

Minutes of the 1st Caledonian Student Voice Meeting of Session 2023/24

Meeting held on Monday, 23rd October 2023, in-person in NH208, at 17:00pm.

Sign In: Kacy Chaudhry (Chair); Chidozie Nwaigwe (Student President); Jennifer Abali (VP SHLS); Solomon Ajala (VP GSBS); Wilfred Obi (VP SCEBE); Heather Andrews (HA); Jay Blakeway (JB); Cristanos Bonaba Ike (CB); Daniel Byron (DB); Sofia Congradyova (SC); Robert Gallacher (RG); David Grimm (DG); Antonio Hegar (AH); Rana Imran (RI); Zovi Jenson (ZJ); Natalie Kiely (NK); Raiyan Mehmood (RM); Sofiat Nafiu (SN); Azeez Oduonikosi (AO); Uchenna Ohanaka (UO); Olalekan Oladele (OO); Zain Qureshi (ZQ); Aiebee-Iberedem Tim (AT); Lee-Anne To (LT); Gracjan Walaszewski (GW); Desmond Wussah (DW)

Present:

Absent: Katy Gillespie (KG); Keiran Harley (KH); Asmita Meshram (AM); Louisa Richardson (LR)

Apologies: Gordon Edwards (GE); Laiba Tareen (LT); Maryam Yunis (MY)

In attendance: Sara MacLean (Student Voice Team Leader); Philip Morton (Clerk)

Observers:

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. Chair Announcements

The Chair welcomed all members to the first meeting of Student Voice for 2023/24 and asked members to raise their voting card if they wished to speak. Members were reminded of what conduct is acceptable during the meeting.

2. Change to Committee Meeting Rules – Use of Mentimeter

The Chair explained the Mentimeter voting system and requested the approval of its use.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Change to Committee Meeting Rules – Use of Mentimeter.

Vote: For: 19; Against: 1; Abstentions: 1. The Change to Committee Meeting Rules – Use of Mentimeter was approved.

3. Emergency Motion: Support for Palestine

RM shared their proposal for the Students' Association to release a statement condemning the tragedies occurring in Palestine and Gaza. It was added that the university should form a stance against any form of discrimination which has no place on-campus.

DG asked if this should be a separate statement from the Students' Association or if it should be made in conjunction with the university. It was answered that a joint statement with the university would better acknowledge the stance as a university for the common good. It was further noted that the university may wish to amend the proposal as not to offend any students that may feel strongly on either side.

The Student President acknowledged that the university are currently discussing the best approach to addressing the matter as GCU has students from both Palestine and Israel attending. It was commented that the university does support humanitarian rights. Vice President SCEBE remarked on the sensitive nature of the subject matter and wouldn't want to advocate support for either side due to this political nature and having students from both countries on-campus.

The Chair asked if any members wished to speak against the motion.

AT echoed Vice President SCEBE's statement, adding that the release of a statement is positive but needs to ensure that the interests of students from both countries are being looked after. It was further acknowledged that university stakeholders may be in the best experienced position to handle this statement. DG added that working with the university may help with the sensitive nature although it was acknowledged that the Students' Association should always be seen to be political organisation. The Student President proposed that any statement released should not be in-support for any one party and instead condemn the genocide and horrifying acts that have taken place on both sides. ZQ praised the statement but added that there should be clarity that the statement condemns attacks on all people and raise awareness of the current political situation.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Emergency Motion: Support for Palestine.

Vote: For: 11; Against: 10; Abstentions: 3. The Emergency Motion: Support for Palestine was approved.

4. Full Time Officers Team and Individual Objectives

The Full Time Officer team presented their team and individual objectives and asked Student Voice for any questions before voting for approval.

The Student President commented that they have begun work towards their objectives including the introduction of the 'Winter Warmer' campaign, the progress of microwaves on campus and discussed student engagement in terms of communication flow between Full Time Officers, Class Reps and Department Reps.

DG asked for an update on GCUNYC and the previous standing order for the addition of a memorial tree on-campus. It was commented that the university are currently progressing with consultations of GCUNYC's future and that a holistic review of the full operation will be completed. The Student President is to follow up on the Memorial Tree action from previous student voice meetings. **Action: Student President.**

RG asked whether the university would reinstate the free breakfast initiative. The Student President gave an update on financial viability due to spending and the number of breakfast supplied. It was commented that the Students' Association and university are working in partnership to create a student pantry for students to collect non-perishable goods for free. DB noted that they had submitted a freedom of information request for the initiatives financial figures and that statistics provided by the Student President were inconsistent to the figures received. RG asked if charities, external organisations or supermarkets had been contacted to gain a partnership for the community larder. The Student President commented that they are currently working on having the pantry opened as soon as possible with finance from the university before contacting other organisations.

AT commented on Vice President GSBS's objectives, mentioning that students are not informed on Students' Association services such as the Advice Centre and that the communications of its services to students should be re-evaluated. It was further noted that students receive a large number of university emails on a weekly basis and that often information is missed. It was stated that if students don't know that the Students' Association exists, where it is and what it provides, that students simply will not engage.

DG questioned how funding would be secured to make the ARC a free service for students. It was confirmed that ARC usage figures, membership numbers and financial earnings would be analysed to evaluate the feasibility and cost of free or subsidised memberships before lobbying the university.

AT asked how the wifi on-campus intends to be updated It was added that the GCU app has been released but has not been communicated effectively to students. Vice President SCEBE confirmed that they will engage with the university to establish issues with wifi services and assess how this can be improved. It was confirmed that the GCU app is currently available to download although it remains a work in progress with services such as Students' Association resources to be added.

ZJ acknowledged that students in SCEBE have not been engaged with feedback and surveys. It was noted that programme leaders are to take a more valuable role in Class Rep recruitment. As well as lecture shouts to explain the importance feedback, it is to be encouraged that awareness of this be communicated on a class level. RG commented that classes wouldn't pause for survey responses and that many students may not interested in providing feedback. DG raised that training for roles such as Department Rep should not be mandatory as many students do not have the time needed to attend these sessions due to classes, placement, work and other commitments although would like to be involved and take on the role.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Full Time Officers Team and Individual Objectives.

Vote: For: 21; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0. The Full Time Officers Team and Individual Objectives were approved.

5. Full Time Officer Reports

The Full Time Officers presented their reports and asked if there were any questions.

The Student President added that they had successfully negotiated the 24-hour computer lab re-opening within the Students' Association to provide a night study space for students. JB commented that Radio Caley were previously able to host late radio shows and asked if security could be made aware of this so that shutters in the Students' Association are not closed. The Student President commented that if security are notified in advance, that access could be granted.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Full Time Officer Reports.

Vote: For: 21; Against: 0; Abstentions: 1. The Full Time Officer Reports were approved.

6. Student Voice Officer Reports

The Chair asked if any Student Voice Officers wished to present a verbal report.

DG highlighted their role as Care Experienced Officer and noted that although the university seem to have an issue with overall student engagement, that they would like to make a positive impact on the university and welcomed any feedback on what more could be done to enhance this.

ZQ, as Black or Minority Ethnic Officer commented on their recent events and attendance and expanded on their wish to promote different cultures through diversity events.

AT as International Students' Officer and Caledonian Court Officer commented that they have worked alongside the Full Time Officers to ensure temporary safe stay accommodation is provided to international students coming to Glasgow as Caledonian Court has been filled. Recent events were highlighted as well as the objective to promote international students whilst supporting the diversity of different cultures on-campus.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Student Voice Officer Reports.

Vote: For: 15; Against: 0; Abstentions: 4. The Student Voice Officer Reports were approved.

7. Clubs and Societies Proposed for Affiliation

The Chair presented the list of new societies seeking affiliation to the Students' Association in the absence of the Societies Council Chair.

Affiliation for Societies:

- GCU Film Society
- Freestyle Writing Society
- Ukrainian Society

Vice President GSBS presented the list of new Sports Clubs seeking affiliation to the Students' Association in the absence of a Sports Council Chair.

Affiliation for Sports Clubs:

- Golf Club

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Sports Clubs and Societies Proposed for Affiliation.

Vote: For: 18; Against: 2; Abstentions: 2. The Sports Clubs and Societies Proposed for Affiliation were approved.

8. Elections

The Chair presented the Student Voice Elected Positions needing filled for 2023/24. It was noted that anyone wishing to volunteer should ensure that they are available for the meetings their position holds as to not impact studies.

The following Student Voice Members ran for each Student Voice Elected Position:

- Vice Chair of Student Voice (1 position):

Robert Gallacher

This position was duly elected.

- Senate Student Representative (3 open places)

Daniel Byron, Uchenna Ohanaka, Aiebee-Iberedem Tim

These positions were duly elected.

- Senate Disciplinary Committee (4 positions):

Robert Gallacher, Heather Andrews, Aiebee-Iberedem Tim, Desmond Wussah, Uchenna Ohanaka

- Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee Rep (1 PGT, 1 open position):

PGT – Olalekan Oladele

This position was duly elected.

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (1 position):

Zovi Jensen

This position was duly elected.

- Elections Committee (5 positions):

David Grimm, Azeez Odu-onikosi, Sofiat Nafiu

These positions were duly elected.

The positions not duly elected will have separate online elections take place after this meeting of Student Voice.

9. Elections Schedule

It was highlighted that since the introduction of the election schedule in 2021-22, some gaps in eligibility had been noted for fixing and revision. The key proposed changes were presented. RM asked for confirmation if students finishing their fourth year could stand in the Full Time Officer elections. This was confirmed.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Elections Schedule.

Vote: For: 16; Against: 5; Abstention: 1. The Elections Schedule was approved.

10. Ideas

The Chair presented ideas (based on the number of votes submitted on the Students' Association website) for approval.

Tuition Fee Discounts for Post Grad Students

DG presented the idea on behalf of the proposer. It was commented that the discount provided helps to retain Post Graduate students studying at GCU as opposed to choosing another university.

AT questioned whether students currently studying at Post Graduate level (masters) are eligible for discount if they wish to continue their studies at a PHD level. This information was unclear. An amendment was added for masters level alumni to receive this discount on entry to a PHD course.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the changed improvement for master's level alumni to receive this discount on entry to a PHD course.

Vote: For: 19; Against: 0; Abstentions: 2.

The revised improvement was approved.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the full idea proposed.

Vote: For: 18; Against: 1; Abstentions: 1. The Idea was approved. **Action: Vice President SHLS.**

Bins Inside all Stalls

The proposed idea was presented to Student Voice.

SC spoke against the idea as the addition of new bins and use of bin bags in every toilet stall on campus would work against the universities sustainability goals through unnecessary use of plastic. It was added that this would further incur an unreasonable use of resources. Furthermore, it was commented that the stigma around periods should be raised as women should not have to feel embarrassed to discard sanitary products in a larger communal bin. It was confirmed that currently, toilet stalls that include sanitary bins are labelled.

DG proposed an amendment that toilets should have one larger communal bin for use. It was stated that the proposed improvement does not embody the sentiment of the original proposal.

There were no improvements added to this idea.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the full idea proposed.

Vote: For: 5; Against: 7; Abstentions: 8. The Idea was not approved.

More GCU Merch and Hoodies

The proposed idea was presented to Student Voice.

RG commented that they have returned from a student exchange programme where the university had a designated student shop. DG added that Glasgow University has their own on-campus shop and that both Glasgow and Strathclyde universities have a greater variety of options, sizes and colours and that students across Glasgow take pride in wearing their universities merchandise which we don't see with GCU due to the limited availability and access. It was further stated that the university should have a shop on campus that sells merchandise and student supplies. The Students President commented that university merchandise is handled by the Students' Association who don't have the resources or finance to hold stock to be purchased in-person or to increase merchandise options. An amendment was proposed that the university are lobbied to support the expansion of merchandise options.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the changed improvement for the university to support the expansion of merchandise options to be sold through the Students' Association.

Vote: For: 22; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0. The revised improvement was approved.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the full idea proposed including the revised improvements.

Vote: For: 21; Against: 1; Abstentions: 0. The Idea was approved. **Action: Student President.**

Evening Events at Re:Union

The proposed idea was presented to Student Voice.

DG commented that it would be positive for the Students' Association to utilise their own space as although societies and sports clubs use the venue often, that often students will only attend if they are a member or affiliated with that society or sports club. RM agreed that the Students' Association invested in the space to increase vibrancy as well as providing and promoting more diverse cultures.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the idea proposed.

Vote: For: 17; Against: 1; Abstentions: 2. The Idea was approved. **Action: Student President.**

11. Minutes of Student Voice Meeting on 03rd April 2023

The Chair invited members who were present at the last meeting of Student Voice to consider the minutes of the previous Student Voice meeting held on 03rd April 2023.

There were no corrections or comments added.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Minutes of Student Voice Meeting on 03rd April 2023.

Vote: For: 3; Against: 0; Abstention: 4. The Minutes of Student Voice Meeting on 03rd April 2023 were approved.

12. Minutes of Extraordinary Student Voice Meeting on 11th May 2023

The Chair invited members who were present at the last meeting of Student Voice to consider the minutes of the previous Student Voice meeting held on 11th May 2023.

There were no corrections or comments added.

The Chair called for a vote to approve the Minutes of Student Voice Meeting on 11th May 2023.

Vote: For: 4; Against: 0; Abstention: 2. The Minutes of Student Voice Meeting on 11th May 2023 were approved.

13. Matters Arising from Meeting on 04th April 2023

The Chair invited members of Student Voice to ask the Full Time Officers any questions regarding the Matters Arising.

There were no questions or comments added.

14. Minutes of Student Voice Sub-Committees

There were no Minutes of Student Voice Sub-Committees to be approved.

15. Standing Orders

The Standing Orders were presented as ideas that have previously been approved during Student Voice. It was noted that after five years the policy will lapse unless brought forward as a new motion.

DG asked if updates on motions approved that have been developed and completed could be fed back to student voice as it was commented that some ideas have been acted upon or initiated without the proposer's knowledge or ownership.

The Student President raised if it is right for the same motion of censure to be raised twice as double jeopardy rulings are not practiced within UK law. It was noted that this can be further explored within the Students' Association. **Action: Student President.**

16. Election Rules

The changes to Election Rules were presented to Students Voice for discussion.

DG commented that the inclusion of drones within the rules should also fall under fairness as well as health and safety due the affordability of this resource. Vice President GSBS raised the change of campaigning time as previously candidates were able to campaign in-person for a two week period. It was confirmed that this had been reduced to a one week period (two weeks for online campaigning) as the two week period was set during the Covid-19 pandemic when online or hybrid learning was taking place to allow for effective communications. Feedback suggested that students felt a sense of election fatigue, that we would prefer to prioritise the mental health and comfortability for candidates campaigning as well as allowing for a more concise and less physically asserting campaign period. Further consultation on the Election Rules are to take place before they are brought for approval to the next Student Voice meeting.

17. AOCB

There was no other business to be discussed.

The meeting was concluded at 19:00pm.