

**Student Council Minutes**

Thursday 13th May 2021, 1pm-2pm

**Chair: Dale Tromans (Postgrad Rep)**

1. **Welcome and Apologies for absence (chair)**

* Jemma Kalinowski, Lorna Sowry, Jessica Furber and Stephen Dean

1. **CSU Democracy Review (CSU President)**

* CSU are recruiting an external organisation to do a democracy review which is currently out for tender. The review be conducted June/July and will consist of student surveys and focus groups where participation will be rewarded so please get involved.
* CSU are shortlisting and interviewing Friday 21st.

1. **University of Chester redundancies (CSU President)**

* CSU has taken a neutral stance to focus on supporting students.
* 2 weeks ago we had Q&A session with the VC, and we are trying to get a written response that will be uploaded to the CSU website.
* Concerns were raised about the salary of the VC and other senior staff of the university and if this could have any impact on the redundancies. CSU President stated the university have been asked this question but are still awaiting a response.
* One suggestion as there should be a national pay cap on VC’s across the country, something that CSU can raise.
* Students would like more open and transparent communication on redundancies.
* The redundancies have come from faculty decisions and not senior staff in order to ensure fairness across the departments with student to staff ratios. In the next few weeks, the student to staff ratios for each department should be published by the university.
* Concerns were raised about the future of Thornton campus. CSU President will look into this and how students are affected when they have a year out and where will they be able to return to? Campus closures and redundancies affect the student experience and their future.
* Concerns were raised about where student fees are going, as students are still being charged full price for expensive courses but have not got access to campuses/equipment/resources, but there are still redundancies.
* Concerns were raised about how research students are affected and this is something CSU can look into.
* UCU have voted for a vote of no confidence against the senior management team at the university. If this was put forward, the SU wouldn’t support this.
* It is possible that if the student numbers are higher in September the redundancies may not go ahead.

1. **Postgraduate update (PG Rep)**

* Postgraduate research symposium took place last month and went well, thanks to CSU President and VP Education for support. A report based on this will feature in forum and is going in the CSU newsletter.

1. **Incoming Student Council Reps (CSU President)**

* Elections and by elections to elect new student council for next year have taken place. We will pass the new email addresses to the existing council so they can introduce themselves and the council to welcome and reassure them.

1. **End of Year events and getting involved (VP Education)**
   1. Society awards
   2. 1839 awards
   3. End of Year

Thanks to everyone who has been involved in this. All the information will be on social media, teams channel and student shout out. Please attend and get involved. If you book a ticket for the event, you will be able to collect a box on the night.

* There are also wellbeing bags available at info point and Binks, Marris House, Shrewsbury and Warrington, and we are able to distribute to other Chester sites.

1. **Any Other Business (Chair)**

* LGBTQ+ Council rep asked for any members of the CSU interested in joining the hedgehog friendly campus accreditation scheme for this academic year. SU Education will pick this up if availability allows.
* The next student council meeting will be held in mid-June, as the council will need to approve new student trustees. CSU President will book the next meeting.

**Chester blend concerns**:

* Concerns were raised about the efficiency of the Chester Blend, however national data shows that more people are willing to sign up for a course that has an online element, and it can be specifically effective when used for large cohorts of students.
* The next academic year will be 25% in person and 75% online for the first term, with remaining terms 75% in person and 25% online.
* One concern was that the online teaching is not specifically online content and is just in person content taught online, therefore it isn’t engaging or interactive. VP Education is formulating a policy to be handed out to all departments which states minimum requirements for online teaching.
* One suggestion is there should be the option for people to choose whether they have in person or online teaching, for those that value hands on learning, and for those who value online learning.

**Thank you to everyone for attending and their participation in today’s meeting.**