

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY THE 23rd APRIL 2020 AT 5.30 PM
VIA ZOOM

Present:

Apologies: N Ranpuria, J Quinn

Attending: P Swinton, J Small

- 1) Welcome, Apologies and Sederunt
- 2) Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising
Minutes from previous meeting approved.
- 3) Coronavirus

S Kirby outlined that the SRC Sabbatical Officers would begin the meeting by each speaking on various matters pertaining to developments regarding the current situation with coronavirus.

L Brady addressed some of the confusion students have experienced from communications regarding the University's No Detriment policy. He said the SRC have been involved in the policy's formation from its early stages and that the policy will apply to all taught students (undergraduate and postgraduate), with the hope that it can also be applied to PGR students in the future. With regards to student confusion over whether exams will take a '24 hour' or 'open book' format, L Brady understands different communications on this matter have been circulated (including an email sent to students on 22/04/2020) and that the nature of exam formats will be decided by the University's Schools.

T McFerran addressed concerns that have been raised regarding pay for nursing students who are undertaking nursing positions in light of the coronavirus outbreak. The issues in question concern a disparity in the wages paid to 3rd and 4th students, as well as the pausing of bursaries. T McFerran said it had now been confirmed that 3rd and 4th year students will receive the same pay and that bursaries will continue to be granted as normal. Concerns had also been raised with regards to accommodation and wellbeing for nursing/medicine students from the University. T McFerran has been working closely with Anne Marie Rice from the Nursing School on solutions, with a flat at Maclay residences

having now been allocated for use by NHS staff from the University. Additionally, from mid-May onwards, wellbeing checks will be given to all student nurses who are undertaking full time positions in the NHS. There will also be wellbeing support available to medical students undertaking full time positions, with the plan being to tie the introduction of the University's wellbeing service in with the NHS's introduction of a temporary wellbeing hotline for its workers, and to garner feedback on the results of this.

T McFerran said, following the recent HRC report, in two weeks' time a survey will be released, in partnership with the University's Equality and Diversity Unit, designed to gather feedback on racial harassment. Council members will be asked in due course to circulate the survey amongst their Class Representative and School networks.

T McFerran said, with regards to IT provisions for disabled students, most available laptops have now been loaned out, however, students in need should contact their Disability Adviser or Adviser of Studies as there are still a limited number of laptops available.

S Kirby said in around a month's time the Scottish Parliament will discuss Purpose Built Student Accommodation, specifically with regards to the possibility of policy amendments which would allow students to be released from their contracts early. With PBSAs in Glasgow refusing to allow students to leave their contracts early, the SRC has, along with many student unions across the country, been in contact with MSPs to ask for a resolution to this issue and is considering proposing bans on advertising/event participation for any PBSAs who do not become more flexible in this regard.

L Brady said a Start of Term Working Group has been established to discuss options on when students will start the first term of the next academic year. The ideas under discussion include the possibility of starting the term in September (as normal), delaying starting the term until October/November or possibly having students begin their studies in Semester 2 in January. Rachel Sandison is chairing the WG and has been tasked with writing a paper outlining the best option which will be submitted to SMG in around three weeks' time. There will not be a decision publicised until after this time, however, currently the most likely option is looking to be that the University will look to have UG students begin the term as close to their originally scheduled start as possible, with a staggered start for PG students between November and January.

S Kirby opened the floor to comments and questions on the SRC and the University's work in relation to the coronavirus outbreak.

D Henderson asked if provisional plans for starting next term were subject to change due to the situation with coronavirus. He also asked if there was a possibility that the whole of next year's teaching may be conducted online.

L Brady said that, with the Start of Term WG only recently being established and the large number of opinions and options to consider, decisions have not yet been reached on these matters. He added that a matrix is in development which will help test different options to determine what approach would be most beneficial to students.

A Bhardwaj asked if any discussions have taken place regarding the refunding of student tuition fees due to the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

S Kirby said there are currently no discussions taking place on the refunding of student loans.

D Ealey said that a lecturer within Level 3 Mathematics told students that there is no No Detriment policy in place for these students, however other guidance contradicts this. D Ealey asked if clarity could be provided on this.

L Brady said that while it is still being developed with regards to Level 3 and joint honours students, the No Detriment policy will apply to these students.

A W Ng said some international students are considering the option of transferring to a university in their home country due to online teaching not being an ideal choice. She asked if the University would be agreeable to students leaving.

L Brady said he acknowledges this as a fair concern, particularly for students from some Asian countries whose universities do not recognise online teaching in the same way as they do face-to-face tuition. He said that it is up to the University's students to decide what is best for them and added that, whilst he cannot speak for the University's opinions on students leaving, the fact that the situation with coronavirus is impacting all students means the University is looking for ways to support all of its students during this crisis.

Hannah Baer said another email from Jill Morrison has been sent out to students clarifying that there might be open book exams as part of the upcoming exam diet.

E Hardy asked if an approximate date of when students would start next year's term could be provided, given that many students may feel apprehensive about signing accommodation contracts when their studies will potentially not start until a later date.

S Kirby said an approximate date could not currently be provided as the matter is still under discussion.

L Brady acknowledged the potential for frustration caused by this uncertainty but said a decision would not be publicised until at least after the next government guidelines on coronavirus measures had been released.

S Kirby said there is also the possibility that the SMG may reject the plans proposed in the Start of Term WG's paper and ask for new proposals to be devised. S Kirby believes, however, that the University have responded in a timely manner with regards to the pandemic and are in a good place with regards to planning. He added that Council members would be kept informed as to any decisions made by the University.

L O'Connor asked for any clarity on how a shift to online teaching (in the next semester) might impact accreditation for students studying professional degrees, given that the 4th and 5th year of these courses normally require hands-on training.

L Brady said this matter is under discussion so clarity cannot be provided at this time, however, Jill Morrison, a member of the Start of Term WG and former Dean for Learning and Teaching in the College of MVLS, is able to provide insight on these issues and ensure they are addressed.

T McFerran said this issue is affecting nursing students also as, unless they take a paid position created due to the coronavirus situation, under NHS advice the summer placement hours that these students would normally undertake are currently unavailable. At present, the availability of placements for medicine and nursing students in 4th and 5th year will be at the NHS's discretion.

S Kirby said ensuring that the concerns of professional degree students are addressed is a priority for the University, and that information on any developments would be communicated to SRC Council in due course.

S Kirby said that Council members should start thinking about compiling their handovers for the student who will be assuming their position in the next academic year. He stressed that handovers be as informative as possible, given the challenging circumstances under which the new representatives will assume position.

L Brady explained the information required for an effective handover and said that examples would be circulated to Council members for guidance when compiling their own.

T McFerran offered guidance on what is required from the handovers of the Council's welfare representatives and said that he would like to set up a meeting with these representatives and incoming VP-Student Support E McCabe to discuss projects being taken on next year and to identify areas which could be improved upon.

K Summers said she would circulate handover preparation guidance among her 1st Year Representatives and General Representatives and would touch base with any of these Council members who wished to be advised further on how to prepare a handover.

4) VCS Report

The SRC's Volunteering, Clubs and Societies Awards took place on March 13th, 2020. The awards ceremony was a success and photos of the night are available to view on the SRC website. K Summers would like to thank all those involved in the organisation and delivery of the event.

S Kirby thanked K Summers for coordinating the event and commended her on its success.

5) Council Reports

a) SRC President: Scott Kirby

The University Rector Elections have been postponed until the next academic semester. The University and the SRC have based this decision on the belief that holding an election during the current circumstances would not yield an engaged response from students and, as such, would be undemocratic.

The SRC has continued its discourse with the University's Graduate Schools regarding PGR representation and, through further discussion, will continue to form a picture of how

PGR representation works currently, with a view to reviewing and developing this system in conjunction with the Schools to ensure PGR students are effectively represented. S Kirby thanked L Brady, J Quinn and the SRC Council's PG Representatives/Convenors for advancing these discussions thus far.

The University's Climate Change Strategy Consultation has now been completed with GUEST currently compiling the results. S Kirby would like to thank all those who promoted the consultation to the student and staff body, particularly K Summers who held workshops designed to increase engagement with the consultation.

Discussion surrounding the recent UCU strikes and the dispute involving UUK and USS is ongoing. Due to the coronavirus crisis, negotiations that were due to take place to settle the dispute have been paused/delayed. S Kirby will meet with UCU on 24/04/2020 to discuss the situation's progress.

The SRC has been assisting the Glasgow University Arms Divestment Coalition (a group formed of a significant number of students who are lobbying the University to divest from investing in the arms trade) with having their concerns addressed by the University. Currently the Defense Sector Working Group do not look to be taking on the coalition's recommendations, however, there is possibly still time for this to be changed.

From discussions at meetings of the University Court and Finance Committee, the University has indicated that, due to the current pandemic, there will be no new building construction begun that was originally planned as part of the Campus Development project. Buildings that will be completed once workers return to site will be the Adam Smith Business School, the Research Hub, the Clarice Pears Building and the James McCune Smith Learning Hub. As building work on university campuses has currently been deemed inessential, the completion dates for these buildings have been pushed back. Unfortunately, the JMSLH is not expected to be completed in time for the next academic semester but the hope is it will open at some point during the next academic year.

With regards to the University's financial situation as a consequence of the current pandemic, it will be undertaking cost-saving measures to mitigate any loss of revenue caused by the crisis, such as the loss of revenue normally generated through international student recruitment. With the sector looking to lose £2.5 billion without any government intervention, discussions regarding the University's financial position as a result of Covid-19 are ongoing and will likely continue into the next academic year.

b) VP-Student Activities: Kirsty Summers

The administration of clubs and societies has been moved online while the SRC offices are closed. This includes the HEAR application process, so any student who wishes to have their Office Bearer role recognised on their transcript should submit a completed HEAR Reflective Log to clubsandsocieties@src.gla.ac.uk

K Summers and T McFerran have been working on a programme entitled 'De-stress at a Distance' which aims to adapt the Take-a-Break campaign to the current social distancing measures. The programme has involved Council members contributing videos of themselves performing daily activities that are then shared on social media. K Summers would like to thank all those who have contributed a video and would encourage other Council members to do the same, and to also engage with the Look After Yourself Facebook page for information on current cross-campus activities. Any videos should be submitted to communications@src.gla.ac.uk

At a recent Cross-Campus meeting involving both outgoing and incoming student body Executive Boards, Freshers' Week was discussed, with the current plan being to proceed in delivering this event as originally planned. Plans will be flexible to accommodate developments regarding the situation with coronavirus. Freshers' Helper applications are currently open and Council members are encouraged to apply for one of these roles.

K Summers further reiterated the importance of Council members compiling their handovers for next year.

K Summers thanked the members of Council for their work over the academic year.

D Henderson asked if Council member roles are automatically listed on students' HEARs.

E Hardy said each Council member's role had already been added to their HEAR.

c) VP-Education: L Brady

The University Library is offering students free access to media-streaming service Kanopy. Students are encouraged to engage with the service as the Library are reviewing whether to continue with providing Kanopy due to the service's expense.

At a meeting of the Theme Leader Group on 10/03/2020, ideas for the Enhancement Theme were discussed. The Enhancement Theme is a Scottish-wide initiative for all HE institutions and is designed to improve the student learning experience. The likely theme will either be 'Learning Communities' or 'Tomorrow's Universities.'

L Brady commended F Shoughari for his presentation at the Let's Talk About X conference, held in Glasgow on 26/02/2020.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, next year's start-date for students pursuing professional degrees is currently under discussion. These discussions are ongoing and involve the wider sector, including the accrediting bodies involved in the running of these degree programmes.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, the Student Teaching Awards ceremony was unable to be held as planned on March 26th, 2020. The STA's received over 1200 nominations this year and a virtual ceremony, akin to the way Edinburgh University Student Association held theirs, is being considered.

d) VP-Student Support: Tom McFerran

In addition to the survey due to be released soon in partnership with the University's Equality and Diversity Unit, T McFerran is in the process of developing a workshop which will address issues of racism relating to the current pandemic.

Due to Covid-19, planned welfare events around the exam diet such as lunches for student carers, student parents, students with disabilities and Widening Participation events are unable to be held as originally planned. The SRC is considering the possibility of working with Widening Participation to deliver a virtual welfare event and any Council members who wish to help organise/deliver this event should contact T McFerran.

L McDougall asked T McFerran if he has been involved in any discussions regarding moving Peer Support online, both in terms of the service's delivery and the initial training provided to Peer Supporters.

T McFerran said, while a new cohort of 75 Peer Supporters have just completed their training, due to coronavirus these students were unfortunately unable to complete the 4-week period of shadowing an existing Peer Supporter that is required to finalise their qualification. As such, these students cannot deliver Peer Support online at present.

However, existing Peer Supporters are delivering this service online in a limited capacity. Additionally, a Microsoft Teams group has been set up which includes all Peer Supporters, their trainers, as well as P Orr and her staff, with the aim that this can be used as a digital network for providing Peer Supporters with wellbeing and mental health support resources and information. T McFerran is also putting resources from Big White Wall (including courses they offer) and the 'De-Stress at a Distance' programme into the Teams group so that Peer Supporters can engage with these resources, with a view to providing support to students virtually, albeit in a slightly different capacity from how they were trained. The hope is that operating in this way will also provide a 'steppingstone' for the students for when they move into providing Peer Support on a normal face-to-face basis.

e) Disability Equality Officer: Rachel Symon

Due to the impact of Covid-19, R Symon was unable to complete some of the projects she was working on and, as such, these projects, such as the digitisation of short-loan library books, will be passed on to her successor, Hailie Pentleton. R Symon would like to thank all those with whom she has worked over the academic year.

K Summers said if there are any online welfare events/activities that Council members wish to organise, please let the Sabbatical Officers know.

f) Gender Equality Officer: Julia Hegele

International Women's Week took place between the 9th and 13th March 2020. The week was successful with all events going ahead as scheduled, with the exception of one event cancelled due to coronavirus. J Hegele would like to thank all those who supported the events. With the help of SWAG, ties with Strathclyde have been made for the future organisation and delivery of the Fight for the Night march, which this year took place on March 13th.

As part of IWW this year, JSOC (Glasgow Jewish Students Society) wished to hold a period initiative, alongside the SRC's Hey Girls initiative, based around the Jewish concept of Rosh Hodesh. Unfortunately, this was unable to be piloted during IWW, however, the society plan to eventually hold monthly workshops designed to de-stigmatise, through a spiritual lens, period-related issues.

After Council members promoted engagement with the GRRB Feedback form, the feedback generated is now being considered by the Scottish Government.

T McFerran thanked J Hegele for her work on IWW and gave particular mention to the successes of the careers events held in partnership with FemEng, SWAG and the Careers Service; the Women's Literature Book Swap, the panel event and the GUEST film screening. He added that the success of this year's IWW is an excellent platform on which to build next year's event.

g) Race Equality Officer: Moni Serneabat Ungar

M Serneabat has attended meetings discussing the Decolonising the University Symposium. Due to the current pandemic this event has now unfortunately been postponed. The symposium will now be held in October.

M Serneabat held the second workshop in her Starting That Conversation series. The workshop was a success and was well-attended.

M Serneabat plans to hold a virtual workshop addressing systematic racism in the current pandemic. This workshop will address the different ways in which those from BAME backgrounds have been affected by the pandemic, and initiate discussion on why BAME persons are being affected most profoundly by the pandemic.

h) UG Arts Convenor: Emma Hardy

This being her last Council meeting, E Hardy expressed thanks to those with whom she has worked on SRC Council.

S Kirby thanked E Hardy for the work she has undertaken in her roles on SRC Council.

i) UG MVLS Convenor: F Shoughari – n/a

This being his last Council meeting, F Shoughari expressed thanks to those with whom he has worked on SRC Council.

S Kirby thanked F Shoughari for the work he has undertaken in his role on SRC Council.

j) UG Science and Engineering Convenor: Harry McLachlan: n/a

k) UG Social Sciences Convenor: Patrick Aasen

P Aasen asked if any clarity could be provided on when degrees would be issued to graduating students, as he had been contacted by a student regarding this matter.

L Brady advised degrees would be issued as close to the original planned graduation date as possible (end of June/early July) so as not to hinder students in the process of applying for jobs or further courses of study.

l) PG MVLS Convenor: Hannah Baer

H Baer said the initial focus on how the coronavirus situation would impact UG students meant that concerns of PG students in this area were not being addressed. However, in the last few weeks the MVLS Graduate School have provided more guidance on the support on offer (including the PGR Stay at Home learning kit), as has the SRC, and this is appreciated as there is uncertainty among PGR students with regards to how the pandemic will affect them.

H Baer said there are still no PGR Class Representatives on Moodle and asked L Brady for advice on how to proceed with this issue.

L Brady asked H Baer to pass on the contact details of who she has been emailing so he can endeavour to resolve this issue.

m) Andreas Nikolaou: Computing School Rep – n/a

n) Critical Studies School Rep: Annabel Bowen Nielsen

A Nielsen said the events she was planning have unfortunately all been cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. She expressed her thanks to the Events Interns within her department who have taken on the events she had been organising in order to deliver these in the next academic year. A Nielsen recommended Council members contact the Events Interns within their own departments if they require similar assistance.

A Nielsen expressed thanks to those with whom she has worked on SRC Council.

o) Culture and Creative Arts School Rep: Beth O'Hare

B O'Hare expressed thanks to those with whom she has worked on SRC Council.

p) Geographical and Earth Science School Rep: Sam Malis - n/a

q) Humanities School Rep: Austen Waite

A Waite was involved in the PSRs for each of his subjects. In both, there was discussion regarding the Arts Advising Team and how, at present, students do not feel it is effectively communicated to them who their adviser is or how to use this system. A Waite will undertake work to address these issues in the next academic year.

r) Medicine School Rep: Lewis O'Connor

With regards to exams for 1st Year Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing students, these exams will take a 24-hour format. In addition to this, however, from discussion with the Year Head, L O'Connor said it was suggested that these students' previous exam results from December, as well as their coursework leading up to the upcoming exam, would be compared with their exam result in this diet so as to ensure no student's result would be inflated beyond expectation (through cheating). L O'Connor is concerned by the comparison of old and new results and the suggestion that a poor result in a previous exam should suggest a student cannot do well in an exam in the future. He added that there are many circumstances which may have adversely affected a student's exam results in December. L O'Connor said that this is something the SRC should be cognisant of in the next few years as he has been informed that this assessment reflective process will be in place over the coming years.

L O'Connor expressed thanks to those with whom he has worked on SRC Council, with particular gratitude to F Shoughari for his guidance throughout the year.

L Brady said the assessment reflective process is being implemented for students across the academic spectrum in alignment with the No Detriment policy, with the aim of this being that no student's GPA falls lower than it was prior to exams.

L O'Connor said, given their recent communications, it is currently ambiguous as to whether the School of Medicine are implementing the No Detriment policy. The concern L O'Connor has is over the School trying to mitigate the potential problem of cheating by taking previous results into account (results which might have been poor for any number

of reasons such as mental health or personal reasons) thereby potentially disallowing students from significantly improving their exam grade in the upcoming exam diet.

L Brady said the matter would be followed up on with the School of Medicine.

s) Social and Political Sciences Rep: Duncan Henderson

During the restrictions put in place in relation to the current pandemic, D Henderson has attended meetings related to the impact of Covid-19 on students' learning and teaching and has been in correspondence with University staff to try and gain clarity on how the pandemic may affect students. D Henderson will continue these efforts, also hoping that, come July when he assumes his new position of College Convenor Social Sciences, he will be able to carry out some of the work outlined in his manifesto.

D Henderson expressed thanks to the members of SRC Council for an enjoyable year and said he looks forward to working with the SRC Council in the next academic year.

t) First Year Rep: Emma Lindquist – n/a

u) General Rep: Anastasiia Korosteleva – n/a

v) General Rep: Avantika Bhardwaj

A Bhardwaj thanked the members of the SRC Council for an enjoyable year and said that the process of working with the SRC Council made her feel welcome in Glasgow and helped her settle into the city.

w) General Rep: Luke McBlain

L McBlain thanked the members of the SRC Council for an enjoyable working year.

L McBlain was thanked for the videos he has contributed to the SRC's 'De-Stress at a Distance' programme.

6) AOCB

T Banos attended the meeting of the University Court on 15/04/2020 and the Mental Health WG meeting on 23/05/2020.

T Banos has met with Abigail Whelan who will be succeeding her as the SRC Council's Mental Health Equality Officer for the next academic year. Together they are working on a Self-Help guide with the hope that this can be released near the end of the current exam diet, coinciding with Mental Health Awareness Week (18th - 24th May).

T Banos thanked the members of SRC Council for an enjoyable working year and wished good luck to those undertaking positions on Council next year.

T Atsegoh attended a School of Engineering Learning and Teaching meeting on 22/04/2020. She said that an email will shortly be sent out to all students in the School of Engineering updating them on their current situation in detail.

T Atsegoh thanked all those with whom she has worked on SRC Council.

D Darulis asked for clarity on how the No Detriment policy will affect joint honours students.

L Brady said the Schools of Maths, Physics and Computing Science, as well as the Senate Office, are currently working on a proposal to submit to the policy group with regards to plans for joint honours students.

I Korres said, as most Pride events have been cancelled due to Covid-19, she has been in contact with GULGBTQ+ regarding the organisation of an online Glasgow University Pride. If any Council members wish to be involved in the organisation/delivery of this event they are encouraged to contact I Korres.

L Brady expressed thanks to S Kirby for all the valuable work he has undertaken over the year in his position as SRC President. He also thanked T McFerran and K Summers for their hard work over the year.

S Kirby recognised the significant contributions of L McDougall to the SRC and its representation of students. He noted the various positions L McDougall has held on SRC Council and the positive impact of her work across these positions, as well as the important advisory role she has played to himself and the other Sabbatical Officers. S Kirby thanked L McDougall for her service to the SRC and led the members of Council in a round of applause for her efforts.

L McDougall commended the current Sabbatical Officers on their valuable work over the academic year.

S Kirby also acknowledged the work that T McFerran, K Summers and L Brady have undertaken to represent students over the past year in their respective VP positions. S Kirby thanked the Sabbatical Officers for their service to the SRC in what has been a challenging year and led the members of Council in a round of applause for their efforts.

S Kirby expressed his thanks to every member of the SRC Council for all the valuable work they have undertaken and accomplished in what has been a challenging year.

S Kirby acknowledged the incoming SRC Council members and congratulated all those who were elected for position. He extended a welcome to the Council's incoming VPs, G Kokkinidis, E McCabe and A M Smith, and wished them good luck with their roles in the next academic year. S Kirby congratulated L Brady on being elected as the SRC's next President and wished him good luck in his role.

7) Date of next meeting: TBC