



PGT Postgraduate Executive Forum

10.30am - 14th November 2018

Meeting Room (Student's Union)

Present:

Member

Ashley Clayton
Martin Campbell
Tom Brown
Alice Foulis
Alexander Griffiths
Brett Dodgson
Ana Neferu

Position

Academic Convenor (Chair)
Pro-Dean PGT
Dean of Science
Director of Education
Academic Policy Officer (Taught Degrees)
St. Leonard's College
PG Society Secretary

Christopher Irvine
Rikst van der Schoor
Hanna Ostapenko
Brooke Franklin
Ashley Mowers
Taylor Humin

Computer Science (CS)
History
POED
Maths and Statistics
St. Mary's College
English

1. Apologies

Provost
Dean of Arts

Psychology
Economics
Biology
Geochemistry
French

Approval of previous Minutes:

Minutes of the previous meeting are approved without alteration.

2. Introductions & Membership

All attendees introduced themselves to the room.

It was discussed that no additional membership, either among students or staff, is currently needed at these meetings.

3. PGT Orientation (DoEd)

DoED asked for feedback regarding the orientation experience.

- POED: orientation was great in their program, where they all do everything together within their program from day 1 to end. Everything is organized by the school which was useful for people not from St. Andrews.
- CS: PGTs felt very welcomed. PhD alumni did a tour of St. Andrews before school started, and the school had some events such as drinks reception which helped build a community within the school.

Academic Convenor discussed that the university was keen on advancing the orientation app and asked if PGTs liked it this year.

- Several people said yes.
- A filter function was proposed to more easily find relevant events for PGTs, or for arts vs sciences.
- Several people discussed that there were tech issues with the app, especially with log in.
- The app was not clear about which events were mostly for undergrads and postgrads, and postgrads ended up wasting time going to undergrad-focused events such as one at the Chaplaincy.
- CS proposed to not have everything just in an app, but also have everything for example online.

Action point: Academic Convenor to investigate why some events such as the chaplaincy event appeared to be focused on undergrads, when they should have been accessible to all students.

DoED asked if the opening event was accessible to postgrads. Class reps said that there were mostly undergrads in attendance. The opening event led by the Dean of Science was useful, it gave a good introduction as to what to expect from the University.

Academic Convenor asked for feedback regarding the events of the Postgraduate Society.

- All events were good and useful.
- Additional proposed events: A group trip to Dundee or Edinburgh, especially in the city centre, as close to orientation week as possible would be useful so people know that they are not confined to St. Andrews. Engagement with the PG Soc in Dundee would also be useful.
- Pro-Dean PGT: advertising wine and cheese unintentionally excludes the people who don't drink alcohol, and there are more and more non-drinking students.

- Dean of Science: many people complained they did not get tickets for the Byre event. He enquired if the Postgraduate Society events were on the app, as many events across the board were not.
- The size of the bonfire was not impressive. There were lots of unregulated bonfires that evening, which is why fire safety imposed size limitations. DoED pointed out that there are already measures to avoid multiple bonfires in the same day from now on.

Item 4 PGT Class Representative Experience (DoEd)

Feedback is asked so early because last year there was negative feedback from the PGTs who were enthusiastic early on but later became upset that they could not actually get anything to happen.

History: it is hard to give and implement feedback given that PGT programs are short, and changes implemented next year come too late for current students. Many students want changes for next semester, while they are still here.

DoED and Academic Convenor: it would be useful to have more signposting about measures changed as result of feedback

CS gathered mid-semester feedback. Overall there has been a lot of support from the school and the school president. He expected going in that changes do not happen until after a year or two.

POED: The program also gathered mid-semester surveys, but usually right before a lecture, so people don't pay attention to it as they rush to the lecture. Also, feedback from the teacher review did not make it to surveys. Mid-semester forms are useful as particular issues were highlighted and the lecturers know about this. In one of the modules, there was a lot of information in too few lectures, so they will put more information in written form as a result of the surveys.

History: Doing surveys in Google Forms takes a lot of work but the form is anonymous, so more people are likely to do them

- Other class reps: paper forms are easier to fill and just as anonymous.

Academic Convenor asked how people find communicating with their cohort.

- History: it is hard to contact everyone
- English: doing something with a social edge helped collect feedback. They had pizza at the event, which the School paid for. They got feedback orally but also on notebooks from ASC.
- CS: He told them that if they see him in the hallway and want to chat, they can always approach him. They also have socials which encourage people to talk. There was no formal feedback request which allowed him to focus well on a few aspects instead.

Academic Convenor brought up that he usually organizes a feedback session for class reps in January or February in an informal environment such as pizza and/or drinks to get their thoughts about being PGT class reps. They will be emailed about it.

5 Postgraduate Community (Academic Convenor, Provost)

Provost asked for feedback within specific schools about available funding

- Dean of Science: St. Leonard's exists to provide opportunities for PGs in all schools to get to know each other. Monique MacKenzie, the new St. Leonard's Provost, looks to develop new events such as coffee mornings or PG Exchange with CAPOD. Monique wants to set aside some so called community-development-fund for postgrads to organize their own events. Ideally such events should be cross-school but other than that, any event is ok. Hopefully this will happen this calendar year. There are already other funds such as CAPOD for organizing conferences, and St. Leonard's does not want to compete with that but should be an additional source of funding to benefit St. Andrews postgrads. A series of events over an academic year would be ok to be funded at once.

Academic Convenor brought up that the Postgrad Society is happy to help in any way, such as booking rooms in the Union which the Society can do with no maximum time limitation because it counts as a subcommittee.

6 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (Academic Convenor, DoEd)

Academic Convenor described the ELIR process to class reps.

There will be focus groups that everyone is welcome to go in order to provide feedback. A group led by Nicola Melton will take place on Wednesday, 21 November 1-2pm in Edgecliffe on the Scores. They are looking for PGT reps input on this event.

7 AOCB

DoED: the Union opened a new source of funding for career events which is open for everyone. Information can be found on the Union website, Funding section.

Meeting adjourned.