

Officer Question Time Minutes

Present: Ellie Keiller (President), Brandon Hattiloney (Representation and Resources Officer), Chris Wilkinson (Education Officer), Rose Bennett (Postgraduate Students' Officer), Izzie Nicholds (Housing and Community Officer), Natalie Cox (Activities and Development Officer), Georgie Freeman (Sports Officer), Ross Strong (Welfare Officer), Alex Binnie (Women's Officer), Fran Nash (LGBTQ Students' Officer) Nicky Woods (Ethical and Environmental Officer)

In attendance: Oli Killeen (Democracy Coordinator, Note taker), Antonia Rossiter-Eaglesfield (Student Voice Manager), Adam Sheridan (Director of Engagement), Jo Thomas (Chief Executive Officer), Lucy Gill (Communications Coordinator)

The Chair welcomed everyone and the meeting commenced at 18:10

No	ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	QUESTIONS ASKED	ACTION
1	Welcome to Officer Question Time	The Chair opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that due to technical difficulties it was not possible to show the vlogs, a resolution was taken for the Officers to give verbal updates, with the vlogs being made available online.	Noted
2	President's Vlog and Questions	The President provided a verbal progress update. Work has been completed on the Mayoral debates for the West Midlands Combined Authority Metro Mayor election to which all candidates were invited. NUS National Conference took place in late April, which I attended as lead delegate to represent the views of students. Work is also underway on the "Respect Each Other" campaign. Highlighting the need for silent study in the library during exam periods. No other questions were asked.	Noted
3	Activities and Development Officer Vlog	The Activities and Development Officer provided a verbal progress update. There is now additional locker space as the Carnival Rag office now contains more student locker space. I have also been working on the Student Groups Conference which will include some Mental Health Awareness sessions. Planning for a Societies Night 3 is underway and there have been changes made to the room booking system. No other questions were asked.	Noted
4	Education Officer Vlog and Questions	The Education Officer provided a verbal progress update. Work has been completed on the Panopto Working Group. Work is now underway on the University Race Equality Charter, the new	Noted

		<p>Academic Assessment and Feedback Policy and Higher Education Bill and how we as a Union can be involved with this process.</p> <p>Q: There are issues with a high turnover of administrative staff within the Department of Classics, Art History and Archaeology – what can be done about this?</p> <p>A: In the first instance you would need to contact your Student Reps, they will be able to bring this up with your Staff Student Committee (SSC), who will be able to sort this out for you, please come and see me if you think you don't have Student Reps for your course or department.</p> <p>Q: Can you explain a little more about the Panopto Code of Practise?</p> <p>A: This sets out the rules for staff on how Panopto should be used as a lecture catch up tool. It sets out provision for the 'acceptable alternative' principle which is used if Panopto isn't suitable. It also makes clear that materials will be available for the lifetime of your Degree. There are still concerns around copyright that need to be overcome, but this is a good step in the right direction.</p> <p>Q: Are there additional provisions in place for those with Student Support Agreements?</p> <p>A: A specific need to access lecture catch up as part of a SSA would normally be looked at an individual basis in meetings between the student and the welfare tutor. If you think this is not being done as it should contact the Welfare Officer who will be able to look into this for you.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
5	Housing and Community Vlog and Questions	<p>The Housing and Community Officer provided a verbal progress update.</p> <p>Work has been taking place on a number of events including Spring Fling, Vale Cinema and Junkbusters.</p> <p>No further questions were asked.</p>	Noted
6	Postgraduate Students' Officer Vlog and Questions	<p>The Postgraduate Students' Officer provided a verbal progress update.</p> <p>Work is underway on Postgraduate specific pre-arrival communications, and the plan to establish where Postgraduate Students sit within the University structure is ongoing. The first ever Postgraduate Ball is taking place on 22nd July. I also recently attended a conference on Postgraduate Mental Health.</p> <p>Q: There are issues in some departments with communications with postgraduates on deadlines and other important issues; is work underway to tackle this?</p> <p>A: This is something that would normally be completed in the pre-arrival process, and the induction process with the individual schools. We are also looking at taking assessment and feedback online, which should help this in the long term.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
7	Representation and Resources Officer Vlog and	<p>The Representation and Resources Officer provided a verbal progress update.</p>	Noted

	Questions	<p>Work has been completed on the Street Kitchen provision and the Guild's Green Impact submission. Work is currently underway on Grad Ball.</p> <p>No further questions were asked.</p>	
8	Sports Officer Vlog and Questions	<p>The Sports Officer provided a verbal progress update.</p> <p>The new Sports Centre will be opening on 22nd May. This Girl Can Night in will be taking place on 4th June. Planning for the Club Conference is underway. Work is underway with the Welfare Officer on Not On and Mental Health Workshops. I also attended the BUCS Inclusivity Conference.</p> <p>Q: Will it be possible to buy Sports Centre Memberships for over the Summer Period? A: We are assured that it will be possible to buy short-term memberships over the Summer months, or there are other options to annual memberships from September to September to accommodate Postgraduate students.</p> <p>Q: Will it be possible to buy a Sports Centre Membership on a month to month basis? A: No, this has been something that has been raised with UBSport before; they are not keen to do this as they think students will not pay for a membership in this way.</p> <p>Q: Is it possible to buy Alumni Sports Centre Memberships? A: Yes, this is possible. You can also buy community memberships if you are still going to be in the area following graduation.</p> <p>Q: How accessible will the 'This Girl Campaign' be, will this be as inclusive as possible? A: There are plans to run accessible sports sessions, how they will run will depend on your precise disability, those facilitating the sessions will be able to discuss precise adaptations with those who want to be involved.</p> <p>Q: What's happening with the Bournbrook Road Sports Pitches? A: These pitches have closed so they can be relocated altered to enable us to fit in netball and tennis courts. This will allow the space around the area to be utilised more affectively. The issues of lack of pitches at the moment have been raised with UBSport, but the pitches in Selly Oak are still available for you. You can still book the Metchley 3G.</p> <p>Q: I hear there will be a running track soon, is this true? A: Yes, there will be a running track on Edgbaston Park Road. This should be completed by July.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
9	Welfare Officer Vlog and Questions	<p>The Welfare Officer provided a verbal progress update.</p> <p>I recently attended the NUS National Conference as a delegate. Work on the Sports Clubs Mental Health Workshops are ongoing and the Mental Health Survey. I have also been working to raise awareness of testicular cancer. Work on the Welfare Tutor system is</p>	Noted

		<p>well underway.</p> <p>Q: Information on mental health conditions such as depression is not as readily available on the website, why is this? A: A lot of work has been done to change the information on the Guild website, although it is not possible to put information on there about every condition. Referral information is available.</p> <p>Q: Concerning the 'Not On' Campaign, a lot of BME Students can feel marginalised by this, what is being done to change this? A: This is something that we are hoping to change, the Mental Health Framework motion that passed at NUS National Conference will now have a culturally competent element within it. Work is ongoing on the Race Equality Charter is ongoing although this has an institutional approach. It is also important that BME and liberation groups engage with the process.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
10	Part-Time Officer Updates	<p>Fran Nash – LGBTQ Students’ Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning a Vale Pride event in conjunction with the Welfare Officer <p>Rik Sowden – Mature and Part-Time Students Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working on a returning to study workshops to provide more support for those returning to study after long periods away <p>Alex Binnie – Women’s Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended NUS National Conference as a delegate Women’s Conference/ARAF Conference Work with the Women’s Association <p>Max Seidler – Satellite Sites Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working to improve mental health awareness and provision on satellite sites <p>Nicky Woods – Ethical and Environmental Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning underway for a food waste film screening 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
11	“Your Ideas” – Mandate Updates	<p>It was noted that the final cycle of ‘Your Ideas’ will be online from Monday 8th May for 2 weeks. All mandate updates are also available online.</p>	Noted
12	NUS National Conference Report	<p>The NUS National Conference took place in Brighton on 25th - 27th April. All delegates voted in line with currently constituted Guild Policy. The Guild sent 9 delegates to represent the views of students at the Conference. Delegates were elected with a significant increase on turnout from last year.</p> <p>The following individuals were elected to lead the National Union of Students (NUS) in the year ahead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shakira Martin (President) Emily Chapman (Vice President, Further Education) Amatey Doku (Vice President, Higher Education) Rob Young (Vice President, Society and Citizenship) Izzy Lenga (Vice President, Welfare) Ali Milani (Vice President, Union Development) 	Noted

		<p>The Guild took 4 motions to Conference, these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health, a National Culturally Competent Framework – Passed • Free Periods – Passed • National Postgraduate Representation – Not heard – out of time • Tackling Anti-Semitism – Not heard – out of time <p>A full report, including voting records will be made available in due course</p>	
13	Report from the Board of Trustees	<p>The Trustee Board has ultimate responsibility for overseeing the strategic direction of the Guild of Students, and for ensuring the Guild is and remains legally and financially compliant.</p> <p>The Board Consists of 7 Officer Trustees, 4 Student Trustees and 7 External Trustees with a wide range of skills to provide the best oversight and to make sure that the organisation is managed effectively.</p> <p>Some key highlights from meetings so far include:</p> <p>September 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of new Guild of Students Byelaws • Approval of work on the new Street Kitchen Venue <p>October 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the External Audit Report <p>November 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the Guild's IT infrastructure investment <p>January 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of an updated version of the Guild's risk register <p>March 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the Officer Action Plans for the remainder of the year <p>April 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received the news that the Guild had been awarded the 'Investors in People' Silver Accreditation <p>The full presentation of the Trustee Board's activities over the last year will be made available online, along with these minutes</p>	Noted
14	Discussion: Street Kitchen Feedback	<p>There was a discussion about the new Street Kitchen food venue at the Guild, the following comments were made.</p> <p>The increased availability of Vegan food options is very good and is to be applauded.</p> <p>Q: Have changes been made to the usual portion sizes since the opening of Street Kitchen as they appear to be smaller than before? A: There were inconsistencies in the portion sizes in the beginning as</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>both the menu and the staff members were new; these have now been corrected as all the staff members have now received comprehensive training.</p> <p>Q: What are the opening times of Street Kitchen, has it been closing earlier than it is supposed to? A: Normal opening hours are 11am – 8pm daily. It may close earlier if they have sold out of food and no more is available.</p> <p>Q: Can additional training be provided to staff on the allergen content of the menu? There is varying knowledge of this amongst different members of staff A: There is a comprehensive document available that details the allergen content of all the food provided, we will work to make sure all staff are fully aware of this.</p> <p>Q: Is it possible to provide more information on the spiciness of the food options A: Yes, this is something that we can work on.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Feedback to be relayed</p> <p>To be worked on</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>Allocation of Grad Ball Tickets</p>	<p>There was a discussion about Grad Ball and how the tickets were allocated.</p> <p>Q: Is it appropriate for Guild Officers to use their personal social media accounts to comment on the allocation process that could be construed as mocking students? A: Personal social media accounts remain just that, Officers are entitled to use them. As long as the comments don't bring the Guild into disrepute then they should stand. Many of the comments received were abusive and this is not acceptable. Individuals with concerns can raise these directly.</p> <p>Q: Will disciplinary action be taken against students posting abusive comments online? A: The Guild has, and will continue to have a Zero Tolerance Policy against members, Officers and Staff. Disciplinary action will be taken against individuals identified as positing abusive messages online.</p> <p>Q: Will Officers be forfeiting their tickets and allowing other students to attend? A: Officers are contractually obliged to attend events of this nature. Whilst they are admitted to events, they are not given physical tickets, so if Officers were not to attend, it would not mean that any more tickets for students would be made available as a result.</p> <p>Q: Have you considered running Grad Ball over consecutive days to allow more students to attend? A: To run events of this scale is a big challenge, to do so might put the Guild at greater financial risk, so we would need to think carefully about this. Although demand for tickets is high, it may not be high enough to justify more than one day.</p> <p>Q: Is it possible for the Guild to subsidise tickets for those that can't afford them?</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>A: There is no official scheme that exists, but we wouldn't want to prevent someone from attending if this was the case. There would need to be some proof of financial hardship, but this is something we could look into if there was a genuine reason.</p> <p>Q: Would it be possible for students to work for entry into Grad Ball, as occurs at may festivals</p> <p>A: The majority of staff that work at Grad Ball are students, the Guild also has a wide range of jobs for students on campus to help them earn additional money. You can contact the Jobs, Skills and Volunteering Department for more information.</p> <p>Q: It can be difficult sometimes for students with disabilities to buy tickets using a computer what could be done about this?</p> <p>A: In previous years, students had to queue to buy physical tickets in some cases for many hours; this is of course not very accessible; in which case bringing them online is more accessible in a way. However, it is possible for individuals to buy more than one tickets, so a suggestion may be to ask a friend to purchase a ticket on behalf of another.</p> <p>Q: Is it possible for carers to be admitted to Grad Ball without buying a ticket?</p> <p>A: This is not something that happens at the moment, but would be something we could look into. I will have to discuss this with the Venues Team and get back to you.</p> <p>Q: Why were tickets not released on the 24th April at the beginning of term?</p> <p>A: A week of promotion was considered beneficial for the majority of students to know about when the tickets were released, we also wanted to make sure the majority of students had loans in at this time, which is why tickets were released a week later.</p> <p>Q: Why isn't the sale of Grad Ball Tickets reserved only to final year students?</p> <p>A: 700 priority passes were given out to final year students in advance of the ticket release. Restricting ticket sales would prevent those going on a year abroad or a year in industry from attending with friends, which could be unfair. The vast majority of tickets are obtained by final year students.</p> <p>Q: If students can purchase more than one ticket, is there information gathered on how many went to non-students?</p> <p>A: Without counting the individuals in and out of the event, it would not be possible to know what that figure is.</p> <p>Q: What can be done to prevent ticket touting?</p> <p>A: The majority of ticket resales occur on the Fab 'n' Fresh Facebook Page. Work is done to remove posts selling tickets at the above market rate. Another option would be to up the price of the ticket and to link tickets to ID, although this would cause more problems than it might solve.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>To be looked into</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
16	Any further	<p>Q: How can students call for a Vote of No Confidence in an Officer</p>	<p>Noted</p>

	<p>Questions</p>	<p>now that Guild Council no longer exists?</p> <p>A: Votes of No Confidence in Officers can be triggered in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Passing of 9 Reprimands or 3 Censures through 'Your Ideas' or; • The receipt of a petition calling for a Vote of No Confidence signed by 3% of Guild membership <p>10% of the total Guild membership needs to vote in the Vote of No Confidence in order to be considered. Votes will pass by a simple majority.</p> <p>In all Votes of No Confidence, reasons why you think the Officer has failed in their political/representation role need to be provided. In all cases the Officer will have the right of appeal or response.</p>	
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The Chair closed the meeting at 19:45

Date of Next Meeting – 17:30 – Wednesday 7th June 2017