

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY THE 7th FEBRUARY AT 6.00 PM
IN THE WILLIAMS ROOM, MCINTYRE BUILDING

Present: As per sederunt

Apologies: P Everingham, F Paterson, E Napier, K Powell, J Quinn, B Hay, S McLean, H McLachlan, P Campbell, R Coleman-Bennett

Attending: M Rambo-Hood, C Bingham, D Duncan

- 1) Welcome, Apologies and Sederunt – n/a
- 2) Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising – n/a
- 3) Halls of Residence Fees for 19/20 – David Duncan

D Duncan delivered a presentation on the proposed rise in accommodation fees for the 19/20 academic term. Accommodation Services plan to increase the fee by 2.9 percent. This is based on increases in living costs, inflation, proposed refurbishment and staff costs. The only exception is the catered residence, Wolfson which will not increase its fees. He is working closely with R Garnish, on transforming catering in halls, as well as on campus. A full review of Accommodation Services is planned feedback from Council would be welcomed.

E Macleod Hughes expressed their concerns that halls are used as a safe place for international students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and therefore any increase of fee could affect those who are most vulnerable.

D Duncan confirmed that there are rooms set aside for students with special circumstances.

L Cerosky asked if a survey has been administered to students regarding Accommodation Services.

D Duncan is not certain if this has happened but will check and share the results with Council.

L Cerosky said the cost of the washing machines in Student Accommodation is too expensive. He asked if they could revisit the price of laundry as a means to offset the increase in rent. He also asked them to consider the experience of international exchange students and if they feel included in University life.

D Duncan cannot make a comment on the cost of laundry, as he would need to look into it first; however, will note this feedback.

S Jacobs asked whether the price of UofG Accommodation was comparable to other Russell Group properties.

D Duncan would need to see the figures before he could respond to this question.

L McDougall confirmed that all of these questions will be researched and brought back to Council.

N Donald asked if there was a timescale for the refurbishment of the halls.

D Duncan said they aim to complete the majority of the refurbishment during summer.

A Ioannou said that because Wolfson is located a distance from the main campus it is a challenge for students to travel to, especially those with physical disabilities.

L McDougall suggested that Accommodation Services could work with a transport provider to give more direct links to campus.

D Duncan said the University will look into this.

T McFerran asked for more information on why the SRC Minibus Service stopped running.

L McDougall said that she would not be able to discuss the financial reason behind the closure of the Minibus Service herself, but that B Hay would be able to address it at a future meeting.

C Green said that disabled students are more vulnerable to abuse in the housing market, and many of these students would like the option to stay in University Accommodation past their first year. Is there a system in place that would prioritise these students.

D Duncan advised that he would report back.

P Palios stated that University Accommodation in Dumfries is the same fee as in Glasgow, despite the fact that the cost of living in Dumfries is much lower.

D Duncan said he is not able to respond until he sees the figures, but will look into it.

V Ferry asked if there would be a review of the bursary system in light of the increase of accommodation fees, as she struggled to pay her fees as a bursary recipient.

D Duncan advised he would investigate.

F O'Reilly asked what the money from the fee increase goes towards.

D Duncan says the increase goes directly back into Accommodation Services.

L McDougall asked for the figures to be shared to Council.

E MacLeod Hughes asked if it was fair for Accommodation Services to use market values as a comparison for the cost of halls.

D Duncan said that any service provider needs to look at its competitors.

F Nokhbatolfoghahai asked if there were design standards that the University Accommodation was held to.

D Duncan confirmed that there are minimum standards for University Accommodation.

J Cardwell said that even with a student loan, she could not afford the costs of University Accommodation. She also commented on the discrepancies between the standards of each of the various University Accommodation facilities, and said this could create animosity if students paid the same rate, but the conditions were different. Whilst she understands that fees need to be raised to match inflation; however, this is a challenge for disadvantaged students.

D Duncan said the difference in standards of each facility cannot be helped, although he hopes that the refurbishment of University Accommodation should minimise any discrepancy.

T Atsegoh agreed with J Cardwell's concerns and said that the increase in fees will likely make private accommodation more appealing to students.

D Duncan does see T Atsegoh's point, however Accommodation Services has to factor in their own running costs.

D Buchan asked that in light of the upcoming 24-hour library access and late opening hours for the Learning and Teaching Hub, how has student safety been addressed.

D Duncan agrees that this is something that needs to be addressed, but does not have a solution at the moment.

L McDougall said they will decide the best way to feed the answers back to Council once they have been researched.

D Duncan assured Council that the answers to these questions will be provided.

E Hardy asked if student loans will be adjusted to match the increase in accommodation fees. She also asked how they could propose an increase in fees when the accommodation has not increased in standard.

D Duncan hopes that the standard of accommodation will increase after the refurbishment; however, the increase in accommodation fees reflects inflation.

M Fahd asked for more information about the process of how international students are allocated accommodation. As an international student, it is harder to make an informed decision when it comes to location and costs.

L McDougall said that the halls are allocated on a first come first serve basis. However, M Fahd's question raises the fact that international students may need more support from Accommodation Services. Said she will take this conversation further with Robert Garnish and Avril MacGregor in the international team.

D Duncan said that Accommodation Services could also provide more information to international students about each hall of residence so that they can make a more informed decision.

4) Academic Forum Update – Emma Hardy

E Hardy referred Council to her report on the Academic Forum and said that she will update the Transformation Team with the feedback from it.

5) Exam De-Stress Report – Fatemeh Nokhbatolfoghahai and Scott Kirby

Exam De-Stress went as planned and had a positive reception. They thanked everyone on Council who helped. They identified that there were some difficulties in Cross Campus collaboration, which ultimately left the SRC with considerable additional work. F Nokhbatolfoghahai said it is challenging to access how effective the De-Stress campaign is, but she feels the engagement overall has been good.

T Banos agreed that it is hard to put a value on De-Stress events, but she has personally seen it help students on an individual basis.

L McDougall said the doodle wall was positively received and thinks this idea can be used for other campaigns. She further stated that the De-Stress campaign is a student response to the stress the University places on students, and thus in itself is a worthwhile action. However, we should look into stronger branding so that participants know it is a student led initiative.

F Nokhbatolfoghahai said another improvement was that events were held in locations the students were likely to be, such as the library.

6) Refreshers' Week Report – Scott Kirby

S Kirby said that some events were successful, whereas others had room for improvement. This year the SRC took a passive approach to clubs and socs. Instead of directly organising the events on their behalf, clubs were given primary responsibility for the event.

K Summers asked if there any was any publicity done other than online.

S Kirby said there was not because they were targeting international students who were not on campus at that point.

T McFerran asked if it would be worthwhile to engage with students in person for Refreshers.

S Kirby said the primary challenge of Refreshers is the timing, which would restrict the effectiveness of this.

L McDougall said that Refreshers will fall a bit later in the University Calendar next year so there will be more time to prep. However, this will always be an obstacle. She suggested that a review of Refreshers should take place.

S Kirby said the reason Refreshers is more successful at other Universities is because their term starts later.

B Halls-Jones asked if there was scope to move Refreshers earlier.

L McDougall said Refreshers takes place at the start of the term, because that is when students come back to campus.

S Kirby also said the refurbishment in the Gilchrist prevented the SRC from running as many PG events for Refreshers this year.

7) Council Reports:

a) SRC President: Lauren McDougall

There was a demonstration of the Big White Wall at the Student Experience Committee. All students have access to it now, and their profiles are anonymous. It includes self-help material, courses, an art

therapy virtual wall and a forum. There is an option for online counselling, but users must get a referral. The Big White Wall is not exclusive to the University of Glasgow.

Student Services has undergone a review, and the feedback reflected many issues previously raised by the SRC.

There will be a joint away day between the SRC and the Learning and Teaching committee to consider both non-academic and academic aspects of the student experience at Glasgow.

At the Curriculum Review Meeting, the advantages and disadvantages of the flexible curriculum were discussed as well as ways to embed classes that enhance practical skills, or foster interdisciplinary skills. They would like feedback from Council.

L McDougall updated Council on the potential removal of dictionaries from exams, and said, at the moment, no decision has been made. She advised that the decision will not be made immediately nor without the SRC's involvement. The conversation from the Translation Dictionaries Working Group was productive, and alternatives were discussed which in the long run might prove to be more helpful for students, such as the use of plain language in exams, and all students having access to a translation dictionary. The University does allow open book exams, however these are rarely used. This means that even if Senate decides to remove dictionaries, the Schools could make individual decisions to allow books into their exams. In addition to this, the vast majority of PGT students are failing the Academic writing skills programme. This indicates that the minimum entry requirement might need to be reevaluated, as well as the support offered to students who do fail.

E Hardy suggested that the University could offer pre-sessional English courses online to international students.

L McDougall reminded members that election nominations open on Monday. It is within Council's remit to promote and support Elections. Council members, can give advice to students running, but not offer support in writing a manifesto.

L McDougall will be participating in a live Facebook event on the topic of Brexit on the 4th of March with A Muscatelli.

The STA nominations are open for one more week, and Council is encouraged to continue supporting this.

C Green asked how many times a student could nominate for the STA's.

L McDougall confirmed a student could nominate multiple people, even within the same category.

K Jagger asked how the STA winners were evaluated.

L McDougall said both the quality and quantity of nominations is taken into consideration when determining the winners.

L Cerosky asked for more information on the Good Cause Claim Process.

L McDougall said there has not been a meeting regarding this yet, so she cannot comment, however this is something they are planning to refine.

b) VP Education: Emma Hardy

E Hardy said the library are looking to implement a system, which tracks desk availability, in a similar manner as their computer availability system. The 24-hour library service has been approved and they are currently hiring staff, and it will begin ideally before the exam period.

There was a discussion about extending the teaching day at the Future Learning Spaces Meeting. The SRC has expressed its opposition.

E Hardy discussed the results of the JISC survey with D McConnell and D Anderson. It evidenced that students want a more technologically advanced campus, and wide support for further use of lecture recording.

Emma will circulate a report about the Class Rep conference at the next council.

Once the STA nominations have closed, E Hardy needs help from Council to evaluate the submissions.

L Cerosky asked how many nominations have been received.

E Hardy said approximately 550, but the aim is 1,000 so she needs Council to help promote this.

E Macleod Huges asked if there was a full breakdown of the JISC survey, and if they could have figures for disabled students.

E Hardy and L McDougall confirmed they have the raw figures, but it has not been compiled into a report, so therefore they cannot pull out specific demographics.

J Cardwell asked what the current teaching hours are.

E Hardy confirmed they are 8:30am - 6pm.

L McDougall said there have been discussions around possible compromises, such as evening classes not being compulsory. This was suggested because of the lack of teaching space. There is also some evidence that evening classes might suit PGT students more. However, at the moment, nothing is set to change.

K Summers asked if Wednesday afternoon will still remain as a non-teaching period.

L McDougall said that the only reason she has supported the discussion of evening classes, is to protect the Wednesday afternoon non-teaching period. However, this would only be on the basis that there would be no Wednesday afternoon classes, no evening classes on a Friday, no compulsory classes in the evening and no classes at the weekend.

E Hardy and L McDougall both confirmed there would be a protocol set to accommodate students in this situation.

C Green asked if issues could be raised regarding the AWSP programme for disabled students at the next LEADS advisory board.

E Hardy and L McDougall both confirmed that this is something already under discussion, but they are not sure of the extent of it, and will look into it further.

c) VP Student Support: Fatemeh Nokhbatolfoghahai

There is a Student Mind Petition, which argues for students to be able to register with two GPs (one at their home and one at their University address). The SRC are going to find out if Barclay's is supporting emergency appointments to students who are registered to their home GPs.

Satnam Virdee has been appointed as the new co-chair of the Race equality group. He has been looking into racism in the classroom, and will create BAME focus groups in order to gain current experience from students.

F Nokhbatolfoghahai met with C Collins from LEADs and discussed decolonising the curriculum and offering more diversity on what is taught.

There is a Scottish Parliament event for estranged students on the 6th of February, which resonates with the arguments the SRC are raising, such as the rent guarantor scheme being available to non-international students and ways to make the campus more family friendly.

F Nokhbatolfoghahai congratulated T Banos on her work on Feel Good February

Plans are underway for LGBT History month, led by E MacLeod Hughes and International Women's Week, led by J Cardwell.

E Macleod Hughes asked if the guarantor scheme could also be extended to students who do not fit a disadvantaged profile, but still are not able to provide a guarantor.

F Nokhbatolfoghahai said she is uncertain as to how the system works, but would like to see it being available to any student who cannot provide a UK guarantor.

M Durkin confirmed she was at the last focus group, so could give some insight into the process.

P Palios asked if the decolonising curriculum and race equality discussion could include the Dumfries campus as well.

L McDougall confirmed that Dumfries is receiving a curriculum review overall because of discrepancies between it and the Gilmorehill campus.

d) VP Student Activities: Scott Kirby

S Kirby has been working on RAG week events and the VCS awards. The VCS nominations have increased against last years'.

At the Graduate Attributes and Employability Working Group S Kirby discussed the SRC's priorities in regards to graduate attributes and will be looking for feedback from Council.

Rag week takes place from 4th- 8th of February, and S Kirby will submit a report on this at the next meeting.

e) School Rep Vet Medicine: Antonia Da Fonseca Ioannou – n/a

f) Environmental Officer: Ross Mowbray –

R Mowbray asked for an update on the Travel Survey Meeting; however, no one from the SRC was able to attend this.

g) International Officer: Basel Shehabi

B Shehabi thanked K Zhang and D Okumbor for their help with Chinese New Year. The Cultural Exhibition takes place tomorrow evening, and he has asked Council to support it and help advertise it.

In response to B Shehabi's concerns at a previous Council meeting, L McDougall confirmed that someone from the SRC's Volunteering team went down to Glasgow International College to promote SRC clubs and socs.

h) Mental Health Equality Officer: Teresa Banos – n/a
L McDougall said if T Banos, or any Council members plan to meet with Nightline, to discuss it with F Nokhbatolfoghahai first.

i) Business School Rep: Elisabetta Trasatti – n/a
E Hardy asked if E Trasatti could give further information on the online SSLC within her School.

E Trasatti said it is only for Management students and it works through Padlet. It is structured in the same manner as in person meetings. It has only recently been trialled and it is under review.

C Green and L McDougall agreed to meet in person to discuss online student and class rep engagement.

P Palios said that Interdisciplinary Studies have a Moodle page, which is also in its early phases.

E Hardy confirmed Moodle pages are part of the Class Rep toolkit if he would like to chat to her further about it.

j) Critical Studies School Rep: Nina Donald
N Donald said that her school are looking to implement an Employability Skills Programme. This is in the early stages, and she welcomes feedback from Council.

k) School Rep Geographical and Earth Science: Kirsty Summers – n/a

l) Humanities School Rep: Hannah Lysons – n/a

m) Law School Rep: Daniel Buchan – n/a

n) School Rep Life Sciences: Hugh Steele – n/a

o) Modern Languages and Culture School Rep: Paula Campbell – n/a

p) Psychology School Rep: Liam Brady – n/a

- q) School Rep Social and Political Sciences: Rebecca Coleman-Bennett – n/a
- r) UG College Convenor Arts: Vicky Ferry – n/a
- s) UG College Convenor MVLS: Fadel Shoughari – n/a
- t) General Rep: Thomas McFerran – n/a
J Cardwell and E Macleod Hughes said they would like to help with the Sexual Health Workshop.

- u) General Rep: Morgan Daniel –
M Daniel is developing a proposal to submit to GUSA about potential gym discounts for homes students.

- v) First Year Rep: Seven Jacobs – n/a
- w) First Year Rep: Temisan Atsegoh– n/a
- x) Gender Equality Officer: Jo Cardwell –
She said that International Woman’s day is about a month away and she would love help from Council members.

Career Services is putting on an event called ‘sexism in the work place’, and she will post a link if Council members would like to attend.

P Palios said a Women’s March is happening at Dumfries, and he would like her support. J Cardwell confirmed she would like to support this.

- y) Disability Equality Officer: Charlotte Green – She had her first meeting with the Disability Equality Group, and felt it could be more student orientated, and asked if she could form a focus group under the SRCs’ guidance.

She met with M Durkin about making improvements at the QMU for disabled access. She will submit a report to the next Council meeting.

- z) UG Social Sciences Convenor: Claire McCormack – n/a
- aa) PG Social Sciences Convenor: Ketong Zhang – n/a
- bb) School Rep Culture and Creative Arts: Leo Cerosky –
L Cerosky possibly secured 40 spaces for Music students’ instruments at the QMU.

He met with the Director of Library Services and they will be installing self-catering options, such as microwaves in the Library. He said to report issues to the Library via their Twitter.

L McDougall confirmed that the SRC has a standing position on the Library Committee, so if there are any issues they can be reported to her.

cc) Chemistry Rep Chemistry: Harry McLachlan – n/a

dd) School Rep Interdisciplinary Studies: Philip Palios

P Palios said that Dumfries student reps want virtual access to events on the main campus.

L McDougall said there is a staff member part funded by the SRC based in Dumfries, and she would like them to arrange a meeting with P Palios.

K Jagger said it is not only an issue with distance, but also lifestyle that could prevent people from making it onto the main campus.

L McDougall agreed and said this is something the SRC needs to look into.

8) AOCB –

a) E MacLeod Hughes said that although the transphobic graffiti has been reported, it would be good to counteract this by putting up zero tolerance posters in the toilets.

They also said that staff can sign up for 'LGBT Ally Training'; however, there is not enough uptake for this training at the moment. Can Council raise this at their SSLC and Rep meetings.

L McDougall said the training is run by Stonewall, and created by the LGBTQ+ community; she agreed this is something Council should support. L McDougall is happy to authorise the posters.

b) S Kirby said that if anyone has library fines they should pay them this week, as all money go towards the charity Refeweegge for RAG week.

J Cardwell asked if students can graduate if they have library fines.

L McDougall said the University debt policy was changed, however she would need to look into this first before confirming.

L Cerosky asked about payment options for the library fines.

S Kirby confirmed it needs to be paid 9am-5pm in cash at the library desk.

9) Date of Next meeting – Thursday 14th March, 2019