



Careers & Employability Rep Forum (CERF) St Andrews Students Association

Meeting date: Wednesday 17th February 2021 (4pm) MS Teams

MINUTES

Present: Joe Horsnell (chairing), Iona Baillie (minuting), Craig Phillips, Thomas Rintoul, Sean Nwachukwu, Ewan Gilligan, Finn Buck, Hannah Pedone, Jillian Ducker, Mia-belle Tierney, Nina McNicol, Sarah Willich, Tanya Lucs

Apologies:

Naomi Norden, Tzvetelina Ignatova, Eleanor Varley

1. Updates from Arts & Divinity Faculty President

JH Welcomed participants to the first meeting of the year and apologised for not having one last semester. There may be another meeting at the end of this semester. The purpose is for JH and CP to give updates but also for Reps to update, present feedback and ask any questions. It won't be formal and discussion and questions are welcomed.

- **CP:** Getting thoughts, views, experiences from students is welcomed, and feedback is taken seriously.

JH: Thank you for helping gather data last semester. The results have been circulated and taken on board. There is going to be a new SA position from this election season. It is the Employability Officer and they will work with the Careers Centre, help Careers/Employability Rep etc, being involved to create change. Anyone here who will be here next year should apply, as you are all qualified.

- **CP:** Collaboration between Careers Centre and SA is very much valued. Looking forward to working with the new post-holder. It will foster the development of great professional skills and enable change to be made. If you are interested, please get in touch with CP or JH.

- **JH:** Email JH, look at the role description on the website or stay behind for more information. Also, Councils has made SPAG official so SP engagement with Careers is now official.

2. Updates from Careers Centre

CP: There has been a lot of change at the Careers Centre since the new academic year including new staff being taken on (4 new careers advisors, see website or email CP to find out who your school's advisor is if you don't know). There is also increased scope for provisions now. Over 1000 responses to the survey so thank you all for your help with this. They are trying to use this to implement student-led changes. The website is being updated, focus groups are going to be run, and once/twice in a decade changes are being made possible. New structures in the SA side will also inform and shape the Careers Centre. There is a lot of collaboration between SPs and careers links/advisers.

- **SN:** The Careers Advisory Board – is this for all SPs or is there one for each SP?
- **JH:** There is just one for all SPs but it is made up of 3 SPs from arts/divinity, 3 from sci/med. They meet with CP and JH to discuss SP goals and implement their manifesto points as well as discuss feedback and projects. All SPs feed into it through Educom.
- **CP:** It was born out of SPs wanting to share experiences and support, so a meeting was set up which ended up being very constructive. After that it was decided to bring together SPs who are motivated to improve (and collaborate with) the Career's Centre and boost Employability provision for students. So far it has been very positive and productive.

3. Updates, reports and questions from Careers Reps

- a. Art History
- b. Biology

SW: Last semester, their Careers Link did a talk for each year group which raised awareness of the Career's Centre especially in subhonours. First of February was a careers event and this also helped cement Julie's link with biology, however it was only for 3rd years. So then they set up an alumni panel for any year group on Monday. BS (SP) has also planned some careers events. SW has also been picking things out from the careers matters newsletters and sharing on Facebook.

- **CP:** That's great. Julie would be interested in what has worked/not. Good job though! Year group restrictions are to do with resources.
- **SW:** Set up the other one as it is less formal/not mandatory.
- **CP:** Aware that science students have less access to labs etc, how do we still provide access to science students? Maybe online appointments/choosing online or in person in the future once the pandemic is over? This would prevent the need to walk over. Or maybe posting someone at the science buildings to improve access to Career's Centre resources. Any student thoughts on what this would look like would be welcome.
- **JH:** **Scimed meeting can be set up to discuss this.**

- c. Chemistry

SN: Last semester they organised a PhD careers fair for students interested in this option, as there has been less provision for this recently. Careers events seem to be industry-g geared especially towards placements. 40+ people, came which was a great turnout and also insightful. Also did non-chemistry event for those who don't want to go into chemistry, including options for the civil service, patent attorney etc. Feedback has been limited as people are not aware enough but will try and improve this. Last semester started planning a BAME STEM students event which has become DiverSTEM, joint with other science schools. Will be a speaker event which goes through the journeys, research, with a Q&A as well, for POC in STEM. In March, they are setting up a summer internships careers fair to help people find research placements etc. Similar thing ran last year and was good.

- **CP:** Very positive. Chemistry has new carers adviser. School might want to be involved in events so speak to careers link. PhD careers fair: recently updated support for postgrads eg the grad skills series. These are workshops for PhD students – most popular is helping with careers outside of academia. Support for PhDs is increasing so will try and do a faculty wide initiative for this. Non-chemistry event is very interesting – more can be done for this. Fantastic work. Career's Centre has done workshops for placement students on applying etc so this related to the later event.

d. Classics

e. Computer Science

EG: Last semester they hosted a student internship panel, as feedback asked for more support in this area. They had a Q&A panel with good engagement and feedback. This semester they are trying to organise an alumni panel next month, helped by Philip in careers. Reaching out to alumni. In collab with maths due to the overlap.

- **CP:** Really positive. CS is so unique, and it's a misconception that it'll sort itself out in the increasingly digital market. Desire to find internships should lead to more work in this area like this. The Career's Centre might be able to help in practise interviews, feedback on applications etc, as they realise that writing might not come naturally to all students.
- **EW:** Some mock interviews etc were planned last semester but fell through because of COVID.
- **CP:** The Career's Centre run these and they are very popular, so can also help in this area. Let students know this. Regarding competing for opportunities, are there any gaps in what the Career's Centre do which could help with competing to get jobs?
- **JH:** Anything the Career's Centre does that students don't know, get SPs to advertise in email.
- **CP:** Get in touch if you need to know what is available and how to access it. Maybe more training on this next year would increase awareness.

f. Divinity

g. Earth Sciences

h. Economics & Finance

JH: Doing quite a lot – got City Bank to do events here which is the first time they've recruited from economics. They're doing coffee chats which anyone can come to, see advertise on Instagram etc.

i. English

GR: Last semester, most feedback was positive, some wanted more careers events which weren't academic-focused. Need more support here (eg publishing, media, law, entertainment).

Internship event going on currently which was organised by SP. Sending emails to media contacts to organise a careers event about accessibility in media and entertainment careers.

- **CP:** Helpful, thanks. English has been given a new Careers Adviser who is very experienced. He can work with you. Was in a meeting with STAR radio, doing a careers week in March, and they have an amazing panel of BBC employees etc. That is something that could be promoted with you guys to help the media side. Careers out of academia: **talk to Darren**, reflect on what can be done better next year, eg signposting to outside of the School of English, to resources in the Career's Centre. Could link in with other nonvocational subjects.
- **JH:** **Get in touch with Anna with the STAR project and put utilise the SP email.**

j. Film Studies

JH: Rough plans for a diversity in creative careers event, in early planning stages currently.

k. Geography & Sustainable Development

l. History

JD: Major feedback was that students want to hear about careers beyond law, accounting, management, such as more creative careers. Also feedback about wanting support for academia, PhDs etc. They ran an internship event with English, Classics and Art History on a variety of fields eg museums, think tanks etc, all outside of the big three careers. PhD event - looking to do something like last year when PhD students informally come together chatting with undergrads which had positive feedback.

- **CP:** Good update. Academia has been found to be a popular area for careers. The University is keen to do broad events re PhDs (panels etc). Will try to increase provision for more creative careers. The reason the 'big three' get attention is because of the companies having bigger budgets and resources, whereas creative firms are smaller with less recruitment drives. So will have to try and think of a way around this. It would be useful to get focused feedback on how provision of creative career support could happen. **Can JH work on this?**

m. International Relations

HP: They have an event coming up in collaboration with economics, hosting Ian Anderson (CEO of Cicero Group) about global political risk, financial journalism, etc, and later on in April there will be larger careers panel. Also they are looking to address feedback saying there is a need for more understanding of how to network and send cold emails. Would be good to have a Career's Centre run event on how to do this. Similar events have been run in the past. Doing tester - Notion page to draw attention to resources the Career's Centre have, as feedback showed

students didn't know what the Career's Centre has to offer. The Notion page also has a list of interests, dissertations, past events etc to bring people together.

- **CP:** How to network query is interesting. IR has international cohort and it is worth bearing in mind that they therefore need to learn how to network in UK vs other countries students may come from or be seeking work in, as the culture and expectations around networking can be very different. **Will feed back to the Career's Advisers and Darren to see if there can be a new workshop. Could you share the Notion page with them and Darren?**
- **HP:** Not met Darren yet. Could use help on creating better lists, such as for grad programmes IR students have gone onto etc, as well as get feedback on page. **Will invite you to this after meeting.**
- **CP:** IR related careers are searched most on the careres website

n. Management

NM: Set up own subcommittees to tackle the problem that the community feel has gone because of COVID. Some plans are in the pipeline to better inform students of what is on offer, what is available. Eg, mock interviews will be advertised as lots of students aren't aware of this. Management Instagram committee will reach out to alumni to find careers and networking opportunities to put things up on Instagram. Instagram is a good platform to promote opportunities, also thinking about running a livestream alumni event and showcases for careers.

- **CP:** Sounds good. **Maybe get Darren involved in careers committee.** They have an Instagram account so can maybe share content with you. **Talk to Darren about this.**
- **NM:** Inviting Darren and also Julia(?) to join the next meeting.

o. Mathematics & Statistics

FB: Collaborating with CS for alumni event on the 18th March. Will be trying to get more involved with the Career's Centre this semester to take advantage of the provisions offered.

- **CP:** Don't feel pressurised, you're students and times are tough because of COVID. One event a semester is good, don't leave the meeting feeling like you're not doing enough. Looking to get feedback from maths – do you get enough support from the Career's Centre or are you lumped too much with CS, are there any gaps?
- **FB:** Interdisciplinary nature for employability is important, side skills for jobs are needed, as well as more support for people interested in academia.
- **CP:** **Feed this back to Phil** and he'll help.

p. Medicine

q. Modern Languages

TL: Running an employability series. Wanted one which was more geared to language students. There have already been some events so far, eg the Russian alumni panel which was relaxed which hopefully helped with Zoom fatigue. They also have a cv event, alumni panels and workshops for each language.

- **CP:** Sounds good. Hoping to do more with international unis in the future.

r. Philosophy

MT: Hosted an event with social anthropology and film which revolved around internships, however there was poor attendance. Advice on how to boost engagement would be good, especially to combat zoom fatigue. Subhonours students aren't interested in careers as they are putting thinking about it off until later. There is also lots of website confusion. Getting people to come though is a big issue.

- **CP:** Philosophy is one of the only departments that doesn't have a careers link. Trying to change this. New careers adviser, Amy (see website for contact) can probably help and be a useful person to collaborate with.

s. Physics & Astronomy

TR: Two main issues: students didn't have skills for job markets, and also staff reported that at academic advising at the start of 5th year, lots of people don't have any idea what they're going to do. Feedback shows students are sick of only hearing about banking, finance, tech etc. Lots of people go into these but there is a feeling that students don't hear enough about other options they can do. Ran events last semester eg UK Space Industry, CERN, skills events from CEED, LaTeX etc. They also have a PhD student panel coming up as people fed back that they wanted to know more about what PhDs are like. Starting to plan a similar event but demystifying academia. Feedback that internship information and careers information are too UK centric – it's hard to find internships abroad for if you're going home for summer. People don't know what career centre does. First years get told but they are not as driven to care about careers as older students.

- **CP:** This is helpful. It is a misconception that it is UK-centric – **will get Phil to talk to you about this** as international careers resources are heavily invested in by the University. This will also be addressed by the new website.

t. Psychology & Neuroscience

u. Social Anthropology

4. Questions for consideration

JH: The Union or Career's Centre can publicise events through social media.

CP: Sessions and events should be recorded if possible.

5. AOCB

JH and CP thanked everyone for their effort, hard work and ideas.

6. Meeting adjourned 17.10pm