



Minutes of KPA Ordinary General Meeting

23rd January 2019

CBA0.013–5.30pm

1. In attendance

Pratika Upadhyay, Jeremie De Guzman, George Blake, Alan Borgars Phuong Bui, Sandra Onyango, Andrew Cook, Dan Watikin, Lauren Grover, Martin Goodhead, Kurandeep Jaur, John Wootton, Roxanne Birdsall

2. Apologies

Sophia Taha, Lucy Yates

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

3.1 These were approved

3.2 Matters arising from the Minutes – there were no Matters Arising

4. KPA Committee Updates and Elections

GB introduces himself and talks about what we do but focuses on the need to fill in roles within the KPA. He expressed the value of the role as an educational charity and the virtues of the role. He expressed the finances of the Clubhouse and how this is part of his role to oversee it. He touches on good income but also high costs. There have been some price changes and some attention to the purchasing power of the KPA - he mentioned maybe looking into purchasing through the SU. Games night among other events are something to look out for.

MG: Will we be able to show game of thrones nights at the KPA like we did a few years ago?

GB: Yes, we'll try.

Inappropriate class size within Spire is an issue raised by the SPIRE voice rep.

Do better with class sizes and appropriate classrooms! Postgraduate level is meant to be smaller.

GB: It may be difficult because people can enroll very late on in the day.

MG: Admin may be the issue rather than late enrolments.

5. Officer Reports

President Report:

GB talks about student case work and the kinds of issues that we tend to help with. This includes helping people with course problems either as a cohort or individually, helping to sign-post students to relevant services if the KPA cannot help and various other person-specific issues that they may be facing. Course costs and finances have been particularly prominent this year. We've had a lot of positive feedback on this front which is very encouraging. GB, through his position on as national officer for postgraduate taught students for NUS, takes his experience of these issues to NUS so that they might be thought about within a national context.

Committee work: All the committees we sit on such as accommodation and the influence we have on the strike fund, which decides what the strike fund will be spent on and how it is allocated. Also, the Office for Students (OfS) has also allocated millions of pounds to be bid for in providing better mental health provision. GB has been a significant influence on this process as a student representative.

Finally, GB explains his role also includes keeping the charity running on a day-to-day basis, which includes the line-management of clubhouse staff as well as the KPA Coordinator, whilst also fulfilling various obligations to the Charity Commission and various other bodies. This does take up a significant chunk of time within his working week and this is why the role is not quite as student facing as the Vice-President role.

Vice-President report

JW talked about being the Vice-President and what the role entails. Unlike the President role, the Vice-President role is able to be fully focused on sabbatical work. In his case, the majority of his role revolves around education but this is not necessary to the role and can be flexible according to the strengths of the individual that fulfils the role. If someone was more focused on building the postgraduate community through organising events, or if they had an interest in welfare, then these would be great focusses for a Vice-President.

Most of his work has been through attending committee meetings connected to the new Education structure at Keele. This has added six new sub-committees, all with their own specific remit that comes under the umbrella of Education. As a result, this represents a significant increase in workload as compared to previous holders of the role in this area. There are a variety of other meetings involving welfare, equality and community that he attends, too.

JW was excited about the upcoming launch of the new website that he's been designing over the winter break. He said that whilst the structure is largely complete, there is still quite a bit of content still left to put into it before it will be ready. The goal with this project is to improve on the dull and slightly confused website and make it much more appealing to work with.

Student voice work is on the radar as something else to focus on. Despite keeping contact with a few reps, there has not been a group meeting since the initial meeting at the start of the first semester. It would be helpful to come together soon to reflect on the first semester to offer advice but also with a view to unearthing any other issues that have come through to the reps. Additionally, it is his plan to ask the reps to help the KPA to find more study spaces for postgraduates by asking at their respective schools and their associated buildings.

Association Secretary report

RB explains the nature of the secretary role and what it involves. The weekly digest continues to hold a focus for RB as she attempts to keep it up to date, relevant and engaging. RB also is responsible for convening OGMS as well as running and organising all elections that the KPA holds. The November by-election saw 11 candidates run for 3 positions with 4 subsequent drop outs leaving 7 people running and campaigning for positions. The international officer role was especially sought after - RB congratulates our new officers on their success.

RB is heavily involved with Women of Keele Educate (W.O.K.E) which made the election process more accessible through some smaller changes to the process, making it less formal and less threatening. This was achieved by making hustings more of a panel rather than standing up and also by making the candidate briefing much more informal and supportive. She also explained that the use of advertising with cards that encouraged other women to run for positions was very effective and backed up by studies. This work takes inspiration from the #sheshouldrun campaign which is specifically concerned with getting more women into positions of power.

Questions

No questions were asked of any of the officers

6. W.O.K.E

The chair had moved the section on W.O.K.E to be included in the Association Secretary report

7. Group Discussions

This portion of the OGM was one for group discussion and given the potentially personal nature of the discussions, they were not minuted. All those in attendance were involved in the group discussion that touched on subjects such as mental health provision, barriers to access and student finance and resources as well as events and other possible initiatives.

8. Motions *

N/A as none were submitted

9. Highlight upcoming Elections and Activities

GB & RB spent some time talking about the elections and encouraged anyone interested in getting involved to come to any one of the officers and also spent some time listing the various events and activities that are upcoming.

10. Any other business

No matters were raised

11. Pizza and Networking

GB thanked everyone for attending.

END OF MEETING