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

MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE UNION COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 5 December 2013

Meeting Commenced at 12:35

Present: Richard Jones, GU President (Chair)
Emma Beswick, Member Services Coordinator (Acting Secretary)
Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, GU/CUSU Welfare and Rights Officer
Chris Truscott, Robinson (MCR External)
Finbarr Leacy, Peterhouse (MCR President)
Jerome Greenfield, St. Catherine's (MCR External)
Paul Merchant, St John's (SBR VP)
Jordan Ramsey, Churchill (MCR President)
Alexandra (Sasha) East, Wolfson (MCR President)
Elena Zezlina, Clare Hall (FSI) / MML Faculty Rep.
Lindsey Askin, Queens' (MCR External)
Marco Devesas Campos, Corpus Christi (MCR VP)
Leah Oppenheimer, Girton (MCR VP)

Apologies: Charlie Barlow, Academic Affairs Officer (Joint)
Girija Godbole, International Officer (Joint)
Padmini Ram, Families Officer
Karthik Depuru Mohan, Academic Affairs Officer (Joint)

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 Member Services Coordinator (Emma Beswick) acting as interim secretary for council meetings.

1. Declarations of interest

No declarations

2. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved (with exception of misspelling Henry Cathcart's surname – to be corrected).

3. Actions arising from previous meeting

No actions carried forward.

4. Matters for discussion

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1. **President's update**

Michaelmas 2013 has been a busy and rewarding term at the GU, with a focus on operations, management and internal governance. Successful Freshers' events included afternoon tea for international students, a comedy night and a club night at Lola Lo. The GU handbook was circulated and features on the GU website homepage. The process of finalising the GU constitution has taken longer than expected; therefore the referendum will take place next term. The GU Executive Committee continues to meet biweekly: the international officers have established a good relationship with the International Student Team, and the extremely dedicated Families officer has secured funding from the University for the GU parent and toddler scheme. RJ has been busy representing graduate students on numerous committees, including the University Council, the Graduate Tutors Committee, CCSSU (Council Committee for Supervision of Student Unions), the Equality and Diversity Committee, the General Board Education Committee, Senior Tutors Committee, Welfare and Finance Committee, the Library Syndicate, the Accommodation Syndicate, the Joint Advisory Committee, and many others.

2. **Welfare & Rights Officer's Update**

Over £2500 of funding has been secured for the GU Parent-Toddler Coffee Mornings, now run by a professional childcare worker rather than volunteers. This will act as a launch pad for consistent review of the needs of graduate student-parents. After two years, depending upon the reviews, future funding will be secured.

Further funding (>£8000) has been secured for the Sexual Health Scheme: all sexual health supplies are now free. College unions must agree to a code of practice in order to provide a safe and consistent service to students, and must provide feedback on the quantities distributed. If MCRs want to be involved, please email Helen Hoogewerf-McComb. HHM is running a sexual health training session over the holidays for any MCRs who require training. For now, any students can receive free and anonymous supplies from the GU or CUSU.

A 3-year plan for the Student Advice Service has been made, including the goal of a quality assurance mark. The SAS will identify issues commonly encountered by graduate students and feed this into the SAS and GU's strategy. The WaR Officer continues to do casework with the advice service.

Overall, there have been many successful increases in funding and resources from the University as a result of campaigning. Once the issues of the constitution/Trustees are dealt with, the GU will dedicate all time and energy to providing such services for graduate students.

3. **GU Constitution**

The GU Trustees were content with the constitution by the end of September, but university / legal advisors have suggested several amendments. These suggested amendments are minor and largely procedural, thus the expectation is that the constitution will be published by the start of/early in the Lent Term. Near beginning of Lent term, the GU will host a GU Council Meeting to offer the constitution for approval on a take-or-leave basis. Votes for this referendum will be counted in Week 3, and the GU should be functioning under the new constitution by Week 4 of Lent Term 2014. Then, a new trustee board will be appointed.

4. **Interim Trustee Board (renewal of Chris Page's trusteeship)**

RJ and HHM continue as trustees for the duration of their sabbatical term, expiring in July

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2014. The other trusteeships expired on 30 Nov 2013, and as the GU requires three trustees, Chris Page (2012-13 WaR Officer) has agreed to carry on as a trustee until new trustees are appointed under the new constitution. The GU Council **authorises** the continuation of Chris Page's trusteeship.

5. Interim Executive Committee Membership

The previous EC was elected at Council Meeting in May, with term due to expire 30 Nov 2013. The EC have made fantastic achievements in keeping the GU running, and solving problems from last year. Some members of the committee have volunteered to continue in their posts (namely Padmini Ashok, Karthik Depuru Mohan, Charlie Barlow, Girija Godbole, and Deniz Vatansever). These interim arrangements will expire once new constitution is in place, and the GU will hold substantive elections for the entire committee. The GU Council **authorises** these interim arrangements.

Other business

The President would value the opportunity to meet MCR committees to discuss the future of the GU and receive feedback regarding graduate representation. MCR Presidents are invited to please let RJ know of a suitable time for this proposed meeting.

Meeting closed at 13:00