

Wellbeing & Community Executive

Tuesday 17th March 17:00-18:00

Tutorial Room

Minutes

Present in person: Alex Chun (AC, PresWell, Chair), Josh Rooke (JR, DSN), Holly McDonald (HMc, Campaigns & Impact Co-ordinator, Secretary), Veronica Chiaravalli (VC, International Students' Officer), Lucy Reynolds (LR, EaCES President).

Apologies: Eden Hodgkins (LGBT+ Officer), Zoe Bremner (Accommodation Officer), Celina Chen (BAME Officer).

Absent without apologies: Innes MacPhee (Gender Equality Officer), Omar Raza (Widening Access & Participation Officer), Celina Chen (BAME Officer), Joanna Barrow (Student Health Officer), Jack McNealy (Accommodation Officer).

Meeting begins: 17:05

1. PresWell updates

AC noted that they are working with University staff on consultations, following the W&C Forum last week. Staff felt the space was useful and gave them a more direct connection to student perspectives. The relevant project groups are going to look at bringing consultations forward time-wise, attempting to reach more students, and reducing burden on individual officers. AC is also working on LoA policy in terms of what is available to students via while on LoA.

There are further discussions with Registry about countries which are now under a visa freeze by the UK government. Present students are not affected, but offer-holders are, so Registry are looking into this.

AC had brought to Student Services that students had reported not receiving responses from Disability Team, and it transpired that there was a system issue, which they are now trying to fix ASAP. JR had not been contacted about this issue specifically.

Also working on resource compilation, and they are close to finishing this piece of work. They are also advocating for SafeZone (an app that assists with safety and reporting/flagging of issues).

2. Officer updates

VC reported that the International Students' Network are working on their first event for buddy scheme for during semester-time. They have spoken with PeerSupport on a summer buddy scheme, will contact EaCES too to finalise logistical details. They are changing the International Student Guide into a more attractive website, which can go on Orientation app hopefully. AC will connect VC with Sarah Browne on this.

LR updated that they are working on handbook for EaCES students and recent graduates, and would like to get this into orientation app to increase visibility. They are planning collaborations and events, including trips outside St Andrews. LR went to Parliament a few weeks ago to discuss education and EaCES students. They will be holding career support events this semester also. AC asked if they'd like more promotion around parliament work (LR will consider based on timing).

JR noted the DSN have been involved in consultation on digital nexus (pleased to be consulted but didn't feel it was ideally timed as the project was already significantly progressed and couldn't consult on structural changes). They had provided a statement on the Supreme Court ruling, which they may publish on socials soon. They are working on a cross-university collab across the UK, and looking at a related survey. Met with Student Services on accommodations for reading disabilities, and hoping to progress this ideally with student feedback to support this. DSN are working on exam packs, and they have held some events like friend finding with EaCES and CCMFL, and other trips beyond St Andrews. They mentioned the need for specific content warnings for things like strobe lighting for theatre productions which had been missed. They had held 4.2hrs events per week on average, and are now preparing for AGM and handovers. DSN are planning an accessible May Dip and want to get others involved.

AC responded that they feel the University should be paying for accessibility specialist architects to get involved throughout design of new spaces, rather than relying heavily on students. Happy to work with DSN on drafting statement on this if needed, as they feel that students were not able to make a significant impact on the accessibility of a new building. JR happy to work on this with AC. In terms of reading-related disabilities, they've been working on reasonable adjustments with Student Services and what this might mean depending on School/discipline (may raise together with DSN). May Dip meetings will be soon, not yet scheduled.

3. AOB

VC met with Bartosz (PeerSupport) and thought about making resource booklet for all students staying over summer, and wanted to collaborate with the W&C Executive to share information and distribute. AC noted that the University employs a lot of students over summer, so it would be good to distribute to them, and that some LGBT+ students might stay here over breaks if their home life is not supportive of their identity (suggested getting in touch with Sarah Browne). VC will get in touch with members of the Executive via email to progress.

JR noted that the DSN aren't involved as much as they'd like (e.g. welcome events for new students because people may not know they exist) and want to get involved (e.g. induction events from Supported Pathways, Open Days). They asked who they should contact to get involved.

AC believes the induction for Widening Access students is a new initiative this year. They also considered the difficulty finding teaching rooms given the initialised system of naming etc.

LR felt the same about wishing to get involved in events, and possibly future open events specifically for EaCES students.

AC will reach out to relevant contacts, and HMc suggested Rachel Hughes would be a good first contact to find out about open days.

VC thinks International Students' Network would also benefit from presence at these events, as many students reach out to them over summer with questions. Would love the Network to be further advertised to prospective students.

LR suggested that for next academic year, there could be a scheme to help students moving into halls who don't have without parental support and/or those who have accessibility requirements

JR is not aware of specific support for disabled students.

VC thinks this is a great idea, and that they will add a page in their guide with information about summer storage, shipping, and moving back to their home country post-graduation

JR has been made aware of a petition against Reform Society being affiliated. AC responded that unless there is a violation of conduct policies, then the Union has a legal obligation to affiliate all societies.

JR asked about contacting relevant staff with issues they didn't manage to cover at W&C Forum. AC offered to read emails over before connecting them with staff.

VC flagged that there are some broken links on the Union website, though it may now be better since they last looked. AC will flag broken links to D&M.

Meeting adjourned: 17:43