

## minutes

Meeting:	Postgraduate Assembly
Date:	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
Paper:	Postgraduate Assembly Spring 19 – 1 (PGAS431)
Author:	Alexandros Efstratiou
Purpose:	Record of Decision Making

### Minutes of the Postgraduate Assembly 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019

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**Assembly members present:** 16 voting members

**Chair:** Anush Rajagopal (LAW)

**Apologies:** Martin Marko (Postgraduate Education Officer)

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

**PGAS431 Introduction to assembly**

-AR introduces themselves as the chair and explains the role of the assembly. They also briefly cover the function of the postgraduate committee.

**PGAS432 Open Discussion**

*Future activities hosted by postgraduate(su)*

-AR signposts the assembly to PG events that were conducted in the past (see appendix), and asks for suggestions or input from the attendees.

-JM states that suggestions will be acted on as the current period includes planning for Easter activities.

*SU Employment*

-AR asks the assembly for feedback on what kind of jobs they would like to hold or what kind of positions they would be interested in.

-MG states that the hiring structure of the students' union makes it inaccessible for people who are in their first year at UEA. They add that the hiring structure would have to be changed to make postgraduates more employable.

-EF concurs and states that the recruitment round timings do not cater to postgraduate students.

-MG suggests introducing quotas for postgraduate employment in the SU. However, they add that they recognise some issues that are associated with quotas and suggest that this possibility could be discussed further.

-BH states that office-based work is especially relevant to postgraduate students, due to the working hours they offer and the lack of night shifts.

-EF expresses their disappointment in that no administrative roles were opened for this year.

-JM clarifies that this was due to current student staff retaining their positions for next year, and that these positions still exist, however they were not opened as there were no vacancies.

-JM adds that the postgraduate committee also required some insights as to how postgraduate students would like SU jobs to be advertised to them.

-BH suggests utilising school bulletins, which postgraduate students tend to engage with, in addition to CareerCentral resources.

-MG suggests creating an SU version of the student ambassador scheme.

### *Accommodation*

- AR explains that focus groups will be held to get feedback from students on what they would like to see in university accommodation, and they urge the assembly members to contact the Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer if they would like to participate.
- There is some discussion around what considerate living flats mean and what they would entail.
- BH suggests having flats that are faith-based, to foster a collective faith culture.
- EF states that university accommodation is too expensive. They add that the one point of feedback they would give to the university would be to stop selling stocks or other aspects of accommodation to outside companies.
- An assembly member states that the length of accommodation contracts can be problematic for postgraduate students. Specifically, accommodation contracts expire before their degree is over, and very few properties offer short-term contracts to accommodate the final few months of their degree.
- BH raises the idea that all flats should be green flats.
- EF states that, in previous years, when "experimental green flats" were established, their practices were mostly based on more recycling, which could be easily extended to wider accommodation on campus.
- JML states that flats like Crome Court are built around sustainability.
- MG suggests that the university could introduce personality quizzes when students sign up for accommodation, in order to group similar-minded people together when allocating accommodation. They state that this practice is used in the US, but recognise some potential issues with this.

### **PGAS433**

#### **NUS Motion to Union Council**

- MG presents their motion (see appendix) and explains that the NUS has a responsibility to expand funding for postgraduates, who are a growing body.
- MG adds that the lead delegate being the Postgraduate Education Officer presents a unique opportunity to push this policy. They explain that the motion's role is to give the PEO the support they need to campaign for postgraduate rights at the NUS conference.
- Following a question from an assembly member, MG goes over the NUS budget allocation and demonstrates how postgraduate funding is disproportionate and much lower than it should be.
- BH notes that this budget translates into a 0.2% allocation for postgraduates, which is extremely low.
- AR asks for any comments on the motion.

-The meeting is not quorate, however the chair initiates an indicative vote:

For: 15  
Against: 0  
Abstain: 1

-The assembly shows that they support the motion in principle through the indicative vote.

**PGAS434 Any Other Business**

-AR opens a discussion around sport provisions to postgraduate students.

-MG states that some activities may require sustainment and growth in order to be taken up by postgraduates, as was the case with Yoga.

-Following a suggestion, AR clarifies that there are swimcards available for postgraduate students.

-JM states that a sports survey will be going out soon.

-JM adds that nominations are now open, including nominations for the position of Postgraduate Education Officer.

-EF expresses disappointment with the bus service, in terms of how unreliable and expensive it is. They further state that the students' union should campaign to change the young person tickets to student tickets, as the age limit of 19 for a young person ticket excludes a very large number of students.

**PGAA435 Time, date and place of next meeting**

5:30pm, Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February, Bookable Rooms 7 & 8

## **Appendix**

### **Past Activities Held by postgraduate(su)**

#### Welcome Week 2018

- Nature Walk
- Work Life Balance Workshop
- Tea and Cake
- Wine and Cheese Night
- PGCE Welcome Party
- Ale Trail
- Ghost Walk
- Laser Quest
- PGR Bowling (PGR students were inducted after the official welcome week period therefore a specific PGR event was held to increase their attendance for our event programme)

#### Summer 2018

- Ale Trail
- Mini Golf
- Wine & Cheese Evening
- Trip to Blickling Hall
- Ceramic Painting
- Tea & Cake
- Open Top Bus Tour of Norwich
- Aerial Acrobatics at the Circus
- 3x Dissertation Hand-In Parties

#### Easter 2018

- Board Games Event
- Church Tour of Norwich
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Banham Zoo Trip
- Calligraphy Session
- Student Parents Social

- Ghost Walk
- Movie Night
- Wine & Cheese Evening
- Coastal Walk

Postgraduate Assembly Motion: Support the sending a financial challenge on postgraduate funding to NUS conference 2019

Proposer: Matt Gallagher

Secunder: Jonathan Middleton

Assembly notes:

1. The postgraduate committee at NUS has received minimal funding in previous years.1
2. That the previous Postgraduate Officer challenged the funding budgets at the 2017 conference.
3. That the Lead Delegate for UEASU has the ability to challenge the financial estimates at NUS conference.
4. That the Lead Delegate for the 2019 conference is the current Postgraduate Officer Martin Marko
5. That a motion has been submitted to Union Council regarding a challenge to the estimates and the Postgraduate budget. 2

Assembly believes

1. It is important that the NUS represents postgraduate students.
2. That the current budget is insufficient to do this effectively.
3. That with the Lead Delegate being the sitting Postgraduate Officer there is a unique opportunity to challenge and increase the budget.
4. That it is important that the current Postgraduate Officer takes the lead with these efforts whilst in the Lead Delegate role.

Assembly Resolves

1. That the Postgraduate Officer and the voting members of Postgraduate Committee should attend Union Council and vote in favour of the motion being sent to conference.
2. That the Postgraduate Officer should campaign for the challenge to be successful whilst at NUS conference.