



KPA Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Date: Friday 16th June 17:00 – 18:00

Committee in attendance:

President – Rob Meredith

Vice President – Ieuan Smith

Association Secretary – Adam Balmer

Student Trustee – Catherine Reynolds (Chair)

Activities Officer – Christopher Murphy

1. Apologies

None-received

2. Accounts

The President explained that we were likely to be under-budget by the time the next committee is in place. He further went on to explain that the KPA has plans to increase spending on the activities budget. All accounts have been approved by the charity commission.

3. Vice-President's Report

3.1. Education

The Vice-President explained his activities in representation of the membership with an emphasis on facilitating the needs of PGT students. He has sat on various learning and teaching committees from faculty to university level. He has been working on two key areas. Firstly, to secure overnight study spaces throughout the summer which has been successful. Secondly, the inclusion of PGT students in the 'Wednesday afternoon policy'. This aims to avoid teaching for students on Wednesday afternoons as it can hinder the ability for students to participate in, primarily, sporting activities. This is significant because it directly affects social inclusion. The Vice-President has been unsuccessful to include PGT students in the policy but he will continue to work on it.

3.2. Membership Engagement

The Vice-President explained that he has been doing quite a lot to increase engagement including doing a variety of social events. One area he is working on are postgraduate only sports activities.

3.3. Postgraduate National Voice

The Vice-President stated that the KPA has developed a good relationship with York Graduate Students' Association (GSA) and has been starting to establish a relationship with Cambridge Graduates' Union as well. He has started to establish links with postgraduate officers at different universities in order to increase our participation in the national voice for postgraduates. Alongside this, the KPA has also been sharing best practice principles with other postgraduate officers.

4. Association Secretary's Report

4.1. Elections

The Association Secretary reported reasonably high engagement with the election process, with over one hundred people voting in elections and lively participation in hustings events. The transitional period between the old committee and the new has seen an effective hand-over and has gone very smoothly.

4.2. General Meetings

The Association Secretary reported successful organisation of two general meetings over the academic year, enabling the membership to receive updates on the variety of activities performed by the KPA committee and updated plans on the clubhouse.

4.3. KPA Bursary Video

The Association Secretary reported that many applications for the KPA bursary take a long time to be processed because of information being absent from applications. He reported having recorded a video explaining to postgraduates how to apply for the KPA bursary and that he hopes for the video to be uploaded onto the KPA website soon.

5. President's Report

5.1. KPA Clubhouse

The President reported that a lot of work had been done on the clubhouse. A new manager is in place and the financial difficulties the clubhouse was experiencing have been turned around. He hopes to see this grow over the next few years.

5.2. KPA Clubhouse Relocation

The President reported that an option seemed to be open for the clubhouse to stay where it is, but he was seeking assurance that the current Clubhouse would receive further redevelopment. He stated that we need the university to agree to fund development work at the current Clubhouse if we are to remain where we are.

Since the meeting took place it has been confirmed that the Clubhouse will in fact be relocating.

5.3. Trustee Board

The President has been looking at the Trustee Board. The current Board is very white/male/middle-class. He reported that the Association had created a new Trustee position, which was vacant, and were looking for new Trustees. A couple of people were lined up and he hoped to get them into position by the end of his term, but failing that would leave this for the next President. He was looking to broaden the skill set available across the Board.

5.4. Handover

The President's focus at this point was on the committee handover. The President emphasised the importance of an effective hand-over given that there are a number of ongoing KPA activities that the next committee will need to undertake.

5.5. Strengthening Governance

The President reported that a financial memorandum is being drafted, which should set out what the Association can expect from the University in its annual grant and what the University can expect the Association to achieve with that grant.

5.6. Estates

The President is also looking to get a formal agreement with Estates with a view to outline the responsibilities they are responsible for as landlords and we are responsible for as tenants.

5.7. Questions

One audience member asked what more can be said regarding the University not necessarily moving the Clubhouse. The President responded that there were three options offered originally, involving staying where we are, moving to a new build on car park E1 Horwood or moving to House 99. It was decided that one of the new build option would not work. Further consultation with the membership regarding the final two options was required and after consultation the membership agreed that moving to House 99 was the preferred option. There is an interest amongst the membership and the local community to remain at the current Clubhouse if the University is willing to invest in its redevelopment, any revised offer from the University would be put out for consultation, with the membership having the final say.

Since the meeting, the potential for a redevelopment offer was ruled out and it has been confirmed that the KPA Clubhouse will be relocating to House 99.

6. KPA Co-ordinator

The Vice-President reported that the co-ordinator is a part-time, paid member of staff, who works three days a week and helps with the management of both the KPA's finances and the KPA bursary. Alison started just under a year ago and has been an asset to the organisation so far. She has brought an expertise that was needed and that was previously being managed by a non-permanent member of staff. She has done a very good job at administering the bursary system and has the greatest understanding of it. She has taken a lot of interest in postgraduate welfare, particularly mental welfare, and has come up with activities ideas, such as the massage sessions. We have been able to agree with the

university for her to have a 1.1% pay increase, and the Vice-President stated that he is personally looking forward to working with her next year. Alison's role brings stability and institutional memory, which will be able to advise future committees on best practice. Her experience is appreciated given that the students that constitute the committee are unlikely to have the necessary experience to run a charity.

7. Bob Beattie Student of the Year Award

The President reported that it had been decided two years previously by the then President that, since there were no University awards that were specifically for postgraduates, one was required. Bob Beattie was somebody who offered great informal support to students at the KPA Clubhouse, until his passing. Two winners were selected – Gemma Scott (Winner), and Kerese Harrinandan (Runner-Up). Kara Holloway was awarded the 'Best Use of Bursary Funds Award', in recognition of what she had achieved with her bursary. The President informed the membership that the KPA is hosting an awards event on Tuesday 20th June as an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our postgraduate community. The Committee decided not to have it as a ball because of the expenses that would be incurred. The President expressed his hope that the Bob Beattie award would continue in following years, explaining that the nomination and award process ran smoothly, and expressed his hope that postgraduate students would get involved in the future, not just for the opportunity to win £1000 but also to recognise and share their contributions to the postgraduate community.

8. Postgraduate Research Code of Practice

The President reported that he had been working with the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise, David Amigoni, who decided the Postgraduate Research Code of Practice was not fit for purpose due to excessive length and internal inconsistency resulting in inadequate clarity. In addition to digitising the document, the Committee had been working to reduce its length to twenty pages, to use accessible language and to cite all related procedures (found online). Furthermore, the committee has worked to ensure that the provisions mentioned within the Code of Practice are accurate and up-to-date and that Postgraduate research students are aware of the provisions available to them. The Committee used this revision to work toward making sure more funding and additional support is available for postgraduate students. In addition, the University has appointed a Postgraduate Officer in order to increase support for postgraduates as a whole. However, there will be a focus on increasing the support for postgraduate research students because they do not have the same administrative support that taught students do; having a dedicated member of staff is a step toward correcting this imbalance.

8.1. Questions

A question was raised about whether the membership can be informed about when the Code of Practice is digitised. The President responded that this would be publicised.

9. Overnight Summer Study Spaces

The Vice-President stated that a central part of his manifesto was on study spaces and their lack of availability overnight during the summer. It is understandable why they had not been available due to the expenses entailed, but this seemed unfair since many students, such as Masters students, do not have this study resource available at the time of the year when important assignments are due. Availability of security staff was an issue and so the Vice-

President recommended that the Darwin building, where Security is based, could be a good location for overnight study during the summer. As such, when the library is closed over the summer, the Darwin building will now have available rooms within which to study, provided students sign in with security.

9.1. Questions

A question was raised about whether or not the room will have computers. The Vice-President responded that the room that had been suggested to him does have computers in it, but that he cannot guarantee that this room will always be available. If this room is available, then a small kitchen space should also be available. The Vice-President asked if feedback could be given to the Committee once the study space begins to be used so that any issues related to the available facilities can be ironed out as soon as possible. A social media post will also outline the available times of these study spaces.

10. Elections

The President stated that the new committee will consist of Ieuan Smith as KPA President, George Blake as Vice-President, John Wootton as Association Secretary and Christopher Murphy as Activities Officer. He pointed out that some positions are still available and that it will be up to the next committee to get them filled. Those positions are Student Trustee, International Officer and Equality and Diversity Officer. These are all voluntary roles that are great opportunities to get involved with the Association, to have something to add to a CV and get involved in the postgraduate community. If students get involved during welcome week, this is very useful for international students. The Committee goes to pick people up from the airport and show them around Keele. It was also mentioned that although roles are defined by the constitution, there is plenty of scope to do so much more; if there is anything that an officer thinks needs to be changed then they will be in a good position to influence that.

Since this meeting, the position of International Officer has been filled by Joyce Gyamfi.

11. Any Other Business

The Vice-President expressed his gratitude to the current President, Rob Meredith, for everything he has given to the Association. Rob has given two years to the association (as its former Association Secretary and President) during which time his dedication has achieved a great deal.

No other business was mentioned.