

MINUTES OF SRC COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 14TH DECEMBER 2023 AT 6.00 PM
MCINTYRE BUILDING
WILLIAMS ROOM/ZOOM

Present: As per sederunt

Apologies: B Hay, C Michel, O Saleh, M Piermattei, C Nield, S Blackburn, M Corbett, I Libelli-Vinco, L Leonhard, E Murray, H Southall, T Frater, M Thomson

Attending: S Cairns, P Swinton

- **Welcome, Apologies and Sederunt**

As above.

- **Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

Minutes of previous meeting approved.

An email reminder about the SRC's Sixteen Days of Activism events was sent to Council members.

H Busquier Cerdan said the survey for IAQD has been completed. It has not yet been sent out as H Busquier Cerdan and C Prime were awaiting feedback from the rest of the working group. The feedback has now been received and the survey will be circulated after the winter break.

- **Welcome Week Report (Verbal Report)**

The Welcome Week 2023 report from the SRC's external consultant, based on the WW survey, has now been received. A few amendments are necessary so the written report will be circulated in due course. H Pentleton gave an overview of some of the report's key statistics.

93% of attendees thought Welcome Week was welcoming.

The Welcome Fayre was the most popular event, with 89% of attendants rating it their favourite event. Over 15,000 people attended. 2 thirds of those who attended the fayre signed up for a club/society.

72% of students said their favourite thing about Welcome Week was meeting new people in a lively atmosphere. Students said their least favourite aspect of WW was the crowded and hectic nature of some events. Feedback on poor communication around events was also received. The SRC will investigate this further as it has been indicated that this may be due to confusion caused by the SRC using 'Welcome Week' branding and the unions using 'Freshers' Week' branding.

SRC Welcome Week helpers were voted the most helpful and friendly of the student body helpers.

- **Council Reports**

SRC President - H Pentleton Owens

H Pentleton-Owens said the University has recruited less students than their target which has resulted in a financial loss. An increase in student numbers is planned for next year and, while this will account for the loss, the SRC has been told the University will not over-recruit. The financial loss has impacted the University's ability to fund projects for some of its services. H Pentleton-Owens said the SRC will remain staunchly against the over-recruitment of students and is keenly aware of the pressures over-recruitment places on University and SRC services.

R Whip said it has been difficult to obtain a firm answer from the University regarding plans for student numbers.

H Pentleton-Owens added that the University's current recruitment strategy is to target Southeast Asian and African countries. She said The Advice Centre has seen an increase in cases where students (predominantly from African countries) with difficult financial/housing situations are not being given the support they were told they would have by the University. The SRC raised this with the Recruitment and Conversion Committee and asked that the University reconsider its recruitment communications if it is planning to increase recruitment in countries with potentially financially vulnerable students.

H Busquier Cerdan asked why the University has under-recruited students this year.

R Whip said he believes there was a national drop in conversion. He said this could be due to multiple factors including Brexit and the rise in popularity of other countries for education. He said the University is discussing ways to counter this drop, with potential measures including an accommodation guarantee for PG students, earlier offers and scholarships.

N Mary McLaughlin asked if the University has considered what would happen if student numbers continued to drop.

H Pentleton-Owens said this possibility was mentioned at the Recruitment and Conversion Committee. She said if the University decides to over-recruit in response to the loss of student numbers this will have implications for the level of support available to students. She said if this was the case, the SRC would need to consider its strategic response. She said the matter could be revisited once student numbers have been confirmed.

P Moran Ruiz asked if there were any plans for a campaign to increase support for students

H Pentleton-Owens said there are no plans for a campaign, however, the SRC Executive would be very vocal about the negative impact over-recruitment has on all students and services. She said work under the 'Cap Student Numbers Now!' campaign could possibly take place in the new year once more is known about the University's plans for student numbers.

H Pentleton-Owens said the Student Wellbeing Framework Review is in progress. This follows on from a report last year which looked at the structure of student support services and the implementation of Student Support Officer roles. H Pentleton said work has been done to improve the interaction of the University's wellbeing services with the College system, however, there is still a feeling that these services lack a strategic approach to the way they approach inclusion and intersectionality. Within the review, H Pentleton-Owens highlighted a lack of designated support for Widening Participation students; something which was communicated to the SRC in the Student Carers' Review. It was agreed that a member of the Widening Participation team would be asked to join the review and a more explicit approach would be taken to integrating this kind of support. H Pentleton-Owens said it has not yet been clarified how much University funding will be allocated to this project.

The cost of food on campus was discussed at the Student Experience Committee. The SRC has been lobbying Commercial Services to provide lower-cost options since the previous academic year. Commercial Services have appointed a new Catering Manager who has said a new menu will have lower-price options. The SRC has asked that they link in with the new Cost-of-Living Intern (appointed through the Cost-of-Living Action Group) on this so that the latter can provide insight on the financial pressures facing students as well as reasonable pricing. Commercial Services have agreed to this and said they will also make agreements with a new shop in the Fraser Building.

H Pentleton-Owens and R Whip visited the Chengdu and Hainan UofG partnership campuses in China. They met with students to discuss their experiences and support, focusing on the extent to which these students felt part of a UofG community. One key takeaway was the need for specific Class Representative training sessions for these campuses due to the difficulties posed by time differences. These sessions could also be a way for students to bond. The SRC is also looking into ways it could establish closer links between the student communities of these campuses and the Glasgow campus.

VP Education - Ross Whip

A report on R Whip and H Pentleton- Owen's SRC visit to China will be brought to Council and the Student Experience Committee in January.

R Whip attended the LTC Away day on Mon 4th December. The SRC provided a workshop at the Away Day looking at notional hours and the impracticalities of this system. A positive list of aims came from the workshop and the SRC's concerns in this area were added to the agenda (these concerns included lecture recording and the unsuitability of exams being scheduled outside normal working hours). A write-up on this will be brought to Council in January.

R Whip encouraged Council members to sign up for the Student Panel on Transforming Curricula.

R Whip referred to an issue within the School of Life Sciences which was mentioned in several Council members' reports. He said the issue had now been resolved and further discussions are ongoing.

VP Student Activities - Mariama Bah

M Bah thanked all Council members who assisted with the organisation and delivery of the Winter De-Stress programme of events.

M Bah raised the issue of storage space for clubs and societies at the Clubs and Socs Improvement Project meeting; primarily the fact that societies do not have access to the lockers in the QMU designated for this purpose. M Bah asserted that more than half of the lockers are not operational due to battery issues. She also raised concerns about the accessibility of the lockers, given their position at the back of the QMU building, as well as the unsuitable allocated access hours. M Bah suggested the lockers could be moved from the QMU to another location on campus to allow for easier access and oversight, however, the QMU were reluctant to this idea. The QMU said they would like to wait until the results of the Clubs and Societies Survey are released in order to gain further insight into the needs of clubs and societies. M Bah said she is aware that societies have used the survey to highlight storage space issues and is hopeful that this feedback communicates that there are issues in this area which need to be addressed.

Events for the SRC's January Welcome are currently being planned. This will take place throughout the month of January.

M Bah said, at the recent Student Experience Committee, Mario Killman (GUSA President) was challenged regarding the decline in the number of student gym memberships, with it being suggested that this was due to the decline in student numbers. M Killman said the reason for the decline is due to the rise in costs of gym memberships and the removal of free gym memberships for 1st Year students in University accommodation by UofG sport. However, SMG members of the SEC insisted that the decline was due to the fall in student numbers.

VP Student Support – Tony Anderson

T Anderson and H Pentleton-Owens attended a meeting with the University's CIVIS representative. He said there has been a lack of communication between the SRC's and the University's CIVIS representatives. T Anderson said he would follow up with the University for further information on CIVIS activity.

T Anderson said he was pleased to report that attendance for the SRC's Trans Day of Remembrance Vigil was very strong this year with 50 attendees (up from 15 last year).

T Anderson said a feedback session for care-experienced and estranged students on the University's Corporate Parenting plan and the support offered to these two groups of students, took place. There are now plans for a pilot scheme with the University's Careers Service which will provide opportunities for these students. This will likely take place in March/April, 2024. A Christmas meet-up is planned for the 15th December where attendees will discuss plans for forming a Care Experienced and Estranged Students society.

T Anderson thanked M Bah for her work on the SRC's Sixteen Days of Activism events and said there was a strong turnout from staff and students for the Fight for the Night March.

T Anderson apologised for the cancellation of the Welfare Forum due to illness.

H Pentleton-Owens and T Anderson had intended to meet Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP at the JMS Building, however, due to accessibility issues with a lift in the building, the meeting was unfortunately unable to go ahead.

T Anderson and R Whip attended a meeting of the Retention and Success Steering Group on December 6th. A new data system is being implemented which will help investigate the reasons students are withdrawing from University. The new system will be based on information from MyCampus.

H Pentleton-Owens said an update on the SRC's Sixteen Days of Activism work would be presented at the January Council meeting. She said this would include information on the SRC's intentions for work in this area going forward and would address issues which the SRC feels arose in the University's delivery of their work in this area.

H Busquier Cerdan said there will be a Good Practice workshop on January 23rd for all College of Science & Engineering representatives. The aim will be to find examples of Good Practice within the College which can be passed to the College Learning & Teaching Committee to form recommendations. H Busquier Cerdan encouraged attendance from Council members in the College.

P Su spoke to staff in the Medical School regarding opening the Medical School Café. He was told this was under the remit of University Estates. P Su said he was unsure on how to properly gather student opinion on the issue and asked if the SRC could take any action to help open the café back up.

R Whip said the re-opening of the Medical School Café could be raised with Commercial Services and asked P Su to send him further information on this.

P Su said there has been an issue in the Medical School regarding exam timetabling. He said exams were brought forward 1 week due to a timetabling error by the School, causing many students to complain. P Su said he believes the issue has been resolved but said he would attend future SSLC meetings to ensure it has.

R Whip said the Medical School booked their exams as lectures within the JMS Building. This meant a significant part of the JMS would need to be closed which was not feasible. The timetable for exams was then shifted to a Friday afternoon and Saturday at the end of January a week before they were originally scheduled. R Whip said the SRC had discussed the matter with the University but asked P Su for further information on the resolution he referred to.

P Su said the Medical School sent an email to the students affected, explaining the issue and apologising for the inconvenience. He said, while students were unhappy with losing study time, they have accepted the situation.

R Whip asked P Su to send him an email with a summary of the situation and a copy of the email the Medical School sent to students.

P Su said C Nield is working on lobbying the Medical School for travel compensation for Dentistry students travelling to placements.

R Whip said he would follow up with C Nield on this work as this forms part of his own work.

P Su said an email has been sent out to students affected by issues pertaining to 24-hour exams. Maureen Bain said an email would be sent to students affected by the issue, however, P Su does not believe an email has been sent out.

H Pentleton-Owens asked P Su to follow up with R Whip on this.

H Busquier Cerdan said he has experienced an issue contacting students in the College of Science & Engineering, stemming from the fact there are two mailing lists for students and his email only got sent to one of them. He is trying to resolve the issue at present.

N Mary McLaughlin said she is finding it very difficult to establish communication with her Class Representatives. She said an issue was raised by Class Reps in a SSLC meeting regarding Class Rep Training and a productive discussion took place, however, she has since found it difficult to follow up with her Class Representatives on the issue.

R Whip said there has been ongoing work between the SRC and IT Services to establish an automated Teams channel system for Class Reps, however, due to technical reasons this will unfortunately no longer be implemented. Instead, a Teams channel for Class Reps will likely be set up and IT Services will be responsible for uploading representatives.

N Mary McLaughlin said she has set up her own Teams channel in the meantime.

Council members agreed that there were difficulties in contacting Class Representatives.

- **AOCB**

T Anderson met with J Small to discuss plans for LGBTQ+ History month. T Anderson said details of the discussion would be shared with P Moran Ruiz. T Anderson said the theme this year would be LGBTQ+ Icons from the world of medicine and healthcare. This will be extended to those from STEM disciplines so MVLS representatives may be consulted for ideas here.

H Pentleton-Owens said Council members with ideas should contact T Anderson.

- **Date of next meeting** – Thursday 18th January.