

## minutes

Meeting:	Postgraduate Committee
Date:	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2018
Paper:	Postgraduate Committee Autumn 18 – 4 (PGCA449)
Author:	Alexandros Efstratiou
Purpose:	Record of Decision Making

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### Minutes of the Postgraduate Committee 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018

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**Committee members present:** Martin Marko (Postgraduate Education Officer), Oli Gray (Activities and Opportunities Officer), Rob Klim (Ethical Issues Officer) James McLean (AMA), Saket Jalan (NBS), Anush Rajagopal (LAW)

**Chair:** Charlotte Hallahan (LDC)

**Apologies:** Sophie Atherton (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), Georgina Burchell (Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer), Andrea James (AMA)

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

**PGCA449 Statement from the Chair**

- CH chairs in AJ's place, as deputy chair.
- CH explains that the last meeting was not quorate, however arising issues were voted on in Teams.
- CH states that, as this is the last committee meeting for the semester, any pending matters must be settled.

**PGCA450 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

- MM requests a clarification on the minutes for the meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup>. They make reference to a point where it is stated that a DPC member clarified where information about no-confidenced members being unable to re-run for elections, however where this information can be found was not specified in the minutes.
- AE explains that, after a similar question by AR, they revisited this point. The clarification that was made was that this information can be found on bye-laws around motions of no-confidence. MM inquires whether the minutes can be amended to reflect this. The committee concurs.
- JM explains that, after consultation with the Campaigns and Democracy Officer, it arose that this point was in reference to best practice on democracy, as it would be inappropriate for no-confidenced members to attempt and reinstate themselves.
- MM raises an error with name initials in the minutes of the previous meeting. Committee concurs to correct this.
- No further issues raised. Meeting is not quorate therefore voting cannot be held.

**PGCA451 Action Log**

- MM gives an update on their action point about informing committee whenever a new funding application is put on Teams. They explain that, while they have already been doing this, they will continue doing so.

**PGCA452 Assembly Discussion Items**

- Nothing to declare as the assembly meeting was postponed.

**PGCA453 PG Social to be held in November (followed on)**

- AR explains that they would like to hold a large-scale event which would appeal to all postgraduates.
- CH asks whether AR would like to have this around Christmas time.
- AR states that the beginning of December would be ideal, and that the Scholars Bar would be a good venue to hold this.
- JM clarifies that the Scholars Bar cannot technically be booked.
- AR explains that there is no need for a booking, as this would be an event pertaining to the whole of the postgraduate

community, meaning it could include people who are already at Scholars at the time of the event. They further explain that the nature of the event would be a larger-scale social, with more food, drinks and activities.

-Responding to a question from JM, AR states that they would like to get about 100-150 people at the event.

-JM gives some contextual information on the usual costs of such events.

-AR raises the possibility of using snacks rather than hot food.

-MM suggests exploring the possibility of purchasing drinks from SU venues at cost price, rather than retail price.

-JM explains that this already happens with wine bottles, but would be infrastructurally difficult to implement for individual drinks.

-SJ suggests reducing the value of the coupons given at assembly to allow more room for other activities.

-After deliberation on where drinks and food could be sourced from, OG explains that, while external companies may give discounts when buying in bulk, there is a bigger picture behind sourcing these from SU outlets, since any money that the SU is making goes back to students.

-AR states that approximately £1000 would be sufficient for the event.

-JML states that they would not like to endorse bringing students in based solely on the premise of free food and drinks, as they would like to incorporate community building as well.

-CH states that the budget and other specifics of the event can be voted on in Teams.

-RK joins the meeting.

*The meeting is now quorate.*

-CH gives RK some context on what the discussion is on, and what the event would pertain to.

-CH believes that Saturday would be the best day to hold the event. SJ suggests holding it on a Friday instead, to make it more accessible to students who must commute to university. The committee concurs.

-JM explains that getting 100 people is doable, however the event would have to be advertised on all channels, and the committee members would also have to spread the word.

-Following a question regarding a capped amount of event admissions, AR explains that more people can be accommodated. They suggest making the first 150 drinks free, at a maximum of one per person, to incentivise people to join quickly, without blocking access to people who want to come later.

-OG explains that giving one free drink with each ticket has worked in the past.

-CH asks for opinions on the proposed spending of £1000 for the event. MM believes that this amount may be unreasonable.

-OG states that, in terms of spending per head, £1000 for 100 people would be a reasonable amount. They ask whether this money can be spent retrospectively.

-JM explains that this cannot happen, as orders must be placed quite early on.

-AR states that they are not concerned about having too much food and drinks, but rather whether they will be enough.

-OG raises the possibility of spending the event money on non-perishable food. JM explains that, if the committee wishes to do this, there is a PG storage space where the food can be held.

-MM states that they believe a £10 per head spending is too much.

-RK explains that non-perishable food would be an investment, therefore no money would be lost through it.

-JML suggests initiating voting to decide on the matter.

-CH opens voting on approving the event with a budget of £1000.

- Approve: 7
- Reject: 0
- Abstentions: 0

-The event is approved.

-MM suggests also voting on the minutes of previous meetings, as the meeting is now quorate. The committee concurs.

-CH opens voting on the minutes for the meeting of November 9<sup>th</sup>.

- Approve: 7
- Reject: 0
- Abstentions: 0

-The minutes are approved unanimously.

-CH opens voting on approving the minutes for the meeting of October 26<sup>th</sup>, with the amendments requested by MM.

- Approve: 7
- Reject: 0
- Abstentions: 0

-The amendment requested by MM and the minutes are approved unanimously.

**ACTION: AE to amend the minutes of the meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup> and upload these to the pg(su) website.**

#### **PGCA454 Acting on Improving Advertising (followed on)**

-AR explains that some issues were raised at the last assembly about students being unaware of the events hosted by pg(su). The assembly requested better ways of showing what the pg(su) is doing on that front.

-AR further explains that the time and advertising of assembly was one of the major issues raised, and that the former chair of assembly suggested utilising social media to a larger extent.

-JM explains that, since this would concern staff resources, it may be difficult to implement due to staff protocol. They further

explain that the committee can request administrative access to pg(su) social media if they wish, however this would create a need for further training.

-AR explains that another issue raised was making the mailing list opt-in more visible and accessible.

-JML states that the creation of a shared mailbox was discussed at the last committee meeting.

-MM asks whether the terms and conditions surrounding mailing list opt-in can be changed. JM explains that it would not be constructive to do so, due to data protection issues.

-CH suggests providing more signposting to the pg(su) twitter.

**PGCA455 Postgraduate Education Officer Union Council Report (followed on)**

-MM asks the committee whether they would like updates on the Postgraduate Education Officer's report at every committee meeting, rather than solely at Union Council. They further ask the committee whether they would like them to give these updates retrospectively, after Union Council meetings, or proactively, before Union Council.

-OG suggests that MM only does either this, or the Workbook, as doing both would create unnecessary workload.

-JML suggests that the officer uses their judgment on this, so as to bring issues to committee if they feel that they are salient enough to warrant discussion.

-OG concurs, and, in response to whether the Officer should do this proactively or retrospectively, they suggest that the Officer brings the most up-to-date document depending on whether the specific issue would have to be discussed prior to, or after, Union Council.

**PGCA456 Postgraduate Education Officer 'Workbook' (followed on)**

-Item was discussed in PGCA455. The committee concurred that the Postgraduate Education Officer does not need to produce a Workbook for committee meetings, and instead uses their judgment to bring salient issues to committee.

**PGCA457 Social Grant funding being intertwined with PGSU Agenda (followed on)**

-CH gives some context on this item from the previous committee meeting, where it was discussed that social grants should continue being voted on in Teams, and the Postgraduate Education Officer should inform the committee whenever a new application is up, since introducing this as an agenda item could take a lot of time out of meetings.

-MM explains that their suggestion pertained to the social grant funding being intertwined with pg(su) Strategy, not the committee's agenda.

-OG explains that there exists a guideline on approving grants.

- MM explains that their suggestion does not only pertain to the cap or approval guidelines, but also on where the spending is going, and whether this is in line with pg(su) strategy.
- JM provides a further clarification that this point is in regards to whether funding applications align with pg(su) morals, which are based around community-building.
- MM explains that, in terms of where the money is going, more purposes such as academic ones could be incorporated into the spending. They ask whether these criteria or guidelines should be in line with the broader picture, and whether this strategy should be reflected in the guidelines.
- JML questions whether there is enough information to make such speculative decisions. They support that this could be more suitable down the line, in the case that the social grant budget begins to become depleted.
- CH states that there would most likely be a need for further guidelines in the future, and asks committee whether they would want to delay creating such guidelines.
- OG states that this would be something very helpful to the full-time officers, and so would like these guidelines quite soon. Responding to a question, they state that they will meet with the other FTOs to discuss what kind of guidelines they would need.

**ACTION: OG, MM, GB and SA to come together and produce a set of questions that they would like answered by social grant guidelines, and put these questions on Teams.**

**PGCA458 Apology to Union Council (followed on)**

- MM states that they would like to go back and explain the mistakes they have made, and how to rectify them.
- CH asks whether this is an ongoing action for MM. MM confirms that it is. Responding to CH's question on when this action would be finalised, MM states that this would depend on multiple factors, as they need to go back and investigate some requests made by students at previous assemblies.

**ACTION: AR to request a clarification from an assembly member who requested a report from the Deputy Returning Officer, regarding what they would like to see in the report.**

**PGCA459 Sport Provision for Postgraduates**

- OG states that the centrally run sports services must be accessible for postgraduates. They explain that they would like to bring some data to UEASport on what postgraduates' needs are on Sports provision. OG further states that, while some research on this was conducted in the previous year, they plan on launching more surveys to make a stronger case to UEASport.

-JM explains that the committee could provide some input on what should be looked at, and some potential platforms that can be utilised.

-OG further explains that triangulating the older data with the newer data would make a very strong case to argue that there is a longitudinal need for sports provision. They further ask the committee for some insights on what barriers postgraduates face regarding things like the £1 swimcard.

-AR suggests that this could also be examined for gym memberships.

-CH suggests asking some assembly members for feedback on the barriers to postgraduate students.

-OG explains that if new ways of engaging postgraduate students can be found, this can be beneficial for both UEASport and postgraduate students, since UEASport would receive more engagement, while postgraduate students would have a higher satisfaction around the sport provisions available to them.

-AR states that the Sportspark track is under-utilised, and it could therefore be used to accommodate postgraduates. OG concurs and states that they believe it would be easy to secure the track for postgraduate sport provisions.

-JM explains the previous Postgraduate Education Officer's work and research on sports provision, including how they booked postgraduate-specific sessions to show UEASport that, contrary to their beliefs, there was a high desire from postgraduates for sport, and postgraduates alone can fill up all slots.

-CH suggests replicating this to some extent, as it could provide valuable data. JM explains that this project had a very heavy impact on the Officer's workload, and so it is unlikely that it could be replicated in this way.

-OG states that they would like to delegate this research to someone who is more familiar with how to conduct it, while they could focus on examining ways for better sport provision.

-JM explains it would be better to create the survey with feedback from the Postgraduate Education and Activities & Opportunities Officers, and bring this back for the committee to discuss.

-OG states that the next SPAC meeting will take place in February. JM states that this creates a need to begin this research as soon as possible, so that results can be achieved before then.

**PGCA460 Funding a Series of Education Events & Conferences throughout the year**

-Item not discussed.

**PGCA461 Winter Series of Events**

-CH asks the committee for any comments on the events outlined in the agenda.

- AR expresses support for the events, and suggests adding a few ale trails or pub crawls.
- JM clarifies that the committee must decide which of these events they would like to run. They provide some further information on how many events should be held in terms of the timescale within which they have to be prepared.
- CH suggests combining the Christmas Jumper Party with AR's social event idea, to host a pulling-together event in the form of a Winter Party. The committee concurs.
- There is some deliberation on whether the Fellbrigg Hall event should be cancelled and replaced with a seal trip. JML suggests that Fellbrigg Hall is a good and seasonal idea, and it could therefore be kept. CH states that the seal trip could instead be hosted nearer to March or April.
- Following feedback on last year's success of ice-skating, the committee concurs to keep the ice-skating event on the winter events list.
- JM reminds the committee that some events must be crossed off the list in order to allow time for the preparation of other events.
- The committee concurs on cancelling Global Village Christmas and the Market, and merging Christmas Decorations with Christmas Ceramics.
- JML inquires around how keeping multiple large-scale events would reflect on the budget.
- MM asks if any discounts can be acquired.
- JM explains that they will contact relevant people to get information on pricing, and then put this through committee for approval. Material will then be created by marketing for whatever is approved by the committee.
- The committee concurs on a £1750 spending for the whole programme of the winter events, including the Winter Party.
- MM asks if something can be done around Christmas Day.
- JM explains that, in the last year, postgraduate students could get free coffee from Unio on Christmas Day, and that this resulted in quite a high turnout.
- The committee suggests promoting and signposting to events hosted by Student Support Services around Christmas Day, as that is a period when students are at their loneliest.
- MM suggests holding a graduation celebration event in January, if this is something the committee would like.
- CH suggests that MM provides some more information on this via Teams.
- AR inquires whether the Ale Trail will be the first event that will be hosted; CH confirms that it will be.

**PGCA462 Any Other Business**

**Parts of this discussion have been removed due to confidentiality.**



- MM raises a discussion around the possibility of introducing an impartial chair for viva examinations, and whether university policy on this topic can be influenced.
- AR asks whether the committee will do something about ongoing efforts to make DTS online.
- MM explains that they have already submitted policy to be considered at Union Council, and the committee can come back to discuss this after the outcomes of this action can be assessed.

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

January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019, 5.15-7.15pm, Bookable Rooms 7 & 8

## Appendix

### *PGCA437 Action Log 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018*

Date Commissioned	Action Required	Assigned To:	Date to be actioned by:
20/11/18	Amend the minutes of October 26 <sup>th</sup> and upload the amended version to the pg(su) website	<b>AE</b>	23/11/18
20/11/18	Meet and produce a set of questions that should be answered by social grant guidelines, and post these questions on Teams	<b>OG, MM, GB, SA</b>	22/01/19
20/11/18	Request a clarification on what the assembly member wanted to see through the report they requested from the Deputy Returning Officer	<b>AR</b>	22/01/19