



## Agenda of a Meeting of the Graduate Union Council

*To be held at 7pm on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019, in Roger Needham Room, Chancellor Centre, Wolfson College*

Note emergency motions will be accepted up to the point the meeting is called to order by emailing [vice-president@gradunion.cam.ac.uk](mailto:vice-president@gradunion.cam.ac.uk)

### 1. Approval of the minutes of the previous Council meeting

The unconfirmed minutes of the last Council meeting, held on 11 March 2019, are circulated for approval.

### 2. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Council meeting

*To confirm amended motions*

- *Rethinking funding from the Student Support Initiative.*
- *Fair Conditions for Teaching Opportunities*

### 3. Reports from Sabbatical Officers and Officers of the Executive Committee

- A. President's Report (*Verbal Report*)
- B. Vice-President's Report
- C. Welfare and Rights' Report

### 4. Council Discussion

- A. Improving postgraduate representation (*we will be discussing the survey [here](#)*)
- B. Housing Toolkit (*attached*)

## 5. Motions to council

- A. By-Election (*Motion attached*)
- B. Call an extraordinary meeting of council on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 to discuss improving postgraduate representation (*on a time to be agreed*)
- C. Departmental welfare

## 7. Emergency Motions

The Council will consider any emergency motions submitted between the circulation of the Agenda and the start of the meeting.

## 8. Dates of upcoming meetings

Easter Term (*23 April to 14 June*)

- 30 April 2019
- 13 April (*Extra-Ordinary Council*)?
- 03 June 2019 (*Annual General Meeting*)

Long Vacation

- 08 July 2019
- 02 September 2019

At 7pm unless otherwise stated

## 9. Any other business

Student Trustee Update

# *Graduate Union Council*

11/03/19

19.00 at MCR, Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Sofia Ropek-Hewson	President
Mrittunjoy Guha Majumdar	Vice-President and Chair of Executive Committee
Marios Christodoulides	Mature Undergraduate Officer
Torkel Lowman	MCR Vice-President, Girton College
Andrea Paterlini	MCR Vice-President, Clare College
Tamzin Bryne	MCR President, Murray Edwards College
Aisha Sobey	MCR Vice-President, Fitzwilliam College
Torben Sell	MCR Darwin College
Thomas Graff	MCR Trinity College
Will Lloyd-Ryan	MCR Trinity College
Anthony Bridgen	MCR President, Gonville & Caius College
Pelmmi Ohswasange	MCR Robinson College
Ebthimions Karayiannides	MCR Magdalene College
Albert Iqdlots	MCR Pembroke College
Stanimirra Georgieva	MCR Newnham College

## Agenda (Council)

### Item 1. Approval of the minutes of the previous Council meeting.

Unconfirmed minutes of the last Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 were circulated and unanimously voted approved.

### Item 2. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Council meeting.

None raised.

### Item 3. Reports from Sabbatical Officers and Officers of the Executive Committee

#### A. President's Report

-President reports that she has written a paper/application proposing fee waivers (in collaboration with fellows?) for refugees and people from poorer countries which has been successfully approved.

-There is a need to develop a different report system for graduate students as currently reports are sent directly to supervisors, potentially discouraging student-reporting of supervisors. This is frustrating as there should be processes in place to facilitate this. Callout for suggestions, possibly involving reports being only sent to other parties excluding supervisors.

-Student board initiative money has been raised but is not going to people in need to bridge gap. PG participation is on agenda now as PG numbers increase. Discussion on acceptance of more PG students by colleges is of concern due to potential lack of proportional increase in funding and support i.e. Lucy Cavendish now accepting students from 18yo, but unclear if they can increase resources available.

-A campaigns fund is set up to help fund students to campaign on issues of interest, form on engagement/impact is available on GU website.

-President is looking into the matter of graduate tutors and collecting info on how many there are in each college per student, in many there are up to 400 students per grad tutors. Additionally, they may be paid less than undergrad tutors.

#### B. Vice-President's Report

-Housing and living expenses campaign for information dissemination.

\* GU is developing housing tool-kit and thinking about how campaigning can be done in various college.

\*Also lobbying for transparency of room allocation, students should be informed of all cost, including hidden fees, charges, living expenses when choosing colleges.

-There has been an engagement drop across colleges including, Darwin, Clare Hall & Girton. Mixed responses received, however elections were a very good time for engagement, decent ~10% turnout.

-Working with Professor Graham Virgo, on PG awareness of avenues and support systems that exist for PG student-supervisor relationship. Further awareness building and implementation on this front is required.

- Has been working on Personal Welfare Handbook and it is in the final stages of development

-University societies often petition the university for funds for the same equipment with result that money is allocated multiple times.

VP suggests created of a central pool of resources that could be utilised by multiple societies to eliminate this redundancy.

#### **Executive Committee Reports** *(presented by Vice-President and Chair of Executive Committee)*

Reports for all the officers were read, some of which include-

-Women's officer has been implementing a 'He for She' campaign.

- A recent Mature UG event was held at Hughes Hall.

- LGBTQ+ Officer implementing gender neutral policy, including LGBTQ+ yoga at the university.

-Environment Officer worked on promoting the University Green Week.

#### **Questions Raised**

**Q: Wasn't there discussion last year, regarding finalising information about welfare infrastructure?**

It was discussed that it would be good to put this information onto the GU website, possibly integrated with materials put together last year. Vice-President highlights that the alternative prospectus information is online, on the GU site. Can be supplemented with other information and resources.

**Q: Is it true that UG tutors are paid more than PG tutors?**

President replied that only a small percentage have been surveyed as yet and she is in the process of compiling information from the colleges and would appreciate any information others might have on the subject.

Tamzin reported that at Murray Edwards there is not much student contact with senior tutor, but rather the graduate tutor acts as an intermediate first point of contact. This is not ideal as senior tutors tend to have big decision-making power in colleges. Senior tutors are also the worst in forgetting to name grads, only JCRs

Clare Hall representative reported that there they have weekly meeting with the senior tutor remain in constant contact. Relationships and dynamics between tutors and rest of college decision making bodies are difficult to understand.

As part of mental health and wellbeing strategies, GU is looking at tutorial structure, training, signposting. Currently overworked tutors cover ~100 students each, so students hardly ever see them as they only have so much time that can be available for booking.

Random allocation of grad tutors can be a disaster, some colleges have two per 100 students, but the result is that a student might see them once in 2-3yrs. The practical result of this is the view that graduate tutor is a role that is just there for students at the worst of times. Which President says is unfortunate, as they are not sufficiently trained to deal with really difficult situations.

Tamzin (President of Murray Edwards College MCR) says that when she went to assigned tutor, found they were too quick to signpost her towards other resources, when actually she was looking for a chat. There are some people within fellowship who she can gel with so she chats to them. Students are being each other's sounding board instead of the tutors. For example, in a case where a supervisor stole a student's work, the relevant college didn't know any of the grad union student rights. It is good that students can/want to listen, but they not trained to deal with this either.

Fitzwilliam college representative said they have 6 tutors and that theirs is really helpful and has led to the college creating bursaries through him pushing. In another example, when a student was suicidal their tutor made the effort to take student out on the weekend. Graduate tutors at Fitzwilliam College share resource documents. President questioned whether the choice of individuals selected to be tutors tend to be people that are overworked, with questionable motivation levels. There was a suggestion that this leads to an inclination of prioritising pastoral support. Vice-President mentioned that in colleges like Christs, the graduate tutors are greater points of contact than Senior Tutors and therefore need to be motivated and possibly even trained adequately.

At Clare Hall, 6-7 tutors are assigned randomly, which is really hit or miss but the graduate tutor is really responsive to MCR and helpful in event organisation and fundraising, says Mariana (President of Clare Hall MCR). Presence at meeting of students/MCR makes it easier for tutors to back students than bring it up alone. They may feel they are being asked to choose between siding with students or the college. President comments that a framework

is needed to help decide which issues it is too difficult for tutor not to choose the college over siding with students.

Tamzin suggested that the grad tutor role is taken up mainly by doing admin. Comments that at Murray Edwards, librarians, porters, catering staff take responsibility for student welfare as they are the ones that see students on a day to day basis so maybe formalising this training.

***Q. With regard to increasing graduate numbers in some colleges, are all colleges doing this? Services provided by colleges do not look scalable.***

Pembroke has recently bought a new part of town to house grads as has a consortium of 4 colleges including Pembroke college on one side of Mill Lane. Murray Edwards do not currently have plans although numbers have already gone up by 50% and none of the infrastructure has kept up. The MCR committee is trying to service the increased student numbers, but currently are only able to offer event tickets for ~1/3 of the student population. The result of this is that students are always stressed about finding somewhere to live, the MCR don't fit in their allocated space any more. College claims this is due to more students accepting offers rather than deferring or declining than expected.

***Q. There have been complaints on empty graduate accommodation, are colleges sharing resources on housing?***

This appears to happen in a weird ad hoc way. (Also, where there are other issues, sometimes no one wants to live in the vacant rooms.) After offers are made but students cannot get into rooms in their colleges, a formal system for this helpful. Calling around accommodation officers, leads to offers from other colleges that charge more money to external students, resulting in great disparity in pricing. Also some colleges kick students out so they can charge more money for the rooms, for example St Johns college have kicked out, some students at end of first year to do this.

***Q. Is there a What's App group for MCR presidents as would be good to connect.***

President responded that there is not one currently but certainly one can be created. Vice-President Mrittunjoy took up the responsibility.

#### **Item 4. Motions to council**

##### **A. Housing and Living Expenses Policy**

The Vice-President has compiled data with a paper, with data table listed on page. 35. Over the past 10yrs its very clear there are specific issues involved.

Proposal (Mrittunjoy): To create a working group to investigate all of these issues and look at them as a whole picture with the aim of improving transparency. Especially regarding accommodation, living expenses & hidden costs.

***Q. What is the intended rate of accommodation expansion?***

The data from CCHPR has been used for creating a comprehensive table for the various colleges in the University. The Vice-President has also looked the kinds of rooms available across the University and the composition of student housing. There are still some gaps in the information available on rate of expansion that need filling in, due to lack of information being put out by colleges. Open for comments

In some colleges, accommodation is guaranteed for 3yrs, if you go over that time, you have to leave the college. There are currently around 165 houses available through the University accommodation service, due to constraints of estate. University system is one of the most expensive, students in 4<sup>th</sup> year just managing somewhere, if unable to live in college.

Sofia adds that the University is extending length of PhD from 3yrs to 4yrs, which means colleges will need to extend accommodation availability to 4yrs. Clare college allows 4yrs, but this means combined Masters and PhD students then still not covered. GU is in the process of making a list, so GU can talk to University administration about whether colleges are allowed to do this?

Vice-president says that currently international students often struggle to supply an upfront deposit payment for university accommodation services. Cambridge is an international university and international student should be included and supported. GU has recently secure a win to have the up-front requirement phased over three months for these students.

Tamzin comments that also private landlords are moving to a no-deposit scheme, which is essentially a loan that the individual takes out from real estate agent. With the number of part-time students increasing dramatically, colleges are often unable to offer accommodation for all of the 1-week intensive that part-time students attend. Is there a way to connect private providers with the university to address this?

Motion passed unanimously.

**B. Colleges Equality Champions Policy**

From LGBTQ+ Officer, Alessandro: there has been an incident MCR What's App group, where Alessandro shared LGBTQ+ calendar. The current 'Admiral of the Punt' (previous ex-president, remains in advisory capacity) responded by thanking Alessandro for reminding how irritating it is when people push their own agenda. There was offense involved on certain sides and committee dissolved and reformed over the last two weeks.

Proposal (Alessandro): To create 3 'champions of equality', BNE, LGB and Women Champions serving as role models within the colleges, replicated in various schools.

Vice-President Mrittunjoy presents the case for the motion. The Council feels that the GU needs to know exactly what kind of role model or exemplary figure from that community the champions would be, as well as their active role at colleges, and how would they not under pressure to side either way. Also how would they be different from MCR officers?

In the case of a conflict btw students and staff, there is a need to have representatives to act as advisors. This proposal requires input on 'role-model' wording. There is also a centrally-organised equality core within the university could be aligned with and could provide advice for implementation.

GU request Alessandro to return with a different proposal to next meeting, with more specific about what role will be.

In general policy on social media platforms some more out of control than others. GU have already created rules for GU fb group. To deal with spam, one group for bar, one for MCR, only things strictly related.

### **C. Rethinking funding from the Student Support Initiative.**

The President says that the SSI comprises ½ billion pounds raised intended to ensure that anyone who gets into a Cambridge education can attend. Now there is a suggestion SSI was never intended to about access equalisation? A 5yr education strategy has been released in parallel not released to students, apparently so many reviews have been made that it's now an education 'framework'.

President recommends that meeting attendees obtain a copy to be able to see the University's thinking exposed. Policy was meant to empower P and VP to fight for concerns. A strategic working group runs the SSI vision statement on which the President sits and was successful in pushing hard for inclusion of PG access and smooth financial disparities between colleges. There has been no research on how to asses PG need in Cambridge. SSI funding is instead being spent on persuading students to choose Cambridge over Oxford and Harvard. There is a greater requirement for needs-based funding especially areas of disability and child-care support, as highlighted by Vice-President Mrittunjoy.

GU can demand for the University to freeze student numbers until funding and resources are increased in parallel. There is a need to further expose these problems and put the separate parts of this together. The VC has 1million pounds that can spend, that will currently be spent on the Foundation year, President is pushing for some to go to PG education. Problem as cannot teach A level nor 1<sup>st</sup> year. Additionally, as Mrittunjoy (Vice-President) says international student fees are currently set at 3 times that of home students, lack of support available to them could be tied into the larger discussion.

Does SSI vision document say 'needs-based funding'? The wording is conveniently vague, more saying there is requirement for the best people to be at Cambridge, regardless of background, but does not define. There should be accommodation of both merit and need. 60% of students offered by Cambridge choose to go somewhere else, so that's who is currently identified as needing funding, but perhaps both could be achieved.

Proposal for amendment of SSI to 'Prioritised needs-based funding' by Mrittunjoy (Vice-President)

1000 pounds for working week funding postgraduate students. Murray Edwards rent is 62% of college Cambridge trust. 50% is acceptable for UG, so should fight for the same for PG. PG need 14000 (NUS guidelines) pounds a year to live. Grants indexed to just below inflation, problematic due to consistent rent increase without grant increase. Assumption that students have somewhere else to go

Vote. Unanimously passed.

**D. Policy on Fair Conditions for Teaching and Research Opportunities**

Last motion is by Vice-President Mrittunjoy to address the casualisation of work by the University i.e. use of TES. Other pressures and expenses are increasing and there is a need for fairness and transparency in hiring, remuneration, welfare & mentoring.

Amendment (Mrittunjoy): fair opportunities for research and teaching responsibilities, extra work should be remunerated.

PhD students can and are currently roped in to doing work for industry that is for profit, but not paid. In Australia by law PhD Student time must be paid for, but it is uncertain if it is the case in the UK.

Would a formal system to all appointments include supervisor and would this lead to people being interviewed to be able to provide supervision? It is known that supervisors currently ask students to do things such as supervise a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, that is not always the best use of their time. A formal system would allow way to decide this and such requirements would be laid bare from the start.

Amendment: Change 'formal' to 'structured'.

Suggestion that colleges could compile a database of PhD students available for supervisions. If supervisions are assigned by the department, it could be better as at a college level there could still be some discrimination.

This proposal aims to create clarity around the potential requirement for supervision, rates of pay and remuneration for marking and preparation work. There is a need to make departments think about work that goes into behind the scenes preparation.

Vote. One against. One abstained. Motion passed.

#### **Item 5. GU Lent Elections 2019**

Lent elections for 2019 ran smoothly, with the result that Alessandro, current LGBTQ+ Officer will replace Sophia as president next year.

#### **Item 6. Divestment working group update.**

The first meeting has taken place, with Logan who spearheaded the proposal joining and points to work on were identified. Investment of universities and colleges in fossil fuels. Drop in sessions by green officers could create awareness. Possibly not at fresher week as zero carbon do, it should be more about welfare, engagement and the fact that GU exists. Fresher's need an opportunity to settle into the system before being able of recognise flaws.

Leaflets and flyers on campaigns GU runs are useful, working group suggestions will probably not go beyond a leaflet to give MCRs and colleges a resource. GU leaflet could then be placed on zero carbon table. There is a requirement to get in touch with finance experts, to further financial detail.

*Meeting close at 9pm.*

## 3.B. Vice-President's Report

### *Housing and Living Expenses Campaign:*

After our recent strategy meeting on housing and living expenses, there are two specific things we aim for in the next few weeks:

1. Development and distribution of a **Housing Toolkit** for MCRs to inform them about some of the realities of Housing throughout the Collegiate University, the ways in which they can campaign and lobby in their colleges for this, and to receive information from their membership pertaining to any important aspect of housing and living expenses, which may be shared with the larger campaign. The Toolkit has recently been developed and is currently under review for final changes before distribution to the MCRs. This has now been done and the final reviews and checks are underway, before distribution to the MCRs.
2. Lobbying for transparency in housing and living expenses by informing prospective students seeking affiliation with a college the following key questions
  - Number and kinds of rooms available
  - Rent range
  - System of allocation of rooms
  - Miscellaneous (or Hidden) charges

This will help the students make an informed choice regarding their college. This shall be undertaken with the MCRs. This is mentioned in the Housing and Living Expenses Toolkit as well. We have been working with the Office for Intercollegiate Services to obtain this from the various colleges.

### *Engagement*

Engagement with the students is key to what we do. As part of our new engagement policy, I initiated engagement drop-in sessions and covered the following places around the University. We got a very encouraging response from students on topics varying from Brexit, housing and living expenses and welfare to academic welfare and divestment. As part of our review strategy, we came to two conclusions for the next phase of this policy

1. It is good to work in collaboration with the MCR in organization and publicity since that makes it more widely known than just having a spontaneous drop-in session.
2. The location of the stall has to be strategically decided, along with the time, since we would like the maximum number of students to benefit from these sessions.

Our weekly bulletins have also helped in engagement and have received direct responses from members of the Graduate Union on topics varying from the Student Support Initiative to international student concerns.

### ***Sustaining the Graduate Rights Campaign***

After having consultations with students across the University including a few one-to-one sessions, it has come to light that there are many in the University who are still not entirely aware or sure of their rights within the Collegiate University. Last year the Graduate Union may have obtained a win with the signing of the first page of the Code of Practice by supervisor and supervisee, but the implementation and follow-up supplementary actions and steps still needs to be investigated and worked on. I have had initial meetings on strategizing on this and we look forward to sustaining the campaign. I have also had meetings with Alice Benton of the Education and Policy team of the University and Chad Allen of the Office for Students (OfS), University of Cambridge.

An early point that has come from these discussions is having workshops on graduate rights in collaboration with departments across the University, with the help of the University Counselling Service, along with helping develop online resources to make students aware of their rights and responsibilities.

1. Increase awareness using Workshops, in collaboration with University Counselling Service, in departments.
2. Have wider consultation about graduate rights with students, teachers, admin and other stakeholders
3. Lobby for our recently passed policy on fair pay and support for teaching and research opportunities across the Collegiate University.

### ***Personal Welfare Handbook***

I have been working on the Personal Welfare Handbook for students for the past six months and it has now been released. The Handbook has got positive feedback from students across the University. I look forward to sharing this helpful and utilitarian document that is primarily for signposting to relevant welfare and access support for various issues and topics for postgraduate and mature undergraduate students.

### ***Anti-Casualisation Working Group***

As a follow up on the policy on fair pay and support for research and teaching opportunities in the Collegiate University, the Graduate Union, along with the Cambridge UCU, is calling on the University and Colleges to Raise the Bar for all workers on casual or temporary contracts, whether we are hourly paid teachers, grad students, postdocs and others on fixed term contracts or workers with the temporary employment service.

We are calling on the University and Colleges to Raise the Bar for all workers on casual or temporary contracts, whether we are hourly paid teachers, grad students, postdocs and others on fixed term contracts or workers with the temporary employment service. We demand:

- Decent Contracts
- Fair Pay

- Rights at Work for TES workers and international staff
- Respect for Grad Workers
- Fair Allocation of Teaching

Recently, Cambridge UCU submitted a claim to the University and Colleges asking them to Raise the Bar for all workers on casual or temporary contracts, guaranteeing significant improvements to job security, hourly pay, and associated rights at work. You can read more about the demands here: <http://www.ucu.cam.ac.uk/pledge-to-raise-the-bar/> (*attached too*).

We, at the Graduate Union, need to work together to build this campaign into a movement. We want these demands to be talked about in every faculty, department, and college at the university, to help strengthen our negotiating hand while making sure that these improvements are implemented within all faculties, departments and colleges. That is why at the beginning of next term we are launching the Pledge to Raise the Bar – a postcard pledge that all members of the university can sign on to (*you can fill in the postcards in the Student Union lounge and put it in the box or mailing it to us via the University Mailing Service*). We will be collecting these pledges in their hundreds to hand to University HR in support of our claim later this year.

You can help us out by collecting pledges, talking to your friends and colleagues about the demands, participating in union stalls, helping with designing leaflets, and more. Let us know how you would like to be involved by filling out our volunteer survey: <https://forms.gle/TnohHrKh9x5onYZW7>

### ***Updates from Executive Committee Meeting***

I have chaired a couple of executive committee meeting since the last Council and have been working closely with the GU executive officers. The following are the discussions and points from the last executive committee meeting, paraphrased from the official minutes of the meeting.

#### **Attendees:**

1. Mrittunjoy Guha Majumdar (Chair and Vice-President)
2. Alessandro Ceccarelli (LGBTQ+ Officer)
3. Sara Hasan (Womens Officer)
4. Karthick Murukesan (Families Officer)
5. Esteban Garcia (Faculty Liason Officer)

**Reports from officers of the executive committee on activity since last meeting / coming in to office (*Progress Cards*)**

***LGBTQ+ Officer***

Alessandro has been looking at collaborating with CUSU on LGBTQ+ campaigns and issues. He is also building up to a university-wide Pride event.

### ***Families Officer***

Karthick is working a points-based central bursary scheme for students with children and families. He is also looking at provisions and support when it comes to housing for students with families. Another area where students have written to him is relating to maternity breaks, which he is also looking at closely.

### ***Faculty Liaison Officer***

Esteban is convening his working group and working on survey of faculty reps. He has been building up to closer collaboration of the faculties with the GU.

### ***Womens Officer***

Sara has been looking at building her working. She is looking at representation of women at college and department levels, along with thinking of a GU Womens Forum. She also is planning for a speaker event where women who are doing well in various fields can be showcased to motivate others to follow in their footsteps.

### ***Vice-President***

Mrittunjoy has been working on the housing and living expenses campaign, with the design of a three-document pack to help MCRs campaign on housing and living expenses. He has worked on the Personal Welfare Handbook and its release lately, along with enquiring about where international fees are being used within the Collegiate University. He also met with representatives of the UCU to discuss about the 'Raise the Bar' anti-casualization campaign, along with attending their working group recently.

## **Executive Business**

a) *Working Groups and Forums* – Alessandro and Esteban suggested names for addition to their working groups and they were unanimously co-opted by the executive committee. The executive committee also decided on having a forum for

their respective office in the first two weeks of a term. These forums will be to provide a platform for engagement with the wider student community as well as incorporating ideas of the students in the respective offices. It is also a good way to keep accountability of the officers to the membership of the Graduate Union. For Easter, we were thinking of having a forum on the Monday, Wednesday and Friday of the first two weeks. There was also a discussion about closer collaboration between CUSU and GU on the various issues and subjects that relate to the remit of our officers. The general mood of the committee was that there should be systematic changes made do as to facilitate regular meetings between CUSU and GU officers on matters pertaining to their offices.

b) *Student Trustee and Elections* – The executive committee decided to initiate the process of the election of the next GU Faculty Liason Officer, GU Disabled Students' Officer and GU Open Portfolio Officer. The incumbent officers would be asked for a small blurb on what they think their role involves. The executive committee was also informed of that the process for new trustees being brought in has been begun.

c) *Intersectionality Forum for executive committee* – The executive committee had a discussion about the intersectionality forum proposed by GU VP Mrittunjoy and it was decided that we will have two intersectionality-related events:

1. A meeting of all GU liberation officers (LGBTQ, Womens, International and BME Officers; other officers are welcome to join) to discuss about ideas, realities and plans to facilitate intersectionality
2. A wider forum for the students in general to discuss intersectionality, where the liberation officers and even resource-persons can join in to engage with students regarding their experiences and ideas.

d) *Council suggestions and/or policy development* - Council motions were discussed. Families Officer Karthick sought the content for two motions (one relating to childcare that has just expired and could be renewed). LGBTQ+ Officer Alessandro discussed about his Equality Champions motion and that he would like to develop it for the next

Council. Womens Officer Sara has already begun working on the HeForShe motion. GU VP Mrittunjoy discussed about the possibilities of having motions for lobbying for better training of Graduate Tutors (including mental health first aid training possibly) and the problem of lack of departmental welfare support (and the possibility of bringing a welfare signposting side to the work of the Faculty Reps).

e) *Housing Campaign* – The executive committee was informed about the progress of the campaign.

f) *Experiences related to departmental welfare and possible directions of campaigning*  
– *Discussed in point above.*

g) *Discussion on Graduate Tutors* – *Discussed in point above.*

h) *Social Media and Communications* – It was decided that we shall be having regular communication and posts relating to the work of executive officers on GU blog and social media. A rota for blog posts was proposed and one blog per officer per term was suggested by GU VP Mrittunjoy. The rota begins from Easter 2019. The blog posts could pertain to anything from campaign issues to matters of relevance and interest to the officers' offices. Also, any post to be shared on social media were said to be send to the Vice President for sharing.

## 4.A) Improving Postgraduate Representation

As part of our initiative to know how we can improve postgraduate representation in Cambridge, we are undertaking a consultation with our members on the same.

Recently we launched a survey

([https://cambridge.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_4UxkKczrTr9VfN3?fbclid=IwAR0y1ppOn0OfGospTHHi4xlQQJFpESx-KFukWWBOLmwcvodkNejwdRsSodE](https://cambridge.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4UxkKczrTr9VfN3?fbclid=IwAR0y1ppOn0OfGospTHHi4xlQQJFpESx-KFukWWBOLmwcvodkNejwdRsSodE)) to know what

students feel about this and how well represented they feel in the collegiate

university. Responses will be confidential and will not be shared with other

organisations. We would like you to please share this with your respective MCRs and

let us know what GU members in your college have to say about this.

## 4.B) Housing Toolkit

As part of our housing and living expenses campaign, we have developed a housing

toolkit for MCRs in Cambridge, to help them initiate and coordinate a sustained

campaign to seek affordable and fair housing in their colleges. We have had one Grad

Open as part of the campaign and we have also had discussions and consultations

with students during our engagement (drop-in) sessions. As part of the toolkit, we

have the following three elements

1. The *Housing Toolkit* introductory report and document, which highlights some of the nuances of housing in the collegiate university. It also lays out ways to initiate rent negotiations in your college.
2. The *Housing feedback forms*, which are to know what your MCR members have to say about housing and living expenses in your college. This includes forms and general questions that you could ask your members.

3. The *ANUK Compliance chart*, which are a good way to gauge if your college violates any provisions and responsibilities under the ANUK Housing Code. You can print this on an A3 sheet and highlight all that your college does. Any of the points not covered translates to a violation of the ANUK code.

We would like to discuss how best to use the toolkit with the MCRs and whether supplementary workshops are required for the same, possibly for MCR Welfare Officers and/or Presidents.

## 5.A) Motion to convene an Elections Committee

**Proposer:** Mrittunjoy Guha Majumdar, Vice-President

**Seconded:** Sofia Ropek-Hewson, President

The GU council notes

- 1) The following positions were filled by co-option, a by-election is required to fill these positions of Faculty Liaison Officer, Disabled Students Officer and Open Portfolio Officer
- 2) Their term of Office extends to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019
- 3) Schedule E.7 states, "An Elections Committee shall be convened by the Council before the opening of nominations for all GU elections or by-elections", and that "The Elections Committee shall carry out and uphold all rules pertaining to the conduct of elections"
- 4) Schedule E.8 states, "The Elections Committee shall normally comprise five people, consisting of the Returning Officer, two members of the GU Council, the CUSU Co-Ordinator and one member of the Trustees, *unless otherwise determined by the Council.*"
- 5) Schedule E.9 states, "the Returning Officer for elections shall normally be the President, or their deputy appointed by the Elections Committee or Student Council".

The GU Council believes

- 1) The President has acted as Returning Officer in the elections this year, and should be approved as a member of the Elections Committee
- 2) That as this is a by-election the three sabbatical officers, should sit on the Election committee to ensure a speedy process
- 3) Any members of Council wishing to stand as members of the Elections Committee should do so under item on the agenda.

The GU council resolves

- 1) To establish an Elections Committee for the by-election of the office of Faculty Liaison Officer, Disabled Students Officer and Open Portfolio Officer
- 2) To elect the Vice-President & Welfare and Rights Officers as members of the Elections Committee, as well as Evie Aspinall (CUSU President)
- 3) To approve the President (Sofia Ropek Hewson) as Returning Officer for the election
- 4) That the ballot will open at 3pm on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May and close at 12.30pm on 29<sup>th</sup> may
- 5) Nominations will open from the 1<sup>st</sup> May at 9am and close on 16<sup>th</sup> May at 12pm (noon), this will be via a one sided A4 manifesto and a letter noting the ability to serve in this position

## 5.C) Departmental Welfare

**Proposer:** Mrittunjoy Guha Majumdar, Vice-President, Graduate Union

**Seconder:** Sofia Ropek-Hewson, President, Graduate Union

The GU Council notes

Postgraduate and mature undergraduate students are often more closely associated with their departments than their colleges. As a result, the lack of welfare provisions and support in departments as against colleges is a matter of grave concern. We may have counsellors, tutors and nurses in colleges, along with MCR Welfare Officers, but there are hardly any such provisions for the students in their respective departments.

The GU Council believes

1. The welfare and wellbeing of the postgraduate and mature undergraduate students in the Collegiate University is of paramount importance.
2. Provisions for access and support should be available for students across the Collegiate University, be it in colleges or departments.

The GU Council resolves

1. To make the topic of increasing welfare and wellbeing support systems in departments a priority.
2. To incorporate welfare signposting duties in the mandate of Faculty Representatives associated with the Graduate Union.
3. To lobby for increased collaboration between the departments and the University Counselling Service for workshops and support-based events in the departments.

### References:

[1] University of Cambridge. "Student wellbeing". Portal. Available here:

<https://www.studentwellbeing.admin.cam.ac.uk/>