

Graduate Students' Association Council

18/02/2019 5pm

Venue: Vanbrugh VN/044

Minutes

Present: Daniel Lock (Chair)
Sehrish Shafi (President)
Amy Bullard (VP Wellbeing and Community)
Charlotte Chamberlain (VP Academic)
Sofia Sarabia (Events Officer)
Neil Cox (Volunteering Officer)
Sarah Wright (Equality Officer)
Veerle Kappen (Colleges Officer)

In attendance: Pete Gorbert (CEO)
Matt Stallworthy (Communication and Events Coordinator) **Minutes**

Apologies: Kate Densley (Sports Officer)
Maha Naeem (Communities Officer)

Absence: Rounak Gosh (Faculty Rep: Sciences)
Killy Zhao (Faculty Rep: Social Sciences)
Miguel Santos (Faculty Rep: Arts and Humanities)

1. Welcome
2. Apologies (as above)
3. Colleges Officer Appointment
 - VK was invited to address Council by the Chair. VK presented a two-minute speech as to why they would make a good Colleges Officer. VK then left then room and the issue was put to a vote. The vote to co-opt VK to the post of Colleges Officer was unanimous.

Hereafter VK will be referred to by their position: COL (Colleges Officer)
4. Approval of previous minutes
 - Chair and VP: Wellbeing and Community approve the minutes as an accurate record.
5. Matters Arising
 - See Appendix for more details.

[ACTION: R&D TO ADD COLLEGES OFFICER TO THE SOCIAL MEDIA GROUP AND DISTRIBUTE EMAILS INFORMATION]

6. Reports

- a. Written Reports from the Officers
 - i. PRES
 - No questions raised.
 - ii. VP: W&C
 - Chair took opportunity to thank council members for getting involved in Events (WBW). Identified Shine a Light as well publicised.
 - VP:W&C suggested that Council Members with ideas about Mental Health/Illness campaigns to get in touch.&C
 - iii. VP: A
 - Drop-in session redesign to be discussed in AOB.
 - VP:A discussed data gathering, how engagement with academic reps is going, and the benefits and successes of the Rep Forum. VP:A sought input from the Council on developing provision further.

- b. Verbal Reports from Council Members
 - i. Volunteering Officer
 - Has met with R&D and C&E Coordinators to discuss ongoing projects. After deliberation, it has been decided to slow down the project to check about safety issues, concerns with training etc.

[VP W&C provided information about similar volunteering project in Cardiff.]

 - Volunteering index has been set-up and is attracting members. VO is looking into finding more projects in York that could have postgraduate opportunities.
 - VO attended a workshop on marketing volunteering opportunities, reports that it was useful to make new contacts within the University, but wasn't particularly useful.
 - ii. Colleges Officer
 - COL wants to examine the current College provision for postgraduate students.
 - COL to attend Colleges/YUSU/GSA working group to feed in, learn and report back.

[P requests to be involved in this project.]
 - iii. Events Officer
 - EO talked to students in their department to discern why students aren't attending GSA events. General consensus was that most postgraduates live off campus, when events are based on campus. EO wants to create a survey about events to gather more information about how to develop provision.

- Hoping to host a Carnival-style event and Eurovision party (18th May).
EO will be liaising with SO to discuss the possibility of a Summer Ball.
- iv. Equality Officer
 - Talked with R&D about reading list project and to move forward. Also talked about focus group research about students with disabilities.
- v. Faculty Representatives
 - VP A mentioned ongoing programme reviews, themes and how postgraduate community is a problem.

7. Welcome Week Discussion

- Praises: Bar Crawl, it was good to have different routes.

Improvements / areas to look into:

- Promotion: pressure the university to send out details in their comms to incoming students
- Students in private accommodation cba walking to campus
- Nothing received from colleges during welcome
- Campus tours run by UG and are the wrong tone / not going around the postgrad areas
- Lack of information about busses

Ideas for improvement :

- Put pressure on University to improve pre-arrival comms
- Organise meeting with colleges (Ast. Heads and College chairs) to discuss how they can welcome PG students
- GSA to work on Campus tour guides to ensure PG areas / information is included
- PGR volunteers - ask on one off volunteering list whether any PhD students would be interested in giving tours
- Develop a walking service / bus service for students off campus to come to events
- Pressure First to provide information to students earlier
- Look into larger venues in town
- Look at doing a daytime BBQ event in King's Manor
- Look into more Give it a Go sessions
- Design Welcome Week guide with more GSA branding
- Look into more events to help students get to know the city centre

[ACTION: CEC TO SEND LAST YEAR'S WELCOME WEEK GUIDE AROUND TO COUNCIL FOR COMMENT]

8. Strategic Plan

- CEO needs feedback from students, raises questions on how to gather that feedback in other forms than surveys, and informs Council that there would be opportunities to be further involved should Council wish.

[ACTION: VP W&C RAISES POSSIBILITY OF SENDING PREVIOUS STRATEGIC PLANS AND ANNUAL REPORTS TO STUDENTS. CEO TO WORK WITH COMMUNICATION AND EVENTS COORDINATOR TO FACILITATE THIS.]

9. Any Other Business

- Acknowledgement of VO and FR:S on going beyond their duties to help a student during Welcome Back Week.
- VP Academic raised concerns about current student drop in work and queried whether they could be redesigned. This included looking at who attends, the aims of the project, and where they are held.
- Communications and Events Coordinator advertised Mental Illness Awareness Week.
- CEO advertised Postgraduate Community Fund.
- Summer Ball feasibility to be examined by CEO and Council.

Appendix

Actions Summary from the previous Council Meeting (21.01.2019) with updates

| Action | Update for Feb 2019 Meeting |
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| Council Members to share information on Sexual Violence Awareness Week where appropriate. | Closed. Information was distributed where appropriate. |
| Vice-President Wellbeing & Community to look into smoking areas on Heslington East. | Ongoing. VP W&C has been sent a map. Information limited so further development is needed. Will be raised in Health, Safety and Welfare Committee |
| Communications and Events Coordinator to develop volunteering page on GSA Website. | Ongoing. Some new additions of the page include an ability to sign up for one-off volunteering opportunities. |
| Vice-President Wellbeing & Community to look into successful safety scheme at Cardiff University and report back to Council/Volunteering Officer. | Ongoing. VP W&C has received information about the event. It has significant differences to the possible scheme here, but VP W&C will meet with VO to discuss outside Council. |

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| <p>Representation and Democracy Coordinator to put Volunteering Officer in touch with Volunteering Officers to YUSU for collaboration.</p> | <p>Ongoing. Have been in touch, though the original meeting was cancelled. VO hoping to meet before next Council meeting with VP W&C to join.</p> |
| <p>Vice-President Wellbeing & Community to raise issues with buses at Student Life on Campus committee meeting.</p> | <p>Ongoing. Issue has been raised, wide concerns of building work on Heslington East campus. University have delayed public consultation. Issue can be raised at Student Life Committee (18th May) and Student Life Operations Group (9th May).</p> |
| <p>Volunteering Officer to examine interest in night walking scheme and create a plan for a pilot project before reporting back to Council.</p> | <p>Ongoing. VO to slow down project and to look into working with the University and addressing safety concerns. R&D to work on this too.</p> |
| <p>Communities Officer to examine provision for Wellbeing Wednesday.</p> | <p>Ongoing. VP W&C highlighted low attendance at Wellbeing Wednesdays for a few consecutive weeks. The events will now restart after Easter.</p> |
| <p>Representation and Democracy Coordinator to put Sports Officer in touch with the GSA Research Assistant.</p> | <p>Closed. Sports Officer is currently organising a meeting with the Research Assistant.</p> |
| <p>Vice-President Wellbeing & Community to support Sports Officer in an examination of current University/Union policy on transgender and non-binary persons.</p> | <p>Ongoing. VP Wellbeing and Community to liaise with Sports Officer about how to proceed.</p> |
| <p>Representation and Democracy Coordinator to meet with Sports Officer to investigate how best to proceed with Leave of Absences Assessment.</p> | <p>Ongoing. Representation and Democracy Coordinator has met with the Sports Officer and has provided some information to ground their ongoing research.</p> |
| <p>Events Officer to work with Communication and Events Coordinator.</p> | <p>Ongoing.</p> |
| <p>Representation and Democracy Coordinator to put Equality Officer in touch with the Advice and Welfare Coordinator regarding Workshop Training Project</p> | <p>Closed. Advice and Welfare Coordinator has met with Equality Officer and work is proceeding.</p> |

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| <p>Representation and Democracy Coordinator to work with Equality Officer to assess Reading List project.</p> | <p>Ongoing. EO to work with R&D to research Reading Lists and assess the best possible avenue forward. EO to liaise with appropriate staff at the Library to gather relevant information.</p> |
| <p>President to raise issue of timetabling at Student Life Operations Group Committee.</p> | <p>Completed. Walter from timetabling with look into the issue.</p> |
| <p>Vice-President Wellbeing and Community to email details regarding Sexual Violence Awareness Week to all Council Members.</p> | <p>Closed. Emails were sent out.</p> |
| <p>Representation and Democracy Coordinator to distribute information regarding future Council Meetings to all members.</p> | <p>Closed. All Council have been informed about upcoming meetings.</p> |
| <p>CEO to establish Council Member email addresses.</p> | <p>Closed. Email addresses were established and have been distributed to the Council. Addresses are now active and in use.</p> |