

Minutes of the 3rd Caledonian Student Voice Meeting of Session 2019/20

Meeting held on Monday, 10th February 2020, in NH208, at 5.00pm.

Sign in: Present: Eilidh Fulton (Student President); Bethany Stevenson (VP SHLS); Susan Docherty (VP SCEBE); Moses Apiliga (VP GSBS); Loretta Bortey (LB); Racheal Brown (RB); Neill Clark (NC); Dara Coussot (DC); Peakay Dennis (PD); Jonnie England (JE); David Grimm (DG); Seona Halbert (SH); John Hogg (JKH); Maggie Huminiecka (MH); Sandra Kubasik (SK); Eleanor MacLennan-Patton (EMP); Kathryn McNicol (KMcn); Kathy Mumme (KM); Maria Nagy (MN); Grace Nyariki (GN); Gillian Poynts (GP); Adil Rahoo (AR); Sophie Robinson (SR); Thomas Schwitalla (TS); John Vasconcelos (JV); Vincent Waters (VW); Kirsty Winter (KW)

Absent: Uzoma Alaneme (UA); Gaia Argiolas (GA); Stewart Baker (SB); Kimberley Brown (KB); Dorian Clark (DC); Laura Clark (LC); Tanya Fate-Cockbain (TFC); Joanne Fitzpatrick (JF); Nicole Gray (NG); Gabriele Janusonyte (GJ); Samah Khan (SK); Viktor Mirchev (VM); Katie Moffat (KM); Ionnis Petrakis (IP); Bernadette Prickett (BP); Zubair Sarwar (ZS); Stephanie Slater (SS); Lucy Starling (LS)

Apologies: Monica Allen (MA); Molly Ferugson (MF); David Howie (DH); Ryan Johnston (RJ); Claire MacLoed (CM); Dorota Makaruk (DM); Muhammad Nadeem ur Rehman (MNR); Anosha Naziri (AN); Kerryanne O'Rourke (KO); Jenny Stryman (JS); Keir Thomson (KT); Maggie Wierzbicka (MW).

In attendance: Sara MacLean (Student Voice Team Leader); David Carse (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. Welcome

- 1.1 The meeting started at 5.00pm. The Chair (Maria Nagy) welcomed all members to the third meeting of Student Voice for 2019/20. Members were asked to ensure they had signed in and taken a voting card to use when speaking. The Chair said that Observers are welcome to the meeting but they are not eligible to vote. Members were reminded of what conduct is acceptable during the meeting and to keep contributions brief but robust.

2 Previous Minutes

The Chair invited members to consider the minutes of the previous Student Voice meeting held on 25th November 2019. 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 Monday, 25th November 2019. **Vote: For: 19; Against: 0; Abstention: 1.** The previous Student Voice minutes from 25th November 2019 were approved.

3 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.

- 3.1 **To find out about the impact of the Nov 2019 strike on tuition fees of international students**

The Student President informed Student Voice that the university will consider the impacts of the strikes on students on a case by case basis. If you do want to raise an issue, each school has a different contact but this information can be found out by emailing the schools. This matter is resolved.

3.2 Referendum on exams before Christmas

Student President updated that the FTO are looking at holding this after the Full Time Officer (FTO) elections. Members questioned whether it could be done at the same time as the Full Time Officer elections and Student Voice discussed the pro and cons including voter fatigue of running another vote outside the election period and the lack of communication and information to voters concerning the referendum if run during the elections – trying to run two things at once without proper planning could mean that both suffer. Members also questioned why we are re-running a referendum in the first place. This matter is ongoing.

Action: Student President

3.3 Increase wildflowers on campus

VP GSBS has spoken to GCU sustainability coordinator who informed VP GSBS that a previous trial of wildflowers was not successful and the amount of work to make wildflowers grow in the soil we have on campus was large. University would be willing to look at planting wildflowers if there was a commitment from the SA and/or society commitment from a society to upkeep wildflowers. Members questioned how feasible this would be as wildflowers grow during summer so how would a student society be able to take care of them. Members recommended that the policy position is taken back to university and to try again. This matter is ongoing. **Action: VP GSBS**

3.4 Every programme cohort to have a session on academic writing and expectations within that course.

This proposal is currently going through individual school boards. VPs of the academic schools are waiting for updates and will inform at next meeting. This matter is ongoing.

Action: VP SHLS, SCEBE & GSBS

4. Student Voice Committees

The Chair called for a vote to approve the previous minutes of all Student Voice Sub Committees. **Vote – For: 23; Against: 0; Abstention: 1.** The previous minutes of all Student Voice Sub Committees were approved.

5. 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.

SP reported that GCU London Graduation was to not go ahead this year but she had lead discussions to keep it which has been successful. Also reported that information about the Safe Taxi scheme will be included on the back of Student cards.

SP requested that one of her individual objectives be changed from leading on a move of the Students' Association to a new location on campus to supporting ELIR. She explains that the university has been silent on the possible move and she would like her objectives to reflect the amount of effort she has put into ELIR. **Vote – For: 23; Against: 1; Abstention: 0.** Student Voice Approved the change of objective from Building Move to Supporting ELIR for SP.

VP SCEBE reported that we are working in partnership with the university to do training that will support the mental health lanyard scheme for staff. VPSCEBE also reported that the mature students room will be launching at the end of the week, gender-neutral toilets will be introduced, feel fab February is ready to launch and the diversity of thought video will be going into production. She is also applying for lottery funding to support mental health work of the Students' Association. JE asked how this funding application would work given that charities can only apply once a year. VP SCEBE explained that there are a few schemes the Lottery funds and an application will be going to two different schemes.

VP SHLS reported that in addition to the written report, there has been progress on the Common Good Games and sports policy within the last few days.

VP GSBS reported that in addition to the written report a careers event for BME students was held last week as part of the partnership work with the university to address the Black Attainment Gap. As part of this work, a survey for BME students will be active soon. Accreditation for 37 students has now been received from the Carbon Literacy Training (CLT). SAGE has been reviewing the Mitigating Circumstances policy and early retrieval. Member of Student Voice asked for clarification on VP GSBS report about Black History Month(BHM) activities – isn't BHM in October. VP GSBS answered that BHM is celebrated in October in the UK and February in the US events are being hosted as a way to continue engagement across the two trimesters and not just during UK BHM. A member questioned VP GSBS about whether the CLT will be rerun. VP GSBS answered that we are currently exploring ways to get it accredited at GCU as the plan is to run it frequently.

No further questions were asked in relation to the Full Time Officer Reports and the Chair invited members to take a vote to decide whether to approve all the reports. **Vote: For: 19 Against: 0; Abstention: 5.** All the Full Time Officer Reports were approved.

6. Student Voice Officer Reports

The Student Voice Officers who had not already submitted a written report were invited by the Chair to provide a brief verbal update. No questions were raised from the reports or an item from the reports discussed. The Chair invited members to take a vote to decide whether to approve the Student Voice Officer Reports. **Vote: For: 21; Against: 0; Abstentions: 3.** The Student Voice Officers Reports were approved.

7. Affiliations

The following societies and sports clubs were ratified by Student Voice.

All affiliations listed below had already been approved by the Societies Council and the Sports Council as appropriate.

- PhD Society
- Photographic Society
- PakSoc
- Cancer Support Scotland GCU
- GCU Music Collective
- GCU Social Sciences Society
- Student Solidarity Network

Members asked for clarification of the origins of the name PacSoc – it was chosen by the society themselves. A member asked about the Student Solidarity Network – MA stated it was to support lecturers in the current industrial action. The Chair asked all members to take a vote to approve all ratifications. **Vote: For: 23; Against: 0; Abstention: 2.**

8. Elections

Elections took place for the following positions and the results are below:

- Elections Committee (x2) –Neill Clark and Bethany Stevenson
- Senate Research Student Representative (x1 PGR) – still to be filled
- Senate International Student Representative (x1) – Kathinka Mumme

The Senate Research Representative (x1 PGR) will be brought back to the next Student Voice meeting in March 2020.

9. Black and Minority Ethnic Officer/Group Name Change

The BME Officer presented the paper on changing the Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) Officer and Group name to Ethnic Diversity Network (EDN) Officer and Group. Although these individuals factually represent a minority in the population as far as numbers are concerned, continually referring to a minority does not create a consciousness of equality. Referring to minorities seems to emphasise under representation instead of encouraging a society that is open to various ethnicities as the norm. A member asked whether this would affect our partnership with NUS as they refer to BME and not EDN. The BME Officer explained that the proposed by-laws changes did take into account NUS preferred terminology and changes proposed should not affect our partnership. The Chair called for a vote to approve the By-Law change. This requires the backing of a two thirds of members present to be approved. **Vote: For: 25; Against: 0; Abstention: 0.** The name change was approved.

10. Merge Mental Health and Men's Health and Alliance Officer and Group

VP SCEBE presented the paper on merging the Men's Mental Health and Alliance Officer/Group with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Group. Mental Health and Wellbeing issues affect all genders and combining the both groups together will strengthen the representation. The merger will utilise more resources rather than diluting them. Consultation has been taken with the Men's Mental Health Officer. Members questioned if not having a dedicated group for Men's Mental health would it decrease engagement with the group since some people are more comfortable speaking to a person of the same gender. VP SCEBE responded that the purpose of the group was to represent students and not to offer practical hands on support for individuals. A member questioned whether the Mental Health and Wellbeing Group would lose the focus on men's higher suicide rates that was one of the reasons the Men's Mental Health group was formed. President assured Student Voice that the mental health needs of men would not be lost in the new group as the Men's Mental Health Officer will be taking on the role of Officer for the proposed combined group. The Chair called for a vote to approve the By-Law change merging the Men's Mental Health and Alliance Group/Officer with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Group. This requires the backing of a two thirds of members present to be approved. **Vote: For: 25; Against: 0; Abstention: 0.** The merge of the two groups was approved.

11. Safe Space Room Changed to Quiet Room

VP SCEBE presented the paper to change the current Safe Space room on level 2 of the Students Association to a Quiet Room. The original idea of Safe Space was for students to practice mindfulness and a place that provides information for students struggling with anxiety. This will remain the same. The term 'Quiet Room' is universally known and a name that all students will be familiar with, therefore all students, no matter what their gender identity will be able to identify and utilise this space. The room will be accessible to all students and will be used as a space to 'get away from it all' - when students simply want somewhere to go where they are unlikely to be disturbed. It can be used for contemplation, meditation and mindfulness. The idea includes the proposal of the room to be a digital detox space as the Quiet Room is a place to refrain from using electronic devices such as smartphones or computers, and to be regarded as an opportunity to reduce stress. This proposal has been in consultation with the Women's Officer and the LGBT+ Officer who currently use the space and are in agreement with the changes. Members asked about the digital detox element of the proposal. For example, could a student use their headphones while they are in the space. VP SCEBE confirmed that students would be able to use headphones but the room was not to be used as a digital workspace. Members asked how the restrictions on the use of digital equipment would be implemented. VP SCEBE responded that it would be on the honour system and infringements would be dealt with on a case by case basis. A Member questioned whether the space would be bookable. VP SCEBE responded that it would not be bookable but available on a walk in basis. A Member asked whether there would be time limits for use. VP SCEBE responded there would be no time limits on the use of the room. A member questioned whether this was morally right to do as the room was a sanctuary for liberation group members and increasing mental health provisions should not be at the cost of these groups. VP SCEBE responded the room was underutilised by the groups and that some members of the liberation groups felt there was a stigma to using the room. The Chair called for a vote to approve the change of the Safe Space to a Quiet Room. This requires a simple majority of members present to be approved. **Vote: For: 24; Against: 1; Abstention: 1.** The change was approved.

12. Revised Societies' Policy

Societies Council Chair presented the paper for revisions to the Societies Policy. The change is to reflect discussion at Societies Council about how deactivation of a society that was passed into policy last year would be implemented. The change would seek to keep the final vote to deactivate a society with Societies Council. A member questioned the process for contacting a society that is on the verge of being deactivated. An amendment to the policy that the Society's President should be emailed on their regular student email address was proposed. The chair called on a vote to approve the amendment **Vote: For: 23; Against: 1; Abstention: 2.** The amendment was approved. The Chair called on a vote to approve the revision to the Societies' Policy. This requires the backing of a two thirds of members present to be approved. **Vote: For: 24; Against: 0; Abstention: 1.** The changes to the Societies' Policy was approved.

13. Revised Sports' Policy

Sports Council Chair presented the paper for revisions to the Sports' Policy. It is proposed that there are changes in the criteria of awards, as outlined in sections 11.2.4 (Team of the

Year) and 11.4 (Club of the Year). It is also proposed to include a new Most Improved Club award in section 11.6. A member questioned whether it is common for Sports Clubs to be running a deficit. Sports Council Chair responded that each club is different and the changes proposed is meant to increase engagement of clubs with sports coordinator to ensure they are better supported/managed. The Chair called on a vote to approve the revision to the Sports' Policy. This requires the backing of a two thirds of members present to be approved. **Vote: For: 24; Against: 0; Abstention: 2.** The changes to the Sports' Policy was approved.

14. Full Time Officer-elect Resignation Notice Period

The Deputy Returning Officer presented the paper on changing the notice period that FTO-elects can resign before triggering a by-election. The Full Time Officer Elections normally take place on Week 6 of Trimester B and the successfully elected Full Time Officers start Mid-May (this year on the 18th May 2020). There are ten weeks between the election results and the start of their contract.

Our By-Laws allow for a successfully elected candidate, called a Full Time Officer-elect, to be able to resign with four weeks of being elected and for their place to be filled by the next placed candidate. It is proposed to extend this period to 10 weeks, as this would be before a Full Time Officer starts their Handover and Induction and prevents the need for a By-Election. A By-Election usually has lower voter turnout and is therefore not as democratically rigorous as the Full Time Officers elections held during term-time. A member asked why the change was needed. The DRO responded that this scenario was seen in other institutions and that they are proposing a change proactively especially seeing that a by-election would eat into the training period of a new officer. A member asked whether moving from weeks to 10 weeks was too big of a change. The DRO responded that 10 weeks is the interim time between being elected but before taking up post, so this seemed like a natural boundary for a by-election being triggered. The Chair called on a vote to approve the change to the Full time officer –elect resignation period. This requires the backing of a two thirds of members present to be approved. **Vote: For: 18; Against: 5; Abstention: 2.** The change to the by-laws was approved.

15. NUS UK and Scotland Conference Policy Submission

Members of NUS may submit up to two policy proposal for consideration at NUS Scotland Conference. A call for submissions was sent and two proposals were received. Care Experience Officer presented his proposal for NUS Scotland on enabling other universities to implement care experienced officer like we have with our Students Association. A member questioned whether another university has to have the exact same set up as we do here. Care Experienced Officer answered that the system could be different in each university but that there was a student representative for Care Experienced students was the important part. A member asked whether this was not also relevant to colleges. The care experienced office explained that this proposal seeks to implement in universities as a starting point as they have established students' associations/union. Many colleges do not have these or are just beginning to establish them. The Chair called on a vote to approve sending the proposal on Care Experienced Officers to the NUS Scotland conference. This requires a simple majority of members present to be approved. **Vote: For: 26; Against: 0; Abstention: 0.** The proposal will be sent to NUS Scotland for consideration at conference.

Student Voice vice chair presented his proposal for NUS Scotland Conference for consideration. At the moment assistant dogs are allowed for seen disabilities but this proposal is to extend that to unseen disabilities. Want NUS to push government and HE/FE providers to allow emotional support animals. A member questioned whether this was feasible given the how similar policies have been implemented in the US. The vice chair responded that the British system would be simplified with no need to license support dogs which already the case in instances like guide dogs for the blind. A member asked if the support dogs would not need to be registered? Most likely there would be registry of support animals at a local level. A member queried about people who are allergic to dogs. A member explained that this is an example of conflicting needs that disability services already balance for other conditions. The Chair called on a vote to approve sending the proposal on emotional support animals to the NUS Scotland conference. This requires a simple majority of members present to be approved. **Vote: For: 24; Against: 0; Abstention: 1.** The proposal will be sent to NUS Scotland for consideration at conference.

*At this point (6:55pm) the Chair called for a motion to further extend the guillotine by another 20 minutes and for the meeting to finish at 7.15pm. The Chair called for a vote and asked members if they wished to vote to extend the meeting. **Vote: For: 13; Against: 6; Abstention: 4.** The meeting was extended to 7.15pm.*

16. Ideas

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

16.1 Turn left over cafeteria food into take-home meals for students in need (Muhammad Bin Omar)

The proposal was present to Student Voice members by the chair as the proposer was not present. A member volunteered to speak against the motion stating that there are more in need population than students and the food should be donated to other charities for distribution. A member rebutted that student homelessness is often hidden and there are also other students who find it hard to buy food after paying rent. VPSHL reported that she had been in discussion with the catering outlet about what happens to leftover food. The catering outlets have taken measures to limit the amount of food wasted including selling it at reduced prices before expiring or repurposing leftovers. Catering noted that they had very little food waste from expiring food. The Chair called for a vote to approve move the Idea to distribute cafeteria left overs for students in need. **Vote: For: 8; Against: 4; Abstention: 11.** The Idea was approved. The VP SHLS will take this Idea forward. **Action: VP SHLS.**

16.2 Anti bac wipes and gel on campus (Vincent Waters)

The proposer explained his Idea was to address the current state of cleansing on campus. The cleaning staff are overstretched and there are simple measures the university could take to supply cleaning products to students. The proposal is to have anti bac wipes readily available all over campus and to have anti bac gel in high traffic areas. A member asked about how sustainable the products would be. The proposer noted that there are bio-degradable versions but they are more expensive. A member asked about if the expense of implementing such a scheme could be better spent other places. The proposer noted that this was about health and would cut down on Fresher's flu and coronavirus. Further the university gets a block grant from the Scottish Government and they should use a portion of

this to look after the health of people at the university. Several amendments to the proposal was put forward. Amendment one was to include that anti-bac gel be available in all toilets. The Chair called for a vote on amendment one. **Vote: For: 21; Against: 0; Abstention: 1.** The amendment was approved. Amendment two was to campaign for the university to hire more cleaning staff. The Chair called for a vote on amendment two. **Vote: For: 22; Against: 0; Abstention: 1.** The amendment was approved. Amendment three was that anti bac gel should be limited to high traffic places only. The Chair called for a vote on amendment three. **Vote: For: 3; Against:11; Abstention: 8** The amendment was not approved. Amendment four was to advocate for the university to install brass handles on all doors. The Chair called for a vote on amendment four. **Vote: For: 19; Against:0; Abstention: 3.** The amendment was approved. The chair called for a vote on the Idea with approved amendments. **Vote: For: 21; Against: 2; Abstention: 0.** The Idea was approved. The Student President will take this idea forward. **Action: Student President**

The Chair thanked all members of Student Voice for their attendance and reminded members that Student Voice members are invited for one free drink in Re:Union Bar & Grill and a chance to network with other members.

The meeting was concluded at 7:17pm