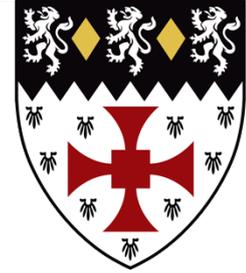


Ustinov College GCR Exec Meeting

MINUTES



11:00 am, 21/04/20

1. **Apologies: SH, ML, AL**
2. **Approval of minutes from last meeting.**
 - a. Approval of minutes from the 14/04/20 – *passed on a general aye*
3. **Matters arising from previous minutes.**
 - a. DM to ask if Ustinov Bar Staff can be included in alcohol awareness for Fresher's Week (if it still goes ahead). *Ongoing*
4. **Agenda Items:**
 - a. **Gym membership refund request [CA]**

We discussed our position of GCR membership refunds. I have since received an email asking about a partial refund for both the gym and GCR membership. I realised that many of the reasons discussed before about refunds were specific to the GCR membership and don't all apply to the gym (i.e. we have no substitute at the moment... and can't talk about the events we've put on).

I don't feel strongly either way about whether we should offer partial refunds to people. I would like to make sure we have a consistent policy though before I either reply to this email or direct their query to a different exec member.

It would be difficult to physically refund people safely with cash with the ongoing Covid situation. It would be difficult to refund a small amount of money to a large number of students. Diana agreed with all presidents across colleges to not issue any refunds and if we refund some then it will cause problems across other colleges. The GCR membership money goes towards many things and not just formals. We cannot split the gym membership fee into termly use, as students use the gym at different rates throughout the year. The money from the gym membership also partly goes towards new equipment and refurbishment and refunds would cause significant issues with our budgets. Unfortunately, for these reasons, we are not able to offer any refunds.
5. **Officer Reports:**
 - a. **Bar [AL]**

Nothing to report.
 - b. **Clubs & Societies [RR]**

Nothing to report.
 - c. **Communications [ML]**

Nothing to report.
 - d. **DSU [AH]**

Last week, an article was published in the Palatinate that reveals that the University is looking at moving significant numbers of modules to online-only in the upcoming years. While some courses may need to be moved online in the short term, this is problematic on the time scales suggested by the University. Members of the UEC have assured the student body that these measures will not necessarily take place. However, it is clear that the University has not taken part in adequate student consultation as laid out in their consultation framework, despite advertising that they have done so. It is highly unprofessional that DSU officers found out of proposed changes of this magnitude through student news media. While we need to wait for the University to work out the logistics of virtual teaching, the UCU (which many of our students are members of) are highly critical of some of the proposals, and so we should ensure that PG students are not harmed by any proposals. *We will need to wait for the University to work out the full logistics of this. This is also being discussed between academics and other Universities are also potentially looking into this so it is not just Durham. Online teaching is only helpful during Covid-19 for future students who cannot travel safely to Durham and we believe it should not be something that will replace physical lectures in the future after the pandemic.*

e. Facilities [CA]

Someone asked if we are still lending out DVDs. It would be possible if there is demand as we can leave the requested DVD in their flat post box and they can return it to reception. It is something we can look into if there is demand but we should not advertise it as it would require someone to be at Sheraton to do this. Anyone who wants to borrow a DVD can email Connor at Facilities.

f. Finance [VB]

Balance Brought Forward (14/04/20) £33,551.58
Connor Armstrong (21/04/2020) -£16.00
Balance Carried Forward (21/04/20) £33,535.58

g. International Officer [SH]

Nothing to report.

h. Livers Out Rep [SK]

Nothing much to report because a majority of students have left Durham. I think we should discuss whether it would be useful as GCR to advertise, talk or just spread information about the housing pledge from the SU. We could talk about Diana signing it and I could include that in my Instagram take over today too.

We could discuss the pros and cons of talking about it a lot though considering we may not be able to advocate a lot on this front. *Diana and Alex have signed it and posted it in the Livers Out Facebook group. Shreya will mention this on Instagram to let people know what it is.*

i. Social [JI]

Nothing to report.

j. Steering [AH]

I've been checking in with several committee members to make sure that they are doing okay as lock-down continues. I'm going to continue checking in with members moving forward. I will create a poll with potential dates for a full committee

meeting, as it would be good for any committee members to raise any issues that they are facing. *We can advertise this as a fun meeting and potentially fancy dress.*

k. Welfare [BR]

The Instagram lockdown videos have been continuing and going well. I will share it with the wider committee to see if anyone else wants to do one. I am still looking for things that are free to share such as the Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals every week.

i. University/College [DM]

University matters:

From the meeting on the 15th with Quentin, key updates are:

Updated student data (below):

Students in Colleges: 984

Students in PBSAs in Durham City: 618

Students in private accommodation in Durham City: 1483

Students self-isolating for medical reasons in Colleges: 49

Students self-isolating for medical reasons in Durham City: 244

University would also like to try and get some other information from students (mostly international) around their accommodation plans for the coming weeks/months if some of the travel restrictions were lifted. We discussed a potential further college consolidation so all students who remain in Durham have access to a fridge and microwave. On the topic of termination of license agreements for PhD students, this was revised and students can terminate their contracts and return as soon as they need to be back at University.

Consideration of some changes to the cost of accommodation for the Easter Term for those who are still living in College – due to the changes in the provision, i.e. no catering services. We discussed the on-line social media conduct and the future plan from University to address the issue. DSO Review and Independence SLA - still working on it so it can be finished in time. Casual workers aren't on a scope to follow at the moment. Students have been using MUGAs and Boathouses.

Updates about South/Mount Oswald from Tim:

Mount Oswald building not running to schedule; they are certain that they will finish just before/early summertime for the August Handover date.

Richard (John Snow JCR) asked about a potential reduced fresher intake (generally) as a result of COVID-19 i.e. International travel restrictions, people deferring a year etc. He said that regardless of international travel restrictions they would not increase the intake of UK home students, and mentioned the possibility that all Colleges may have a smaller intake. He said it's a bridge to cross when we come to it but they had made 1100 offers (again not sure how accurate this number is and the split between UG and PGs).

From my meeting with Amanda and Dennis, University is looking to move their website to a new server by the end of November. With this change, they are looking into changing the design and also we have been asked to share some information about our website.

This week I will be the primary contact for all student communications that

University will send (twice a week), mainly looking into the regular student emails to ensure the language, tone of voice and clarity of message is suitable for our student audience.

College matters:

Update on cleaning bathrooms: College will provide a cover on both buildings with cleaning stuff for all students to use. We might expect students to get angry, but there are 2 things we can highlight. There is no risk of people going inside the room and spreading the virus, and I have been speaking with university and they will reduce the accommodation fees (don't know how much, but something is better than nothing). This reduced cost will be implemented on ALL colleges, but of course, we hope the catered colleges will have more reduction.

Fire safety new measures: College will put a signal on the door handles, like in the hotels, this is to let College know if the student is in the room or going out for something. *There have been issues with this as signs have been put on doors where there is no student living in the room so Diana will talk to Ian about this. It is also unclear about which way round to have the sign whether you are in your room or not.* **AP: DM to talk to Ian about this and push college to advertise.** The fire fighters' department asked us to implement these new measures.

I have spoken with Sarah, and we have just 40 empty rooms, and they will keep them in case of emergency to move residents from either Sheraton park or Dryburn, therefore, if there is more college consolidation, it will not affect our students. Ian has told me that in Ustinov College we have more than 400 students living on-site, meaning we have more than 50% of the total students in Durham Colleges. Next week I will start having CMT meetings again.

Exec matters:

I have received good feedback from our Instagram stories and really appreciate all the effort from all the Committee.

6. AOB

Update on the transition refund – AP: VB to ask about this.

Rebecca Salthouse
GCR Secretary
21/04/20