

**EQUALITIES COUNCIL**

15 NOV 2018 // MINUTES

Time: 18:00

Venue: INTER 028

**In Attendance:**

Willow Wong (Chair, VP Welfare and Diversity)

Emma Underwood (Secretary, Campaigns and Communications Coordinator)

Christopher Keane (Disable Students Rep)

Renee Landell (BME Rep)

Sophie Bury (Women’s Rep)

James Sullivan (Mental Health Chair)

Lucy Simpson (Mental Health Vice Chair)

Clem Jones (President)

Holly Hughes (VP Societies and Media)

Dom Brown (VP Sports)

* **Welcome and introductions**

Willow Wong opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Names, pronouns, and positions were given by those around the table, and the agenda was laid out. No apologies were given.

* **Officer report**

WW began her report by acknowledging her absence from the office and thanking the reps of their hard work over the previous weeks. She went on to explain that the Council Tax campaign had recently faced a stumbling block in its progress, as student registration is unable to be extended up until graduation due to visa issues. She remarked that a meeting would take place that week to discuss next steps. WW went on to discuss the state of accommodation on campus, disclosing that postgraduate entrants would now be guaranteed accommodation, and that contracts in Founder’s Building would now be extended so as to cover the holiday periods. She also made reference to the fitness to study policy, Housing Week, International Week, and Trans Awareness Week.

* **Democracy Review**

WW went on to give a presentation regarding the Union’s democracy review which is currently underway. Context and information was given from the slides which can be found on the Councils section of the website. WW then posed three questions to the council for them to think on prior to their meeting.

* What are the things that **stop** students from getting involved in the SU democratic structures?
* What are the things that would **motivate** students to get involved in SU democratic structures?
* If you were in **charge** of the SU what would you **change** about how it works?
* **Elections**

The election of an LGBT Rep and an International Rep had been scheduled, however no individuals nominated themselves, therefore the elections did not take place. We hope to co-opt the positions in the near future.

* **Rep Session: Mental Health Network**

James Sullivan and Lucy Simpson gave a joint presentation on Mental Health Awareness Week and upcoming projects. JS recalled the good engagement with the two murals set up, and the wide range of people who took part. He went on to discuss the Let’s Talk About Mental Health event, how despite the small crowd, the speakers were excellent, and the engagement with the discussion topics was very good. JS gave thanks to the other reps and the Sabbatical Officers for their support. Moving on from MHAW, he gave an update on Campaign assisstants, detailing that 14 applications had been received, narrowed down to 7, and that interviews would take place over the coming days. With their website set up, JS stated that the MHN would be looking to increase outreach for the campaign.

Lucy Simpson spoke next, as she gave updates on upcoming campaigns and projects. Concerns about some college services were raised, mentioning that there was no direct feedback system for services such as DDS. CJ added that the feedback system is not ideal, and perhaps the best way of doing so would be to submit a formal complaint through the Students’ Union. SB remarked that many of these issues happen in real time, and a solution is needed immediately rather than after an arduous process. A meeting was arranged between WW, LS, and EU to discuss this further. LS proposed the potential for a Social Secretary for the Equalities Council or for the MHN, and EU added that if it were the former then a motion would need submitting. She also brought up the lecture series planned for the coming term which aims to educated people on more specific areas of mental health, and mental illnesses in particular. RL remarked that MHN events were perhaps not as well attended by BME individuals as possible, due to the conception that non BME individuals may not understand issues surrounding BME students. LS clarified that exclusion was not intentional, and JS was open to collaboration.

* **Rep Session: BME Rep**

Renee Landell gave a presentation on the progress she has made as BME Rep. She went over her aims for the year, including working closer with more BME students (through a Whatsapp group which already has 50 members), celebrating BME achievements, and raising awareness and money for the Sickle Cell Society. Black History Month was recounted, as the month started with a number of successful events, including a documentary launch, and the Student Staff networking meeting. The Gospel Choir Concert and Windrush Tribute have both been postponed to a later date. RL remarked that the History department had been particularly receptive, having screened her documentary and invited her for a Q&A. She also brought yp the ongoing initiative with Jack O’Neill, VP Education in challenging the attainment gap via the TSEP research. She has also been working with Rosmary Deem in the recruitment of more BME students.

* **Any other business**

WW will be arranging catch up with individual reps so as to update her on their activities, and CJ reiterated the importance of the democracy review. LS agreed to facilitate a meeting between RL and student services for recruitment. The reps all welcomed WW back to her role, and WW in turn thanked all reps for their contributions and closed the meeting.