

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY THE 21st APRIL 2022 AT 6.00 PM
WILLIAMS ROOM/ZOOM HYBRID

ACTION

Present : As per sederunt

Apologies:

E Barre, H Pentleton, K Leomo, E Lindquist, I Gilbert, J Mackay, M Stavrou, C Waterhouse, A Whelan

Attending: P Swinton, B Hay, J Small, T McFerran

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- 1) Welcome, Apologies and Sederunt
 - 2) GUSRC Strategic Plan Presentation – Eddy Graham

E Graham delivered a presentation on the GUSRC Strategic Plan 2022-2027, outlining the plan for the overall framework, purposes, aims and vision of the organisation over this period.

D Henderson asked if any of the success indicators in the current Strategic Plan would be carried forward into the new Strategic Plan.

E Graham said success indicators and key outcomes from the current Strategic plan would be carried forward, except in cases where they pertain to activities that the SRC no longer carries out.

Council approved the Strategic Plan framework outlined by E Graham.

- 3) Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

D Henderson requested a correction be made to the minutes of the previous meeting regarding his comments on the financial situations of Russian and Ukrainian students at the University. The corrected version of the minutes will be uploaded to the SRC website in due course.

Minutes of previous meeting approved.

E Simmons and R Vare discussed, with Gina Connor, incorporating the GBV module as a long-term feature of training for clubs and societies. Also discussed was the implementation of a tiered system for the completion of SRC training courses by society Office Bearers. There are plans to review the training offered to clubs with regards to handling instances of GBV.

S Malis will meet with Robert Partridge and Barry Morton (Estates) to discuss plans for improving student safety and wayfinding. He advised that a working group or student consultation may be an outcome of discussions.

E McCabe advised that she and T Anderson will take forward, as part of the handover process for new Council members, the suggestion of a shared inbox for 1st Year/General Representatives.

E Simmons advised that there are plans to deliver De-stress packs to students in Paisley-based accommodation. An outdoor activity may also be planned, dependent on levels of student engagement.

E Simmons said the Disability Service has committed to expanding the support available to students without diagnoses. It has also provided an assurance that resources will match the demand for the service if demand increases significantly. E Simmons said continued work is necessary in this area.

M Clarke said she has lobbied for the University to ensure communications regarding exams are given to students in a timely manner.

E McCabe advised that the embedding of the SRC's GBV module within the Registration and Enrolment process is under discussion at two project boards – a short-term MyCampus board and an Onboarding Project board. E McCabe advised that she would be happy to provide updates to Council members as discussions progress.

M Clarke advised that, if Council members are aware of old lecture materials being used in online lectures, they should pass the course codes to her so she can investigate the issue. She advised she would also approach the Senate Office to discern what the policy on the reuse of materials is and circulate this information to Council.

M Clarke said she spoke with E Lindquist regarding plans to campaign for the recording of small-group teaching, with the hope that such measures would improve accessibility to learning and teaching. M Clarke advised that this would require long-term action and the support of the incoming VP Education.

E Simmons advised that she has compiled a list of issues stemming from the high student numbers at the University. She said she would circulate the document to Council members in due course and asked for feedback to be provided for the purposes of informing the long-term work of Sabbatical Officers on this issue.

E McCabe advised that a possible SRC campaign for fee rebates (for non-Scottish students whose learning has been impacted by the strikes) would not be discussed as this was dependent on further strike action being announced.

E Simmons advised that the Dear Safe Place campaign was discussed at the recent Welfare Forum and that the project is currently on hold.

E Simmons advised that she would circulate an update on the reinstatement of the Library community fridge in due course.

E Simmons said she would raise the proposal of student budgeting classes with The Advice Centre at the next SALT meeting. She advised that budgeting advice may be better incorporated into the student registration process.

E Simmons advised that protected student groups will be able to apply to a new University summer fund in June and July for financial support. The Discretionary Fund will also receive increased funding, in line with the rise in the cost of living. Protected student groups will receive priority when applying to these funds.

T Anderson advised that Care Experienced students are also eligible to receive an accommodation grant over the summer (£105 per week) from SAAS. He suggested contacting Dan Keenan in the University's Widening Participation team and asking for students to be emailed with information on this.

E McCabe said a 12-month payment programme has been introduced for higher education costs for students in receipt of the Care Experienced Bursary. She added that students adversely affected by the energy crisis have been added to the Scottish Government's list of priority groups in the University's Discretionary Fund guidance.

E McCabe said the Scottish Government has announced an uplift of £350 for student loans in 2022/23. The SRC received an assurance that most disadvantaged students can access up to £8100 per year through bursaries and loans. E McCabe expressed her disappointment in the loan uplift and said financial support for students would be a key area of work for next year.

E McCabe will meet to discuss the Hardship Fund with R Partridge, the University Finance Team and The Advice Centre. The scope of the fund will be discussed, as well as the messaging to students on what support it can provide. E McCabe has asked that those attending the meeting present an update at the next Student Experience Committee meeting so that the issue can be opened for wider discussion. The SRC has also advocated, at Court, for the University to assess the affordability of its services and to promote student job opportunities.

M Clarke said local Councils in England are granting Council tax bursaries to students. As this does not happen in Scotland, M Clarke and E Simmons are going to explore a potential SRC campaign for this.

L O'Connor said food sold in University Hospitality outlets could be made less expensive in order to help students cope with the rising costs of living.

E McCabe said the Sabbatical Officers have spoken to Robert Garnish about this matter already. She said the SRC should continue to advocate for this.

T Anderson posited that the Care Experienced bursary of £8000 does not adequately cover the cost of student living. He said a lack of financial support could harm the retention of disadvantaged students.

D Henderson said increases in funding are outweighed by the increases in the cost of living. He said that, compared to other Russell Group universities, Glasgow University offers the lowest additional financial

support to students. D Henderson said, going forward, the SRC should campaign for the University to provide direct financial support to students, so that students do not have to rely on SAAS or the Hardship Fund.

E McCabe said the SRC will continue to raise these concerns with the University. She said she will find out the exact increase in accommodation costs and update Council.

T Anderson said the University cannot justify an increase in accommodation costs when the amenities in halls such as Murano already need improved.

E McCabe said she will raise the points discussed at this meeting with Commercial Services and communicate the fact that no student consultation took place prior to the rise in accommodation costs. Council will be updated as discussions progress.

L O'Connor posited that the University could potentially save money by operating its own accommodation instead of outsourcing it. He said this would come with the added benefit of an increased focus on student welfare.

E McCabe said she would be happy to ask Accommodation Services if the University's new Residential Strategy features plans for University-operated halls of residence.

M Clarke said the issue of full-time work having a detrimental impact on student learning was discussed at the SRC's catch-up with Senate, as well as at Academic Forum. Staff are aware of the issue but the University has advised that no action can be taken to address the issue, as teaching must remain flexible.

E McCabe said this issue was also raised at Court. She said she expects the issue will become more prevalent next year with the continued increases in the costs of living and that it will require a range of responses from the University. E McCabe advised that the SRC will continue to raise this issue with the University.

E Simmons said she would also raise this issue at the next Retention and Success Subgroup meeting and circulate an update to Council.

E McCabe said the University has provided an assurance that its Covid-19 messaging will reinforce the need for respectful behaviour, while encouraging continued mask-use in congested areas. Council members with continued concerns in this area should contact the Sabbatical Officers.

E McCabe advised that the University is currently formulating its advice for students in relation to Covid-19 isolation. She said this will include advice on how students can continue their learning and teaching from home if they are isolating. She advised that the University plan to update the SRC on this in due course and that she will pass this information onto Council.

D Henderson asked if Covid-19 symptoms would be considered Good Cause for missing an exam. He said, if so, information on this should be urgently communicated to students.

M Clarke said Covid-19 should be considered Good Cause for the disruption of a student's studies. She said she will follow up with the University to ensure that this information has been communicated to Schools.

E McCabe added that there is no requirement for medical evidence to be submitted with a Good Cause claim.

E McCabe advised that any students who miss an on-campus exam due to illness should apply for a re-sit. She said that M Clarke and herself will follow up with the University to ensure communications on this have gone out to students.

M Clarke said she and the SRC CIVIS representatives will meet with the University's CIVIS team on 22/04/2022 to discuss the future work of the programme. A social media outreach campaign is planned with the intention of explaining the role of the CIVIS Student Council to students.

M Clarke said Glasgow University holds the status of a CIVIS Alliance Member, since it is not funded by the European Commission. She said this would be discussed at the meeting and further clarity obtained on what this status means for the University

E Simmons said she was advised that a full consultation on student experiences of CaPS would be difficult to achieve, given that comparative data on previous user experiences versus current experiences is not available. She said she believes such a consultation is important, however, and that she plans to submit a proposal for this at the next Mental Health Equality Group.

S Malis said he has not heard any further information from H Baer regarding the lighting issue at the Vet School she raised.

M Mojsiej said he was still awaiting delivery of the PBSA mental health research methodology requested by B Hay.

E Simmons will be looking into the impact of high student numbers on the student experience. As such, the concern raised by K Craig on high student numbers in MVLS will be addressed within this area of work.

M Franz passed information relating to the re-purposing of Hunter Halls (and the implementation of 'overflow halls') to M Clarke.

D Henderson passed information on other universities' bursary schemes to E Simmons.

E Simmons advised that she will explore the potential for the SRC to re-campaign for the University to divest from the arms trade. She noted that the Glasgow School of Art recently announced its divestment from fossil fuels and arms companies.

E Simmons met with M Mojsiej, K Craig and H Pentleton to discuss plans for the People's Sustainability Assemblies. Discussions are ongoing.

E Simmons said she is yet to receive further information from T Meadows regarding the student support officer issue in her School.

4) Executive Agenda Items

- SEC Strategy Consultation

E McCabe strongly encouraged Council members to attend the consultation on 22/04/2022 and provide feedback on the strategy.

- UCU Update

The Glasgow University UCU branch passed a ballot on further strike action. As the ballot only passed marginally (as was the case with several other UK branches), further action is to be discussed at the UCU National Conference. Discussions are ongoing and M Clarke expects a decision to be made on further action in the next 4-6 weeks.

M Clarke advised that, due to the employer notice period required prior to strike action, there is a possibility that further strike action (or a marking boycott) will have no impact at the University, as such action would occur after the exam board meets.

M Clarke said contingency plans are in place if a marking boycott takes place around the time of the next exam diet.

E McCabe said, in the event of a marking boycott, the SRC will continue to advocate for students to graduate on time (with priority to be given to Senior Honours students).

- Hybrid Working Feedback from Academic Forum

The feedback received from this session will be passed to the incoming VP Education.

- Class Rep Engagement Feedback from Academic Forum

The feedback received from this session will be passed to the incoming VP Education.

- January Welcome Report

H Krogsaeter asked if SRC ambassadors could be given HEAR recognition for their roles, reasoning that this could act as an incentive for students to sign up.

E McCabe suggested that a formalised process for tracking SRC Ambassadors' hours could be implemented for the purposes of granting HEAR recognition. She asked S Malis to speak to G Connor regarding the possibility of giving HEAR recognition to SRC

ambassadors and to include any relevant information in his handover.

- VCS Report

D Henderson noted the low number of nominations in some award categories. He asked if there were plans in place for boosting engagement in subsequent years.

S Malis said engaging students with the online nomination process proved challenging, given the easing of Covid-19 restrictions and new students' unfamiliarity with clubs and societies/volunteering opportunities. He said the SRC would continue to publicise the VCS awards heavily and that information on engagement would be included in the handovers for the incoming Sabbatical Officers.

M Clarke thanked the SRC Communications team for their hard work in promoting the STA and VCS Award ceremonies.

T Anderson said the pandemic had an understandable impact on engagement levels. He added that the name of the Principal's Civic Engagement Award lacks clarity with regards to what it recognises, suggesting that this may have also been responsible for lower levels of engagement. He suggested the noticeboards outside the McIntyre Building could be utilised for promotional purposes.

E McCabe advised that student unions across the sector are experiencing lower levels of engagement with their activities. She asked S Malis to note the points raised by Council members in his Sabbatical handover.

- STA Report

M Clarke advised that the 2022 Student Teaching Awards received the highest number of nominations in the event's history. She thanked the SRC Communications Team, J Small, T McFerran and the SRC Admin Team for their hard work on promoting and organising the event.

D Henderson said he would endorse splitting the Best Supervisor award into different categories to reflect the different supervisory

requirements of UG, PGT and PGR students. He suggested this could help with boosting PG engagement.

D Henderson said, whilst noting the efforts of M Clarke and S Malis in promoting the STA and VCS nomination processes, that strategic SRC objectives (such as the minimum nomination count) must be met to ensure these events obtain University funding in subsequent years. He suggested consideration be given to how this could be achieved.

D Henderson said he would support the criteria for the Best Student Representative award being changed back to allow for Class Representatives to be nominated for this award. He suggested this could improve levels of Class Representative engagement.

M Clarke said no Class Representatives were nominated this year and this was why the criteria for the award was amended.

L O'Connor suggested discrete, College-based award categories could be implemented for Class Representatives. He posited that this could improve levels of Class Representative engagement.

D Henderson said he supported the implementation of a single 'Best Class Representative' category. He opined that separate College-based categories may be overambitious at present but that this idea could be explored in future years.

E McCabe advised M Clarke to include the points raised regarding STA Class Representative engagement as suggested considerations in her Sabbatical handover, along with any other relevant advisory information on this subject.

5) Council Reports

a) SRC President: Ella McCabe

E McCabe said the newly formed Student Onboarding Project Board is seeking student feedback on the onboarding process, with a particular focus on any issues relating to registration and enrolment. She encouraged Council members to provide feedback which could be passed on to the board.

The SRC's block grant funding has been increased by 7% in line with inflation. E McCabe expressed disappointment that the University did not award funding for any of the SRC's individual projects, noting that no student body received funding for individual activities. She added that there will be further opportunities this year for the SRC to apply for funding for smaller projects. This funding will be allocated from the Strike Fund as well as in line with the aims of the new Student Experience Strategy. E McCabe said the SRC will continue to push for the University to commit to ringfencing funding for student bodies.

T Anderson asked why the extra funding available could not have been included in the SRC's block grant.

E McCabe said the University wishes to tie all extra allocated funding to the aims which will be outlined in the new Student Experience Strategy.

E McCabe said the 2022 Council Dinner is currently being planned and will take place on 23/05/2022. Invitations will be sent out in due course.

b) VP Student Activities: Sam Malis

The SRC's Spring Destress Campaign is currently underway, and events are being publicised online. S Malis encouraged Council members to assist in the planning and delivery of events where possible.

The 2nd Interclub Forum took place on 29/03/2022. The event was a success and provided S Malis with an opportunity to meet new clubs and discuss matters such as affiliation, handovers and the new SRC website. S Malis said he would be happy to circulate his notes from the event.

S Malis said several performance-based societies are experiencing issues with the lack of space on campus for their activities. He said the SRC is currently lobbying the University for space to be made available in the short-term, as well as designated society space to be factored into plans for building developments.

c) VP Student Support: Eva Simmons

E Simmons advised Council members that there are still places available on focus groups looking at sanitary product and condom distribution on campus.

- d) PG Research Convenor: Hannah Baer
- e) UG Arts Convenor: Emma Lindquist
- f) UG MVLS Convenor: Lewis O'Connor
- g) UG Social Sciences Convenor: Duncan Henderson

D Henderson said Court received the Annual Report on Research and KPI's on 20/04/2022. The report included mention of staff/PGR exhaustion as a reason for certain KPI's not being met. D Henderson posited, at Court, that greater support for postgraduate research and academic staff is needed to reduce this exhaustion. He was informed that, while a standard of research quality must be maintained, a lesser quantity of research may be asked of PGR and academic staff going forward.

The University Principal presented a report on the current international political situation (including a focus on the Ukraine invasion), funding allocations and the University's rankings. The cost of living for students was discussed and D Henderson advocated for greater financial support from the University. He said greater detail is required on the University's financial support plans and that the SRC should continue to push for this.

D Henderson noted that after 3 years as a student representative, this was his last Council meeting. He expressed thanks to B Hay, J Small, Louise Cameron and P Swinton for their hard work and organisational support and wished Council members good luck with their future endeavours.

- h) Chemistry School Rep: Grace Cleasby
- i) Computing School Rep: Zoltan Kiss
- j) Culture and Creative Arts School Rep: Chloe Waterhouse
- k) Geographical and Earth Science School Rep: Elizabeth Barre
- l) Law School Rep: Miko Mojsiej
- m) Life Sciences School Rep: Hanne Krogsaeter
- n) Mathematics and Statistics School Rep: Michalis Stavrou
- o) Medicine School Rep: Kirsty Craig
- p) Physics & Astronomy School Rep: Abigail Whelan

- q) Psychology School Rep: Paul Skinner
- r) Social and Political Sciences School Rep: Matilda Franz

M Franz's School has asked for the SRC's help to lobby the University for changes to be made to the end of course evaluation survey process. Currently, these surveys are University-wide, however her School wishes to write its own bespoke evaluation survey. She has reached out to The Advice Centre for their input here.

E Simmons asked for clarity on what issues the School has experienced with the survey.

M Franz said the selection of questions and the way they are phrased does not capture the feedback the School requires.

E McCabe asked M Franz to keep Council updated on the progress of discussions on this matter. She advised that the Sabbatical Officers could follow the matter up for her if she experiences any issues.

- s) Gender Equality Officer: Rinna Vare
- t) Mental Health Equality Officer: Miko Mojsiej (acting MHEO)
- u) General Rep: Lewis Trundle
- v) First Year Rep: Isaac Gilbert
- w) First Year Rep: Tony Anderson

T Anderson met with M Mojsiej to complete the handover for the Mental Health Equality Officer position.

6) Submitted Agenda Items

- Motion to Stop Killer Robots (GU Amnesty)

Emma Murray presented GU Amnesty's motion asking for the SRC to publicly commit to not contribute to the development of Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWs). The motion also asked the SRC to sign the 'Future of Life – Lethal Autonomous Weapons Pledge' and to support GU Amnesty's campaign to pressure the University to sign this pledge.

K Craig asked what the effective uses of LAWs would be.

E Murray explained that LAWs can limit soldier casualties but that this benefit is ultimately outweighed by the loss of civilian life they cause. She added that the AI technology underpinning LAWs can be put to positive uses but that it has lethal potential if used in the wrong way.

E Murray exited the meeting and a discussion took place on the SRC's support of the motion. Council members expressed broad support of the motion, reasoning that contributing to the development of LAW technology would be morally wrong and that support for the motion would be a logical progression of the SRC's previous work campaigning for the University to divest from the arms trade. Council members in support also posited that the motion would be an opportunity to push for the University to align with ethical research standards. There was agreement from Council members that, should the SRC vote to support the motion, any communications issued regarding the motion should clarify that the motion was brought to the SRC by a student society.

Council members who opposed the motion reasoned that the SRC fundamentally does not contribute to the development of LAW technology and that supporting the motion could result in fewer AI-based research opportunities for students. Opposing views also included the belief that support for the motion would fall outside the SRC's role; that it would detract from the SRC's core function and that it would appear 'out-of-touch' with student needs.

Council members voted on the motion. The motion was passed with 15 votes for, 1 against and 0 abstentions.

- Motion to discuss Council Structure (Lewis O'Connor)

L O'Connor presented a motion to Council advocating for defined rules regarding the structure of Council meetings. The key aim of the motion requested that oral reports from Council members no longer be required and that Council meetings be used chiefly to discuss agenda items and vote on actions.

E McCabe said she agreed with the aims of the motion but proposed that they be included as a guidance document within the

Presidential handover, rather than voted on as a formal motion. She reasoned that this course of action would still allow future presidents control over Council meeting structures.

A discussion followed in which Council members expressed broad support of incorporating the aims of the motion into the SRC's standing orders. Council members supported the suggestion of an additional Council meeting prior to Welcome Week, as well as the utilisation of Academic and Welfare forums to formulate discussion points for Council meetings. The regular circulation of the minutes of said forums was also proposed.

Council members voted on endorsing the aims of the motion and instructing the Permanent Secretary to implement these aims within the SRC's Constitution and standing orders. This was passed with 11 votes in support, 2 votes against and 0 abstentions.

- Motion to discuss SRC Ball (Lewis O'Connor)

L O'Connor presented a motion to Council proposing that the SRC organise a Class Representative Ball as part of a wider strategy to raise levels of Class Representative engagement. He posited that a ball could provide networking opportunities, enhance the SRC's visibility and improve cross-campus relations.

A discussion followed in which Council members presented a range of viewpoints on the proposal. Those in support said the event could be situated within a wider strategy to address a perceived lack of Class Rep engagement with the SRC, and that such a strategy should be discussed by Council. Council members also noted that anecdotal feedback had been received from Class Reps indicating support of the proposal.

Conversely, several Council members expressed reservations regarding the proposal, noting that more evidence of a Class Rep engagement issue would be required in order to justify such an event. Additionally, Council members noted that the success of such an event would depend on a robust financial proposal. It was noted also that invites should only be issued to Class Reps who have performed their roles, however, concern was raised on how this could feasibly be discerned.

Council members voted on whether to advise the incoming Council to explore the proposal of a Class Representative Ball. Council voted in support of this course of action with 16 votes for and 1 against.

- Committee Representation from July 1st (Tony Anderson)

T Anderson asked if Council members who currently sit on University committees could continue to sit on these committees until October 2022.

E McCabe said elected Council members can continue attending committees over the summer if they are remaining in post/continuing as Council members, but those leaving office will not be in attendance as they will not have access to their rep mailboxes. All positions will then be open for re-election at the first Council meeting.

- Freshers' Week Strategy (Lewis O'Connor)

L O'Connor asked if graphics could be created for the next UofG Welcome week which clearly explain who each student body is and what role each performs. He suggested that united branding between the 4 student bodies could provide new students with greater clarity on the roles of each student body.

S Malis advised that decisions on branding would be taken by the incoming executive boards of each student body. S Malis said he would be happy to discuss the planning process of UofG Welcome Week with L O'Connor.

D Henderson suggested that, beginning in July/August, the organisers of the next Welcome Week could provide regular planning updates to the SRC Council. He advised that this could help resolve potential issues more efficiently.

S Malis said recommendations and guidance on organising Welcome week would be included in the Sabbatical Officers' handovers.

E McCabe advised that the next VPSA would ultimately have oversight over the SRC's Welcome Week planning decisions. She

noted that decisions are made by the executive boards of each student body and are done so in consideration of several factors, including staffing pressures. E McCabe advised that the incoming Sabbatical Officers would decide on whether to consult Council on Welcome Week discussions.

7) AOCB

M Clarke said she will be writing an article for Wonkhe, exploring the work she has undertaken this year. She said it will primarily focus on student/staff partnerships and the work that has been undertaken on establishing an inclusive curriculum.

M Clarke said the agenda for the upcoming CIVIS trip to Athens has been released. She said this will be a valuable opportunity to discuss areas of CIVIS/SRC work such as GBV support, inclusive education and the impact of the rising of cost of living on students.

M Clarke is working with a University Remote Proctoring Group to ascertain how remote proctoring can be incorporated into the University's learning and teaching plans.

B Hay expressed thanks to E McCabe for all her hard work as SRC President and VPSS over the previous 2 years.

E McCabe thanked Council members for their hard work over the academic year.

8) Date of next meeting - TBC