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**Union Forum Minutes**

18:30 – 20:00, 19 March, Microsoft Teams

# **Membership**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Initials** |
| Union Chair | Tara Notash (Chair) | TN |
| Union President | Liam White | LM |
| VP Voice | Luana Vasconcelos | LV |
| VP Activity | Ravi Kant | RK |
| VP Support | Sam Buss | SB |
| VP Community | Matt Aikin | MA |
| Voice Zone Officers (PTOs) | Archie Jones, Christian Bergvoll, Jenny Jackson, James Mitchell, Deeya Varsani | AJ, CB, JJ, JM, DV |
| Support Zone Officers (PTOs) | Natalie Savva, Leoni Williams, Christina Joseph Kamble, Ben Matthews, Rebekah Owolabi | NS, LW, CJK, BM, R Owolabi |
| Community Zone Officers (PTOs) | Feyi Salami, Risper Okello, Nehal Boobna, Jaden Ogunlade, Ansar Mohammed Faisal | FS, R Okello, NB, JO, AM |
| Activity Zone Officers (PTOs) | Hannan Ahmad, Shubham Choudhary, Sharon Chandrashekar, Angel Ahlawat, Amelie Gilford | HA, S Choudhary, S Chandrashekar, US, AG |

**No apologies were noted. Chair, Tara Notash, opened the meeting by welcoming attendees.**

**Union Priorities 2024-25 Update**

Union President, Liam White, presented the progress on the Union’s top five priorities. 723 change suggestions were gathered from students, which is an increase of 182 compared to May 2024.

1. **Venues, Nightlife and Events – 100 responses**
   1. Events: improved inclusivity such as other campuses, post-graduates
   2. Greater quantity and variety of events such as free, cultural, day-time, end-of-year and overnight
   3. Alternative provision of nightlife such as non-drinking events, expanded music offering, themed nights
   4. Union building – building refurbishments, more bookable student spaces including sporting facilities/gym/practice rooms
2. **Clubs and Societies – 82 responses**
   1. Support for committees – increased funding, greater support and training
   2. Access for members – reminders and opportunities to join throughout the year, more on-campus events
   3. Collaboration – more incentives for inter-society collaboration
   4. Quantity – limit the total number of societies, merge similar societies
3. **Student Voice – 57 responses**
   1. More opportunities to provide feedback, greater engagement with course reps and awareness of Union action and achievements
   2. Better pay and/or reward for student reps
4. **Support and Advice – 41 responses**
   1. Awareness - greater visibility of Union Advice and Support services
   2. Wellbeing Support – better promotion of wellbeing campaigns

**Pulse 1 Results Updates**

Liam presented the results of Pulse 1.

1. Over 500 students responded to the Pulse survey.
2. Positive results in areas like: sense of belonging, satisfaction with societies and opportunities to get involved
3. Negative results in areas like: lack of clarity in assessments, issues with feedback quality and timelines, and students are unaware of what the Union does or how to engage.

The Union will take this data to university committees to influence future improvements. Pulse 2 will run after Easter with a focus on academic support.

**Officer Updates**

1. **President: Liam White**
   1. Working on improving library and study space access, particularly for commuting students
   2. Engaged in conversations with the university about late night library access and transport links
   3. Continued promotion of union campaigns via social media and in-person events
2. **VP Voice: Luana Vasconcelos**
   1. Running Academic Integrity Week in April, including events and online content
   2. Promoting Course Rep nominations, with support from the Voice Zone
   3. Organising end-of-year Course Rep celebration
   4. Working with schools to improve representation structures
   5. Zone continuing monthly training and discussions on inclusivity and intersectionality
3. **VP Support: Sam Buss**
   1. Awareness campaigns ongoing – University Mental Health Day, Time to Talk Day
   2. Accessibility is a main focus – discussions with students about disability support experiences
   3. Working with the university to improve disability visibility and support
   4. Promoting Surrey Decides engagement
4. **VP Community: Matt Aikin**
   1. LGBTQ+ History Month recently concluded with positive events and engagement
   2. Working on follow-up to the decolonising of the curriculum project, outcomes will be shared with staff and students
   3. Interfaith Forum and Cultural Forum in the planning stages
   4. Reviewing options for sustainability campaigning and community links
5. **VP Activity: Ravi Kant**
   1. Summerfest and Varsity planning underway
   2. Encouraging involvement from societies and clubs
   3. Updating the Academic Societies Handbook
   4. Supporting student groups with funding and logistics
   5. Planning cross-society networking opportunities

**Speak Week**

Speak Week is scheduled for April. The purpose of this is to gather student feedback in creative and accessible ways. Some ideas include: pop-up stalls in busy areas of campus, themed days by zone, using QR codes, posters, snacks to encourage participation and encouraging student groups and reps to get involved.

**Any Other Business**

Reminder that the next Union Forum will be on 15th May 2025. Officers encouraged to share their Speak Week plans and ask for support where needed.