

Officer Question Time Minutes

Present: Ellie Keiller (President), Brandon Hattiloney (Representation and Resources Officer), Chris Wilkinson (Education Officer), Izzie Nicholds (Housing and Community Officer), Rose Bennett (Postgraduate Students' Officer), Natalie Cox (Activities and Development Officer), Georgie Freeman (Sports Officer), Ross Strong (Welfare Officer), Rik Sowden (Mature and Part-Time Students' Officer)

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

The Chair welcomed everyone and the meeting commenced at 18.10

No	ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	QUESTIONS ASKED	ACTION
1	Welcome to Officer Question Time	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone in the room to Officer Question Time. The Chair asked if everyone in the room would like to see the vlogs or just go straight into questions with verbal updates.</p> <p>A vote was taken, and the vlogs were not played. It was noted that they are all online for members to view if they should wish to.</p>	Noted
2	President's Vlog and Questions	<p>A verbal update was provided. The President has been working on hosting West Midlands Metro Mayor Candidates at the Guild – these have been well attended.</p> <p>Much work has also been going on to campaign on the Higher Education and Brexit Bills that are both currently working through Parliament.</p> <p>No further questions were asked of the President</p>	Noted
3	Activities and Development Officer Vlog	<p>Q: Are there any plans to hold more live music events? A: This came out of the 'More live Music at the Guild' Idea that passed last year. There are plans to run more as the others have been well received. The option is available for groups to book out Guild rooms if they wish to. The ADO-elect is also very keen on the idea, so I am sure this will continue.</p>	Noted
4	Education Officer Vlog and Questions	<p>A verbal update was provided by the Education Officer.</p> <p>Work is underway on the University's Digital Education Strategy – it will detail where the University should be and where it is going. There has been a lot of work done on Panopto which will feed into this.</p> <p>There is also a paper going through the University on Feedback and Assessment – although this is currently confidential, but good things are on the way.</p>	Noted

		<p>Q: Can you provide an update on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)/HE Bill?</p> <p>A: The Higher Education Bill is currently working in way through the House of Lords – there have been many amendments made including taking international students out of immigration figures, and asking universities to automatically register their students on the electoral register, overturning current Government Policy. It also looks as though the TEF will not be used as a marker to increase tuition fees.</p> <p>A statement from Officers will be released shortly on what the next steps are, and what will happen going forward.</p>	Noted
5	Housing and Community Vlog and Questions	<p>A verbal update was provided by the HCO.</p> <p>A number of 'Not on' Workshops have taken place, there was also a Student Safety Awareness Day on 15th February, and there is an RA event coming soon – The Vale Easter Egg Hunt – taking place on 22nd March.</p> <p>Q: Can an update be provided on the changes being made to the RA Scheme?</p> <p>A: We are looking at ways the RA scheme can be changed, so it can effectively respond to shifting demand from students in Halls. Meetings are currently underway with key staff in the organisation to get this process underway.</p> <p>Q: Can an update be provided on junk busters?</p> <p>A: Junk Busters is a scheme organised in partnership with the University of Birmingham that gives students the opportunity to donate any unwanted goods to the British Heart Foundation. Some of the money collected will now go to fund academics at the University of Birmingham who are researching the causes of heart disease in an effort to find a cure.</p> <p>Q: I have heard that you have recently influenced local policy, how has this been done?</p> <p>A: A lot of work has been going on to campaign against additional licencing requirements on Houses of Multiple Occupancy that directly impact on students. I worked on a statement with Officers from other Birmingham Unions, which was sent to the local Council. They have now decided that these changes will not take place.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
6	Postgraduate Students' Officer Vlog and Questions	<p>A verbal update was provided by the Postgraduate Students' Officer – work has been done on pre-arrival communication for Postgraduate students, Postgraduates and Mental Health, the PRES and PTES (Postgraduate Experience Surveys)</p> <p>Q: Can you provide more information on the Postgraduate Ball?</p> <p>A: There is a Postgraduate Students' Ball happening on the 22nd July in the Great Hall at the University. This is the first time this has included both Taught and Research students.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
7	Representation and Resources Officer Vlog and Questions	<p>A verbal update was given by the Representation and Resources Officer.</p> <p>Work has been recently undertaken on Guild Elections, the opening</p>	Noted

		<p>of Street Kitchen and Go Green Week which was the week before Officer Elections.</p> <p>Q: Is there any plan to expand the Meal Plan to Street Kitchen? A: That is something that can be looked into, if there is a strong demand there from students. A suggestion would be to submit an idea through Your Ideas, so there is a mandate there for this to happen.</p> <p>Q: How has the launch of the Street Kitchen been received so far? A: The feedback so far has been generally positive. There are plans to place some marketing on the Building about the new venue to bring customers into the building. Our Communications Team have put out messaging on this, but this has been overshadowed by the elections communications.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
8	Sports Officer Vlog and Questions	<p>A verbal update was provided by the Sports Officer</p> <p>Funding has been received from the 'This Girl Can' Campaign to put on women-only sports sessions. A successful Sports Forum was recently held, which encompassed a Sports Officer Hustings which was well attended. Planning for Sports Ball is underway and work has been undertaken on Inclusivity in sport, working with other Part-Time Officers.</p> <p>The Sports Centre is still not open, but there is a meeting about that tomorrow (17th March) so hopefully more information will be available soon.</p> <p>No further questions were asked.</p>	Noted
9	Welfare Officer Vlog and Questions	<p>A verbal update was provided by the Welfare Officer.</p> <p>Sexual Health Awareness and testing was available last week when Umbrella were in the Guild. Planning is underway to incorporate Mind Your Head week into term 3, focussing on student wellbeing during this stressful period.</p> <p>Q: Are welfare workshops available to Sports Clubs? A: These are available if Sports Clubs request them. There is specific information for sports clubs on Mental Health. BUCS are currently working with Student Minds to roll out mental health training to all involved clubs.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
11	Part-Time Officer Updates	<p>Rik Sowden (Mature and Part-Time Students' Officer)</p> <p>Currently working on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of Drop in events with Mature and Part-Time Students • Responding to the consultation on Part-Time Masters' Funding • Working with Library Services to provide workshops on students returning to study 	Noted
12	"Your Ideas" – Mandate Updates	<p>Officer Action Plans will soon be being placed online so students can track how Officers are progressing with their manifesto pledges. A part of this will include a progress tracker.</p> <p>There is a plan that mandates via Your Ideas will be tracked in the</p>	Noted

		<p>same way. Hopefully this will help with closing the feedback loop.</p> <p>Q: Currently the 'What we're working on pages' contain out of date information – is this likely to be updated soon?</p> <p>A: Yes – this is something we are aware of, and will be looking to update over the next few weeks.</p>	Noted
14	Discussion: Officer Elections 2017 - Feedback	<p>This discussion was introduced by the Representation and Resources Officer. It was noted that this Officer Elections period was the most successful ever, with 8, 507 votes. Those present were invited to give feedback on the process.</p> <p>Q: The Societies incentive worked really well last year, is there any particular reason why this wasn't brought back.</p> <p>A: This was looked into before the elections process began, and it was decided that as an engagement method, it wasn't as effective as others. This was an opportunity for us to try new things and see how they worked, even if they had not been done before.</p> <p>Q: There were times when people may have wanted to make complaints but couldn't because they didn't know how to, how do you explain this?</p> <p>A: The process and related documents were made available online via the Election FAQs page; however this may not have been made clear enough. This is something that can be looked into for next year. If anyone did want more advice Student Voice were on hand to assist in person if necessary.</p> <p>Q: Could more information be provided on exactly the type of behaviour would constitute behaviour where a complaint could be made?</p> <p>A: All elections regulations were made available online; however these often cover how the election should be conducted. All current University and Guild Policy is active when elections take place, so any breach of these would also constitute a breach of election rules, and a complaint could be made about this if it is believed necessary.</p> <p>Q: Did any candidate take up assistance offered on the Candidates with a Disability Support Policy?</p> <p>A: In terms of use of the policy this year, it was used during the term 1 elections; however no requests for this assistance were received in term 2. All candidates were made aware of this policy during the training provided.</p> <p>Q: Is there any reason why campaigning and voting was a week long and began and ended on a Thursday?</p> <p>A: This was discussed at length, there was a view that we wanted to give candidates the opportunity to campaign over a weekend, but didn't want to lengthen the physical campaigning period too much. This is a discussion that will happen every year amongst the Officer Team.</p> <p>Q: There is no doubt that candidates were well supported, there were some concerns amongst the media groups about some of the</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>turn-around times and timescales, which were slightly squashed. Can you explain the Free and Fair Use list changes? A: In terms of the media groups, thank you to them all, they worked really hard throughout the process and their input was invaluable. It is understandable that there were concerns here, the Guild too was under tight timeframes, and this couldn't be helped. There is a balancing act also to be had with Freely Available Items, we would always ask that students use their sensible judgement on this issue</p> <p>Q: How successful was the society endorsement process? A: We had two groups endorse candidates, this was to be expected, but the feedback we had from those groups was that the process was useful and easy to do. The process that was created was very robust</p> <p>Q: Are there any reasons you can think of why Postgraduate turnout was so low compared with last year? A: There are a number of reasons why this may be the case, the role of a Full-Time Postgraduate Officer was newly created, but it is possible that the Guild isn't relevant to Postgraduate Students all year round – this may be something we could combat with a Postgraduate only incentive</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
15	NUS National Conference	<p>This update was given by the President</p> <p>8 Delegates were elected to attend the NUS National Conference in April, taking place in Brighton. In all 9 delegates will attend, including the President as delegation leader.</p> <p>As the elections were held at the same time as the wider Officer Team, turnout for NUS elections saw an 833% increase on last year.</p> <p>4 motions will be taken to Conference. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling Antisemitism in the National Movement • Free Periods – to lobby for Sanitary products to be included in the NUS purchasing consortium • National Mental Health Framework – To create a National Mental Health Accreditation Scheme that Unions can work towards, similar to that of NUS Green Impact • National Postgraduate Representation – To create the role of a National Postgraduate Students' Officer within the NUS <p>Q: Did any of the policies not reach quorum and what will happen with these? A: All of the proposed motions will be being taken to Conference as they were all passed via democratic structures of the Guild of Students.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
16	Any further Questions	No additional questions were asked.	

The Chair closed the meeting at 19:00
Date of Next Meeting – 6pm, Thursday 4th May