

Ustinov College GCR General Meeting Minutes



7:00 p.m., 16/11/2016

1. Apologies: KR

2. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Minutes passed on general aye.

a. Issues Arising from Last Minutes

Following the last meeting, Nicky Burbach, Will Glossop, Yi Xu, Gaurish Chawla, Alexander Hampton, George Pegler, Alex Papadopoulos and Matthew Roberts were all elected for the GCR Committee positions they were standing for.

3. Reports from Officers

a. President [KR]

[JF updating on behalf of KR.]

Last week was first meeting of Sheraton Park Working group. Attendees included JG, JF, KR; representatives from JCRs/GCRs/SCRs of Ustinov, Josephine Butler, and Queens' Campus colleges; and representatives from University Executive Committee. Bar will be present at SP site. University taking forward plans for MUGA access and use of swimming pool at Durham School for Ustinov students. Current plans do not include a music room, but has been noted as an important feature by Sian Broadhurst [SB] of the UEC. SB also noted the importance of effective communication between UEC and students. UEC plan to set up billboards in Fisher House regarding plans for SP and also organise focus groups with students to discuss site.

Flyers deposited on chairs of all attendees at this meeting are material that was distributed at the Postgraduate Open Day as part of the Alternative Open Day campaign. The campaign was not GCR affiliated but highlighted concerns held by many postgraduate students. Prospective students were told to email the Vice Chancellor regarding any concerns raised by information on the flyers.

b. Treasurer [XM]

Deposited money from Bonfire Night formal tickets. GCR was on budget for induction week events.

c. Vice President [JF]

New accessories for keyboard purchased for music room. UV light for parties installed. One of the speakers is currently broken, but repairs are being investigated.

d. Clubs and Societies Officer [WG]

Discussions ongoing regarding setting up an online room booking system for spaces societies can use on Howland's Farm.

i. Ratification of Yoga Society

Proposal: *To ratify Yoga society as an official Ustinov GCR society.*

Proposer: Xiaoxiao Ma

Secunder: Will Glossop

XM: Last Friday, successful first Yoga society session was held. Students asked to pay £1 to attend course to cover instructor fees. Hope new members can attend.

Vote: Ratification of Yoga society passes unanimously.

e. International Officer [YX]

Organising trip to York on Dec 11th. Ticket prices £5 for GCR members, £7 for non-GCR, £3 for kids. Coaches leave at 9 a.m. and return at 5 p.m. Had to be moved from Dec 10th to 11th due to schedule clash with Christmas childrens' party. Approximate cost ~£800 for two coaches plus £144 for parking.

f. Livers Out Representative [AH]

Organising college trip to see new Star Wars film on 15th – 20th December.

g. Acting DSU Liaison Officer [TAB]

Ustinov did not get through to next stage of University challenge competition. Election for NUS delegates occurring soon. Proposal for a DSU Postgraduate Officer also currently being discussed. President and Academic Affairs Officer of DSU will be holding a drop-in session next week – more information will be advertised nearer the time.

4. Agenda Items

a. Insurance Renewal

i. Motion to Approve Insurance

Proposal: *The GCR shall approve the payment of a total of £2461.80 for insurance; £931.80 of which will be spent to insure GCR property and £1530.00 for Directors and Officers insurance cover.*

Proposer: Xiaoxiao Ma

Secunder: Will Glossop

Insurance needed to cover loss of property and to protect GCR officers. As charity we are required to be fully insured. For reference, last year costs were £1621.80 for officers and £931.48 for property. Insurance company are currently awaiting payment.

Questions: None

Vote: Motion passes unanimously.

b. York Trip Expenses

i. Motion to Approve York Trip Budget

Proposal: *Motion to approve up to £1300 to spend on coaches and parking costs for college trip to York.*

Proposer: Yi Xu (Catherine)

Secunder: Xiaoxiao Ma

Questions: None

Vote: Motion passes unanimously.

5. Hustings

Two minute talk for each hust. Then candidates open to questions from the floor. Every

question must be directed at all candidates. Voting happens immediately afterwards online.

a. Communications Officer

Candidate: Yue Li [YL]

Secunder: Jasmine Cross

YL: Want to be involved with the GCR community. Second postgraduate degree in Durham. Worked as office secretary through undergraduate and first postgraduate time here. Also have previously worked at a well-known national charity. Used social media to keep volunteers informed. Also communicated with public to make them aware of activities run by the charity. Have experience with this role and wants to be part of the GCR team.

Questions:

Do you have any experience making posters?

YL: Have had some experience. Not particularly skilled at it, but will help to make them to best of my ability.

Do you have any experience with the media team?

YL: I have had prior experience with photography and am eager to learn new skills for this role.

We often struggle to get people to attend GCR meetings. How would you advertise the event to encourage people to come?

YL: We need to give information about the time/location and explain what the event entails. Will email all students invited. Will also design posters to leave in kitchens as was done for Induction Week events.

b. Bar Steward

Candidate: Beth Nelder [BN]

Name of Secunder: Lucy Foster

BN: Work at bar. No bar steward currently. Love working at bar and Fisher house – I want to be involved at making sure everyone gets what they want out of it.

Questions:

What does the role of Bar Steward entail?

BN: Bar Steward is a liaison role between GCR and the bar. Bar is run by college, but bar staff mainly students. I think bar steward is needed to ensure good communication between all groups which have a stake in the success of the bar.

We shall be moving to SP next year and University is asking us how we would like the bar at the new site. Would you be willing to be involved in this dialogue?

BN: Absolutely – I think it is highly important.

What is one most important thing about the bar that you would want to keep at SP?

BN: The social space – the best part of the bar is that it is a welcoming and accessible space for students. The provision for student employment is also very important.

Do you have any opinions on the current whisky selection on offer?

BN: No, but I know many have strong opinions. I am willing to listen to people's

views on this.

Is there any overlap with the café?

No, the bar is run independently from the café.

c. Welfare Representative (Female)

Candidate: Seowli Khor [SK] (Ashley)

Secunder: Jasmine Cross

SK: As students, our goal is to achieve academic success, but we also want to enjoy our time here. Want to be point of contact for any issues. Also want to be a source of information, advertising facilities such as the Night Bus. I will be contactable via my office, my email and Facebook. In addition, I wish to run health and safety workshops covering topics such as self defence/martial arts.

Questions:

The GCR does not currently have a Welfare Officer. Would you be willing to cover some of the responsibilities of Welfare Officer in this role?

SK: Yes, I would be happy to stand in on this role until someone is elected.

Are you aware that all committee members need to commit to general responsibilities such as office hours and clean-up after parties?

SK: Yes.

d. Press Secretary

Candidate: Dan Brunsdon [DB]

Secunder: Jasmine Cross

DB: Only been at Ustinov for this term. Work by current GCR has been great for formals and other events – thank you. However, they are running on a half team and I want to contribute my skills. Ran departmental society at my old University, running events and communications. Also was research assistant for lecturer, which required me to organise an event and liaise with attendees. Correspondence, emailing and volunteering is what I've been doing in work experience, and these are all skills that I will need for this role.

Questions:

We used to include a quote at the bottom of newsletter. More recently, a short film was included. Do you want to include anything like this?

DB: I would discuss ideas with previous press secretaries. I would avoid films to spare people my bad music taste.

Do you have any experience with Photoshop?

DB: I have some limited experience, but I would use responsibilities to delegate any tasks involving Photoshop.

The Press Secretary also sits on Communications committee in addition to being responsible for the newsletter. Would you also be happy to help with other communications activities?

DB: In my experience running the departmental society at my old University, I was the president/secretary/treasurer combined. Where I can help with other roles I will.

e. GCP Liaison Officer

Candidate: Alyssia MacAlister [AM]

Secunder: Jarno Valimaki

AM: Part of GCP. GCP set up by college to promote intercultural relations. Here to liaise with GCR to make two work in tandem. I am a project coordinator with the GCP, on the Media team, and the Editor of the Ustinovian Magazine. Proud to be member of college and want to make it as fun as engaging as it could be.

Questions:

Which GCR roles would you be primarily interacting with?

AM: I will be first person in this role. My understanding that I will be point of contact to discuss conflicts of interests/resource requests – a middleman to make things easier. I shall likely be primarily liaising with the Communications Officer, Secretary, Chair, and President.

Say the GCP want to run an event that the GCR would be more suited for, despite the GCR not having time to run it immediately. How would you deal with this?

AM: Hasn't arisen yet. Event could be run with volunteers to alleviate time pressures – I helped out the GCR with the Children's Halloween party earlier in the year. Broadly, the GCP run more academic events, whereas the GCR are more focussed on student involvement and social activities.

How do you plan on liaising with the GCP– via regular meetings, or through regular online updates to the committee?

I am a GCP Project Coordinator, so I shall be having regular meetings GCP members. I am willing to come to GCR meetings once a month if appropriate to provide updates.

How far ahead do GCP book events, given the GCR book events for the whole year in advance.

Each team is separate. Teams need to have booked space for events at least two weeks in advance. Ideally, teams should plan full term of events in advance. This would be much clearer for GCR.

This also seems to be a good way to avoid issue of clashing that has arisen in the past.

f. Entertainment Officer

Candidate: Abhishek Ghamande [AG]

Second: Jasmine Cross

AG: I have been in Durham for close to 45 days now. I think Fisher House is biggest source of socialisation, and I want to make it more entertaining. I do not want to commit to any specific plans immediately; instead, I would like to listen to ideas from people to find out the kind of events they want.

Questions:

How would you promote events?

AG: I don't think promotion prior to the event is important, since people are studying during the week. Instead, I shall put focus on trying to make sure people attend on the night.

Any ideas?

Do not want to commit to anything – I want to listen to other people's suggestions.

Could you commit to one, if pushed?

A Bollywood night held in Fisher House.

How do you see this role? Would it be primarily coming up with ideas for events?

I see it as mainly discussing event ideas from myself and other people with the rest of the committee.

g. Formal Secretary

Meihao Cheng not present for hustings, and thus forfeit their candidacy for the role.

Candidate: Hongyan Zhao [HZ]

Secunder: Yi Xu

HZ: Studied public organisation in undergrad, so I have practical ideas on how to run events. Formal dinners are a symbol of each culture. If I were elected, I would combine ideas from different cultures to give themes for events. Formals are a way of making new friends and building people's networks. Formal dinners are a new experience for myself and I want to be take part as an organiser as well as an attendee.

Candidate: Yuxiong He [YH]

Secunder: Yiqing Lin

YH: I think that activities run in Ustinov are great, and want to be involved in making it a good experience for students. Ustinov has large population of Asian students – as one myself, I can effectively communicate with this group. I held a student union role during my undergraduate degree, so have experience with a role requiring good communication and teamwork.

Questions:

Setting up for formals takes lot of physical work, starting at 2pm on the day of the formal. Last year's Social Committee was good at this – do you have the time to commit to set up formals?

YH: Yes, I do, particularly on Fridays when formals will be held.

HZ: I will need to find the balance between studies and this role, but I should have the time needed.

Do either of you have lectures on Friday that could prevent you from setting up?

YH & HZ: No.

The current system of buying formal tickets requires queueing at the GCR office. How would you improve this?

HZ: I want to supply tickets online, via Facebook or the college website.

YH: I believe the current system is fair, but would look into setting up a Possible random ballot for ticket allocation out of those interested..

If formal tickets were sold online, how would online ticketing work?

YH: I think online ticketing is a bad idea, since it may increase chance of people clicking to sign up for tickets without paying for them. I would prefer a random lottery to allocate formal tickets..

HZ: If online tickets are unpopular, one could have multiple selling points in college instead rather than the GCR office, using multiple queues to reduce wait times.

Formals are important for people to make new friends How would you encourage people to make new friends at formals?

HZ: It is not a good choice to have long tables. We should have round tables or stand during the meal to encourage interaction.

YH: I would add tables and chairs so more people can attend formals.

People often pick who they want to sit with. Do you have any ideas on how to encourage people to break out of usual social group at formals?

YH: Yes – the random lottery idea for ticket allocation would solve this, as people would not be able to pick.

HZ: It is not reasonable for attendees to sit with only people they know. I would try to ensure students from a minimum of 2 different countries would sit together on the same table.

Do either of you know how to use Photoshop?

YH & HZ: No.

What would you spend the budget for decorations on?

HZ: I would spend it on table decorations representing the countries of the students attending.

YH: Does the budget only cover decorations? *No, it can also be used for entertainment.* If the budget is only for decorations, then I would choose flowers. Flowers make the event feel more formal and bring people closer to nature.

Do you have any interest in helping with/running events involving sharing meals that aren't formal, like the International Dress event run by the GCP?

YH: Yes – could run an event where people can play table games/card games. Such events are popular in Asia. They are a good experience for everyone to get involved and get people to know each other. Would require providing a table and game for everyone, so they can talk, eat, and play.

HZ: In formal dinners we can have different styles and ways to organise them, to appeal to different interests. We won't be able to force people to attend, but we can make them more appealing by varying the styles and themes.

h. DSU Liaison Officer

Candidate: Thom Addinall-Biddulph [TAB]

Secunder: Lissa Gardner

JG: AS TAB has been acting as DSU Liaison Officer since the last general meeting, he only needs ratification to be elected into this position.

TAB: I have been the DSU Liaison Officer since Oct 2015. Did not run again at the last General Meeting, but have since been co-opted into the Executive Committee as acting DSU Liaison Officer. Since I took the role, I have increased turnout in DSU elections from 2% to 5%, which is a significant improvement despite the small figures. I have a good working relationship between current DSU officers, and I believe the DSU is more receptive to postgraduate concerns than before. I want to continue making sure that the SU does not forget we exist in topics where undergraduates and postgraduates are in conflict.. I also want to make sure Ustinov students are aware of DSU societies, since the DSU run 220+ student societies that are available for postgraduate students to join. I want to make sure you are aware of the DSU and vice versa.

Questions:

At the start of term, there was a Ustinov-specific societies fair. The DSU had something similar for all students that was intense due to the large number of attendees. Is it possible for the DSU to run an event like ours for their societies held at Ustinov?

TAB: A postgraduate-only event to advertise societies used to be run but does not currently. In January the DSU holds a refresher's fair, but that has been run badly in the past. I will liaise with the DSU to make sure it is run better this year. I can also email the Activities Officer about hosting a potential event for societies to advertise to postgraduates at Ustinov.

Vote: Ratification of TAB as DSU Liaison Officer approved unanimously.

6. Any Other Business

I would like to run for the role of DUCK officer. How can I do so?

JG: We shall discuss this with the Executive Committee. We can vote people in absent roles in an acting manner, but candidates will need to stand formally at next set of elections.

Alexander Blair

GCR Secretary

16/11/2016