

**Present:**

*Scrutiny Panel Members:* Jack Bowen (JB), Lucy Shapley (LS), Shaun Keen (SK), Eloise Watkins (EW)

*Officers:* Josephine Conway (JC, Activities & Employability Officer), Mikey Brown (MB, President), Jules Singh (JS, Education Officer), Danielle Murinas (DM, Postgraduate Officer)

**In Attendance:**

*Staff:* Rozena Nadeem (RN, Democracy Coordinator, Minute-Taker), Houmaa Chaudhry (HC, Senior Representation Coordinator), Adam Sheridan (ASh, Director of Engagement)

**Apologies:**

*Scrutiny Panel Members:* Jingke Lin (JL)

*Officers:* Eleanor Thomas (ET, LGBTQ+ Students Officer)

**Absent Without Apologies:**

*Officers:* Manisha Kaur (MK, Ethnic Minority Students Officer), Louisa Martin (LM, Womens' Officer), Rachel Boucher (RB, Ethical & Environmental Committee), Imogen Mann (IM, Disabled Students Officer)

**Trigger Warnings:** Inclusivity for international students, welfare, wellbeing, access of facilities/campus, social media, safety on campus, strikes, EDI

Item No.	Role	Notes
3:10pm - 3:25pm	Education Officer	<p>JS entered the waiting room.</p> <p>JS and the Panel greeted each other.</p> <p>JS asked AS if he had any updates since submitting his report.</p> <p>JS provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We had an Officer away day to talk about key individual priorities as a team</li> <li>We also had a de-stress period</li> </ul> <p><b>JB:</b> Can you please inform us on the reason behind the delay for the reformed EC and extension launch and is it possible to confirm</p>

		<p>that this will still go ahead as planned without alteration, even if this coincides with the changing of officers?</p> <p><b>JS:</b> It's delayed – academics have too many projects. An additional survey is going to be sent out.</p> <p><b>JB:</b> Could you please outline what, if any, support is being put into place and lobbied for by the Guild for students who have been affected by the recent rounds of industrial action?</p> <p><b>JS:</b> I've had meetings with University senior management about support for students and mitigations. It's taken into account for student cohorts. A framework was set up at the start of the year which outlines that any strikes will be taken into account by the exam boards in the summer.</p> <p><b>LS:</b> As I'm a Joint Honours student, I've noticed that you want to improve communication between schools for Joint Honours students?</p> <p><b>JS:</b> The purpose of my work is to make it easier for students to do credits for interdisciplinary study, students to be able to take credits from across the University, and also for students who are in their first year to be able to do their study in a different year. I would like to improve the experience of these students.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> Outside of work with the Library/student groups, what work is being done with individual colleges/schools to promote inclusive teaching and learning?</p> <p><b>JS:</b> The President will be doing more work in this.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> Do you have a heat map of where student activism is present across the University?</p> <p><b>JS:</b> I will have to look at the Student Rep data to identify this. No disparity with where the activism is.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> What work are you doing with the University, schools and colleges to support 1<sup>st</sup> generation university students?</p>
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<p>3:25pm - 3:55pm</p>	<p>President</p>	<p>MB entered the waiting room.</p> <p>MB and the Panel greeted each other.</p> <p>SK asked MB if he had any updates since submitting his report.</p> <p><b>MB:</b> I'm on phased leave due to ill health, and am working reduced hours.</p> <p>MB talked about other things that he is working on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behind the scenes, earlier this semester, I was working on the Guild's 5-year strategic plan, and we've secured 4 and half million pounds funding from the University – this will hopefully relieve pressure in the organisation in all sorts of ways. I mentioned this briefly at the last All Student Meeting, we otherwise haven't gone public with this information yet.</li> <li>• Climate emergency &amp; divestment work – grass roots level. We want a very clear outcome in favour of divestment. This is one of my priorities.</li> </ul> <p><b>LS:</b> I can see that you are working on the right things.</p>

	<p><b>MB:</b> I've been working on the Change in Mind campaign, and have been asked to bring this to a conclusion.</p> <p><b>JB:</b> How will you ensure that your handover will be successful?</p> <p><b>MB:</b> I have talked to the President-elect. Our team didn't have the best handover, as I think that you shouldn't just have a document, you should ensure a smooth transition, in particular around University relationships. There are also lots of admin handover bits, such as a review of the Guild democratic structures, a liberation review, and review of part-time Officers etc.</p> <p><b>JB:</b> As President, there's lots of things you need to consider. It's a complicated system.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> My next questions might be quite heavy. Given the concerns raised at the previous All Student Meeting (ASM), can you explain the legal advice that was meant to be sought for an idea submission that Part-Time Officers submitted?</p> <p><b>MB:</b> I'm expecting a phone call about legal advice today. We'll release a statement separately. The legal advice is complicated – and I've spoken to the two idea proposers. We will mark Trans Day of Visibility tomorrow. We won't deal with the VC's previous actions, as it's not an appropriate time, and the proposers were receptive to this. We will still release a statement though.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> The concern raised at ASM was that legal advice was sought when it hadn't been – what will you do as an Officer, Trustee and member of the Guild's Appointments Panel, about this?</p> <p><b>MB:</b> I talked to the CEO. I can't discuss staffing matters here. The Guild may need to take advice on issues. We'll have a new post holder soon, as part of that person's introduction to the role, we will ensure that they are inducted on what to do in circumstances like this. It sounds vague, but I hope it offers reassurance.</p>
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		<p><b>SK:</b> I appreciate it's difficult, as it's not the Scrutiny Panel's job to scrutinize staff, but, it is our job to scrutinize you as an Officer.</p> <p><b>MB:</b> I should have checked that the legal advice was sought – in my view, if we have the process right, we need the advice. We will make sure that it works. A system did fall down. Happy to take my share of responsibility for that. It shouldn't be on one Officer to take the responsibility though.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> No one is putting the blame on you, and we're not blaming Officers, especially with you working reduced hours.</p> <p>SK asked MB if he had any questions.</p> <p>MB had no questions.</p> <p>MB and the Panel thanked each other, and MB left the meeting.</p>
<p>4:10pm – 4:20pm</p>	<p>Activities &amp; Employability Officer</p>	<p>JC entered the waiting room.</p> <p>JC and the Panel greeted each other.</p> <p>SK asked JC if she had any updates since submitting her report. SK also noted that the Panel appreciate that it's been a difficult week for the Officer Team.</p> <p>JC had no updates.</p> <p><b>JB:</b> It's great to see how Welcome Week and Refresher's Week went, but could you let us know about the main feedback that was reported for these, and how you will ensure that this is implemented next year?</p> <p><b>JC:</b> This was a unique year, as we were welcoming 1<sup>st</sup> AND 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. In future, we will cater events for all year groups, not just Fresher's. Feedback predominantly came from venues and societies. We won't do consecutive night clubs again. We had mixed feedback for Fresher's Ball. Give it a Go Fair feedback was very positive, but students didn't prefer for it to be combined with UoB Sport (as students may not have been dressed for sports activities). We had long</p>

	<p>queues for Fresher's Fair, which was great, but we need to manage students' expectations.</p> <p><b>JB:</b> I am there as a support for the society, and contact to the Venues team. All of the security measures will be led by the society. I am offering personal support and 1-2-1 meetings with societies.</p> <p><b>LS:</b> Feedback from students states that the balls can be unaffordable. How will you divide costs for tickets, including food etc?</p> <p><b>JS:</b> There have been various tickets previously e.g. £75 includes food etc. We cannot reduce the prices, but they can include FAB and DJs especially since it will not be a normal fab, it will be a unique night in itself. The Grad Ball ticket will be open to all students on campus. This will include the fairground rides, acts, bars etc. We would also like to open it up to alumni, however this is TBC. Currently, the tickets are open to all students and students can also just attend the after party.</p> <p><b>LS:</b> You were planning to talk to other student unions about reducing barriers to student groups?</p> <p><b>JC:</b> For that conversation we have a big WhatsApp chat with officers from different student unions. AEOs are different in different student unions, some include sport, some include venues etc. The answer to this question hasn't really come to me yet. However, working with the student voice team, we had new members of staff to focus on barriers. Pricing is a big one. It is difficult to work out why student aren't engaging in groups, there's a lot of factors. Staff are also concerned that events take place late at night. Therefore, the Welfare &amp; Community Officer and I have been discussing safer routes home for students, such as safer walking routes and different buses etc. Tackling small issues at a time will lead to the overall reduction of barriers. In conclusion, there is not one answer as to why students are not joining groups, but hopefully we can get more answers next time.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> What else is being done to help international students?</p>
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		<p><b>JC:</b> We want to hire an external speaker to talk about EDIs to help make groups as inclusive as possible – this is important as they have the expertise and knowledge. Also, we want to send out a form to student groups to ask how we can better support them.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> We do have a bank of knowledge in the Guild, and it is important to ensure that it's transferred over as there are things that an external speaker will not understand.</p> <p>SK asked JC if she had any questions.</p> <p>JC had no questions.</p> <p>JC and the Panel thanked each other.</p> <p>JC left the meeting.</p>
<p>4:20pm- 4:40pm</p>	<p>Postgraduate Officer</p>	<p>DM entered the meeting.</p> <p>DM and the Panel greeted each other.</p> <p>SK asked DM if she had any updates.</p> <p>DM provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Been doing some work on employability and inclusion for PG students</li> </ul> <p><b>EW:</b> What improvements have been made for Postgraduate student access to services?</p> <p><b>DM:</b> I'm working with others on how more PGR-friendly language and comms can be used on relevant channels (e.g. using "researcher" rather than "student"), as if inclusive language isn't used, PGRs will think that the service isn't for them. I will look at what changes have been made.</p> <p><b>EW:</b> Sounds good. How about the Wellbeing and Graduate School strategy?</p> <p><b>DM:</b> The Graduate School strategy has been separate to the wellbeing strategy. The wellbeing group was created after the results of the PGR experience survey – it's a more</p>

		<p>reactionary group looking at what can be fixed. We're working on it actively, and actively working on general wellbeing, not just when things are bad.</p> <p><b>LS:</b> What feedback was there on the attendance of the Postgraduate events?</p> <p><b>DM:</b> The PGT cafes are not ran by the Guild itself, rather they are ran and advertised in collaboration with the Graduate School. The events are ran by PG Ambassadors. For the Queer Academia Seminar, there was not an overwhelming number of people, partly because there was not lots of promotion (due to there being a lot of things that need to be put out by the Graduate School). One event had to be cancelled because of Storm Eunice. Currently, we have a strong hold on Twitter at the moment (because of academic Twitter being big), so we're using Twitter to promote more things.</p> <p><b>LS:</b> Academic Twitter is very big. One of my lecturers showed us memes on Twitter the other day.</p> <p><b>DM:</b> More places are using Twitter to engage PG students.</p> <p><b>LS:</b> What did the library say about PG study spaces and quiet spaces?</p> <p><b>DM:</b> There is a difficulty with practicability of this, as it is hard to monitor. There's been an idea submission about this too through the democratic system.</p> <p><b>LS:</b> Agreed, it is hard especially since there are limited amount.</p> <p><b>DM:</b> However, there are other spaces on campus that are quiet so the library can promote other these spaces. Students can also use the UOB app to track which places are quieter.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> Great feedback on what you've done. I'd like to ask JB's first question – what actions can be taken for students in substandard conditions for UCU strikes?</p> <p><b>DM:</b> The Education Officer and I met with a Senior University staff member to discuss mitigations. Students will not be</p>
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		<p>assessed on things that they have not learnt. For me, the threat of industrial action is that it will affect postgraduates more – this is being discussed with Senior University staff though.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> How about inclusive language? Are there areas beyond the Renters’ Union where better PG practice can be used?</p> <p><b>DM:</b> I read all of the newsletters that went out for Elections and Go Green Week, and was actively involved in these. For general emails, this isn’t something that I oversee, so I can’t always monitor the language. For PG Officer candidates in elections, we normally do Q&amp;A events, but this year they were given questions but we did not have the ability to write the questions. When Mikey was running in the Elections he was asked questions on how he would support PG students. This will put PG students off – researchers are less likely to apply for positions because of how their degree program structured. The role fits more with PGT, but it is easy to fall into trap of not remembering researchers. A lot of it is about culture change. People need to know that we are for them. There needs to be change in the comms department.</p> <p><b>SK:</b> That sounds great! The next question is more of a personal question. Not just in POLSIS but other departments as well, there has been concerns about supervisor allocations; students are not happy for various reasons including students being provided with supervisors who they don’t know, and supervisors who do not have expertise or papers in their area. There is uneven allocations too. Have you heard about the meeting limits? This is a big concern too.</p> <p><b>DM:</b> This has not been raised with us. It’s interesting to hear this though because in the Graduate School strategy, they want to improve supervisor allocations. It might be the time, and not specific to POLSIS. There is always a limit to how many meetings can be had, but it’s also down to individual supervisors.</p>
<p>4:40pm – 4:44pm</p>	<p><b>Panel Debrief</b></p>	<p>The Panel were debriefed.</p> <p>The meeting closed.</p>