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**Present:**

Scrutiny Panel Members: Anamika Varghese (AH), Madi Hamblin (MH), Sam Hadley (SH), Sukhdip Nagra (SN), Anastasis Mauriac (AM)

Officers: Robin Hayward, Trans and Non-Binary Students’ Officer (RH)

**In Attendance:**

Core Staff: Jane Baston (Senior Voice Coordinator), Scott Dawson (Student Voice and Representation Manager, Minute-Taker)

**Trigger/Content Warnings:** N/A

Time	Discussion	Notes
10:00	Introductions	<p>The Panel Introduced themselves and welcomed RH to the session. MH outlined that the panel would review RH’s report and then ask questions from the panel.</p> <p>There were no pre-submitted questions from students.</p> <p>RH introduced themselves as an MA Computer Science student (pronouns: They/Them).</p>
10:03	Scrutiny Panel Feedback	<p>MH: Noted made fantastic progress in RH’s work and that RH was clearly doing what they could to create Inclusive and safe spaces for trans and non-binary students.</p> <p>Thought noted one event RH had looked to run (safe space socials) had been cancelled, the second was well attended and is a good sign for student engagement.</p> <p>Noted anonymous form was very helpful for students to share thoughts and views on their experiences.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>MH: Noted the positive work around Trans Day of Remembrance and general support and collaboration with others throughout.</p>
10:10	Scrutiny Panel Questions	<p><b>MH asked: The Gender-Neutral Toilet Plan seems very guild-centric, you mentioned in your manifesto the importance of urging the university to be sensitive to the needs of trans and non-binary people. Has there been any progress regarding gender neutral toilets and cataloguing them in the University?</b></p> <p>RH: Limited progress, was suggested as an idea but not developed with the University currently. Discussed an option on flags for relevant toilet spaces to be included on the UoB app, noting Gender Neutral Toilet locations.</p> <p>RH: Noted that the University does have an online list of accessible toilet spaces that can be shared and accessed, but it's not included within the app from a digital student accessibility perspective.</p> <p>Noting RH needs to follow up with University contacts to make effective developments. But not had time to progress.</p> <p><b>MH asked: Regarding the toilets in the Guild, where is this at now?</b></p> <p>RH: Discussion in two weeks with Guild Facilities Manager, idea has progressed within the Democratic System for development. Include the Welfare and Community Officer and Facilities Manager. And there have been ongoing informal conversations with the facilities manager already.</p> <p>RH: Wished that this work had happened sooner, but noted plans are in development in the Guild to create more accessible gender neutral toilet spaces and interested to see where this goes next.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p><b>MH asked: One of your aims is to properly and continually seek feedback – what does this kind of feedback entail?</b></p> <p>RH: Didn't have capacity to chase things this semester. Discussed that last year RH ran meal out events for students. They have reached out in trans spaces to promote feedback opportunities. And have discussed in those spaces ongoing events in the University/Guild which may be of interest.</p> <p>RH: Has also done anonymous google forms and has promoted on FB and Instagram to allow students to share thoughts and views on their work. Has discussed that previous winter meal events have been created due to this feedback from students.</p> <p><b>MH Asked: Are these communications on personal Instagram or Guild communications?</b></p> <p>RH: Mostly personal, feedback form will be going out through the Guild if possible. Aware that guild surveys have to be created by Guild Staff which can slow things down for some activity. Although noting longer term projects can be done through the Guild System and it is helpful.</p> <p>MH: Noted RH openness and thoughts on their ideas throughout this work.</p> <p><b>MH Asked: In your manifesto you mention you want to education people about trans and non-binary students – the 'lets talk trans' event contributes to this, but is there plans to educate about non-binary people?</b></p> <p>RH: Noted that it would be great to do more collaborative projects. A lot of prep has to be done to ensure informed conversations with students on this can take place.</p> <p>RH will try to develop this work in the future, RH also discussed that there are differences between Trans and Non-</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>Binary experiences which are need to be considered for events like these.</p> <p><b>MH Asked: You mention discussing important topics with the Vice Chancellor and remaining tied to the relevant University Departments, have you made any progress with this and how?</b></p> <p>RH: Mostly speak with University EDI lead – who they have met this semester through an induction event with the Part-Time Officers and to discuss the university complaint process, to help trans/non-binary students feel more comfortable with submitting complaints.</p> <p>RH: Wanted to explore with the University how trans and non-binary access to these forms could be made more accessible.</p> <p>It is likely to be quite limited and the University may not able to be more open/transparent on the process, RH noted due to risk of University receiving a large number of complaints is they made the system more broadly accessible.</p> <p>RH: Is working to push university to do a statement and recognise trans day of visibility.</p> <p><b>MH Asked: Do you have any further successes or opportunities you'd like to highlight?</b></p> <p>RH: Is pushing for the Guild trans solidarity statement, which feels important to have in the current political climate. But it hasn't been published yet. Involves a wider number of individuals. Noted this is on students minds through vigil and trans/non-binary safe space activity.</p> <p><b>MH Asked: Do you have any feedback for the panel on the session?</b></p> <p>RH: Nothing to feedback, feels comfortable and able to share feedback to the panel. And feels the panel are able to</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		questions as needed.  MH: Appreciated this comment and thanked RH for their transparency and quality of response for the panel.
10:19	Student Submitted Questions	No student questions were submitted.
10:21	Session Ended	MH ended the session.

**Present:**

Scrutiny Panel Members: Anamika Varghese (AH), Madi Hamblin (MH), Sam Hadley (SH), Sukhdip Nagra (SN), Anastasis Mauriac (AM)

Officers: Joe Hill, Education Officer (JH)

**In Attendance:**

Core Staff: Jane Baston (Senior Voice Coordinator, Minute-Taker), Scott Dawson (Student Voice and Representation Manager)

**Trigger/Content Warnings:**

Time	Discussion	Notes
11:00	Introductions	<p>The Panel introduced themselves and welcomed JH to the meeting.</p> <p>AM outlined how the session was going to run. They would give some feedback on JH's report and then ask some question from the panel. We'll then do questions from students. There will be space at the end for questions from JH.</p> <p>JH introduced himself and his role.</p>
11:05	Scrutiny Panel Feedback	<p>AM commended JH on his work throughout the first Semester.</p> <p>AM commented that the Reps system has been really efficient this year with lots of communications about the system.</p> <p>AM noted the EDI training that has been provided for Reps and the development of the core training.</p> <p>AM commented on the structure of the report and the information provided.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>AM noted the number of projects that JH had been working on and that it was very impressive number of projects</p>
	<p>Scrutiny Panel Questions</p>	<p>AM asked about what was discussed at University Education Committee regarding reducing assessment load.</p> <p>JH noted that reducing assessment loads is a continuous conversation. It has been one of the factors that lead to the changes in the academic calendar.</p> <p>JH commented that the University is collecting data on this. We know that Birmingham over-assesses students.</p> <p>JH mentioned that they've been picking up the quality of feedback with annual reviews. Often Rep feedback notes issues to do with quality which requires more drilling down into the issues.</p> <p>JH noted that Departments don't necessarily monitor if policies are being followed and implemented. There is a lot of work to be done to ensure that these are done.</p> <p>AM asked if the University is creating system to track this and the implemented.</p> <p>JH updated that the University has been creating guides for academics and Departments.</p> <p>JH noted that the Reps System is being used to help facilitate this.</p> <p>JH noted that Reps help with validating if improvements have been made to feedback and how much feedback students are receiving, within the bounds of the confidentiality.</p> <p>JH is picking up places in the University where students are not getting enough feedback or if there's high enough quality feedback.</p>



Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>JH updated that he's organised a Q&amp;A with the PVC for Education in January for Reps and other students to ask questions of her.</p> <p>AM asked about the contributions to the Mid and End of Year Evaluation forms. Are there plans to encourage students to fill these forms out?</p> <p>AM noted that not many students fill these forms out and if there's low engagement with them how can we use that data.</p> <p>JH noted that it's a fair question. There are general comms encouraging student to engage with those forms.</p> <p>JH has been working with BL at SEEG to get lecturers to give time for people to fill the forms out within lectures and seminars as this tends to result in better engagement than an email.</p> <p>JH updated that there was about a 50% response rate for the mid-year evaluation forms. This does vary department to department. It does mean that there should be useful information from this.</p> <p>JH is currently pushing for some changes to the End of Module Forms. Particularly around open text but we want to allow for the best comparison that we can across the year.</p> <p>AM asked if JH could expand on Education Committee – what it does and what decisions were made there.</p> <p>JH noted that Education Committee doesn't have a huge amount of power due to changes to the Democratic System this year. The Committee made the decision to delegate power to the Voice Team for the Academic Engagement Fund to make it more responsive and quicker when Reps apply.</p> <p>JH mentioned that most of the Committee meeting is a dialogue with the Reps.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>JH brought issues around the academic calendar and the Rep Team brought some questions around recruitment.</p> <p>JH is planning for this to be a space for discussion where Reps can look at how they want to move forward on certain issues.</p> <p>AM noted that it sounds like a good space to have for communication with Reps.</p> <p>AM asked about JH's first manifesto aim. She congratulated JH on the number of Reps that had been recruited.</p> <p>AM asked if there was a plan to get Reps to complete their training?</p> <p>JH hasn't checked in a while. At the last check over 1000 Reps have completed their training. The Reps Team have been contacting Reps to get them to complete it.</p> <p>JH noted that in Jan they'll be looking at coverage of Reps and where recruitment might need to be pushed.</p> <p>JH noted that the EDI training will be launching on the 8<sup>th</sup> Jan, alongside the Consent Course.</p> <p>AM asked about how JH is planning to establish a social media presence.</p> <p>JH updated that this was original about having a separate Instagram account for Student Reps to promote them. However, after considering this more this is not the best way to do it.</p> <p>JH has regular meetings with the Comms Team and get Rep content created there. There is a plan to get College Reps involved in creating content for the central Guild channels.</p> <p>JH noted that Rep of the Month will start in the new year.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>JH is planning to talk with the University about how Rep of the Month could be collaborative promoted.</p> <p>AM asked about promotion of Departments acting on feedback and what work has been done to promote when Departments act on feedback.</p> <p>JH noted that there was a decision made over the summer to push a “You Said, We Did” campaign. They’re working with Departments to showcase how feedback has been acted on.</p> <p>JH noted that this should be going out across the University.</p> <p>AM noted that she’d received an email about this from her Department and it was really useful.</p> <p>JH mentioned that there will be local level communication alongside University wide communication to evidence those wins.</p> <p>AM asked about the EDI training for Reps and if JH could expand on this.</p> <p>JH updated that this was based on the EDI canvas course that is available to all students but wasn’t felt to be very accessible to Reps. 3-4 modules have been picked to focus on with content that is relevant to Reps.</p> <p>JH noted that Reps will be encouraged to complete these specific modules. We’ll also be asking Reps for feedback on this, and the time commitment involved to complete the training.</p> <p>AM asked about how the University is gathering feedback on late returns of feedback.</p> <p>JH noted that feedback is tracked differently across the Colleges. UQAAC has oversight of this but there is an awareness that this data might not be very accurate.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>JH has raised this issue to the University. The University are working with the Colleges on making sure that this data is properly collected.</p> <p>JH mentioned that where they see best-practice they're looking to share it across the University.</p> <p>AM asked about the staff handbook for Reps laying out the minimum expectations. Is there a similar handbook for students?</p> <p>JH agreed with this being something that would be useful. The handbook is very staff focused. It has minimum expectations of what staff should be doing.</p> <p>JH noted that a student facing handbook would be useful so that students know what they should be expecting from staff.</p> <p>JH mentioned that it does technically exist in the code of practice, but it would be good to make it more accessible.</p> <p>AM asked about improving the student experience of the academic calendar. Could he explain why the changes were made to the structure? A lot of STEM subject have had their exams moved.</p> <p>JH noted that this has been a tricky point and has been raised by Maths student specifically.</p> <p>JH updated that the logic was mainly about reducing assessment load. Having less assessment period requires less assessment and requires reworking how students are assessed across the year.</p> <p>JH noted that the old calendar essentially turned holiday periods into study leave. The new calendar allows for more flexibility and lightens the study load during the Winter Break.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>AM asked what changes has been made for assessment being more intense at the end of the year.</p> <p>JH has been talking with School and Colleges about the support provided to students through this change. Data shows that assessment periods in the summer have better results.</p> <p>JH has discussed various ways to have student led sessions to provide support for these assessments.</p> <p>JH noted that having to be assessed in a years' worth of content at the end of the year is a shift. School and Colleges need to be providing students with support for this.</p> <p>JH mentioned that the outcome after the Maths Student Petition was an agreement about regular support for students and regular engagement with Reps over what students wanted.</p> <p>AM asked what feedback JH has had on the implementation of reading week.</p> <p>JH has some feedback from Reps through a survey. Around 2/3 of Reps knew about assessment support week. Most have noticed changes as well.</p> <p>JH noted that the data doesn't go down to the College level, but the data was encouraging. A lot of students saw changes to the support that they received.</p> <p>JH mentioned that UEC should be receiving a report on the support provide during those weeks by Colleges at their next meeting.</p> <p>JH noted that it will take a while for students to get used to this change.</p> <p>AM noted that JH wanted to push for quicker turn around times on extension requests across the University. What were</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>the outcomes from this? And are there future plans to push for this?</p> <p>JH has not been able to work on this in much depth.</p> <p>JH has looked at self-certification for extenuating circumstances. This can be done but the process isn't well published.</p> <p>JH wants to look at the turn around time for these in the next Semester.</p> <p>AM asked about the provision of socials and mixers for commuter students that JH mentioned in his manifesto.</p> <p>JH noted that there was a commuter student social in Welcome Week. There were plans for another one at the end of October, but this fell through due to some logistical reasons.</p> <p>JH had some feedback that asked for more activities to help people interact and get to know each other at those events.</p> <p>AM asked about increasing accessibility of materials which has been updated on in the report. What ideas does JH have to work with student groups and campaigns on this?</p> <p>JH has been encouraging the University to engage with different groups of students that are keen to be involved in this.</p> <p>JH noted that Black Voices did a report last week on some research they did on the Awarding Gap.</p> <p>JH is meeting with some academic and University staff soon to discuss these issues. There's a meeting with the library about looking at making citations more diverse. It's fairly PG focused project at the moment but could be expanded to Undergraduates.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>JH mentioned that he wants to work with Black Voices in the Access and Participation Panel for the APP consultation. Addressing the Black Awarding Gap needs to have Black students in the room when discussing it.</p> <p>AM asked about mitigations for strike impact and what work JH has done on this. Why was this on the lower end of the priority list and what are the plans for this.</p> <p>JH noted that UCU haven't had any strike dates this term and there are unlikely to be more next semester. There were also few students who were impacted at Birmingham, and everyone was able to graduate over the summer.</p> <p>JH noted that there are currently no strikes taking place to mitigate.</p> <p>JH clarified that no graduations or progression swere delayed due to the Marking and Assessment Boycott at the end of last year, unlike other places around the country.</p> <p>AM asked if the loss of content hours can be used to justify mitigations.</p> <p>JH noted that there is a process for students to complain if they want to do so. It is a complicated process and must be done by individual students.</p> <p>JH mentioned that there is a group complaint being tested at another University. It didn't feel practical to do this, but he'll be keeping any eye on it to see if it's something that could be considering in the future.</p> <p>AM asked if JH could expand on the Access and Participation Plan rewrite.</p> <p>JH updated that the APP was something that JH wasn't aware of, but it takes up a lot of time. The University has to rewrite their plan this year and it has to address gaps in progression, access and attainment.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>JH mentioned that the current plan comes to an end next year. While it's the University's plan JH is involved in overseeing the rewrite.</p> <p>JH is chairing a Panel for the student consultation piece.</p> <p>JH noted that Students' Union are also asked to provide comment on the plan as well.</p> <p>JH noted that while the University does good work on access to University there are a lot of gaps with progression once students are here. The University are going to be looking at Free School Meals as a risk to attainment and at Black student attainment.</p> <p>JH has been learning a lot about how Access and Participation works. Most of the involvement in this will be next term.</p> <p>JH noted that the student panel will be used for the student consultation on the panel. Students will be able to see and comment on the plan.</p> <p>JH wants to ensure that the Guild does some wider work on the plan to see what we can add and what might be missing from the student perspective.</p> <p>AM noted that this sounds like a really interesting project.</p> <p>AM asked for more information about the UoB Online project.</p> <p>JH noted that the University wants to expand the online/distance learning courses that it runs.</p> <p>JH mentioned that the UoB Online has only just started with some new staff recruited. A lot of it has been focused on the logistics about getting it started.</p>



Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>JH is keen to make sure that students are effectively represented when they're on these courses.</p> <p>AM noted surprise at the fee levels for these courses.</p> <p>AM thanked JH for answering the questions.</p> <p>AM passed over to MH.</p>
11:45	Student Submitted Questions	<p>MH noted how interesting the answer.</p> <p>MH noted that there isn't any gender-balancing for Senate Rep roles. What have he done to ensure gender equality on Senate?</p> <p>JH mentioned that this has come into the Ideas submission process recently.</p> <p>JH does agree with the proposal. Currently all 6 students that attend University Senate are men and we need to change this.</p> <p>JH hasn't done anything specific on this yet though.</p> <p>MH asked about how the application questions in the Rep applications were used, and what happened in the over-subscription process.</p> <p>JH noted that the Rep sign-up Survey has been checked by our System Team.</p> <p>MH clarified that they were asking about the over-subscription process.</p> <p>JH updated that to his knowledge the over-subscription process hasn't been used.</p> <p>JH noted that he is happy to check about this.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>JH mentioned that there is currently a co-option process running to fill empty roles. It would be surprising if there was use of the over-subscription process as there are roles that are still empty.</p> <p>MH asked if what happened to people who weren't appointed as Reps.</p> <p>JH clarified that everyone who applied would likely be a Rep.</p> <p>JH is happy to talk to individuals if they'd like more clarification.</p>
11:50	Question from Officer	JH noted that he had no specific feedback for the Panel.
11:50	Session closed	<p>AM thanked JH for answering all the questions.</p> <p>AM closed the session.</p>

**Present:**

Scrutiny Panel Members: Anamika Varghese (AH), Madi Hamblin (MH), Sam Hadley (SH), Sukhdip Nagra (SN), Anastasis Mauriac (AM)

Officers: Ismael Rodriguez Foronda, Ethical and Environmental Officer (IRF)

**In Attendance:**

Core Staff: Jane Baston (Senior Voice Coordinator, Minute-Taker)

**Trigger/Content Warnings:**

Time	Discussion	Notes
14:00	Introductions	<p>The Panel introduced themselves and welcomed IRF to the session.</p> <p>AV outlined how the session will run. There will be some feedback from the Panel on IRF's report and then some questions from the Panel. There will also be some questions from students and a space for IRF to ask questions.</p> <p>IRF introduced himself, and his studies.</p>
14:05	Scrutiny Panel Feedback	<p>AV noted that IRF's report demonstrates enthusiasm for the role and a key focus on collaboration with lots of different student groups.</p> <p>AV noted the clear vision of what IRF wants to do in the role. There is a clear focus on making change at the University and the Guild.</p> <p>AV mentioned the ambitious nature of IRF's manifesto goals and the use of creativity to reach those goals throughout his work already.</p>
14:10	Scrutiny Panel Questions	<p>AV asked how IRF is planning to implement information sharing and ensuring that students are aware of the different information.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>IRF noted that the University generally has enough information about what's happening across the University.</p> <p>IRF noted that the key challenge is the pipeline between the Guild and the University to communicate and create awareness of events and activity that is happening.</p> <p>IRF mentioned that the Guild E&amp;E Officer account doesn't have a huge following. Instead, he has decided to create the UoB climate action which is a collection of different societies and student groups who work on climate related issues.</p> <p>IRF noted that they have a group chat that enables people to share information with each other.</p> <p>AV asked what the outcomes have been from this group chat? Is there a possibility for this information to be shared with a wider network.</p> <p>IRF noted that most people don't read their email. It's better to share information with those that are interested in hearing about it.</p> <p>IRF noted that they can share information with anyone who gets in touch.</p> <p>IRF has advertised some recent events including one happening next week.</p> <p>IRF mentioned that last week UoB Hedgehogs were able to share their event last year.</p> <p>IRF has meet with AC to discuss re-launching the Guild's Activist Network as it has been dormant for a while.</p> <p>IRF would like to help map out structures within the University to help to know to contact rather than bouncing between different people.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>AV asked where the group chat had been advertised to people who are interested in environmental issues.</p> <p>IRF noted that there is an Instagram page for UoB Climate Action that has a link to the chat. It's not an official Guild group and therefore can't be advertise through Guild channels.</p> <p>IRF mentioned that you don't need to be part of the Guild or a society to join. It has staff members from the University involved as well.</p> <p>AV mentioned IRF's manifesto point about increasing awareness and provision of plant-based food on campus. Are there plans to collaborate with other societies in the future?</p> <p>IRF wants a more transitional approach to this instead of running events.</p> <p>IRF has meet with various people at the University who are responsible for Catering, Comms and Facilities to discuss this.</p> <p>IRF noted that the University's newer menus have around 50% plant-based food. It's not for sustainability reasons but for inclusivity and accessibility reasons for those with dietary requirements.</p> <p>IRF noted that there is some resistance increasing this above 50%. There has been push back from some people who want to keep meat options.</p> <p>IRF has been considering how different alternatives can be presented to work towards that. An option can be having plant based at the default with meat options.</p> <p>AV noted the detail that IRF has provided in his answers.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>AV asked about the connections created with student groups and societies. What outcomes is IRF looking for and how effective has this been?</p> <p>IRF noted that climate campaigns tend to ebb and flow a bit. There are some groups that are focused on particular activities but can face challenges with being able to do that activity.</p> <p>IRF noted that UoB Hedgehogs can't do much for this year due to the University's biodiversity monitoring. Therefore, this year is likely to be less active for them.</p> <p>IRF has worked with Earth-Resus on looking at changing the curriculum in the Medical School to incorporate more sustainability.</p> <p>IRF has been helping to facilitate other societies in their activities.</p> <p>IRF's key outcomes for this are for a shift within the student population. Last year there was a vote for plant-based food which enables this to be brought into University meetings.</p> <p>IRF has been working with the University on re-draft their Carbon-Zero plan.</p> <p>IRF has recently been approached by a group that are looking at eco-anxiety and has been representing their views within the University.</p> <p>AV asked about the meeting that IRF had with Julia Myatt, noting her role as a professor, and her involvement in introducing more sustainability in to teaching. This conversation was about including sustainability in more courses. What curriculums changes and future programmes is IRF thinking about as part of this?</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>IRF noted that this started with Earth-Resus in the Medical Department. This was because a lot of their procurement has a big environmental impact.</p> <p>IRF noted that the University still has a course that trains petro-chemical engineers.</p> <p>IRF noted that there can be green washing within courses. This can be built within courses and the information that they give.</p> <p>IRF mentioned that the University also gets a lot of research funding that contributes to the green washing.</p> <p>IRF has spoken to Julia Myatt about courses having sustainability incorporated into them. Some of them might be including a year in sustainability.</p> <p>IRF has been looking at how we can measure the impact of these.</p> <p>AV noted the use of sustainability on her course.</p> <p>AV thanked IRF for attending and answering the questions.</p> <p>AV passed over to SN.</p>
14:25	Student Submitted Questions	<p>SN thanked IRF for his time.</p> <p>SN asked how can the University help students take practical steps to go plastic free? One of Birmingham University's values is to be "responsible"; how does the university reflect this value in its approach to plastic?</p> <p>IRF noted that we can't get rid of all plastics. For example, the Medical School will continue needing to use gloves during procedures for health reasons. Instead, we can look at other uses of plastic like plastic cups.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>IRF noted that looking procurement within the University and how we can reduce plastic within it is key to reducing plastic use.</p> <p>IRF mentioned that we could look at system based on taxing peoples use of plastic on campus. Helping to reduce the need to use plastics on campus as well is key, such as providing actual plates rather than plastic plates.</p> <p>IRF has spoken to the Head of Waste Management and they're looking at how they reduce plastic waste.</p> <p>IRF mentioned that we need to look at what we're willing to sacrificed to reduce plastic waste. The Head of Facilities is keen to hear ideas from people on this.</p> <p>IRF noted that their ideally would be moving away from plastic and using actual crockery that can be washed rather than plastic.</p>
14:30	Session Closed	<p>AV thanked IRF for his time and for his answers to the questions.</p> <p>AV closed the meeting.</p>



**Present:**

Scrutiny Panel Members: Anamika Varghese (AH), Madi Hamblin (MH), Sam Hadley (SH), Sukhdip Nagra (SN), Anastasis Mauriac (AM)

Officers: Ben Lockley, Postgraduate Officer (BL)

**In Attendance:**

Core Staff: Jane Baston (Senior Voice Coordinator), Scott Dawson (Student Voice and Representation Manager, Minute-Taker)

**Trigger/Content Warnings:** N/A

Time	Discussion	Notes
15:00	Introductions	The Panel Introduced themselves and welcomed BL to the session. SN outlined that the panel would review BL's report and then ask questions from the panel.  There were no pre-submitted questions from students.
15:05	Officer Report	SN: Noted BL proactive approach on the rep system and the collaboration with the Education Officer. SN highlighted BL's work on appointments panel and ensuring fair representation and engagement, demonstrated strong positive outcomes for students.  This was also noted for areas such as timetabling, SN noted panel were supportive of BL conduct in the role.
15:10	Scrutiny Panel Feedback	<b>SN Asked: Can you provide more details on the improvements made to the rep system this academic year?</b>  BL: Discussed challenges within the rep system such as students not being aware of who their Student Reps are and the value and recognition provided to Reps needs improving. Due to Guild Staffing and IT challenges this initially created challenges for the Student Rep experience.

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>BL: Has been pushing particular areas of development, such as Postgraduate Rep specific socials. The most recent social was held last week and BL had positive conversations with the students and senior Postgraduate staff members in attendance.</p> <p>BL: Continuing to push for further rep promotion and recognition. Working to ensure it is included in the Birmingham Award and that students know to mention it on their CV etc...</p> <p>BL also is looking to push opportunities such as the Rep Awards and rep t-shirts/merchandise for engagement and opportunities.</p> <p><b>SN Asked: How do you plan to continue holding the Guild and University accountable for ongoing issues?</b></p> <p>BL asked for clarity on which type of ongoing issues?</p> <p>SN clarified this was mostly about academic challenges</p> <p>BL: Highlighted assessment and feedback within the University and efficiency within systems guild systems as the ongoing challenges. For University meetings BL discussed being the only student voice in several meetings around assessment and feedback development.</p> <p>BL: Found that many in these senior University meetings agree further action on assessment and feedback needs to be taken, but on the ground experience doesn't match that.</p> <p>BL: Has been building on the Rep System and utilising surveys to help push and create change.</p> <p>BL: Has been pushing for transparency in Guild decisions and to ensure the organisation is open on why particular decisions and actions are taken. Wants to ensure there is an honest student perspective.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p><b>SN Asked: What criteria were considered in the appointment of new student trustees?</b></p> <p>BL: Discussed the 4 new student trustees were recruited through a daylong event in which discussions on balance of the trustees in area such as gender, age etc... were considered as a part of decision making.</p> <p>BL: Applicants were scored individually and then reviewed collectively. To ensure confidence in the recruitment process.</p> <p>BL: Noted a general worry about the lack of awareness by students of Trustee Board and the engagement and decision-making power the board has.</p> <p><b>SN Asked: What were the outcomes of the collaboration on the mid-module review questionnaire?</b></p> <p>BL: Highlighted that the University removed mid module evaluations 2 years ago. This meant that locally some schools did carry on with them, but many students lost the opportunity to shape/influence on the course.</p> <p>BL: The reintroduction of mid module evaluations this year has seen a 50% response rate across the University which has helped to flag concerns and comments on themes which have appeared for students.</p> <p>BL: Has also discussed the end of module evaluation which is due in December 2023, in which a question has been included on asking if the mid module feedback was actioned by staff prior to the final evaluation.</p> <p>BL: Hopes that this help reps and others hold staff account on the changes that can be created.</p> <p>BL: Discussed free text comments, which will be included for the first time and hope that students will use that space responsibly (i.e: not putting direct/unnecessary comments towards staff). Aware of the risk of free text comments, but</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>trust students to be fair in their use for providing feedback. SN: Noted mid module evaluation feedback had been delivered within their school recently, which is a good sign that this has been taken forward.</p> <p><b>SN asked: Can you elaborate on the challenges faced in securing an earlier release of student timetables?</b></p> <p>BL: Noted that they have been pushing the University to create this change. BL noted a fixed timetable created earlier, now means changes are less frequent and impactful for students. There are longer term benefits to this including help with students with planning paid work, commuting, caring responsibilities etc...</p> <p>BL: There is a positive impact for Postgraduate Teaching Assessments as well with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year PGRs knowing when they are teaching with more notice for the purpose of planning shifts.</p> <p>BL: This also means PGT's are getting greater support with their module engagement as well. And this should all apply for the upcoming semester 2 timetables, they should be circulated shortly.</p> <p><b>SN Asked: How do you measure the success of postgraduate social events, and what feedback have you received from participants?</b></p> <p>BL: Noted the quantity of students engaged have been really good, 1000+ in Postgraduate socials across this semester so far. Given that PG data is provided quite late in the first semester (meaning direct emails are difficult to do), this is a good start.</p> <p>BL: Discussed that there are a lot of distance learners who are online only and BL has been opposing them due to the challenges around social integration and connection for the student community on those programmes.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>BL: Noted a Halloween social for PG's, a Christmas social also coming up and further ongoing Postgraduate Rep socials.</p> <p>BL: Re-emphasised the Impact of the student experience for distance learners is a bit point of concern</p> <p><b>SN Asked: In what ways are you working with Postgraduate Reps to customise events within their schools?</b></p> <p>BL: Noting Postgraduates arrive in late September and by the time fully trained and developed as Reps they aren't fully in place until late October. BL has been lobbying Schools/Colleges through student experience officers to do be-spoke local events where possible.</p> <p>BL: Noted Postgraduate student fund grants which were organised for these students to engage in societies last year, which helped to support activity through 3 to 4 groups with a PG specific focus, this also found good success although limited due to funding.</p> <p><b>SN Asked: Could you provide more information on the progress made in securing funding for students from WP backgrounds pursuing Masters Degrees?</b></p> <p>BL: Discussed an agreement for WP funding has been agreed in principle but not formally signed off. It is likely to be £250,000 dedicated to expanding the Pathways to Birmingham programme. BL will be supporting the implementation group who take forward the use of that funding.</p> <p>BL: Noted this work was supported by research with the Student Voice department to find out support options for the University of Birmingham against the wider University community.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>BL: Started conversations on this funding support in February 2023, and developments were made quickly. Hoping to provide more details at the next scrutiny panel on implementation.</p> <p><b>SN Asked: Have any ideas or policies been submitted through the democratic structure since the writing of this report?</b></p> <p>BL asked if any ideas been allocated to them at this stage.</p> <p>JB confirmed none had directly gone to BL at the moment.</p> <p>JB: highlighted there is one within the current demonstration of interest, which may go to BL and JH (Education Officer) if it is taken to the next stage of democratic system.</p> <p>BL: Discussed this idea which covers under-representation of women in the open student places for University Senate. Ensuring there is at least one individual who identifies as a woman in that space to help with overall gender balance.</p> <p><b>SN Asked: What progress has been made on the issue of gender-neutral bathrooms?</b></p> <p>BL: Has been working with the Trans and Non-Binary Officer to make this change. BL looking to support this with relevant operational Guild Staff.</p> <p>BL: Noted frustration that this is still an ongoing issue after 3 Academic Years.</p> <p><b>SN Asked: How will you address and prioritise this concern moving forward?</b></p> <p>BL: Will look to push and promote with senior Guild staff on the matter. Will always look to bring up at weekly meetings with Guild staff. Hoping to see change for the next panel meeting.</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p><b>SN Asked: Can you provide details on the united statement drafted in response to safety concerns of Jewish students?</b></p> <p>BL: Aware of the challenges and concerns facing students. Guild President has worked well to get support from the VC.</p> <p>BL: Welfare Officer has also met with Jewish society to provide space and support for them in the Guild. Making clear the statement released is a broad anti-hate statement, we believe the students are supportive of this message.</p> <p>BL: Feels a small number of the student population are negative to general statement, but the Officer Team are doing what they can to support students from Muslim and Jewish communities.</p> <p>BL: Noted a previous visit to Auschwitz in the previous academic year to help understand the issues facing Jewish students. BL and other officers have worked with several contacts to make sure any messaging was purposeful for students and not creating disunity.</p> <p><b>SN Asked: How will the Guild continue to support and ensure the safety of Jewish students?</b></p> <p>BL: Noted where students have required space at events support has been provided, this has been done in collaboration with the University.</p> <p>BL: Noted that some students have not asked for events to be promoted, but where support can be provided it will be undertaken.</p> <p><b>SN Asked: What were the key points of the ‘yes’ campaign for the UCU referendum?</b></p> <p>BL: Noted that although pension dispute for UCU has largely been resolved for staff and developing PGTA’s, there is still the issue of the four fights, gender pay gap, fixed term</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>contracts, and general engagement with unions on campus.</p> <p>BL: Noted Senior University staff are open to conversations with UCU locally, although this is not mirrored nationally.</p> <p>BL: Noted leadership of UCU has not always felt strong, local lecturers have just wanted fair pay for a days work and to find resolution to the ongoing local issues.</p> <p>BL: Frustrated the referendum did not hit quorum, but happy that students will experience a year of teaching without disruption. Noting the inconsistency this creates for the student experience and that of staff in the work place.</p> <p><b>SN Asked: How do you plan to engage students in future referendum campaigns?</b></p> <p>BL: Felt that staff can do more to support the approach to this activity. Felt that pre-covid this would happen naturally with student engagement and participation.</p> <p>BL: Noted we need to nurture organisers but also speak with students directly and incentivise them to engage and participate.</p> <p>BL: Discussed the worrying apathy of students engaging in democratic processes. This will need to be a multi-year project to get engagement and participation back on campus.</p>
15:36	Student Submitted Questions	SN noted that there were no student submitted questions.
15:47	Questions from Officer	<p>SN Asked if there was anything further BL would like to raise</p> <p>BL: Asked panel about how officer are perceived in the Guild.</p> <p>MH: Wasn't aware of officer roles until being engaged in scrutiny panel role. Felt there was not enough emphasis placed on the difference between Guild and the University.</p>



Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>Being aware the administration processes slow things down.</p> <p>BL: Asked If students don't know the difference why would they reach out to us?</p> <p>AM: Noted often only negative issues are heard by students more widely, i.e: ValeFest or external memberships.</p> <p>BL: Felt that there needs to be recognition from Guild Staff on such decisions impacting the student experience. Decisions that are being made that will have a big impact, which are done without student input or transparency.</p> <p>MH: Asked about Scrutiny Panels last year vs this year:</p> <p>BL: Highlight that since the All Student Meeting was now gone, this means that only the scrutiny panel is the mechanism to holding students account in their roles. And therefore there needs to be clear emphasis placed on the panel sessions.</p>
15:50	Session Closed	<b>SN closed the session.</b>

**Present:**

Scrutiny Panel Members: Anamika Varghese (AH), Madi Hamblin (MH), Sam Hadley (SH), Sukhdip Nagra (SN), Anastasis Mauriac (AM)

Officers: Aoife O’Driscoll-Paton, Disabled Students’ Officer (AOD)

**In Attendance:**

Core Staff: Jane Baston (Senior Voice Coordinator), Dayna Hopkins (International and Postgraduate Coordinator, Minute-Taker)

**Trigger/Content Warnings: Disabled students experience, PEEP, RAP.**

Time	Discussion	Notes
16:00	Introductions	AOD enters the room at 16:03.  SH welcomed them and introduced themselves and other panel members. They give an overview of how the panel will work today.
16:03	Scrutiny Panel Feedback	SH: It is evident that as DSO, you have built some valuable connections with SANDAM and networked effectively at the Disabled Students Contribution Group. You seem to have a great awareness of what the students want/need, making you a more effective representative of disabled students.  SH: Your presence on social media, particularly during the start of the Disability History Month, is engaging and informative. As you are an unpaid part time officer, but your report indicates strong potential for the rest of your time as DSO.
16:06	Scrutiny Panel Questions	SH: How have discussions about physical access projects with the relevant organisers been going so far? For example, The relationship between SANDAM and Careers Network?  AOD: I’ll start with the careers network, it’s being going really well, we had our first group meeting. Half of the meeting was disabled students on campus, and the other half was the

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>careers network giving a presentation, afterwards there was a chance to network with the careers network which was good.</p> <p>AOD: The careers network wants to set up focus groups with disabled students to give feedback on the service, and students gave some feedback about why disabled students worry when entering new jobs, especially regarding reasonable adjustments and disclosing disabilities. Careers network are looking at setting up a mentoring scheme to support this. Also have been in touch an accessibility lead in the University's estate team, we have a good relationship and they have been given a budget from the University for physical accessibility and we are going to set up a group on how to prioritise that money and they wanted advice from students on how to prioritise that money as well.</p> <p>SH: That sounds really great. I was going to ask what feedback did you receive from students regarding the Careers Network, but you've already answered from the first question so happy to move onto the next one.</p> <p>SH: Have you continued to distribute your document of disability wellbeing links to students after welcome week?</p> <p>AOD: So, the main distribution was in welcome week and also I put it on Instagram for it to be accessed anytime. We haven't done anymore at the moment, we had a disabled students contribution group on digital accessibility, specifically for using the intranet and accessing wellbeing services on the intranet, this feedback has now been passed on the services that support accessibility digitally.</p> <p>SH: Can you provide more information on your campaign seeking to hold the University to account on RAPs? What do you aim to achieve by the end of your time as DSO with this campaign?</p> <p>AOD: It's going slowly because other things have occurred. We have a campaign team together who are very engaged. Some</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>students are looking into current policies what they are and where they are not being followed, so we can bring them forward.</p> <p>AOD: We have a meeting on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November with the Accessibility oversight group, and we will be looking to implement the changes they have been working on. I have also been speaking with the Director of Student Services about the Universities Personal evacuation plan, as there has been issues identified with it along with RAPs. We are currently looking into where policies are not being followed and who is responsible for them.</p> <p>SH: I'm really glad that it's been student lead, that's great to hear.</p> <p>SH: How does the issue with PEEPs not being in students' timetables relate to fire safety?</p> <p>AOD: So PEEP is a document that disabled students who may find it more difficult to exit a building in a fire or in a different emergency, it is holistically guidance for them on how they can exit the building. This is very important in regard to fire safety on how disabled students can exit the building in an emergency, they are not being reviewed as often as they should be, with the process being slow, long and drawn out and it is difficult for students on how to navigate this.</p> <p>SH: How have you engaged with the Accessibility Oversight Group during your times as DSO so far?</p> <p>AOD: So we've had one meeting with the group, I found it very helpful to be in the room with peoples who names have been shared with before as being important but to actually be in the room so I could actually speak with them and bring up issues relating to students. For the next meeting I've put on the agenda about the PEEP issues, so I can bring forward students' feedback to them, and have their voices heard.</p> <p>SH: What do you hope to achieve during your time as DSO?</p>

Time	Discussion	Notes
		<p>AOD: Student activities are running their committee training next week, one of my manifesto points, was to improve the training, the previous Disabled Students Officer also had this as a manifesto point. I know the computer science has a document for accessibility for events, where people can see what events are accessible by seeing what rooms they are held in, and what they need to do to make their events more accessible, this should be added to more student groups, that is something I would like to do.</p> <p>SH: Opens the floor to other panel members. No other questions are asked. Thank AOD for their time.</p>
16:18	Student Submitted Questions	SH: There was no student submitted questions.
16:19	Session Ended	The meeting ended at 4:19