



Keele Postgraduate Association

Minutes of Ordinary General Meeting on Wednesday 28.02.2024

In Person at CBA 0.060 & Online at 5 pm via Microsoft Teams

Attendees: (the meeting was hybrid)

Note: some students arrived at different times via the Teams channel.

Below is the total number of people who attended:

- 1- Michel Ghrayeb (VP and Chair of meeting)
- 2- Rachana Dhaka (President, in person)
- 3- Janani Rayan Anand Rajarajeswari (in person)
 - 4- Sandra Suresh (in person)
 - 5- Akash Narayana
 - 6- Anne George George
 - 7- Chisomo Msungama-Phiri
 - 8- Dur E Adan
- 9- Ebenezer Nii Adama Welbeck
 - 10- Gabriel Oduor
 - 11- Jie Xiao
- 12- Jyotheth Karnam
- 13- Manisha Manisha
- 14- Manushi Patel
- 15- Nina Mehlig
- 16- Neyoo Akinyemi
- 17- Shalini Shankar
- 18- Shragava Sandeep
- 19- Srishti Majmuder
- 20- Syeda Faaiza Noreen Noreen
 - 21- Sikiru Afolabi
- 22- Aayush Batra (KPA Association Secretary)

1. Welcome

The VP welcomed the attendants and highlighted the agenda items.

2. Apologies

No apologies were noted.

3. Items for discussion

- **To provide a summary of the committee's actions and accomplishments within the initial six-month period.**

The VP highlighted that a document has been shared about the achievements and actions of the committee and made room for attendees for feedback and comments and whether they would like the committee to change their approach, focus on missed points, or even commend on certain actions:

No comments were noted by the attendees. So the Chair moved to the next item on the agenda.

- **To vote on the co-option of International Officer (Volunteer role) for the KPA**

The VP started by explaining the rationale behind having a co-option: as the position hasn't been filled in two consecutive elections, according to the constitution the association would go for co-option for the vacant positions. This includes announcing the role to the community and the appointments committee would choose the most suitable candidate for this. The process ended with choosing *Janani Rayan Anand Rajarajeswari* as the International Officer of the KPA, and now the decision is up for voting by the postgraduate community. Jannani said a few words to the attendees:

"Hello everyone. Good evening. I am Janani Ryan and I study counselling and psychotherapy at Keele. Being an international student in the UK is hard. It's not easy to leave behind your family, your friends, and your stories back home. But thanks to the KPA, I made really good friends and I've made memories and I've made a home for myself here. And I think my vision for becoming an international officer is to make sure that everybody else gets to have that home for themselves here at Keele. So yeah, please vote for me. Thank you."

One of the attendees, SS, asked Jannani how she is going to make life easier for students around campus. To which Jannani replied: "So I think the biggest hurdle immediately when you move to the UK as a student is cultural adaptation and dealing with language barriers and the culture shock. And there's a bunch of things that you need to do immediately that you're running about to do. For example, getting your job code, getting your bank set up, and essentially, the first, like one and half months is just running about apart from your course. I used to be a graphic designer so I'm sort of like bringing my skill set here. Building like a support document for students who've just moved to the UK to Keele and I'm hoping that these documents become a "go to" when students move here. And it's like a bunch of FAQs. And if they need more support, I'm always available as the International Officer and I am trained in mental health support. I do think I can support students to the best of my ability."

For this decision to pass, it would need the approval by 2/3 majority of the Quorate general meeting. As the meeting does not form a quorum, the matter shall be transcended to the trustees. However, the Chair conducted an informal voting process regarding the decision, which led to 17/18 positive votes in favour of the appointment. Discussion on this item ended at that point, and the Chair moved to the next item.

- **Discussion and feedback about the voluntary roles' initiative, that was devised to increase the postgraduate community's involvement in our events and help us shape our activities to answer the PG community's needs.**

The VP has requested feedback on the volunteers' initiative and whether there are any comments, complaints, or queries about the initiative. JR highlighted that she met a PhD student who is also part of the volunteers' initiative and that they would like to create better communities or have a representative for each course, so we could potentially circulate information to classes that are in the school.

- **Discussion and feedback about the community's vision for the University's ten-year plans for improvement.**

The Chair (VP) has informed the students that the University is drawing up a 10-year plan for the university and there's a big interest in student feedback. So the Chair gave clarifying examples about possible recommendations students presented and asked if anyone wanted to present their ideas. No feedback from the community was noted, and the meeting moved to the next item of discussion.

- **Discussion about the best ways to reach out to students.**

The Chair asked for feedback about methods of communication between the committee and the PG community, and whether the newsletter is being efficient in letting them know about the KPA's events. JR Highlighted that the newsletter could be easily missed by the students and that social media and WhatsApp are more efficient. SS also highlighted that WhatsApp groups could help a lot in spreading info about our activities.

4. Any Other Business

The Chair asked the attendees whether they had any other business. No other business was noted.

5. Close of meeting

The Chair thanked attendees for being there and highlighted that any queries or questions are always welcome on our contact information provided in the newsletter. Also, he mentioned that the elections are coming up soon and students should stay on the lookout for future announcements.

END OF MEETING