

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY THE 19th JANUARY 2023 AT 6.00 PM
ZOOM

ACTION

Present : As per sederunt

Apologies : H Pentleton, R Whip, C Bodapunti, K Kurmaly, I John, T Atsegoh

Attending: P Swinton, G Connor, J Small

1) Welcome, Apologies and Sederunt

As above.

2) Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes of previous meeting approved.

3) Council Meeting Etiquette - R Väre

In light of feedback received regarding previous Council meetings, guidance on Council etiquette has been circulated in order to ensure Council meetings remain a respectful and welcoming environment for debate and discussion.

4) Motion: Adoption of IHRA Antisemitism Definition – Glasgow Jewish Society

R Vare explained that this motion would not be discussed and voted upon at this meeting as part of the motion asks for the IHRA definition to be included in the SRC's Equality and Diversity policy – something that is not possible due to the policy being a general one which deliberately does not include an exhaustive list of protected groups. R Vare expressed her apologies to those who submitted the motion for not recognising this issue sooner. She also explained that the SRC does not hold its own definitions with regards to racial discrimination and, instead, uses the University's racial glossary (a glossary which already includes the IHRA definition). She said the SRC will provide a link to the University's racial glossary on its Equality and Diversity policy webpage so that it is clear the SRC uses these definitions. The SRC has been in contact with the Glasgow Jewish Society regarding these issues and R Vare and H Pentleton will meet with the society in due course to discuss how they can work together to support Jewish students.

5) Motion: Establishment of Home Students Officer

K Fish explained the nature of the motion and said if Council were to pass it a Home Students Officer position would be implemented for the 2023 Spring Election. She said the SRC recognises the adverse impact university policy changes (such as removing the accommodation gap for students who live a 'commutable distance' from the University) have had on home students and said this role would help represent the needs of these students and allow the University to better understand these needs. This representative would exist as a welfare and equal opportunities officer and would sit on Council, Welfare Forum and other relevant University committees.

T Pu asked what impact implementing a Home Students Officer would have on the overall number of Council representatives.

M Levesque said, with the addition of this position, the overall number of representatives would still be below the maximum outlined in the constitution. She said adding the position would require a constitutional amendment (which would need ratified by University Court) so by passing the motion, Council would be agreeing to discuss this position addition at an Emergency Council Meeting on February 2nd.

T Frater noted that, representing 31-32% of the student population, home students are a large and significantly under-represented student group with no formal representation on campus.

O Saleh asked if home student status only applies to students who live in Glasgow or students who commute to the University.

R Vare said home student status could apply to commuting students. She said home student status would depend on individual circumstances and whether a student considered themselves a home student.

T Frater said, traditionally, a student living with family in their childhood home would be considered a home student, however, there are many other definitions for this student group.

K Fish said home students and commuting students are terms which are often used interchangeably. She said given the housing crisis in Glasgow, a Home Students Officer would provide representation for students who are forced to accept accommodation outside the city.

S Grover asked if a Home Students Officer would represent students from the rest of the UK who are currently living in accommodation in Paisley due to the housing crisis in Glasgow.

R Vare said the hope is that next year the University will not be housing any students in towns/cities outside Glasgow.

K Fish said such students would not be the representational focus of the Home Students Officer, however, they could perhaps benefit indirectly from the work of the Officer.

A vote was taken on Mentimeter to establish if Council would be in favour of voting on the implementation of a Home Students Officer as a constitutional amendment at an Emergency Council Meeting to be held on 02/02/2022.

Council voted with 24 members in support and 6 against. The motion will be tabled for voting upon at an Emergency Council Meeting on 02/02/2022.

6) Motion to Restructure the SRC Academic Officers

M Levesque explained the nature of the motion.

H Busquier Cerdan asked if the proposed restructuring would result in PGT students being left out of School-level representation.

M Levesque said the proposed motion would allow PG representation to default to the College Convenor so there would be a clear route to representation for PG students in any School. She acknowledged that, with the passing of the motion and the implementation of a PGT representative, School-level representation would default to focusing on the Undergraduate experience.

K Fish said, in cases where it would be beneficial to the student experience, the SRC would encourage collaboration between School and College-level representatives, however, School representatives who are approached regarding PGT issues would be expected to refer these to the appropriate College-level convenor.

H Busquier Cerdan asked if School representatives could assume representational responsibilities for PGT students if a PGT College Convenor role was vacant.

M Levesque said she felt the risk of this happening would be low as advertising positions specifically targeted towards PGT representation would hopefully boost participation in these roles. She said in the case of a vacant PGT Convenor position, School Representatives from that area would work together to fill any gaps in representation.

T Pu said many School representatives are already in position on Council when PG students begin their studies. As such, PGT students do not have a chance to run for School Representative positions.

T Frater asked how many new positions would be created if the proposed motion passed.

M Levesque said one additional position for PGR students would be created. The hope is this would allow Council to split representation of the PGR experience into two categories: desk-based research and lab-based research. The MVLS restructuring of the Life Sciences portfolio would see the only potential changes to School representative positions, however it has not yet been confirmed what these changes will be.

R Vare said the SRC has suggested keeping one Life Sciences Portfolio Representative, believing this to be the most effective means of representation for students in the College. The Sabbatical Officers are awaiting confirmation from the University's IT team here and IT are aware of the Spring Election deadline. Council will be updated in due course.

R Vare said the Sabbatical Officers discussed the motion with the University's PGR Team as well as the VP of Research and both are supportive of the proposed changes.

I Zhoulka Kassous asked if the proposed motion would result in the removal of the PGR Convenor position.

R Vare said there would be 2 PGR Convenor roles and the workload of PGR representation would be shared to be more manageable and targeted. The hope is this would, in turn, encourage participation in these roles.

R Vare noted that some position titles in the SRC's constitution require updating as they are incorrect. She said the constitution also contains certain sentences which are incorrect/do not accurately reflect the working practices of the organisation. A lawyer will conduct a review/edit of the document in the coming months and implement the necessary changes. The hope is the

updated document will be in place by the start of the next academic year. R Vare noted that normally the University Court approves constitutional changes, however, due to the Spring Election deadline, David Duncan has agreed to approve uncontroversial changes on behalf of the University Court.

M Mojsiej asked if the proposed motion removes PG students from being represented by School Representatives.

M Levesque said PGT students on 1-year courses are often ineligible to run for School representative positions as these are elected during the Spring election. She said, in many cases, current PGT representation at School-level does not line up with the undergraduate experience. It is therefore often unclear who PGT students should approach for representation. This motion would allow a space for clear and consistent College-level PGT representation for such students. The PGT College Convenor positions would be available to PGT students who wished to run for them. She said it would be important for these representatives to work constructively with School Representatives, with this dialogue being used to develop the position descriptions for the new positions.

M Mojsiej asked if it was necessary to stop PG students being represented at School-level, referencing the fact he received a lot of enquiries from PG students when he was a School representative.

M Levesque said when studying as a PGT student she was unclear on who to approach regarding matters requiring PG representation. She said defaulting to the College-level system outlined in the motion would make the route to accessing representation very clear for PG students.

R Vare said she felt this discussion was valuable. She said the Sabbatical Officers recognise that further changes to the representative structure of Council could potentially be beneficial. She said that, due to the time pressures exacted by the upcoming Spring Election, she believes passing this motion would be a positive first step in making Council's representational structures clearer and more effective.

A vote was taken on Mentimeter to establish if Council would be in favour of voting on this motion as a constitutional amendment at an Emergency Council Meeting to be held on 02/02/2022.

Council voted with 21 members in support and 12 against. The motion will be tabled for voting upon at an Emergency Council Meeting on 02/02/2022.

7) Cap Student Numbers Campaign Update

The SRC's joint statement with the University on the campaign was published today and was also included in the student newsletter released today. The SRC has asked that the statement be prominently displayed on the University's website so it is available to both incoming and current students. The statement has been shared on the SRC's social media and website and will be included in the next SRC newsletter. R Vare encouraged Council members to continue sharing the campaign online.

The next steps for the campaign are to lobby Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government on these issues. The Sabbatical Officers have met with one Councillor and enjoyed a productive meeting identifying policies under review which the SRC can potentially contribute to discussion on. The Sabbatical Officers will continue these discussions and reach out to contacts in the Council who have been supportive to student issues in the past. The University, alongside other universities in Glasgow, are also lobbying GCC to take action regarding student accommodation issues.

H Southall asked to what extent the SRC has compromised on the original goals of the campaign.

R Vare said minor compromises have been made. The SRC was unable to secure the University's commitment to a 5-year cap due to its strategic planning rounds and changing SMG membership. The SRC did receive assurances that there will be a 2-year cap and that it will be involved in decision-making processes going forward.

M Levesque said, while a compromise was required on the length of the cap, previously there were no independent committees within Schools which discussed growth targets. She said the recent establishment of these committees is a notable achievement of the campaign, as is the SRC's membership in the University's Recruitment Conversion Committee going forward. She said there has been a tangible shift in perspective regarding student numbers, with committees now planning how they can manage their expected number of students. The University's Timetabling department is also now able to make plans far further in advance than was previously possible due to the student numbers cap.

K Fish said a notable success of the campaign is that the SRC will now be involved in discussions regarding the University's Strategic Planning Round for 2025-30 – something the SRC has not been involved in before.

8) Council Reports

a) SRC President: Rinna Väre

R Väre provided an update on student accommodation. There are now vacant spaces in halls of residence for students who may require them. Students have been moving out of hotel accommodation and, in some cases, into serviced apartments. The University has ensured it will provide a communication to incoming students regarding the difficulties of finding accommodation in Glasgow currently, so that they can make an informed decision before beginning their studies.

H Southall asked if any information could be provided on the impact of the Scottish Government's rent freeze and eviction ban on the availability of student housing.

R Väre said she could not provide exact statistics, however, the University has secured further nominations from private student accommodation providers across the city in order to mitigate any potential impact.

H Busquier asked if there will be accommodation provisions in place for students returning from a year abroad.

R Väre said she is not aware of any targeted support for these students, however, if H Busquier Cerdan has concerns in this area he should contact the Sabbatical Officers.

Unfortunately the University has chosen not to implement the free breakfast scheme which the SRC and the Cost-of-Living Action Group supported. The SRC is currently discussing budget food options (including a £1.50 lunch deal and meal deal option for £2.50-3.00) with the University Catering team, with the hope these options can be made available on campus. Council members will be updated in due course.

The SMG sub-group met for the first time to discuss the University's GBV Action Plan in response to Morag Ross's report. The plan's deadlines and action-owners were discussed, with the hope being all actions can be

completed by the start of the next academic year. The SRC's own actions are progressing and the Sabbatical Officers have been in contact with the University's Communications team to discuss what campaigns can be done around the report, as one of the actions is for the SRC and the University to formulate a joint communications plan.

In response to another action outlined for the SRC in the GBV action plan, the SRC is currently reviewing its Conflict of Interest policy which prevents The Advice Centre from representing both students who are part of the same case. There are also plans to hire additional staff in the Advice Centre. An update on progress here will be provided to Council members in due course.

Amnesty International Society met with SMG regarding their Stop Killer Robots motion. The University has declined to sign the society's pledge, however, it has provided assurances that it will review academic activities involving the use of this technology. Martyn Hendry has agreed to be the SRC's point-of-contact on this so R Vare and M Levesque will keep in contact with him regarding this matter.

b) VP Education: Micaela Levesque

M Levesque referenced the consultation which took place at the previous meeting of Council regarding the Student Experience Committee strategy. She said that the strategy appeared limited in scope when discussed and that it has since been taken to the SEC to review its list of associated projects and progress thus far. The SRC expressed concerns regarding the lack of framework for how the projects were being selected as well as the quality of the consultation work; concerns which received support at the SEC. The hope is that Jonathan Jones will address these concerns in subsequent consultations.

The LTC Away Day took place on 06/12/2022. The SRC presented on the PGT student experience at this event and M Levesque thanked all Council members and Class Reps involved in this presentation for their input. Staff feedback on the presentation has been positive with staff members commenting that the event was a helpful space for focusing on the PGT experience. There was also recognition from staff that further discussions within the University which focus on the PGT experience are required.

The Student Voice Working Group met for the second time and has now devised an action plan for the term, beginning with an audit for services related to EVASYS and SSLCs. The group will then focus on specific topics within these areas, with the hope being to present a list of recommendations to the Learning & Teaching Committee by the end of the year. P Moran Ruiz is also involved in this work and Council members will receive an update on developments in due course.

The development of the Keystone Building is now in its workstream phase. M Levesque thanked Council members for their input on this project.

The nominations for the Student Teaching Awards are now open. Council will receive information on the promotional stalls in the JMS building and the assistance required to operate these. M Levesque said she will also contact Council's academic officers at the beginning of February regarding the assistance required for the nominee selection process.

O Saleh referenced the recently announced UCU Glasgow strike action and asked if the University could commit to only examining students on materials taught in lectures.

M Levesque said any students whose learning is impacted by access or policy issues should contact both Disability Services and The Advice Centre. She said there has been considerable discussion within Learning & Teaching meetings this week regarding the impact of strike action on exams and teaching. She said the University is still discussing their policy here but that, currently, it looks as if outcomes will be influenced by UCU Glasgow's actions as well as the individual cases of students. M Levesque asked O Saleh to email her so she could follow up with the University regarding the impact of strikes on students and how this reflects on policy.

I Zoulikha Kassous asked what the University will do to support students (particularly international students paying significantly higher tuition fees) whose learning and teaching is impacted by the strikes. She also asked how the SRC can ensure students will be made aware of the support available.

M Levesque said, with regards to communications on resources and University policy in relation to strikes, the Clerk of Senate is preparing a communication to go out to all students within the next week with information on this. This will include information on the strikes and what students' options are. M Levesque said she will contact M Hendry to ensure

this communication will be made available to all student groups (particularly international students) via the appropriate channels.

I Zhoulikha Kassous asked if lecturers could be asked to inform students of the resources available to them while they are on strike.

M Levesque said the SRC could recommend this to lecturers, however, she did not think this could be legally enforced by the University.

H Southall asked if the SRC could be seen as being hypocritical by trying to mitigate the impact of the strikes when it supported the last round of UCU strike action.

M Levesque said the SRC can hold the University accountable for mitigating the impact of the strikes upon students' learning and teaching while also supporting the strike action.

H Busquier Cerdan asked if the SRC could ask for staff to communicate the resources available to students during the strike action.

M Levesque said she can contact senior College and School-level staff to see if this would be possible, however, she said it may not be possible to ask this of staff.

S Lombardo asked if information for students regarding the strikes will be made available prior to the strikes taking place.

M Levesque said the Clerk of Senate's communication regarding this information is due to go out in the coming days. She said, with regards to targeted, localised communications for students around the exam diet, she would seek to find out further information on this from College/School level staff.

O Saleh said his School recently changed their policy on what materials would be examined to be in line with the University's policy. He said this would have a disadvantageous impact on students.

M Levesque said she does not believe it would be possible to change a School-level policy at this time, however, communications to students could still mitigate the negative impact of such policies. She said the issue should

continue being raised, however, as policies which are detrimental to students should be changed.

M Mojsiej asked if there are any proposed changes to exam policies or formats.

M Levesque said the decision was made at the Academic Standards Committee to keep the same exam formats as last year. With regards to individual School exam formats, a communication will be released to students in due course with this information. The hope is this communication will be released in a more timely manner than last year and M Levesque said she would follow up with the University to ensure this would happen.

R Vare said the SRC has not received any updates from UCU Glasgow regarding the strikes, however, UCU General has announced that strike action will take place on February 1st. The SRC expects a further 17 days of strike action across February and March, with dates to be confirmed. Further information is expected next week following a meeting in London where issues will be discussed on a national scale. R Vare said the University has agreed to an additional uplift (over-and-above the uplift agreed in 2022) for staff, and part of this would be paid in February, with the rest beginning in August. The University's expectation is that this uplift would be welcomed on a local level by UCU Glasgow but potentially not on a national level. Council members will be updated on developments in due course.

M Mojsiej said a marking boycott was part of the strike action balloted for. He asked if the University has a plan in place for students graduating this year.

M Levesque said the University does not currently have a plan in place for graduating students. She said, however, the graduating class are the University's biggest concern and that the SRC will continue to raise this matter in discussions.

O Saleh asked if the SRC could organise a student strike against the University based on the grounds of student frustration with the housing crisis and the impact of strikes caused by inadequate pay for University staff. He suggested the concerns could be set out in a letter to the University which the SRC would encourage students to sign.

R Vare said such action would need to be carefully considered with regards to what action the SRC would be asking students to take. She said the diverse

situations of students (with some only studying at the University for a year and others who have Visa requirements)) could complicate such action. R Vare said she felt the SRC achieved meaningful results with the Cap Student Numbers campaign and suggested the SRC carefully consider any future campaign work intended to improve the student experience.

M Mojsiej said students refusing to pay tuition fees would be the closest course of action to strike action.

M Levesque suggested O Saleh could potentially join one of the student projects supporting the strikes.

T Pu said students could submit negative feedback to the NSS on issues they are concerned over. He cautioned against deliberately affecting the data of the survey, however, positing that the University use this data to improve students' learning and teaching.

R Vare said, in the past, some societies have advocated for students to submit negative feedback to the NSS to highlight issues. She said the SRC's working relationship with the University relies on acting ethically with regards to the submission of feedback so the submission of any disingenuous feedback as a tactic would need to be carefully considered before endorsed by SRC.

M Levesque said if students are dissatisfied with any area of the University's services they should feel within their right to submit negative feedback in response to surveys.

K Fish said her School's rankings went down significantly after a cohort-wide decision from students to negatively score their School in response to their negative experience with learning and teaching.

A Saxena said significant changes within the School of Chemistry were effected as a result of the negative score it received in the NSS.

c) VP Student Activities: Katie Fish

The SRC has now secured the use of rooms 201 and 208 in the McIntyre Building for students outside of teaching hours.

Home Students Day will take place on 20th January, 2023. Engagement with the events is encouraged.

The SRC's January Welcome event has been a success thus far with a variety of different events being held. K Fish thanked Council members who have been involved in the organisation and the delivery of events.

Nominations for the VCS Awards 2023 are now open and will close on 13/02/2023. Council members who wish to take part in hosting the event should contact the Sabbatical Officers.

K Fish is working to try and remove the no-bookings-pre-6pm policy for clubs and societies booking rooms via Timetabling.

Council members can register via the SRC website and log their hours as volunteering hours. This allows Council members to be eligible for a VCS nomination. Council members under 25 will also be eligible for a Saltire Award.

P Moran Ruiz asked if there are plans for information/training to be given to society welfare officers. He also asked if welfare officers would be included as Office Bearers within societies.

K Fish said the SRC is unable to make it mandatory for Clubs and Societies to have welfare officers in place. However, the SRC is looking into establishing a sticker system on its website whereby societies with welfare officers would be identifiable by a sticker on their profile. This system may also extend to stickers for SRC workshop attendance. A meeting will be held with SRC staff to discuss these matters and Council will be updated in due course on developments.

T Frater asked if welfare officers are mandatory within clubs and societies.

K Fish said they are recommended, not mandatory, for SRC affiliation.

d) PG Arts Convenor: Alex Symington

A Symington noted that he attended a meeting of Senate on 13/12/2022 and Periodic Subject Review training on 18/01/2023.

A Symington and M Bah thanked G Connor for mediating a meeting between Glasgow University Literature Association and themselves.

- e) PG Social Sciences Convenor: Tim Pu
- f) UG Arts Convenor: Kayz Kurmaly
- g) UG Science and Engineering Convenor: Temisan Atsegoh
- h) UG Social Sciences Convenor: Ross Whip
- i) Business School Rep: Sahej Grover
- j) Chemistry School Rep: Arnav Saxena
- k) Critical Studies School Rep: Mariama Bah
- l) Engineering School Rep: Hugh Southall
- m) Humanities School Rep: Emma Murray
- n) Law School Rep: Isabelle John
- o) Mathematics and Statistics School Rep: Jordan Baillie
- p) Medicine School Rep: Mara Perras
- q) Psychology & Neuroscience School Rep: Natalie van Rooyen
- r) Social and Political Sciences School Rep: Irene Libelli
- s) Charities Officer: Lewis Trundle
- t) Environmental Officer: Erika Makipere
- u) LGBTQ+ Officer: Pablo Moran Ruiz
- v) Mental Health Equality Officer: Tony Anderson
- w) Race Equality Officer: Omar Saleh
- x) General Rep: Theo Frater

T Frater said he noted the incorrect date for the next meeting of the University Court in his Council report.

T Frater encouraged Council member participation in Home Students Day.

- y) First Year Rep: Abheer Kukreja

10. AOCB

H Busquier Cerdan asked if Council would vote on releasing any further statements in support of UCU strike action.

R Vare said she would be happy to continue with the SRC's current position of support for the strikes, given the clear support expressed by Council for the last round of strike action. She said, however, if Council members disagree with this view then further discussion is welcome.

S Lombardo said the SRC should be clear on its position regarding the strikes.

I Libelli said she feels, with some exceptions, most students support the strikes and demand action from the University on the issues underpinning them. I Libelli said the SRC should remain in support of the strikes.

R Vare said it seemed clear from discussion that the SRC should not alter its position on the strikes.

R Vare said a report has been compiled based on the feedback Council members provided at the December Council meeting regarding their experiences as volunteers in the SRC. R Vare said this report would be focused into an action plan for the current and incoming Sabbatical Officers to work on.

K Fish said accessibility issues with regards to elections hustings were identified within the feedback received, as well as gaps in Council training for students elected in the Spring election. Feedback indicated Council members feel supported on Council and that they would like to be more involved in SRC activities. Council members will be updated as the action plan to address this feedback is formulated.

R Vare said Council members are expected to submit nominations for each of the SRC's upcoming award ceremonies (VCS Awards and STAs).

Nominations for the 2023 Spring Election open on Mon 6th February and close on Fri 17th February, with voting taking place on the 1st and 2nd of March. Council members are encouraged to run for the positions available and to encourage student participation in the elections.

11. Date of next meeting – Thursday 16th February, 2023