

Student Council

Minutes

Tuesday 6 December 2022, 6.00 pm - Held via Zoom and livestreamed

Present

Azzah Abubacar, Chair of Student Council

Executive Committee:

Jojo Croft	VP Welfare
Saynab Sharif	Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences
Charlie Sellar	Vice President Barts and The London
Radhika Thiagarajan	Vice President Communities

Student Representatives and Part-time Officers

Amelie	Barone	Sustainability Officer (ME)
Matthew	Beach	Postgraduate Research Representative (HSS)
Elena	Erescov	Postgraduate Taught Representative (BL)
Kayatre	Giritharadas	Womens Representative (BL)
Shivin	Hassan	LGBT+ Representative (BL)
Kareemah	Jaigirdar	Allied Courses Representative
Ivy	Lee Jia Jia	International Representative (BL)
Annie	Mae Wright	VP Barts
Aisha	Qadi	International Representative (S&E)
Jumainah	Rahman	SMD Pre-Clinical Representative
Faizan	Sheikh	Disabled and Specific Learning Difference Representative (Mile End)
James	Tavener	SMD Clinical Representative
Sofia	Valdivielso	Volunteering Officer (ME)
Melody	Zhao	School of Law Representative
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In attendance:

Brad Coales	Secretary and Governance Adviser
Marianne Melsen	Student Voice and Insights Manager
Jak Curtis Rendall	Head of Communications and Marketing

Apologies

No apologies were received.

1.0 Chairs Welcome and Announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2.0 Chair's Introduction

The Chair reminded Members that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed.

The Chair, following the amalgamation of the online poll and the vote taken at the previous Council meeting, confirmed the appointment of two new Council members to fill the vacant positions of Sports Officer (ME), and School of Geography Representative as follows:

- Alix Werner - School of Geography Representative
- Amelia Kramer - Sports Officer (ME)

3.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Members were asked to approve the minutes of the Meeting of Student Council held on 6 December 2022. The minutes were duly approved.

4.0 Minutes from Sub-Committees

Minutes from the following Sub-Committees had been included in the Council papers and were to be taken as read.

BLSA Board - 6 October 2022, 1 November 2022, 13 December 2022

Club Sport Committee - none

HSS Board - 4 October 2022

Postgraduate Board - 25 October 2022, 12 December 2022

Science and Engineering Board - none

Societies Board - 15 September 2022, 26 October 2022

Sustainability Board - 11 December 2022

Volunteering Board - none

Welfare and Communities Board - 11 October 2022, 8 November 2022

Members were invited to put any questions to the Chair's of the committees concerned, but none were asked.

5.0 Report from the Scrutiny Panel and Executive Officer Updates

As there was no January Scrutiny Panel meeting due to the exam period, the Executive Officers were given the opportunity to give an extended verbal update on their work and take questions from members of Student Council and any other QMSU members present.

Motions and Amendments

6. Byelaw Changes

There were no Bye-Law changes to be considered at this meeting.

7. Motions

a) **Should Queen Mary University's Student Union become more sustainable by transitioning to a 100% plant-based food system?**

Proposer: Keenal Shah

Seconder: Krishan Shukla

Keenal and Krishan shared the speech in favour of the motion and highlighted the key points.

MB asked whether Plant Based Universities were linked to Animal Rebellion, and Keenal confirmed that AR had financed PBU.

Keenal explained that the motion was not about trying to force anyone to become vegan, but it provided QM students with a chance to address climate change.

Krishan added that this was not a freedom of choice issue, as there would still be other outlets on campus which offered meat. If the motion was passed, QM would be the first union in London to do so. Financial concerns should not override the emergency. The policy could generate more customers as many students wanted to try a plant based diet, but were unsure where to start.

AQ spoke against the motion, saying that for it to apply to all outlets might be going too far; some students needed to include meat in the diet for medical reasons, and that Union outlets were a source of halal meat for meat eaters. Students who lived on campus might be more reluctant to change.

Keenal pointed out that not all meals were bought through Union outlets, and that many students who lived on campus used The Curve, which was a University outlet and it was only the Union that was being asked to transition at this time.

CS commented that the motion only mentioned Mile End, and asked whether it covered all campuses. Keenal explained that it focused on Mile End as a first step, as those associated with the campaign were largely based there.

CS said that whilst he understood the spirit of the motion, it did need to consider the financial implications as the profit from commercial services was a significant percentage of the Union's income. Therefore, if passed, the policy would have then to be considered by the Union's Board of Trustees.

JC commented that vegan and vegetarian products currently accounted for most of the leftovers from Union outlets.

Keenal explained that if students were educated about the issues, that could help. It was hard to predict how the policy might affect sales; they could increase in the longer term.

AS agreed that if passed, the policy would need to be considered by the Board of Trustees. The University's Zero Waste Shop was completely vegetarian/vegan but struggled with sales.

JT noted that the motion referenced the trial at Kings had involved a single venue, and also asked why push for 100% vegetarian/vegan outlets if less than 50% of students were vegetarian/vegan.

There was then some discussion concerning a possible amendment to the number of outlets and target dates. The Secretary stated that amendments made on the spur of the moment often made for bad policy, and that as no vote had yet been taken, the motion could be withdrawn and represented at the next meeting,

AS suggested that a review should be built into the time-scale.

AQ suggested that it should be piloted at one outlet first and the targets should be graduated.

AS added that he understood that around 50% of menu items were already vegetarian/vegan.

Keenal pointed out that the motion was asking for gradual change, but that the aim was to eventually reach 100%.

The Chair then called a break, whilst Keenal and Krishan decided whether they wanted to put the motion to a vote.

After the break, it was confirmed that the motion should be put to a vote as it stood.

Keenal summed-up by stating that the policy could be both incremental and profitable, and the target was to be 100% plant-based by 2025.

The matter was then put to a vote:

In Favour: 3

Against: 13

Abstain: 0

The motion was **not passed**.

There was then some confusion as to whether there were sufficient votes cast for the vote to be valid.

The Secretary would check the online voting record and confirm.

In the event, it turned out that at least two of the votes cast were invalid because the voter could not be properly identified and also the required threshold of 17 members (given the new appointments confirmed earlier) for the meeting to be quorate at the time of the vote had not been met.

The vote was therefore invalid, and the motion could be brought back to the next Student Council meeting (in amended form if desired).

8. Student Council Review

The purpose of this session was for Council Members to give their views on the effectiveness of Student Council, and to any make suggestions for changes or improvement. Members were asked to answer some online questions via Mentimeter, and to discuss some of their responses, with a view to considering how to improve the effectiveness of Student Council, and create greater engagement.

9. Policy Renewal

- 8.1 *Policy passed more than two academic years earlier shall be presented to Student Council with a recommendation from the Executive Committee to renew, embed or lapse.*
- 8.2 *Any policy that is renewed will be debated again after 2 years.*
- 8.3 *Any policy that is embedded will be considered permanent policy until Student Council brings it back for debate to retain or lapse.*
- 8.4 *Recommendations shall require the approval of a simple-majority of Student Council to be passed and should be done in 1 vote for all policies at the same time.*
- 8.4.1 *Student Councillors should make clear to the Chair any individual recommendations they would like to be debated separately, the Chair shall bring these forward for debate before being voted on. The rest of the recommendations shall then be voted on in 1 vote.*
- 8.5 *A Union member may, at any time, bring policy that is considered to be out of date to the attention of Student Council to be debated.*
- 8.6 *Policies which exceed the 2-year limit for any reason shall be brought forward for debate at the next meeting of Student Council.*

As the meeting had now become inquorate, it was not possible to put the Executive Officers' recommendations on policy review to a vote, and so these would be carried over until the next meeting.

9. AOB

There was no other business