



Postgraduate & Mature Students' Committee Meeting – 11-11-2020

Attendance: JS (PG & M Chair), JW (PG VP), JC (PG Treasurer), KW (Academic Rep), MP (VP)

Apologies: SWC (President)

Updates

JS In the last couple of weeks I've been attending a lot of meetings about COVID & Accommodation prices. A potential bar event has fallen through due to the new restrictions. Aside from this, I've mostly been sorting academic events with the help of the Principal. There's an inter MCR quiz tonight if anyone's free. I'll try and be in touch a bit more for the rest of term.

Academic Events

JS I think we've had enough Research Forums for one term, but we've got a talk next week about US government which should be interesting. We also may organise a Zoom interview with an Academic, who specialises in Neuroscience and Literature, who would have been living in college this term – the SCR could provide an interviewer. It will be quite casual

KW A Cuth's Creative Writing event could be good – a reading at the end of term perhaps?

JS A recent poetry even was well attended, so that could work.

JW If we collaborate with the SCR on this, the Principal will definitely be supportive.

KW I'm keen for recorded talks to be uploaded to youtube – it makes it more accessible.

JW It's possible to only save the main speaker of a Zoom call – if they are ok with that being done.

JS Last research event was recorded. MM (SCR President) is willing to help with this. We are looking to create a varied bank of resources that Cuth's Students can access in the long term, so that you aren't limited by what happens in the specific years that you're here. Potentially we could create a new tab on the website, I'll contact the Exec CompScis about sorting that.



Social Events

JS We need to sort College Families – it was largely organised a while ago, but we’ve not been able to settle on a time. The plan would be to go between breakout rooms – my only worry is that people won’t show up, but they do have a vested interest to do so as they have already signed up. We can circulate an email for those who don’t come.

JS We could do a replica of a PG formal online, with a mix of speeches and breakout rooms.

JC This sounds like a good idea. How will we adapt if turnout is poor?

JW I think this is more likely to drive engagement than other events, as it doesn’t have a single, niche audience.

MP Social Committee are organising an online formal on the 27th of November, and are planning on sorting some discounted food for it from somewhere like Spags.

JS There’s been talk of organising this seperately with one event for 1st and 2nd years, and one for the rest of us. We could encourage some sharing of traditional dishes, which would help with it not being overly Anglo-Centric, as the PG community is very international. We could encourage people to make a fancy dish. I’ll feed this back to the Principal.

JC I think if we are already doing a Christmas formal combined with UGs, a PG only formal should be unrelated to Christmas (JW Agrees).

JC Are we now assuming that Lockdown will go on to the end of term?

JS It’s probably best to assume in person stuff is out of the question.

JW Is there any value in recreating the “Meet the PG comm” event online? There hasn’t really been a well attended non-academic social since Freshers’ Week.

JS Good idea. I’ll arrange this in the next couple of weeks. Some people might just want an hour away from work.

JW We could repeat the “PG or not to PG” Q&A session from last year – those who attended (admittedly not many) seemed to benefit from it.

JS I’ll make sure this is done in advance of the application deadlines in January. I might communicate with other MCR presidents about an event over the Christmas period for people who are staying in Durham, but I think many PGs are distance learning, so I’m unsure how well any in-person event will be attended. We’ll need to assume events will be postponed for a while, and think about how we can adapt the staple events like murder mystery



Engaging with Mature Students

JW It's a big question – but is there anything we might be able to do specifically related to Mature students – it's even harder than usual to contact them, doubly as we don't currently have a Mature Student Rep.

JS Someone seemed keen to apply for Mature Students' Rep, but ultimately didn't. I've tried to make it clear that anyone can attend events. Perhaps a dedicated Mature student event is needed. I could get in touch with MATSA.

Filling the Rest of the Committee

JS We haven't had many responses to applications, so we may be rereleasing applications before the end of term. I would get applicants to film a video, but roles are generally quite poorly filled as is. If we can fill a couple more positions, I'll consider it a success.

JW I think we could bully HH to apply again. Aside from that it's quite hard to encourage people to sign up without them having attended in-person events.