

University of St Andrews Students' Association Students' Representative Council

August 21st – Online -17:00

Present

Member's Name

Position

Barry Will	Association President
Cam S. Brown	Association Director of Education
Lucy Brook	Association Director of Events and Services
Caitlin Ridgway	Association Director of Wellbeing & Equality
Sam Gorman Activities	Association Director of Student Development & Activities
Fiona Waddell	Athletic Union President
Will Christopher	Association Chair
AK Schott	Accommodation Officer
Guillermo Canales	SRC Alumni Officer
Hitanshi Badani	SRC Arts & Divinity Faculty President
Eva Neill	Environment Officer
Arlo Bitcon	SRC Gender Equality Officer
Jack Kennedy	LGBT+ Officer
Klaudia Grat	SRC Postgraduate Development Officer
Matthew Ko	SRC Science & Medicine Faculty President
Nuttaricha Ngarmskullert	Secretary to the SRC
Alisdair Richmond	Societies Officer
Grace Greene	Student Health Officer
Katie McAdam	Widening Access & Participation Officer
AK Schott	Student Trustee
Manon Claire Williams	Student Trustee

In Attendance

Iain Cupples	Student Advocate (Education) / HR Manager
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Absent

Daniel MacDonald
Alice Chapman
Jack McNealy
Sachin Shah
Martyna Kemeklyte
Katie McAdam
Ishani Khemka

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted without dissent.

2. Apologies for Absence

Daniel MacDonald	Employability Officer	Apologies
Alice Chapman	Charities Officer	Apologies
Jack Mcnealy.	Community Relations Officer	Apologies
Martyna Kemeklyte	International Students' Officer	Apologies
Katie McAdam	Widening Access & Participation Officer	Apologies
Sachin Shah	Disability Officer	Apologies
Ishani Khemka	Student Councils Intern	Apologies

3. Adoption of the Minutes from the Previous SRC Meeting

The minutes were adopted without dissent.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

No matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5. Open Forum

Jack Kennedy (JK) requested all officers present at the meeting to spread word of the meningitis and MMR vaccination drive taking place in September.

6. Reports of Sabbatical Officers

6.1. Report of the Association President

Barry Will (BW) spoke of his meetings with the Fife Council to address the issue of housing in St Andrews and is hoping to introduce legislation to reduce the number of short term lets through his campaign this year. BW has also been working on organising the rector's election, which will take place on the 2nd of October this year, and has been

sorting out funding for the same. He is in talks with a few candidates for the position. BW has also been speaking to the finance directory of the University, the corporate communications department and other student unions in Scotland to understand the way Universities are financed, and how this process can be improved to better support the students at university. He is also waiting to hear from the University about whether they will fund a food larder in St Andrews, which would operate through the Students Association.

There were no questions for BW.

6.2. Report of the Athletic Union (AU) President

Fiona Waddell (FW) shared that the AU is reorganising its executive committee, to make it more representative, productive and directive. FW hopes that this will increase student engagement with the AU. The AU also hopes to organise focus fixtures. They will be held one Wednesday every month, where licensed bars, food vendors, merch giveaways and corporate sponsors will gather in the sports centre. The aim is to get non-athletic students to the sports centre, where they can support their friends and their university. This will start around October. FW has also been in conversation with sports clubs to make sessions more accessible. AU will also be implementing “Saints Sparsity” which is a program that uses money acquired from sinners to aid those who are struggling to pay their sports memberships. Students can then repay the AU in instalments.

There were no questions for FW.

6.3. Report of the Director of Education Support

Cam Brown (CB) announced the new education policy that will be implemented the coming semester. An extension portal will be set up, and students will be able to apply for an extension up to seven days without a medical certificate, and extensions will be granted in 1-3 days. 14 out of 18 schools have signed up to the extension portal. The Butts Wynd building will now serve as a 24-hour study space for undergraduate students. CB and FW have been working on “Wednesday evenings for sport” that target PG students. Academic alerts are being reviewed with the DoWell. The academic calendar will also undergo review. Students will rank proposed models of the academic calendar throughout September. If one model is widely preferred it will be reviewed by university committees. If this happens in a timely manner, the DoES will be able to introduce the same to the December senate and implement the model in 24/25.

There were no questions for CB.

6.4. Report of the Director of Events & Services

Lucy Brook’s (LB) main talking point revolved around the 601. LB considers the 601 written off for the entire year, though optimistically it may reopen next semester. The main impact of the 601 shutting is the fact that the design suite will now be used as a storage space. As a result, printers have been moved outside to ensure they are still

accessible, and computers will be set up in the SRC office to ensure students will still be able to print materials. A marquee has been set up near the Sports Centre to serve as a substitute for the 601. Sandys and Beacon bar have new lighting and Beacon Bar will no longer serve as a cocktail bar but will be more similar to Sandys in terms of its menu. Beacon bar will also have speakers, so that louder events can take place in that space. While Bops will be focussed on Sandys Bar, Beacon will also have alternative music playing so that students can choose which music they prefer. The Wednesday night bops “Pause” will be rebranded to “Half Time” and will be sportier in theme. There will also be a beer garden set up behind the pool tables.

There were no questions for LB.

6.5. Report of the Director of Student Development & Activities

Sam Gorman (SG) stated that 120 societies have affiliated with the union this year, which is a decrease from the 150 affiliated societies from previous years. SG believes this is largely since old societies forget to get in touch over the summer and do so when the semester begins. SG also spoke about a re-working of the volunteering portal. The main change is the removal of having to input the start and end time of your period of volunteering, instead the portal will only display the total number of hours volunteered. SG will also be able to see which students are closer to getting the award, and it will make it easier for SG to encourage those students to step up. The dates of association elections and uniform weeks will be distributed by the 25th of August 2023.

There were no questions for SG.

6.6. Report of the Director of Wellbeing

Caitlin Ridgway (CR) shared that she has met every officer who she oversees and spoke about their goals for the year. CR worked with the GotConsent co-ordinator to review their facilitator training, reintroducing them to halls and organising in-person workshops. CR has been in communication with the charity Hey Girls to organise period product distribution training to distribute products that were with the previous DoWell. She has also worked with the student services on reviewing the abuse and harassment book that they will be publishing later this year, and making sure it is representative and inclusive. They are also planning a launch event for the same and a solidarity campaign against abuse and harassment. CR is also reviewing the updated version of the Reporting Sexual Misconduct booklet and is analysing data for anonymous reporting and trying to develop ways by which anonymous reporters can seek support. Other than this CR is also working on their pledge to support student sex workers and is conducting research with the well-being and equality co-ordinator at the union and is in talks with other unions to better understand the situation and provide support.

There were no questions for CR.

7.1. Questions for Accommodation Officer

7.2. Questions for Alumni Officer

- 7.3. Questions for Arts/Divinity Faculty President**
- 7.4. Questions for BAME Officer**
- 7.5. Questions for Community Relations Officer**
- 7.6. Questions for Disability Officer**
- 7.7. Questions for Employability Officer**
- 7.8. Questions for Environment Officer**
- 7.9. Questions for Gender Equality Officer**
- 7.10. Questions for LGBT+ Officer**
- 7.11. Questions for Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer**
- 7.12. Questions for Postgraduate Academic Officer**
- 7.13. Questions for Postgraduate Development Officer**
- 7.14. Questions for Rector's Assessor**
- 7.15. Questions for Science/Medicine Faculty President**
- 7.16. Questions for Secretary to the SRC**
- 7.17. Questions for Student Health Officer**
- 7.18. Questions for Widening Access and Participation Officer**

8. Unfinished General Business

9. New SRC Business

9.1 R-23-13 Motion to change "Lifers" and "Lifelong Flexible Learners Forum" to "Carers, Commuters, Mature and Flexible-Learners" and "CCM&FL."

Mandy Thompson (MT) introduced the motion

MT explained that "Lifers" and "Lifelong Flexible Learners Forum" was a very misleading name, and many students are often confused in about whether they fall under the bracket of Lifers. MT proposes that subcommittee's name should be changed to a more inclusive and representative name ("Carers, Commuters, Mature and Flexible-Learners") as it will accurately reflect the diverse demographics it serves. MT hopes to rebrand the subcommittee during fresher's week so that more students would want to be a part of the subcommittee and thus it would maximize outreach. MT also proposed adding representatives to the subcommittee, including a representative for parents, representative for student carers and a representative for inclusion and commuter events. Alisdair Richmond (AR) was requested to present the amendments he made to this proposal, which were accepted by MT.

There were no questions for MT.

The motion passed with its amendments.

9.2 R-23-14 Motion to establish a Campaign ‘SOS Universities: Save Our Scottish Universities’.

BW introduced the motion.

The motion is to establish a student campaign which would publicly endorse a reversal or reconsideration of the most recent budget cuts by the Scottish government to higher education institutions across Scotland. The campaign would also expose the funding structure of Scottish universities. BW states it is necessary to understand that institutions are critically underfunded and by what used to be the main source of income and that needing to have a conversation about the same is necessary. This also tackles the way in which institutions are increasingly reliant on international student funding, which is unstable and is often impacted by geo-political events. This campaign would be funded by the President's budget.

AR made amendments to the motion that were accepted by BW. The amendments only changed the wording of the motion to make the statements clear.

A.K. Schott (AK) asked whether BW had an idea of what the campaign might look like and who it would involve. BW answered that since the campaign would be national it would be largely online, most of the resources spent would be for the local institution (i.e., leaflets, banners, stickers).

CB voiced his support for the motion

AK asked whether conversations were had with the university to assure that if the campaign can procure additional money, that it will be put towards issues that the students are passionate about. BW responded saying that they will be having a meeting with the Vice Principal of communications and a representative of the Principals Office to have a more intimate discussion about the campaign and its relationship with the university.

There were no further questions for BW. The motion with the amendments was passed.

9.3 R-23-15 Motion to reimagine our Postgraduate Representation and Activities Structure

CB introduced the motion.

He stated that this project aims to reimagine postgraduate representation academically and socially and would thus be in collaboration with SG. The main problem pertaining to the role of Postgraduate Academic Convener (PGAC) was the doubling of workload after the Postgraduate taught (PGT) and Postgraduate Research (PGR) president roles were merged. The proposal includes a restructuring wherein the PGAC role is abolished due to its unsustainable nature and its duties will be split between the PGT and PGR presidents. Other existing roles like EDI officer and international officer should be split between taught and research studies. It was also proposed that the Postgraduate Academic Forum (PGAF) be chaired by the DoED.

SG spoke about the other half of the motion.

This calls for a removal of the role of Postgraduate Activities Officer. The Postgraduate development officer role will also be abolished by the end of the 2023-2024 academic year. The final suggestion is the removal of the postgraduate subcommittee. It will be replaced by another association fund wherein all associated societies and PG representatives can apply to aid in hosting events for postgraduates. This change encourages affiliated societies to be more inclusive towards PG students.

AK asked whether the motion proposed abolishing the roles that were responsible for organising events and placing the responsibility on academic reps. They said in previous years postgrad reps have been able to access the Education Discretionary fund to organise events, but they have not had the bandwidth to do so. AK wondered whether there would be significant interest from academic reps to organise events who were meant to be responsible for academic representation. G responded saying the fund would be open to affiliated societies as well, and it would be good to see how the PG reps utilise their access to this fund and see if it would be successful. CB also added that setting up the fund does not mandate PG academic reps to use it. As leaders of a community, it gives them the opportunity to execute these events but does not force it.

CB added two graphics to the chat to better understand the changes.

AK discouraged the removal of activities officer, as while they may not have been as active last year, in previous years they have held weekly events, balls and organised themed weeks. AK said they would be very apprehensive removing the role without replacing the role with anything.

SG responded saying that the way in which the current system is designed doesn't promote the running of events and believes the system is flawed and requires change. The proposed system may encourage societies to include postgraduates and have them be more involved in the running of societies. CB added that this motion addresses the issues perfectly and allows societies to be more focused on PG communities. The union also does not have the ability to pay for these positions, and without stipends individuals continue to get overwhelmed and leave the position.

Hitanshi Badani (HB) added the main flaw is the current PG representative system tries to mimic the undergraduate presentative system, which means the postgraduate convener has to do the job of a DoEd while not being paid for it. The new system gets rid of the position and reduces the workload. Klaudia Grat (KG) the current PGT representative agreed with these thoughts. KG added that someone that has an actual paid position within the Union to organize events would be more productive than the alternative.

AK shared that they were struggling to visualise how the motion would create a positive impact and whether representatives would be willing to use said funds. SG stated that there has been a lack of engagement in the past with regards to representative willing to organise events. AK thought that this might be an issue of awareness rather than engagement, to which SG responded that they would not have the bandwidth to within their role to generating engagement within the subcommittee. AK then questioned who would be responsible for generating an awareness of the fund to subcommittees and societies, for if there aren't set roles then management would be required to communicate the existence of the said fund to any individuals who'd like to organise events, which in an optimistic scenario would be over 100 individuals. CB in a final response stated that there are guidelines and checklists in place to organise events and considering that there are few alternatives to the current situation, CB believed that this would be the best way forward.

AK proposed an amendment to review this motion before elections. SG agreed to this and suggested 1st February as the proposed date for review.

The motion along with the amendment was passed.

9.4 R-23-16 Motion to clarify existing Funds and establish new ones

SG introduced the motion.

The motion proposes a New Societies Fund that runs under the Societies Subcommittee, for societies created in the current or previous academic year, and the PG Events Fund. The Societies Subcommittee will also write a terms of reference document, and guidelines for the Societies Fund and the Charitable Events Fund. The Employability Officer would also replace the DoEd on the decision-making body for the Employability Fund because of this motion being implemented.

Iain Cupples (IC) asked if the management accountant had been consulted about funds. SG stated that he had met with Jillian, and she was happy with the motion.

HB asked that education discretionary fund as it is right now, only allows academic representatives to apply for it was wondering if this would change with the new proposed fund? SG responded that school presidents and officers would be able to apply

to the fund and class representatives could ask school presidents or officers to apply on their behalf. CB specified that this motion formalises the procedure through that approves funds. As details for the motion continue to be finalised CB says they hope to extend the funds to the academic schools as well.

IC stated that he didn't believe this motion needed the laws amendment as it would be unnecessary and a hassle to execute. SG disagreed, saying stating that the laws needed to contain an accurate and updated description of the roles of a sabbatical officer. AK asked whether the laws could be updated stating "update relevant funds" as opposed to specifically naming the funds, which would make updating the laws easier and less specific. SG stated he would be opposed to this amendment.

No further questions were asked, the motion passed.

10. Any Other Competent Business

Molly Reade (MR) the deputy convenor of the Disability Students Network stated they've been looking at improving on the accessibility pledge and making it more effective and was wondering whether there were subcommittees that could help enforcing the same. SG recommended that the DSN and Societies Committee have a meeting to discuss how to move forward and how to enforce the pledge

CB reiterated that the review for the proposed academic calendar starts on the 4th of September 2023, and ends on the 30th of September. He said it will be shared with all subcommittee members for them to forward to committee members for feedback.

AK proposed to discuss how the SRC allocates subcommittee budgets. AK suggested having an overview of how budgets are decided right now and what kind of factors go into that decision, and then seeing whether they can be redistributed in a more constructive way. CB gave an overview of the association funds. He stated that each year the association is given a block grant by the university, which was six hundred sixty-seven thousand pounds last year. While the grant has increased it has not increased proportionally to inflation, which means the union now spends more than it is given. The cash office provides a figure of funds each year to be allocated to subcommittees, which was one hundred and four thousand pounds last year. This year's block grant has not been increased despite requests from the association, but the Sabbs and management team are still in talks to receive an increase in grant money.

IC continued that the SRC does not have the ability to alter the budget setting process. IC also reiterated that the Association has been running on considerable losses for 3 years now, so instead of using the commercial funds that were previously being used to fund student activities the association is now looking to use university funds instead. A strategic and operational plan are both going to be executed to handle the current issue.

AK emphasised a need to increase the budget for the accommodation subcommittee due to the glaring accommodation crisis in St Andrews. They said they don't believe that the association can say that they're doing everything we can to support students when they don't have a team working to support students full time.

CB reiterated that the money constraint is because of the financial situation of the Union and it decided what the union can and can't do. SG suggested an increase in budget is something to discuss with special team outside the meeting. Finally, BW added that the Union needs to make sure that every decision and every cost is considered within the context of these significant cuts from the university. He stated that justifying any increase, would undermine the Union's key argument to the university which is that it does not have enough money to fund its subcommittees.

AK finally stated that as a charity the union would not be living up to its commitments to represent students if it doesn't fulfil this quota.

No other competent business. Meeting closed.

