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**Graduate Union
17 Mill Lane
Cambridge CB2 1RX**

MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE UNION COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY 7 OCTOBER 2013

Meeting Commenced at 17:35

Present: Richard Jones, GU President (Chair)
Guy Edwards, GU Secretary
Girija Godbole, GU International Officer
Deniz Vatansever, GU International Officer
Padmini Ram, GU Families Officer
Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, GU/CUSU Welfare & Rights Officer
Felicity Osborne, CUSU President
Proust Raphaël, Magdalene College (MCR Secretary)
Raeland Verhallen, Gonville & Caius (MCR President)
Luke Maishmal, Wolfson (MCR External)
Marco Devesas Campos, Corpus (MCR Vice President)
Lindsey Askin, Queens' (MCR External)
Andrew Buskell, Clare Hall (HPS Faculty Rep.)
Henry Catheart, Queens' (MCR President)
Ben Abrams, King's (College Officer)
Omar Shamayleh, Hughes Hall (MCR VP & External Officer)
Benedict Lindeiner, Jesus (MCR Treasurer)
Richard Butler, St John's (SBR President)
Janina Voigt, Trinity (MCR President)
Jordan Ramsey, Churchill (MCR President)
Josh McTigue, St Catharine's (MCR Co-president)
Finbarr Leacy, Peterhouse (MCR President)

The President (RJ) opened the meeting, noting apologies and absences, and highlighting the role of the President as Chair of the Council Meeting and the Secretary (GE) acting as secretary.

1. Minutes

No minutes of the previous meeting were available.

2. Actions from previous meeting

No actions available.

3. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4. Matters for discussion

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4.1. Operational and budget update

The President (RJ) reported to the Council on the year-end estimates for the 2012/13 financial year, highlighting a small deficit of approximately £3000. Audited accounts will be presented in due course following approval by the Board of Trustees. The President highlighted the activities undertaken in the GU over summer, including improvements to the Toddler Group, events for international students, and engagement with the University on policy issues, including combined University and College Fee, the planned re-working of the research student Code of Conduct by the Academic Division of the University and the relationship between colleges and departments with respect to studentships for research students and the graduate college fee negotiations. In addition, the President reported that he had begun representing graduate students on a very large number of University and College committees, and in rebuilding the GU's reputation across Cambridge after the issues associated with the previous President's early departure from office.

4.2. Graduate Union Constitution

The President (RJ) reported that the Constitution is not yet finalized, and will be presented to the Council once it has been approved in draft form by the Board of Trustees and the University.

4.3. Elections for Executive Committee & Trustee Board

The Secretary (GE) and the President (RJ) reported that elections were to a large degree dependent on the progress of the Constitution, but noted that the plan is to appoint, following an appropriate nomination and advertisement process, a new Board of Trustees in November / December 2013, with Executive Committee elections planned for Michaelmas 2013. Board of Trustee appointments would be recommended to the Council by the Executive Committee of the GU, with the Council given the option to approve the proposed Board as a 'slate', rather than to decide on individual candidates.

4.4. Annual General Meeting

The Secretary reported that, as an AGM had not been held for 2012/13, one would need to be planned for during the current academic year (again, depending on resolving the ongoing challenges around the Constitution), but that the longer term strategy would be to return to an AGM held at the end of the sabbatical officers' term of office, circa June in each year.

5. Other business

5.1. Welfare and Rights Officer Update

The WRO (HHM) reported on increased staffing availability in the Student Advice Service and an ongoing concern with the quality of PhD supervision. The Advice Service is currently investigating the governance of PhD supervisors. In addition, the Toddler Group is growing beyond volunteer capacity, and funding is being sought from the University to engage professional support for the children who attend the group. The WRO also reported on activity to provide a more grad-suitable sexual health service, with year-round coverage.

5.2. GU Handbook and Freshers' Events

The President highlighted the availability of the GU Handbook and the planned Freshers' events.

6. Schedule of future meetings.

It was agreed that future GU Councils would be set for:

- **18 February 2014**
- **22 April 2014**
- **17 June 2014 (AGM)**

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Further meetings in Michaelmas 2013 would be subject to the progress of the constitution, but a meeting is provisionally scheduled for 12 November.

Meeting closed at 18:09