

Ustinov College GCR General Meeting Minutes



7:00 p.m. 08/10/2017

1. Apologies:

Present: JG, TAB, AS, AB, XM, VU, TP, AH, JO, JS, MR, WG

2. Introduction to DSU Sabbatical Officers

Megan Croll, President of the DSU, introduces herself to everyone in attendance. She says that the DSU is there to be a community, and to run sports and societies, events and pub quizzes amongst many other things. The DSU has a support and advice service that can be accessed by all students, for example there are people who can look at contracts for you. Megan states she has less of a remit than other sabbatical roles; she is paid to work for the students, and to focus on the points that were in her manifesto. This includes fighting against increasing accommodation fees, making the college Common Rooms more bulletproof so the university cannot pick away at them, and working on improving student consultation. Megan finishes by highlighting the DSU website, durhamsu.com, which has a lot of information including on how to get involved in sports and societies, and says that students should feel free to email her if they have any questions.

Sabrina Seel, the first Postgraduate Academic Officer of the DSU, now introduces herself. She is going into her sixth year at Durham University; having already completed a Masters here, she continued on to do a PhD. Sabrina would like to point out three objectives that she has for the coming year. The first is to make sure the postgraduate voice is heard through the university. She points out that this is a big issue, and postgraduates here are often overlooked despite making up a large portion of the student population. She will be sitting on the DSU, the Council and the Senate as a representative for postgraduates, and would like to introduce postgraduate forums in the Student Union to have a chat with her or any of the other DSU Officers (hopefully with some free pizza).

Secondly, Sabrina would like to work on postgraduate researcher supervision. From her own experience, she realises that the relationship a student has with their supervisor can be quite tricky. A PhD takes three or four years to complete, so it is a very important relationship to develop. She notes there is a large variance between the departments, and not a set standard. She would like PhD students to know that there is someone they can go and talk to about issues with their supervisor, because at the moment a lot of people do not know where to begin. For example, if the supervisor is the head of the department, or is married to the head of department, supervisees may not know where to turn in the event of an issue. Sabrina would like to set something up to deal with this situation.

Thirdly, Sabrina would like to try to address the issue of mental health. She notes that she has been quite open with her struggle with depression, and feels that if other people want to they should have somewhere to go that can make this possible. She also points out that if there are people who do not want to talk about their mental health then this is of course not a problem. She would also like to set somewhere up for international students, as moving to a new country can be quite hard sometimes to adjust to.

Sabrina has an undergraduate counterpart, Rosa Tallack, who is a Welfare Representative for DSU and works with associations and Common Room Welfare Officers. She ends by calling for everyone present to check out the DSU twitter account and the DSU website, and states that if there any problems then students should feel free to email her.

TAB points out to everyone that AH is our DSU Officer.

3. **Voting Issue and Emergency Motion [TAB]**

A centralised problem began today with the online voting system meaning it cannot currently be accessed. Usually an online vote is held for the GCR Committee elections; this is not currently possible. TAB suggests that for this meeting a secret ballot is carried out as a substitution. The downside of this is only people present at the meeting will be able to vote. However, TAB is unsure how long it will take CIS to get the online system up and running again, and in terms of the candidates who are standing up giving a speech, it might be worth voting for them immediately and not making them wait for what could potentially be a week or more.

A member of the audience objects to the proposal, saying that there are a disproportionate number of people from the HF site due to the meeting being held there. The result of the vote may be skewed due to a lack of representation from Sheraton Park and from livers' out. JG agrees with the point brought forward, saying that it is indeed a down side. However, he points out that a minibus is running between the sites so hopefully this will have encouraged some people from SP to attend, but again agrees that it is not ideal.

Proposal: *To carry out a secret ballot using the printed ballots rather than conducting an online vote, due to the system being down.*

Proposer: Thom Addinall-Biddulph

Secunder: Alastair Stewart

Questions: *Approximately how many people vote on the online voting system usually? Is the proportion of GCR members here comparable to the online vote?*

TAB states that the AGM had just shy of 100 people voting in the elections; the number of students attending the meeting would represent less than that. However, he points out that was quite an exceptional case, and usually only forty or fifty people vote in these elections. JG points out, however, that there are more members of the college this year, so perhaps these figures from the past do not well represent the number of people who would vote this year.

If the secret ballot was not held, how would the voting system work? Would the online system be advertised?

Before answering, TAB points out that he as Chairperson is neutral in the motion, and is just passing on information. He says if the motion were not to pass, he will have words with CIS. If the voting system is fixed within a day or two then it would be fine, but if it got to Tuesday and the system was not fixed then another General Meeting would have to be called, and everyone would have to run again.

Would it be possible to record the hustings and make them available to everyone?

JF, the Tech Officer, could attempt to find a camera and try to film things. However, it is pointed out that the issue still stands – another GM would have to be called after Tuesday. The decision is to proceed and vote on the motion.

Vote: 36 votes for, 14 votes against, 2 abstentions. The proposal carries, the election will happen by secret ballot. JS requests that it be advertised on the Facebook page that this is how the election will be carried out in case anybody wants to join the meeting knowing this information. MR will do this immediately.

The meeting will now proceed as normal.

4. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Minutes from the General Meeting held on 27/07/2017 – these will be voted on at the next GM as they were not sent out prior to this meeting.

a. Issues Arising from Last Minutes

Results of Elections following Last Meeting

Following the last meeting, Vinay Utham (Bar Steward) and James Smith (Welfare Officer) were elected for the GCR Committee positions they were standing for.

5. Reports from Officers

a. President [JG]

JG introduces himself, and extends a warm welcome to all new Ustinovians. The biggest update is that Ustinov has now moved in to Sheraton Park. At the last meeting, JG reported that the GCR were fighting to get a bar licence for SP; this was successful. Ian Macdonald, Ustinov's Business Operations Manager, had to defend the GCR's position. It is now licensed from 19:30 – 23:00. Given how opposed residents were at one time to SP having a bar, JG points out it has been quite a success getting one under the terms that currently stand. JG has been pushing to work with the residents, by for example attending the Neville's Cross Community Association and the Sheraton Park Residents Association meetings. He says that he is trying to stop on as a few toes as possible.

The bar and café are largely there, but are not yet complete. They opened last week, but it is not quite up to full capacity.

JG points out that there is a distinct lack of facilities at SP currently. For example, there is no study space. Antony Long claimed the flat kitchens can be used as a study space; JG said this was unacceptable. Ustinov is supposed to be getting some facilities from the Business School, but this has not been sorted yet. As far as sports facilities are concerned, there is currently a sports hall and a MUGA at

HF, but nothing at SP. Ustinov should be getting access to Durham School sports facilities, but there is an issue with the new Maiden Castle pitch which fell through due to the rejection of planning permission. JG states that it is not yet clear if Ustinov will have access to these facilities at the end of this academic year. The music room currently does not exist despite a number of meetings with Joe Farrow, past Vice President, about it. Currently it is being suggested that the GCR use some money on what was going to be developed as a MUGA to gain some facilities. The owners of the land no longer want to settle up with Durham University; that money is now going to be transferred to refurbish the old observatory.

The gym is still not ready at SP. JG says that it is supposed to be filled with equipment in the first couple of weeks of term, and was delayed due to delivery issues. The current expected completion time is 23rd October. There is an issue currently relating to insurance. Currently the door cannot be locked, so everyone has access to the gym. However, it is a requirement of the insurance for a student to be inducted before they are allowed to use the gym – this cannot be enforced if everyone can access the gym at all times. College have been asked to get a quote for swipe card access to be installed; Ian phoned up to get the quote, but there has been no response yet.

JG points out that there have been a lot of other teething problems at SP. College moved the PGCE students in to the site a week before the Wi-Fi worked; it should nearly be working for all residents now. AB points out that it is not fully working yet, to which JG says he has been told around twenty rooms currently have an issue. JG calls for students in attendance to complain to College if it is still not working.

AFS have taken over the running of the HF site, hence why there are now new porters around. JG is unsure how it is running, for example it does not seem reasonable that parcels can only be picked up between 13:00 and 18:00. For the sake of time, this is all JG will mention about SP and HF, despite there being a number of other teething problems.

How open is it going to be to extend hours to, for example, midnight on weekends?
JG contacted Glen and Ian by email, but they refused to put it in writing. He asked for a timeline, but they did not respond to the question. JG points out that we will be good neighbours, we are postgraduates so certainly not as rowdy as many undergraduate colleges. JG will be meeting with the head of the SPRA and head of the NCRA, and has put a discussion on the future of the bar as an agenda item. He is planning on taking them around the bar to show them what it is like on a typical day. As soon as they saw Fisher House they removed their complaints about the bar. JG hopes that in the future the GCR will be able to ask for more late nights; currently there are only six nights, which require the residents associations to be notified two weeks prior to the event, and an email to be sent out to interested residents. VU says he will be discussing this at the Bar Management Committee meeting.

b. Treasurer [AB]

i. Induction Week Budget Review

AB calls for anyone interested in looking at the Induction Week Budget Review to read the print outs that have been handed out around the hall. The initial budget was £3,915, based on the previous year. In terms of like for like spending for things on the original budget, the GCR spent slightly less than the amount budgeted was spent. However, we did go

over due to things that were over looked and not put on the original budget, in particular stash and photos. The main reasons for IW being more expensive this year compared to last was due to having to hold certain events over two sites or two days, for example the formal and the brunch. There was also poor uptake for the trampolining trip. There were comments last year that more active events should be held; we tried this year and it did not succeed.

ii. The GCR Levy

The GCR found out very early on in Induction Week that the way levies are paid for GCR membership has changed for this year. The levy is how the GCR is funded, and allows us to run coach trips, formals, the gym and many other things. Historically livers in were charged the GCR membership automatically, and livers out could opt in to pay the £40. This year, all bar two colleges have switched to an online system. It is now part of 'optional college charges', meaning it is an opt out system for livers in and livers out. AB says the take home message is that if you enjoyed this last week and a half, and would like to help support future vents, then please pay the GCR levy. He points out that if students would rather not, that is of course up to them.

Can I pay afterwards, or pay in cash? It is only a £40 charge and I don't want to set up a direct debit for this.

Yes, it is an option to initially opt out, then come to the GCR office, ask to opt in and pay the £40.

c. Vice President [XM]

The main responsibility of Vice President is to take care of all the facilities. There are still many issues with facilities at SP that JG has been working very hard to try and improve, so XM will not go into detail about these at this time.

At the HF site, there is a music room and the Howlands hall, which can be booked through Sheila (the college Secretary). There are two pool tables, though one is currently broken, and there will hopefully be a new dart board soon. XM has contacted someone to fix the pool table. There are two vending machines; the soft drinks machine is not controlled by us so XM states that if anyone has an issue with it then call the number on the machine. If anyone would like to suggest snacks to go in to the other vending machine, they should contact XM. AB highlights that the vending machines do not accept the new £1 coin.

d. Bar Steward [VU]

Ustinov now has two bars, one on the HF site and one at the SP site. There are a number of things that need to be ironed out at the new bar; VU has repeatedly emailed hospitality about them and will continue to try to get them fixed.

The deadline for applying to be a bar staff member is 23.59 on the 18/10. VU calls for anyone interested to apply, and if they have any questions they should feel free to contact him.

e. Clubs and Societies Officer [TP]

There was a Clubs and Societies Fair during IW, which TP hopes students found useful. If there was not a society there that someone was interested in joining, they should feel free to email TP about setting up a new society. Two new societies will be set up; Hair and Lifestyle, and Darts.

f. Communications Officer [MR]

MR is pleased to see the turnout at the meeting, and hopes it is due to the GCR trying to be more proactive to newcomers. MR is trying to help make the transition to Durham as smooth as possible for all students. A call for ideas or questions regarding how information is communicated to Ustinovians is put out. If anyone has any suggestions, they should contact MR.

g. DSU Liaison Officer [AH]

Megan, Sabrina and AH act as the link between the students of Ustinov and the university. AH is there to remind the university that postgraduate students do exist, and are a very important part of the student population. AH points out that on the back of the campus card there are many useful phone numbers, including Nightbus and Nightline.

h. Induction Officer [WG]

Induction Week happened, and went pretty well. WG is going to organise a poll in order to find out what was done well and what was not done so well. TAB calls for anyone who may have any comments or suggestions on Induction Week to please feel free to talk to any Executive Committee member.

i. International Officer [JO]

Since the last general meeting, a trip to Alnwick was run. During Induction Week, there was a walk looking at the history of crime and punishment. JO has run ISO office hours, and calls for anyone who has any problems to speak to him so he can let College know. There will be a trip to Edinburgh in the near future, which is currently in development, and there will be other trips to local attractions organised soon.

j. (Acting) Livers Out Representative [AH]

AH has been helping livers' out find houses. There was a successful trip to Whisky River run during IW.

k. (Acting) Social Secretary [JG]

Most of the job of Social Secretary has been to help Will with Induction Week. The Summer Ball and party have been booked, and the Bonfire Night Formal has been booked for the 3rd of November.

l. Welfare Representative [JS]

JS - Over the past couple of months as welfare officer, I have started to put into practice the policies outlined in my original manifesto. Welfare officer hours have returned and were run daily during the dissertation deadline period and proved to be successful. Welfare office hours are due to start again this week -

once a week in the evenings at each site. Welfare posts providing information in the Ustinov Facebook group have been receiving positive feedback from students and shall be continued throughout the year. Students are encouraged to add me on Facebook or the welfare officer email address for quick and easy access to welfare support. We provided free fruit for students during dissertation deadline week, ensuring students had a healthy breakfast or snack to aid them during the stressful time. This will be repeated throughout anticipated periods of high stress. I am in contact with the DSU with the DSU welfare meetings to soon start. I have also been giving free (and unofficial) pharmacy advice to those who require it, making it clear to students that this is independent from the college, thus the college is not liable for the information I provide in any way. I also tried to set up a welfare phone – but this idea was dismissed by college. Finally, I have been managing condom, lubricant and feminine hygiene products supplies to ensure all are discretely accessible to students.

One of the issues we are still aiming to overcome is providing a quiet place at the Sheraton site where condoms and feminine hygiene products can be obtained discretely by students. The GCR office is behind the porter's office and currently we are not allowed to stick things (like a pouch) to walls. Now that IW is over, I will have time to talk to Brenda this week to gain some support from college with the aim to allow us to set up a condom/FHP stand in the toilets closest to the Sheraton Social Space. I am confident the issue will be resolved very soon.

The future plans for welfare look promising giving we have candidates for nearly all the Welfare Committee positions. There are early stage plans for stress relief events near the next exam period in January (involving puppies), an alcohol awareness session and a Nightline/ACU brunch. Additionally, I have been collaborating with/pushing/annoying Vinay, our Bar Steward, to create a mocktail menu at the bar, which will hopefully open up the bar a more comfortable and open place for those who do not drink alcohol. The welfare board badly needs updating and this will be tackled once the welfare committee is assembled. All GCR Executive Committee members and sports captains are due to receive bystander training to tackle and challenge sexual harassment. One of my roles will be to remind and ensure that we all challenge any inappropriate behaviour. One other priority is to recruit a LGBT+ rep when the GCR roles are open for re-election soon (or at this GM if anyone is willing to step forward!). We gathered quite a lot of interest in this role throughout induction week, so I am optimistic we can fill it!

6. Agenda Items

There were no agenda items.

7. Hustings

The secret ballot voting will run by a single transferable vote system. TAB calls for everyone to put a number one beside their first choice in candidate, a number 2 beside their next favourite, and so on. Not all people have to have a number beside their name, for example you could just pick your first choice and no more. Furthermore, TAB points

out that if people present do not like any of the candidates running for a particular role, then their first option should be put as 'RON' (reopen nominations).

Due to the online voting system being down, none of the manifestos of the candidates can be seen. Therefore, the husts will now be taken as the manifestos for the candidates.

a. Livers Out Representative

Candidate: Jyotika Thakur

Hust: I am doing my Masters in Law, and have been part of committees in school and university. I will try to make sure that people do not feel homesick after coming from different countries.

Candidate: Clare Wallace

Hust: I am doing my PhD in Mathematics here in Durham, having come back from Paris where I did my Masters. In living abroad and then coming back to Durham to live with my parents, I know how difficult it is to socialise if you do not have the college atmosphere. I want to help people with this in any way that is possible. I think that there should be more events in the city centre, as it can be difficult to get home from college if you live the other side of Durham. I would like to organise events like pub nights, a trip to the pantomime, and other things that will get people involved in the Ustinov lifestyle as much as possible outside of College.

Questions:

Coming up to Howlands / Sheraton is a bit difficult for livers' out. Can you name an event you would like to put on outside of College?

CW – I would love to take people to the pantomime. It is part of the UK experience, and it is probably possible to get a group discount.

JT – I would organise events like pub crawls and walking tours in order to get people to socialise together and have fun together.

Part of job last year was to help people find houses, talk to the DSU to help etc. Will you keep doing this if you are elected this year?

JT – I would definitely like to keep doing this.

CW – One of my office mates just tried to find a flat for seven months and it then fell through so I have witnessed the struggle some people have. I am definitely willing to help with this in an active way.

b. Social Secretary

Candidate: Ashish Mainali

Hust: I am from and am studying Entrepreneurship here in Durham. Nepal is small, but I have travelled to Europe and places in India, amongst others, so have some kind of international experience. Being an international student, I can understand the feeling international students get when they come to a new country. This is the main reason that I want to apply for this role. I want to create a survey that will allow people to suggest events, and I will listen to those requests. I want to gather people together from all different cultures, as in the end this will benefit everyone.

Candidate: Nigel Quinn

Hust: I am from America and am studying International Relations. I have been extremely impressed by the variety of events that have been going on, and would like to get involved in as many ways as possible. During my undergraduate, I was an IPA. In doing this, I had to organise different events for international students, for example cultural exchange nights, an Olympics style event, movie nights, and had great success in the events that I have run. I know if something is not going to be too successful, and will be able to move it in a direction that may work. I want to meet as many people as possible, as I may have lots of ideas but there are so many different cultures here in Ustinov I want to find out events you would be interested in.

Candidate: Shubham Floyd Shukla

Hust: I was born in Ireland, my family is from Ireland, and I am doing my Masters in Business with a financial focus. I want to tell you what I have done before, what I intend to do with this position, and how I intend to do it.

I was a Social Secretary in Nottingham, and was involved with organising international events. I worked with thirty Reps, so I know the amount of work that is required to get things organised. I want to smash events like Bonfire Night and Christmas. I would like to include events that do not require alcohol to be consumed to socialise. For example, perhaps something like a global cuisine picnic, where everyone who joins in can taste food from different cultures and talk to each other. Feedback will be important in helping me gauge what people want. How will I do this? One thing, I will be realistic about how much can be managed in a given time. I will learn from people, recruit a small team and delegate tasks to help the organisation.

Candidate: Paris Swenson

Hust: I have been social sec for the past two years during my undergraduate. I have organised events such as a princess and frog event, and a BBQ after which everyone picked up litter on the beach. I will use the international community in order to try and get as many different events as possible. It would be good to allow people to sign up to events over Facebook, making them easy and accessible. Things like pub quizzes are friendly ways for people to come down and integrate with everyone. Also, as Social Secretary previously I understand the tedious issues relating to finance, health and safety, etc.

Questions: *I like that two of the candidates have pointed out they want non-alcoholic events. What kind of events are you thinking of holding? Perhaps this will give the other two a chance to answer this too.*

PS – In a pub quiz, some people can drink, but not everyone wants to get drunk on a weekday so people do not have to drink. Also, I would like to organise a sports day.

FS – The global cuisine picnic that I mentioned would give people the option of having alcohol, but the focus of the event would be food and conversation. Other events he would need to take time to think about.

NQ – A sports day would be good, maybe not located around the bar. If it was organised outside then it would relieve the pressure of people thinking they have to drink. A pub quiz perhaps not located at the bar, for example using the Howlands building.

AM – Events that I would like to organise include board games, a sports day, pub quizzes and an international day. Learning about where everyone comes from does not need to involve drinking.

People would like to see a cuisine day, however every time it was brought up, the university has said no. The only way a food event can be held is if the food is ordered from Yum. Is there anything else the candidates can think of that would let international students engage, not necessarily involving food?

AM – I would find a way to introduce people's food culture. *MR points out that you cannot cook food and bring it to Fisher House.* He will look for other ideas by organising a poll.

NQ – I would aim to not organise something that could become controversial, for example regarding religion. I would look into doing a survey to get ideas on part of cultures that people would like an exchange on.

FS – Dancing may be a good idea, for example Latin, tango etc. The idea would be not for people to be necessarily good at the dances, but it would give people a chance to come together and try something new.

PS – There are still other things that can be organised, for example the party on Friday had music playing from different cultures, and on the karaoke night people were singing in different languages.

One of the most difficult things we have to deal with is communication, for example there are people not using Facebook or people who do not see the emails etc. What ideas do you have to make people know about the events you may organise?

PS – The old school method of talking to people would be best. For example, telling them what is going on, and be approachable and talkative.

FS – I am going to piggy back on that point and say being available to talk to and being a part of the community is very important. A big part of communication will come from me getting to know people in Ustinov. Another way would be to get people to knock on room doors to advertise an event.

NQ – I agree with lots of the points, for example talking to people. Community engagement is really important, meaning finding out who these events are being put on for. Other ways include posters, leaflets, Facebook, and other types of social media that people may use.

AM – The best way of communicating is through word of mouth. Pick people from different cultures and communicate to them as best as possible. For example, communicate the idea to an Indian person, a Chinese person etc. and they can all spread the news to their friends.

c. Female Welfare Representative (happened after Treasurer)

Candidate: Maryham Abdel Malak

Hust: I am from Egypt, and I have been female for a long time. People only talk about things behind closed doors in my society, and I understand that many topics are quite taboo. I have had secret societies to discuss issues before, and would like something similar here. I have an understanding of a number of cultures, for example I worked in Egypt and in India. There are lots of uneducated women there,

and I was very surprised how just making people aware and educating people made them take control of their lives. Vote for me.

Candidate: Vera Bieber

Hust: I am Vera from Germany, and am doing a PhD in Chemistry. I do not usually like to speak in front of a crowd, but I am very open and approachable. I would like to go for this position as it is important for people to have someone to talk to, even if they just arrived and do not have anyone to talk to. I am 26, so am older than some students here, and have life experience that I can share with everyone. I have done some meditation training in the past, and I speak three languages fluently (English, German and Mandarin) so will be able to talk to a lot of people in their own language.

Candidate: Vaishnavi Bongale

Hust: I am from England, and doing a Masters in International Relations. It is important that all students have access to support, and a place that offers comfort and acceptance during their time here. I want to bring this to Ustinov. I was Student Ambassador at Leicester, and so had constant communication with people. I loved making a difference with people, and I want to do the same here. I want to immerse myself in the community, and be a point of contact for Ustinovians.

Candidate: Rachel Opadiran

Hust: I am a Masters student in Defence Development and Diplomacy. I have zeal and a passion for women support and empowerment. I love to see women win and strive, and so am passionate about taking up this role. I want to be a friendly face for anyone who needs advice or support, or even just a friendly chat. I want to represent the diversity at Ustinov – I can see lots of different ethnicities, creeds, cultures, a beautiful melting pot of all of these cultures. I give my respect to the other candidates; there is no wrong choice, but vote for me.

Candidate: Louise Welsh

Hust: Withdrew.

Questions: *I am the Welfare Officer – thanks for applying. I will be running welfare office hours, and would like the other Officers to help. What would you do if you get a student along who does not, for example, speak English well.*

RO – I lived in China for three months, so have experienced being in a culture that did not speak English at all. I needed a level of communication despite them not understanding what I was saying. Something as simple as Google translate, or signs. The language itself is not necessarily hugely important; one should be patient, and find creative ways to talk to the student in help. Possibly help should be called for, but if I am alone then I would use Google translate, a cup of tea and some biscuits.

VB (Vaishnavi) – I worked in India for 2 months and did not speak the language. Language is not everything; you can communicate through patience and comfort to calm them down. For example, give them a hug. The student may be far away from home, but the instant help they require may be just a patient person. Google translate can be used, and once they have settled down it might be possible to communicate more effectively with them.

VB (Vera) – I think that I have a pretty calm presence, so I would try my best to try and find out what is going on. It may be possible to ask if the person is ok with finding someone who does speak the language.

MM – I may resort to art; an art project that would allow people to communicate, and allow them to share how they feel through, art and music. Just providing a safe space will be enough. If the language is the barrier, there are lots of ways to deal with that. If they had someone come in and the person was comfortable with this that would be great. If not, just making them feel like they are worth something, making them feel like they are being listened to may be enough.

You will be helping out not only in your specific role, but will be helping out at events etc. You will be expected to represent the GCR. Are you willing to engage with this as well?

MM – I very much believe in role rotation, and would be more than happy to be part of other activities, clubs and societies at Ustinov, and be helpful to other people.

VB (Vera) – I am quite happy to get involved with lots of things. I am here for 3 years so want to get involved.

VB (Vaishnavi) – I really want to help out with other roles.

RO – Of course, I am happy to help. I would be representing not just females but the GCR itself, so collaborating with other groups would be fantastic. It would provide an exciting opportunity to learn from each other.

d. Male Welfare Representative

Candidate: Adrian O'Brien

Hust: I am from Columbia, and am doing my Masters in Marketing. I worked as a clinical and health psychologist, so have experience with working with people who have depression. I worked on the health aspect of Psychology, for example on preventing substance abuse and studying substance abuse effects in neurological development. I hope to use my professional and academic learnings to help Ustinovians. If anyone wants to chat, of course he will make himself available.

Questions:

Depression a large issue among postgraduates; how will you promote people to speak out about e.g. depression?

Generalising slightly, having lived in two cultures I find that it is difficult for men to speak about these. I want to put an emphasis on mental health, which is heavily stigmatised. I want to hold events about mental health, raise awareness, and make it clear to everyone that so many people have problems.

College has the policy that you are not able to give advice, as they would be liable. Do you know where you would refer people to etc.?

I believe they have a counselling service here, so I would be able to pass them on to there. They could then help with pointing the person in the right direction.

e. Deputy Social Secretary

Candidate: Hsiao-Yun Hsu

Hust: I want to communicate with other people, and learn new things. I have some experience, as I organised a conference in Taiwan. If I become the DSS, I will

organise more interesting social events. I will help people have a better social life in Ustinov College.

Questions:

Do you have any capability with WeChat? Would you be interested in trying to promote various social events through WeChat?

Yes I could do this.

f. Ents Officer

Candidate: Amr Marzouk

Hust: I have been involved in activities since I was a kid. I do stand-up comedy, and used to do theatre. I sang during the karaoke night. It is important to take part in activities in order to relieve stress. I would like to find out about people's hobbies, for example Instagram photography, hiking etc. I would like each month to have a different themed night, for example a Latin night, or an Egyptian night. For the first time for years I can attend the world cup. I would like to organise a festival for during the world cup celebrating all of the countries, and organise fantasy football.

Candidate: Yaqian Yu

Hust: Did not turn up so has been withdrawn.

Questions: *What events did you feel with the strongest from Induction Week, given you are someone going through Induction Week?*

I got to know a lot of people by hanging out at the bar or with the porters etc. It would be great to continue to do this over the next year.

g. Formal Secretary

Candidate: Jintong Zhou

Hust: You can call me Lorraine. I graduated from university in China, and have a Bachelor degree in translation from Chinese to English and English to Chinese. I am currently studying English lessons for foreign people. During the past four years of university, I have managed jobs such as Secretary. I used to be Secretary for the model United Nations, for example. I have enough experience for a secretary job, and want to help as many people as I can while I am here during this year.

One of the big events in terms of formals is the Summer Ball. It requires a lot of planning compared to other formals and usually you need to work with a committee to plan this more massive event. Do you think you could do this?

Yes, I feel confident with that.

TAB notes that we do have a specific role for organising the ball; Ball Secretary.

Questions: There were no questions.

h. Tech Officer

Candidate: Joe Farrow

Hust: I have been doing the tech in the college for a couple of years. I know how all of the tech works, and in fact set up the tech in here. I want to start to move events over to SP, for example Ustinov Live, to get a feel for how they will work from next year.

Questions: There were no questions.

i. Ecology Representative

Candidate: Farah Samuel

Hust: I am from Pakistan, and am fortunate to be a Commonwealth Scholar here at Durham. I did my undergraduate in Environmental Sciences, working in global climate change, energy etc. Given the relevance of my subject, I feel I would be a good fit for this role. For the last six years I have worked with lots of different communities. I worked for the protection of the environment. Many people find the idea of climate change very boring and people may forget it, or think it is a hoax, but I am from a country that it very much affects. I am all for organising non-alcohol events, for example hikes in the hills near Durham. Durham is so green, let's show some ownership of Durham and the college.

Questions:

A current issue at SP is the over flowing bins; there is a little bit less accessible recycling. Are you willing to work with college to make this facility available at SP?

I am definitely keen to do this. We need to realise that this is a basic education that we need to have. Even as postgraduates some people have not been taught about this. I want to talk to people and let them know the significance of this.

One of the big accomplishments of the Eco Reps has been to put in bike shelters at SP. What they put in were bike rentals, which are locked up. Would you be willing to annoy college enough that these become able to be used?

Yes, I can be quite an annoying person. I will do this.

At the Howlands site people often leave their lights on all night. Do you have any ideas on how to remind students to turn off the lights?

I think we could implement spot checks at both sites. First, hold some sort of induction so people realise they are responsible for their kitchens and rooms. If mums can do it, you can too.

j. Sheraton Park Representative

Candidate: Iris Probst

Hust: Not present, therefore is automatically withdrawn.

k. Press Secretary

Candidate: Sandhita Chandra

Hust: I am running unopposed, but I would like people to vote for me because I earned it. I have helped with publishing and photography before. I am a good communicator, so am right for this job. I have good language skills; I know three currently and am learning two more, which will help with the role. I am good at motivating people to submit their words to me even if they do not feel confident about writing their own piece. I was the editor of three different journals. Even if they do not feel they are that good, I can help edit it to be great. I will encourage people to submit to for example the newsletter. I will give all the information about what is happening every week.

Questions: *Do you have any experience in reaching out to other students to try and find the best way they want to receive information?*

Yes I do. During my undergraduate I was on the editorial board for my department's journal, I was on the college journal and was an academic representative and a class representative. These previous posts have given me experience in what people

really want or need. I have had experience talking to people and engaging with them to find out what they want. They were people in all different walks of life; culturally, geographically etc. Also, having worked with a web journal, I have experience in finding out what different groups of people want the most. I have gotten to know lots of people, and am looking to get to know more and find out what people are most interested in.

Previous Press Secretary pretended to be a Platypus, would you do the same?

I am very passionate about platypods, and think it would be a very fun experience. I would be very good at spreading awareness about Phineas and Ferb, and will find out more about platypods.

l. Female Sports Representative

Candidate: Yurie Furuya

Hust: This is my second year here at Durham doing Masters. There have been lots of events held by the GCR, and I have taken part in lots of them. I was not part of the GCR before, but would love to now. I love sports, I love playing tennis, and I have work experience so will be able to look after events. Other than this role I am happy to help other members of the GCR, and would like to contribute.

Questions:

What's your favourite sport?

My favourite sports are tennis and scuba diving.

I will be working with other members of the GCR trying to get things to transfer to the new site. Would you be willing to work with these people?

Yes, I am willing to help out with anything. I know I will help to be in charge of the gym, but I am also happy to help in other ways.

m. Male Sports Representative

Candidate: Jack Pike

Hust: First of all, please accept my sincerest apologies for not being able to attend this meeting. Long distance relationships, am I right? My name is Jack, I've been a member of Ustinov College since 2015 and I'm applying for the position of Sports Rep. I have represented the college in a number of competitive sports since I arrived in Durham and have had a passion for health and fitness from a very young age. In my opinion, having an active and healthy lifestyle has an immeasurable effect on a person's mental and physical wellbeing and I would love the opportunity to help the facilitation of that at Ustinov. I've been a regular member of Ustinov gym and know first-hand how frustrating it is to have faulty or missing equipment. I promise to work hard with the GCR to keep the gym fully stocked and functional, and will raise the college's issues at GCR meetings. I am already the captain of the Ustinov Ultimate Frisbee team and have an existing relationship with sports reps at Maiden Castle and with Team Durham. This will make communication between the college and the university much smoother and more transparent. I am also a member of the college bar team and so know the bar steward and other appropriate GCR members personally, so coordinating live sports events can be easily achieved.

I want to thank the organisers for allowing me to apply for this position and I hope you will grant me the chance to make a difference at Ustinov.

Questions: No questions as JP is not present.

A call for each individual role that was not applied for is now made by TAB. The following are the husts that happened as a result of this call.

n. Election Officer

Candidate – Sarah Sorek

Manifesto – I am studying finance. I have been part of committees at other universities, and I was secretary of a Photography Society.

Questions:

Are you happy to set up the online voting system when it is actually working?

Yes, I am happy to do this.

o. Ball Secretary

Candidate – Maddy Rose

Manifesto (Hust) – I was part of a Dance Society, where I ran all the social secretaries, and ran all the events. The team raised around £17,000 from their events. A requirement of the role is to be able to negotiate with lots of clubs in order to get the Ball running; I am good at negotiating with people.

I had to book the venue already to get the Friday Night – the Ball will be held at Beamish Hall. What is the most important thing to you about the Ball?

Excellent transport links to and from the venue.

Unlimited money to spend on the ball, what would you spend it on?

An ice sculpture of my face.

Any ideas for a theme?

I am a history of politics student, so am used to working with different themes. I would come up with a list of ideas, and then put it to e.g. a Facebook vote.

p. Video Master

Candidate – Alex Papadopoulos

Manifesto – I do not like talking for very long, but I have been Video Master here for 2 years, and would like to continue this role.

Will you MC Ustinov Live for me this year?

Maybe, depending on when it is.

What is your favourite film?

The first Lord of the Rings movie.

Are you willing to do more international nights, and hold special events that utilise media outside the mainstream for them?

Yes, if anyone has a genre idea then please feel free to let me know. For example, a world genre week could be put in place.

q. Assistant Treasurer

Candidate – Ellen Feng

Manifesto – I am studying Accounting and finance. Because of my major, I would like to take this role. After graduating university, my first job will be an

accountant, so I would like to take this opportunity to try it out. I did an internship with an accounts firm. I always pay close attention to detail.

I would like to join the GCR (committee). The GCR gave me a lot of help, and made my first week very interesting, so I want to contribute to the GCR and help other people the way they helped me. I speak Chinese and English, and used to work with the Chinese Society. I hosted a Fresher's welcome party. If I am needed, I am more than happy to help at any time.

We will be running across two sites, are you happy helping shuttle things back and forward between offices?
Yes.

8. Any Other Business

No other business.

Alastair Stewart

GCR Secretary

08/10/2017