

Present: Gavin Lee (Chair, GUSRC), Jamie Wightwick (GUSRC), Duncan McKay (AUSA), Nick Edward (AUSA), Nicole McCaffery (USSA), Carole Brooks (OUSA), David MacLeod (DUSA), Colin McKean (GSA), Andrew Keenan (USASA), James Shield (USASA)

1. Minutes

Accepted. CM requests that formal tone be adopted.

2. Matters Arising:

2.1 Local Income Tax

Following pressure from student groups (CHES press release and letter to John Swinney) the Finance Secretary commented in parliament about the exemption of students. Situation will be monitored. There was no confirmation that this would apply to all students, so exemptions with regards Part-time students will be monitored.

2.2 EUSA Campaign ('Time to Fund the Future', concerning both student and University funding)

Members of CHES had received information regarding the EUSA campaign, and had reviewed it. CHES did not believe there would be value in becoming involved in this campaign. GL agreed to contact EUSA.

ACTION: GL

2.3 Tenancy Deposit Schemes:

Ongoing matter.

ACTION: GL –points 1 & 2 on TDPS briefing.

2.4 Widening Access

Tayside and Fife Widening Access forum' is working positively with strong involvement from student bodies. Glasgow and Edinburgh Forums appear to have less student representation, but are still successful in encouraging those from WP backgrounds

2.5 Dental Fees

Dundee had researched the issue further and they seemed unfounded. There seemed no imminent plans at Institution or National level for fees to be increased.

2.6 PG Funding

Nothing to report at present. Ongoing matter until next meeting.

ACTION: GL to report on PG funding for next meeting.

2.7 ELIR

GL raised awareness of a Sparqs training session on ELIR, and agreed to circulate details. GUSRC has set up working groups on Student Experience and Uni-SRC relationship. St Andrews have a large review of assessment and marking, which may include removal of classifications in favour of European Certificate of Higher Education (ECHE) to be introduced, plus form of GPA.

3. Agenda Items

3.1 Claire Baker

GL had met with Claire Baker and had wide-ranging discussion. She seemed supportive on income tax, and calling for an independent review. (Labour and Tories calling for independent review of higher education.) The £30m which Fiona Hyslop had announced was discussed, and Clare Bakers suggestion is to increase the minimum funding for the 22000 poorest students almost £7000. Clare also expressed a strong interest in the role of the Rectors' Group. It was agreed that this was useful, and would be useful to have similar meetings across the parties.

ACTION GL: Will organise meetings.

3.2 National Postgraduate Council

GL raised awareness of the current affairs of the NPC, and the significant difficulties they are facing. There had been a suggestion that the role of NPC could be subsumed by NUS. It was not felt at the meeting that this would be beneficial to NPC Scotland. CHESS were informed that NPC Scotland were holding a meeting in November with affiliates and non-affiliates to discuss how to progress PG representation in Scotland

**ACTION: ALL - consider sending delegate to an NPC
Scotland meeting, discuss relations with NPC.**

4. AOCB

Points-based immigration system, including registering of certain foreign nationals every two weeks. University has to validate the visa. CHESS expressed significant concern with regards the impact on admissions and student welfare.

**ACTION: ALL – ask universities how they are planning on
registering students / complying with new legislation.**

Concerns over use of voice-to-text programs for use by disabled students in exams were raised. OU has banned these VTT programs as they use macros, with students consequently failing. Concern over balance of trustworthiness of scribes vs. possibility of using programs to cheat. Concerns raised over training offered to scribes – often, none.

**ACTION: ALL – ask their universities for their policy on such
situations.**

Meeting closes at 13.40.

Next Meeting: TBC.