QUEEN'S STUDENTS' UNION

SUC/A/24/5

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION

To: Members of the Students' Union Council

Dear Councillor,

Please attend the first Statutory Meeting of the 2024-25 Students' Union Council, to be held on Monday 11 November 2024 at 5.00 pm in The Cube, Level 1, One Elmwood.

Yours sincerely,

DAMIEN CORRIDAN

Clerk to the Students' Union Council

AGENDA

FIRST CIRCULATION

1.   Apologies

2.   Minutes of Previous Meetings

2.1   Statutory Meeting (Annual Business Meeting) of Monday 8 April 2024   SUC/M/24/3

2.2   Statutory Meeting of Tuesday 22 October 2024   SUC/M/24/4

3.   Business Arising from the Minutes

        There are none.

4.   Communications

4.1   Condolences

4.2   National Students' Unions – Updates

5.   Constitutional Amendments/Rule Amendments

        There are none.

6.   Business for Consideration

6.1   The Clubs and Societies Committee at its meeting of Monday 4 November 2024, considered whether the following Clubs and Societies meet all Constitutional requirements necessary to recommend them to be considered for recognition by the Council:

        6.1.1   QUB Vietnamese Student Society (Cultural Society)

        6.1.2   QUB Palestine Assembly Society (Campaigning Society)

6.1.3   QUB Medical Research and Innovation Society (Academic Society)

6.1.4   QUB LIVE Music Society (General Interest Society)

6.1.5   QUB Formula One Society (General Interest Society)

6.2   Student Officer Plan of Work 2024-25   SUC/P/24/32

Council is asked to consider and approve the Student Officer Plan of Work 2024-25 as detailed in paper SUC/P/24/32. Council received a presentation on the Plan of Work 2024-25 at the Tuesday 22 October meeting of Council.

6.3   Policy Updates – Policies Approved by Student Ideas Submission

The following new Students' Union policies were considered by the new Student Ideas Submission process since the last meeting of Council, with voting on proposals taking place from Monday 21 October – Sunday 27 October 2024. The number of students participating was 625.

Ideas approved shall be discussed by Council to consider the next steps to progress policies. Councillors will be asked for feedback on the approved policies and be asked to indicate which policies should be prioritised for action.

Other ideas shall be referred to the Proposal Support Committee (PSC) of Council for further consideration.

Title	Votes	For	Against	% For	% Against	Status
Student Accessible Secure Cycle Parking	273	234	39	86%	14%	APPROVED
Reusable Takeaway Cups	340	295	45	87%	13%	APPROVED
Campus Shuttle Bus Service	406	348	58	86%	14%	APPROVED
Pedestrian Crossing on Road Beside Students' Union	441	413	28	94%	6%	APPROVED
Programme of Daytime Social Events and Activities for Commuter Students	291	255	36	88%	12%	APPROVED
Introduce an International Buddy Scheme	301	253	48	84%	16%	APPROVED
Introduce Mirrors in BT1 Gym	302	131	171	43%	57%	FAILED
Professional Experience Mentoring for Students	273	238	35	87%	13%	APPROVED
Host a Regular SU Student Creators Fair	275	185	90	67%	33%	REFER TO PSC
Create Sensory Accessible Study Space on Campus	285	239	46	84%	16%	APPROVED

6.3.1   Student Accessible Secure Cycle Parking

Idea Summary

Create secure bicycle parking facilities on campus for students.

Benefits

-    Encourage students to cycle to/from campus

-    Secure storage reduces potential of bicycle theft/vandalism

-    Covered bike sheds keeps bicycles dry

- Potentially a reduction in CO2 emissions due to decreased use of cars / buses

Challenges

- A suitable location would need to be identified

- There will be construction and maintenance costs incurred to build and maintain new secure cycles parking if access to current facilities cannot be extended to students

- A fair process for use would need to be developed, especially if demand for spaces exceeds supply

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

- The Students' Union will develop an outline plan and present it to the University's Estates Directorate for detailed planning.
- The proposal will be raised with members of the University's senior leadership team

Detailed Idea

Students to be granted access to secure bike sheds on campus - there is a strong push for active transport etc but a lack of facilities for secure parking.

There appear to be existing facilities on-site. These could potentially be used by students if there is communication with the relevant Estates team to discuss how access could be managed. (E.g. key fobs for a small deposit that are registered to a specific student account, etc.)

All students that currently use a bicycle for commuting to and from the University could benefit.

6.3.2   Reusable Takeaway Cups

Idea Summary

Have reusable takeaway cups available to students for a small deposit fee (if they forget to bring their own reusable cups to campus).

Benefits

Reduces use of non-disposable cups on campus

Enables students to use a non-disposable cup if they do not have one of their own on campus.

Students do not have to purchase additional non-disposable cups if they wish to drink tea / coffee sustainably

Challenges

A process for returning cups would need to be developed

Most catering retail outlets on campus would need to agree to the proposal for it to be effective across campus

Catering outlets would need to have a supply of non-disposable cups for use

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will develop a proposal and present it to Campus Food Drink and Retail department in the University and to the Sustainability Team in Queen's.

Detailed Idea

There is an opportunity to use reusable takeaway coffee cups for a small deposit in circumstances where a student has forgotten their own.

This helps avoid use of disposable plastic cups.

These could be easily accessible in the Students' Union and the McClay Library and would allow any environmentally conscious students to avoid the use of disposable cups.

6.3.3   Campus Shuttle Bus Service

Idea Summary

Provide shuttle transport to/from Queen's Accommodation to the main campus

Benefits

Easier, more comfortable, commute to/from campus and Queen's Accommodation sites

During periods of light traffic, the commute will take less time than walking / cycling

Provides safe transport, especially during periods of darkness.

Challenges

Running a bus service can be costly, especially if it keeps to a regular timetable

The service may not be free

Buses are a less sustainable form of transport than walking / cycling (but more sustainable than driving)

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will develop a proposal and present it to Queen's Accommodation.

6.3.4   Pedestrian Crossing on Road Beside Students' Union

Idea Summary

Introduce a pedestrian crossing on Elmwood Avenue

Benefits

Student safety as the road beside the Students' Union (Elmwood Avenue) can be very busy with traffic

Fewer accidents and near accidents as drivers will be more attentive

Challenges

There would be a cost to the government to build a pedestrian crossing

Potential traffic disruption during construction

Potential traffic congestion if road crossing is not timed to traffic lights on University Road

<u>Next Steps if Idea is Approved</u>

The Students' Union will develop a proposal and seek support from the University.

The Students' Union will lobby the politicians, the NI Department of Infrastructure and Belfast City Council to support the introduction of a pedestrian crossing on Elmwood Avenue.

6.3.5   Programme of Daytime Social Events and Activities for Commuter Students

<u>Idea Summary</u>

Programme of events at a School and University level to enable students to connect and build community, especially if they are unable to attend evening events

<u>Benefits</u>

Builds community and connection amongst students in Schools

Builds community centrally amongst students

Potential for Clubs and Societies (especially Academic Societies) to engage with students

Creates a well-rounded, positive, student experience for those who are unable to attend (or dislike) night-time social events

<u>Challenges</u>

Difficult to centrally organise activities in individual Schools due to timetabling and resourcing

There will be a cost associated with this new activity

Student groups already offer a lot of activities to students

Students may not be able to attends events of interest to them due to their academic timetable or part-time work commitments

<u>Next Steps if Idea is Approved</u>

The Students' Union will review its own timetable of daytime events and discuss with the University their central timetable of student events.

The Students' Union will ask its School and Faculty Reps to raise the issue in their Schools to identify Schools willing to develop a programme of activities / events.

6.3.6   Introduce an International Buddy Scheme

<u>Idea Summary</u>

Introduce a buddy scheme to connect new international students with home students, to reduce loneliness & culture shock, and build community.

<u>Benefits</u>

Creates connections, friendships and networks amongst students

Provides a known contact person for incoming international students

Reduces culture shock for new international students and increases cultural awareness and understanding amongst home students

Provides a skills development opportunity to home students

<u>Challenges</u>

There will be an administrative cost associated with this new activity as it requires personal connection with many students

Home students may not commit to acting as 'buddies' in sufficient numbers due to time commitments

It would be challenging to scale a buddy scheme to meet the needs of all international students – as there are thousands of international students in Queen's

<u>Next Steps if Idea is Approved</u>

The Students' Union will develop a proposal and seek support from the University to either implement a buddy scheme or fund the creation of a buddy scheme

The Students' Union will review the outcomes from a previous buddy scheme (prior to 2018) and training previously delivered for any relevant learnings

6.3.7   Professional Experience Mentoring for Students

<u>Idea Summary</u>

Develop a programme which connects mature students with professional experience with other students, to share professional and career experiences.

<u>Benefits</u>

Provides support and guidance to students from other, more professionally experienced students

Provides professionally experienced students an opportunity to develop mentoring skills and contribute their knowledge and experience to University life

Career networking and friendship opportunities

Experiences shared in the classroom

<u>Challenges</u>

There will be an administrative cost associated with this new activity as it requires personal connection with many students

Difficult to centrally organise activities in individual Schools due to timetabling and resourcing

It would be challenging to scale a mentorship scheme to meet the needs of all students.

<u>Next Steps if Idea is Approved</u>

The Students' Union will develop a proposal and seek support from the University to either implement a mentorship scheme or fund the creation of a mentorship scheme

<u>Detailed Idea</u>

This proposal can create opportunities for professional students—those of who have three or more years of work experience—to actively support freshers and collaborate with faculty. By sharing real-world insights and practical skills, students can help bridge the gap between academic theory and industry practice. This could involve mentorship programs, guest lectures, collaborative projects, and more.

There's a missed opportunity: career experienced students could be helping new students navigate their studies and future careers and assisting teachers by bringing real-world perspectives into the classroom.

Potential Options Include:

- Peer Mentorship Programs

    - Description: Match professional students with freshers to provide guidance on academics, career advice, and navigating university life.

    - Impact: Offers personalized support to freshers while allowing professional students to share their experience, fostering a supportive community.

- Teaching Assistant Opportunities

    - Description: Enable professional students to serve as teaching assistants, bringing practical industry insights into the classroom.

    - Impact: Enhances the learning experience for all students and supports faculty with additional expertise.

- "Adopt a Class" Program

    - Description: Professional students co-teach or guest lecture alongside faculty members, sharing real-world applications of course material.

    - Impact: Bridges the gap between theory and practice, making coursework more engaging and relevant.

- Collaborative Research Projects

    - Description: Professional students lead research initiatives involving freshers and faculty on industry-relevant topics.

    - Impact: Provides hands-on experience for freshers and leverages professional students' expertise to advance academic research.

- Mentorship Matching App

    - Description: Develop a platform that connects professional students with freshers based on shared interests, goals, or fields of study.

    - Impact: Facilitates easy and scalable mentorship connections, enhancing accessibility and engagement for both groups.

- Curriculum Input:

    - Feedback Mechanisms: Involve professional students in discussions about course content relevance.

- Advisory Panels: Establish committees where students with industry experience can consult with faculty on curriculum development.

- Networking Events:

  - Meet-and-Greets**:** Organize events where students at all levels can connect and share experiences.

  - Industry Nights: Host sessions where professional students discuss trends and opportunities in their fields.

6.3.8   Create Sensory Accessible Study Space on Campus

Idea Summary

Have study spaces for those with sensory needs (e.g. hypersensitivity to bright lights, noise, etc.)

Benefits

In addition to quiet space, the creation of space in the McClay Library, Graduate School, and other study and teaching spaces without overhead or intensive lighting.

Tailored, adjustable, lighting in study areas which can be adjusted by students according to their needs.

More accessible education facilities for students with sensory accessibility requirements.

Improved academic success from students with sensory accessibility needs.

Challenges

There may be a cost associated with installing / removing lighting fixtures and fittings, particularly if additional electrical work is required

Renovation could be disruptive if taking place during term time

It may be difficult to determine level of need and ensure that available space meets demand

Next Steps if Idea is Approved

The Students' Union will develop an outline plan and present it to the University's Estates Directorate for detailed planning.

The proposal will be raised with members of the University's senior leadership team

Detailed Idea

Students with sensory disabilities are highly impacted by long hours spent under electric lighting. Sensory issues are often associated with autism, but many other disabilities/health conditions are affected by overhead electric lighting, including epilepsy, ADHD, stroke survivors, people who have had traumatic brain injuries, and ME.

This impacts focus - which is crucial to academic success It can exacerbate pre-existing symptoms, cause fatigue and pain. All of which are barriers to a successful education.

There should be specific study areas in the library and graduate building which have no overhead lighting during day-light hours, but instead have desk lamps. These areas should give priority for students with sensory issues.

While the sensory spaces that have been introduce are a great step for people to unwind, they are not suitable study spaces, especially as they crowd up and people use them for sleeping.

The sensory accessible study areas however should be made with productive study and mind, with students being able to choose the direction and level of lighting.

7. <u>Business for Discussion</u>

7.1 Cost of Living Crisis – Updates

    7.1.1 QSU Free Meals and Giveaways

    7.1.2 SU Swap Shop Opening

    7.1.3 Other Issues (from Councillors)

7.2 QUB Academic / Support Services Issues – Updates

    7.2.1 QUB Academic Year Structure Review

    7.2.2 Welcome and Induction Review

    7.2.3 Digital Lecture Recording Pilot

    7.2.4 Other Issues (from Councillors)

7.3 Students' Union Mental Health Activity – Updates

7.4 Student Housing – Issues Facing Students (NUS-USI President)

7.5 Student Officer Role Review – Working Group

The following Councillors have volunteered to participate on the Student Officer Role Review Working Group:

- *Mohammad Farhan Nazeer*
- *Souhardya Datta*
- *Michael Loughran*
- *Beth Elder*

8. <u>Bye-Elections</u>

Please note that the following elections will be held at this Meeting of the Students' Union Council:

Nominations are open (<u>online</u>) and close on Monday 11 November 2024. (12.00 noon)

Standing Committee	5 vacancies
Proposal Support Committee	5 vacancies
Environmental and Ethical Committee	5 vacancies
Campaigns Committee	7 vacancies

Scrutiny Committee   6 vacancies

Clubs and Societies Committee   4 vacancies

9.   Elections

        There are none.

10.   Motions

        There are none.

11.   Report of the Management Board and Recommendations

11.1   Report of the Management Board

12.   Report of the Executive Management Committee and Recommendations

12.1   Report of the Executive Management Committee

12.2   Report of the Union President (July 2024)   SUC/P/24/33
12.3   Report of the Union President (August 2024)   SUC/P/24/34
12.4   Report of the Union President (September 2024)   SUC/P/24/35
12.5   Report of the Union President (October 2024)   SUC/P/24/51

12.6   Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (July 2024)   SUC/P/24/36
12.7   Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (August 2024)   SUC/P/24/37
12.8   Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (September 2024)   SUC/P/24/38
12.9   Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (October 2024)   SUC/P/24/52

12.10   Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (July 2024)   SUC/P/24/39
12.11   Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (August 2024)   SUC/P/24/40
12.12   Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (September 2024)   SUC/P/24/41
12.13   Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (October 2024)   SUC/P/24/53

12.14   Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate Education (July 2024)   SUC/P/24/42
12.15   Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate Education (August 2024)   SUC/P/24/43
12.16   Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate Education (September 2024)   SUC/P/24/44
12.17   Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate Education (October 2024)   SUC/P/24/54

12.18   Report of the Student Officer Undergraduate Education (July 2024)   SUC/P/24/45
12.19   Report of the Student Officer Undergraduate Education (August 2024)   SUC/P/24/46
12.20   Report of the Student Officer Undergraduate Education (September 2024)   SUC/P/24/47
12.21   Report of the Student Officer Undergraduate Education (October 2024)   SUC/P/24/55

12.22   Report of the Student Officer Welfare (July 2024)   SUC/P/24/48
12.23   Report of the Student Officer Welfare (August 2024)   SUC/P/24/49
12.24   Report of the Student Officer Welfare (September 2024)   SUC/P/24/50
12.25   Report of the Student Officer Welfare (October 2024)   SUC/P/24/56

13.   Reports from other Union Committees and Recommendations

13.1   Report of the Clubs and Societies Committee   SUC/P/24/57

14.   Reports from University Committees

There are none.

15.   Constitutional Questions

There are none.

16.   Questions (to Elected Student Representatives)

There are none.

17.   Any Other Competent Business

18.   Date of Next Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council

Tuesday 3 December 2024 at 5.00 p.m. in The Cube, Level 1, One Elmwood.