



Communities Committee Meeting - 11/08/22

Attendance: NH (POC Rep), LJ (LGBTQ+ Rep), SS (SwD Rep), SM (WCS Rep), SL (International Students' Rep), KM (President), AB (VP)

Apologies:

Absent:

Location: Zoom

Communities Chair

KM: Last year, we had a chair every term. Third term we didn't meet due to exams and then summer. Here's some background context for this. Originally, we had a communities officer, but one person who ran for the role resigned in freshers week, as he felt he couldn't represent all the community groups. The role was flawed in itself. Therefore, we decided against having a lead communities officer, and instead, had a committee. Lara was our communities chair and did this for the year. This changed because Lara was seen as part of the exec, and got the same discounts. This was tricky as the chair is still on the same level as other reps. The purpose of the chair was to give perspectives, and the agenda was circulated to communities committee beforehand so this could be added. Exec meetings are open and anyone can come. Termly chairing is good as it allows people to experience chairing and removes this association with the exec, it also gives us different representation.

NH: I'd like to articulate what Dan has said. He felt the terms were too short for him to actually make a difference in the role. Having a termly chair didn't make it more representative because it removed the person there from having more of a key role and say what is going on. Comm comm was involved in every decision made and so there was no consistent voice. This made it hard for people to raise concerns.

KM: This highlights role of communities chair. You're not the lead rep, you chair the meetings and set an agenda, but the agenda can come from anyone and anyone can steer discussion in the way they want. It isn't a project role.

NH: I don't think that's what he meant, its a primary contact even if that's not what it's meant to be. It did wind up being that to an extent.

KM: What do others think? What do we want to do this year? If we do it termly, there is nothing stopping someone from running again.

SL: Last year in third term, there wasn't a chair elected as there was no need?

KM: No meetings so no opportunity to reelect.

NH: I believe this was detrimental- lots of people had concerns and they didn't have an opportunity to raise that. No one to go to to sort something out.



KM: Communities chair isn't the line manager of the other reps. If people have these concerns then the right call in structure of JCR would be come to me or another member of the exec.

NH: What is the function of the committee then instead of just having ideas and then going off and doing our own thing anyway?

KM: This committee is in the design stages- it has only ran for a full year last year, so is still in the trial and error stages of figuring out what the purpose is and function is and its role within wider JCR. We can iron it out during this year.

NH: It feels like right now, its a platform where we talk about issues together but then do our own thing.

KM: If you wanted meetings with the exec, you can invite the exec to communities committee meetings.

NH: I thought the role was chair was also to partially to act as a representative for concerns.

KM: Purpose of the exec is the flawed issue here- people think it has more use than it does. it's a useless committee as it does not function as a committee. Let's move back onto the agenda point.

SL: I think having another shot with a termly chair might be worth trying, just incase work load is too much. It's worth keeping and if the chair this term feels passionate about it, they can continue and run again. We should run termly as a precaution of being overwhelming for the person.

LJ: Keep it as it is, because you're more likely to have people go for it, might be intimidated if it's a year thing, but can get to grips with things in the first term, and then decide they want to run in the next term. been able to see how things work. not be daunted by it.

POI: Assistant reps can also run for chair.

KM: Can we agree to keep it termly?

All in agreement.

Election of Communities Chair

KM: I invite you to come forward if you want to run.

No response

Make up of the Committee

KM: I want to bring up the idea of having the addition of the Post graduate mature president to the committee so we can communicate up to the post grad level and tie together more of the community.

NH: Good idea!

KM: Going to write a motion for the first JCR meeting.



LJ: I think it's good too, as it will make us aware of different issues that might exist.

Freshers Week

KM: Main thing, anti racism workshop. Specifically the addition made last year about intersectionality.

NH: Concerns about bringing up intersectionality, space about racism. I want to make sure that this is a space for racism and doesn't push away from that. People complained that the freshers reps were pushing very heavily away from discussing racism. I'll message about getting the slides, it'll be done by 15th September. We can have a meeting after even if it's me and you, we can also send it in the chat and discuss intersectionality slides before we run it by the freps.

KM: Sounds good.

KM: What events do you guys want and when? I've spoken to Ellie about a tour and lunch for local students on the Monday. On Thursday there is a matriculation photo and that takes up all of the morning. It is probably best if we don't have any events on this day.

KM Reads out previous dates for events.

EM: Would prefer not to have a night out, potentially Tuesday or Wednesday

NH: Am happy to keep whatever! What time?

KM: 10:30

NH: Are people going to be awake at that time?

KM: Freshers woken up by freps as there is a lot to do during the day, so yes!

EM: I was considering the idea of having a brunch with snacks so that local students have time to travel and don't have to get up too early.

KM: No worries, can move things around. Let me know and can accommodate. You guys have free reign over events. For example, Cat did a clay art type event and it was very successful. You can do whatever and name it whatever. Let me know and we can sort out a budget.

NH: Last year, I saw that there was a SWD event and they did baking.

LJ: This event used the oven in someone's flat.

SS: Can SWD have lunch and tours like the local students during the Autism programme? (Check this is the name of the programme)

KM: Yep, let me know dates and we can book it.

Confirmed dates:

Nadia- 10:30 Wednesday

Ellie- 10:30 Tuesday, but will confirm later regarding a later time for local students.



SM- Friday Morning

LJ- Tuesday Afternoon

SS- Monday

KM: Have a think about what you want to do and we can sort out budget. Please make a list of the supplies you'll need and pick any title.

International Freshers Week

SL: Have been messaging Elenor and we're going to call and get everything clear. She mentioned that the biggest challenge that she faced during freshers week was that it was just her and her assistant rep. I think it would be much more productive for me and Colette to have some more hands on deck. Happy to post to ask for volunteers.

KM: I've been talking to other presidents and we are working out joint events. We need to work out numbers, dates and where. Hopefully this spreads the workload across all colleges and makes for bigger and better events for international students. You can also take any freps you need as it's prep week. Potentially message the frep group with 'like this' message to see who's happy to help.

SL: ISA have not yet confirmed schedule so I'll wait for that before I organise anything else. Also, when are things during prep and international freshers week?

KM: I'll get Alice to message, and we can have a meeting with the three of us and can go through it.

SL: I'll wait till after that meeting then to organise anything.

NH: Is there a chance we can have a POC event during international week?

KM: We will finalise the prep week timetable and finalise the international week schedule and will schedule you in!

SWD Fund

SS: I know the JCR are looking for more funding ideas, and I think we should introduce a SWD fund, focused on increasing accessibility and central disability resources. I know students are worried about the cost of getting confirmation from the GP which allows them access to resources, so it would be good to have a fund to support that.

NH: Good idea.

SS: I think we should trial it and see engagement. Usually have low engagement so wouldn't be an initially big expense.

NH: We should have better advertisements for college support so people know what's available.

LJ: Tried to get a poster with support printed and I chased it but it didn't happen.

NH: Also the problem of not being paid back quick enough with reclaims.



AB: Thalia is eager to catch up with the reclaims, did mine very quickly, so hopefully this shouldn't be an issue this year!

NH: What is the process for requesting a fund?

KM: Message TA and FiComm will see how feasible it is and what they've it in the budget as it's been finalised for this year already. They'll iron out procedures for funds and see what is eligible. Then we do a motion for it to be put in the standing orders.

AOB

NH: Last year, I submitted a motion regarding the way in which method two minority roles are elected. This has been delayed, so I'm running it by this group again.

The nature of running for a position is a problem. Some people are unable to attend JCR meetings and there is a limitation of who can vote for it. I want positions to be advertised more and have it so you can vote online so that the appropriate minority group can vote, rather than just the people at the meeting, most of which aren't part of that group.

SS: Anyway we can live stream the meetings for people who can't attend?

AB: This is supposed to happen already.

LJ: Most of the time people run for the roles because they happen to be at the meeting so we need to publicise it more.

Around this point, KM leaves meeting due to connection issues.

NH: Voting is proportional

LJ: There's problems with this, community they represent isn't who they are talking to, so in a lot of cases it could turn out that the least visible form of the minority is voted into a position due to the general audience.

AB: Have you proposed for a specific solution in the motion for this problem?

NH: Caucus voting and having the elections run the same as method 1 but without campaigning.

LJ: I found caucus voting was more implemented at the end of the year.

AB: Caucus voting should've been more prominent throughout, it was always on the standing orders, I just didn't realise until midway through the year, totally my bad but it is an official thing on the standing orders.

NH: I think we should advertise running in absentia more to overcome the problem with people having difficulty in participating.

AB: KM can't get back on the zoom and suggest we discuss this further in another meeting, as needs to be discussed with GovComm.

Discussion Ends



EM: Another point about the anti-racism workshop. I noticed there wasn't specific contacts at the end. Think there needs to be more on who to contact and how to report racism.

NH: Have spoken to DPOCA about that section. We're waiting for other JCR's to get the welfare training so they can be a contact so we have a reason for including it in the workshop, but will definitely be the case for Cuths.

AB: Obviously doesn't solve the problem of not having it at the end of the workshop but there should be direct contact information in the Welfare Handbook.

NH: What's the procedure during freshers week if someone experiences racism/discrimination? Who do they go to? Can we ensure that it is taken to the person with the minority position.

AB: I'm not too sure how it went last year as I wasn't in any elected minority position and a lot of that was under welfare and confidentiality. I'll check with KM to see what the procedure is and get back.

SM: The workshop seems quite long. How long does it last?

NH: An hour and a bit.

SM: There's lots of words, we want people to be as engaged as possible.

LJ: Is it split at all?

NH: It wasn't last year.

NH: We want to have an EDI type thing like with the consent workshop, where people have to complete the test in freshers week and will be chased up if they don't. We can't narrow the presentation down as we want it to be easily accessed and understood for anyone who presents it. It's also used on other occasions, for example with staff, so we want it to be useful to whoever uses it. If it's less wordy, we might miss key information depending on who is presenting. We potentially want to make a google doc with the information but there is some disagreement there.

SS: I think it is a good idea for accessibility if it can be split as it might increase engagement rate especially for SWD who may get distracted.

NH: I agree with your points, but there are a few issues. Our main concern is engagement. There is also a problem with people being too vocal during the workshop specifically within small group discussions which is a problem. If you have any specific suggestions then let me know but it might have to be something we put on the side.

AB: AOB?

No response

End of Meeting

