

minutes

Meeting:	Postgraduate Committee
Date:	5 th March 2019
Paper:	Postgraduate Committee Spring 19 – 3 (PGCS475)
Author:	Alexandros Efstratiou
Purpose:	Record of Decision Making

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Minutes of the Postgraduate Committee 5th March 2019

Committee members present: Oli Gray (Activities and Opportunities Officer), Sophie Atherton (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), Georgina Burchell (Welfare, Community, and Diversity Officer), James McLean (AMA), Charlotte Hallahan (LDC)

Chair: Andrea James (AMA)

Apologies: Martin Marko (Postgraduate Education Officer), Saket Jalan (NBS), Rob Klim (DEV)

Absences: Anush Rajagopal (LAW)

In attendance: Josh Melling (Student Engagement Coordinator – PG), Alexandros Efstratiou (Advocacy Assistant), Ulvi Hagverdi (LAW – ISS President)

PGCS475 Statement from the Chair

-AJ notes apologies and absences.

PGCS476 Minutes of the Last Meeting

-Minutes are approved unanimously.

PGCS477 Action Log

-AJ states that they invited the Mature Students' Officer to join the meeting, however they were unable to attend.

-OG to present on their action point later on in the meeting.

-MM not present to give updates on their action points.

-AJ introduces UH, who is present in their capacity as the International Students' Society president, in order to give more information around a postgraduate subsidy they requested regarding an ISS event.

-UH explains that the event in question is an international students' ball which is based on elements of cultural diversity. They add that, to further relations between the ISS and the postgraduate community, they would like the postgraduate committee to subsidise £15 out of the £35 ticket for a maximum of 20 postgraduate students, through the social grant.

-Following some questions from the assembly, UH states that the event will be held in the Assembly House in Norwich city, which is a good venue. They add that there will be a good and diverse range of food options, and that the event is actively aimed at diversity and inclusivity.

-AJ asks whether UH has discussed the logistics of how any potential payments would come from the PG committee. UH confirms that they have discussed this with staff.

-AJ further enquires how postgraduate students are being encouraged to attend the event. UH states that pg(su) could use their channels to advertise the event to PG students.

-The committee thanks UH for their clarifications. UH leaves the meeting.

-OG notes that this event could be beneficial to many students.

-Regarding the logistics of the subsidy, AJ states that they could request a list of attendees, and then reimburse ISS for an appropriate amount based on how many of these attendees were postgraduate students.

-The committee agrees to subsidise £15 per head for the ISS ball for a maximum of 20 students unanimously.

PGCS478 Update from Assembly

-Nothing to declare as the last assembly was cancelled.

PGCS479 Assembly Review

- AJ notes AR's absence, which would make the discussion more productive as they are the chair of assembly. They explain that they included this item as they would like to discuss the effectiveness of the Postgraduate Assembly following the structural changes that occurred after the summer.
- SA explains that assembly attendance is an issue across the board, and state that they will be visiting other students' unions to observe how they promote postgraduate engagement with their student forums.
- AJ states that they believe the assembly would be more effective if it was moved back into the Scholars lounge.
- JM explains the procedures that were followed prior to the current academic year, and how events that transpired at assemblies near the beginning of the year brought about the current structure.
- JML expresses concerns with having restrictions around how postgraduate space can be used, particularly if these restrictions were brought about by internal politics.
- OG states that this discussion should be had with the chair of assembly. JML concurs, and adds that some reasons on why the last assembly was cancelled should be provided by the chair.
- JML further suggests creating clear guidelines on what should be expected of someone in the role of chair of assembly.

PGCS480 Community Board Update

- JM presents a marketing poster which was produced for the Easter Events.
- AJ gives some updates on upcoming events and how they will be advertised on the community board. They ask the committee for input on what else they believe should be showcased on the community board.
- GB suggests signposting to generic support as well.
- JML suggests using the board to explain procedural structures within pg(su), so that postgraduate students are more familiar with how they are represented.
- OG and AJ suggest using a flowchart or diagram to get this across. The committee concurs.

PGCS481 Conference Fund and Social Grant Discussion

- AJ states that a discussion needs to be had regarding the remaining budget and when the committee should stop accepting funding applications.
- JM states that there are £900 remaining in the conference fund and £2000 remaining in the social grant. They add that less money will be spent on the PGR focus groups than was projected due to a lower turnout, therefore some money will also be spared from the campaigns budget.

- AJ suggests shifting some of the remaining budget to the conference fund, due to its popularity this year. Committee concurs. AJ adds that this money could be shifted from the social grant and the campaigns budget.
- OG suggests using past social grant events to advertise how the event went and how it benefitted students, to increase the organic reach of the social grant.
- JM explains that a reflective paragraph and a picture of the event is asked of the organisers as a condition to provide funding.
- The committee discusses and concurs that this could be extended to the conference fund as well.

ACTION: JM and AE to include reflective paragraphs and event pictures for both the social grant and conference fund reimbursement terms.

- The committee discusses the re-allocation of budget towards the conference fund. A vote is initiated on re-allocating £300 from the campaigns budget and £200 from the social grant to the conference fund.
- The committee votes in favour of the above unanimously.
- AJ suggests that a policy should be sent to Union Council to mandate that the pg(su) budget is annually incremental, such that it accounts for inflation and student numbers, particularly as the alumni fund no longer feeds into this budget.
- OG states that alternative funds other than the alumni fund exist, and it could be beneficial to explore these options before sending such a motion to Union Council. The committee concurs.
- SA states that they will discuss this with MM as well as other relevant people for signposting to alternative funds.
- Following a question from AJ, SA and OG state that they will mandate the Postgraduate Education Officer to explore alternative sources of funding.

PGCS482 Mature Student Representation from postgraduate(su)

- AJ states that the Mature Students' Officer could not attend the meeting, therefore they give OG the opportunity to present their action point around mental health training.
- OG goes over an ongoing project around mental health training, and asks for input from the committee in order to make this training accessible and relevant to postgraduate students as well.
- The committee provides some suggestions, particularly around how the different lifestyles of PGRs and PGTs need to be accounted for.
- AJ redirects the discussion to the potential of the Mature Students' Officer sitting on postgraduate committee, and requests some thoughts on the matter.

- OG asks whether anybody sees any potential problems with the Mature Students' Officer having a place on the postgraduate committee.
- AJ clarifies that the question raised at the previous meeting was what the remit of the postgraduate committee is, and how mature student representation would fit into it.
- JM clarifies that the discussion that took place was around replacing the SOC place with the Mature Students' Officer.
- GB expresses their belief that the Mature Students' Officer should sit on the postgraduate committee, since all postgraduate students are mature. JML concurs.
- AJ inquires whether changing the bye-law would mandate the Mature Students' Officer to sit on committee. SA states that this would need to be discussed with the officer themselves being in the room.
- AJ initiates a vote on whether the Mature Students' Officer should sit on the postgraduate committee. The committee votes in favour of this unanimously.

PGCS483 Easter Events

- JM shows the events poster that was produced for Easter, which includes all of the planned events. Committee approves of the events.
- SA suggests some design changes to make the poster more readable, such as changing the font's colour.
- JM states that having independent means of transport would allow for more events to be put in place for postgraduate students and asks whether anybody with connections to UEASport could further conversations on hiring their mini-vans.

ACTION: OG to further conversations with UEASport on mini-van hire.

PGCS484 Any Other Business

- SA raises a discussion around MM's absences from postgraduate representation bodies as of late. They state that they are concerned about MM and would like to check with them to ensure that everything is okay. SA asks for the committee's thoughts on this.
- CH and AJ state that these absences have become a common occurrence. AJ expresses that this can get quite frustrating as the Postgraduate Education Officer is very relevant and needed in postgraduate assembly and postgraduate committee.
- CH states that MM's absences have adverse effects on the committee's productivity, as the committee's work must sometimes be halted due to this.
- SA states that they will reach out to MM to check that everything is fine with them and discuss this issue with them.

-AJ expresses some concerns with International Students' Society funding requests and any potential implications this could have with ongoing elections. They explain that the Postgraduate Education Officer has directed international students' officer to AJ for funding before, whereas these matters should be internally discussed first. They add that it may be odd how the international officer is requesting funding at this time of year, especially since, in previous occasions, the people requesting funding assistance from the postgraduate committee did not have any clear ideas on how their events would benefit the postgraduate community.

PGCS485 **Time, Date, and Place of next meeting**
17:15, May 7th, Bookable Rooms 7/8.

Appendix

PGCS475 Action Log 5th March 2019

Date Commissioned	Action Required	Assigned To:	Date to be actioned by:
05/03/19	Include reflective paragraphs and event photographs for both the social grant and conference fund reimbursement terms	JM, AE	07/05/19
05/03/19	Further conversations with UEASport regarding hiring their mini-vans	OG	07/05/19