



HUGHES HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

MCR Committee
Mon, 3 August 2020, 12pm
E-meeting

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Present: N Gorringe (Temporary President & Equality and LGBT+ Officer); H Zhou (Vice President); K Bartsch (Treasurer); B Low (Academic Affairs Officer); Z Rehman (Social Secretary); B Williams (Social Secretary); R Hosking (Female and Non-binary Welfare Officer); A Johnsen (Equality and BAME Officer); M Tang (IT and Infrastructure Officer); O Kranse (Green and Ethical Affairs Officer); E Mensah (Sports and Societies Officer)

Absent: A Vasileva (Secretary); J Navani (Accommodation Officer)

I. Introduction

Declaration of Members' Interest

No declaration was received.

II. Standing Actions

II.A. Ms Z Rehman and Mr B Williams to send their biographies to Mr M Tang

Mr M. Tang confirmed he had received the biographies and had updated the website.

Action: Completed.

II.B. Ms A Entwistle-Thompson to explore options of purchasing outdoor sports equipment that students can hire and use

At the time Mr E. Mensah had not joined the meeting.

Action: Remain as a standing action.

II.C. Ms Rehman and Mr Williams to create a Freshers' calendar for plan A and plan B by Friday, 3rd of July

Calendar received by Ms N. Gorringe which has events which are both socially distanced and virtual. Ms N. Gorringe asked for MCR officers to input their availability into the calendar also. Mr K. Bartsch and Mr B. Williams told to arrive around 10/12 September, confirmed as appropriate by Ms N. Gorringe. Ms Z. Rehman able to assist with virtual events while in self isolation after returning to the UK.

Action: Ms N. Gorringe will circulate the calendar within the MCR, more event/freshers discussion will take place at the next meeting.

II.D Mr J Navani to discuss pricing of virtual yoga classes for students with Ms Entwistle-Thompson.

Mr J. Navani unable to attend the meeting due to time-zone constraints.

Action: Remain as a standing action.

III. Items

III.A. Resignation of elected MCR President: reasons and temporary MCR president role.

Ms A. Entwistle-Thompson resigned as MCR President last week due to the behaviours she was subject to be a small number of students. Ms N. Gorringe put herself forward as acting temporary MCR President, whilst still fulfilling duties of the Equality and LGBTQ+ Officer. Ms N. Gorringe said few students have inquired about action taken by the College to act on this matter and commented the College has not acted sufficiently and briefly commented on the action Ms A. Entwistle-Thompson may be taking.

Ms R. Hosking commented that this issue is a personal and steps should be taken to make it less so, it would be positive if the College were to take action but ensuring that no other MCR officer experiences the same is also important. Ms N. Gorringe suggested a constitutional change to provide support for the MCR committee should students cross a line as there is no such protection explicitly in the constitution. Ms R. Hosking agreed and added there should be an official channel for the MCR. Ms N. Gorringe mentioned there will be a review of the harassment policy this year anyway and there may be room to add in something for the MCR.

Mr K. Bartsch asked if there is a rule applying to all students, which Ms N. Gorringe replied with the existence of the statement from the College on harassment. Mr K. Bartsch added that changing statements may not solve the issue and there should be a person whom the MCR can go to if there is an issue. But Mr K. Bartsch had concerns over confidentiality in discussing emails sent to MCR emails. Ms N. Gorringe agreed a single point of contact for the welfare of the MCR committee would be beneficial and if they are a senior member of the College this would help the issue of confidentiality. Mr K. Bartsch suggested a

disclaimer be written addressing confidentiality with emails sent to the MCR accounts and that members within the MCR can “filter” emails of certain members. This suggestion was supported by Mr B. Low. Mr A. Jonhsen added a disclaimer about confidentiality is quite common and is not sure a filtering system is right. Ms Z. Rehman said that the focus should be on ending the harassment and the MCR committee should have a point of contact for reporting. Mr H. Zhou discussed the idea of having a person to filter emails, raise issues of harassment where they can be discussed and resolved as a committee. Ms R. Hosking asked who will be the ones filtering the emails as this is a large workload and thinks the current system works fairly well. Ms N. Gorringer agrees with Ms R. Hosking and believes that such harassment is rather rare and doesn't think there should be someone filtering MCR emails. She added that it would be best to define what is harassment on the MCR website alongside a statement of confidentiality. Ms N. Gorringer added that a College tutor acting as a direct point of contact for the MCR committee welfare would be very beneficial, and discussing these issues as a committee would also be positive but it depends on the person. An improvement to the current system was supported by Ms R. Hosking and Mr A. Johnsen. Ms N. Gorringer suggested each MCR officer write a short statement about our roles in accordance to the constitution, including the limitations of our roles to accompany a statement of when confidentiality may need to be broken. Ms N. Gorringer believes this may help to deal with issues we are not comfortable in dealing with or fall outside the responsibilities of the role.

Action: For each member to submit a brief summary of their role to the MCR President before the next meeting. To give thought to the statement defining harassment and confidentiality before the next meeting.

III.B. Election of permanent MCR President.

Ms N. Gorringer suggests the election for the MCR President should occur before the end of August for there to be no cross over with incoming students and to allow for no interference with freshers planning. Also suggested was the promotion of the Male and Non-binary welfare Officer role alongside the MCR President role.

Mr K. Bartsch asked what would happen if one of us were to apply for and take on the role as MCR President. Ms N. Gorringer said that if one member were to take on the role of MCR President they should ensure their duties of their current role are also satisfied and advertisement of the newly vacant role can occur after freshers, possibly with the advertisement of sub-committees.

Ms R. Hosking raised a concern about low student engagement because of recent graduation. Ms N. Gorringer said the voting platform would be the same as previous and she doesn't believe that there is a certain number of votes needed to win the vote. Mr A. Johnsen said that graduating students retain access to Raven for 90 days after graduating and may still be able to vote. Mr K. Bartsch thinks that the recent graduates still know the candidates which is good.

Ms N. Gorringer proposed a timeline which would see the announcement of the results by the 28th August, it would also be good to record the “e-hustings” so that those who were

unable to join due to time-zone differences can still watch. Either MCR Secretary or MCR Vice-President will be asked to organise the elections.

Action: Ms N. Gorringer will approach the MCR Secretary or MCR Vice-President about running the elections.

III.C. Plan for August: Freshers planning and black history month planning.

Ms N. Gorringer states that there is a lot of planning which needs to happen for freshers and black history month, starting with planning of the welfare talks with College. Ms N. Gorringer and Mr A. Johnsen will liaise with Dr Roughley. Ms N. Gorringer will also share the freshers calendar with the MCR committee which was prepared by Ms Z. Rehman and Mr B. Williams.

October is Black History Month and Ms N. Gorringer suggests it would be beneficial to start rudimentary planning this month. Again, Mr A. Johnsen and Ms N. Gorringer will take the lead but will also advertise to students about getting involved and other MCR officers are also welcomed to help.

Action: Ms N. Gorringer will circulate the freshers calendar to the MCR committee. Once Dr Roughley is back from holiday Ms N. Gorringer will email her about the welfare talks. Next meeting will be focusing on freshers planning.

III.D. Any other business.

Ms Z. Rehman asked for guidelines about freshers events, such as social distancing, bar opening, venues, etc. Ms N. Gorringer's advice was to have both socially distanced and virtual events regardless, and she is waiting for College to confirm which areas of College are to be designated as social areas. It is possible that other non-College properties will be available to hire by the College, so there may be more space. Ms N. Gorringer also said it would be good to get the bar opened before the influx of students, and there also might be different rules for those who are in a household together who may not have to abide the "2 m distance rule". More information is expected from the College once senior staff have returned from annual leave.

Mr O. Kranse expressed concern about those who have harassed Ms A. Entwistle-Thompson and those individuals escalating it. Ms N. Gorringer believes that it is not the position of the MCR to release a statement about the treatment of Ms A. Entwistle-Thompson as it is a personal matter but making people aware of the limitations of the MCR roles would be good.

The next meeting will take place on X 2020, at X pm, as an e-meeting.