Motion on Widening Access

The Union Notes;

1. That 9% of students from the SIMD20 make up our university.
2. Much existing work on Widening Access is being done, this focuses on SIMD20.
3. Heriot-Watt is above the national average for recruitment from SIMD20, however there is much room for improvement
4. That the university is in talks with the Scottish Funding Council for its new access agreements for the coming year
5. Over 10% of Freshers don’t make it past their first year at Heriot-Watt.

The Union Believes;

1. The purpose of universities is the creation and dissemination of knowledge to benefit society as a whole and as such the university population should be representative of society.
2. That the university should be setting ambitious targets for recruitment of students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds
3. That the university should not just set targets for recruiting students from the poorest backgrounds but also looking at other issues, such as encouraging more women to apply for STEM subjects, and how we support disabled and domiciled black and ethnic students.
4. More must be done to target support for students who are at the most risk of dropping out as well as better signposting to services that are available to students.
5. More could be done by HW through outreach work to encourage students that university is an option, regardless of their background.

The Union resolves;

1. To lobby the university to improve its support for students who are at risk of dropping out of university through student support services and support given by the academic departments and schools.
2. To lobby the university to adopt more ambitious targets in the second round of SFC outcome agreements.
3. To engage with the university in its implementation of its contextualised admissions policy for Scottish student from SIMD20 and SIMD40 backgrounds.
4. To ask the principal to sign the “principals promise” on widening access
5. To work with the university in looking to set up a peer mentoring system and/or outreach scheme sending student back into schools and colleges, to educate younger students on Heriot-Watt, and their time at University.
6. To work with the university in order to develop an effective code of practise around mentoring and ensure that it is effectively implemented.