

Student Leadership Team (SLT) Meeting Minutes

Date: Saturday 15 February 2025, in person in Milton Keynes.

Attendees:

Name	SLT role	Initials
Natalie Baker (Chair)	President	NB
Andrew Wilson	Deputy President	AW
Charon Gates	WELS faculty representative	CG
Isabelle Hoyet (online)	International representative	IH
Jack Flaherty	FASS faculty representative	JF
Jethro Tieman	Sustainability rep	JT
Julie Catterall	England representative	JC
Katie Hickmott	VP Academic Student Voice	KH
Michael Jones	Wales representative	MJ
Nichola Connolly	VP Student Representation	NC
Reece Mckeown (online)	Ireland representative	RM
Scott Harvey-Whittle	STEM faculty representative	SHW
Name	Staff role	Initials
Beth Pacey	CEO	BP
Ciara Lineham	Projects Officer	CL
Gabby Cull	Head of People	GC
Gareth Jones	Head of Student Voice	GJ
Heather Bloomer	Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications (MarComms)	HB
Jazz Simpson	SLT Liaison Officer	JS
Kate Dungate	Student Policy and Insights Officer	KD
Mandy Turner	Projects Officer	MT
Nicky Powell (online)	Training and Wellbeing Officer	NP
Pooja Sinha	Research and Strategy Officer	PS
Sam Smeraglia	Executive Officer	SS

Apologies:

Name	Role	Initials
Ross Thorne	VP Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	RT
Andrew Kolapo	Student member of Council	AK

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introduction.
2. Building an Inclusive Organisational Ecosystem - Presentation.
3. Student Community and Wellbeing Research Project – Workshop and Discussion.
4. Priority Areas – Update and Workshop.

5. Student Issues Reporting Tool – Discussion.

1.	1. Welcome and Introduction	
1.1	NB opened the meeting and welcomed attendees to the first in-person SLT meeting of this term.	
2.	Building an Inclusive Organisational Ecosystem – Presentation from Jiten Patel.	
	<p>Jiten opened the session with some contracting, including having the ‘mindset of a learner’ and positive intent. Objectives included understanding bias and bystanding, identifying barriers to interpretation and practicing real world examples.</p> <p>The presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biases manifesting as micro aggressions • Positive discrimination Vs Positive action • The Bystander model • Barriers to taking action <p>All are invited to email Jiten with one thing that they will do or stop doing in the next couple of weeks, that will help them to become a more effective bystander, or help them to raise awareness of their internal biases.</p>	
3.	Student Community and Wellbeing Research Project – Workshop and Discussion (Pooja Sinha)	
	<p>PS opened the session introducing its purpose, and what the Theory of Change is. This project focuses on two very underrepresented student groups: international students, and BAME students. These students were asked about their student community and wellbeing.</p> <p>Feedback from this research was that these students would like allyship to be prioritised in online spaces; creating connections between individuals by finding shared circumstances, identities etc. Conversations and events could be semi-structured, and should be moderated to ensure safeguarding and safe spaces.</p>	
4.	SLT Priority Areas – Update and Workshop (Kate Dungate)	
	<p>KD opened the workshop session with an overview of the Student Consultations that are taking place in Spring. The aim of this workshop was to review the direction of travel with these consultations: how do we utilise this opportunity to reach students?</p> <p>2 themes selected to discuss at consultations were Academic Experience and Student Support. Discussions on these topics revolved around consistency of student experience, tutorials, and AI.</p> <p>SLT tested <i>Mentimeter</i> as a tool for gathering interactive digital feedback.</p>	

	<p>The team also discussed how these consultations can be used to create a strong evidence base to create positive change moving forward, and the type of evidence that would be most effective to achieve this, including a mix of quantitative ranking questions as well as qualitative case studies.</p>	
4.1	<p>Priority areas – update on projects NB gave an overview of how the projects will begin to work now with the different project working groups.</p> <p>Menopause Project NC provided an update. There will be a page on the website, Jasmine (not present) doing work on this and a logo etc.</p> <p>Neurodivergence Project The Belonging Team conducted a survey and held focus groups. Rachel (not present) has created an action plan based on this research. Project group will review this. Once the new Belonging Officer is in post, they will also support the roll out of these actions.</p>	
4.2	<p>Action - JS to send out an overview of who is on which Working Groups to the whole SLT.</p>	JS
5.	<p>Student Issues Reporting Tool – Discussion (Gabby Cull)</p>	
	<p>Searchable PDF Module Books SLT members agreed that many of them have always had PDF module books available, so it is unclear how many students this impacts. It was noted that this student issue was originally submitted 2 years ago. Whether PDFs are still the most accessible option was also noted: HTML is more accessible. BP – Do we need to put out a statement for helpful information about this? Best practice</p>	
5.1	<p>Action – Contact the student that raised this issue, confirm it has been discussed, but SLT have decided not to take it further.</p>	JS
5.2	<p>Social media – do certain providers align with our values? There was a lengthy discussion around the suitability of Twitter/X, for our goals in reaching students and fostering community spaces. Alternatives were discussed, such as BlueSky and Threads, and prioritising the promotion of the OUConnect platform.</p> <p>HB informed SLT of the rapid changes in the way that X/Twitter works, and our levels of engagement with students on this platform. We have had a reduction in followers, interactions, and the reach we are getting. In 2022 we had >1mill, last year <300,000. A lot of charities and Not-for-Profits (NfPs) are leaving this space. We are not getting value for the input we give to Twitter. Meta policy changes are not supportive of our students/our values, but HB notes that we cannot remove ourselves from social media altogether because we still need to get that engagement from students.</p> <p>NB proposed we pause posting on X for a few weeks, or a month, to review and compare the data on engagement (without X).</p>	

5.3	Action – review the scope of our Facebook presence – should we have staff moderators in all Association-related Facebook groups? Including club sites like DSG?	HB
5.4	Action – MarComms to pause posts to X/Twitter for a period of time, and review the Social Media engagement data, feeding back insights to SLT.	HB
5.5	Action - Contact the student that raised this issue, confirm it has been discussed and will be investigated by the Marcomms team.	JS

The meeting concluded at 4.20pm.

The next meeting will be held **online, 25-27 April 2025.**

ACTIONS:		Action holder:
4.2	Send out an overview of who is on which Working Groups to the whole SLT.	JS
5.1	Contact the student that raised this issue, confirm it has been discussed, but SLT have decided not to take it further.	JS
5.3	Review the scope of our Facebook presence – should we have staff moderators in all Association-related Facebook groups? Including club sites like DSG?	HB & team
5.4	MarComms to pause posts to X/Twitter for a period of time, and review the Social Media engagement data, feeding back insights to SLT.	HB & team
5.5	Contact the student that raised this issue, confirm it has been discussed and will be investigated by the Marcomms team.	JS