



## Ethical & Environmental Committee

21<sup>st</sup> February 2018 (18:00 – 19:30) in NH209

**Present:**

Caitlin Reid, E&E Officer (**Chair**)

Rachel Simpson, VP GSBS

**Apologies:**

Alan Adamson, E School Officer

Paulo Cruz, GCU Sustainability Officer

**In Attendance:**

Gary Kyle, Student Rep Assistant (**Clerk**)

### 1. Apologies

As detailed above.

### 2. Actions from previous meeting (13/12/2017)

The responses to the previous meeting's actions are as follows:

<p><b>ACTION:</b> Decide when to close the "Wee Green Survey" and publish results via GCU Students' Association website.</p> <p>(COMPLETED)</p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> Discussion surrounded whether to take "snapshots" of student opinion throughout the year or to close it entirely after a specific date. It was agreed that it would be best to run the survey throughout the year and just highlight which responses were received in Trimester A and Trimester B. However, at the end of Week 12 of Trimester B, it will be closed so as to inform the subsequent academic year's campaign.</p>
<p><b>ACTION:</b> VP GSBS to contact GCU Students' Association senior management team.</p> <p>(ONGOING)</p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> This is still ongoing.</p>

<p><b>ACTION:</b> VP GSBS to organise Trustee Info Session and/or raise sustainability at Trustee Board meeting.</p> <p><b>(ONGOING)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> This is still ongoing.</p>
<p><b>ACTION:</b> Student Rep Assistant to upload photo of E&amp;E Officer onto the GCU Students' Association website.</p> <p><b>(ONGOING)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> This is still ongoing.</p>
<p><b>ACTION:</b> Student Rep Assistant to summarise professional development and present paper at next E&amp;E meeting.</p> <p><b>(ONGOING)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> This is still ongoing.</p>
<p><b>ACTION:</b> Student Rep Assistant to explore additional accreditation opportunities.</p> <p><b>(COMPLETED)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> This was discussed at length in the last meeting and it was noted that the university has put up banners throughout the outdoor concourse that showcase their EcoCampus Platinum award (and the fact that they're the only institution in Scotland to currently hold this award). Student Rep Assistant contacted GCU Sustainability Officer to obtain more information.</p>
<p><b>ACTION:</b> VP GSBS to draft policy for next E&amp;E committee meeting.</p> <p><b>(COMPLETED)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> VP GSBS noticed that GCU Students' Association already has a sustainability policy and, in addition to that, the E&amp;E committee recently established a remit for the group. To avoid duplicating pre-existing material, VP GSBS will provide the current policy for noting.</p>
<p><b>ACTION:</b> VP GSBS and E&amp;E Officer to meet with university staff to discuss "Swap Shop" proposal further and report back at the next E&amp;E committee meeting.</p> <p><b>(ONGOING)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> A meeting was carried out and discussions surrounding time and resources required for this event to take place. Concerns were raised regarding the logistical effort required and that it would require more volunteers to assist. It was noted that electrical equipment would have to be donated to the British Heart Foundation as we could not accept non-PAT tested equipment.</p> <p>VP GSBS to explore operational aspect; material storage; timing; etc. <b>(ACTION)</b></p>

<p><b>ACTION:</b> VP GSBS to discuss “Glasgow Goes Green” proposal with university staff and Executive Committee and report back at the next E&amp;E committee meeting.</p> <p><b>(COMPLETED)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> VP GSBS held discussions with both Executive Committee and university staff regarding this. Additionally, VP GSBS and the Student Rep Assistant attended a meeting at the University of Glasgow to explore how GCU Students’ Association could be involved with “Glasgow Goes Green”. Discussions went well however the student officer responsible for sustainability did not get back in touch with VP GSBS and therefore further planning could not be achieved.</p>
<p><b>ACTION:</b> VP GSBS to continue looking into sewing workshop provision.</p> <p><b>(ONGOING)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> This is ongoing.</p>
<p><b>ACTION:</b> E School Officer to share “Wee Green Survey” amongst the Engineering Society.</p> <p><b>(ONGOING)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> E Officer was not at the meeting (see Apologies) and therefore this action will carry over to the next meeting.</p>
<p><b>ACTION:</b> Student Rep Assistant to explore GCU Students’ Association teleconferencing.</p> <p><b>(COMPLETED)</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSE:</b> This has been achieved as the E&amp;E Officer is using teleconferencing to attend the current meeting.</p>

### 3. “Green Impact” Progress

The following discussion is based on this year’s “Green Impact” workbook and the associated criteria for each part and where GCU Students’ Association currently is with each one.

For KN001 (*The union has carried out relevant [primary research] amongst its students to inform its sustainability work, and has published the findings*), last year GCU Students’ Association carried out “The Big Green Survey” which achieved a total of 39 responses. This year, a similar survey (“The Wee Green Survey”) has been carried out and, at time of meeting, the response rate currently stood at 28 responses. The results, at this stage, currently show a strong lack of engagement from the student body. However, it was worth noting that only 24% of respondents in last year’s “The Big Green Survey” were aware of the presence of the Ethical and Environmental group compared to this year’s responses which, currently, show that 64% of respondents are aware of the group existing.

For KN002 (*The union has proactively promoted the annual national [NUS sustainability skills survey], taking place in Oct 2017, amongst its students to contribute a good number of respondents, and has shared the results*), it was worth noting that last year had a total of 44 respondents whereas this year achieved 208 – a significant increase – and the results were published on the GCU Students' Association website.

For KN003 (*The union has engaged its course reps in understanding how sustainability is covered in the formal curriculum, and is building an evidence base on this*), the Student Rep Assistant highlighted that further discussions should be held with School Officers and Full Time Officers on how this can be achieved. Currently, sustainability is mentioned as a responsibility of Class Reps (and is discussed as part of the Class Rep Training). Additionally, the Class Rep Exit Survey could potentially have a question added for future years and Academic Rep Gatherings could hold workshops that focus on sustainability within the curriculum. The E&E Officer said that she had used a SurveyMonkey approach rather than paper-based polls within her additional responsibility as a Class Rep. VP GSBS also said that she could share evidence of Psychology Class Reps using that same approach within their class.

For KN004 (*The union has successfully worked with the institution to embed sustainability into their existing monitoring and evaluation processes*), this is still ongoing.

For LD001 (*The union has one or more elected representative that proactively champions sustainability*), Caitlin Reid is the current elected Ethical & Environmental Officer and provides updates regarding her role at E&E committee meetings and Student Voice.

For LD002 (*The union has an active and productive sustainability committee or working group*), these minutes are a record of the third constituted meeting for the E&E committee group and there has been a slowly expanding membership and also a modest following of students via our social media channels.

For LD003 (*There is demonstrable commitment to sustainability from one or more senior member of staff in the union*), VP GSBS is continuing to work on establishing a meeting with senior management within GCU Students' Association.

For LD004 (*Sustainability is substantively included in the union's strategic plan*), as mentioned in previous meetings, there is sustainability mentioned within "The Bigger Plan" (GCU Students' Association's strategic plan) and this cannot be amended until 2020.

For LD005 (*The union has proactively and constructively engaged senior institutional leaders and/or trustees in sustainability, resulting in positive outputs*), VP GSBS is currently looking into this.

For LD006 (*The institution substantively refers to sustainability in their strategic plan and/or teaching and learning plan and/or graduate attributes*), as mentioned in previous meetings,

the university makes reference to sustainability within the “GCU Strategy 2020 – Goal 2: Enriching cities and communities through research” and indirectly through its other goals. There is also reference made within graduate attributes.

For PA001 (*The union’s website contains information on what the union is doing on sustainability, and how students can get involved. The information is easy to find, up to date and engaging*), the Student Rep Assistant confirmed that there was information updated on the website and that he had designed a webpage banner for the GCU Students’ Association website so that environmental work done by the union is easily accessible and visible from the main website page.

For PA002 (*The union adequately resources its sustainability work*), there is a budget of £125 allocated per year to the E&E committee and students are encouraged to fundraise for more, if required. The GCU Sustainability Officer also provides resources in terms of funding for societies to hold environmental-awareness events. Additionally, there is support offered by external organisations in regards to organising activities, etc.

For PA003 (*The union actively supports staff in professional development on sustainability*), the Student Rep Assistant and another member of GCU Students’ Association staff attended an event in November 2017 where part of it focused on sustainability.

For PA004 (*The union has successfully engaged with its clubs, societies, and other student networks on sustainability and the UN [Sustainable Development Goals]*), VP GSBS has engaged with clubs and societies to inform them of sustainability and the funding that was made available specifically for societies to engage with sustainability. VP GSBS also has communication plans in place to send out the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

For PA005 (*The union is actively working in partnership with the institution to attain and/or retain one or more external sustainability accreditation programme or award*), as stated earlier, GCU is an EcoCampus Platinum institution and VP GSBS will discuss with GCU Sustainability Officer how much work is required to maintain this award, alongside any others that may be achieved/sought.

For PA006 (*The union has convened an exploratory meeting, early in the academic year, involving institutional sustainability leads, influential sustainability champions and relevant academics*), there was a meeting with the previous VP GSBS and the current VP GSBS alongside the GCU Sustainability Officer at the start of the academic year regarding sustainability; the current VP GSBS is seeking minutes of this meeting taking place.

For PA007 (*Sustainability is a popular category in the union’s teaching awards, with a variety of applications covering different disciplines*), whilst it is currently not in this year’s teaching awards, VP SEBE has stated that the teaching awards will be due a review in terms of how it is structured, delivered, promoted, etc. and VP GSBS will discuss this further with the GCU Students’ Association Executive committee to see how this can be taken forward.

For PA008 (*The union has one or more active sustainability society or club*), there is a Sustainability society, a Vegan society and also the Ethical & Environmental group that are active within this academic year. It was also noted that the Engineering School Officer is exploring how to incorporate “Engineers Without Borders” into the Engineering School and/or Engineering Society. VP GSBS will explore the Vegan society to obtain evidence and also see whether Amnesty society have done anything regarding ethical environmentalism.

For PA009 (*Sustainability is referenced in the job descriptions of all new staff*), it was noted that it is definitely referenced within the Student Rep Assistant’s job description and as there are upcoming staff vacancies, VP GSBS could explore having sustainability embedded within new job descriptions.

For PA010 (*The union has one or more active policy commitment relating to sustainability, passed within the last three years, and has published it*), VP GSBS stated that the previous policy commitment requires renewal and that this can be presented to the next Student Voice meeting.

For SU001 (*The union has identified its most significant negative [environmental impacts], and published them*), this is information that needs to be sought from the Chief Executive.

For SU002 (*The union has removed plastic bags from any retail outlets or events (including Freshers Fairs)*), it was stated that GCU Students’ Association does not use any plastic bags for any of its events, stalls or bar.

For SU003 (*The union does not use bottle-fed water coolers and has installed one or more drinking water fountain or it has actively lobbied its institution to install water fountains on its premises*), there are several mains-fed water fountains within GCU Students’ Association alongside promotion of their location and the benefits of using reusable water bottles.

For SU004 (*The union provides and promotes a good selection of vegetarian and vegan options in catering outlets and/or at events and meetings*), the internal catering company (BaxterStorey) has expressed an interest in obtaining student feedback regarding reviewing the menu options provided. VP GSBS will liaise with the Student President to obtain further information.

For SU005 (*All cotton-based clothing sold by the union is [Fairtrade]*), the current clothing supplier (Raging Bull) is an ethically-sourced company but does not have the Fairtrade standard.

For SU006 (*The union has a [SMART action plan] on sustainability, and has published it. It should include both operational sustainability and campaigning and influencing*), VP GSBS will create this and publish online.

For SU007 (*The union has reduced the amount of one or more utility over the last three years through efficiency*), Chief Executive can provide this information.

For SU008 (*The union/university is powered by more than 10% [renewable energy] either bought or generated and/or the union is working with the institutions to increase the percentage of renewables in its energy mix*), this is not the case.

For SU009 (*The union has cycle parking and/or showers in or around their building to encourage staff to cycle to work*), it was noted that there are numerous cycle parking features around campus; staff are encouraged to opt for healthier travelling methods; and there are showering facilities in the adjacent university gym building that staff and students can use (separately).

For OCO01 (*The union has collaborated with, or supported, another students' union (FE or HE) on sustainability*), GCU Students' Association is collaborating with the City of Glasgow College. Currently in discussions is a community litter-picking event with the two organisations and the City of Glasgow College have expressed an interest in utilising a previous E&E campaign. VP GSBS is waiting to hear back from the community council for when the litter-picking can take place.

For OCO02 (*The union has collaborated with, or supported, one or more community organisation on sustainability*), alongside the litter-picking event that is currently in discussions, VP GSBS ran a university-wide campaign near the end of Trimester A which encouraged staff and students to donate food, clothing, *etc.* for the local elderly or homeless which, in itself, encourages sustainability of resources through reuse rather than generating unnecessary waste.

#### **4. "Wee Green Survey" Update**

Currently, there have been 29 respondents with common themes associated with disengagement or lack of knowledge coming through. Those who are aware of the Ethical and Environmental Committee find the webpages accessible and easy-to-understand; they believe that deforestation, recycling and energy wastage are high or medium priorities. It was noted that fossil fuels, food wastage, *etc.* were seen as low priorities but the reasoning behind this has not been explored.

Therefore, it is advised that future campaign work focuses on exploring the themes that students have reported back as being high priority – namely recycling and energy wastage. VP GSBS stated that she had been working with the GCU Sustainability Officer to explore aspects of the themes that have been identified by students but this has not yet formed part of a formal campaign.

## 5. AOCB

### - *Student-organised events*

A student has e-mailed the E&E Officer to express interest in hosting some “green events” and wanted to screen environmental documentaries/films and that the student felt that this committee might be the most effective platform in order to achieve this. The student has received permission to screen the desired documentaries/films and therefore they are looking for this committee to assist in the facilitation of these events.

### - *Collaboration with Women’s Officer*

The GCU Students’ Association’s Woman’s Officer has also contacted the E&E Officer to discuss collaboration around “sustainable periods” and it is hoped that an event/stall/promotion will be achieved in due course.

### - *Sustainable Elections*

The student elections for the 2018/19 Full Time Officers (FTO) are imminent and suggestions from a GCU Students’ Association staff member were to consider alternative ways for being sustainable or offering sustainable incentives. Examples were to offer reusable water bottles and also to mindful of the printed resources we use for promotion (posters, manifesto leaflets, etc.). VP GSBS abstained from the discussion as she is rerunning as an FTO candidate but the E&E Officer expressed interest in exploring sustainable elections.

### - *Wee Green Changes Campaign*

Based on work that the Sustainability Society has carried out and also taking inspiration from City of Glasgow College, it was discussed that a “5 Wee Green Changes” promotion should be carried out to demonstrate how easy it is to make small changes to one’s lifestyle and the beneficial effects that would have on the environment.

**The next meeting for the Ethical & Environmental Committee is scheduled to take place on 10<sup>th</sup> April (18:00-19:00)**