



Education Committee
St Andrews Students Association

Meeting date: Thursday 11th February 2021 (6pm) MS Teams

Apologies: Lowell So (Divinity SP), Hannah Koegler (Art History SP)

Present: Amy Gallacher (DoEd), Chloe Fielding (Science and Medicine Faculty President), Joseph Horsnell (Arts and Divinity Faculty President), Iona Baillie (minuting), Rebecca Wilson (CEED)

Hannah Koegler (Art History SP), Camiel Leake (Chemistry SP), Belinda Hawes (Earth Sciences SP), Callum Irvine (English SP), Teo Yarkova (Film Studies SP), Imaan Kotadia (Geography and SD SP), Geraint Morgan (History SP), Murray Whyte (Maths SP), Lucy Matthews (Modern Languages SP), Rachel Neighbour (Philosophy SP), Sarah Johnston (Physics and Astronomy SP), Lindsay Nielsen (Psychology and Neuroscience SP), Elinor Layne (Social Anthropology SP), Orrin McAleer (Medicine SP) Emma Johnston (Arabic/Persian Convener), Maddie Lee (Comparative Literature Convener), Antonia Cahill (French Convener), Helen Clinton (Italian Convener), Elodie Phillips (Russian Convener), Rohan Date (Spanish Convener), Brynne Stewart (Biology SP), Eva Halliday (German Convenor), Kushal Tansania (Graduate SP), George Watts (International Relations), Ursula Goldsmith (Music) Ryan Gibb (Computer Science SP), Erik Crnkovich (Classics SP)

AGENDA

1. Introduction (Sci/Med FP – 5 mins)

CF said hello and welcomed people to week 7 Educom.

2. Mentoring champions (Rebecca – 10 mins)

CF: RW is here to talk about mentoring champions.

CW: Keen to get SPs involved in the mentoring schemes. There is individual school mentoring (eg medicine) which run themselves but then CEED supports, and also student mentoring over the summer which CEED manages (for incoming UG and PGTs). They are matched with a student ideally on their degree but if not someone who has taken similar first year options. In order to get enough mentors and ensure smooth running, they'll have school champions who will be students. Here to answer questions. If you know CRs who would be good for the position, suggest they could do this (they will have to be available until June/July). Also, encourage students to be mentors. There was good feedback last year, especially from PGT students.

Action: all SPs to encourage/seek champions and mentors

- **JH:** It is slightly easier if it is a CR than if it is an external student as there is more oversight and you probably know them better. We can talk more on this later as well.

(No one had any questions.)

- **CW:** Get in touch with any questions you come up with later (raw5@). Will get in touch with SPs with your champions, as well as generally keeping you updated.

CF thanked RW for coming.

3. PGR working conditions (Chemistry SP – 10 mins)

CL: This came up during PG Affairs meeting. PGs are working at home. Staff can get money off electricity bills but PGs can't as they don't pay tax. Can anything be done (maybe bursaries etc) as electricity costs are way up due to working from home.

- **AG:** If this is an issue for your school (CL and other SPs), email the Provost; there are pots of money which can help with. Cc in AW when you send these emails.
- **AW:** Also, signpost to discretionary funds as they can apply to this. This has come up before but it didn't have enough numbers to be actioned.
- **SJ:** As AW mentioned discretionary funds, are there any things people can apply to if they've been rejected from the discretionary funds and spoken to the money advice service?
- **AG:** Not sure if there is anything further than this. The University need to tick lots of legal boxes to give out money which often means people are in dire straits to get money. If you email the Provost, they might be able to tell us about pots we don't know about.

Action: CL (and any other SPs) to email the Provost (ccing in AW) with this type of concern.

4. Updating names on Outlook (Psych/Neuro SP – 10 mins)

LN: A lot of students (eg International students etc) go by a different name than is shown. Students can manually choose the name they'd like to be addressed by but students often don't know this. DOTs should say at the beginning of the year that people can do this on outlook, or when students enrol there could be an option to say what you want to be called.

- **BS:** Something got sent out a couple of months ago about preferred names. This could be done again?
- **SJ:** In matriculation there's a section where you can say the name you want to be addressed by, but a lot of people (at least in physics) put in nicknames that by mistake. If someone goes by a nickname that has a nonspecific gender (eg they put in George for Georgie), it causes difficulties for the department as they try and have balanced tutorial groups. Can this be fixed?
- **BS:** Also, when you change your preferred name, if you search on outlook, the old and new names come up which is strange.
- **LN:** Would love to see the nickname change email as this would help.

5. Parental leave update (History SP – 10 mins)

GM: Raised in department EDI meeting as a spinoff from a discussion about peer support for staff coming off parental leave. Taken to Student Services. There's not much support for staff coming off leave and what little there is is mechanical and feels like Student Services jumping through hoops. Student Services offers ad hoc support but it isn't very institutional. There's nothing specifically targeted for those coming off parental leave and this leaves a gap as the support needed for this is quite specific. The Student Services person said they would be happy for peer support to categorise people to be paired up but there might not be enough peer supporters. If anything similar has happened in other depts it would be interesting to hear.

- **AG:** Thank you for following this up. Any idea where this is going?
- **GM:** To be honest, it makes sense for it to be dealt with as an add on to current peer support system as that already works with categorisation for years, subjects etc, so that adding another category for matching would be easier. Worth following up especially to get more peer supporters with a similar experience.
- **SJ:** Off topic but worth sharing. The panda club (kids are called panda cubs) in physics meet once a week for parents to share experiences and get support. Nice to have someone to talk to in the same position. The kids come and do

an activity while parents talk and share advice. Might not be feasible for all schools but maybe other schools could join up to run similar clubs.

- **CF:** Great idea.
- **GM:** Will raise with their EDI. Might not be feasible in just history but between some schools it might work. Thank you.
- **IK:** Sounds like a great idea. Have a lot of mature students, especially in SD. Who organises/chairs those sessions?
- **SJ:** Currently it's a very keen PhD student but they're drawing up a system to make it work year to year. One idea is to take turns week to week and keep it casual. EDI director and an early researcher also helped the student set it up.
- **IK:** Might suggest in the next EDI meeting.
- **CF:** Thank you guys.

6. Student-led graduation initiatives (Arts/Div FP – 10 mins)

JH: A couple of people asked if there would be funding for student led graduation events/initiatives such as yearbooks, leavers hoodies, graduation parcels etc.

Written to proctor to ask for a fund for this and she redirected to the Principal's office. If anyone has ideas or views, get in touch.

- **AC:** Supported this project and said French were considering doing a yearbook as a PDF and leavers' hoodies
- **ML:** Suggested Comp Lit might want to do yearbooks
- **CL:** Suggested a system whereby students could design the hoodies and then the winning design gets printed (this system is used in Chemistry)
- **LN:** Staff have led on these more than students.
- **JH:** Would people use a pot of money for this type of thing if we got it?
- **ML:** Re the yearbook idea, the person that reached out to them was just to do it for their class not the whole graduating class. Might be nice to do by school, depending on departments (as ModLang would be big). Would there be funding for a University wide thing or could it be by department/school?
- **JH:** Would ask that. Probably would be a school wide thing (rather than ust classes) to be inclusive etc. Funding a yearbook for one class would be sad if other classes didn't get one. If all classes in a school did it it might be ok.
- **EH:** It's also worth bearing in mind that a yearbook is a huge amount of work so don't put too much on yourselves making one.
- **AC:** Wasn't planning on having it printed so it would be free for everyone in their school. Then still works for a small school.
- **CF:** So does anyone not want this?
- **GW:** What exactly are we doing? What is the exact plan we're going with?

- **JH:** Trying to secure funding for any initiatives you want to run in stead of grad. Eg parcels, hoodies, books, can be run by you, SPs, CRs etc.
- **GM:** It needs to be

7. AOCB

JH: Had a chat in the Arts group about staff wellbeing. JA brough up the idea of an '8 to 8 pledge' that students could sign, where students could support/express concern that staff are overworked. It would work by saying students don't expect staff to reply outwith roughly the 8am-8pm day. You'd get an email footer which would say all this. Will sort out exact timing but the are people in favour of the general idea?

- **SJ:** We have a template for this sort of thing that goes at the bottom for staff but having one for students would be lovely. Maybe a logo to go with it would be nice too so you don't have a massive email footer. Even just a symbol. Like the idea though.
- **JH:** Good idea.
- **JA:** Could we take it a step further, asking that students avoid sending emails at the out-of-hours times (at least for European time zones) so that inboxes aren't being filled up at those times?
- **JH:** Personally agree but in order to prioritise student wellbeing, saying students should email staff is not ideal.
- **AG:** The feedback on this idea from SAABs is that answering emails in the pm is seemingly the new norm. This should help with defining boundaries. Maybe more along the lines of encouraging understanding between groups more than saying don't send emails at X time.
- **BS:** Wording is difficult. Staff are sometimes uncomfortable about this type of thing as maybe it could lead to situations where some are sending emails at out-of-hours times but not expecting replies, making it seem like they're flexing at other staff members. There is also times when staff can work best in the evenings, eg if they have children who take up more time during the day and are in bed in the evening.
- **JH:** The way we would do this is more an expression of student support/concern for staff. Agreed we should be careful about wording.

Action: JH to type the idea out, make a plan, and invite people to have a meeting and discuss further

- **GM:** Another important element is that some students also only work well in the evenings. It should be more along the lines of saying you only expect a

reply at normal hours, it shouldn't be prohibiting the email being sent in the first place.

- **JH:** Thanks to JA for bringing this up and having this idea. Hopefully we can get this going by the end of spring break.
- **CF:** Let JH know if you want to get involved.

SJ: Wellbeing week is next week and it's for everyone in the University. Looks like it'll be good – there are some cool events like comedy, yoga, games, panels. You'll get an email asking to share to students. Please can you do this. There are really great things going on and they have tried hard to make this a diverse Wellbeing week as well.

AG: Something that came up at L&T is that some University staff in the Proctor's office reached out for comments on student engagement as there was concern about how many students are engaging in Panopto recordings. Wanted comments on what students might be struggling with and anything can do to help.

- **JA:** It is burnout – we've had online classes for a year and lots of 4th years (for example) are losing their sense of purpose. They don't go to class or do the reading, they just work to the next deadline and they don't see the value of their education anymore. This is also happening in the younger groups.
- **BS:** Spoke to DOT about this. A better measure is needed such as those used at other universities. Not being on moodle doesn't mean you're not working. They're also doing check-in emails and these have been seen positively.
- **GW:** In SSCCs it was brought up. Pandemic might be making it worse but now this phenomenon is just being quantified. It gives awareness to something that was already going on. Changes to timetable next year won't help and burnout might increase.
- **AG:** Will feed this back to AMG. Email with feedback and any good ideas to include. Good point about the change to the academic calendar, will raise this too.

Action: AG to raise this with AMG

Meeting adjourned 6.55pm