraries on both campuses 	
--	--	--	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working with FXPlus to get soundproof private study pods in Upper Stannary and another area; plus 3 pods to be included in the refurbishment at Falmouth campus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q&A: audience member raises concern about there not being enough spaces for the demand. AL acknowledges this and says that if initial spaces are well-used, sabbs are likely to be able to lobby for more. ● Reducing laundry prices in university private accommodation – JL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attended Accommodation Liaison Group which have completed sector-wide comparative analysis of provision against other universities – washing costs slightly higher than average and drying costs roughly on a par ○ Highlights two main laundry providers for university accommodation – we’re currently with cheaper provider ○ Contract will end in 2028 – opportunity to review and lobby for lower costs ○ Asking for universities to release contract so it is accessible to students ○ Working with sports clubs, student catering staff, and ambassadors to work out cost of washing their kit/uniforms to perform their roles – use this alongside university pledge to remove barriers to participation to lobby for reducing costs or creating bursaries ● Free Soup Fridays – AB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Happening for the next three Fridays – serving 40 students in 20 student slots at 1pm and 2pm. Other food items provided as part of the meal. ○ Working with SU staff to look at ways to make initiative more sustainable ● Commit to supporting and representing students of colour – JL and AL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AL has done lots of EDI work as an officer and co-wrote proposal with JL 	
--	--	---	--

		<p>and sabbs to ensure work would continue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acknowledge there is a lack of representation of people of colour across university and SU leadership, as well as lack of diversity in Cornwall as a whole, and want to ensure active inclusion work continues as well as encourage white people to get involved ○ So far sabbs have run focus groups, popups, and feedback sessions with voucher giveaways to find out what support and event students of colour want ○ AL is working on an event for students to celebrate and learn about each other's cultures with free Jamaican and African food – if you are part of a cultural society and want to participate get in touch with her about getting involved 	
4	Make a Change proposals	<p>Improving Institutional Inclusion and Representation for Online Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposer RM can no longer present so AB reads statement on their behalf ○ RM polled online students and found 65% felt secondary to university planning; 72% felt on-campus students had better activity provisions; 63% rarely see online event options on SU website; 72% feel activities aren't for them; 88% feel the course-based rep system lacks scope to represent online students as a whole ○ Proposes a permanent, dedicated online student rep who is involved in strategic planning; running regular digital mixers; and creating an online student buddy system ○ JL – provides context of last year's proposal to increase number of online student events – research showed this was difficult to implement due to asynchronous nature of online degrees. 	RM JMB AR EXEC

Also shared that the SU doesn't get any funding in their block grant to represent online students. Shared current initiatives for online students such as weekly student newsletter. Suggests framing work to lobby for better funding provision from university to support online students and says she is keen to hear what sorts of activities online students are interested in.

- TQ moves meeting to group discussions
- **Discussion points**
 - Audience member highlights that online students pay full tuition but don't have access to many services that in-person students have [note: online students do not pay same fees as in-person students. [Link to fees information](#)]. Surprised that no fees went to the SU and asked where it was going. JL says based on publication she would assume it was going back to other university costs.
 - Audience member raises that any student may become an online student for various reasons and they are entitled to same quality of education – thought post-Covid context would have improved online experience
 - Audience member asks how online students access services like renting equipment. AL says they believe they fund this themselves if they cannot get to campus to access equipment. Another audience member confirms this.
 - Audience member shares that as a student living abroad they cannot access any in-person services and are several hours behind UK time for events.
 - Audience member asks if online students can access bursaries. AL and JL note they can access hardship fund.
 - AL moves conversation to proposed actions and asks students what they want this to look like, noting funding and asynchronous delivery constraints.

Audience member recognises difficulties and suggests incorporating online student experience into the roles of existing sabbs and reps, plus actively consulting online students. JL suggests this responsibility would go to the Presidents and that a new role would be unlikely due to funding constraints.

- Audience member asks how likely it is that any of the proposed actions could be achieved if the amendment passes. AL says it is hard to say and highlights the incoming Presidents would be responsible for implementing most of this work. JL says it would require lobbying both unis to fund this work and would likely take 1 year + to see major changes.

Reducing AI Topics in Lectures and Seminars

- **Presentation (JMB)**

- AI topics and use have been increasing in lectures on arts courses – presentation of AI is generally positive and doesn't mention any criticism of AI
- They highlight ethical concerns around AI – support of controversial/extreme governments, environmental damage (the Digital Stability Reliance predict that in 2027 3.3-6.6 billion litres of water will be used by generative AI generators), scraping artists' work without consent to train models, and cyber security risks of unreleased programmes such as Mythos
- Proposal: acknowledges some positive uses for AI e.g. healthcare, but believes lectures should confront and challenge mainstream views on AI. Develop regulations on ethical and responsible use as countries such as Spain and Australia are doing. Also promote not relying on AI to do work and preserving attention spans.

- **Group discussions**

- Audience members raise several points – one was concerned by use of ChatGPT prompt in music seminar. Another was

		<p>displeased with normalisation of AI use by lecturers in class and lack of discussion of negative impacts unless a student raised it. Another said environmental impact alone was enough to stop them using it and this had never been mentioned in class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ JL shared that in 2022/23 her lecturers on the Pop Music course discouraged AI use – clearly there has been a shift○ TQ suggests moving to group discussions before receiving further audience comments○ AL reads comments from student unable to attend – they study Ecology and Conservation and were previously against AI – now they find it useful for testing their code and think it should not be completely discounted despite recognising negatives○ Film student says ChatGPT isn't 100% correct – they are concerned by receiving incorrect prompts in Film classes and work that is full of mistakes. Also highlight reduced brain activity of AI users.○ AB reads feedback from Exeter academic reps Townhall on AI – acknowledge you learn more by doing work yourself, however they see AI as inevitable and therefore want it to be regulated and learn how to use it – especially in competitive way for industries they may want to go into post-uni. Also is useful for academic work such as species surveys. Thinks Exeter's AI guidance is good.○ Audience member – need to distinguish between useful AI and generative AI. Think that pushing AI is incompatible with both universities' sustainability policies.○ Audience member – placement student doing research which relies on AI. AI can be used well with critical thinking to support work – it is concerning for lecturers with years of developed critical	
--	--	--	--

		<p>thinking to push this to students who are still developing this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Audience member raises that Russell Group universities (including Exeter) have been told to integrate AI education in all areas of curriculum – may limit SU advocacy ○ Audience member – believes AI is antithetical to the principles of the university including academic integrity and plagiarism due to non-consensual data scraping. AI companies decide what information is given out, references GrokAI on X/Twitter. ○ Audience point – the motion is talking about generative AI’s specific harms. They study Games – several creative careers are disappearing due to AI. ○ Audience point – concerns about universities replacing staff with AI and impacting workers rights ○ Audience point – as an ambassador they’ve noticed negative reactions from prospective students when they cannot give them a clear AI policy for Falmouth University. JL says that Falmouth does have an AI Policy. Students say it is very difficult to find and not consistent across departments. ○ Audience point – positive reinforcement encoded into AI algorithms can cause harmful relationships; this can also negatively impact education by reinforcing mistakes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Let’s Put A Stop to Generative AI - AR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disagrees with use of AI in education – has gained 900 signatures for their Stop AI petition as of 5th May and has 800+ followers on Instagram ○ Cites harms of AI including bias ingrained in the system, stealing creatives’ work, and causing jobs instability (LinkedIn Survey – 63% executive employees expect entry level roles to reduce due to AI) 	
--	--	--	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Universities have hidden growing carbon footprint from lecturer and student AI use○ Believes university shouldn't claim to be sustainable and supporting student employability while promoting AI○ Passing proposal would give students confidence in the institution and reassure them that the university is looking out for them where AI is destabilising future creative jobs● Group discussion<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ TQ moves to group discussion; JL reminds students that whatever is passed will apply to both Falmouth and Exeter students so proposals should work for both communities○ TQ sets 30 second limit for responses in light of time constraints○ Audience comment – staff should receive training on up-to-date AI knowledge so students have confidence○ Audience comment – Exeter student who disagrees with presumed university consensus that AI is needed for students' work – suggests decline in teaching quality has led students to feel reliant on AI○ Audience comment – drop in attendance for AI topics; highlighted Palantir AI connection with ICE raids in USA; questioned efficacy of AI detection software○ Issue with sound for online participants fixed○ Audience comment – more comprehensive education on harms and benefits rather than strict stances for or against○ Audience comment – report saying AI carbon emissions over next 10 years equivalent to emissions of 2.7 million people; another study showed net negative impact on peoples' cognitive function from using AI tools – can universities support these values	
--	--	--	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Audience comment – film student disputes that industries do want graduates using AI in the way they are being taught to use it ○ Audience comment – questioned efficacy of Exeter’s AI scanning software – unfairly letting students get away with extensive AI usage ○ Audience comment – seconding portraying both sides of AI – expressed concern that some lecturers learnt AI skills from social media and that students have no choice to opt out ○ Audience comment – as a Games student wanted to opt out of coursework being used to train AI ○ Audience comment – concern of overreliance on AI by educators leading to misinformation being taught – paying same fees for poorer quality education ○ JMB – questions why Falmouth University deleted comments discussing Stop AI’s exhibition at the campus 	
5			
4	<p>Voting Outcomes</p>	<p>TQ moves to voting for Make a Change proposals. AL thanks students for their proposals and explains difference between Union Priority, Agreed Action, Abstention, and Voting Against. AR asks if students get to help with passed proposals. Sabbs clarify any student can get involved with actioning Union Priorities. Student asks if proposals 2 and 3 could be combined. Sabbs clarify yes.</p> <p>Improving Institutional Inclusion and Representation for Online Students 29 for; 0 against; 0 abstentions</p> <p>Reducing AI Topics in Lectures and Seminars; Let’s Put a Stop to Generative AI Proposal to combine the two proposals on AI 34 for; 0 against; 2 abstentions New AI Proposal 35 for; 0 against; 2 abstentions</p> <p>Voting for Union Priorities</p>	TQ

		<p>Audience member asks for a refresher on the current Union Priorities before sorting new proposals into Agreed Actions and Union Priorities. Sabbs provide explanation.</p> <p>Improving institutional inclusion and representation for online students: 2 Union Priority; 34 Agreed Action; 2 Abstentions Outcome: Agreed Action</p> <p>New AI proposal: AL asks what core things students want. JMB clarifies they want fewer AI topics and more critical discussion of AI and ethical issues. AR says they accept AI won't go away but wants regulation and consensus across the universities. JL summarises that the proposal will focus on lobbying for critical AI discussion and consistent guidance and policy. Audience agrees. AL asks if proposal should include ethics. Audience member also asks to include staff education. AL suggests lobbying universities for ethical and sustainable AI guidelines and building awareness bridge. Can organise a later meeting with interested students to plan what happens next. 36 Union Priority; 0 Agreed Action; 2 Abstain Outcome: Union Priority</p> <p>Discussion of which current Union Priority to move: Audience member asks if it will be hard to achieve any more progress with buses. AL highlights an incoming President has a Cost of Living priority so may keep working on buses. TQ moves to vote on removing buses as a Union Priority. 0 Union Priority; 36 Agreed Action; 2 Abstain Outcome: Buses moved down to Agreed Action Six Union Priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student representatives actively support trans students' right to exist as themselves • Exploring better provision for neurodiverse students on campus • Reducing laundry prices in university private accommodation • Free Soup Fridays • Commit to supporting and representing students of colour 	
--	--	--	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby for ethical guidance and regulation on AI and work with students on what this would look like 	
6	Summary	<p>TQ Summarised the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted to approve updates to the complaints and disciplinary procedures sections of the SU's Byelaws • Improving Institutional Inclusion and Representation for Online Students passed as an Agreed Action • Attendees voted to merge 'Reducing AI Topics in Lectures and Seminars' and 'Let's Put a Stop to Generative AI' into one proposal focusing on making sure both harms and benefits of AI are discussed in the curriculum with consistent regulations across departments. This passed as a union priority and there will be future work with students to shape what the proposal looks like • Buses was moved down to an Agreed Action, with acknowledgement of the progress sabbatical officers have made this year 	TQ
7	AOB and Close	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sabbs thank TQ for excellent chairing of largest Forum meeting of the year • Thanks is given to Presidents for their work with Forum this year • CR notes applications for next year's Forum Facilitators are open for students who want to be involved <p>Close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting concluded with free pizza provided to attendees to encourage informal discussion and community engagement. 	TQ
8	Date of next meeting	TBC. Final Forum of academic year	TQ