

Guild Council
Friday 26 March 2021, 09:30
Microsoft Teams Online Meeting

Welcome

The Guild Chair welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

Attendance and Apologies for Absence

Present: VP Activities, VP Education, VP Welfare & Diversity, CO-Hums (Guild Chair), CO-CLES, CO-SSIS, and Co-CO-EMPS (x2).

Apologies: Guild President, CO-DC, CO-CMH (proxy given to CO-SSIS).

In attendance: Student Voice Manager (SVM), Student Governance Coordinator (SGC), Academic Impact Coordinator (St Luke's) and Academic Impact Coordinator (Streatham).

The meeting was declared quorate.

Notification of any other business

None.

1. FOR DECISION: approval of the minutes from the last meeting.

Council voted on the minutes from the last meeting. The result was:

YES: 6

NO: 0

ABSTAIN: 1

The minutes of the meeting of 15 February 2021 were therefore approved.

2. FOR INFORMATION: update on fee compensation campaign.

In the last meeting, Council voted to adopt a stance on campaigning for tuition fee compensation due to COVID-19. VP Education gave an update: teaming up with Falmouth SU's campaign (they have more experience and other University of Exeter students united), had initial meetings with Falmouth President – will do joint campaigning, joint statement, have recruited project assistants (very keen, including international and PGR students). We need to build momentum to put pressure on University. The FTOs met with the University –reluctant to give any money back whatsoever as the academic year is not over (think they can make up for the year over the next few months, e.g. Festival of Discovery).

CO-Hums added that everyone who is involved with the campaign is fantastic and enthusiastic. There is lot to do. The Festival of Discovery is being brought up in SPB - there will be allotments. VP Activities has a first meeting on the festival next week. Can update on Guild aspects - 'Give it a Go' initiative. Mix of academic and social activities.

3. FOR DECISION: amendment to Byelaw 7 Student Activities (Truro).

Medical students who transfer to Truro cease to be members of the Guild while studying in Cornwall as they become members of Falmouth SU. They do, however, become automatic associate members.

of the Guild. The proposed amendment would allow Truro associate members to stand for election to committee positions for the following year (when they return to Exeter).

The proposed changes to Byelaw 7: *Change 45.2.1. to '45.2.1. Associate members (unless specifically included in the constituency by this byelaw) are not permitted to hold a committee position, nor vote in any group election.'* *Change 45.2.4. to '45.2.4. Only people who will be full members for the entire term of office are eligible to stand for election for, or appointment to, a committee position.'* *Change 64. to '64. The constituency will be the full members of the group and the associate members by virtue of studying in Truro (Byelaw 1, 7.10) of the group.'*

VP Activities invited SGC to add: it is a very confused situation. This is a unique situation in the country in that Medical student change SU mid-course. We are trying our rules to catch-up with student experience. It will still remain that only full members can be on student group committees, but this opens nominations up to Truro students.

VP Education spoke in favour of the amendment as Truro students have spoken to us about this issue – even writing an open letter. It will improve the Guild's relationship with medical students.

CO-CLES asked about Truro students being out of the loop and need for sufficient handover. SGC said that it would be down to the society to handle – the members must decide. It opens it up as a possibility. The Activities Team would be available should problems arise. VP Education added that students on year abroad / placement year are currently eligible.

Council voted on the proposed amendments to Byelaw 7:

YES: 7

NO: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

The byelaw amendments were therefore passed by Council. The proposed amendments will now be sent to be considered by the Board of Trustees (if they approve they will come into force).

5. FOR INFORMATION: Election Update.

The SGC gave an update: last week we had the main student elections for next year. This is one of the most important projects the Guild does, it is legally required, has been planned for months. The turnout was 19.30% (slightly lower than last year, but higher than many other unions). Most roles were more contested. The results are published on the website. 7 subject chair roles did not have any candidates by the start of voting (which is normal) and will likely have special elections in May.

CO-SSIS loved the voting incentives (and the tiered approach to encourage more and more voters).

CO-CLES asked about doing a joint handover (all outgoing and incoming COs together). SGC the induction planning is starting now, and we like that idea as we are wanting to foster more teamwork. CO-Hums said that there are good ideas to share and build good relationships.

CO-Hums praised the work of Subject Chairs in getting students to vote.

VP Education really appreciated the support the Guild gave to candidates especially those of marginalised and underrepresented identities. Especially the statement condoning hate speech and bullying and repeated throughout events. Need to continue in the future. SGC said was very much on the agenda to support such candidates be resilient during election. Also had a session on this. Currently analysing candidate and voter demographics to assess diversity. CO-Hums said that candidates appreciated the repeated 'be kind' message at the start of the hustings.

CO-Hums added that the CO hustings is definitely needed in the future too as the candidates have a lot to say and are receptive to questions.

4. FOR INFORMATION: Democracy Review.

Kathryn Sullivan updated: the Board of Trustees agreed on the principles of communities of student leaders (colleges, liberation and global justice, and student opportunities). Board felt it could not send detailed proposal to Council and have questions (and vice versa) so will set up a task and finish group to look at detail. Asked if Council was happy for such a group to be convened.

6. FOR ACTION: 'What do students want from the curriculum?' opportunity.

'What do students want from the curriculum?' opportunity. 'If you're the sort of SU that takes students' education and their hopes for their future seriously, we have an exciting opportunity for you. Over the next few months Wonkhe, supported by Adobe, will be carrying out a research project on students' expectations for their academic curriculum. We'd love to hear from interested SUs who would be keen to shape the discussion, run a focus group with students on our behalf, and share your insight on how SUs can influence the curriculum. It won't cost you anything to get involved, we'll cover expenses and you'll be first in on a new toolkit on influencing curriculum. Alan Roberts, partner at CounterCulture LLP and fresh from a stint as interim chief exec of two SUs, will be facilitating the project - get in touch with Alan to express interest and find out more.'

VP Education said that this is an external opportunity which we should get involved in. As we have really good examples of how students shape the curriculum through the Guild and by being rep (e.g. equality reps in SSLCs). CO-Hums said it was really interesting. Get in touch with Student Voice Manager if you are interested in getting involved.

CO-Hums had a question about equality reps – the Associate Dean for Global asked a question about international students in general and equality reps being international students. VP Education can see why that might be offensive, but it might be a misunderstanding or mis-phrasing. Could be added to the agenda for MARG for staff guidance on working with student reps. CO -Hums asked what role the Guild has in the experience of international students. VP Education: Guild successfully proposed a policy (safeguard international student interests) at NUS Conference last year. This is something we need to continue doing. International students can be flagged as an area of priority for Guild insight.

7. Any other business.

The next meeting has been scheduled for June – let SGC know if it clashed with exams and it can be rescheduled.

The meeting ended at 10:25.