

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 25th FEBRUARY 2016 AT 6.30 p.m.
IN THE WILLIAMS ROOM**

Present: I French, L McDougall, M Harris, E Napier, M Hau, K Powell, F Taylor, O Schafer, D White, B Rooney, S Al-Wasity, B Simpson, S Maier, E Ross, I Hafeez, A Pancheva, H Kay, T Lohmus, J Richardson, K Muat, R O'Fee, J Benson, D Guthrie, F Nokhbatolfoghahai, R Slater

Apologies: M Deans, L Kuehme, S Kholeif, S Yue, C Watson, L Evens, C Hill

Attending: B Hay, A Bankier

1. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

There were no matters arising and the minutes were approved.

2. Reports

2.1 Liam King – President

L King highlighted appendix 2 of his report on council structure and asked council members to think about that section and feedback thoughts to him at the next meeting.

2.2 Una Marie Darragh – VP Student Support

U Darragh informed council that peer supporters had been re-scheduled to the 16th March at 1pm, round reading room. U Darragh will also put this update on the council facebook page.

2.3 Gemma Gratton – VP Education

G Gratton thanked those council members who had answered questions on Language strategy.

G Gratton informed council that new furniture would be trialled in the Senate Room on the 12th April and asked council members to go along and feedback to her.

STAs – G Gratton reminded council that it was the final day for nominations tomorrow. She added that at present they had already broken the record for

most nominations. Council were asked to help out with the event if they were available.

NSS – G Gratton asked council members to try and promote NSS whenever they are in contact with class reps or final year students to help boost engagement.

2.4 Ameer Ibrahim – VP Student Activities

No questions or items highlighted

2.5 Other Council Reports Submitted

M Harris - Charities, Clubs and Societies Officer

L Evens - Environmental Officer

E Napier - Age Equality Officer

L McDougall - Disability Equality Officer

L McDougall updated council on the accessibility review of the Learning and Teaching Hub. Informing council on some of the items raised.

- Potential new changing space (Larger accessible toilet)
- Improved accessibility to higher level
- Gender neutral toilets on every floor
- Re-think currently proposed pillars to ensure they not going to cause problems from the visually impaired.

They will be producing a report and feeding back and then have a follow up meeting.

Q L King asked where the main entrance would be for wheelchair access.

L McDougall responded that there would be wheelchair access at all the entrances to the building although some will be easier than others.

The University Avenue entrance will require traversing a series of ramps to access the main social area and would be the least easy in terms of accessibility. L McDougall added that the entrances to the building come in at a number of levels.

L McDougall encouraged council members to get in touch if they had any questions.

Milia Hau – International Students Officer

Milia Hau informed council members that new visa restrictions on tier 4 international students now required that students need to have at least

£9000 in a bank account in addition to their fees to apply for an extension to their visa.

L King asked Milia to speak with U Darragh regarding any issues.

I French - Sexual Orientation Equality Officer
K Powell - UG Convenor Arts
O Schafer - UG Convenor Science and Engineering

F O'Donnell – PG Convenor Social Sciences

G Grattton thanked F O'Donnell and E Ross for their Peer Training Event

D White – PG Convenor Arts
B Rooney – PG Convenor MVLS
I Hafeez – School Rep Engineering

L King asked I Hafeez to update council on the potential kitchen space in the James Watt Building.

I Hafeez responded that although the potential of a kitchen space for student use was discussed it would be difficult to implement at present due to a shortage of suitable space. L King asked I Hafeez to keep him updated of any progress on this issue.

L king asked academic reps to take this forward.

Mihaela Dimitrova – School Rep Business

Has been asked about the problem in the library and desk hogging. MD to email G Gratton regarding this.

A Pancheva – School Rep Computing Science

A Pancheva asked G Gratton about a email she had sent regarding lecture recording. G Gratton will respond to this asap.

H Kay - School Rep Geographical and Earth Sciences
S Maier - School Rep Humanities
S Dallas - School Rep Maths and Stats
Tuuli Lohmus – School Rep Physics and Astronomy

L King asked if T Lohmus responded to the consultation. She confirmed she had.

J Benson - General Rep

**MD to email
GG
regarding
desk
hogging
issue**

**GG to
respond to
AP re:
lecture
recording**

F Nokhbatolfoghahai - General Rep
R O'Fee - First Year Rep
K Muat, First Year Rep

L King asked council members to feel free to experiment with different styles of council report.

3. Academic Forum

G Gratton reported back to council on the academic forum which took place on the 16th February.

Counselling and Psychological services attended, along with M Fischbacher-Smith who was discussing assessment and feedback and NSS results. There was positive feedback regarding the event and another forum is planned for some time before exams. M Fischbacher-Smith keen to attend future meetings. G Gratton was advised that it was a valuable mechanism for engaging with the University as it reversed the usual power balance where the majority attending are staff members. Minutes will be circulated to Council in due course.

GG to
circulate
minutes

L King thanked G Gratton for organising the meeting.

L McDougall asked if welfare reps would be invited again. G Gratton responded that they would.

4. Principal of introducing new Officer positions - Religion & Belief equality officer and Home Student Officer.

4.1 Religion & Belief Equality Officer

F Nokhbatolfoghahai delivered a short presentation in support of introducing a new position, Religion and Belief Equality Officer, to the GUSRC Council.

Discussion followed around a number of points

- Such a role would have to be clearly interfaith.
- There would be some crossover with both Race Equality Officer and International Students Officer.
- University should be a secular space.
- Could push for more neutral space for student within the campus redevelopment. Perhaps like Edinburgh where the space is prominent and used by all students.
- Is there a need for more officers? suggested a more generic welfare officer role, or restructuring the current positions rather than creating

additional positions.

- Other welfare officers represent minority groups that may have been the victim of inequality sometimes stemming from religion. 50% of student body is not a minority group.
- There will be better provision in the new campus.
- Many groups have no specific space on campus.
- Could promote favouritism of specific religions. Students may vote for whomever represents their own religion regardless of whether they are the better candidate.
- Would be difficult to represent all religions satisfactorily.
- More council members could increase engagement with the student population.
- Would be a lot to ask council members if any of the current roles were to be extended to take this on.

L King asked that F Nokhbatolfoghahai, the welfare representatives and U Darragh meet to discuss this further and bring it back to the next council meeting for further consideration.

**UD to
circulate
doodle poll
to discuss**

4.2 Home Student Officer

K Muat delivered a short presentation in support of introducing a new position – Home Student Officer.

Discussion followed raising a number of points.

- Is this not part of the VP Student Support remit. The response was that while it is, the issue would benefit from a more focused approach, too big an issue to be overlooked.
- Correlation between distance and drop out rates?
- Scale of role similar to that of International Students Officer.
- Role could push for better provision for these students on campus such as lockers.
- Can bring issues identified by home student network to council.
- Potential for involvement in local student orientation, possibility for high school visits.
- Potential to work with International Student Officer position on integration.
- Could be part of General Rep remit.
- Concern over ever expanding roles on council.
- Who would be eligible to vote for the constituency.

L King asked that the General Reps and Welfare Officers meet to discuss the constituency, and how the role would work and bring their findings to the

next council meeting.

L King thanked R Slater, GUU President for attending council.

U Darragh
will
circulate
doodle poll
to arrange
meeting

5. AOCB

5.1 - Sports Clubs and GUSRC affiliation. M Harris informed council that GUSRC will be meeting with GUSA to discuss this ongoing issue and asked council to think about it for discussion at a future meeting.

5.2 - Council fundraising – M Harris asked council members to get in touch if they have any ideas for charities. A poll will be created and council members were asked to respond.

5.3 - GUSRC Elections. J Benson raised her concerned about the lack of promotion of Hustings. L King responded that would be an email to all students tomorrow and that there would be a live stream of the hustings.

5.4 - By Election – L King raised to council the potential of a by-election being held to try and elect students to the vacant roles.

5.5 - Council Reports Online and handover documents - A Pancheva asked if it would be possible for the council reports to be posted online like the minutes?

L King responded that it was something that could be considered. B Hay commented that there was at present a facility for the sabbatical officers to write a blog on the website.

A Pancheva also asked that handover documents should be submitted sooner and be compulsory.

L King acknowledged that it had been the case that they were not always completed in the past and added that it might be better to insist the documents are submitted in advance of the final council meeting in April.

5.6 - Volunteering, Clubs and Societies Awards – Ameer Ibrahim informed council that the VCS Awards would take place on the 24th march and nominations would close 17th march

5. Date of next meeting, 17th March 2016, 6.30pm