

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY THE 18th MARCH 2021 AT 6 PM
ZOOM

Present: As per sederunt

Apologies: H Hourston, L McBlain, I Korres Nte Paoula, A Whelan, D Al-Obaidly, E Simmons, J McKay, J Hegele, S Kholeif, S Kirby

Attending: P Swinton, B Hay, J Small

1) Welcome, Apologies and Sederunt

Council observed a minute's silence in memory of Sarah Everard.

2) Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes from previous meeting approved with the exception of minor corrections highlighted by D Henderson. Now amended, with the exception of undisclosed financial information on grounds of commercial confidentiality.

L Brady advised, with regards to the matter raised at the last meeting concerning storage of students' belongings, that he has spoken to David Duncan and Robert Garnish concerning this and they are going to investigate options further. An update will be circulated to Council once further discussions have taken place.

3) Council Reports:

a) SRC President: Liam Brady

The Sabbatical Officers, B Hay and H Speirs met with E Simmons to discuss Safe Spaces and the potential for an updated guidance framework. There appears already to be guidance/policy in circulation and potential therefore that this could be synthesised into one document.

L Brady congratulated all those who were elected to Council at the SRC Spring Election. He said it will be positive for Council to gain new members in the next academic year. There was a 14% increase in voter turnout this year and only 8 positions left unfilled – another improvement on last year.

Nominations for the Rector Elections opened on 15/03/2021 and will remain open until 31/03/2021. Hustings will be held on 19/04/2021 and the election itself will take place on the 20th and 21st of April. Councillor Graham Campbell has pulled out of the election. L Brady said the SRC do not endorse any candidates as it is involved in running the election, however, he encouraged student engagement, particularly among clubs and societies, with the election.

L Brady said the SRC has been involved in addressing matters of gender-based violence in halls of residence. The issue of the 'Murano 12' was raised with David Duncan and subsequently with the Principal. L Brady advised there will be further meetings with senior UofG managers to ensure that students in halls are being adequately supported. L Brady understands that, despite good intentions and general student uncomfortability with parties at the moment, the efforts of Security in halls of residence to police breaches of covid restrictions have resulted in students feeling intimidated as well as sense of unfairness as they are being treated more severely than students in private flats. As such, the SRC wishes to ensure all students in halls of residence are receiving the support they need during this time and are still able to enjoy themselves in their accommodation.

At the Student Experience Committee meeting on 16/03/2021, the Public Sector Equality Duty cycle, previously discussed with Mhairi Taylor at the E&D Priorities Consultation Meeting on 25/02/2021, was discussed. A report on this has now been formulated and the SRC will have the chance to provide final feedback on this before it is passed on to its committee stages.

An update from the Student Equality Monitoring tool was also provided at the SEC. From last year's degree classes, the tool showed a significant reduction in the attainment gap. It cannot be said that this is directly attributable to the No Detriment Policy or the changes that were made to make exams more accessible, however, the SRC have requested that the Senate Office investigate this to try and discern if there are specific reasons for the closing of the gap. L Brady said, if there is a correlation between the narrowing of the gap and recent changes in approach from the University then the University should be retaining the positive changes and building on them

C Hashimoto-Cullen asked if there are any plans for the SRC to issue a statement with respect to the recent attacks in Atlanta. She said she believes it is very important that the SRC addresses matters such as these, as similar attacks take place in the UK and the University has a large population of Asian and other international students.

L Brady asked J Small to organise a social media communication to go out this evening or early tomorrow addressing the attacks. He thanked C Hashimoto-Cullen for raising this matter.

Following discussions between the Executive and Permanent Secretary it has been agreed, with regards to the SRC's advertising for external companies, the SRC maintain a degree of oversight. However, as such decisions are part of the Permanent Secretary's operational role such decisions should generally lie with that postholder, in consultation with the President where there is a potential conflict with the SRC's values. L Brady said increased presidential oversight has been chosen, as opposed to a policy on ethical advertising, as the latter would be difficult to impose, given that he feels potential issues regarding advertising are rarely clear-cut and the matter of organisational financial sustainability needs to be a factor that is considered.

L Brady added that the approach taken to commercial activity will, as always, be influenced by decisions of the Student Finance Sub

SRC to
release
communication
regarding
recent
attacks in
Atlanta.

Committee, which is fast approaching. The SRC will be requesting increased financial support. This meeting will take place before the next Council meeting, so an update will be provided to Council members at the next meeting of Council.

b) VP Education: Grigoris Kokkinidis

The University have officially announced that summer graduations will be cancelled. This announcement left some students feeling frustrated with this decision and they wished to know if the University had considered certain recommendations before making this decision. G Kokkinidis said the University has now clarified that these recommendations were taken into account before the final decision was made and that, even with the recently announced roadmap out of lockdown, the graduations will remain cancelled as this cannot be relied upon.

The SRC have made it clear to the University that, to whatever extent possible, informal events should be planned for anyone who can attend them. The University agrees with this viewpoint and communications on such events will be released in due course after further updates from the government have been announced.

The second Virtual Class Rep Forum took place on 17/03/2021 and was a great source of student feedback on their experiences over the past year and their hopes and recommendations for the University regarding the next academic year. G Kokkinidis will collate this feedback and pass to Moira Fischbacher-Smith, who will circulate this with the relevant committees along with other feedback which subject areas, Schools, Colleges and other areas of the University have received from student and staff. Such feedback will be put forward to inform planning for September and the next academic year.

Preparations for this year's STAs are almost complete, with the ceremony taking place next week. G Kokkinidis gave thanks to all those who have helped in shortlisting and presenting videos and to those who have submitted nominations.

L Brady thanked G Kokkinidis for his efforts in organising the STAs as well as all those who helped in the organisation of the event.

S Huzell said Life Sciences societies have been discussing the organisation of an informal graduation celebration for students in the School. She asked if such an event could take place if it adhered to covid restrictions, or if it would infringe on the University's arrangements.

A McKenzie Smith said she is keen to think on how the SRC can advise small groups and club/societies on how to organise their own informal events. She asked if S Huzell was referring to organising a virtual or physical event.

S Huzell said the event could be virtual for all students in the School and additionally, if permitted, a physical celebration, similar to the Freshers' Fayre, could take place in a public place, such as the cloisters or a park. She added that students in the School are keen to see each other one last time before they graduate and go their separate ways.

A McKenzie Smith said she feels this a good idea and that a guide/pack for such events would be useful for students. She said she will follow up with S Huzell once she has begun work on this.

L Brady said he has been in touch with the University's Communications team and is keen for them to work with Schools to publicise informal graduation events. He said he will follow up further on this.

D Henderson asked, with reference to G Kokkinidis's Policy Group Weekly meeting on 18/02/2021, if the abbreviation 'SO' stood for 'Senate Office.'

G Kokkinidis confirmed this was correct.

c) VP Student Activities: Amy McKenzie Smith

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L Brady to
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The VCS Awards took place on 12/03/2021. A McKenzie Smith said while it was regrettable that this event could not be held in person, the virtual event went very well, with well-made videos and positive feedback being received from those who won awards. A McKenzie Smith thanked all those who assisted with the organisation and delivery of this event.

With recent changes to government guidance, A McKenzie Smith has now, as of today, secured the use of the marquee again for dance and sport society activity, despite initial resistance from the University related to the grass under the marquee.

Further positive work has been undertaken by the Home Students Working Group. A survey, and possible focus groups, will be organised to gain feedback on home students' experiences. A McKenzie Smith asked Council members to provide feedback on the draft survey she posted to the Council Facebook page.

L Brady congratulated A McKenzie Smith on the organisation and delivery of the VCS Awards, as well as J Small and the SRC Communications team for their work on the event.

C Hashimoto-Cullen asked if A McKenzie Smith knew when the JMS Building would be opened as exams are due to take place in 5 weeks and the University is close to running out of exam study space, if it has not actually done so already.

A McKenzie Smith said she understands how important study space is to students and that she believes the building is due to open at the end of April.

d) VP Student Support: Ella McCabe

E McCabe will bring the LGBTQ History Month and International Women's Week reports to the next Council meeting.

The gender-based violence module has now been integrated into the SRC Moodle page. The SRC is working to get University and SRC-specific information slotted around this and plans to lobby the

University to include the module as either a key or compulsory part of inductions for incoming students.

The SRC has now secured funding for emotional resilience training workshops. There will be 12 new trainers for this and for Mind Your Mate training, with the plan to start the programme and recruitment process for trainers soon. This funding should enable this training to run for the next few years at the University.

At the meeting of the SEC, it was highlighted that there is, in the short term, room within the University's covid emergency fund for financial support for people coming back to the University. This is intended to help relieve the financial burden of hotel quarantine and is only available to those who have been asked by the University to come back. Additionally, the University has confirmed that it will provide some form of financial support over the Summer period, with more details on this to follow.

At the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, it was confirmed that a report would be brought, in conjunction with the head of Security, to the next meeting on sexual violence incidents at the University. E McCabe feels that, in light of recent events, the report will be useful for gaining perspective on what is happening on campus.

The SRC has now received confirmation that students will be permitted representation during disciplinary meetings regarding incidents in halls of residence, with a member of The Advice Centre now being allowed to sit in with a student during these meetings. E McCabe believes that, while this process has not fully been reviewed, it is reassuring to know that students can have representation in these meetings with a form of oversight beyond that simply of Security and the head of Student Services.

L Brady added that students now also have the right to appeal any decisions made in such disciplinary meetings.

e) PG Arts Convenor: Kevin Leomo –

K Leomo asked what the SRC's position regarding support for GTAs and PGR students being recalled from abroad is.

C Reid said she raised this matter with Chris Pearce and that it would seem that the letter which was sent out regarding recalling people was aimed more at full-time permanent staff, with GTAs being caught up in this communication. C Pearce is going to look into the matter, however, C Reid believes the advice for GTAs may end up being different. She added that it was not clear whether financial support would be on offer to GTAs, however, she said she got the distinct impression that this letter was not necessarily aimed at GTAs. She also believes that this communication was based more around the University's panic that people would return to University and find themselves with tax/income-related bills. As such, C Reid believes this communication is best understood in this light, rather than as an urgent recall of GTAs with no promise of financial support.

K Leomo has been contacted by a number of PGT representatives who seek to submit a collective complaint/request for financial recompense to the University in light of the fact that a lot of the practical elements of their courses have not been delivered. K Leomo said he was unsure on how to advise these students.

L Brady advised that these students take this matter to The Advice Centre in the first instance. He said that he feels this issue is potentially not isolated to the courses in question and that the SRC should publicly support student efforts to resolve such matters wherever they may arise in other subjects.

K Leomo said the College of Arts is going to roll out new preparation and marking rates for GTAs at the start of April. K Leomo said the CoA is the first College to get these rates and he is hopeful that they will improve on previous ones and will subsequently be rolled out in other Colleges.

f) PG MVLS Convenor: Hannah Baer – n/a

g) UG Arts Convenor: Emma Lindquist –

E Lindquist attended the Board of Studies meeting yesterday and wished to inform Council that the College of Arts are starting two new programmes. Comparative Literature is being made available for single Honours and a new programme is being introduced called Creative Arts and Industries.

h) UG MVLS Convenor: Lewis O'Connor – n/a

i) UG Social Sciences Convenor: Duncan Henderson – n/a

j) Chemistry School Rep: Katie Fish – n/a

k) Education School Rep: Jon Hosie – n/a

l) Geographical and Earth Science School Rep: Sam Malis – n/a

m) Humanities School Rep: Lauren Campbell – n/a

n) Life Sciences School Rep: Smilla Huzell –

S Huzell asked if School Representatives are permitted to endorse clubs and societies with mass emails. She said she had been contacted by oSTEM who asked if she could advertise their activities. As such, she wondered if she could send out a mass email to the School or if it would be preferable to circulate this information among Class Representatives who could then circulate it further.

L Brady said the society should contact staff within the Schools and Colleges they wish to reach with regards to advertising their society. He also recommended that the society apply for affiliation with the SRC to utilise the channels of promotion offered as part of SRC affiliation. He said that such promotional communications for clubs and societies should not be sent out from School Representatives' Council email addresses.

T Kleczkowski said he also received an email from oSTEM and, when he passed this on to his School, he was asked if the SRC had checked this. He said he was unsure who to consult on this.

L Brady said the society had emailed the SRC regarding communications being sent out, however, the SRC has yet to respond. He added that the society are not currently affiliated so the SRC would not involve itself with them as yet, however, he understands that the society are trying to raise awareness of their activities.

o) Mathematics and Statistics School Rep: Chloé Hashimoto Cullen

C Hashimoto-Cullen said she had been asked by a Class Representative if it would be possible for Class Representatives to contact their lecturers through an official email address, as they are struggling to receive answers from staff owing to fact that staff prioritise dealing with emails which do not come from student email addresses. She said she understands that Class Representatives have their own email address, however, this is only set to receive emails, rather than send them.

L Brady said as there is no email address for Class Representatives to send emails from, the best options would be for them to email staff via their student accounts or to arrange for C Hashimoto-Cullen to email them on their behalf.

After students had asked the School of Mathematics and Statistics to follow up in response to significant statements from the University, C Hashimoto-Cullen agreed with the head of her LTC that she would pass on such communications, as staff do not receive these. However, as this situation is not ideal, C Hashimoto-Cullen asked if there was a way these communications could be visible to School staff instead of them relying on her to pass them on.

L Brady said this has been an ongoing issue. He said the University normally sends out separate versions of communications for staff and students and that staff are not sent the student version. He said the SRC have asked for staff to be sent the student version of communications in the past, however, this has not been done. He also noted that the two versions of communications are often not dissimilar from each other, which raises the question as to why two

L Brady to follow up with University on issue of

versions are needed. L Brady thanked C Hashimoto-Cullen for raising this issue and said the SRC will follow up with the University on this as it is causing issues for students.

C Hashimoto-Cullen said that staff within her School are experiencing 'burn-out' as a result of a year of home-schooling, lockdown, and the masters programme being pushed back; the latter resulting in the case that staff will not receive a summer holiday before the next academic year. Staff members C Hashimoto-Cullen has spoken to have expressed a need for a holiday and she is concerned over their exhaustion, given that the exam and revision period is yet to begin and that these periods require staff to feel fresh. She asked what the University has been doing to support staff and what the SRC can do to lobby the University to support staff.

L Brady said he is aware that there has been work undertaken by the University's HR department to tackle this issue. He said the University is aware of the issue of staff exhaustion and that it is routinely raised in meetings. He said that staff would be best contacting HR or their own unions for help in addressing this issue.

L Schorrlepp said staff in the School of Psychology are also experiencing this exhaustion. She said an Easter break has been organised for staff, with meetings cancelled to allow for this. She posited that this may be possible for staff in other Schools and that she believes the holiday was authorised by the Director of LTC.

L Brady acknowledged that the current period is a difficult time. He said that the the issue of staff exhaustion is often addressed in University meetings and that, as well as SRC representatives, trade union representatives are often present at these meetings. He reiterated that the best option for staff looking to address the issue is for them to contact their unions or the University's HR department.

C Reid said she has spoken to staff members who have mentioned that students seem angrier this year than in previous years. She said she feels this a natural result considering everything that has

staff not receiving student communications.

happened to students. C Reid said if staff and students can maintain a relative degree of civility to each other then this would significantly help to resolve difficult situations.

L Brady and C Reid both communicated that an 'us and them' mentality between students and staff should be avoided, and that it should be recognised that everyone is struggling with the current situation.

L Brady thanked C Hashimoto-Cullen for raising this issue.

- p) Modern Languages and Culture School Rep: Helen Manson – n/a.
- q) Physics & Astronomy School Rep: Holly Hourston – n/a
- r) Social and Political Sciences School Rep: Matilda Franz –

The School of Social and Political Sciences is currently looking for student members for their School Decolonisation Forum panel. M Franz encouraged Council members to notify any peers in SPS of this opportunity and said interested parties should contact her. She added that efforts were being made to make the panel as diverse as possible.

K Craig asked if students are required to be from within SPS in order to engage with this opportunity.

M Franz said ideally students should be from SPS.

- s) Veterinary Medicine School Rep: Luke McBlain – n/a
- t) Environmental Officer: Alvaro Perez Guardiola – n/a
- u) International Students Officer: Patrick Aasen –

L Brady said he would pass the minutes from a recent Russell Group meeting to P Aasen.

L Brady to
pass RG
meeting

P Aasen said he has been in touch with other ISOs present at the meeting who communicated, in summary, that the Russell Group asked students not to demand anything that is “unreasonable.”

minutes to
P Aasen.

v) LGBTQ+ Officer: Indigo Korres Nte Paoula – n/a

w) General Rep: Bailey Camack –

B Camack said 1st year students have raised concerns regarding finding accommodation next year. He said he has directed the students with these concerns to the content supplied by The Advice Centre, adding that he is hoping to organise a workshop around this topic in due course.

E McCabe said she is working with The Advice Centre on a video describing flathunting tips, due to be released before the end of March. She said a Q&A session may also be organised, with students having the opportunity to submit questions in advance via a Microsoft document. The hope is that this will expand on the flathunting advice already on The Advice Centre section of the SRC website.

x) General Rep: Mia Clarke – n/a

y) General Rep: Jamie McKay – n/a

z) First Year Rep: Kirsty Craig –

K Craig congratulated those elected to Council positions during the recent Spring election and said she is looking forward to working with them in the next academic year.

4) AOCB

L Brady said the next Council meeting will be the last of the year and that a post-meeting social will be organised. He said Council members are encouraged to submit ideas for the social and to put forward suggestions for a theme.

K Zhang said a Chinese student was recently killed due to a car accident. He said this follows the death of another Chinese student from a car accident in 2018. He asked if there was anything the SRC could do to promote road safety as this would be beneficial for international students whose home countries do not have the same traffic system. He suggested that road safety information be included in inductions, particularly inductions for international students when they first arrive and are unaware of the traffic system. He said anything the SRC can do to widen awareness of road safety would be worthwhile in trying to ensure that a similar incident does not occur again.

L Brady said the SRC will take action regarding the points raised by K Zhang, thanking him for raising this matter. He said K Zhang and the CSA have responded in a very compassionate way to this incident. L Brady expressed thanks to K Zhang for his efforts in response to this tragedy.

Council members expressed their condolences over the death of the student who passed away.

5) Date of Next Meeting – April 22nd 2021

SRC to take action regarding the promotion of road safety awareness for students.