



Meeting:	Postgraduate Assembly
Date:	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
Paper:	Postgraduate Assembly Winter
Author:	Bright Archibong
Purpose:	Record of Decision Making

uea(su)

### **Minutes of the Postgraduate Assembly 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

**Chair: Javier Martinez Perez**

**In Attendance:** Josh Melling (Student Engagement Coordinator – PG), Bright Archibong (Advocacy Assistant)

#### **428 Welcome Drinks and Pizza**

JMP welcomed everyone to the PG Assembly and went on to introduce Martin, the PG education officer.

#### **429 Postgraduate Education Officer Q&A**

Martin introduced himself, and explained what his job role is. He also encouraged the students to freely get in touch with him or the course reps if they had any academic related feedback or concerns. Martin also informed everyone to keep an eye out for the blog, accessible through the main webpage as he will be posting updates on his job role and other relevant information.

#### **430 Postgraduate Trustee Election (Callum – UG Education Officer)**

Callum explained that voting for the PG trustees elections is open and talked on the importance of students voting as there isn't enough PG representation on the board. He further explained that elected nominees will receive adequate training and an opportunity to meet the rest of the board at the strategy weekend in March. Voting for this elections ends on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2020.

### **431 Welfare on Campus (Amelia- Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer)**

Amelia introduced herself to everyone and gave some background information into her role. She clarified that her role extends beyond mental health to community building, housing and other relevant departments.

Amelia identified that the issue of waiting times was raised by the University in March, 2019 and reducing it is a top priority. According to her, the school has been looking into providing other means to give students support beyond signing up for counselling.

She explained that by the end of January, the waiting times of students seeking support will be reviewed to ascertain the level of improvement achieved and if requested, it will be shared with the general population. Listed at the meeting were also alternative means for students to receive support such as wellbeing officers at the accommodations, the lifelong learning teams and the embedded wellbeing teams in the academic faculties.

### **432 Courage Wellbeing Project (Amelia)**

Amelia informed everyone that funding for the courage project has been extended to August due to the time involved in getting requests met by the university. She also indicated that the "Eradicate Hate" campaign starts on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 and it's happening around the time of "Report and Support", which was launched on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January. Amelia also stated that these activities are all part of the university's attempt to eradicate hate, drive inclusivity and contribute to the total wellbeing of students. Matt asked to know the SU's research focus for the courage project, with regards to PGRs and PGTs and Amelia responded that she would confirm the focus area and revert accordingly.

### **433 UCU Strikes: Your Questions, and our update (Lewis Martin, Chair of the UCU strike working group)**

Lewis indicated that the UCU ballot on the remuneration for staff and gender pay gap closed on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 and the results will be released on Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 and circulated amongst the UCU members. He also explained that there'll be more action taking place between the end of February and the beginning of March and if students are interested in getting involved in the strike activities, the opportunity for support will be circulated on the PG student union pages as PGR students are also being affected by the lack of remuneration. A student asked if more word can be gotten on the faculty and staff perspective on the issue on

ground, so that students can get more supportive. Lewis responded by saying the student union will hopefully give more information on it in order to achieve more vocal support. He also encouraged students to attend the "Teach Out", which is a program on mental health within organizations.

Another student asked if the PGRs working as staff could be more vocal and have conversations on the strike and Lewis' response was that quotes from the strike action will be aired during the courage project activity.

#### **434 Postgraduate Events and Activities**

JMP stated that the post graduate ball was discussed at the previous assembly and it intends to run at the end of summer. Matt also informed everyone that a survey to get peoples opinion on when and where they'd want the PG ball to be had been created and he encouraged everyone to fill the survey.

#### **435 PG Assembly Mailing List and Teams Chat**

JMP explained the purpose of the mailing list to everyone and further explained that signing up to the list allows previous activities to be sent to students, for them to select what activities they want repeated. JMP also shared how to sign up to the mailing list and encouraged everyone to do so.

JMP discussed that a major priority is visibility for the events organized. JMP asked Josh to look into how the schools share the activities in the bulletin and Matt concurred. Matt identified that a major difficulty is getting schools to actually share disseminated information given to them as they are very unresponsive to the SU. He suggested that the crowd sourcing effort be adopted to drive visibility for the activities. He also encouraged other students to come forward with suggestions on how visibility for activities can be improved and JMP concurred.

A student suggested deploying roll up banners and posters to the scholars bar and the hive, in order to drive awareness for activities however, JMP explained that not many postgrads move around those areas because they are highly saturated with undergrads.

JMP reminded Matt that following up with the suggestion of a student, he was supposed to look into the possibility of having the assembly self-fund its activities in order to provide funds for more activities and Matt assured that he would look into it before the next assembly.

Currently, the SU is seeking to increase the grants it gets from the university, in order to support more activities for postgraduate students. Lewis explained that the shortage of funds affects the SU's ability to host more events for students. He encouraged PG students to write directly to the Vice Chancellor of the University requesting that more money be allocated to the Student Union.

A student asked if the university could consider allowing PG students fund some events and not be over reliant on the university and Lewis' response was that the union would rather not charge PG students because they are a small group and undergrads who are more in number get more free events.

A student raised the disconnect between the PGR and the PGT students. He encouraged a networking event between the two classes, in collaboration with Career Central in order to help PGT students understand more about PhDs. Matt explained that the committee is having discussions around this but currently, no plans have been set into motion.

JMP asked if students present had suggestions for activities they'd like to see this semester and a student suggested that PG students need more sporting activities. Matt mentioned that there are swim cards, the PG football group that meets on Tuesdays and previously, the PG climbing and badminton. He further explained that team sports aren't really done because it's difficult to get people together but if there's a possibility for it, the union could look into it and allocate funds to it. Lewis also mentioned that the union is considering increasing the sporting activities for PG students.

JMP informed everyone that a conference fund of almost £6,000 is available for students to apply for, to cover research and conference expenses of up to £100 and more if the need is well justified. Lewis clarified that the funds aren't restricted to just PGRs but extends to PGTs who have networking events to attend. JMP explained the criteria for getting the conference funds to students and also clarified that funding needs to be applied for at least 2 weeks before the event.

#### **436 Any other Business**

There was no other business

#### **437 Time, Date and Place of the Next Meeting.**

The next assembly meeting will take place in Scholars Lounge on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020 at 5:30pm.