

Committee Name: Guild Officer Group
Date & Time: 3/10/23 11-12
Present:

In attendance	Apologies	Absent without apologies
Amira Campbell – Guild President (Chair) Dean Turner - Welfare and Community Officer Ben Lockley - Postgraduate Officer Cat Hardiman - Sports Officer Harry Brooks – A&E Officer Joe Hill – Education Officer Tianjie Liu (Alice) - International Officer Trinity Barson - LGBTQ+ Students' Officer Aoife O'Driscoll-Paton - Disabled Students; Officer Ismael Rodriguez Foronda - Ethical and Environmental Officer Robin Hayward - Trans and Non Binary Officer Also in attendance: James Lindsay, Director of Community and Representation (CEO Nominee) Jane Baston, Senior Voice Coordinator and GOG Secretary Scott Dawson, Voice and Representation Manager	Safina Amir - Women's Officer Jo Thomas, Chief Executive Officer	Semmer Preet Singh- Ethnic Minority Students' Officer Chetna Rajendra Khandare - Campaigns Officer

	Item for discussion	Questions/Comments/Voting Decision From Discussion	Action
1	Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC welcomed everyone to the meeting 	
2	Minutes from the last meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC has invited Part-Time Officers to the West Midlands Group chat AC will reach out to PTOs about buddies. Update on Dubai will be given at the next meeting JB is looking for dates that will work for FTOs for a photo and will send some dates out to PTOs. Minutes from meeting approved 	AC to contact PTOs about buddies. JB to send photos date out to PTOs

3	Officer Projects	<p>Standing Item for updates from Officers on projects they're working on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BL updated on conversations on widening participation for Masters Students. • Also working with JH on timetabling and with Registry on student records and approving those processes. • AC has been in touch with a Council member who is interested in the Widening participation work. • CH has just launched the Sport Access Fund last Monday. Progress work on Go Green Week and setting up a Swap Shop for Spots Kit. • Working with DH from Voice for smaller Sport Tournaments for PG students. • TL has just had the first Language Café with over 100 people in attendance. Looking for another venue for the 24th October. • TL has also started 'Talk to Alice' where students can chat with her about any issues that they'd like to raise. • Working on planning Luna New Year and getting them updated. • AC asked if we can send updates on upcoming events to PTOs. JB can include them email updates to PTOs. • TB and RH have run a picnic event last weekend. Also working on getting their Committee up and running. • AOD attended Accessibility Oversight Group and working with Estates to get accessibility improved on campus. • DT working on starting Pantry Breakfast in November. 8-10 on a Monday in Mermaid Bar, with someone from Guild Advice in attendance. • JH has been working on Rep Recruitment and how we can provided additional training for them. • Meeting with the University of how we improve assessment and feedback. 	<p>AC to put BL in touch with the Council member interested n Postgraduate Widening Participation work.</p> <p>JB to include event information in PTO emails.</p>
---	------------------	--	---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the APP work and have a meeting later today to look at developing the plan for the next year. • HB has been working on Welcome Week and getting people along to club nights. Working on making them more engaging throughout the year. • Collaborating with different societies for club night. ASC and BrumSki already for two different nights with work happening for another night with ValeFest. • IRF has been working on the collaboration for climate action groups across the University. Working on a number of events for GGW. • Also been working with the University on some Comms work on COP28. • Has also been involved in some banner drops on campus related to plant-based Universities campaign. 	
4	Comms	<p>Standing Item for communication updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRF asked about social media training for Part-Time Officers. • JB updated that Comms and Marketing were hoping to run this next Monday morning. 	JB to inform PTOs who are not in attendance of this time.
5	UCU Referendum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AC introduced the item and gave background on the strike action from UCU and UNISON. ▪ AC outlined the recommendations to call a referendum on support for UCU, the question that should be proposed, the timeline, and support for UNISON action. ▪ AC updated on local strike action that was recently cancelled at University of Birmingham. ▪ AC gave information that we are expecting UCU to continue strike action for the rest of the year. ▪ AC asked for views on whether GOG should call a referendum. FTOG have discussed this and haven't come to a consensus view. 	<p>JL to discuss with AC a change to the referendum guidance on Part-Time Officer involvement in campaigning.</p> <p>Student Voice to run a referendum as outlined by the Guild Officer Group.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ AC gave context around support last year which was based on the re-approval of the Trade Union Belief and Commitment.▪ IRF asked about the benefits of calling a referendum.▪ AC said that it gives the Guild a wider mandate for supporting UCU and releasing statement if the referendum is in favour. FTOG currently isn't giving any statements on this due to a lack of consensus.▪ IRF asked what would happen if we don't support the UCU strike action.▪ JH gave context around getting a mandate from students beyond the trade union action.▪ TB asked about the timeline for the referendum.▪ JB shared that the timeline had been suggested to align with other democratic activities, in particular the All Student Vote.▪ BL advocated for having a five day voting period. The strike action has changed and increased significantly over the last few years with rolling strike action.▪ BL also commented on the increase of the impact of strike action and therefore mitigations by the University have required additional resources to ensure that students graduate.▪ BL raised the issue of having these conversations with students and using our democratic system for that purpose.▪ TL talked about the impact on international students who are paying higher fees than home students. It would be good to get a wider mandate from the student body on this to give justification on the Guild stance.▪ JH suggested running a pre-referendum and how we could use this to gain student views and educate students on strike action.	
--	--	--	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ AC discussed the varied views on the impact of strike action. UCU has been varying their action over the last few years and we don't have a clear view of student opinion on different type of action.▪ JL clarified about how referendum can be used to seek opinion from students or to decide Guild policy.▪ SD clarified that quorum is 5% of the student body. It will likely be a minimum of 2000 students to vote for it to be quorate.▪ JL clarified that GOG would have to choose whether to seek opinion or to decide Guild policy in the referendum. It could not do both in the same referendum.▪ BL spoke against an opinion seeking referendum. Noting the importance of giving students a clear opportunity to mandate their union's support (or not) for potential strike action.▪ HB spoke in favour of doing an opinion seeking referendum to gain student insight on the issue.▪ IRF raised that students may not be actively thinking about the Guild and the democratic stances that we take. It may be hard to engage students.▪ JH asked about GOG's powers on calling a referendum.▪ JB clarified that GOG needs a 75% majority to call a referendum but could decided to a do piece of work on student opinion via a simple majority.▪ JL stated that if we use some research to inform the next democratic processes then we would need to consider how that works and if the two impact each other.▪ BL asked about budgets for the referendum.▪ SD clarified that we would have budgetary support for campaign teams in any referendum. Student Voice would	
--	--	--	--

		<p>support the creation of Campaign Teams. Student Voice would ensure that the referendum is publicised appropriately to students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ AC outlined that the main question from GOG is around whether we conduct a referendum or research on student opinion.▪ RH voiced agreement for conducting a referendum and also carrying out additional research on opinion on different forms of strike action. We don't want to dilute the decision.▪ AOD spoke in favour of knowing what we'd do with any research data and what the impact of that would be.▪ TL questioned if it would be useful to do a survey alongside the referendum.▪ CH mentioned that we don't want to bias decisions alongside the referendum. We can then do additional research afterwards based on the outcome.▪ SD communicated some possibilities for consideration. 2 main routes. First option could start with a poll over October to gather student opinion to inform the wording/structure of the referendum. With a referendum following in December. A second option is to go straight to referendum in October.▪ JH mentioned that the ASV in December would likely be in the next round of strike action, whereas an October Referendum will be in a period of no strike action.▪ AC asked for views on the two options that SD outlined.▪ AC reflected on needing to know what the Guild is going to do on the outcome of any research or referendum. The Guild has very little influence over UCU and the strike action they may want to take.▪ BL mentioned that a referendum gives the Officers a larger mandate to go to the University and encourage them to work to resolve the dispute. Last year's President	
--	--	--	--

		<p>was regularly raising the pensions dispute with the VC who sits on the Board for USS Pensions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ AC suggested looking at other details presented in the paper.▪ AC highlighted the suggestion for the referendum to have a 1-year mandate.▪ BL would be comfortable with an extended mandate up to 2 years.▪ HB would prefer a 1-year mandate.▪ The Officers went around the room to discuss their views on the mandate, and when to hold the referendum.▪ BL referendum in October for 2 years.▪ CH referendum in October.▪ TL referendum in October No preference on timeline.▪ TB referendum in October. 1 year mandate▪ AOD referendum in October. 1 year mandate.▪ DT referendum in October with a 2 year mandate.▪ JH referendum in October with a 2 year mandate and noted that future GOGs can call another referendum later.▪ HB, a referendum alongside All Student Vote with poll survey done prior and a 1 year mandate.▪ IRF referendum in October and a 2 year mandate.▪ RH referendum in October and a 2 year mandate.▪ AC referendum in October and a 2 year mandate.▪ In summary GOG is in favour of holding a referendum in October. The majority are not in favour of conducting a research piece beforehand.▪ GOG voted to hold a referendum on UCU strike action. 11 GOG members voted in favour.▪ A 75% majority was reach and so a referendum is called by GOG.	
--	--	---	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GOG voted on holding an opinion based referendum. 0 GOG members voted in favour. ▪ GOG voted on the mandate of the referendum. 9 GOG members voted for 2 year. 2 for 1 year, with 0 absentions. ▪ A simple majority for a 2 year mandate was therefore reached. ▪ GOG vote on timeline. 11 voted for a referendum in October. ▪ A simple majority for the referendum to be held in October was reached. ▪ AC proposed whether the referendum guidance should be changed on who should be allowed to campaign in the referendum. ▪ CH raised that Officers campaigned to be elected so should be able to continue to do that while in role. ▪ CH left the meeting. ▪ RH raised that all Officers should be treated the same within the guidance. ▪ General agreement in the room. ▪ JL clarified that this decision lies with the Returning Officer Nominee(RO) not GOG. As the RO he would welcome GOGs views on this. ▪ TL would feel comfortable using her work platform to raise awareness of the referendum but not to campaign. She wouldn't be against other's doing it. ▪ BL asked what students would see before they vote and what information would be given to students. ▪ TL left the meeting. ▪ JL clarified that the Student Voice Team would ensure that the election is run freely and fairly including the provision of information on the topic. ▪ SD clarified that the difference is due to PTOs being students and having the ability to campaign from the student perspective in comparison to FTOs. We can still realign the campaign guidance for FTOs and PTOs however. 	
--	--	---	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GOG is in favour of Part-Time Officers being able to use their platforms as Part-Time Officers to campaign in a referendum. ▪ AC talked about noting support for UNISON action at University of Birmingham. The Trade Union (TU) belief would cover this. ▪ AC doesn't believe that it should be contentious for students as the impact is smaller. ▪ JB noted that a similar idea had been submitted to the democratic system calling for the Officers to show support of the UNISON strike action. ▪ JH noted that the scale of the action is different. ▪ BL shared that there was a statement drafted which was deferred to GOG due to the timing of the meeting. ▪ DT noted that we can just release the statement. ▪ HB raised that he would like this to go to a referendum as well. We don't want to assume students' views on UNISON action. ▪ GOG shared their views on a UNISON referendum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AC - No ▪ BL - Yes ▪ TB - Not opposed ▪ AOD - Not opposed but don't think it's necessary. ▪ DT - No ▪ JH - No. Not at the same time as the UCU referendum. ▪ HB - Yes ▪ IRF - No ▪ RH - No. It's less contentious than UCU. ▪ AC noted that there is a Belief and Commitment about trade union action on campus. ▪ SD summarised that GOG shows general support for UNISON strike action but not yet for a referendum. We can encourage 	
--	--	---	--

		<p>students to get in touch if they'd like to see more engagement on UNISON strike action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HB questioned the wording of the statement and who it comes from. ▪ AC clarified that it can be rephrased based to come from the Guild on the B&C. ▪ GOG agreed to support UNISON strike action. 	
6	Club Guest List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HB mentioned that all Officers get free entry in to club nights with a plus 1. You need to email CH before 5pm on the day of the sports night with the student IDs. ▪ HB should be emailed/contacted before FAB nights with the same information. 	
7	Appointments Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ JB shared that SS had put himself forward for the third PTO space on Appointment Panel. ▪ GOG approve appointing SS to Appointments Panel. 	JB to inform SS and SJ of the appointment.
8	Democratic Calendar/Democracy Review Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SD suggested emailing democratic calendar updates on the basis of time. 	SD/JB to email around democratic calendar updates.
9	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DT raise the buddies scheme for PTOs. ▪ AC updated that some have been sorted already. AC will email PTOs the pairings. 	

The Chair closed the meeting at: 12:15

Date of next meeting: 10TH November 2023