



## UNIVERSITY OF YORK GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

### EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES

FRIDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2009

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**Chaired by:** Daniel Carr (Acting President)

**Minuted by:** Keith Gibson (Operations Assistant)

**In attendance:** Dan Horsfall (Welfare Officer), Rich Rhodes (Internal Officer), Tom Flynn (Treasurer), Richard Mitchell (Events Officer), Kitty Wicker (Events Officer), Rachel Hope (Events Officer), Jay Walker (Press and Publicity Officer), Katherine Mildon (Sports Officer), Samik Datta (Sports Officer), Jian Gao (Sports Officer), Eva Fairnell (Part Time Students Officer), Chitvan Bochiwal (Overseas Officer), Rubab Satti (Overseas Officer), Ian Darlington (Senate Rep.), Rose Monachino (Wentworth GCR), Louisa Wong (James GCR), Sam Turner (Vanbrugh GCR), Matt Beacham (Election Observer)

**Apologies:** Tom Scott (YUSU President), Tom Langrish (Elections Returning Officer), Sarah Lewis (PGCE Students Officer), Gavin Smithies (Kings Manor GCR)

**No apologies:** Ming Luo (Facilities Officer), Peng Ren (NPC Officer)

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#### 1. Use of Google Calendar

Rich Rhodes asked that executive members with GSA email accounts use the Calendar facility on Google Mail to record all relevant meetings and GSA business.

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#### 2. Report on King's Manor GCR

Eva Fairnell reported that there is now a King's Manor Graduate Common Room Committee. Having been founded and undertaken elections for all

positions, it was noted that this committee intends to be active and to arrange events and trips in the near future. Despite this, it was noted that there is no physical Common Room space for King's Manor GCR.

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### 3. **GCR budgets and funding procedures**

Rich Rhodes raised concerns that GCRs are not funded according to the number of members or residents in college, suggesting a more proportionate funding system in future. It was agreed that the budget for next year would take this concern into account, and that GCR funding would be reformed.

It was also agreed that some expenses incurred by GCRs were too large to reasonably expect committee members to pay and then be reimbursed. As a short-term measure, the Executive agreed that large purchases could be done in advance using the new GSA Debit Card.

It was further clarified that approval of GCR funding requests is the duty of Rich Rhodes as Internal Officer, and that GCRs should approach him rather than Tom Flynn to gain such approval.

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### 4. **Vanbrugh GCR**

When discussing GCR funding, Sam Turner expressed concerns that the television purchased for Vanbrugh GCR last year had not materialised. At present, this television is in the GSA Office, and it was agreed that it would be returned to Vanbrugh GCR imminently.

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### 5. **Report on recent elections**

Matt Beacham gave a report on the recent GSA elections, for which he acted as an Observer. He expressed concerns about the operation of the Observer role, as he felt he had not been sufficiently involved in the process to give a full evaluation of the elections' operations. The Executive was notified that Tom Langrish, the Returning Officer, would report directly on the elections to the Democracy Working Group, who would then consider any necessary changes before reporting back to the Executive Committee.

Daniel Carr was actioned to liaise with David Duncan, the University Registrar, to confirm the number of postgraduate students at the University

and ensure the GSA was being funded the correct amount for these student numbers.

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## 6. **Report on FELT meeting**

Eva Fairnell gave a report on a recent FELT meeting, primarily discussing the idea of creating baseline expectations for staff use of the Virtual Learning Environment. She said that opinion was divided at FELT and raised concerns regarding the differing expectations of students and staff in this matter.

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## 7. **Postgraduates Who Teach**

Eva Fairnell raised concerns about the extent to which the GSA represents Postgraduates Who Teach. Daniel Carr and Tom Flynn clarified a number of current projects in which the GSA was representing this group, and it was agreed that the GSA should run focus groups or similar projects to gain information on Postgraduates Who Teach, and also make a greater effort to make PGWTs more aware of the services the University and GSA provide for them.

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## 8. **Standing Committee on Assessment**

Rachel Hope and Richard Mitchell raised concerns about a number of issues discussed at the recent Standing Committee on Assessment meeting, particularly regarding students being awarded zero marks if assessments are submitted late or deemed ineligible. The Executive agreed that these suggestions were deeply concerning, and asked Rachel Hope and Richard Mitchell to prepare an alternative proposal alongside YUSU Academic and Welfare Officer Charlie Leyland, and to report back to the Executive as soon as possible.

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## 9. **Committee appointments**

Following recent elections and resignations, the Executive agreed to retain the committee appointments made earlier in the year, with the following exceptions:

1. Rich Rhodes to sit on the Race Equality Implementation Group



2. Sam Turner to sit on the Bars Strategy Group
3. Eva Fairnell to sit on Learning and Teaching Projects
4. Rubab Satti to sit on the Board for Graduate Schools
5. Dan Horsfall to sit on the Disability Equality Scheme, and on the Nursery Management Group

It was further agreed to set up a Nursery Working Group to be chaired by Daniel Carr.

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#### 10. **Events planner for summer term**

The Executive agreed to defer responsibility for next term's events planner to Rich Rhodes, agreeing that he is able to decide upon which events will and will not be run.

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#### 11. **GSA DVD collection**

The Executive agreed to give its DVD collection to Wentworth GCR, to be stored in their common room, on the condition that other GCRs are also allowed access to this facility. All graduates are therefore able to borrow DVDs from the collection in Wentworth GCR.

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#### 12. **Inappropriate use of GSA resources**

Daniel Carr raised concerns about use of GSA telephones, printing and photocopying facilities for personal purposes. It was agreed that officers and staff are not to call external numbers or use printing and photocopying facilities except for GSA business. Daniel Carr also requested that officers and staff endeavour to waste less time using GSA computers for personal matters.

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#### 13. **GSA task list**

The Executive actioned Daniel Carr to produce a list of existing GSA projects, outlining details of each project, the staff member assigned to each, and the deadline by which it is to be completed.

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#### **14. Photocopying**

Rich Rhodes suggested the GSA Office should keep a detailed log of photocopying done. It was agreed that in the short term, Keith Gibson should keep a paper log of such photocopying, with a spreadsheet to be created for future use.

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#### **15. Energy and Efficiency Policy**

Daniel Carr reported that one of his election promises was to create an Energy and Efficiency policy, but that he felt underqualified to produce this alone. The Executive agreed to set up a group to produce this policy, consisting of Daniel Carr, Jay Walker, and Richard Mitchell, and to consult with the YUSU's Environment and Ethics Officers on the policy.

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#### **16. Personal alarms and condoms**

The Executive agreed to dispose of the GSA's current stock of personal attack alarms and condoms, as the alarms are old and many do not work, whilst there have been reports of condoms tearing. Dan Horsfall was actioned to deal with this and sort the acquisition of new items.

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#### **17. New equipment for the welfare office**

The Executive agreed to allow Dan Horsfall to purchase a new computer and any other equipment required to ensure the Welfare Office is able to accommodate a member of staff and officer, following the appointment of Mel Nichol as Academic and Welfare Coordinator.

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#### **18. Sports budgeting**

Dan Horsfall raised concerns about the level of budgeting for GSA sports. Whilst this level has been agreed for the financial year, it was agreed to review the budget next year and invite officers to discuss the requirements for each of their areas of concern.

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## **19. Plasma Screens and Other Communications Equipment**

Keith Gibson presented a proposal regarding the creation of a network of plasma screen TVs around campus, to keep students informed of the GSA's activities. The Executive felt this proposal needed to be explored further, and actioned Keith Gibson, Rich Rhodes, Richard Mitchell and Jay Walker to investigate all options and report back to the Executive with their recommendations.

It was further agreed not to wait for a resolution to this before purchasing design equipment to enable the GSA Designer to work in the office. The Executive actioned Keith Gibson and Richard Mitchell to purchase this equipment, liaising with the GSA Designer.

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## **20. PhD Student Facilities**

Dan Horsfall raised concerns about the standard of facilities provided for PhD students at the University. He suggested a GSA campaign aimed at both standardisation of the minimum level of facilities across all departments, and improving this minimum level. The Executive agreed that prior to undertaking this campaign, somebody would be hired to conduct research into facilities for PhD students at comparable institutions and throughout the University of York.

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## **21. ISA Representation on the GSA Executive**

The Executive agreed to invite the ISA President, or in their absence another ISA officer, to attend future Executive Meetings, and to be allowed to speak on any matter, but not to vote.

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## **22. Closed Session**