

## minutes

Meeting:	Postgraduate Assembly
Date:	3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2019
Paper:	Postgraduate Assembly Spring 19 – 3 (PGAS443)
Author:	Alexandros Efstratiou
Purpose:	Record of Decision Making

### Minutes of the Postgraduate Assembly 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019

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**Assembly members present:** Martin Marko (Postgraduate Education Officer), Andrea James (AMA), James McLean (AMA), Shahreen Masooma (PPL)

**Chair:** Anush Rajagopal (LAW)

**In attendance:** Josh Melling (Postgraduate Engagement Coordinator), Alexandros Efstratiou (Advocacy Assistant)

### **PGAA443 Statements from the Chair**

-AR introduces themselves and states that this is the last assembly of the year. They briefly explain the purpose of the assembly.

### **PGAA444 Summer Programme of Events**

-AR signposts attendees to the summer programme of events.  
-Following a question by AJ, JM explains that the list includes last year's events and recommendations for this year. JM further prompts the assembly for suggestions.  
-JML concurs to tea & cake.  
-JM adds that a suggested event for last year was a boat party on the Broads.  
-AR states that if anyone thinks of something they can suggest it. They add that some sailing clubs are offering free sailing trials, which can be looked into as a potential event.

### **PGAA445 NUS Update**

-MM explains that the NUS is currently under a reformation process given their recent change of CEO. They explain that democratic reforms and financial reviews were suggested, and the democratic reform has passed.  
-MM states that the staff capacity of NUS has also decreased by about 50%, and they are currently selling land assets, meaning that they are looking at converting into a more independent charity.  
-MM further explains that there is now a trans officer in NUS.  
-MM states that what arose from the meetings is that the NUS could be doing more for PGs, but they are not.  
-Following a question by AJ, MM responds that they are unsure whether the NUS budget for postgraduates has increased, however £2000 is not enough either way.  
-JML asks how MM navigated through this background as they were mandated to request more money for PGs.  
-MM states that, given the context, they came to an agreement with the other UEA delegates at NUS not to request the additional funding for postgraduates.  
-AJ asks whether the NUS is dissolving.  
-MM explains that this is not technically true, however, given its incredibly low budget, the PG section of NUS is, in principle, dissolving.  
-AJ observes that, in that case, nobody is representing postgraduate students at NUS.  
-JML asks if MM would be able to write a detailed report on this, in case that the same avenues would be required for next year. They ask MM to include what they were mandated to do, what they did, and generally anything that would help steer new delegates for next year.

- MM concurs, and states that there may also be reforms in the way that the SU engages with NUS.
- JML states that this is good to explore, however it would be very helpful for committee to look at a written, detailed report, including some suggestions for the future.
- Following a comment by JML, MM states that documentation from NUS meetings is no longer as accessible as last year.

**ACTION: MM to write a detailed report on their NUS updates.**

## **PGAA446 Assembly Ideas**

- AR gives the background context on the current assembly structure and asks members for their input on how social or formal they would like the assembly to be.
- AJ suggests holding it out in the Scholars lounge.
- JM states that materials for signposting can be created.
- JML concurs, and states that the current format does not get the desired attendance.
- JML suggests having a preamble that explains what assembly does so that people know what its capacity is.
- JM asks assembly about their preferred location, time, etc., and gives potential locations where meetings could be held.
- AJ repeats that holding it in Scholars is preferable, as this is a PG space.
- MM suggests perceiving the current structures as transitional, and suggests that the whole purpose of assembly can be changed.
- JM explains that there are no bye-laws with regards to the assembly, and these only exist for the committee.
- AJ suggests modelling the assembly so as to get 'regulars' in the room to foster a cohesive postgraduate community.
- AR further suggests including some PGT-specific elements.
- JM clarifies that, historically, it was mostly PGT students that engaged with the union structures, and that this year was an anomaly.
- AJ states that this could have been due to the legacy of the previous officer.
- MM explains that these structures must be made more accessible to students, for example by circulating the agenda before the meetings.
- AR asks whether people like course reps can be mandated to contribute to helping students engage with the assembly.
- MM explains that this is in their plans in looking at how current structures can be interlinked.
- JML states that MM themselves should also be more engaged with these structures, so that they can act as the face of cohesion in the PG community.
- MM concurs, and states that they will examine ways of going about it.
- JML states that nothing democratic can be done without enough people to reach quorum.

- AR suggests introducing an agenda point to discuss re-structuring the assembly at the next committee meeting.
- JM explains that this item is already on the committee agenda.
- JML further suggests displaying a flowchart of how the PG democratic structure works in the Scholars screens.
- MM and AR state that the costs of these can be deliberated at committee.

**PGAA447 Any Other Business**

- AR suggests looking at elections for next year.
- JM states that this can be discussed at committee.
- AR also suggests trying to increase the capacity of the committee to increase assembly attendance via means of mandates and snowballing.
- AJ states that the more the people that sit on committee, the more the responsibility can be diffused.
- JM also adds that this could add a need for more administrative resources, although they acknowledge good arguments for both sides.
- JM and AJ suggest trialling some ideas, for example having an open forum type event once per semester.

**PGAA448 Time, date and place of next meeting**

- This was the last assembly meeting of the year.
- JM states that the summer period can be used for trialling ideas.
- AR states that this meeting's attendance was worse than usual.
- JML states that this could potentially have been due to the Friday timing.