



Education Committee
St Andrews Students Association

Meeting date: Thursday 22nd April 2021 (6pm) MS Teams

Present: Amy Gallacher (DoEd), Joseph Horsnell (Arts and Divinity Faculty President - Chair), Iona Baillie (minuting), Abi Whitefield (PG Convenor)
Hannah Koegler (Art History SP), Camiel Leake (Chemistry SP), Belinda Hawes (Earth Sciences SP), Callum Irvine (English SP), Teo Yarkova (Film Studies 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), Eva Halliday (German Convenor), George Watts (International Relations), Ursula Goldsmith (Music) Ryan Gibb (Computer Science SP), Erik Crnkovich (Classics SP), Lowell So (Divinity SP), Brynne Stewart (Biology), Jeanne Adam (Management), Sanjana Ramaswamy (Economics SP)

Attending: Chase Greenfield, Andrea Richie

Incoming Team: Ewan Phillip, Christian Wilkinson, Rhona McCracken, Thomas Rintoul, Francesca Lavelle, Harry Ledgerwood, Catherine Mullner, Siobhan Ali, Ross Barclay, Brynn Walsh, Hunter Garrison, Delaney Murray, Charlotte Thomas, Freya Harding, Helen Matthews, Caroline McWilliams, Leonie Hoher, Quinn Murphy, Claire Shortt, Lucia Guercio, Anya Ek, Sean Nwachukwu

Apologies: Chloe Fielding (Science and Medicine Faculty President), Imaan Kotadia (Geography and SD SP)

MINUTES

1. Welcome **5 mins**

(Art Div FP)

JH welcomed the outgoing and incoming SPs to the last/first Educom.

2. Postgraduate Representation Project Presentation **15 mins**

(Chase Greenfield, Andrea Ritchie)

CG presented the Executive Summary of the PG Intern Report to the School Presidents for discussion.

- **SJ:** Read your paper and there are lots of impressive ideas. Concern with the restructuring is the recruitment of positions. It's hard enough to fill the PG positions as it is and there are less PGs and they are only here for a year. Are there any plans in case you don't fill them?
- **CG:** Goal is first elect the reps but if they don't get filled, the PG Academic Convener will see if any existing reps would fill the slot.
- **SJ:** Recruiting PG reps is really hard. As the elections for all your positions happen at the same time, if people are running for president positions and not rep positions, you might lose good people for rep roles. In UG, when the people that ran for SP don't get it, many of them go on and become great reps but this won't be possible in PG the way yours is set up.
- **AR:** March election is an issue for many one year PGTs as by then they are nearly done. Don't want to limit them.
- **AG:** Feel free to raise stuff offline as well. Over the next months, we are going to develop a communication plan and this may also help with this. PG elections will not be your responsibility next year (which was a big stress this year).
- **BH:** For EES, there is only one PGT rep and one PGR rep so having reps *and* presidents seems like overkill. Is there going to be a different system for schools like this?
- **CG:** There is only one PGR and one PGT rep overall, not per school.
- **BH:** Fair, my bad.

- **CM:** New Academic Convener here. If positions aren't filled, co-option is an option. Can also step into roles on a short-term basis. The burden won't be on you to take on unfilled roles.
- **EL:** Would you be happy for us to share these plans for the PG reps in case they have thoughts?
- **CG:** Think so.
- **AG:** The report will be published in two weeks but feel free to share now.
- **LN:** PG Elections question. It is hard to ensure you're representing all streams of students within the department (different subject, evening degrees etc) within schools as it is. How will you ensure that science research and arts/div are all represented by the two overall presidents?
- **CG:** Thought about this a lot but no definitive answer. Originally it was going to be faculty based but the split is more distinct between PGT and PGR than between arts and science students. It is an important concern though. The time commitment is 10-15 hours per week for the presidents/officers.
- **AG:** We can work this into training, LN. Right now there is only one PG Convener so even having two roles will be better. Can specialise the training.
- **SJ:** A lot of ideas were based off discussions with other Universities, but other Universities have a lot of differences from us especially in terms of representation and the Student's Association. Ideas might not mesh together as well given these differences. Also, if the number of PG reps is similar to UG reps, this might be a bit skewed, it could over-represent the PGs.
- **CG:** This is highlighted in the report. Clarifying the number of students per rep is something that will be looked into in the future. There was no definitive answer for this but it is worth further consideration. Please get in touch if you have any other ideas/concerns. The plans here are not necessarily what will happen, it is just what we think is the best blend between our structure and ideas from other Universities.
- **AR:** Have tried to consider the differences between St Andrews and other universities. Any specific worries, please email.

JH to send around CG and AR's email addresses

CG: Thank you for listening to us, take your time to read the document and feel free to get in touch.

3. Screen reader update **5 mins**

(Physics SP)

SJ: Brought the screen reader point to SWAG this week. Talked about it to Student Services. The outcome is that they know there are issues but it is the best material anyone has. They are looking at long term solutions more than short term fixes. It is going to a working group and they are also working with the Library to see what will happen with the ALS (which will be absorbed into the digital learning group). It needs to be improved by September and this has been fed back to them. There will also be clarity sent to staff about the differences between pdf formats and making their readings more screen reader friendly.

4. Graduation initiative funding reminder **5 mins**

(Art Div FP)

JH: Received more funding for graduation initiatives. Sent around the forms so you can do this. Get in touch if you have questions or want to go through your application.

5. SSCC Best Practice sharing (and survey) **15 mins**

(DoEd; Art Div FP)

AG: Frank flagged an issue that has come up wherein reps felt uncomfortable about raising concerns in front of staff. Want to find a path that suits everyone. Suggested to draft a paper between SPs and DOTs about best practise in order to improve this. Will put padlet in the teams, feel free to add to it. It tries to capture your views as we draft the paper. You'll also see a draft later. Looking for a DOT and SPs to help on this.

- **EL:** Maybe department specific, but we have done pre SSCC meetings where after feedback is gathered and distilled, SP and reps meet with DOT who advises on how to present. It also validates reps that they should raise their points. Might be hard in large schools.
- **SJ:** We do rep reports before each SSCC. Module specific problems are reported to staff (head of year/module coordinator) and these are settled out of the meeting. Then only the things that affect everyone is discussed in the SSCCs. Meetings start with updates on projects or transitions occurring. Then everyone starts the meeting on the same level. Had some shouty SSCCs

in the past so we do hands up even in person. The SP also has the right to cut people off or remove them. This is enough to discourage rudeness. Also allot each agenda point time and have a summary at the end with actions etc. Then minutes are free for anyone to read. All of this helped and made the SSCC the smoothest they've had in a long time.

- **TY:** In Film, each year has time to talk about their year's concern and the module coordinators have immediate feedback. Minutes are also available. In honours, each module has a different feedback.
- **JA:** Also do pre SSCC meetings. Notes are taken during this which helps people know what to bring up at the meeting. The DOT gets to find these out ahead of time to prepare. This helps them run smoothly.
- **EH:** They have shouty meetings so have decided that online meetings go over time less and are less aggressive. So in the future they are looking to continue online meetings.
- **BS:** Certain topics come up every year.
- **EC:** Never done these things mentioned so wouldn't want to say these have to be done. Not necessary for them and mandating this would add extra work.
- **AG:** A lot of this has come from the staff, thank you for this feedback. It has to work for you guys. This will impact the successors so feel free to add to the padlet, incoming presidents. When you meet with your DOT, talk about what works best for your school. This will also be embedded in your SP training. Please keep adding to the padlet. If you or your DOT is interested in getting involved, get in touch.

Action: SPs to do the padlet by the end of next week.

6. Handover process update **5 mins**

(DoEd)

AG: Don't worry. It can be daunting. Handover month is June but you can start sooner if you want. Current SPs make a handover document with staff contacts, reflections on the year etc. Will also gather these so none are lost. If you need help with this, email AG or JH. Will move initial training session to nearer June to push it away from exams. Also making it shorter. Will be 31st May, 5-7.30. Also moving the freshers week SP training to June. Probably in the evening. Get in touch with any questions or if you need support.

- **JH:** Maybe one a week during June. Will email soon about this.

7. AOCB

SJ: Thank you to JH, CF, AW, AG for keeping us sane and working so hard this year. Well done for surviving!

JH: It has been a fantastic year of working with all of you.

AG: You have all risen to the challenge. Well done. You're the strongest SPs of many years. Congrats on getting to the end of a difficult year.

Meeting adjourned 6.50pm