



Keele Postgraduate Association

Officer Reports

Dear members we, the KPA Committee, have tried our best to bring you the best student life experience and here are some glimpses from our last 8 months' works, in group or individually.

Our team includes:

Elected Officers:

President: Rachana Dhaka

Vice-President: Michel Ghrayeb

Assn. Secretary: Aayush Batra

Activities Officer: Shargava K. Sandeep

Student Trustee: Harshit Mishra

Equality and Diversity Officer: Rafiq Khan A. Lohani (newly elected)

Permanent Staff:

KPA Co-ordinator: Alison Tansey

Bar Manager: Charlotte Davies

And other clubhouse staff who support us for our events and activities.

KPA President

I am thankful to you for your time and kind support for the betterment of the KPA. Below, I will provide updates on actions and activities undertaken since we have been in charge of the present roles. It was a great opportunity to learn so many things from our brilliant members like yourself and from the responsibilities attached to the role.

If you have any questions or want to share your feedback, please feel free to do it [here](#) or in the OGM Meeting on 28th Feb, 2024, 5 pm.

Meetings with Keele University departments and clubhouse team

- Monthly meeting with our VC to keep him updated with KPA activities and concerns.
- Frequent meetings with the Governance team, regarding different issues and sorting the Data Sharing Agreement and Election Handbook updating tasks. Constitutional amendments, administrative and policy changes, or updates in the organization.
- Had frequent conversations with the Keele Careers, Student Services and the Write Direction teams and they have shared with me different informative documents with certain pivotal links on it. I have updated them on the [KPA Webpage here](#). This is really useful for our members to seek academic support or job search support here.
- I have been part of four Disciplinary Committee Meetings for student misconduct
- Received the Student Voice Representatives list, so that now we can communicate better.



- Took part in all the council meetings and raised all the serious concerns shared by our members, such as freedom of expression, accommodation and inclusion at different fronts.
- Attended the regular Sabbs Drop-in sessions with PVC Education, to share concerns from the feedbacks (oral or written) from our membership.
- Submitted reports to the Council, Senate, USVC committee, Welcome activities evaluation committee, BRC (the accounts), and other committees at different times, throughout the year.
- Several Meetings to finalise the Data Sharing Agreement with different people in the University and KPA.
- Regular meetings with the University Governance team members and KPA Committee for the Elections Handbook updating
- Part of the Keele100 TAFG meetings and gatherings with students, under the supervision of PVC Education. To share opinions collected from our members on different issues in hand.
- Regular communication with the University IT department to get the KPA mail list updated, so that all our members can get our emails and information on what we are doing and have their say on timely basis.
- Meetings with committee members to plan the events for the upcoming days in advance, prepare posters with help of the committee members and make sure reach our members.
- Meetings with some active professors, who wanted to know more about KPA and ensure that we will assist their students when needed under our limitations.
- Meeting with the Keele Alumni/Keele Key Fund office, to understand how they can support us if possible. If you want to know more please have a look at our weekly newsletter or [here](#).
- Meeting with KDA, to plan the talk sessions and the PGR Reps training sessions, later the responsibility was more taken by our Vice President
- Regular participation in the Education Leadership Group Meetings and give them inputs gathered from the issues or concerns shared by our members.
- Part of the ILAS Operations group meeting, to share opinions about what kind of lectures or seminars are more beneficial for our PGs
- Part of the curriculum Development committee meeting, to have a say from the postgrad perspective and international student perspective, they were quite attentive in making arrangements for these two groups
- Part of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion group meetings, to make sure that we remain zero tolerant for any kind of discrimination and can raise the possible concerns beforehand.
- Participation in the Diversity Festival has helped us meet with different student groups and the Language Centre team and now they are interested in collaborating with us on some aspects
- Part of the 10 years master planning event for the Keele, where I have raised concerns for the separate PG space for their activities.
- Part of the KPA Talks presentation, this was a good learning as well as a good organizing experience.



- International Students Framework discussion with the new PVC International, Mr Antonius Raghubansie, trying our best to make the university authorities more familiar with the issues International Students face and how they can be addressed more sensitively.
- Part of the Global Pre-departure Session for the January intake PGs
- Timely meetings with our clubhouse Manager Charlotte Davies regarding different things.
- Meeting with different PG representatives from different universities and discussing issues such as challenges they are facing and successful solutions, with the idea to learn from each other's' experiences and work as a team.
- Welcomed a team from St Mary's University SU, who wanted to learn about how we are running our bar, its student and business perspective were discussed with them.
- Curriculum Design meeting with Mrs Angela Rhead, where it was discussed how they can select the PG student volunteers for the authentic feedback and she shared some documents to go through and share feedback with her
- Attended the meeting with KDA about the new year activities and more PGR involvement in different events.
- Discussion with different executive officers from the university at different occasions and share them the membership concerns directly, whenever required and possible.
- Part of the PVC Education and Sabbatical drop-in session, myself and Michel, shared with her our challenges and achievements along with the student concerns coming up these days.
- Part of the Marketplace events with students and staff, where talked about the KPA and how we support PGs at Keele and where the information about us can be found along with our contact details.
- Gone through the Bursary Applications and discussions with the committee, to award the benefits to the deserving and needy students.
- A PhD student, and her team members from the PG Research Society from Chester University had long discussions with us about our events and challenges, this meeting has been a good success with their positive feedback.
- After discussion with our external advisor, and other PG representatives from different universities, we have planned to have a monthly meeting from February onwards.
- Drafted different policies for the KPA with support of our team.
- Part of the Keele Parking and Transport discussion committee, and shared the PG student commutation issues with them along with some dangerous bus stops due to drug dealing.
- Updated induction slides and shared with the upcoming induction cohorts.
- Updated our website with new features and updated information.
- Sustainability approach work on progress for our clubhouse
- Clubhouse team is a great support to our events and activities and we are going hand in hand, to support KPA

Induction Planning



- Working alongside the University to ensure that all student expectations are addressed. I have been in regular communication with the PVC International, Director of student Futures and Director of Student Services, for the smooth start of the new students as PGs at Keele.
- Hold the Global Pre-departure sessions for the PGs with the VP.
- Regular participation in the Induction planning and Feedback meetings with the university.
- Separate meetings with the Clubhouse team leaders and association committee members to decide dates and events for the induction period
- So far 38 Inductions have been attended by myself, Michel and Shargava (in couple of them), that is quite a good number and some schools are inviting now, also some SVRs are showing more interest
- Working alongside different university departments to develop a collaborative approach to students at these difficult times.

Training

- Attended Social Media Engagement Training
- Attended University Communication and Leadership Training Online
- Trustee Training with the SU, with the rest of the committee members.
- Disciplinary Committee training by the University with the VP.
- Arranged First Aid Training for the New officers, with the support of Clubhouse Manager Charlotte Devies.
- Worked alongside the new committee to ensure that they are fully prepared for their roles and have regularly checked in with the new team. We have continued to hold regular committee meetings to ensure that we are providing the best student experience for our membership.

Student Experience

- Continued to ensure that we are checking in weekly with our students via our Study Session days every Monday and Thursday and Thursday Coffee Mornings.
- Updated Website so that students find a vibrant web page with up-to-date information on it
- Tried to experiment with the Thursdays to make it a full-day thing rather than just coffee mornings and found new students taking interest in the same
- Looking forward to new initiatives with the committee such as different games and local area tour activities, every month as per the students' demands.
- Updated KPA Induction slides and made a video on request of the University team, so that it can be circulated amongst the new students.
- Part of the KPA Elections Q&A Sessions and Promoting the #SheShouldRun Campaign
- Assisting the Committee members to organize different kinds of events so that different student interests can be taken care of.



- Received material from the Write Direction Team and the Careers Team to be uploaded on our website and done that, also shared with the SVRs so that they can further circulate it for the students
- Participated in the PG Representative networking Event in London, to meet different student officers representing PGs so that we can learn more from each other's challenges.
- Trying to meet students whenever possible during our regular study hours, but all the meeting requests at the office are surely taken care of mostly by me and also supported by Michel in my absence
- Started regular online drop-in sessions every week and had received huge positive responses
- Made sure that students affected from the Middle east war situation (which I could reach out to with help of information from our members) got proper support needed to move ahead.
- Meeting with Global Student Recruitment office to host an icebreaking event for the Sept and Jan PG intakes together, along with Michel. So that students get together and network with their peers.
- Students requested to have more trips and sports events therefore we have decided to host every month one trip, cultural event, and sports event apart from our regular Monday Study sessions, Thursday coffee morning and study sessions, and last Thursday's KPA Talks.
- Different welcome events for our new members arrived both during September and January, thanks to Michel and Charlotte for their support.
- As part of our student well-being first approach, we are organizing different well-being workshops or other activities every month.
- Shared the volunteer opportunity to work with KPA and host events with us has been earlier circulated to the PG voice reps and now to all PG email lists.
- To increase feedback on the KPA, I asked students to write in person on graduation day about their experience and also shared the KPA survey again through PG reps.
- Sign posted some students to the ASK services and others to different relevant departments as per their queries or concerns.
- The best observation so far is that we are having different faces in different activities this year, this gives us pride that we are able to reach out to students from different backgrounds and interests.
- Shared the KPA statement with the student members after consenting with our trustees and committee members, in respect to the war situation and students facing issues.
- Students are coming forward to volunteer with us, this is a positive sign.
- There are some positive feedback emails as well after our statement following the Middle East situation was released, which gives us some relief.
- Thankful to the amazing Clubhouse Manager and Team Leaders, for their kind support, along with our hardworking KPA team.
- Entertained students visiting our office, this year we are proudly getting more students to visit us in person, this year.
- Shared certificate with the students who presented their research in our KPA Talks.
- Responded to students in the best and quickest way possible whenever they have tried to approach us.



Priorities going forward

- Taking care or being vigilant about the issues our PGs might be facing and seeking support from the university for them
- Develop strategic aims as a result of our survey.
- Understanding what necessary campaigns need to be focused on to better the student experience at Keele this year.
- More focused support for PGs from the Careers and Write Direction teams
- Setting direction for the KPA in future and fixing issues around its legal status and documents
- Greater visibility of KPA and more engagement of home as well as overseas students
- Appointment and proper training for the student volunteers, so that we have a larger team to take care of our membership interests and issues.
- More participation from the diverse groups of students.

Last but not least, I want to thank you for your trust in and support to us. Trust me, your needs are our goals, and we are here for you.

Kind Regards,

Rachana Dhaka

KPA Vice President

It has been nearly 8 months since I have been elected as the Vice President of the KPA. I want to start by thanking the PG community for their trust in me to take this position, which has so far provided me with the opportunity to learn a lot about the education process at the University. Also, I had the pleasure of meeting a lot of hard-working individuals who are experts in their fields and whom I am observing to learn as much as possible from their expertise.

As for my achievements during these months, I do my best to recall them, and I will divide them into two groups:

The routine tasks:

- At the end of June, I received my handover.
- In July, the committee training began, which included Trustee training, finance training, First Aid training, social media training, communication training, and Charity Training.
- I attended the university community meetings for the first time in July and met different University staff and have been **regularly attending** since then. (These committees include the **Education Committee, Faculty Education Committees (FACs), program validation panels, Student officer drop-in sessions with the PVC of Education**, senate meetings, and other occasional meetings where a student officer's presence is necessary).
- Part of Trustee meetings as Officer trustee.
- Participated in Disciplinary Committee Meetings.
- **Rachana and I participated in the graduation ceremony events.**
- **Rachana and I attended the Keele 100 events.**



- Maintained a presence during the routine events when possible: PG productive morning and others.
- I and Rachana organized and scheduled induction sessions across the University. We also participated in the Pre-arrival induction session held by the university.
- Writing reports for the Education committee and FACs.
- Events Organization guided by committees' suggestions in committee's event planning meetings.
- Responding to occasional individual queries from students.
- Events Preparation, execution, and Attendance.
- Elections Began, and I was the main officer on duty as I was full-time. Me and Ayush carried out the election and the full report has been shared with the committee.
- Preparation for the EGM which included Assessing the presented Motion, sharing the assessment with the trustees, and coordinating the event with the secretary who also carried out wonderfully his specified duties on the matter.
- Took part in the 10-year master planning event, that aims to set the future of the university's architectural structure.
- Participated in creating the PGR rep's guidance doc by the KDA.
- Took part in the international framework meeting with the Internationalization PVC.
- Attended the usual meetings as per usual which included: the FSVC, FECs, Education Committee, and the Senate.
- Met with the committee when needed to organize the set event for the respective months.
- Participating (and leading when needed) the drop-in sessions every Tuesday initiated by the President.

Special contributions:

- Updated the routine events and replaced the PG productive Mondays and 1-hour free drink on Thursdays, with 2 days of Study Sessions for studying and networking, with occasional PG discount and a complementary free drink. Along with the regular coffee mornings on Thursdays.
- Updated the newsletter and attempted to increase collaboration with different departments of Uni to learn more about the services provided in Keele for students, and to announce them on our newsletter to raise awareness.
- Created the KPA Talks, the first session of which was on the 30th of November, which had big support from students and was very enjoyable. This is an opportunity for students to make a 10-minute presentation for their peers about an interesting idea they came across in their research. We are not sure how successful it will be considering our community members' busy schedules, but we are hoping for the best. KPA Talks happen every last Thursday of each Month (except Holiday periods), and certificates are awarded to presenters.



Upcoming Work:

- Aside from the usual tasks (meetings, events, their execution, and planning), I intend to bring more detail and clarity to the volunteer roles, to make them less loose and more beneficial.
- Keep the KPA talks going.
- Contribute to updating the election handbook.
- Me and Rachana are aiming to get more insight from students about what events they need, as the isolation problem is evident.

Thank you for your time,

Michel Ghrayeb

KPA Secretary

In the past eight months, my role as the Association Secretary has been multifaceted, involving communication, event organization, issue resolution, and skill development. This report outlines the key areas of my responsibilities and contributions.

Communication:

One of my primary responsibilities was fostering communication with students. This involved creating and disseminating a weekly newsletter, providing updates on upcoming events, and sharing important information. I also coordinated weekly postgraduate events, providing students with an opportunity to interact with committee members and discuss any concerns they may have. Additionally, I facilitated various discussions led by students on topics related to their studies.

I actively listened to student concerns, ranging from mental health to academic matters. This involved collecting feedback through surveys and personal interactions. For issues related to visas, I facilitated communication with the appropriate authorities and intervened when necessary, ensuring students received timely responses.

Event Organization:

My involvement in various events was extensive. I meticulously planned and executed movie nights, golf events, bowling outings, and museum trips. This included site visits to assess safety, obtain quotes for tickets, and ensure a hazard-free experience.

Training and Development:

To enhance my capabilities, I attended various training sessions, including first aid and other relevant topics. This not only equipped me with valuable skills but also allowed me to contribute more effectively to the well-being of the student community.

Social Media Management:

I maintained an active presence on various social media platforms to keep students informed about events and updates. Regular engagement strategies were implemented to boost event attendance, resulting in increased participation.



Creativity and Outreach:

To promote events, I created visually appealing posters using Canva. These were shared on social media and used in the weekly digest to attract attention and generate interest among the student body. This creative approach contributed to the success of our promotional efforts.

Issue Resolution:

Addressing concerns promptly was a crucial aspect of my role. I worked to resolve student issues related to mental health, studies, and visas. In cases where a direct resolution was not possible, I effectively communicated with the relevant department to ensure timely responses and solutions.

Chief Returning Officer:

During this period, I assumed the role of Chief Returning Officer for the KPA by-election held in November and December. In this capacity, I took charge of social media communications, ensuring compliance with election rules and regulations, and overseeing the seamless execution of the electoral process.

Extraordinary General Meeting:

Subsequently, I played a pivotal role in organizing an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). My responsibilities encompassed coordinating the venue logistics, making necessary arrangements, and meticulously recording meeting notes to ensure the smooth conduct of proceedings.

In addition to these responsibilities, I successfully organized various events, including a trip to Winter Wonderland and the coordination of weekly Postgraduate study events at the KPA clubhouse.

Thank you,

Aayush Batra