

Officer Question Time Minutes

Present: Brandon Hattiloney (Representation and Resources Officer), Ellie Keiller (President), Chris Wilkinson (Education Officer), Rose Bennett (Postgraduate Students' Officer), Izzie Nicholds (Housing and Community Officer), Ross Strong (Welfare Officer), Georgie Freeman (Sports Officer), Awati Mohammed (International Students' Officer), Fran Nash (LGBTQ Students' Officer), Nicky Woods (Ethical and Environmental Officer), Alex Binnie (Women's Officer), Kiki Hassen (Disabled Students' Officer), Maurycy Cytarzynski (Community Action Officer)

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

Apologies: Natalie Cox (Activities and Development 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	The Representation and Resources Officer, acting as Chair for this meeting, welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was explained that Officer Question Time is the forum where students can ask questions of their Officers and hold them to account for what they do.	Noted
2	President's Vlog and Questions	<p>The President's Vlog was played.</p> <p>In an update to the video, the President informed the room that the Healthcare factsheet had gone out to around 7,000 students – so they could be informed of the healthcare services available in the local area, and how to register for a GP.</p> <p>Meetings with Birmingham City Council have also taken place to discuss how students can get more involved with politics, including whether it might be possible to have a polling station on the vale.</p> <p>Q: Was sufficient training given to staff members working the societies fair at the end of Welcome Week. There were incidents of people with disabilities having difficulties with the one-way system put in place for that event.</p> <p>A: If students did experience certain difficulties with the one way system, apologies for that. It may have been a miscommunication. I understand that staff were briefed better on the second day, so hopefully those issues were resolved.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
3	Activities and Development Vlog and Questions	<p>The ADO's vlog was played.</p> <p>It was noted that the ADO had sent her apologies to the meetings as there was a Mega Forum happening at this time. It was agreed</p>	Noted

		<p>that questions from the meeting would be passed on for a response, or answered by other Officers in the meeting.</p> <p>Q: Why was a meeting of Officer Question Time planned at the same time as Mega Forum? A: This was an unexpected oversight and was not intentional. Care will be taken in future to ensure this doesn't happen again.</p> <p>Q: There have been a number of issues with room bookings at the moment, what is happening with this? A: The staff member who is responsible for this area of work has recently left the organisation. This is a big job which has now been shared amongst other staff, they are doing their best in difficult circumstances. Any specific issues about room bookings will be raised with the ADO,</p> <p>Q: Will it be possible for societies to offer a free membership if they wish to? A: (Given by RRO) This is something that I am unable to answer personally, but I will pass on that question to the ADO, who will be able to give a fuller response.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted – will pass on question for response</p>
4	Education Vlog and Question	<p>The EO's vlog was played</p> <p>Q: You mentioned Panopto in your vlog, but are you aware that it is not available in all modules? A: Yes. This is something that I am aware of, and there are a number of reasons for this including lecturers IP rights, lecturers not knowing how to use the system, or the fact that some lecturers have seminars with a high level of student participation, which are harder to record. I am working with the University and the student reps, to make sure other systems are in place.</p> <p>Q: Where can I go if I am not satisfied with my course? A: There are a number of different ways to seek help, in the first instance, I would suggest speaking to your Student Reps, as they sit on Student Staff Committees and can work with you to resolve issues. Alternatively, if you have formal complaints to make, Guild Advice should also be able to help.</p> <p>Q: Can some more information be provided as to why all lectures are not available on Panopto? A: There are some concerns amongst some academic staff about their performance rights, which the university has no right to, as opposed to their academic rights. There may also be a number of technical reasons, as previously discussed. I am working with the Student Representation System Advisory Board to look at how Student Reps can champion this as a study aid.</p> <p>Q: Would it be possible to work with the university to get an Evernote account for use by students as a study aid? A: This is not something that I am familiar with, but it would most likely be a negotiation between the university and the company. This is something that could be looked into.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
5	Housing and	The HCO's vlog was played	

	Community Vlog and Questions	<p>Q: What's an invisible rape alarm? (noted from video)</p> <p>A: That is an error, it should say invisible pens and rape alarms as two separate items.</p> <p>Q: Why were there no trigger warning played before the Not On campaign video that was put out recently?</p> <p>A: This was probably an oversight, we will take your feedback on board for future reference</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
6	Representation and Resources Vlog and Questions	<p>The RRO's vlog was played</p> <p>Q: Groups have been informed today that NUS Liberation Conferences will be elected via a cross campus ballot – this might create difficulties about safe campaigning. How will this be addressed?</p> <p>A: If anyone has any particular concerns about this, they are welcome email me; but the cross campus ballot, opens up the election to those that may not be a member of the association, but they would still need to self-define. It is not expected to change the way you campaign, as this will still mostly be done within the safe spaces.</p> <p>Q: Can the accessible toilets within the building be unlocked, so people with disabilities don't have to ask to go to the toilet?</p> <p>A: Yes, this is something that can be looked into, however it should be noted that there are reasons during nights out for example, that they need to be locked.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
7	Postgraduate Students' Officer Vlog and Questions	<p>The PGSO's vlog was played.</p> <p>In an update from the video, it was noted that Welcome Week was a great success, a number of Postgraduate specific welcome events, including a postgraduate pub quiz mixer that was attended by over 100 people. Long may this continue.</p> <p>Q: What work is being done to address the lack of study space available for postgraduate taught students?</p> <p>A: As a PGT student, this is something that I am aware of, and am keen to work on. I will be working on this throughout my term. There were 9,000 PGT students last year, so this is a problem that needs to be addressed.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
8	Sports Vlog and Questions	<p>The SO's vlog was played.</p> <p>Q: Are there any plans to work on encouraging students with disabilities and active participation in sport?</p> <p>A: There are plans underway at the moment to run a "Get active on campus" campaign, and disability sport something that I am keen to push for. I am currently working with the Disabled Students' Officer on this.</p> <p>Q: When is the new Sports Centre due to be completed?</p> <p>A: All being well, it is expected to open on 1st December 2016</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
8	Welfare Vlog and Questions	<p>The WO's vlog was played.</p> <p>Q: When is World Mental Health Day</p>	<p>Noted</p>

		<p>A: 10th October</p> <p>Q: In a recent Tab article on Mental Health and institutional responses to tackling it, the University of Birmingham was ranked 20/30. What is being done about this?</p> <p>A: I would question the journalistic integrity of the Tab. However, there is a serious point to be made around the support offered on campus. It is widely known that the university could do better. I am working on undertaking a piece of research around the number of counsellors per head here and at other universities. I am to take this to the Director of Student Services. There does need to be further work done before this can happen, rather than relying on the Tab.</p>	Noted
9	Part-Time Officer Introduction	<p>The Part-Time Officers introduced themselves.</p> <p>Q: What do the Part-Time Officers do?</p> <p>A: Each of the Part-Time Officers has their own remit, that can be a lot more specific, for example the International students Officer, represents all international students at the Guild and the Community Action Officer focuses on local and National campaigns. All of the Officer biographies are available on the Guild website.</p>	Noted
10	Discussion: What does the Guild stand for?	<p>The "What we stand for" document was presented for discussion and a video was played. The Representation and Resources Officer introduced the document.</p> <p>This was reviewed based on responses from students during Welcome Week – over six hundred ballot box responses, 1,200 coin box responses and 92 whiteboard responses. Suggestions are still being accepted. It is an update of the old beliefs and commitments document that was overseen by Guild Council. It is hoped that the new document will be more open and accessible.</p> <p>The document has been split down into sections based on the main issues that were raised from the consultation. They include: Equality and Diversity; Jobs and Employability; Politics and Campaigning and Student Opportunities.</p> <p>These overarching topics cover a wide range of topics including: animal welfare, mental health awareness housing, and opposition to Prevent. The full document will be placed online during the first cycle of Your Ideas for student approval.</p> <p>Q: Will there be further opportunities to amend this document?</p> <p>A: Yes, the document was drafted so that it could be approved in the first cycle of Your Ideas but any student can submit amendments during any other cycle of Your Ideas.</p> <p>Q: Will this document be placed online, as students don't really have any knowledge of the Beliefs and Commitments?</p> <p>A: Yes, this is why the review was done. It was noted that we need to make it more student friendly and raise awareness of it, so that students can have an input into the strategic direction of the Guild.</p> <p>Q: Will this document be made available in a variety of different</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>formats?</p> <p>A: Yes, this is something that can be worked on and will provide good feedback for the website update</p>	
11	Introduction to "Your Ideas"	<p>"Your Ideas" is the versatile online demographic platform that allows any student to submit ideas on issues that matter to them.</p> <p>Ideas that are submitted go forward to the Assessment Group to check them for legal, reputational or financial issues.</p> <p>Ideas are then voted, and commented on for a period of two weeks. If an idea is voted on by 0.5% of the student population then Officers have responsibility for implementing the ideas.</p> <p>There will be 5 cycles this year, the first cycle will be open between the 10th- 21st October.</p> <p>Q: Will the cycle information be placed online? A: Yes, this will be being done shortly.</p> <p>Q: If I submit an idea, can I be involved in making it a reality? A: Yes, absolutely – this is a student led system, so it's really great if you want to get involved. If it passes, then we will work with you on how you want it to work.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

12	Introduction to Guild Elections	<p>The Autumn Term elections open for nominations on the 7th October at 10am. They will remain open until Wednesday 19th October at 12 noon.</p> <p>There are number of posts being elected including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mature and Part-Time Students' Officer By-election- The Mature and Part-Time Students Officer represents the interests of their students at a Guild and University level and campaigns on matters that will matter to them- Assessment Group representative roles – These members play a key role in the democratic function of the Guild, and will discuss all ideas submissions before comment and voting- Chair of Officer Question Time – This person is responsible for chairing all meetings of Officer Question Time and will work with the Officer Team to formulate the agenda- NUS Section and Liberation Conferences Delegate - These Delegates will represent the University at NUS Conferences for Liberation (Black Students, LGBT+, Trans, Women's and Disabled) and Sections Conferences (Mature and Part-Time, International, Postgraduate)- Student Equality and Diversity Committee Members – This Committee looks at the Guild's responses to issues relating to Equality and Diversity, focusing on issues such as inclusive curricula, accessibility, student parents and carers- Ethical and Environmental Committee Member - This Committee manages the Guild's responses to environmental issues, and will also look after the Guild's entry into the NUS Green Impact Gold Award.- Appointments Panel Member – This committee meets on the vacancy of a Trustee and will select and recruit new members to the Board. <p>The RA elections will be open for nominations between Friday 21st October, 10am and Wednesday 2nd November, 12 noon. These elections are to elect members of a Residence Association in University Halls. They have the job of encouraging social interaction between the residents.</p>	Noted Noted
13	Any further Questions	<p>Q: What is happening with Castle Cars, they were at Fresher's Fair, but there have been problems with them, so why are we still them? A: This is a question of contracts, we will be meeting them soon to talk about this, but we recognise there have been problems with them in the past</p> <p>Q: Are there any plans to expand the Gluten free options in Joe's Bar and also at engagement events like this? A: We are working on offering alternatives, there are a number of implications, cost is one example, which will need to be considered.</p> <p>Q: Are coaches being booked to attend the NUS National Demo, will there be an accessible coach, and has the ramp weight limit for electrical wheelchairs been considered? A: Coaches are being organised, although they haven't been booked yet. If you have particular requirements we can work with</p>	Noted Noted Noted

		you to take this into consideration. Q: Is the Guild planning to run demo prep sessions? A: We are working with the NUS to make sure that all students who attend will be safe. We will look into working with external organisations such as Green and Black Cross to provide these services. For insurance purposes, the Guild can accept no liability for those arrested for legitimate reasons.	Noted
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The Chair closed the meeting at 19:45