

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY THE 23rd JANUARY 2025 AT 6.00 PM

ROOM 201, MCINTYRE BUILDING AND ZOOM

Present: As per sederunt

Apologies: N Laddad, A Castro, F Dinning, L Alhusaini, K Kirkpatrick

Attending: P Swinton, G Connor

1) Welcome, Apologies and Sederunt

P Morán Ruiz reminded Council members that reports submitted should only cover the activities undertaken since the previous Council meeting, rather than an accumulation of activities over several months.

P Morán Ruiz made Council aware of the weather warning in place for 24/01/2024 and said the McIntyre Building would be closed and all in-person teaching and assessments on campus would be cancelled.

2) Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes of previous meeting approved.

3) Trustees Report and Financial Statements – Gina Connor

G Connor referred to the financial summary on p45 of the Financial Statements. With regards to income she said, although the SRC is reporting an increase in income of £214,349 against the previous year, it should be made clear that 50% of this increase in funding was received in past years from sources such as strike fund grants. She said the SRC appreciates that the University acknowledged its budget request to uplift SRC funding in 2023-24 to reflect its expected regular annual expenditure commitments. The SRC also received additional funding to expand the level of support offered by The Advice centre and to clubs and societies.

Additional income received included funding from the Chancellor's Fund, which saw Glasgow University Student Television receiving £6,000 and GU Magazine receiving £3,900. Some of this funding was not used last year so it will be rolled over into the current financial year.

Expenditure for the period rose by £114,906 against the previous year in line with the additional work being taken on by the SRC. With the shortfall in funds reported in last year's accounts of £90,217, this will almost balance out the increase in income the SRC is reporting this year. The rise in expenditure was attributable to the following areas: additional Advice worker support hours; additional Wellbeing workshops and costs of recruitment and training (2 rounds) for the trainers of Mind Your Mate and Mind Yourself workshops, and additional staff and funding support for clubs and societies.

G Connor referred to the section 'Funds as an Agent' on p69 of the Financial Statements and explained that part of the support offered to affiliated clubs and societies includes access to a platform for membership and event ticket sales. Additionally, the SRC offers use of a lending library for equipment to be used by clubs, saving them the expense of buying the equipment themselves. For clubs and societies who prefer not to have the difficulties associated with managing their own finances, the SRC offers a holding account where their funds are kept within an SRC bank account for them to have easy access to when needed. In the 2022-23 financial year the holding account saw income of £292,613, with £265,577 paid out to club members. This increased to £353,713 in 2023/24 and £312,342 paid out, demonstrating the increasing popularity of this system.

At the SRC's 2023/24 year end, it finished with a total surplus of £9,226. This consists of a small surplus of £830 for the SRC's general activities and £8,396 designated for the SRC'S media groups to take into the next academic year as surpluses from the Chancellors fund and event income.

K Roberts asked why the auditor's remuneration has increased by over £2k.

G Connor said this is due to a change in the SRC's VAT status. Up until a few years ago the SRC had a higher level of income, primarily due to Welcome Pass sales for Welcome Week – the income from which would come to the SRC initially before being distributed among the student bodies. As this is no longer the case, the SRC's income is lower and this necessitated a change in its VAT status. As such, there is a limit on what the SRC can reclaim in VAT (a drop of 20 % to 5%). Additional reasons for the increase in cost are the annual increase in the price of the auditor's services, as well as the increased cost of Alexander Sloan now auditing the clubs and societies finance system.

K Roberts proposed the Trustees Report and Financial Statements for approval. Approval was seconded by S Blackburn.

P Su proposed Alexander Sloan to continue as the SRC's auditors and Govan Law Centre to continue as the SRC's solicitors. Approval was seconded by CJ Adebayo Omoaka.

4) Council Reports

Written Reports submitted -

a) SRC President: Pablo Morán Ruiz

The University will not reach its recruitment target numbers this year. However, recent forecasts appear more positive than previous forecasts. The SRC continues to raise concerns on how the University manages the growth of its student numbers and the impact of this growth on the wider student experience. The SRC has concerns regarding the various diversification strategies the University is employing to increase recruitment from less traditional routes, such as from Study Abroad, Faster Route and Advanced Entry students. The SRC has also raised concerns about any potential reductions in IELTS requirements for course entry, as well as the impact that the saturation of student numbers has on University services and the resulting impact on students.

The University recently underwent work to improve its UKVI compliance. This has resulted in a new method of engagement tracking for UKVI students through the SafeZone app. The SRC remains in discussions with the University to minimise the impact any such changes may have on students. The SRC is working from a set of communications published on UKVI for Students and is looking at ways to address concerns that students have around placement opportunities. P Morán Ruiz said he understands that students have data protection concerns about using SafeZone in this way, however, he said the SRC has received assurances from the University that the data collected will not be used for any other purpose than UKVI compliance and that discussions are taking place regarding how best to reassure students of this.

The Academic Standards Committee has recommended that each Transnational Education (TNE) institution report annually to this committee. The SRC is endeavouring to make sure that the student experience of each partner institution will be central to these reports. P Morán Ruiz and H Busquier Cerdán hope to visit the UESTC campuses at Chengdu and Hainan in the coming months with the plan to compile a report of the student experiences at these institutions, informed by discussions with student and staff there. The report will also look at the expansion of these campuses, particularly Hainan, with a view to discerning how student needs are being met through this process. The SRC is also working to begin discussions with the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) to look at their modelling of the student

academic and non-academic experience. Council members will receive an update on this work once discussions have progressed.

b) VP Education: Heri Busquier Cerdán

Nominations for the Student Teaching Awards (STAs) are open until February 17th. H Busquier Cerdán strongly encouraged Council members to submit nominations and said he will be putting out a call for a shortlisting committee on February 24th.

The Student Voice Working Group will be holding workshops on February 5th and 11th to consult with staff and students on how they can work in partnership to represent the student voice and support work on the Student Voice Framework document. Participating students will receive a £20 voucher.

The Class Representative Conference will take place on February 21st and will feature sessions run by the SRC, sparqs and the University.

L Thompson asked if the Student Voice workshops are separate to the MVLS workshops.

H Busquier Cerdán said they are not related.

c) VP Student Activities: Angelica Wilson

A Wilson said the SRC has now finished its Winter Destress campaign. She thanked everyone involved in the organisation and delivery of the campaign's events.

The SRC's January Welcome events are currently underway.

The SRC met with K Lee to discuss a space in the Fraser building which clubs and societies may be able to use between 6pm and 9pm in the evening. Discussions are ongoing.

The SRC will be holding a Burns Night event. More details will follow in due course.

Nominations are open for the Volunteering, Clubs and Societies (VCS) Awards and will close on February 17th. A Wilson strongly encouraged Council members to submit nominations and said she will shortly be recruiting for a shortlisting committee. She said Council members can nominate any events which took place between nominations closing last year and nominations closing this year.

d) Iris Duane: VP Student Support

I Duane provided an update on the SRC's World Changers Need Access Campaign which ran concurrently with Disability History Month. The University has doubled its Disabled Access fund from £250k to £500k. While this is a positive increase, the SRC believes additional funds are needed and has delayed the University's campaign on accessibility. I Duane, P Morán Ruiz and H Busquier Cerdán have been discussing the formation of a new group for these efforts and the University is supportive of this. I Duane and N Smith plan to meet with the President of the City of Glasgow College Student Union to discuss the campaign and how the College can be involved. I Duane plans to compile an interim report on the progress of the campaign and circulate this ahead of a future Council meeting. The SRC continues to lobby the University to address access requirements and provisions for disabled students and I Duane thanked N Smith for all of her work in this area. The University has also been responsive to suggestions of sensory rooms and more prayer rooms on campus, with an area identified for a possible sensory room. I Duane will contact the Disability Service regarding its implementation, noting also that herself and H Busquier Cerdán are discussing how the number of prayer rooms on campus can be increased.

The Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee's Emily Test recommendation has been delayed due to the ongoing UKVI work which is currently using up Student and Academic Services' resources. The University Principal and other members of senior management have, however, minuted their recommendation for the implementation of the Emily Test, with the Principal and S Carter (the University's Gender Equality Champion) meeting with Emily Drouet's mother.

Scholarships, particularly in relation to Palestine, were also discussed at the Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee, with the University considering joint work with the University of Edinburgh. Two scholarship action plans are also forthcoming; one from the Humanitarian Response Group and one from the University's recent conference at the GUU. The University claims it is lobbying other universities to take on further HESPAL Scholarships, as well as lobbying the UK Government to give Palestinian academics more access and full refugee status. I Duane noted that the recent ceasefire agreement may affect the action plans referenced.

I Duane and N Gillies are currently planning events for LGBT History Month. The theme this year is 'social change and activism.' A flag-raising event has been confirmed for February 3rd and I Duane encouraged all Council members to attend.

The Cost-of-Living Action Group is being restructured to be more proactive. I Duane and P Morán Ruiz met with the group's new Chair, Andrew Struan, and the next meeting will take place on February 11th. Members will include staff from Commercial Services and University Colleges.

- e) PG Arts Convenor: Moki Zhong
- f) PG Social Sciences Convenor: Ayush Garg

A Garg said students in the Adam Smith Business School have contacted him to express their dissatisfaction with the grades they received last semester as well as the assessment feedback they received.

H Busquier Cerdán said students should be advised to contact The Advice Centre if they are having course issues. He asked to be made aware if a wider course issue was presenting itself.

- g) PGR Arts & Social Sciences Convenor: Misha Campello Gramelius
- h) UG Arts Convenor: Aimée Storer

A Storer met with the Dean of the College of Arts regarding funding for Year Abroad students. She then met with Student Mobility Coordinator, A Tint, and was informed that all Year Abroad students are eligible for Turing scheme-equivalent funding of minimum £335 per month. Some students, however, have not been receiving this so A Tint is investigating why and endeavouring to ensure all Year Abroad students are in receipt of this funding. A Storer said she has been informed that the Year Abroad team is significantly understaffed which may be causing these issues.

P Morán Ruiz said the Sabbatical Officers have raised this issue with External Relations.

H Busquier Cerdán said he will be speaking with A Tint to determine where the issue is happening and to ensure Year Abroad students receive their funding. He said the Sabbatical Officer have also spoken to External Relations regarding ensuring students in receipt of bursaries can still access these on their year abroad.

A Storer said she was informed by A Tint that bursaries are linked to tuition fees and will only be paid out when these fees are paid. However, this should not affect the release of separate funding for Year Abroad students as this is linked to the University's Widening Participation work.

H Busquier Cerdán said the Sabbatical Officers would take these issues forward.

- i) UG Social Sciences Convenor: Daniz Alasgarova
- j) Biodiversity, One Health & Veterinary Medicine: Laura Thompson
- k) Critical Studies School Rep: Una Dale
- l) Mathematics and Statistics School Rep: Ellie Hughes

- m) Medicine, Dentistry & Nursing School Rep: Ebrahim Rezaei
- n) Home Students Officer: CJ Adebayo Omoaka

CJ Adebayo Omoaka met with staff from the Hunterian Museum and Kelvin Hall who are offering tours to SRC Council members and staff. Tours would entail meeting staff, visiting the stores and getting to know the Hunterian catalogue outside of what is on public exhibition. CJ Adebayo Omoaka said Hunterian staff have also asked if they can work with the SRC to develop a role description for the Council member who sits on the Hunterian Strategic Development Board to better prepare them for the role. They also said they would follow up with Hunterian staff members for the brochures that were promised.

P Morán Ruiz said the SRC would be happy to look at the description of the role put forward at the beginning of the academic year.

CJ Adebayo Omoaka added that Council members (particularly Academic Reps) with ideas on how the Hunterian Museum can engage with students should contact her.

L Thompson asked if the tour would be limited to seeing certain objects.

CJ Adebayo Omoaka said their own tour experience was very wide-ranging.

K Roberts asked for more detail to be provided in the role descriptions for Council positions so that Council members are aware of all committee commitments. K Roberts said he has been receiving invitations for University Court.

P Morán said he would be happy to look at adding more detail to role descriptions. He said K Roberts should not be receiving invitations for Court and asked him to forward these to him to investigate.

- o) International Students Officer: Andreia Castro
- p) Mental Health Equality Officer: Batseba Asmelash
- q) Widening Participation Officer: Amy Hutchison
- r) General Rep: Sarah Millar
- s) First Year Rep: Alina Chauhan

5) Divestment Referendum Proposal

Following approval of the Divestment Referendum Proposal motion, the SRC have begun working on the logistics of running a referendum and have convened an internal committee for this purpose. Internal and external planning discussions (the latter with student unions of universities which have held referendums) have taken place and the SRC is focusing on building a strong foundation for the referendum which avoids the mistakes other student unions have advised of from their experiences. The aim is to hold the referendum in March as this has been deemed

the time for strongest student engagement and will allow for adequate preparation time. The SRC is also considering how best to structure the referendum to ensure fair representation and dissemination of information. The appointment of 'yes' and 'no' campaign teams is being considered for this purpose, with this involving an open call for students to join either group. The SRC would facilitate both campaigns with an emphasis on fair representation, so both sides would have equal access to resources which may include room bookings, budgets and web platforms. The SRC is also looking at the best online voting platform to host the referendum vote, as well as how it can disseminate information on voting and campaigning effectively. P Morán Ruiz said this would be a regular agenda point over the next few Council meetings where he would update Council members on the progress of the referendum's planning.

D Calvert asked who has final approval on the wording of the referendum question.

P Morán Ruiz said the internal committee would decide on the question, however, he would be happy to bring the general sentiment of the question to Council for approval.

A Chauhan asked when campaigning will start.

P Morán Ruiz said provisionally this would be 2-3 weeks before the referendum date and would be timed to not interfere with elections or exams.

I Duane said the referendum would take place across all UofG campuses based in Scotland, with the intention to potentially include those abroad, if possible.

L Thompson asked if the next SRC Executive would be in place come the time of the referendum.

P Morán Ruiz said the current SRC Executive would be in office during the referendum. He said any resulting work required after they leave office would be taken on by the next Sabbatical team.

A Chauhan asked if a divestment motion could be added to the agenda of the February Court meeting.

P Morán Ruiz said the Chair of Court is responsible for bringing motions to Court. He said he does not believe that a divestment motion will be part of the agenda but said he has asked for the SRC's dissent to be noted on Court's recent divestment vote.

I Duane said the results of the referendum would need to go to the Investment Committee first before a divestment vote could be brought to Court. She assured A Chauhan that the SRC continues to actively campaign for divestment.

6) LTC Away Day Report

H Busquier Cerdán attended the LTC Away Day with P Morán Ruiz on 10/12/2024. They lead a session building on the one delivered by H Pentleton Owens and R Whip the previous year which dealt with time poverty and the effect of cost-of-living faced by students. The session included a section on the unsustainable growth of student numbers and the impact of this on students. This included creating archetypes of students and giving these to staff at the Away Day, then asking them to prepare for the assessment. Staff would then be met with prompts every few minutes representative of real-life issues faced by students. Most, if not all, staff struggled to plan how they would complete the assessment. Staff members said it was an eye-opening experience which illuminated the challenges faced by students.

7) AOCB

P Su asked his MVLS Reps to encourage their Class Reps to attend the Class Rep catch-up in the Williams Room on Friday 31st January.

L Thompson advised P Su to '@' the name of the Teams Channel when posting about this in Teams, otherwise the right students may not be alerted.

P Morán Ruiz said the Spring Election is approaching and any Council members considering running should reach out to the person currently holding the position they are interested in.

8) Date of next meeting – Thursday 20th February 2025