



KPA Annual General Meeting Minutes

Thursday 26th May 2022 from 17.30 – 18.15
CBA1.099/100 and online via Microsoft Teams

1. Attendees

Bethany Edge (Chair – Association Secretary)

Sarah Hammond (President)

Members:

Matthew Meehan

Molly Drummond

Sayed Miah

Christopher Murphy

Purnima Gamage (online)

Abdelrhman Rayis (online)

Non-Members or not confirmed:

Steve Kilner (online)

Bolajoko Adekanye (online)

James Clegg

2. Apologies: None

3. Officer Reports (Verbal Update)

Association Secretary, Bethany Edge, verbal report:

In the past year, I have worked closely with the KPA President, Sarah, and board of trustees to do the following:

- KPA Elections: I am a candidate in this round of Elections, and thus the returning officer roles were given to Alison Tansey and Atieme Ogbolosingha.
- KPA General Meetings: I organised an EGM late last year to discuss the UCU Industrial Action and to explore how we can best support our members through this, this meant we could take informed action.
- KPA Postgraduate Celebration Event 2022: I am in the process of organising our annual postgraduate celebration event (with help from the KPA Coordinator Alison and KPA President Sarah) which will take place this year on Friday 24th June -

nominations for our Bob Beattie Postgraduate Recognition Awards will close at the end of tomorrow (Friday 27th May) and we hope to give out five prizes: one winner who will receive a prize of £300 and four 'Highly Commended' awards with a prize of £175 to each student. My aim with these awards and associated celebration event is and has always been to celebrate all our fantastic Keele Postgraduates and to spread the benefit widely.

- KPA Communications: I have continued to disseminate the weekly digest since assumption of the role. The digest contains useful information and updates from the committee, events organized by the KPA, university, and relevant external communication. I have been involved in assuring that committee events and communications are disseminated via our social media pages, however, I only recently gained access to the KPA Instagram and Twitter accounts, so my involvement was mainly with the Facebook pages.
- Committee engagements: I have been actively involved in the KPA executive committee brainstorming ideas for events and planning our strategy as a committee. I have also attended many Trustee Board meetings where I have noted the need to serve all our students, contributed differing perspectives and proposed solutions to problems faced by the charity. I have also been involved in revising the KPA Constitution along with Sarah (KPA President), Alison (KPA Coordinator) Elisia (former President), Atieme (former VP), Ashley (former external trustee) to make it more accessible and to clarify the position of the KPA going forward, this is ongoing.
- Committee events: I have organised and facilitated many events since I started my role, including Freshers Week trips to Trentham Gardens and Amore in Newcastle, events to celebrate Black History Month, LGBT+ History Month and other occasions such as Random Act of Kindness Day and Christmas. I am particularly pleased with the reception to the 'Productive Postgrads' sessions that I initiated and facilitate as these have gained popularity and now see a range of regular and new PGs coming along each week to work together, which is building a fantastic and supportive community of individuals.
- Student case work: I have consistently been available for student contact and always respond to student enquiries and bringing these to the attention of the committee. Most of my communication with students has taken place in our regular committee events - Weekly Productive Postgrads on Mondays, and PG Coffee Mornings on Thursdays. I have found that by being a regular, consistent presence at these events, students come up to me to discuss any challenges they have/are facing and feel able to ask me any questions.

President, Sarah Hammond, verbal report:

I can't believe that I'm coming to the end of my term as President! It's definitely been tricky at times, but I don't think it's quite sunk in that I won't be here in about a month's time, and I'm really going to miss everything and everyone at the KPA. I won't be a stranger though; I'll still be around to finish off my Masters.

Atieme Resignation

Atieme resigned in February of this year to take up a teaching post at the University of Surrey. As a result, I have been both President and Vice President and I hope I've

successfully juggled the two roles. My main priority has always been that postgraduate voices are heard across the university, and this has been a huge privilege for me.

Elections 2022

Tomorrow we should be able to announce the new President, Vice-President, Secretary, and International Officer for 2022/23. I wish them every success for the next academic year. Unfortunately, we have been unable to fill the positions of Equality and Diversity Officer and Activities Officer for this election cycle.

Events

We have tried to put on as many events as we could this year with a depleted committee, and I think we have made an excellent success, particularly with our LGBT+ History Month film night and zine workshop. We also put on a Mother Language Day, which was well received by students who shared experiences of their languages and cultures.

Before I started my term, I know that the trips to Wedgwood and Betley bonfire were very well received, and I hope that the new team of officers can inject new ideas and keep these events going throughout the next academic year.

Our Mindfulness and Yoga events have been very well attended, and hopefully these will continue in the new academic year. Both tutors have asked to come back after the summer break, which is fantastic as they love working with us and with our postgraduates.

Our Productive Postgrads event continues to go from strength to strength, it has been an excellent way to foster community and to allow postgraduates to have a dedicated study space and opportunity to socialise with likeminded people. Our Coffee Mornings have now started again face to face, and it is lovely to see so many different people coming for a chat over coffee and some biscuits.

Student Casework

I have been working closely with the PVC for Education to ensure that PG students get a tailored induction package when they start at Keele. In conjunction with the SU and UNIAC, the independent auditor, we carried out a focus group which gave us excellent insight into what postgraduates wanted from their induction period. I am also working to ensure that international students also have a tailored induction period. This work is to be passed onto the next officers and will be in place by the start of the next academic year.

I was asked to be a 'witness' and write a statement about the impact of Whalley's Quarry landfill on postgraduate students at Keele. This has been sent to the Council and we are awaiting the next steps. I worked in conjunction with the university on this and have ensured that it is kept on the university's agenda.

I have also undertaken a lot of casework on behalf of individual postgraduates, ensuring they have access to the correct funding, signposting them to the correct people, and ensuring that their voices are heard across the university. Alongside the SU, we ensured that students affected by the crisis in Ukraine and Russia were supported by the university, both financially and also in terms of their mental health. We are still working with the university to ensure the safety net for these students is in place.

I have also worked closely with the SU Officers to create a Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy, alongside the university, to ensure all students are able to access the information and support they need from the services that are offered at Keele. I have ensured that postgraduates will be recognised within this strategy and will be able to access the support they need.

I have also been involved in leading on a Student Partnership vision with colleagues from the university, focusing on broadening and diversifying student voice, student engagement and student leadership. Two postgraduates are also involved in this endeavour, and this has been a fantastic opportunity for all of us to shape postgraduate experience within the university.

I was involved in the interviewing for the new Chair of Council, Mike Farrar. I have very much enjoyed being a student member of Council, holding the university to account over the experiences of postgraduates at Keele. I was also involved in the interviews for the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, and was very pleased to appoint Donna Lee, who I think will be excellent in ensuring postgraduates are included and heard across the faculty.

Constitution

Work is still ongoing with our constitution, unfortunately our external trustee Ashley Storer-Smith who was responsible for it has resigned. We wish them well, and we will be working with the Board of Trustees to ensure that we implement a working governing document that will provide further stability to the organisation. We are now in the process of looking for replacement trustees for Ashley Storer-Smith and Rachel Bright who is due to be standing down at the end of her terms. We wish them both very well and thank them both for all they have done for the association.

KPA/SCR Research Assistant

Pete Collinge will be working with the KPA and the SCR to research our history. I was pleased to be part of the short listing and will be working with Pete until the end of my term. We will also be providing some archival research training to the other people who applied in the summer months.

Clubhouse

The Clubhouse continues to go from strength to strength. I was incredibly pleased to give a narration of our accounts to the Business Review Committee in April and reported a surplus for the first time in recent history. This was greatly appreciated by the

committee, and huge thanks go to the whole team at the Clubhouse for all of their hard work. The new outside space is looking fantastic after a face lift by one of the employees, and I look forward to the plans Jules and the team have for the next year.

KPA Bursary

I have been very pleased to see a number of postgraduates applying for our bursary this year. It is always a privilege to help our postgraduates in any way we can, and I know these awards have been greatly appreciated.

Bob Beattie

Beth, Alison, and I have been working very hard behind the scenes to plan our Bob Beattie recognition awards, due to take place on Friday 24th June at the Chapel. More information will be disseminated in due course, but I know we are all looking forward to celebrating our postgraduate and their wonderful achievements over what has been a rather taxing year for us all.

I want to thank Alison and Beth for the support and guidance they have given me this year, it has been quite turbulent at times, but I think I leave the KPA in a more stable position, ready for all of the new officers to take up their roles.

4. Members' comments / suggestions / feedback

MD: queried the fact that our events were suspended over the holiday periods (Christmas and Easter break), specifically our coffee mornings and productive postgrads sessions.

SH: As we have not had a full committee, and these times coincided with my annual leave, and Beth's (as well as sick leave) it was really difficult to run the things that we wanted to run. So hopefully with the fuller committee we will be able to run these things over holidays. I do think it is really important that we still keep that postgraduate community going on kind of over the holidays.

BE: It is a concern that a couple of people have raised because obviously we don't go away as postgraduates like undergrads do. It is definitely something that we're looking into continuing through the summer break, which is our next holiday period. We will be reshaping the nature of productive postgrads. So instead of offering free lunch, we're going to move towards still maintaining the free coffee and (instead of free lunch) offering a 50% discount on anything purchased over the clubhouse bar, so that would essentially mean all postgrads will get their drinks and any food at cost price. This will make the event more sustainable for the future.

5. Approval of year ended 31st July 2021 Financial Statements by the membership

These were approved. Seven members voted to approve the account out of the seven members present.

6. Approval of last AGM minutes by the membership

These were approved. Seven members voted to approve the account out of the seven members present.

7. Any other business: None

BE: Thank you, to everyone who has turned up to today's AGM and it's really good to see you here and getting involved. We also wanted to wish everyone look who was running in our elections and if you haven't already, please do make sure you vote for your next committee (voting will close at 5:00 PM tomorrow, and then we'll be announcing your new committee at 7:00 PM tomorrow). We also want to make sure that you nominate some fantastic postgrads for our Bob Beatie Awards, and you can find all the information for that on our website. The more nominations we get the better! As we can highlight the successes of our postgrads our celebration event in June.

Meeting Ended at 18.00