

Minutes of the 2nd Caledonian Student Voice Meeting of Session 2020/21

Meeting held on Monday, 7th December 2020, on Microsoft Teams, at 5.00pm.

Sign In:

Present: Eilidh Fulton (Chair); Jonnie England (Deputy Chair); Susan Docherty (Student President); Tabitha Nyariki (VP SHLS); Zoe Nicholson (VP SCEBE); Adil Rahoo (VP GSBS); Sarina Vlaytchev (SV); Catherine Mackie (CM); Alexander Van de Rose (AVR); Kimberley Brown (KB); Louise Dunn (LD); Georgina Smith (GS); Hannah Einarson (HE); Connor Davidson (CD); Anthony Rodrick (AR); River Gowans (RG); Nicola McMaster (NM); Serena Piotta (SP); Vincent Water (VW); Kathinka Mumme (KM); Elisabeth Dumortier (ED); Kirsty Hunter-Heigh (KHH); Eleanor MacLennan-Patton (EM); Bronwyn Doherty (BD); Dylan Duffy (DD); Stephen Pender (SPP); Cara Burkitt (CB); Monica Allen (MA)

Absent: Nabila Khan (NK); Harrison Elue (HNE); Laura Clark (LC); Muhammad J Ayub (MJA); Yasmin Sweeney (YS); Nikolay Naydenov (NN); Daneyal Mirza (DM); Amanda Kerr (AK); Robert Gallacher (RG); Douglas Livingston (DL); Seona Halbert (SH); Erika Tonhauser (ET); Muhammad Usman Misri (MM); Polina Klimoveca (PK); Chloë Wood (CW); Monisa Hussain (MH); Daniel Moore (DMO); Amer Sultan (AS); Ayesha Tareen (AT); Louise Thomson (LT)

Apologies: Zalha Abasi (ZA); Yonca Gocer (YG); Elizabeth Shaw (ES); Mary Welsh (MW); Fiona Reed (FR); Laiba Tareen (LTR); Abbie Stone (AS); Bethany Thomson (BT); Bethany Stevenson (BS); Anupama Nigam (AN); Abbie Meehan (AM); Ikeoluwa Odukudu (IO); Ewan Batty (EB);

In attendance: Sara MacLean (Student Voice Team Leader); Raisah Khan (Clerk)

Observers: None

Any member of Student Voice, excluding Full Time Officers, who miss two meetings of Student Voice without apologies in an academic year, will have automatically deemed to have resigned as a member, Officer, Department, PGT or PGR Rep.

1. Welcome

The meeting started at 5.00pm. The Chair welcomed all members to the second digital meeting of Student Voice for 2020/21. Members were asked to keep their cameras on and microphones off unless they wanted to discuss something or present a paper. Members were reminded of what conduct is acceptable during the meeting.

3. Minutes of Student Voice meeting on 9th November 2020

The Chair invited members to consider the minutes of the previous Student Voice meeting held on 9th November 2020. No questions were raised by members in relation to the minutes. The Chair said that only those present at the previous meeting could vote to approve the minutes of the meeting at Student Voice held on 9th November 2020. **Vote- For: 20; Against: 0; Abstention: 0.** The previous Student Voice minutes from 9th November 2020 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

The Chair asked the Full Time Officers to provide a verbal update only on items in which there has been development since their paper was written. The Student President explained that most items are ongoing due to the outbreak of Coronavirus resulting in the closure of campus.

4.1 Referendum on exams before Christmas

This matter is ongoing. **Action: Student President.**

4.2 Phasing Out of Single Use Coffee Cups

This matter is ongoing. **Action: VP GSBS.**

4.3 Plastic Free Campus

This matter is ongoing. **Action: VP GSBS.**

4.4 Session on Academic Writing and Expectations Within Courses

The Vice President SCEBE confirmed that the School of Computing, Engineering and Business Engineering have been providing training on academic writing and expectations within their courses. The Vice President GSBS and Vice President SHLS will also look into this with their schools. **Action: VP GSBS & VP SHLS.**

4.5 Replace/Upgrade of Equipment in ARC

This matter is ongoing. **Action: VP SCEBE.**

4.6 Increase Wildflowers on Campus

This matter is ongoing. **Action: VP GSBS.**

4.7 Reflection Spaces in Each Building on Campus

This matter is ongoing. **Action: VP SCEBE.**

4.8 More Food Recycling Bins on Campus

This matter is ongoing. **Action: VP GSBS.**

4.9 Leftover Cafeteria Food into Take Home Meals

This matter is ongoing. **Action: VP SCEBE.**

4.10 Improved Sanitisation on Campus

The Student President will be attending a meeting with GCU Facilities to discuss changing door handles to brass. There will be further updates on this matter in the next meeting. **Action: Student President.**

5. Student Voice Committees

The Chair called for a vote to approve the previous minutes of all Student Voice Sub Committees. **Vote – For: 21; Against: 0; Abstention: 3.** The previous minutes of all Student Voice Sub Committees were approved.

6. Honorary Life Members

The Student President said that the following shortlist was agreed at Executive Committee held on 10th March 2020.

Student	External
Callum Matthews	Kathryn Collins, former Executive Assistant
Monica Allen	Caroline Miller, former Representation and Advice Manager
Keir Thompson	
Rachael Brown	

No questions were asked from Student Voice. The Chair called for Student Voice to ratify the shortlisted nominations for Honorary Life Members. **Vote: For: 21; Against: 4; Abstentions: 0.** The Honorary Life Members shortlist was approved.

7. External Affiliations

The Student President presented the organisations that the Students' Association want to remain affiliated to in 2019/20 and reported that Section 22 of the 1994 Education Act requires the Students' Association to present the current list of affiliations for approval by members annually.

The Students' Association will remain affiliated to the following organisations:

	2018/19	2019/20
National Union of Students (NUS)	£25,156	£25,156
British Universities and College Sports (BUCS)	£4,549	£5,097
Scottish Student Sport (SSS)	£3,660	£3,733
National Nightline Association (NNA)	£60	£130

The External Affiliations are included within the annual audited accounts available from www.GCUstudents.co.uk/financial.

The Code of Practice relating to the operation of the Students' Association outlines the process for disaffiliation.

There were no questions asked by the members. The Chair called for a vote to approve the External Affiliations. **Vote: For: 17; Against: 7; Abstention: 2.** The External Affiliations were approved.

8. Full Time Officer Reports

The Chair asked the Full Time Officers only to provide a verbal update on any items in which there has been development since the report was written. It was noted there were no further updates since the reports were written.

No questions were asked in relation to the Full Time Officer Reports and the Chair invited members to take a vote to approve all the reports. **Vote – For: 26; Against: 0; Abstention: 0.** The Full Time Officers Reports were approved.

9. Student Voice Officer Reports

The Chair asked the Student Voice Officers only to provide a verbal update on any items in which

there has been development since the report was written. It was noted that there were no further updates since the reports were written.

No questions were asked in relation to the Student Voice Officer Reports and the Chair invited members to take a vote to approve all the reports. **Vote – For: 25; Against: 0; Abstention: 1.** The Student Voice Officer Reports were approved.

10. Elections

The Vice Chair called for the nomination for the position of a Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee Rep (1xPGR). There were no nominations for this position so this will be carried forward to the next Student Voice meeting.

11. Revised Election Rules

The Deputy Returning Officer presented the revised Election Rules. The Election Rules work in conjunction with Schedule 4(Elections) to the Constitution and the Code of Practice relating to the operation of the Students' Association.

Feedback from candidates' post-election interviews, the report from the Returning Officer and discussions from the Deputy Returning Officer Network was taken into consideration. In addition, consultation took place with the GCU Interim Head of Governance, GCU Director of Academic Development and Student Learning and the Elections Committee. In addition, all members of Student Voice were also invited to provide feedback. The current Coronavirus pandemic was considered when the rules were reviewed.

In reviewing the Election Rules, a benchmarking exercise took place with the National Union of Students (NUS) Rule-setting and candidate briefing principles (2018-19) that was created with the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK.

The Deputy Returning Officer explained that one of the main changes to Election Rules has been the move to digital campaigning during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Vice Chair noted that the synopsis of the proposed Election Rule changes was helpful in presenting a clear overview.

The Student President asked why GCU Learn cannot be used for campaigning and whether there will be support and training available to candidates on online campaigning. The Deputy Returning Officer explained that access to GCU Learn for the purposes of campaigning was denied as GCU Learn is used for the purposes of learning and teaching only. Further from this, there were also issues of fairness as students from different programmes have course groups that vary in size. It was also confirmed that candidates will receive training and support on online campaigning. Campaigning has been reduced from 3 to 2 weeks to ensure this can take place in the first week.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the revised Election Rules. **Vote: For: 21; Against: 2; Abstention: 4.** The revised Elections Rules was approved.

12. Ideas Expiration Policy

The Student President presented the paper for the Ideas Expiration Policy. It was noted that in 2019/20, a 'likes' threshold of 10 was added to the Ideas process to help foster more engagement with the Idea by the proposer and to help increase the quality of ideas being discussed at Student Voice. This has helped increase the overall number of likes on Ideas, however, further adjustments

need to be made to ensure that the Ideas submitted to the Idea platform are dealt within a set amount of time.

It was proposed that the idea should be limited to being active on the Students' Association page for one calendar year from submission and if it doesn't reach 10 likes then it will be removed. However, Ideas can be resubmitted.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Ideas Expiration Policy. **Vote: For: 25; Against: 1; Abstention: 0.** The Ideas Expiration Policy was approved.

13. Introduction of a Caledonian Court Officer

The Vice President GSBS presented the proposal to add the position of Caledonian Court Officer to section 2.5 of the Students' Association By-Laws. They would be responsible for uplifting the issues of Caledonian Court and liaising with the Caledonian Court FTO Lead for any potential initiatives launched within Caledonian Court. The Officer would be required to be a resident of Caledonian Court and those electing the Officer would be required to be residents at Caledonian Court. The Vice President GSBS further explained the rationale behind the proposal and confirmed that Caledonian Court have been consulted on this.

The Vice Chair asked why the position is restricted to Caledonian Court and does not include other private housing associations. The Vice President GSBS explained that a discussion had taken place regarding this but it was concluded that this idea was too broad. A decision was made that a Caledonian Court Officer would be created initially and this will be reviewed and potentially expanded to create a GCU Accommodation Officer in the future.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the proposal for the Caledonian Court Officer. **Vote: For: 20; Against: 7; Abstention: 0.** The proposal for the Caledonian Court Officer was approved.

14. Revised The EDIT Policy Document

The Editor-In-Chief presented the revised THE EDIT Policy saying that the main changes include tightening up the language.

No questions were asked and the Chair called for a vote to approve the revised THE EDIT Policy. **Vote: For: 20; Against: 4; Abstention: 3.** The revised THE EDIT Policy was approved.

15. Ideas

Student Voice was asked to discuss and decide whether to approve the Ideas.

15.1. Merchandise (Anonymous)

'Myself and a few friends think it would be a great idea to have a wider variety of merchandise available, eg sweatshirts, t-shirts, shorts and joggers. we also think it would be great to have options with both the new logo and the coat of arms logo.'

The proposer asked Student Voice if the University would consider creating more of a variety for merchandise and including personalisation on these items. It was agreed by the members that this is a good idea and should be discussed further with the University.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Idea for Merchandise. **Vote: For: 23; Against: 1; Abstentions: 0.** The Idea for Merchandise was approved. The Student President agreed to take this forward. **Action: Student President.**

15.2. GCU Must Seek SA Advance Input On All Future Emails / Other Comms to Students (Vincent Waters)

‘Over the summer, too many email have come from the university corporately which have caused spasms of confusion, worry and doubt among students. Talking about a "return to campus" in a headline is atrocious communicating when in the full explanation you go on to say that all lectures will be online and only a few activities for a small number of courses will be on campus. Students need plain language emails with the key messages up front, they shouldn't be made to struggle to figure out simple news. The priority for communication should be clarity and understanding, not appearance.

This idea proposes two policies:

that the university corporately send no further emails to the student body before sharing them with the Student President

that all departments do likewise with the appointed student Department Rep for their department

...so that they may offer advice on clarity and succinctness of message in the content of the email (or other communication method) before they are sent to students.’

VW explained to Student Voice that the concern raised in this Idea had been addressed earlier this year by the Student President who has been working with the University Executive Board and has been consulted on student comms. However, VW explained that this should remain policy and the Students’ Association should be permanently consulted on student comms and should not be a temporary COVID-19 measure. The Student President suggested an improvement which was that the Full Time Officer who sits on the SRTC Comms Co-ordination Group should be consulted in the future. Although it is currently the Student President who sits on the Comms Group, it may be another Officer in the future.

The Chair called for a vote to consider the improvement. **Vote: For: 24; Against: 0; Abstentions: 2.** The Chair called for a vote for the Idea with an improvement to include that the Full Time Officer sitting on the SRTC Comms Co-ordination Group will be consulted about student comms. **Vote: For: 26; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0.** The idea was approved. The Student President agreed to take forward this Idea. **Action: Student President.**

15.3. Climate Change Training – Mandatory (Martha Paulina Bytof)

‘A compulsory Climate Change Training for all students and staff that would be accredited, starting the next new term (Tri A, 2020/21). This would include a training on Carbon Literacy and sustainability.’

The Proposer (Martha Paulina Bytof) explained to Student Voice that this Idea is important in raising awareness about climate change and how to make changes. MA explained that the Ethical and Environmental Committee have already began working towards COP26 and providing students with free Carbon Literacy training. It was noted that this Idea would give the work already being carried out more premise. The Student President suggested an improvement by changing the language from ‘mandatory’ to ‘embedded in the curriculum’.

The Chair called for a vote to consider the improvement. **Vote: For: 19; Against: 5; Abstentions: 3.** The Improvement was approved.

The Vice Chair raised concerns over students being required to take time away from their studies to attend the climate change training. The Vice President GSBS also added that the Glasgow School for Business and Society provide a similar optional course which students can attend if they wish to do so. Further from this, the University are also currently looking at how to embed SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals) into the curriculum.

The Chair called for a vote for the Idea with an improvement to embed the climate change training into the curriculum. **Vote: For: 17; Against: 8; Abstentions: 1.** The idea was approved. The Vice President GSBS agreed to take forward this Idea. **Action: Vice President GSBS.**

15.4. Access to Parking (Gillian Poynts)

'As a full time carer, at times, my husband has flare ups due to his condition, this can result in lengthy hospital stays 60 miles away from our home, we have a disabled badge and yet I am unable to access this at the university. I missed almost 3 weeks of trimester A due to him being hospitalised as I simply could not afford to park in town - as well as park at the hospital! Yes, £2 per hour to be exact! Surely there can be some contingency built in for carers when these flare ups happen - I am not looking for preferential treatment but a little latitude would have gone a very long way and kept some sort of normality in a very trying situation!'

The Vice Chair spoke on behalf of the proposer and explained the issue over the lack of parking spaces on campus and the high prices of parking in the City Centre. The Student President reassured that access to parking spaces to student carers was taken to the University last year and it was confirmed that there is a disabled parking area and student carers have access to this if they are experiencing any issues. It was further noted that the University do not want to encourage students to bring their cars on campus as they are aiming to reduce CO2 emissions. The Vice President GSBS suggested an improvement that the University should look into working in partnership with some of the car parks in the city centre and providing deals for students.

The Chair called for a vote to consider the improvement. **Vote: For: 14; Against: 10; Abstentions: 2.** The Improvement was approved. The Chair called for a vote for the Idea with an improvement to arrange deals for students with car parks in the city centre. **Vote: For: 14; Against: 10; Abstentions: 1.** The idea was approved. The Vice President GSBS agreed to take forward this Idea. **Action: Vice President GSBS.**

15.5. Request University to Track Student Suicides (Gabriele Janusonyte)

'According to 2019 statistics (theferret.scot) only ONE Scottish University records student deaths by suicide (and only as of 2016) - University of Stirling. Keeping a record of suicides can help improve mental health services by showing how they are truly lacking, and also help by removing mental health stigma associated with suicide. This is supported by the Scottish Association for Mental Health, which says that by reviewing suicide deaths it can aid in developing better suicide prevention. It can also help universities see patterns and respond effectively. University of Stirling has already done so - information about the increase in suicide deaths (3 in 2018/2019, compared to 0 in the previous academic year) has allowed both students and staff to petition the university for more mental health advisers, which the university has recruited. This info was obtained through the Freedom of Information request. In the UK, an All Party Parliamentary Group on Students found that roughly 33% of students have had suicidal thoughts over the last year. Suicide should not be surrounded by silence. Universities should step up and do their part.'

The Vice Chair spoke on behalf of the proposer and explained that the University have been working hard to promote and support student mental health. However, keeping a record of data on student suicides would help identify where to put in prevention techniques and actions. Further from this, the Vice Chair suggested an improvement to include suicide attempts as well as suicide cases as this

would help highlight the problem even further. It was noted that the University will only work with the information that will be available to them and will not put pressure on students to come forward.

The Chair called for a vote to consider the improvement. **Vote: For: 17; Against: 6; Abstentions: 2.** The Improvement was approved.

KM raised concerns over how the data will be collected and if it will be published. It was highlighted that this is a very delicate and triggering subject which will need to be handled with care. The Chair explained that the Idea is requesting the University to track the data and use it to help support students. The data will not be published.

The Chair called for a vote for the Idea with an improvement to track both suicide attempts and suicide cases amongst students. **Vote: For: 19; Against: 2; Abstentions: 4.** The Idea was approved. The Vice President SCEBE agreed to take forward this Idea. **Action: Vice President SCEBE.**

15.6. Microwave on Campus (Tara Lea Carroll)

‘Really wish there was a microwave on campus for students to use. Would find this great for lunches, I know other unis like Strath have one. So annoying eating cold food all the time!’

The Vice President GSBS spoke on behalf of the proposer and explained that having microwaves on campus will enable students with dietary and religious requirement to be able to bring their own food and heat it. Further from this, Vice President GSBS explained that microwaves are already available to Postgraduate students on campus.

KM spoke against this Idea as there are too many health and safety issues involved. Due to the current high standards of hygiene, it would be difficult to maintain and monitor the cleanliness after each use. Some of the other Student Voice members also agreed with this.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Idea for Microwaves on Campus. **Vote: For: 7; Against: 16; Abstentions: 1.** The Idea for Microwaves on Campus was not approved.

16. A.O.C.B.

16.1. NUS: Scotland Delegates Nominations

The Student Voice Team Leader notified members that there is a By-election running for NUS: Scotland Delegates nominations which closes on Friday 11th December 2020 at 12 noon. It was confirmed that there is only one position available and the link was circulated to the Student Voice members.

The meeting was concluded at 7.05pm.