

Graduate Students' Association Council

09.03.2020

Venue: Spring Lane (SLB/205)

Minutes

Present: Purnur Altay (President)
Clara Garcia (VP: Wellbeing and Community)
Jane Baston (VP: Academic)
Suzanne Lengewa (Chair)
Jessie Shepherd (Equalities Officer)
Elizabeth Kuria (Colleges Officer)
Daniel Ghete (Faculty Rep: Sciences)
Kristian Putnam (Faculty Rep: Social Sciences)

In attendance: Darryl Butcher (CEO)
Chris Bovis (Minutes)
Troy Carruthers (Interim Communications and Events Coordinator)

Apologies: Ayse Ciftci (Sports Officer)
Minko Minev (Communities Officer)
Amy Hopkins (Faculty Rep: Arts and Humanities)

Absence: Sameer Jangam (Volunteering Officer)

1. Welcome
2. Apologies (as above)
3. Approval of previous minutes
 - a. **VP WC** and **P** approve the previous minutes.
4. Matters arising
 - a. Actions from the previous meeting
 - i. See Action Log
5. Reports
 - a. Written Reports from the Officers
 - i. President
 1. No written report as the President accidentally sent her report to the wrong drive. She apologises and it will be added shortly.
 2. YorGuarantor is up and running!
 3. YorProperty is going forward, but slowly. There's a lot of people at the University who need to input and check things. Currently trying to find alternatives and meet with relevant parties.
 4. Reading Lists. Met with the Library and got a positive response. After a consultation with Academic Staff, there seems to be movement towards putting some information online. Even if restricted to UoY students only. Could be online by the end of the year.

5. Students with caring responsibilities. Working to gather data and develop options to improve facilities and experiences for students with families and caring responsibilities.
6. Employability. **P** wants to grow PG employability, working with careers and holding events.
- ii. VP: Wellbeing and Community
 1. Reaching students and better representation. Online programme of events for Distance Learners and focus groups for Sexual Harassment and Misconduct. Also set up the BAME Book Club.
 2. National meeting with other SUs, to see what others are doing and what we can introduce here.
 3. Mental Health campaign. Survey is going through an ethical review.
 4. 'Taking care of each other' events - sofa in market square and talking to students about how to support each other at University. Another event on community building and isolation this Thursday.
 5. BAME Practitioner at Open Door after work by Amy last year. They have now been contracted.
 6. National Day of Action against Sexual Violence is in the pipeline, after working with other SUs around the country.
 7. Sports Tournament in the works. May happen, may not - but is currently being discussed.
 8. [Action: Council to share VP WC events and social media posts]
- iii. VP: Academic
 1. Trip to Maastricht to work on the partnership. People from Maastricht are visiting this week are coming along to talk about the student experience and to share best practice.
 2. University Strategy. First steps are complete and there's a student engagement element coming up.
 3. LibInSpo - Big success this year. The winning idea was a family room, but other ideas are being implemented.
- b. Verbal Reports from Council Members
 - i. **E** has added some points to the agenda and will raise them later.
- c. Verbal Reports from Faculty Representatives
 - i. **FR:SS** has had queries about the strike.
6. GSA Staffing Update
 - a. Interim Communications and Events Coordinator in position. Troy Carruthers - his email is still the same, if you're looking to hold events.
 - b. Representation and Democracy Coordinator is leaving the role. Recruitment should be open soon. Council wishes to thank Chris for his service.
7. Strike Update
 - a. Withheld pay. **P** working with YUSU and the University to determine where to invest withheld pay. **P** has raised concerns about refunds, and is being redirected to the official procedure. Now looking to invest the money in projects that benefit students. Mental Health provision and student welfare is a potential focus. Some money being potentially considered for investment into the skills workshops and

writing support. Family rooms, expansions of the advice service and student voice assistants roles. Also having regular meetings with Senior University staff to monitor the situation.

8. [VP A] Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)
 - a. PTES opens on 14th April and runs through until June. It's open to all PGT students and people should encourage students to fill in the survey. It's very important to measure how departments are doing and where they can improve.
9. Annual General Meeting
 - a.
10. [Last minute addition] Elections
 - a.
11. [Last minute addition] International Bank Accounts
 - a. Partners of international students face problems and don't have the rights. Is it possible for the university to offer leases with partner names (to grant those partners some rights).
12. [Last minute addition] Halifax Playground
 - a. **EO** is Family Network Coordinator too and has had issues with the family playground in Halifax being unsafe for children - rubbish, old equipment etc. Potential option of the GSA replacing the equipment. Suggestion of the Community Fund next term.
13. [Last minute addition] Advice Service Proposal
 - a. Working together with YUSU as part of a University/SU collaboration forum - bid to increase provision of the GSA Advice Service. Increasing demand of the service has led to a reduction in other responsibilities of our Advisors.
14. Any Other Business