

minutes

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| Meeting: | Postgraduate Committee |
| Date: | 13 th February 2019 |
| Paper: | Postgraduate Committee Spring 19 – 2 (PGCS465) |
| Author: | Alexandros Efstratiou |
| Purpose: | Record of Decision Making |

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Minutes of the Postgraduate Committee 13th February 2019

Committee members present: Martin Marko (Postgraduate Education Officer), Oli Gray (Activities and Opportunities Officer), Sophie Atherton (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), Georgina Burchell (Welfare, Community, and Diversity Officer), James McLean (AMA), Saket Jalan (NBS), Anush Rajagopal (LAW)

Chair: Andrea James (AMA)

Apologies: Charlotte Hallahan (LDC)

In attendance: Josh Melling (Student Engagement Coordinator – PG), Alexandros Efstratiou (Advocacy Assistant)

PGCS465 Statement from the Chair

-AJ announces the apologies sent by CH.

PGCS466 Minutes of the Last Meeting

-Minutes are approved unanimously.

PGCS467 Action Log

-Chair goes over the actions that arose from the previous meeting.

-MM states that they have contacted Student Support Services, who already provide mental health first aid training, to explore ways of expanding this to PGRs. They have also liaised with the PGR service and are looking at ways of incorporating this into the Courage Project. They add that, while all parties are quite keen on this, the financial support from the PGR service may be quite limited.

-MM suggests that they report on their progress on this at the next meeting. AJ concurs.

-JM states that the continuation of the budget discussion is in the present agenda.

-AJ states that they have seen the revamped funding applications on Teams.

-MM states that they voted as steered by the committee in the NUS sections conference, except for two motions which were not part of the PG sections. They also give an update on the candidates they voted for, and, following a question from AJ, state that no other major events took place.

-Regarding Integrated Masters, MM explains that they have requested staff support especially around requesting data from the university.

-JM clarifies that MM can ask the university for data if they would like to, and they could also search for any publically available information online.

ACTION: MM to bring relevant data around Integrated Masters to the next committee meeting.

-AJ states that the SOC agenda has been put on Teams.

-It is noted that assembly's comments on employment have been relayed internally within the union.

-Regarding the installation of a community board in Scholars, MM states that they will raise this at the next GCMC. AJ suggests putting up-to-date content in the board, in terms of current events and other things happening within pg(su).

PGCS468 Update from Assembly

-A brief overview of how last assembly went is given.

PGCS469 Budget discussion

-MM provides some budget recommendations, such as increasing the campaigns budget and expanding Yoga, which provides good cost per person. They add that, while they would be keen on spending some of the budget on events such as the PG conference or supporting initiatives like the bitesize seminars, they are unsure whether the rest of the committee would prefer to keep the budget for strictly non-academic purposes.

-JM provides a contextual clarification that events such as the PG Education Conference come out of a central union budget, not the PG committee's budget.

-JML asks whether MM would like to allocate some of the budget towards educational resources. MM replies that they would like to host or assist more events that would help PG students. They add that, while alternative funding could also be sought for such events, for example faculty funding, they would like the committee's input on whether such events should be subsidised by the committee's budget or whether they should be looking at alternative sources.

-AJ asks whether this would entail shifting money from the social budgets towards the campaigns budget. MM states that there are currently £400 left in the campaigns budget, and, following some questions from GB, MM responds that this money could be used for campaigns such as supporting DTS, as well as holding events in the same nature as the PG Education Conference.

-Following a question from JML, MM explains that funding for the bitesize seminar series comes partially from the FMH faculty, and seminar leaders use the social grant to cover the pizza expenses.

-MM clarifies that the bitesize seminar series is run within the FMH faculty, following a question by AJ. They further explain that the seminar leaders, who are also the same people that run the PhD network, requested some additional staff and organisational support from pg(su), as these initiatives take up quite a lot of time and effort to run.

-MM asks the committee whether £400 in the campaigns budget is enough, or whether some money should be shifted towards this from other budgets in case that the need for other campaigns arises. The committee agrees that £400 is enough money to work with.

-JML states that this discussion could be had later on in the year, if a need arises for more money to be allocated to the campaigns budget.

-MM adds that the mental health first aid training has traditionally come from the campaigns budget and it has been quite successful. They ask whether this should continue to be the case, and whether more of such training should be provided.

-AJ states that since SSS provides this training, it would not make sense for this to be classed under campaigns. However, they add that the committee has been able to demonstrate the

- demand for such training, which could be used to lobby the university to make more provisions around it.
- MM raises the possibility of other forms of training, for example resilience training, which could be conducted by staff. They add that, while mental health first aid training incurs costs that are quite high, this is not the case for resilience training.
 - JM clarifies that the rights to resilience training materials would have to be re-purchased.
 - OG states that there are bodies which could provide low-cost training on these topics.
 - It is noted that the committee has the right to create policy which goes to Union Council, in order to lobby the union to create its own mental health first aid training which could then be rolled out.
 - OG requests some steer from the committee in terms of what they would like this training to look like and how large its scale should be.
 - AJ states that this may be tricky, as the Courage Project is examining similar issues and there may be a lot of crossover.
 - JM clarifies that there were a lot of e-mails being sent to the union.postgrads e-mail address regarding places on the mental health first aid training. They add that they are currently in the process of collating all of this data in a form to demonstrate the demand for training of this nature. Based on what many students said, a two-day training may be inaccessible to some.
 - SA suggests beginning with a one-hour session that would be accessible to everyone.
 - OG states that they could create an overview of this training and bring it to committee for any recommendations.

ACTION: OG to create an overview of the training and circulate this prior to the next committee meeting.

- MM proposes allocating some money to fund training for academic reps.
- AJ argues that, from a university perspective, this training would give reps accountability that would extend beyond the intended capacity of their role, which may be inappropriate. They make the case that a better way would be to provide training that would allow the reps to signpost people that may raise mental health issues with them to the appropriate services.
- AJ adds that this can be further discussed at the next meeting, when OG brings the training overview. MM can then bring more specific information around what they would like to see introduced for academic reps, how many resources and funding this would require, and where these resources and funding would come from, in order to make the discussion more specific.
- OG flags up the matter that the training they will be circulating within committee has been created by other members of staff within the SU, and it therefore may not be appropriate to use it as it is for the purposes that committee wants.

-AJ suggests that OG brings the training that they will be rolling out to committees, so that the PG committee can be used as a sounding board.

-OG concurs. Responding to a question, they state that this training would occur after Easter, and the PG committee's role as a sounding board would be to pick out postgraduate-specific issues.

-OG adds that, in terms of who has the biggest resource availability, it may also be appropriate to ask the university for support as its resources exceed those of the SU by a large margin.

-Coming back to the bitesize seminar series, MM asks the committee whether they would like to support such activities.

-AJ states that what has been done up to now, meaning supporting them through the social grant, seems appropriate.

-MM specifies that this would refer to labelling these activities as pg(su) activities, and providing the appropriate amount of support that this would entail.

-JM clarifies that the bitesize seminar series is specifically targeted at how to publish a medical thesis.

-Following some concerns around how extendable this would be to other faculties, MM suggests that similar events targeted at other faculties could be run by pg(su).

-AJ expresses some support for this idea, however they state that it needs to be specific in terms of how such events would be opened up to other faculties or what themes would be fostered, encompassed within a plan of exactly what would happen.

-GB suggests that this would simply be a case of booking rooms in a recurring manner to host such events.

-JML concurs.

-MM asks the committee whether they would like to subsidise PG participation in some events that the International Students' Society is hosting.

-GB suggests that this could happen if those who would like to attend applied for the social grant.

-AJ concurs and states that this could be advertised.

-MM asks for thoughts on increasing Yoga capacity, or including mature and HSC students, who constitute other groups of students with different needs and forms of engagement with the union. They state that this could also enable financial support from other student bodies.

-Following a question by MM, JM states that the spending on Yoga currently exceeds £1000 due to the increase in the length of sessions.

-AJ suggests increasing the capacity of Yoga incrementally by small amounts, to ensure that the supply is met by appropriate demand. They inquire about any existing data on the matter.

-JM states that, based on student requests, there is quite some demand, and expansion would also accommodate people who cannot attend Wednesdays.

-There is some deliberation around what a potential expansion would entail.

-JM reminds the committee that, in planning for the expansion of Yoga, the instructor's availability would also have to be taken into account.

-AJ suggests holding sessions on different days experimentally for 6 weeks, to see how this would work in practice. The committee concurs.

ACTION: MM to produce a plan for the expansion of Yoga, detailing any resources they would need and how many of them would be needed.

PGCS470 Mature Student Representation from postgraduate(su)

-AJ asks whether it would be more appropriate for the mature students' officer to be a part of the postgraduate committee.

-OG explains that the reason behind the selection of this year's SOC place committee member was that they are a postgraduate student themselves. They add that the mature students' officer could be an undergraduate student, and therefore suggest that this should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

-JM clarifies that last year's SOC place on committee was held by an undergraduate student.

-SA explains that extending the mature students' officer capacity to sit on postgraduate committee would require a bye-law change.

-It is stated that incorporating mature representation within postgraduate committee would give pg(su) a good case for requesting more funding for the purposes of representation.

-GB states that the apprehension of activities involving undergraduates that is experienced by postgraduates may also be shared by mature students.

-JM and SA explain that, in case this was followed through, a policy would have to be passed to change the bye-laws.

-SA asks who would like to second them on such a policy.

-MM suggests that the mature students' officer would be the most appropriate person to second SA on this. They suggest first inviting the mature students' officer to committee to discuss this and then taking it forward from there.

-The committee concurs that consultation with the mature students' officer should precede any policies.

-MM further suggests conversing with the mature students' assembly and other mature student reps.

ACTION: AJ to invite the mature students' officer to the next committee meeting.

PGCS471 Brexit and Postgrads

-SA gives an update around the Brexit situation and explains that they will be attending meetings on setting up a "UEA is United" campaign. They ask committee for anything that they would like SA to bring to those discussions.

- AR states that a paper was released which put some restrictions on part-time jobs, which could be relevant for Associate Tutors.
- SA states that they will raise this.

PGCS472 Easter Events

- AJ explains that they have drafted out some ideas for Easter events, such as an Easter egg hunt and a coastal walk.
- The committee is signposted to previous events that occurred over Welcome Week and winter.
- JM states that, based on the remaining budget, committee would most likely only be able to afford one trip.
- JM and AJ state that they have discussed finding pubs that provide live music.
- AJ states that the driving idea behind this year's events could be finding free and pre-existing events which students can be booked into.
- AJ adds that another idea which was brought up was egg painting, and other events that aim at getting people outside; for example, coastal and nature walks.
- MM raises the possibility of collaborating with the Student Support Service. GB states that this may be difficult.
- JM encourages the committee to send them any event ideas that they have. They add that marketing are very busy in Easter, and so requests and plans should be finalised as soon as possible.
- Following a question by AJ, JM states that last year's spending on Easter events was £800.
- After a brief review of the budget, JML suggests that the logical thing to do would be to reduce the Easter budget.
- The committee agrees on a spending of £500 for Easter events.
- JM states that an event plan should be finalised by Monday the latest. They re-iterate the ideas that were suggested in the meeting:
 - Easter egg hunt
 - Coastal walk
 - Nature walk on campus
 - Egg painting
 - Tea and cake
 - Wroxham Barns

PGCS473 Any Other Business

- Nothing to declare.

PGCS474 Time, Date, and Place of next meeting

17:15, March 5th, Bookable Rooms 7/8.

Appendix

PGCS465 Action Log 13th February 2019

| Date Commissioned | Action Required | Assigned To: | Date to be actioned by: |
|-------------------|---|--------------|-------------------------|
| 13/02/19 | Bring relevant data around Integrated Masters to the next committee meeting. | MM | 05/03/19 |
| 13/02/19 | Create an overview of the training and circulate this prior to the next committee meeting. | OG | 04/03/19 |
| 13/02/19 | Produce a plan for the expansion of Yoga, detailing any resources that are needed and how many of them would be needed. | MM | 05/03/19 |
| 13/02/19 | Invite the mature students' officer to the next committee meeting. | AJ | 26/02/19 |