

**Annual General Meeting Minutes**

Date: **Wednesday 26th June 2019**

Time: **17:30 – 19:30**

**Present**:

John Wootton, George Blake, Stephen Seabridge, Molly Drummond, Katie Charlton, Currie Agyeman, Sharon Yang, Amy Blaney, Gabriella Gay, Sam Humble, Sophia Taha, Christopher Murphy, Sebastian Orlander, Pratika Upadhyay, Martin Goodhead, Ellie Yates

1. **Apologies**

Dee Alimi, Lucy Yates, Roxy Birdsall

1. **Election Results**

GB was pleased to report that the KPA now has a full committee, most of whom were present. This is great news and he expressed his excitement about what the next team will bring to the KPA.

Our team is:

Katie Charlton – President

Currie Agyeman – Vice President

Sharon Yang – Association Secretary

Gabriella Gay – Equality and Diversity Officer

Sophia Taha – Activities Officer

Dee Alimi – International Officer

Amy Blaney – Student Trustee

1. **Presidential Report:**

GB: June was best month we’ve ever had at the Clubhouse, with £54,000 income. This is in no small measure down to the hard work of the Clubhouse staff. Julia Lawton – the Clubhouse Manager – has said on numerous occasions how proud she is of the staff and their contribution to the family feeling that the Clubhouse is known for.

During the last two months, we’ve focussed on elections and handover. Concerning the elections, we’re in discussions with the university on how to improve that situation by starting the process of reviewing the data flow between the University and the association.

Regarding the Keele Doctoral Academy, the latest news is that there is still some difficulty in securing substantial and regular funding to kick start the project. This is distressing as we have put our hopes into it as a project in order to help support or even solve a number of the issues that our research students face.

Office for Students (OFS) mental health bid is a success for the KPA and the PG community. This is the direct result of some consultation work that we were involved in earlier in the year. Whilst the job description of the role has not yet been finalised, it is our hope that this position will contribute to the postgraduate community heavily; through liaising with other Universities, making campaigns and organising events that postgraduates can get involved in.

We have also recently attended the PG supervisor training consultation, which is pre-booked into next year’s calendar. Here we helped to give new supervisors an understanding of the postgraduate journey and some of their priorities whilst also detailing how the KPA can help.

Our Postgraduate wellbeing week was a resounding success with a range of different events taking place across the week, culminating in a trip of 30 people strong to Trentham Gardens.

ST: Well done but also some separation for international students which is something to look out for at next year’s event.

There was lots of great feedback for our postgraduate celebration event and we consider it to have been a huge success. A special mention for Alison who did most of the work organising it.

Some of you might have noticed that we’ve advertised for a new trustee, this has been advertised through Facebook and a few other channels.

ST: What is the gender distribution given that we’re losing a female trustee?

GB: Actually, Anita is likely to be staying on and we are losing David T, who has come to the end of his 2nd term

SH: Can students apply to this?

GB: Unfortunately no, this position is for trustees who are external to the organisation. If you’re interested then I suggest you look at the student trustee position when it is next available.

1. **2017/18 Accounts:**

It was explained that this section of the meeting is the part where we ask our members to approve last year’s accounts. It was also explained that the membership is in no way responsible for these accounts and everyone, including the finance team at the University and the trustees have approved them at this stage.

ST: Can we have a break down for the accounts to make them more accessible?

KC: This is fine, we’ll make sure this happens.

ACTION: Generate a break down and detailed breakdown for members to read over

VOTE to approve the accounts:

In favour: 16

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

**Accounts approved**

1. **Policy Document:**

The membership was informed of the purpose of the policy document. Its purpose going forward is to inform the membership of what policies are already in place. Ideally, in the future this will go out with a call for motions to help prevent members from duplicating existing policy in their motions.

1. **Motions:**

**6.1 Title: Ending a sustainable policy**

Proposer: Yaar Perez Dagan

Seconded by: Martin Goodhead

*Permanent policy*

MG: This motion is about stopping food waste on campus. The catering services do not allow students to eat conference food during lunch time as it is allocated to delegates. This is okay in theory but in practice there is a lot of food left over. This is evidenced by a particular conference where 20 delegates did not show and were still refused when a call to students to eat that food. Student’s found this humiliating.

1. Considering the above, this motion suggests that the KPA will lobby for food sustainability and to end food waste in Keele in general.
2. Moreover, the KPA will lobby for changing the current policy of not allowing students to grab food during conference lunchtime.
3. More practically, the suggested University policy that the KPA is asked to lobby is as follows:

As conference food is normally ordered according to the number of delegates, for every delegate that did not attend the conference, one student would be allowed to grab food during the conference lunchtime, while lunchtime is still on, without disturbing the conference.

For instance, if 10 delegates did not show up for a conference, up to 10 students would be allowed to grab food during the conference lunchtime. The students would not be refused or required to wait until the official lunchtime of the conference is over in order to grab food.

1. **(added action) -** The KPA to work with the SU and University to communicate this {new policy and when food is available} to students in a better way.

There was some discussion over the feasibility of this motion owing to its specific nature and the fact that there are multiple stakeholders involved. The motion was split into action points 1, 2 & 4 and 3 (as this was the contentious action). Given that action point 3 failed, it was agreed to by the seconder of the motion (as the proposer was not present) that the KPA lobbying the university to take general action on this, even if it is not the specific thing asked for here, was acceptable.

There was also the suggestion to add to the list of actions a requirement of the KPA to work with the SU in appropriately advertising any opportunity for free food as and when it becomes available.

ST: Add action to mandate the KPA to work with the SU and Uni to communicate this to students in a better way.

AB: I suggest an amendment {to action 3}. It is unworkable for catering staff to monitor the numbers. Maybe we should wait until the conference is over and then whatever is left is available.

ST: Can we split the action points and vote on them separately?

MG: Happy to split the vote between actions 1, 2 & 4 and then action 3.

GB: It’s worth noting that action 3 will not be followed word for word as we’re not the only stakeholders. We need to vote on principle of the KPA supporting this and taking it from there.

SO: I have an issue with this. As someone who’s worked in food service. Is there any data on this? There is always waste.

ST: I have personal experience on this and have seen plenty of food waste.

MG: I refer to GBs point that the KPA lobbies for it on a broad stance so as to look for a solution between all the stakeholders.

SO: I don’t agree with the wording as it gives a right for all food to be passed onto students without limit. I don’t like the underlying assumption that the wording gives this.

SO: How can we make this fair for everyone involved?

Chair: Let’s split the actions as suggested.

*Vote for actions 1, 2 & 4 of the motion:*

For: 13

Against: 3

Abstentions: 0

**Motion Passes**

*Vote for Action 3*

Action 3:

Vote for: 1

Against: 9

Abstentions: 5

**Motion Fails**

**The motion passes with the removal of action point 3.**

**6.2 Title: KPA President/VP to create and co-chair a university-wide PG Rep Committee**

Proposer: Martin Goodhead

Seconded by: Sophia Taha

*Permanent Policy*

MG: PG reps from across different Faculties do a significant amount of unseen/low-key voice work, including around teaching provision and conditions, supervisory contact hours and provision, printing and research resources, and promoting research activities.

Nevertheless, the KPA does not have a record of what PG subject/Faculty reps are working on, or even who all of them are; nor, in turn, do all subject/faculty reps understand the KPA’s powers as an organization to support them

Sharing best practices and concerns in a cross-faculty PG setting can potentially help Reps, the KPA Sabs and, by virtue of this, KPA members as a whole in several ways. These include: comparing lobbying approaches to make Reps and KPA Sabs more effective in meetings and campaigns; calling attention to trends emerging across faculties with regards to cuts to contact hours or assessment procedures as well as teaching or research financial support allocation; allowing reps to discuss how campaigns on issues affecting or liable to affect students from across different faculties can best be collectively engaged upon.

In addition, bringing reps together with the KPA allows them to discuss collaborations with the KPA, clarify the KPAS lobbying and casework powers/provision for individual and group cases. It allows the KPA to get a sense of students’ needs from across the university and to devise appropriate policies in turn, to devise policy collectively drawing upon specific specialities, as well as getting feedback from Reps and on behalf of students about how well specific measures are working or being communicated. It also gives the KPA another way of communicating back to students.

*Actions:*

1. For KPA President/VP to email Faculties asking for details of reps and to contact Subject/Faculty Reps directly to invite them for an initial meeting as soon as can be reasonably scheduled.
2. For KPA President/VP to organize cross university meetings with PG reps from across HUMSS, Geography, Natural Sciences and other Schools (as part of wider reform, expressed in the other motion around broader PG Rep/KPA partnership) on a *regular* basis; the format of these is to be worked out in consultation with Reps at the initial meeting as well as by email.

This motion was not heavily discussed but the discussion that did take place was around clarification of the current educational practices for postgraduate representation and how it is different for postgraduate taught and postgraduate research. The Motion passed as is, with the exception of changing the frequency from monthly to regular which was immediately accepted by the proposer.

GB: For context there are lots of layers of reps; there is Voice reps administered by KeeleSU which is separate to that of the PGR representative system.

PGR reps don’t have a global structure and are more local in nature. It is useful to know that there are other stakeholders involved in this so the overall conclusion of this motion may look different to this motion.

MG: I’m happy for this to be a negotiation.

Is there a rep for each course?

GB: Theoretically yes

SH: Could there be a volunteer to organise this who works within the KPA and organises it?

ST: This motion is asking that the Pres or VP does this as they’re likely to do it through the remit of education.

CA: Can a monthly meeting be workable? I’d like to amend action 2 Change monthly to regularly

MG: Accepts the change

Chair moves to vote:

Vote favour: 16

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

**Motion Passes with amendment.**

**6.3 Motion 3: PGR teaching ensuring adequate provision**

Proposer: Martin Goodhead

Seconded by: Sophia Taha

*Permanent Policy*

MG: PGR handbook says that everyone who wants to teach gets to teach. Within HUMSS this is not regularly passed on to students without GTA status. Sessional opportunities are limited given the latest changes in light of VSS. Allocation is decided among schools which takes direction from faculties and up to University. PGR reps want to mobilise on this and get support from KPA.

*Actions:*

1. KPA to use its influence to demand that Heads of School be clear and transparent about why they are awarding teaching, based upon consultation with staff and PGRs who teach and have expressed an interest in teaching.
2. KPA to lobby Heads of School and Faculty as appropriate to make teaching qualifications (for instance ITAD but also Fellow scheme) known and available to PGRs
3. If a PGR seeking teaching has not been awarded teaching for a whole year, to entitle them to meeting with Head of School explaining why this is and put in place measures allowing PGR to appropriately upskill.
4. For the KPA to use its influence on educational committees in order to lobby for a university-wide policy across Schools that takes into account reasonable load on GTAs and mandates taking reasonable steps, which are open to scrutiny, to ensure that PGRs across Faculties get the chance to teach.
5. For KPA to liaise with PGR reps across HUMSS, Geography, Natural Sciences and other Schools (as part of wider reform, expressed in the other motion around broader PG Rep/KPA partnership) on a monthly basis, and, as part of this, review teaching provision/PGs-who-teach resource allocation and workload demand when teaching.
6. **Amendment**: Add this issue onto an agenda of the working group that will be set up as of item 6.2 action 1 of these minutes.

SO: Action 5 is already included, so no need to vote on this so can vote on the first 4 actions.

SH: Action 3 looks like it’s covered in point 1.

MG: I’m happy to remove the 3rd action as it’s under the umbrella of the 1st action.

I’d be happy to vote on actions 1 and 2.

ST: Action 3 is broad in a 1 sense. But it is intimidating to do go to your head of school, so we could get the KPA to go with them as part of case work and students can sign up for this.

SO: I have issue with enabling teaching qualifications available.

MG: Of course, I only mean ‘where reasonable’.

SO: The School of education does offer this as GTAs are signed up for it. I assume it is available for others, too.

ST: If Chris gets offered teaching, why does he get it over other PGR students? What’s the process here? There is a sense in which it is a bit nepotistic. You’re in or you’re out.

SO: There is some level of policy. The second point is moot as if you’re given teaching you will go through a teaching qualification.

CA: Where is the handbook for this? Are all students guaranteed teaching?

MG: It’s not that they will *ensure* but *endeavour* to get teaching for all students. This is the problem, there is no way to enforce this.

GB: The difficulty of this is that within the financial sustainability plan revokes sessional teaching. This is because university lecturers are very expensive and has the compound effect of hindering PGR students from gaining sessional teaching through that budget cut.

ST: We already have a policy on this. We’re already mandated for the KPA to support GTAs who are over worked. So let’s take away some of the work from them and instead to give it to PGR sessional teachers.

MG: **Add amendment**: Have initial meeting regarding this matter so that we can clarify this issue further. We can then identify what is reasonable and work out the specifics later.

JW: We have already committed to setting up a working group through previously passed motion today to meet with PGR reps, perhaps we should add this issue to an agenda of things to discuss given the stakeholders are the same.

ST: Add it to the working group agenda so that this could be added to other working group.

MG: Accepts amendments.

Chair calls for the vote:

For: 12

Against: 0

Abstentions: 4

**Motion Passes**

**6.4 Title: KPA constitution working groups**

Proposer: Martin Goodhead

Seconded by: Sophia Taha

*Permanent Policy*

The KPA constitution is in need of reform, a process already begun by the outgoing officers.

For the purposes of democracy and effectiveness alike the input of postgraduates in what they would like their elected officers and the KPA as a whole to have as their core/statutory responsibilities is crucial.

KPA committee are likely to be particularly busy September from onwards, and therefore planning and activating this review in a way which means it doesn’t have to compete for time with other tasks once the new term is ‘in swing’ as well as helping officers plan, on the basis of input, how their work plan will look based upon any revised or suggested core and discretionary commitments, is likely to be helpful.

GB: I want to propose that we move this to an item for discussion which is more general discussion rather than having a motion passed as I don’t think this is workable.

ST: I disagree with the idea of turning this to a discussion as we historically have not stuck to actions from previous meetings.

GB: There are a number of issues with this, legally. We need to be compliant with education act, the charity commission and other bodies.

ST: We want this motion for a working group to discuss what it would change. There is nothing specific within this motion that we want because that is what the motion is meant to be for.

MG: We need to look at the KPA as it’s evolving with different responsibilities.

ST: We just want a working group. The point isn’t to break the law but to look at the constitution. The point is to look at the complaints procedure and other things. The President and VP nearly had severe consequences and lost their jobs through a complaint made because the process wasn’t clear. This was not intentional and this shows that the process is not fit for purpose.

AB: I recognise my conflict of interest but this is an enormous job. However, speaking for the trustees, we need to be very careful with this as it is a binding document. You can over-legislate and this could be a real danger with this committee and future committees.

ST: The actions are meant to give broader feedback and the trustees could say no. We have 3,000 members and we need to get people more engaged.

SO: You can’t force people to engage with this.

*MG: Reads the actual wording of the motion as seen above.*

GB: So far we’re voting on if this should be a discussion item and not if it is a motion, we need to do this first.

MD: Why is this being done for one motion and not another?

ST: I find this very inappropriate.

*It was agreed that the membership would vote on the motion as it stands and not vote on whether or not the motion should become a discussion point.*

Chair calls for the vote:

Vote for: 4

Vote against: 7

Vote Abstentions: 4

**Motion Fails**

MD: I am very unhappy that this has been spoken about behind closed doors and this is not good enough. If you’re going to do this for one, then it needs to be done for the rest with a disclaimer when the initial call for motions are made.

ST: I agree that this is not okay.

*There were no more comments from the floor, so the chair moved on to the next item.*

**6.5 Title: Ensuring replacement or adequate support provision in the event of supervisors leaving altogether or becoming unavailable**

Proposer: Martin Goodhead

Seconder: Sophia Taha

*Permanent Policy*

On more than one occasion PGRs have been left without any formal supervision for months upon end, contrary to their agreement with the University as set out in their induction documentation and guidelines provided to students by the faculty (in this case HUMSS).

This can be for a multitude of reasons, from supervisors leaving altogether (a more likely prospect with the current spate of VRs) or taking extended research leave/maternity through to simply being ‘busy’.

This puts the successful completion of their Phd project at severe risk, in terms of advice and oversight of academic content but also in terms of potential mental health repercussions.

PGRs are potentially intimidated, particularly in cases where the university is responsible for them continuing to meet their visa requirements but also in instances where maintaining School good will is seen as necessary for accessing research/funding opportunities and references, about complaining.

For students who are sponsored by governments/external non-UK/EU organizations, the potential costs of non-completion are financially punitive, adding up to 150/200% of their total course cost as paid by their sponsor, which at a rate of 14k p/year x3 then times 2 can add up to £84,000 in the worst case scenario.

*Actions*:

1. KPA Sabs to use their power to support PGR reps around casework in these instances, including committing to setting up joint- meetings with heads of School
2. KPA Pres/VP to raise this as a general concern when attending PG Education committee meetings and in discussions around the Doctoral Academy and what constitutes adequate student provision
3. KPA to seek clear evidence that the university has taken this on board, for instance in the form of specific guidelines - relating to these instances - appearing within PGR handbooks and within other advisory materials directed at PGRs and Supervisors

Chair calls for a vote in the interest in time, there were no objections to this.

Vote for: 15

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

**Motions passed**

Chair asks if it is okay to postpone the items for discussion.

ST: Shall we put this on the agenda for the next UGM?

KC: I am happy with this as a motion.

Any other business: N/A

**--Meeting end--**