

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY THE 20th APRIL 2023 AT 6.00 PM
WILLIAMS ROOM/ZOOM

ACTION

Present : As per sederunt

Apologies : I Libelli

Attending: P Swinton, G Connor, S Cairns

- 1) Welcome, Apologies and Sederunt
- 2) Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes of previous meeting approved with addition of A Symington's apologies.

The SRC met with IT Services to discuss the implementation of a PGR Rep position on the MyClassReps system. The SRC is currently gathering information required by IT Services for these changes and the hope is this will be implemented in time for the Autumn election.

H Pentleton-Owens met with K Fish, E Makipere and M Mojsiej to discuss People's Sustainability Assemblies and the work undertaken last year. H Pentleton-Owens has drafted an action plan which she will send to GUEST, with whom she will coordinate dates for the assemblies for next semester.

The Sabbatical Officers met with the proposers of the Motion to reject the Illegal Migration Bill which was passed at the last Council meeting. The SRC has released a statement on the bill and written to the University on the matter. The University has responded outlining the work it undertakes to support students affected by these issues. This response has been shared with those who proposed the motion and is available to Council members on request. The University is not prepared to release a public statement at this time, however, the SRC will continue correspondence with them on this matter and has asked that they publicise these issues in their communications around World Refugee Day in June. The SRC has also held events as part of its De-stress

campaign to support refugees, such as its letter-writing campaign for Refuweege in the Library.

3) Election Funding Update – Gina Connor

G Connor said 14 people who initially applied for funding did not submit a claim for funding. 7 of these people have now been in touch to confirm they no longer wish to claim the funding.

R Whip asked what happens with the unclaimed funding.

G Connor said this money goes back into the Council budget.

4) Cost of Living Campaign Update

The SRC is planning a Cost-of-Living campaign which will address tuition fees and accommodation costs. The goal will be for the University to implement a free breakfast scheme on campus. The hope is on-campus campaigning will take place. Council members will be updated on developments in due course and engagement is encouraged.

T Anderson asked if on-campus community fridges will be implemented. He also noted that the Gilchrist PG Café is doing a buy-1-get-1-free deal on paninis on Fridays. He said this is only beneficial if students can afford 1 panini and asked if the SRC could help distribute unsold paninis.

R Väre said these matters are being discussed in the Cost-of-Living Action Group which will be meeting soon. She said the hope is that community fridges and an anti food-waste scheme similar to Too Good To Go can be implemented on campus.

H Southall asked if GUEST operate a community fridge.

R Väre said they used to but do not currently. She said there is hope that GUEST may start this initiative up again and that the University could support it.

T Anderson asked if the Unions have any plans in this area.

R Väre said she is not aware of the Unions undertaking any action in this area.

M Levesque said the GUU informed the SRC at Cross Campus that they proposed their own catering service for University events, so that they could lower the prices in their catering outlets for students. The University rejected this proposal, however, the GUU is continuing to pursue the idea.

5) Volunteering, Clubs and Societies 2023 Awards Report – Katie Fish

K Fish said the report includes certain recommendations for next year's ceremony. Some awards were renamed this year to make them clearer and to avoid overlap. K Fish said a recommendation is to keep some of the new award categories for this purpose. The report also contains a recommendation to bring back the Club or Society Member of the Year Award.

There were some complaints this year regarding the costs of the University's Catering Services. Catering was £1k more expensive than the previous year when an external caterer was used (the University no longer permits external catering for on-campus events). A recommendation for next year is to explore lower-cost catering options earlier in the year.

R Väre said L Farquharson contacted the SRC to express his frustrations over the University's Catering Framework Agreement and how this agreement prevents the QMU and other non-University catering outlets from catering on-campus events. There are discussions going on to explore a resolution to these issues with the University.

R Väre congratulated K Fish on the organisation of the VCS Awards.

6) Student Teaching Awards 2023 Report – Micaela Levesque

M Levesque said the report contains information on categories and figures for the awards and these are reflective of a consistent approach with last year's event.

A recommendation for next year is the event be scheduled on a date which does not clash with a religious holiday (as it did with Ramadan this year). If this is unavoidable, it is recommended that extra provisions be put in place to support students who celebrate Ramadan and wish to attend the ceremony.

The report also recommends that, in categories such as Highly Innovative Teaching and Best Student Representative, options for joint-awards be implemented. This is due to many nominations being submitted for teams, rather than individuals, and the current award categories not allowing more than one person to be nominated.

M Levesque said the use of direct quotes for nominations was beneficial for the programme and useful for writing speeches. She added that having remarks from nominees who could not attend, rather than videos (or no message), was beneficial to the event and negated any technical issues on the night.

M Levesque thanked all Council members who assisted in the organisation and delivery of the event.

R Väre thanked M Levesque for organising the event.

R Whip asked, with regards to the Highly Innovative Teaching Award, if it would be preferable to focus more on the initiative rather than a specific person.

M Levesque said this would be a good idea for recognising partnerships and larger cohorts. She said it is useful for awards be given to named persons when a person's work is recognised across multiple nominations. She said it may be useful for certain awards to allow for named persons to be nominated as well as group projects, however, students would need to be made aware that both can be nominated.

7) RAG Update – Lewis Trundle

L Trundle said, overall, RAG raised £3.7k from fundraising activity this year – a larger sum than in previous years.

R Väre commended L Trundle and the RAG team on their work.

8) De-stress Campaign – Katie Fish

K Fish and H Pentleton-Owens have been organising a programme of events for the SRC's De-stress campaign. These include alpacas on campus and arts and crafts events. K Fish encouraged Council members to sign up to help at events.

T Anderson asked for an update on why the SRC's Eurovision screening has not yet been confirmed. He said clubs and societies are keen to promote this event.

K Fish said the SRC is currently researching whether it should hire or buy the resources required for the event.

G Connor said once a decision has been made on this, the only required sign-off is from Gary Stephens at Security. It is hoped this will be received on Monday 24th April.

9) Council Reports

a) SRC President: Rinna Väre

The Cost-of-Living Action Group is being set up with a revised membership and/or chairperson. The remit and governance of the group is also being discussed and the hope is this group will receive support from the Student Experience Committee. These matters will be discussed at a meeting on 21/04/2023, with the group then meeting again in the coming weeks.

R Väre and R Whip recently visited the University's Dumfries Campus. A meeting has now been set up between the Deputy Head of School at the campus, the SRC and Robert Partridge to discuss how student activity can best be supported and organised there and how links with the SRC can be strengthened. R Väre said she has also personally been in contact with students she met on the day to provide advice on the SRC's online resources for clubs and societies.

The SRC are working to ensure improved communications go out from the University regarding accommodation. Accommodation Services staff have been attending the SRC's regular catch-up meetings with the University Comms Team and are putting together a plan on informing students about their accommodation issues. The SRC hopes to be able

to offer feedback on this plan before it is implemented so that students receive honest and realistic information about accommodation which does not deter them from studying at Glasgow.

The SRC has responded to Glasgow City Council's housing strategy, highlighting concerns on how this will affect students. The hope is an additional student housing strategy can be implemented in the future. R Väre, H Pentleton-Owens and The Advice Centre have also continued working on the Scottish Government's PBSA review and have highlighted issues previously raised at Council meetings.

Work on the Student Experience Strategy is progressing. Some of the initial timelines have been pushed back as their timeframes proved unrealistic. The SRC will present the Clubs and Societies Improvement Project business case to the May Investment Committee. The Eco-Hub Project will also be presented at this meeting. The SRC will be reviewing this soon to ensure it serves purpose. There are also plans to take more cases to the June Investment Committee.

The SRC is currently working on its Annual Report. This will be presented at the June meeting of University Court.

The SRC's CIVIS Representatives (R Väre, A Saxena, T Anderson and M Mojsiej) will attend the Global Civis Days in Tübingen, Germany, in May. The trip is being funded by External Relations and a report will be written and circulated to Council in due course.

T Anderson asked if there has been any further discussion on financial support for students from widening participation backgrounds who will be staying in University accommodation next year.

R Väre said there is currently no information on additional financial support measures. The University is encouraging students to apply for the financial aid it has available. R Väre said she hopes, through the Cost-of-Living Action group, it can be made clear to students how they can apply for financial support.

T Frater asked if there is any prioritisation of the business cases in the Student Experience Strategy.

R Väre confirmed certain business cases would be prioritised. She said consultations took place with the Learning & Teaching Committee, Student Experience Committee and other stakeholders and student organisations (including the SRC). She said prioritisation is based on

multiple factors including past work and expected impact. Some initial cases were prioritised as they were easier to achieve in a short period of time, while other long-term cases, such as improving student organisation buildings, will take several years to realise and require securing support from University departments (such as Estates).

M Levesque said the SRC has influenced the prioritisation of certain cases, however, others it has asserted as being of lesser value remain high on the prioritisation list. It is currently seeking greater transparency from the University over how projects are being prioritised as well as where the funding is coming from (i.e. from the SES budget or wider student support budget).

T Frater said it was highlighted in previous discussions that some departments are using the Student Experience budget for activities which should be funded by their own budgets.

R Väre said this was a complex issue as some departments recognise that the funding they are receiving should come from elsewhere in the University, however, the University is instructing them to seek funding from the Student Experience budget.

b) VP Education: Micaela Levesque

M Levesque said staff working on the Learning & Teaching Strategy are keen to have student input across the strategy's several workstreams next year. M Levesque is discussing the possibility of student consultations/focus groups with Moira Fischbacher-Smith for this work.

M Levesque said the University currently lacks 2 important systems necessary for the functioning of a large organisation: a customer relationship management system (CRM) and a curriculum management software. These systems would allow disparate University systems to interact with each other and share data, as well as replace manual processes for tasks such as timetabling. There is broad agreement across the University that these systems will be implemented and that the process will take approximately 3 years. M Levesque encouraged Council members on committees next year to continue to advocate for this.

M Levesque said, with regards to her work on academic policy communication this year, the Good Cause process has seen significant progress. A Good Cause workshop happened earlier in the year and an action list was devised, with some actions already being completed

(e.g., updated guidance and greater clarity for students on Good Cause in relation to dissertations). Work in this area is ongoing and the hope is this will continue into next year. Progress has also been made with regards to sending more timely communications to students on important subjects (exams, for example).

With regards to PGT and PGR students (particularly international students) the Learning & Teaching Away Day was PGT -focused and two new PGR officers have been established on Council. Greater clarification of Council's PGT roles has also been implemented. The SRC has also worked, within its Cap Student Numbers campaign, to highlight issues stemming from the over-recruitment, which have disproportionately impacted international students and PGT courses.

The SRC has worked to create more of a central community for Class Representatives via the use of Microsoft TEAMS. The report of the Student Voice Working Group is expected in mid-May and M Levesque said she was hopeful its findings would result in implications for resourcing, as well as mandatory training for Schools involved in SSLC meetings.

c) VP Student Activities: Katie Fish

The SRC is hiring two academic interns. The job adverts are now live and open until April 28th. These interns will look at academic clubs and societies and the spaces and support available for their activities. Their research will be used to lobby for greater support from the University for these societies.

In the next academic year, clubs and societies will be required to have a Welfare Officer in order to affiliate with the SRC. The C&S model constitution document has also been revised by the C&S Committee and shall be sent to all affiliated clubs and societies. From next year, all clubs and societies will be required to have a disciplinary and complaints process in their constitution, with all constitutions being advertised on SRC club webpages.

K Fish said all student bodies at the University have experienced issues with Estates this year. K Fish has compiled a report summarising these issues. This has been sent to Estates and a meeting with the department is planned to try and reach resolutions.

The University has confirmed that additional funding will be available for clubs and societies to stage large-scale, one-off events. This fund is still in the planning stages and work is ongoing.

The SRC met with Glasgow City Council and advised that a student housing strategy should be implemented in Glasgow. K Fish said she expects Council members will continue this work next year.

K Fish said the Clubs and Societies Improvement Project, alongside the Eco-Hub project, will be the first business cases in the Student Experience Strategy. A consultant will be hired to work with the University and SRC to identify barriers which societies face due to University systems (i.e. the inability to book rooms before 6pm using the room-booking system, despite being allowed to). Prohibitive catering costs for societies will also be investigated. The consultant will then provide recommendations based on their findings. The other student bodies are involved in this business case and will also receive funding for their clubs' and societies' activities. The hope is that resources purchased by one student body will be available to all student bodies and vice versa.

R Whip asked if all currently affiliated societies must implement a Welfare Officer.

K Fish said this will be required when societies re-affiliate for 2023-24.

R Whip asked if clubs can re-affiliate if they do not find someone to assume this position. He also asked if clubs will normally have held their elections prior to re-affiliation.

G Connor said most clubs and societies hold their elections in March/April. As such, all clubs and societies were informed before the 2022 festive break that they would be required to implement a Welfare Officer as a re-affiliation requirement for 2023-24. The Clubs team have seen this position being added across many clubs in the interim so the hope is there will not be issues with this requirement. Societies who cannot find someone to assume this position will be advised to temporarily appoint an existing Office Bearer as Welfare Officer (alongside their existing position) until which point the position can be filled.

H Busquier Cerdan asked if Welfare Officer positions will be HEAR-recognised.

K Fish said the position is HEAR-recognised, however, there is no capacity within the University to add these positions to transcripts. This hope is the Clubs and Societies Improvement project can enable this to happen.

H Busquier Cerdan asked if 'Welfare Officer' will be a fifth HEAR-recognised position for clubs and societies.

K Fish said societies are currently permitted 4 HEAR-recognised Office Bearers. The SRC has gained approval for Welfare Officer, Events Officer and Publicity Officer to be added to the list of HEAR-recognised positions.

G Connor said Welfare Officer positions cannot currently be added to HEAR due to the University's systems. Every single position for each society has its own code. If Welfare Officer positions were added, the thought is this would add 1500 more codes – an outcome the University does not have the capacity to deal with as only one person adds codes and this is a manual task. The SRC has advocated for this process to be streamlined for the last 5 years, however, the committee who would approve this only sit twice a year. As such, the SRC is going to investigate the possibility of adding this position next year.

A Ng asked if all societies will be required to hold an EGM to implement a Welfare Officer.

R Väre some societies may do this in line with their own constitutional requirements, however this will not be an SRC requirement.

T Anderson asked if Welfare Officers must complete compulsory SRC training.

K Fish said it is recommended that Welfare Officers undertake the SRC's wellbeing workshop training, however, this will not be mandatory.

R Väre said compulsory training has been discussed in previous years, however, monitoring this would be a considerable extra workload for SRC staff. She said the importance of undertaking some kind of training, however, should be communicated to clubs and societies.

K Fish noted that Welfare Officers are not expected to deal with serious breaches of society/University codes of conduct. If a serious issue arises this should be signposted to The Advice Centre or University.

T Anderson asked if specific training for Welfare Officers could be organised so that these society members know where to signpost members with issues. He asked if Welfare Officers will be supported by The Advice Centre if they are affected by issues which arise.

K Fish said discussions on this are ongoing and these issues are being taken into consideration

d) VP Student Support: Hailie Pentleton

The SRC has been working with the University on the early stages of developing a Gender-Based Violence Campaign. Consultations with the student bodies are ongoing and a consultation with Council is in the planning stages.

The Student Carer Policy survey is currently live. The results of this will be integrated into a wider report on which H Pentleton-Owens is working with an external consultant. This will be presented to the Student Experience Committee with the hope that a working group will engage with it and implement better support for student carers and improve policy.

The planning of a project delivering free, reusable period products is ongoing. This will be soft-launched in the next month and students will be able to have these products delivered to their homes or pick them up on campus.

The Sabbatical Officers are exploring the re-structuring of the Welfare forum. A focus group on this was held by R Väre and the SRC is considering ways of making the forum a more dynamic space which features more of a campaigns committee element and provides volunteering opportunities for non-Council members. This work is ongoing and will be discussed at the Welfare forum.

e) PG Arts Convenor: Alex Symington

A Symington referenced his meeting with Lieutenant Commander Youngston and their discussion of the affiliation of the University Royal Naval Unit with the SRC. He said the outcome of these discussions could be significant for the next Council member on the Military Education Committee as it may mean the URNU will affiliate with other student bodies.

R Väre said any important information from Council members' committee roles should be detailed in a separate document in their handovers and sent on to the Sabbatical Officers.

- f) PG Research Convenor: Imene Zhoulikha Kassous
- g) UG Social Sciences Convenor: Ross Whip
- h) Business School Rep: Sahej Grover
- i) Computing School Rep: Angela Ng
- j) Engineering School Rep: Hugh Southall

H Southall said a 2nd year student in the School of Engineering has sadly passed away. Details of the student's memorial will be circulated in due course.

- k) Humanities School Rep: Emma Murray
- l) Mathematics and Statistics School Rep: Jordan Baillie
- m) Social and Political Sciences School Rep: Irene Libelli
- n) Charities Officer: Lewis Trundle
- o) LGBTQ+ Officer: Pablo Moran Ruiz
- p) Mental Health Equality Officer: Tony Anderson
- q) Race Equality Officer: Omar Saleh
- r) General Rep: Chaitra Bodapunti

10. AOCB

E Makipere said she is currently sitting on the Hillhead Community Council Recycling Subgroup. The group requires feedback on recycling practices in the G12 area so any Council members who wish to provide feedback should contact E Makipere.

T Frater apologized for not submitting a Council report and said this was due to a heavy academic workload.

R Väre said if Council members have submitted 4 reports and attended 3 meetings they will receive HEAR recognition for their roles.

- Council Handovers

R Väre asked Council members to submit their handovers to the Sabbatical Officers as soon as possible and by the end of May at the latest. Any Council members who require further guidance on completing their handovers should contact the Sabbatical Officers.

- Marking and Assessment Boycott

M Levesque said the UCU has voted for and, as of today, started a marking and assessment boycott. Marked work may be withheld and un-assessed work may not be returned until September. She said this poses concerns for graduating students, student visas and academic progression. M Levesque said the hope is that disruption will be mitigated by other qualified University staff stepping in to mark work, however, this scenario poses its own issues regarding staff workload. She said there is currently no clear decision in place for how the strikes will be dealt with and asked Council members for their concerns and questions so that she could raise these with the University. She said the hope is that the University will release a public statement answering students' questions on the boycott.

A discussion ensued wherein Council members raised a variety of concerns and questions regarding the marking and assessment boycott. These broadly consisted of concerns over whether students would be able to graduate as planned, progress in their studies, enrol for next year, apply for graduate schemes without degree classifications, secure visas (including graduate route visas) or apply for SAAS or tuition fee funding for next year. Concerns were also raised regarding the knock-on effect of the boycott on exam resits, the impact on smaller Schools (such as the School of Modern Languages and Cultures) and the impossibility of re-allocating marking work to non-striking staff without over-working them.

Council members also sought clarity regarding how many staff would be participating in the boycott, how the University would prioritise different cohorts of students and whether some Schools would possibly dispense with external examiners. Additionally, Council members asked what will happen regarding projects which are allocated based on GPA, whether the boycott will apply to exams, coursework, and dissertations and, if graduations continue as planned and a student graduates without work being marked, what the eventuality would be if the student then found out they did not pass their assessments.

M Levesque said she would pass on the concerns and questions raised to the University.

- Council Dinner

Invitations have now been sent out for Council Dinner on Monday, May 22nd. R Väre encouraged all Council members to RSVP as soon as

possible. A full Council photo will also be organised at the event. Any Council members who do not wish to feature in this should contact R Väre.

R Väre gave thanks to all SRC staff this year for their hard work, especially G Connor, B Hay, J Small, S Cairns, G McGinn, L Cameron and P Swinton. She also thanked all Council members and her fellow Sabbatical Officers for their efforts this year.

11. Date of next meeting – TBC