

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY THE 24th OCTOBER 2024 AT 6.00 PM
ROOM 201, MCINTYRE BUILDING AND ZOOM

Present : As per sederunt

Apologies : E Barnett, D Alasgarova, S Blackburn, K Kirkpatrick

Attending: P Swinton, B Hay, J Small

1) Welcome, Apologies and Sederunt

As above.

2) Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes of previous meeting approved.

3) Elections Report (Oral Update on Elections)

The recent SRC election saw some of the highest Autumn election engagement since 2019 both in terms of participation and votes. 1,770 votes were recorded - twice as many as last year's election - and over half of the positions were contested. Engagement with General Representative roles and PGR positions was particularly strong. 44 out of 51 positions were filled, with Council now having a full Welfare team and strong PGR/PGT representation.

4) Elections to University Committee Positions

SRC Court Assessor

D Calvert, Y Komery and A Garg put themselves forward.

D Calvert was elected SRC Court Assessor.

Learning & Teaching Committee (College of Arts)

F Dinning was elected LTC rep for College of Arts.

Learning & Teaching Committee (College of Social Sciences)

C Atsegho was elected LTC rep for College of Social Sciences.

Learning & Teaching Committee (College of MVLS)

G Guio Archila, L Thompson and Ebrahim Rezaei put themselves forward.
L Thompson was elected LTC Rep for College of MVLS

Learning & Teaching Committee (College of Science & Engineering)

B Jatin Dholakia and N Laddad put themselves forward.
N Laddad was elected LTC Rep for College of Science & Engineering)

Student Experience UG

A Chauhan and S Blackburn put themselves forward.
S Blackburn was elected Student Experience UG rep.

Student Experience PG

S Talkokulwar, A Garg and B Jatin Dholakia put themselves forward.
B Jatin Dholakia was elected Student Experience PG rep.

Academic Dress Committee

N Pooley was elected to the Academic Dress Committee.

Military Education Committee

K Roberts was elected to the Military Education Committee.

Health Safety & Wellbeing Committee

N Gillies and S Maharaj put themselves forward.
S Maharaj was elected to the Health Safety & Wellbeing Committee.

Hunterian Strategic Development Board

G Guia Archila and CJ Adebayo Omoaka put themselves forward.
CJ Adebayo Omoaka was elected to the Hunterian Strategic Development Board.

Library Committee (UG Representative)

L Wong and A Hutchison put themselves forward.
Amy Hutchison was elected to the Library Committee as UG rep.

Library Committee (PG Representative)

K Roberts was elected to the Library Committee as PG Rep.

Scotland's Rural College Liaison Committee

F Dinning was elected to the Scotland's Rural College Liaison Committee.

CIVIS

D Calvert, H Watters, L Wong, S Millar, S Talkokulwar, E Rezaei and A Castro delivered put themselves forward.

S Millar was elected to the CIVIS Student Council.

D Calvert was elected to the CIVIS Student Council.

A tie-vote between E Rezaei and A Castro occurred, and another vote was taken.

A Castro was elected to the CIVIS Student Council.

Student Voice Working Group

G Guia Archila, CJ Adebayo Omoaka, A Chauhan, L Wong, A Hutchison and B Jatin Dholakia put themselves forward.

A Hutchison was elected to the Student Voice Working Group.

5) Council Reports

a) SRC President: Pablo Morán Ruiz

Although the University recruited under target this year, they were still considerably higher than the previous year. The SRC continues to highlight its concerns to the University over the strain which high student numbers place on its own, and the University's, services and infrastructure.

The SRC has lobbied hard for the University to reinstate its emergency accommodation process which was discontinued in January 2024. There has been a significant uptick in homeless students presenting to the Advice Centre in recent months.

P Morán Ruiz has been involved in lobbying the University for higher numbers of Sanctuary Scholarships, as well as further provisions and promotion of support for sanctuary students. He and I Duane have also been looking at English Language Requirements and fee waivers. P Morán Ruiz will continue to meet with University staff to progress work on these issues.

P Morán Ruiz and H Busquier have been liaising with the University's Academic Policy & Governance and Transnational Education teams to address how student voices on TNE campuses can be better heard and listened to through effective representation.

L Wong asked if students on TNE campuses have separate representational systems.

P Morán Ruiz said each TNE campus is set up as a partner institution of the University of Glasgow. The nature of student representation on these campuses depends on the partnership agreement in place.

b) VP Education: Heri Busquier Cerdán

H Busquier Cerdán referenced the formation of a joint University/SRC working group to consider problems around transport costs for unpaid placements and field trips. The WG recommended a standardised reimbursement process in advance of expenses being incurred, as well as the University granting reimbursements for placements taking place within the Glasgow City Council area. In Summer 2024 the University rolled out an expenses scheme allowing students to claim reimbursement for placement and transport costs. H Busquier Cerdán asked that he be contacted with any feedback on this system. The additional recommendations are still being explored by the University following consideration at the Student Experience Committee

H Busquier Cerdán referenced the Wellbeing Policies Development Group and said he, I Duane and members of the Advice Team have been involved in shaping the Interruption of Studies Policy. They have also been involved in reviews of the Carers Policy and the Fitness to Study Process. Work in these areas is ongoing and Council will receive updates in due course.

The Student Voice WG has developed new websites for students and staff. These are now live and any feedback should be sent to H Busquier Cerdán.

H Busquier Cerdán and P Morán Ruiz will be involved in the NSS Task Force in considering results from the National Student Survey (NSS). An update will be provided at the next Council meeting.

Questions to H Busquier Cerdán's report

L Thompson said the reimbursement scheme is not very well signposted. She asked if the scheme covers transport to field courses.

H Busquier Cerdán said he would find out and get back to L Thompson.

F Brown said many School of Education placements can be outside Glasgow with very long durations. She asked if reimbursements would be daily or weekly.

H Busquier Cerdán said it is his understanding that students studying on compulsory placements in the School of Education will be eligible to apply for reimbursement for the cost of their travel from their term time address to the placement location. He said the SRC's overall aim is for the University to implement a system whereby students can apply to be paid in advance of their placement for their travel costs, therefore removing the need for students to be financially inconvenienced whilst they wait on the University reimbursing them. However that process is quite a way off and the University are only at the stage of exploring if this would be possible, although the SRC are continuing to lobby them on this.

P Morán Ruiz said transport placement costs would be discussed at Academic Forum.

c) VP Student Support: Iris Duane

A second GBV counsellor has been hired by the University. This staff member will share work with the first counsellor who does 1 day per week at SRC.

The SRC is aware that waiting times for conduct cases are currently rising. P Morán Ruiz has been lobbying the University to address this.

The first meeting of the Gender Equality Group took place on 21/10/2024. The group has made an official recommendation that the University adopt the Emily Test Charter.

A piece of artwork by Molly Hankinson will now be exhibited on the Dumfries Campus as part of their 16 Days of Activism.

This year's Fight for the Night March will take place on November 28th. I Duane is in planning discussions with Strathclyde Student Union and SRC-affiliated societies for the event.

A Harm Reduction report is being prepared across the University. The report will deal with the student experience of all substances, with a view to improving students' relationships with these substances. I Duane will have advance sight of the report in November before it is released in February. I Duane is reviewing how the SRC might carry out its own harm reduction work alongside colleagues in TAC.

The Equality and Diversity events at Welcome Week saw a sustained increase in engagement. I Duane said she would be exploring ways of engaging the student groups which, up to this point, were less likely to engage.

Questions to I Duane's Report

L Wong asked if the harm reduction work described by I Duane would be an action for the University or for the medical system too.

I Duane said the report will chiefly look at how the University can undertake harm reduction measures to improve the student experience. She said part of the report would look at how this work can impact the wider community.

Yohan Komery asked why caffeine is being considered as part of the report.

I Duane said the report has not yet been released so she cannot comment. She said she would provide an update to Council once the report has been released.

K Roberts asked if the GBV counsellor is only based on the Gilmorehill campus or if they attend other campuses.

I Duane said the counsellor is permanently based on the Gilmorehill campus. She said she would speak to the Student Experience Coordinator on the Dumfries Campus to see what GBV-related services they provide.

d) VP Student Activities: Angelica Wilson

A Wilson said she has mostly been dealing with the delivery and planning of Welcome Week 2024 this term.

A Wilson and S Drijver-Headley attended the Sustainability Working Group where there were discussions as how the University could get 'back on track' to meet its 2030 net zero target.

A Wilson met with a working group of the Adam Smith Business School & PGT Hub Delivery Board to discuss extended opening hours for this building. The group is looking to extend the current Mon-Fri 8am-8pm opening hours to the weekend. Any Council members with opinions or questions on these opening hours should contact A Wilson.

F Brown asked if Reach Out Ambassadors would be needed to help with staffing for extended opening hours.

A Wilson said the head of Reach Out, Catriona MacIsaac, is leading the working group and that she said Reach Out staff would be available to work weekends. She said the main concern around extending opening hours has come from the Facilities team, as their staff may not be able to accommodate the extra work.

Other reports received -

- e) Biodiversity, One Health & Veterinary Medicine: Laura Thompson
- f) Critical Studies School Rep: Una Dale
- g) Infection & Immunity School Rep: Gerardo Guio Archila
- h) Modern Languages and Culture School Rep: Duncan Calvert
- i) Molecular Biosciences: Elizabeth Barnett
- j) Disability Equality Officer: Nicola Smith
- k) Widening Participation Officer: Amy Hutchison

P Morán Ruiz opened the floor to Council members who wished to highlight specific matters in their reports.

N Laddad said he has spoken to lecturers, students and student societies in the School of Engineering about what changes can be made within the School. He said there should be a policy which ensures online script viewing for everyone. Additionally, he said there should be better professional opportunities for Engineering students. N Laddad further advised that some class reps have told him they have doubts about whether they have the necessary skills to chair meetings. He believed School-based class rep training may be able to generate a positive impact in this area.

A Gurgisaid Strathclyde University has software which allows students to upload their assignments to check for plagiarism before submission. He said Glasgow University should also have this. L Thompson said Glasgow University has Turnitin plagiarism checker, however, there are issues with how many times students can upload their work before it submits. H Busquier Cerdán said he believed Turnitin allows a draft to be uploaded before final submission in most cases. He said this matter could be discussed further at Academic Forum.

CJ Adebayo Omoaka said she has not yet received a handover for her role. She said she is keen to contact home students and begin her outreach work, however, she does not know the best way to get in touch with these students. I Duane acknowledged the lack of data around home students. She said she would continue to speak to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team on this and she would be happy to discuss further offline or at the Welfare Forum.

N Smith said a student contacted her to ask that the SRC back a campaign for a sensory room on campus. B Asmelash said she would be happy to work with N Smith and I Duane on trying to establish a sensory or wellbeing room on campus. I Duane said the University is currently looking at other universities for best practice in this area. She said this issue could be discussed at the next Welfare Forum and that a meeting should be organised for N Smith, B Asmelash and herself to discuss this. She said this work could also be brought into Disability History Month.

S Drijver-Headley said she had spoken with another student regarding the presence of companies such as Dominoes and Amazon Prime at Welcome Fair. She said the student felt this was contradictory to the SRC's values, given that these companies have poor environmental track records. S Drijver-Headley said she agreed with the student and highlighted issues such as the recent election of Dr Ghassan Abu-Sittah as Rector, and the SRC's past endorsement of the Green New Deal. She suggested that Council members should decide what companies are allowed to come to the Welcome Fair

A Wilson said there was a financial breakdown provided at Council training outlining how income generated from the fair contributes to the SRC's costs.

She said, there was a need to address the weaknesses in the University's approach to sustainability and that a much greater impact would be achieved by challenging the University to develop effective measures which could be implemented across the whole University.

S Drijver-Headley said she does not feel that benefits these companies offer to the SRC or students justify their presence on campus. She said it was stated at Council training that the vast majority of the SRC's income comes from the University, with a smaller proportion generated from stalls.

A Wilson said, reduction in Welcome Fair income, could severely impact upon the SRC's ability to deliver the events and activities it organises for students. She said that it is important that Council remember there is a significant gap between what funding the University provides and what funding is necessary to operate SRC services. The SRC represents the student voice and was responding to student demand. Companies/stalls cited by S Drijver-Headley were some of the most popular during Welcome Week.

B Hay said that, personally, he had some sympathy with S Drijver-Headley's arguments. This matter has been discussed over the years but there had been a general consensus that there was a requirement to protect the SRC and do the best for the students it serves. He added, that the additional income from Welcome Fair makes an important contribution to the SRC's finances. The SRC is a non-trading organisation and is extremely limited in its commercial activity. The small amount of commercial activity can be the difference between breaking even and posting a financial loss. B Hay highlighted that the less revenue the SRC generates the closer it got to complete reliance on University funds. The SRC would have to go cap in hand to the university to beg for additional funding, which would be unlikely to be forthcoming. This would further undermine the SRC's independence and negatively impact its services to students.

B Hay echoed A Wilson's earlier points that the stalls in question were some of the most popular by a considerable distance. The SRC has a responsibility to represent and reflect the interests of all students at the University. The SRC is a small organisation and there are larger issues at play with the University. He further advised that trustees should avoid bringing their personal interests into areas of operational practice, rather than strategy and campaigning.

S Drijver-Headley agreed that the University has significant work to do to meet its environmental responsibilities, but said the SRC being a small organisation does not excuse it from making these changes. She said student satisfaction and popularity does not justify these companies' presence on campus.

P Morán Ruiz said the SRC exists to represent the interests of the whole student body, not personal concerns. He said practices could be reviewed if it was demonstrated that an issue is affecting the interests of the student body. P Morán Ruiz said environmental sustainability is a core value of the SRC and is always considered in its operations.

A Chauhan suggested that companies like Dominoes could be replaced by local businesses.

F Dinning suggested that the Welcome Fair could feature companies who have more of an environmental sustainability focus, and comparisons in student engagement could be carried out to see if it would be in the student interest to gradually phase the bigger companies out.

P Morán Ruiz said this suggestion would be noted for the future.

L Thompson proposed that questions on environmental sustainability be added to the Welcome Week survey next year so that data on student opinion could be gathered.

P Morán Ruiz said this could be added to the survey.

K Roberts said all the emergency buttons for disability access in the ARC are currently disabled with instructions to call Security instead. He said the ARC does not have many phones and only a small number of first aid-trained personnel for the whole building. He asked if the SRC could increase the provision of first aid-trained personnel in the ARC.

P Morán Ruiz said accessibility is being explored on several University working groups and the SRC would follow up on the issue described.

I Duane said she will follow up on the accessibility issue described by K Roberts. She asked Council members to inform her of any similar issues as soon as they are made aware of them.

B Hay said the SRC used to have an affiliated First Aid Society. He said he would investigate whether it was still active and what services it could provide, if so.

N Gillies said she is currently in the process of organising Trans Day of Remembrance, which will take place on November 20th. A vigil is being organised in partnership with GULGBTQ+ Society. N Gillies met with the

society's committee and it was agreed that more support would be provided to people reading out names from the list as last year there were issues regarding where students were supposed to read from, as well with the pronunciation of names.

P Morán Ruiz said any Council member who wishes to help with planning for TDOR should contact N Gillies.

K Roberts said non-binary colleagues contacted him to say some events in his College have changed names and that they now sound quite insensitive to non-binary persons. He asked if any consultation takes place when renaming events.

P Morán Ruiz said this matter would be best taken to a discussion outside of Council, whereby the renaming of events could be investigated and any potential SRC action could be discussed.

6) Welcome Week (Oral Update)

A Wilson thanked the Council members who were Welcome Helpers this year. She said the week was a resounding success with over 15,000 attendees at Welcome Fair over 2 days and 275 exhibitors (60 commercial, 215 clubs and societies). There were 107 events, 72 of which were SRC events, and 17 of these were under the SRC's community and inclusion banner. There were 5 collaborative events with GUSA, Confucius Institute and International student services, as well as 32 society events. Some events were so busy that students were turned away, so the SRC is looking at securing bigger spaces for bigger events in future. A Wilson said a full written report would be circulated in due course.

CJ Adebayo Omoaka asked if Welcome Helper teams could be changed in future if issues with team members arise.

A Wilson said any issues within Welcome Helper teams should be reported to her or a member of the SRC's Communications or Volunteering teams.

A Chauhan asked if the SRC could address the spiking and sexual harassment cases at the night-time events.

P Morán Ruiz said the evening events are predominantly run by the GUU and the QMU. He said the SRC has been in discussions on these

matters and that they tend to be a wider discussion on what is happening at the University, not just Welcome Week.

I Duane said the SRC issued additional communications before and after Welcome Week, as well as in welcome packs, highlighting GBV resources. She added that the SRC also has the compulsory GBV module for students to complete. I Duane said she understands the concerns raised but said the Unions are outwith the SRC's jurisdiction.

N Laddad said the SRC should publicise the use of the Safezone app for students.

A Wilson said all SRC helpers receive training on the Safezone app from Security, and that the Unions do this as well. She said the SRC also includes a section on Safezone in the guide, which has 5000 copies made.

P Morán Ruiz said the SRC also released a video on GBV around the Welcome period.

K Roberts asked if students are made aware that the Safezone app works outside the University.

A Wilson said students are made aware of this, particularly with regards to walking back to their accommodation.

7) AOCB

L Thompson asked if the SRC's GBV counsellor would be signposted after a recent incident at the Library.

P Morán Ruiz said this would be discussed and that L Thompson would be updated on the outcome of discussions.

8) Date of next meeting – Thurs 21st November, 2024