

**MINUTES OF THE SECOND COUNCIL COMMITTEE
HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2011 AT 6.30 p.m.
IN THE WILLIAMS ROOM.**

Present : As per sederunt sheets

Apologies : S. Tuckwood, A. Daly, T. Gore, E. Docherty, D.
D. McCusker, G. Hope, C. Shi

Attending : A. Conacher (Advice Centre) Representatives of the
Palestine Society, G. Reynolds (IT)

Chair : Iain Smith

1. WELCOME

It was noted that Chris Forster, School Representative, Chemistry, had stood down from his post since the last meeting. Chris was thanked for his contributions.

1.1: Apologies/Sederunt

1.2. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

A: Items for Discussion

2. President's Severance

I. Smith noted that enquiries had been received with regard to the remainder of S. Ritchie's salary after his resignation. A statement had been released shortly after the resignation on 7 November, which I. Smith accepted may have been unclear in some respects, due to ongoing employment matters. S. Ritchie had given his consent for the issue to be raised at Council, and *The Journal* had also approached the sabbatical officers regarding this matter. An email had been circulated to Council to make the situation clear and it was decided to open the issue for discussion at this evening's meeting should there be any further questions.

- J. Helle asked how the sum of the president's severance was decided. I. Smith explained that it was agreed by the sabbatical officers, through discussions with B. Hay. The sum, was based on the view, reinforced by external advice, that S. Ritchie was an employee and therefore entitled to the benefits that employment legislation affords.

- Kenneth Law expressed his overall support for the decisions taken, but also noted his regret at the way things were handled. He felt that that Council should have had it explained at the emergency meeting following S. Ritchie's resignation that he was to receive a severance package, even if the full details could not be divulged at that time. He explained that Council did not want to be in a position where it appeared that issues were being concealed from them, even when that was not the case.

3. VP Student Support, Amy Johnson

3.1 University Debt Policy

A. Johnson updated Council on what she regarded as the University's lack of a coherent debt policy. She wished to flag this issue for Council as an issue which the Executive Officers were looking into. She had spoken with the head of Student Services in the hope of taking this forward. Currently, students with outstanding debts to the University are unable to graduate, or register, and there is no official policy on this. GUSRC would like the University to consider implementing a repayment plan, similar to other institutions, which would allow students to continue without any barriers while clearing any debts at the same time. A proposal was currently being drawn up with GUSRC Advice Centre.

3.2 Eden Springs

A. Johnson noted that this issue had been raised at a previous Council meeting and at the most recent Principal's Question Time. After A. Johnson and E. Docherty had researched this issue, it was discovered that although the business is based in the Middle East, the water is sourced locally in Scotland and there was therefore no environmental or economic argument against the company. She suggested that GUSRC push the University to award a contract to a different company after the Eden Springs contract runs out in May 2012, though arguments for this were yet to be established and should not be political in nature.

[A. Johnson
to circulate
email to
Council](#)

3.3. Hospitality Services

A. Johnson noted that Hospitality Services had started asking students who have not bought HS food to leave the Fraser Building or not sit down during lunch times. Several complaints had been received from students. After speaking with HS, it did not appear that a solution would be easily reached. This highlighted a lack of space for students to eat lunch on campus.

- D. Ralston noted that it used to be the policy that students who were not purchasing food could not sit down only during peak times. It was confirmed that this had now changed.

- **A. Johnson suggested that Council members consult with students as to whether this was a serious issue and report back to her.**
- I. Smith noted that QMU had brought in a similar policy with regard to food not purchased on the premises. This further highlighted the lack of space for students who do not purchase lunch on campus.

4. VP Learning and Development, James Harrison

4.1. Update on Student Teaching Awards

J. Harrison noted that nominations for this event had now opened and that publicity would be appearing soon. Council members willing to help distribute publicity should contact him.

4.2. Graduate Attributes and Class Reps

J. Harrison gave some detail as to how Graduate Attributes benefited students and explained that the University was increasing focus on this. He would be working closely with School reps who would, in turn, work with Class Reps to make sure that it was understood across the Schools. He would follow the meeting with an email with more detail.

5. VP Media and Communications, Iain Smith

5.1. Publicity Update

- Student Teaching Awards had been completed
- Strategic Plan was going to print on Friday 2 December
- The National Student Survey was taking place in week two of the second term. A designer was currently working on this.

5.2. Student Media Update

- Guardian – the Guardian would be going to print on Wednesday of next week, and there did not appear to be any problems.
- GUST – had recently conducted an interview with the sabbatical officers and hoped to take part in another one in future. GUST would also be present to film a package on the upcoming Carers Policy launch.
- Subcity – I. Smith had a meeting with Phil Kennedy, the station manager, to discuss recent problems. It was decided that Subcity management meetings would be suspended as it was accepted that they would not be able to achieve much in the last few weeks of term. The half-year review meetings would be taking place in the last week of term. The station manager was confident that with a few personnel changes, the difficulties could be turned around.
- GUM – GUM were currently prepping issue two which would appear early in the new term.

5.3. Media Week

I. Smith welcomed any council members who wished to take part in a working group to discuss ideas for Media Week along with members of student media and other interested parties.

5.4. Council Office

It was noted that members were not making great use of the Council Office and I. Smith wished to gauge the reasons why. He also noted that new computers had been ordered for the room.

- F. Weber noted that many students found it difficult to find the room to speak to council members. He also noted that the wifi was very poor.
- The possibilities for the room were currently being discussed.

6. Women's Aid Volunteers: Edith Halvarsson, Gender Equality Officer

E. Halvarsson had received an email from Women's Aid Volunteers Glasgow, asking for volunteers for a charity event being held on 22 December. F. Weber suggested that E. Halvarsson and A. Johnson approach the GUSRC SVSS Coordinator to explore ways to contact students interested in volunteering.

7. Civil Partnership/Marriage Consultation, Kenneth Law, General Rep

I. Smith noted the paper and thanked the working group for their work on it. Council was asked to support this paper as GUSRC's response to the government consultation on the issue of Gay Marriage. **If approved, the document would be passed to the Advice team for finalisation.**

- J. Harrison suggested removing reference to opposing views in the response, fearing this could confuse the issue, as the document clearly backed equal marriage.
- J. Meaden sought clarification on this point, and suggested that it should be noted in the response that opposing views were aired, but that the majority voted in favour. He argued that this was more representative.
- It was agreed to acknowledge that GUSRC understood that there would be opposing views, but that Council backed the government position on equal marriage.

K. Law to
consult with
J. Harrison
and the
Advice
Centre

8. Social Sciences Podcasts: Hera Hussain, UG Social Sciences Conv.

H. Hussain had been campaigning to have lectures posted on the internet as podcasts. She noted that psychology already did this, but wanted to check with council that she could circulate a survey to all the School Reps in Social Sciences to generate feedback on this idea.

- F. Weber suggested not limiting this to Social Sciences.
- I. Smith requested that he be kept in the loop on any developments, and also noted that he would be hesitant to circulate another survey to students as GUSRC was working with the University to reduce the amount of surveys students are sent. He suggested looking at the issue again to see if a survey was required. J. Harrison suggested opening a dialogue to make use of the new Council structure.

9. Convenor/School Representative Online Presence: H. Hussain

H. Hussain had spoken with D. Copsey (Employability Officer) who had suggested creating a webpage profile with a link from the College web page. She suggested that GUSRC explore this for every college.

- J. Harrison requested that H. Hussain send him an email that could be distributed to Council, explaining how she was able to get her College to agree to her idea.
- G. Reynolds suggested that it would be simpler to create profile pages on the GUSRC site and ask the Colleges to link to it.

H. Hussain also noted that the University and GUSRC celebrated teaching staff, but students were overlooked in this regard. She noted that Social Sciences were creating a 'students in the spotlight' webpage and suggested that GUSRC could include something similar on the official website.

- I. Smith did not think this would be difficult to achieve. He cautioned that Council would be expected to take a lead in encouraging students to become involved with such a project.
- F. Weber suggested that submissions would need to be verified to confirm that they were true.

10. Minibus Provision: Chris Day, First Year Rep

C. Day circulated a paper regarding his proposal to extend a bus service to the Vet School. He wanted to set up a working group to secure funding from the University for this.

- B. Hay explained that GUSRC linked, and were currently in discussion with the University in order to increase funding that will enable GUSRC to maintain the current level of service. He advised that the main issue was not the cost of purchasing a minibus, but the ongoing running costs. He suggested that C. Day consult with the Executive, before coming to a conclusion as to how this may be pursued. C. Day agreed to consult with anybody who was interested, and would not continue if it didn't look feasible.

11. Class Representatives: Dave Walker, School Rep, Life Sciences

D. Walker noted that he had been having difficulty with the Class Rep system, owing to the fact that University staff had not been submitting class rep lists to their offices so they could be passed to GUSRC. He believed that the School placed no value on the Class Rep role and wanted to improve perceptions of their role around the University.

- D. Mackay noted that the Law School was considering reforming the way that the Class Rep system worked for them. He had passed the details of this to J. Harrison and it was currently being discussed.
- F. Weber noted that in his experience as a Class Rep trainer, around 50% of class reps took the job because nobody else was standing for it. He did not believe that this was motivational.
- H. Hussain suggested to J. Harrison and C. Shi that there should be an informal meeting of Class Reps in the Williams Room. She emphasised the need to motivate the class reps at the beginning of the year, rather than simply acknowledging them once their term was over. N. Smith agreed

12. International Student Survey on Tier 4 Visa Changes, Jani Helle, International Students Officer

The UK Border Agency was changing the Tier 4 Visa requirements in April 2012. He explained that this would make it harder for many students from outside EU to come to the UK to study. The main change was altering the length of a visa from 8 years to 5 years. This applied to the whole of the UK, which meant that Scotland would become less attractive as it was more difficult to complete an undergraduate and a postgraduate degree in Scotland, than in England in 5 years. NUS Scotland was circulating a survey to generate evidence of effects which the UK Border Agency would need before changes could be made. A. Johnson added that this change had been made with English universities in mind, as most English universities offered 3 year degrees. J. Helle wished to receive Council's consent to circulate the NUS survey.

Exec to
circulate NUS
survey

13. Welcoming International Students Fund, J. Helle

J. Helle explained that the Scottish Government were funding events and improvements for welcoming international students to Glasgow. In order to apply, he asked Council to give him feedback on how they were received upon arriving in Scotland and what they think could be improved. A link would go up on the SRC Facebook group. The deadline was in just over a week.

B: Items for Approval

14. Election Report

Circulated

C: For Information

15. Council Reports

F. Weber,

- Learning and Teaching Committee had agreed to collect data on dissertations and consider a cross-college dissertation policy.
- RIO predicted a £500,000 drop in fees in the College of Arts next year.

N. Smith,

- Noted that the letter S. Ritchie had circulated to Council explaining his resignation had not been circulated to the wider student body. I. Smith explained that this was because S. Ritchie had not contacted GUSRC to agree to this.

16. Health Week Report

Noted

17. AOCB

D. Mackay,

- Plagiarism did not cover Facebook groups and other such online media. He suggested getting the University to update its inappropriate Collaboration Guidelines to take account of the existence of groups.
- Received a complaint about the way the International Office was applying GPA across the University with regard to applications for studying abroad. J. Harrison explained this was an ongoing issue and that they were in touch with the Advice Centre.

A. Johnson,

- Consensus was sought on the altering of the academic year - a vote which was to take place at the next Senate meeting. Senate members would be briefed in full on this issue.

Anon,

- Noted that they had been threatened by a man with a knife behind the Adam Smith building the previous evening. GUSRC would be working with the University to increase security and lighting, and raise

awareness of such incidents across campus.

J. Helle,

- Regarding the student who was run over on University Avenue, J. Helle suggested looking into supplying reflectors.

A. Johnson to
discuss with
J. Helle

Movember

GUSRC raised £2,256

The next meeting of Council will take place at 1830 on Thursday 26 January.

The meeting concluded at 2035