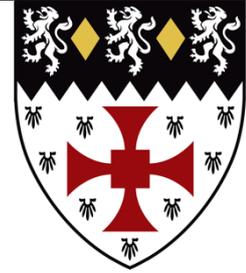


Ustinov College GCR Trustees Meeting

AGENDA



19:00 pm, 14/11/19

1. **Apologies:**
2. **Matters arising from previous minutes.**
 - a. Jamie Graham is no longer registered as a student so is no longer a student trustee.
3. **Officer Reports:**
 - a. **President [DM]:**

University matters

- The new site, Brackenbury at Dryburn court

Situation: The College has taken back the site at Brackenbury, with this most of the students have been complaining about the distance to the main site, problems to arrive on time to lectures, even the lack of advertisement College made at the time of their offer of accommodation. Since I was aware of this site, I have been working with the students that live there, mainly because we cannot reach them very easily. I have had talks with PVC, DSU, and the PG Rep from DSU was happy to attend a drop-in session that the College organized on the site on the 16th of October.

Update: We are searching for transport options from the University for these students, in the meantime, for some events, we have been volunteering to be on Dryburn to run some activities, ie. selling formal tickets, walk to an event.

It was noted that in the past the GCR funded transport for events but this was when our financial situation was different to now.

Facilities at Dryburn are not ideal. To alleviate this, there are now regular events in the Keenan common room without children but this still less than is provided at Sheraton.

- University Ops BPR

Situation: University is going to the second stage of their Operations review, this will affect not only the staff but also students.

Update: On JCR PresComm, all presidents are working to get as much information as we can to present to University about the effects of this on students' wellbeing.

College matters

- National Trust Card

Situation: On the 7th October, Helen Luke (College Development Administrator) send an email address to the president's account, asking about the payment of the National Trust card, from the chain of emails regarding this topic, at the end College accepted to pay 50% of the total cost of the card (see attached file). Have to mention that the college had been keeping the card in their Office despite the fact that GCR has always being paid for it. In a meeting with the treasurer, I asked her to change the delivery method, and the card should be sent to GCR Office and not to the College. This with the purpose of keeping a line between GCR assets and what College said is theirs. We haven't received the card and the treasurer has been contacting the NT office regarding this. However, Our external Trustee has mentioned that on Tuesday he had a conversation with another mentor about the International Women's Group, they got apparently rejected by College to use the NT card on a trip that was already planned. Have to mention, that first, the College didn't have the card and definitely not the right to exclude a group that has been used the card before.

Update: the treasurer is now in charge of our NT card.

It was recommended that the mentors contact the GCR to use this in the future as the GCR now has possession of the card.

- GCR and GCP relationship [discussed below in agenda]

Situation: GCP and GCR relationship, in the past we have had joined events, however, we are trying to clarify, what would a joined event is, since one of the GCP scholars has raised that College told them they can use our equipment, ie sound system. This, of course, would end up in a lot of problems to the GCR, first because we haven't been asked to "participate" in the event, second, as an asset of the GCR, we can not just lend equipment that needs to be installed by our tech officer, even if the student that is asking for the equipment is a GCR member. Also, I would like to raise with you the point that the College has added new projects (see this link for more information

https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/ustinov.college/GCPBrochure2019_2020UPDATE-compressed.pdf), with this we have analyzed two main conflicts. Firstly, miscommunication to GCP scholars about the aim of their events, with some overlaps of the type of events they will run and what we are already providing. Second, below "Music and Performance" the Choir, which used to be part of the GCR, has been added as GCP thing. One of the points that really concern me is that I believe, the College is expecting that GCP scholars who are also GCR members, can have access to the equipment, despite their lack of knowledge on how to use our equipment.

Update: Despite I have asked Martin Brader, acting Vice-Principal, to share to GCP scholars and the team leaders, that we should have a discussion on the events they are planning if

they are expecting our collaboration and not just pop-in in the office and ask for equipment, I haven't had any reply from them. Chasing this with some Team leaders, they haven't received any information from College. We have tried to contact them to have a talk, but we haven't been able to have a meeting.

Situation: The Choir.

Update: College has managed to get a Choir coordinator and she is now in touch with Clubs and Societies Officer to ratify the Choir group.

Situation: Similar events run from GCP that overlaps the events GCR run.

Update: College has chosen to not do join events and run the events outside College.

- College Advisory Board [discussed below in agenda]

Situation: On 23rd October, students have received an email, asking to contact Martin Brader in case they want to be part of the College Advisory Board. Further this, I had a discussion with College and asked them their plans to get the students, after I share the draft I have about the College Advisory Board, they have agreed to make elections, however, I have also asked how many positions would be available for GCR trustees, with zero response from College.

Update: I will have an update about this at our meeting.

GCR matters

- Bar Steward resignation

Situation: Due to having some difficulties to perform the roles and duties stated on the Standing Order of the GCR for this role, our Bar Steward has stepped down from this position.

Update: We will have another GM to try to get more students get involved in the GCR.

It was noted that recent relations between College and the GCR may have deteriorated. Each body has a different role and this should be clearly established and respected. This is linked to the memorandum of agreement which is outdated. Should this be brought up to date and re-signed it should clarify the above. [See agenda items]

b. Treasurer [VB]:

Financial Situation

At the beginning of the current financial year on the 1st September we had £13,307.53 in our Current Account, £48,355.67 in our Saving Account, £44.96 in the safes in the GCR office, and £248.00 in the float. As of now (13/11/2019), we have £14,970.69 in our Current Account, £48,380.05 in our Saving Account, £700.53 in the safes in the GCR office, and £236.00 in the float.

Induction Week 2019

For Induction Week, the Annual Budget passed at the AGM allowed us to spend up to £3,470.00 (excluding formal, photography, and induction party). I am still waiting for the reimbursement form for movie night popcorn, but overall I expect that we will have spent at least £600 less than budgeted.

The following cost more than expected: GMIS coaches (£700 instead of £300), GMIS volunteer food (£36, not budgeted), bingo prizes (£20, not budgeted), Livers' Out Comedy Night (£50, not budgeted). However, we saved money on everything else (especially on the handbooks, welcome packs and brunch) and did not hire Paul Skerritt this year, which was included in the budget with £500.

Formal Dinners 2019-20

So far, we had two formal dinners, one for induction week and one for Bonfire Night. Both sold out quickly: for the Induction Formal we had long queues, for the Bonfire Formal we used an online reservation system that filled up within two and a half minutes. For the Induction Formal all tickets were £12, for the Bonfire Formal we sold tickets for £12 to GCR members and £17 to non-GCR members. We earned £2,160 from the Induction Formal ticket sales (180 tickets), and £2,625 from the Bonfire Formal ticket sales (87 GCR tickets, 93 non-GCR tickets).

We have not actually paid for either of these formals yet because as always these invoices are very slow to come. I expect us to pay about £30 per head for the Induction Formal, which was held at the Radisson, but we can request the difference back from the transitional fund. For the Bonfire Formal at Hatfield I expect us to pay £8 per head, which means that we would make a surplus that we can use towards the benefit of all Ustinov students.

Transitional Fund Reclaims 2017-19

A few months ago, I had a meeting with college to finally request money for 2017-18 and 2018-19 back from the transitional fund as neither of my predecessors had done this before. Luckily Alex Blair had left good notes and I was familiar enough with last year's spendings to find everything. For 2017-18 I requested back the money spent on minibuses shuttling between the two sites for induction week and 13 other events, as well as the moving of the pool tables. For 2018-19 I requested back the money spent on coaches to three formals (we walked to the others), and the difference between the money we earned from ticket sales and the money we paid for the two formals at the Radisson. All this comes to a total of £13,616.80. Ian MacDonald told me two weeks ago that everything has been approved and should be paid into our account soon, but I am still waiting for it right now.

Formal Dinners 2018-19

For the two formal dinners at the Radisson last year we were sent full invoices from the Radisson which we had to pay and then request back the money for the High Table from college. For the four formals at other colleges and the one at the Business School we received one invoice in July (!!)

which simply listed the amount of money we should pay to college for each of those five formals. After taking over this summer and looking closer at the figures given to us, I grew suspicious that something was not right. Tom (last year's president) had occasionally mentioned the price per head we were paying for formals last year and I had the numbers of students and nothing was adding up to the figures given by college. So I investigated and found the price per head for most of the formals. Indeed, college had overcharged us by at least £2000. When inquiring, I was told that they had simply charged us £15 per head for each of the formals, despite the different colleges charging them different prices per head, e.g. Hatfield £8, St. Aidan's £11, Castle £16.5, and so on. This episode is not sorted out yet but I'm on it. (Trustees will be updated as this develops)

GCR Members

So far, we have 269 GCR members, which is disappointing and slightly alarming, considering that our yearly budget expects us to get 350 members. Further communication and advertisement are needed to get the word out. The good news is that the university is planning to return to an opt out system, so even if we end up making a slight loss this year, things should get better next year.

Facilities Finances

The pool tables have not yet been reclothed this financial year because the covers have helped to keep them in a good condition. So far, they have earned £201.40. The bar has been requesting to buy some bags of 20p coins from us because pool players often ask them for change. This is a good way for us to get rid of spare change.

The vending machine has so far earned £386.11 and we have ordered £455.47 worth of snacks for it, though the last £150 order was just made this week and the last money collection was almost two weeks ago (so it may look like we are making a loss but we are not).

PVSL has been paid. BT, Netflix, and Adobe are being paid as usual, with the slight change that we reduced the Netflix cost by going for 2 screens instead of 4.

Insurances have been renewed and the cost was a bit higher than budgeted but there is nothing we can do apart from adjusting next year's budget accordingly.

We have spent nearly £380 on new bass speakers as a long-term investment. Next year's budget will need to include a separate category for music/tech equipment but so far we are still covered by the money budgeted for general facilities admin.

ISO Finances

No major trips yet but we put on a coach to watch fireworks at Framwellgate School and charged students a small ticket price (£1 GCR member, £3 non-member) for the first time. This worked well, the money did not stop students from signing up (we filled the coach easily), and it meant that we only spent £18 on this small trip.

We also have an upcoming trip to York. The aim is to use a pricing model such that we break even on the trip.

Social Finances

Induction Week and Formals have been detailed above.

On parties we have budgeted to spend ~£400 per party for the 6 late opening parties we have in a year. So far, we already had two and we spent £255 on the induction party and £257 on the Halloween party (including decorations), so we are doing well. Money spent on event photography is as expected.

The Christmas party will be more expensive as it will be a silent disco but we can cover this from the savings already made for the previous parties.

Clubs & Socs Finances

The gym pricing system has been changed this year. Formerly, only GCR members could get gym memberships and they cost £20. This year gym memberships were opened for non-GCR members. We sold early bird memberships until one week after induction week for £20 (GCR member) and £55 (non-member). Afterwards, prices were raised to £25 (GCR member) and £60 (non-member). So far, we have sold 160 early bird GCR gym memberships, 2 early bird non-GCR gym memberships, 10 regular GCR gym memberships, and 4 regular non-GCR gym membership. In total, we have made £3,850 from gym membership sales and have already almost matched the annual budget which expected us to make £4,000 from gym membership sales.

The exec has so far approved of funding requests from clubs and societies that add up to nearly £1,000, but that is all within the annual budget.

In response to questions about the new pricing model:

Despite the increase, our gym membership is still below average compared to other colleges (those which do not include it in common room pricing). The increase in pricing was justified as we have not increased it for a while the machines at Sheraton are better than those at Howlands (and will be more expensive when out of service contract). They are also now internet connected so the gym offers members more than it did the last academic year.

2018-19 Accounts

They are due early next summer, but I intend to have them ready before that. However, it takes time to sort through the chaotic stack of paper I inherited. I will let you all know when the accounts are ready for you to review.

As an addition to the accounts info, whilst looking through the old storerooms, we have started categorising old files and destroying those that we are no longer legally required to keep; starting from the oldest.

c. Chair [AH]:

Elections – We recently had a GM in October, and from that elected three new exec (myself included) and 16 committee members.

We shall be having another general meeting soon (provisionally Saturday 30th Nov). It is hoped that we can fill some of the remaining executive roles, in particular the Bar Steward and Social sec positions.

It was noted that GM announcements should have the trustees CCed in to ensure they know about it if not at college.

Associate members – I have recently had several members interested in having their live-in partners become associate members. These have generally been approved by default as long as they fit all the criteria for becoming an associate member. Additionally, we have had one ex-Ustinovian (now staff member) applying for associate membership. Ed Pope is regularly involved with the GCR, playing for the Ustinov Hockey team and frequently hosting pub quizzes. Previous non-partners applicants for associate members have required a confirmation vote by the full trustee board. [passed, 9 votes]

4. Agenda Items:

a. Issues with the College and GCP [DM]:

For this academic year, the GCP has expanded from 3(ish) strands to 10. One of these - "Music and Performance" seems like it could overlap significantly with GCR activities. This originally included the choir which at one point was going to be a GCP-run endeavour despite previously existing as a GCR society. The choir issue has been dealt with and it is now being ratified again as a society. There were also plans to hold an open-mic night which definitely infringes on the social/ academic divide and clashes with our running of Ustinov Live. Their solution has been to hold this event off of the college site... which is not an ideal outcome for either side.

Part of the issue is down to boundaries and communication with the new students (to college and GCP) not all fully aware of what the two organisations are and what they do. We are attempting to use the GCP Liaison to establish better/ more direct links but this is a work in progress.

b. Update to memorandum of agreement with college and College Advisory Board [DM]:

We have a version of the memorandum of agreement, signed in 2012. This contains references to Howlands and College Council which are obviously no longer applicable.

College are agreed with us that this needs updating.

It was noted that the document may have been modified more recently but it is unknown if these changes were properly implemented or where a copy of these changes could be found

The college advisory board as originally set up did not have any GCR representatives on it. If intended as a conduit for student feedback then this is not ideal but arguably not as big an issue. It was then mentioned that our constitution and the MoA both acknowledge that the GCR are intended to act as a channel between College and the student body of Ustinov. From this PoV, omitting us from any kind of advisory board is a major oversight and symptomatic of the current state of the relationship between GCR and College. (Especially as other colleges had common room members involved right from the start).

If the board will have the power to make decisions that will affect the GCR and entire student body then ensuring our trustees have a voice is even more important. The intended role for this body needs to be clarified (ie whether its primary purpose is for feedback or making/ approving policy decisions).

There are 2 issues here. One is whether CAB will be acting as a replacement for College Council (CC) and if so, how it's power (and members) fit into the revised MoA. If it will not replace CC then we separately need to look at where the powers of CC wrt the GCR and any oversight now lie. The official word on this is "PVC or nominated rep" which is effectively the (acting) principal. This change has already been carried through in our constitution (as we need changes to be approved by a Uni representative) but how it affects the rest of the MoA has yet to be properly considered.

As the university has removed college councils, which had all college stakeholders (e.g. SCR and Mentors as well as the GCR and additionally external/ DSU representatives); these stakeholders no longer have a voice. In addition, a channel for mediating any disagreements is no longer present. The changes around college council now make us accountable to Sarah Prescott (as acting Principal). We don't think that this power should just rest in one person. DM will ask college for clarity around this to see the CAB could fulfil some of the oversight CC used to have over the GCR. If it can't (or shouldn't) then other provisions would then be looked into.

It was mentioned that the trustees should write an official letter to College to tackle a number of issues, as highlighted throughout this meeting. This include establishing the role of CAB, where the power of CC should go and also try to deal with the relations between College and the GCR.

The letter should also address the GCR/ GCP issues. Nevertheless, it would be good to meet with as many GCP as possible beforehand so we can inform each other and discuss any issues between ourselves.

AP: AH to draft this. DM to find more info on CAB. All will then review.

c. Election of Deputy Chair of Trustees [TAB]

It was proposed that this would be postponed until we have recruited more external/ alumni trustees. Ideally the post should not be filled by an officer trustee. This person would then be responsible for minuting future meetings.

d. Alumni and external trustee vacancies [TAB]

It was mentioned that we could look with the other charity common rooms or those living in the local area (perhaps SPRA) to try and find a suitable external trustee. As yet, we have not received any applications for external trustee.

We have had some interest from people who would be interested in being an alumni trustee. It was discussed to advertise this properly and then consider at a future meeting if any of the applicants would be suitable as alumni trustees (and improve the diversity of views).

Contacting our alumni/ SCR officially would be a good step here.

We could also contact the mentor group and see if any would be interested in becoming an external/ alumni trustee (as appropriate).

5. AOB

a. Date of next meeting:

Due to the time-sensitivity of some points raised and possible absences, it was suggested to meet again in late January.

b. Keeping of Minutes [CA]:

We will look into making a separate location to store trustee-related documents apart from the GCR Drive.

These should be made publicly available once approved. CA, AH and TT to cooperate in updating trustee info on GCR website and to work minute publication into this.

Connor Armstrong
GCR Vice-President
14/11/2019