

Officer Question Time Minutes

Present: Reece Patrick Roberts (President), Adam Goldstone (Education Officer), Robyn Macpherson (Activities and Employability Officer), Jess Small (Postgraduate Officer), Izzy Bygrave (Welfare and Community Officer) Jo Park (International Officer), Simon Price (Sports Officer), Jay Martin (Disabled Students' Officer); Shamima Akhtar (Disabled Students' Officer), Holly Battrick (Women's Officer), Jess Rutland (LGBTQ Students' Officer), Jules Singh (Commuter Students' Officer)

In attendance: Ken Chan (Chair of Officer Question Time), Oli Killeen (Democracy Co-ordinator), Adam Tomes (Communications Coordinator), Adam Sheridan (Director of Engagement), Jo Thomas (Chief Executive Officer)

Apologies: Janiece Jackson (Anti-Racism; Anti-Fascism Officer)

The Chair welcomed everyone and the meeting commenced at 18.00

No	ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	QUESTIONS ASKED	ACTION
1	Welcome to Officer Question Time	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to Officer Question Time. Congratulations were given on his recent election.</p> <p>The Chair noted that 50 years ago this week members of the Guild of Students occupied the Great Hall in protest of greater student rights – The Guild is commemorating this, and it's important that people participate in things like Officer Question Time to make their voices heard – and hold Officers to account for the work they do.</p>	Noted
2	President Update	<p>A verbal update was provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,567 have taken place so far on the Selly Express night bus. A request for additional funding has been submitted to the University financial allocation process • Working with the WCO and the local community to make sure that landlords in Selly Oak are accredited • A poll has been sent to student reps and college reps to get information on students' hidden course costs – 250 people have responded • Working on a 'wagon wheel' to show how student fees are spent – available in 2019-20 • SHAG Week Campaign – successful campaign with interest sessions run by Part-Time Officers • Scrutiny Panel – new accountability process trial – challenges recruiting a full panel. 2 meetings due to be held in Term 2 • Vice-Chancellor's Question Team – working with VC on how this will look – possibly happening in Late January Early February 	Noted

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NUS – working with them to ensure students still have a collective voice in light of the organisation's financial difficulties • Attending Auschwitz with AEO – working with University on what can be done to tackle anti-Semitism on campus • Dubai – working on a mental health campaign – petition ongoing – working with institutions on best practice • Planning underway for Officer Elections 2019 <p>No further questions were asked.</p>	
3	<p>Activities and Employability Officer Update</p>	<p>The Chair noted that the AEO is responsible for Student Groups as well as Jobs, Skills and Volunteering and making sure that students get the most out of their time at Birmingham outside of academic studies.</p> <p>A verbal update was provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MedSoc – working with them on their transition to the Guild – making it easier for them • Society Tiered Structure – working on inclusivity and incentivisation • Deb Hall refurbishment – focus groups held and a survey running to get feedback – hopefully the refurb will enable better use of floor space. • Achievements Wall is now and running • 2 Society Nights held • SHAG Week – talks well attended • Room Bookings Policy – new proposal taken to Space Group • Student Group workshops on Grant allocation held, and one on Ball planning upcoming • Working to streamline Student Group processes • Society of the month and spotlight on - Ongoing <p>Q: There have been a number of thefts from the Burn FM Office, what is the Guild doing about this? A: A statement was put out as soon as possible after the event reminding people to keep an eye on their personal items and not to leave them unattended. All options are being looked at to try and make the area more secure including restricting access to the Burn FM Office.</p> <p>Q: Can University security provide support to prevent incidents like this happening again? A: University security is unable to operate within the Guild building. As the Guild, we are aware of the issues and are working to try and prevent them from happening in the future.</p> <p>Q: What new initiatives are being put forward to try and prevent this from happening again? A: All suggestions are welcome, the police are aware that theft is the most common crime committed around campus and are advocating bystander intervention if people see something that doesn't look right. Thieves are generally put off by people asking questions. However it is noted that care should be taken to ensure</p>	<p>Noted</p>

		<p>you don't put yourself at unnecessary risk.</p> <p>Q: 2 different incidents of theft have happened on separate occasions and it took the Guild quite a long time to act, why was this?</p> <p>A: An incident report was submitted as soon as possible after the event, and the relevant Officers were also informed. It did take slightly longer than anticipated to get a statement out about this, which I apologise for.</p>	
4	Education Officer Update	<p>The Chair noted the Education Officer is responsible for improving students' academic experience and is responsible for the Student Rep System.</p> <p>A verbal update was provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Map App – currently being tested • Personal Tutoring/Pebblepad – working to inform students what it is and why they should use it • Involved in Personal Tutor Policy Review • HE Updates – Universities Minister Sam Gyimah recently resigned following Brexit controversy • Student Rep Forums held to gather feedback and good practice from across the university • Your Ideas mandate updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tell us how are tuition fees are spent – wagon wheel under development to be released shortly - Release Timetables sooner – work underway - Height adjustable desks in library and study spaces – meetings underway with library services to implement this <p>No further questions were asked.</p>	Noted
5	Postgraduate Officer Update	<p>The Chair noted that the Postgraduate Officer is responsible for representing postgraduate students, and works on all aspects of their university experience to academia and postgraduate community.</p> <p>A verbal update was provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PGR Mental Health – met with student services to discuss support available • Library opening hours – these have been extended, but looking at ways postgraduates can be catered for during closure periods • University Postgraduate Strategy – exciting work ongoing • NUS – Working on the inclusion of a Full-Time Officer – but this might be difficult with NUS' current issues • PGMSA – Full committee elected • PG event on Saturday <p>No further questions were asked.</p>	Noted
6	Welfare and Community Officer	<p>The Chair noted that the Welfare and Community Officer is responsible for health, welfare, and support and community engagement.</p>	Noted

		<p>A verbal update was provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meal plan – consultation is ongoing on changes being made • Housing Fair and Housing Awareness Week recently held • Marks out of Tenancy – work ongoing • Mental Health – met with Preet Gill MP to discuss support available • Meetings held with Council to discuss safety in Selly Oak • World Kindness Day • Meetings held with Wellbeing Officers • Christmas on Campus – held Monday 10th December <p>Q: What work have you been doing recently on Disability History Month and the International Day of Disabled People? A: I have been working with the DSOs to promote their events, and can make myself available for additional support.</p> <p>Q: What work is being done to promote the 'Not On' Campaign? A: There is now a Sexual Harassment Steering Group which is discussing additional funding for the campaign. Work is also ongoing for Sports Clubs and Societies to include mandatory classes within their inductions.</p> <p>Q: Is the Meal Plan consultation going to take into consideration dietary issues? A: Yes, additional dietary needs will be considered where possible.</p>	
7	International Officer Update	<p>The Chair noted that the International Officer is responsible for the student experience of international students, and also represents students studying abroad on those on the University's international campuses.</p> <p>A verbal update was provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fab and K-Pop hosted – another one coming soon • Working with the BIA on how to support students better academically • Personal Tutors – working on how to help support them with cultural awareness • International Mental Health Working Group – to discuss more targeted support • Careers – Met with Careers Network to discuss an international employability fair • Attended NUS International Leaders' Conference and discussed a national campaign on a Graduate visa • Met with Study Abroad Office to discuss exchange students' module choices which is poor • Working on an International Student Experience Report • International Student Scams – Working with Student Services on how to highlight scams to international students and how to protect themselves • Safety Workshop happening tomorrow • Dubai Campus – working on the Education Committee 	Noted

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Office hours ongoing • Dubai Student Forum being elected • International Day – Working on a date sometime next term <p>Q: Are you responsible for students coming back from periods abroad? This is an area that is also quite challenging</p> <p>A: Yes, if anyone has any ideas about how this can be improved, they are welcome to contact me – there is a focus group on this issue happening soon and anyone affected is welcome to attend.</p> <p>Q: What additional support is available for those on year abroad who are having difficulty with module choices?</p> <p>A: This is a big issue that I am aware of, and it is something being worked on. If you would like to meet to discuss any particular issues I would be happy to do this.</p>	
8	<p>Sports Officer Update</p>	<p>The Chair noted the Sports Officer is responsible for overseeing Sports Clubs, and works to increase engagement and participation in Sports Clubs – helping them to be more inclusive.</p> <p>A verbal update was provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gym Memberships – a display will be going up shortly showing the best times to go • Tiverton Gym Project – Potentially opening late March or Early May • Outdoor Gym Spaces – on hold due to lack of finance • International Sports Fair – potential date of January 25th - high interest so far • Colour Run at The Vale – planning underway, more information soon • Meetings held with Aston Sports Officer to discuss potential varsity opportunities • UBSport Mental Health – survey out now – First Aid Course offered to committee members • Kit Forum – to gather feedback and experiences to pass onto Account Manager • More Try a sport sessions upcoming • Work ongoing on the Club Tier System • Planning underway for an inclusive sport festival next term <p>Q: You mentioned an Inclusive Sport Festival – what further work is being done on this?</p> <p>A: Disability Sport is involved as well as the Club Development Team. I will look to meet with the DSO to discuss this, potential opportunities include Goal Ball, but I would really like to include things like Wheelchair Basketball and any other options that might be available.</p> <p>Q: What accountability is there for Sports Clubs who behave poorly or organise initiations that impact negatively on club members?</p> <p>A: Education is a key part of how to tackle this, I am aware of this problem and I am working hard to address it. From the Guild's point of view, we can ban them from club nights, but the University has overall responsibility. BUCS are working on direct reporting of issues</p>	<p>Noted</p>

		and can take action to ban teams from competing if they feel it is warranted. No further questions were asked.	
9	Part-Time Officer Updates and Questions	<p>Jules Singh (Commuter Students' Officer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forming and supporting a Commuter Students' Association – EGM held in September – events held Working with the Guild and the University on how they can better support commuter students Working with the Mature Students' Officer on a number of events Campaigning on a better TOA contract to negotiate discounts for commuter students who want to go on night's out Car Parking – working for better support for commuter students <p>Holly Battrick (Women's Officer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reclaim the Night – working to hold in Birmingham City Centre next term SHAG Week – Pleasure Workshop, Not asking for it campaign Working on International Women's Day Drop ins – held fortnightly <p>Jess Rutland (LGBTQ Students' Officer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychology E&D Meetings held to discuss range and content of inclusive courses Working with AEO on E&D Training for Clubs and Societies Dubai – raising concerns on safety for LGBTQ students in Dubai NUS – working to preserve liberation representation in light of NUS financial issues Working with the university on gender neutral toilets SHAG Week – excellent workshops held on hetero-normativity and non-conventional relationships <p>Shamima Akhtar/Jay Martin (Disabled Students' Officer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working on Disability History Month – events held such as mental health in rock and roll, film screenings Today is also the International Day for Disabled People Working with a ' Movember' Ambassador on how we can work together on male mental health Working with University on the Accessibility Group and a Disability Ally Scheme <p>No further questions are asked.</p>	Noted
10	AOB	None was noted.	Noted

The Chair closed the meeting at 19.30
Date of next meeting: Monday 18th March 2019