

**Guild Council**

**13:30, Tuesday 30 November 2021, Amory B106 & Microsoft Teams**

**Notes**

*These notes are designed to capture key information on attendance, topics covered, decisions made, and actions assigned. It is not intended to be a detailed account of the discussions (see [agenda](#) and [recording](#)).*

**1. Welcome.**

The meeting was recorded to be published online.

**2. Attendance and Apologies.**

**Present**

VPE	Vice President Education
VPO	Vice President Opportunities
VPLE	Vice President Liberation & Equality
CO-BS	Business School College Officer
CO-Hums	Humanities College Officer
CO-CLES	Life and Environmental Sciences College Officer
CO-EMPS	Engineering, Mathematics and Physics College Officer
7/11	Quoracy reached.

**Apologies**

GP	Guild President
CO-CMH	Medicine and Health College Officer

**In Attendance**

CGC	Chair of Guild Council
SGC	Student Governance Coordinator
CIM	Campaigns and Insights Manager

**3. FOR APPROVAL: The Minutes from the last meeting.**

The notes of the last meeting were approved as accurate and will be published online.

**4. FOR INFORMATION: Update on actions.**

The action log was published with the minutes. VPO has reached out to Nightline and set up a meeting with Activities.

**5. FOR INFORMATION: Notifications of any other business.**

None.

**6. FOR DISCUSSION: Review of personal tutor provision across the University.**

VPE invited feedback and student input on the review of personal tutor provision. There is difference in provision between colleges. The University does not see the role as a pastoral role but providing tailored academic support and for signposting to information and support. VEP's view is that personal tutor are the person that students often go to in a crisis and as such should be able to take that forwards effectively (i.e. require training). There also needs

clarification of expectations (for colleges, staff and students). In January will start a review from a staff point of view.

Discussion included:

- First years don't know expectations, lots have not heard from personal tutor since Freshers (unsure who instigates contact). But third years are more aware of what a personal tutor is meant to be. Feel 1:1 (rather than group) would be more effective for wellbeing.
- Mandatory contact could be considered. What should this commitment look like?
- There is unclear expectations of what a personal tutor is. Students should shape what personal tutors are.
- Physics Dept Wellbeing Committee meeting: sent out a survey on personal tutoring. Results: lots saying wanted academic, but lots also wanted pastoral support. Disconnect between staff thinking they're providing support and students receiving support / feeling supported. There are resources to give to tutors. Will flag the wellbeing instant chat service. Fourth Year students, as also their supervisor, students don't feel they can go to them as might impact grades.
- Similar with PGRs feel unable to go to their supervisors for personal support. Could have different tutors for different aspects of support (used to be the case in Physics). PGRs have supervisor (academic) and a personal tutor.
- Some students say that they email their personal tutors are not responding, likewise some personal tutors email their students and get no response.
- Humanities: see personal tutoring as a more academic role, but signpost to wellbeing. But student expectations are different. Looking at proving support for FCH students.
- What do we mean by pastoral support? It is not the role of academics to be 'counsellors' or 'therapists', but personal tutor is where the academic and pastoral meet (e.g. struggling leading to mitigation). Role of signposting appropriately, not supporting through crisis. Also be prepared for the likelihood of disclosures. But requires the training and support for staff.
- Also need clarification about what personal tutors can do (e.g. academic support).
- Want to avoid students being constantly referred and being stuck in cycles.

## **7. FOR DISCUSSION: Student Wellbeing Forum – student influence in their mental health and wellbeing.**

VPLE have been working with the Head of Wellbeing as they want more continuous feedback from students to shape the service but also to help students understand Wellbeing. Considering having a student forum for Wellbeing. Have discussed having a system to launch next term: Student Staff Wellbeing Committee (similar to SSLC) which would have formal rep roles for: BAME, disabled students, LGBTQ, international student, mature students, care leavers, and student parent/carer. Wellbeing want this to be a student-led partnership with the Guild (who would provide training as it is a rep role). Would have 2 a term (1 with reps and staff, 2 with other students).

Discussion included:

- Would be a university-wide forum (not college-level) as would give it longevity and it is not an academic focus. Therefore would have one or two of each kind of rep.
- Feedback is that there are too many resources for wellbeing – a forum might be yet another and won't be helpful for students. Prefer single point of contact.
- Every college has a head of wellbeing – but they're not signposted as a point of contact.
- The Guild is looking at its representation structures and that includes having a diversity of voices.
- In humanities, there is a student intern steering group twice a term including students from a diversity of backgrounds.
- This forum is not a place for seeking wellbeing support but a change-making forum.
- CO-CLES has produced and shared a mental health poster.
- Equality reps already exist.
- What is needed is that the University needs to put more money into wellbeing services (waiting times are too long, support provided not enough). However this forum could help push for this.
- How can this piece of work be linked in with the personal tutor review due to the overlap?

- Wellbeing suggested launching around the Elections (which are Feb-Mar). Although that might be confusing as not elected roles that will start soon by application process. Elections are not appropriate for these roles (draws out the process but also not the best way of engaging under-represented groups).
- Purpose and objectives of this group needs to be developed for what the Guild wants from it.
- Need to consider how the views of students which are not covered by the listed reps.
- It is a forum for wellbeing generally, not just for Wellbeing Services of the university.
- Need to consider how would encourage people to apply to be these reps.
- The University's proposed restructure will mean that all rep structures will need to be looked at.

**Action:** VPLE to meet with the Voice Team to discuss the proposed wellbeing forum further.

### 8. FOR DISCUSSION: Discussion – the set-up and objectives of an International Student Working Group.

VPLE, on behalf of GP, outlined the idea for a international student working group which can be used to identify areas of the student experience which could be addressed. Should this be a closed group, or town hall style? What should the objectives be? What should the regularity of meetings be? And are there any current issues that attendees are aware of?

Discussion included:

- Open meetings are similar (could become part of) the 'Let's Talk: International Students' (e.g. tomorrow). Includes regular staff.
- Don't think it should be selective representation – the technical status of students (as 'international' or 'home') does not always reflect their lived experience.
- A number if the issues faced by international students is country-specific (e.g. transferring qualifications) and a working group would not be able to address every country.
- Some colleges already have international student working groups (e.g. CMH) and often work well alongside similar groups for other groups of students. Some colleges have a senior tutor for international students.
- A 'working group' suggests it's not about collecting feedback but doing something.
- Aware there are not many international students in the meeting; not in a place to make these decisions.
- Trying new and different ways of trying to engage students (e.g. INTO).
- Current issues: covid travel restrictions over Christmas will impact international students.
- One of the equality rep positions is for international students.
- Othering of international students due to accents.
- More events for them to get to know each other.

### 9. Any other business.

None.

*The meeting ended at 15:08. The next meeting is yet to be scheduled.*

### **Action Log (as of 18 Jan 2022)**

<b>Guild Council 2021/22 Action Tracker</b>				
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Date closed</b>
09-Sep-21	Guild President	The Guild President will have the approved candidates informed of their approval. Update: done 20 Sept 2021.	Complete	20-Sep-21
09-Sep-21	Guild President & Student Governance Coordinator	The Guild President and the Student Governance Coordinator will send the byelaw changes to the Board of Trustees. Update: Trustees ratified changes 18 Oct 2021.	Complete	18-Oct-21

09-Sep-21	Guild President & Student Governance Coordinator	The Guild President and the Student Governance Coordinator will work with the Appointments Committee to select a Chair for Guild Council (ideally before the next meeting). Update: chair appointed.	Complete	26-Oct-21
06-Oct-21	Staff (Comms)	The Guild has highlighted wellbeing resources but will look into what information on abortion we could provide. Update: see <a href="https://www.exeterguild.org/news/article/7222/Resources-for-Wellbeing-Sexual-Health-Pregnancy-and-Contraception/">https://www.exeterguild.org/news/article/7222/Resources-for-Wellbeing-Sexual-Health-Pregnancy-and-Contraception/</a>	Complete	07-Oct-21
11-Nov-21	Student Governance Coordinator	SGC to upload the minutes with a log of actions. Update: see <a href="https://www.exeterguild.org/pageassets/voice/guildcouncil/GUILD-COUNCIL-2021.10.06-NOTES-approved.pdf">https://www.exeterguild.org/pageassets/voice/guildcouncil/GUILD-COUNCIL-2021.10.06-NOTES-approved.pdf</a>	Complete	15-Nov-21
11-Nov-21	Vice President Opportunities	VPO to pick up with Nightline about their offer of training for student group committees. Update: have reached out to Nightline	In Progress	
11-Nov-21	Vice President Opportunities	VPO will take this feedback on potential training for student group committees to the Activities Team. Update: have booked in meeting with Activities.	In Progress	
30-Nov-21	Vice President Liberation & Equality	VPLE to meet with the Voice Team to discuss the proposed wellbeing forum further. Update: met with the Voice Team.	Complete	06-Dec-21