

KCGS General Meeting 15/11/16

Minutes

Apologies

Oral reports from KCGS Exec Officers

The LGBT+ Officer reported that the LGBT+ dinner was held on the previous Saturday and was a great success.

The Social Secretaries reported that Freshers' Week was a great success, with more alcohol-free events, a garden party and an outdoor cinema event. This term they are holding four formal swaps, one high table, one superformal, and grad drinks every week. The Lay Dean has requested that they liaise with the undergraduates to produce common calendars of social events, in light of excess drinking at weekly formals. They have also met with the Graduate Tutors to discuss hosting more events that include fellows and JRFs. Next term there will be a 'welcome back' event with fellows, sponsored by the tutorial office. They are intending to use a QR code system for superformal tickets again this year, allowing the event to stay paperless.

The Welfare Officer reported that since the last general meeting she has replaced the carpet in the grad suite and bought plants with domus money. The screening of the US Presidential election had a large turnout. The welfare puppy day (mainly organised by undergraduates) was successful, as was the welfare walk to the botanical gardens for the apple day festival. She has been unable to replace the stock of condoms because CUSU haven't had stock.

The Computing Officer had no updates, but welcomed any requests for help with computing-related matters.

The Equality Officer reported that the BME dinner was a great success, and that Kings will hopefully host a BME open day later in the year.

The Women's Officer reported that she had organised consent workshops during Freshers' Week, but that these were problematic due to a lack of training and resources. Women's Dinner is coming up later in the year, and she is looking for speakers, artistic contributions and films for that event.

The Junior Treasurer reported that bills for purchases on the KCGS store since June have been sent out.

The International Officer reported that grad buddies had been allocated for freshers, with a subsequent welcome buddy event. The international food potluck was a great success. They currently are hosting international movie events each weekend. She has also sent visa information out to international students.

The Academic Affairs Officer reported that the Friday lunchtime seminars are well received, but there are some problems with timing. The Senior Tutor, Graduate Tutors

and Vice Provost had reaffirmed their commitment for funding the seminars and for the availability of the wine room. Attempts to bring together a student advisory committee for academic affairs have created interest, but have been difficult to schedule. The Senior Tutor has requested volunteers for University Challenge.

The Secretary had nothing to report.

The Environmental Officer reported that volunteers are needed for a green impact scheme. They are trying to pass an environmental policy for the college and to create an environmental committee. There is a vote coming up soon at Regent House on whether the university should divest from fossil fuels. Kings members are going to take a photo in support of divestment, which KCGS members are invited to.

The Chair reported that he had to re-open nominations for the KCGS elections, as he had not received enough nominations. Since then he has received many new nominations, and the top five positions all have nominations. This is necessary, as all other positions can be filled by exec vote.

The President reported that she has taken over development responsibilities. The vote to put a roof over Chetwynd Court was passed at governing body, after an initially split vote. A working group has been established, with student representatives. A paper is going to council in the new year proposing to increase the responsibilities of grad wardens in line with the financial gains they receive. The 1985 fund (jointly granted to grads and UGs) will be spent on a welfare event in week 5 of Lent term. A report on this was submitted to the fund donors, who are very happy with the proposal. It has been agreed that the Robinson Room will have card access. She has been discussing further collaboration between grads and JRFs/CRAs. Tutorial have agreed to fund two Friday events per term to bring both communities together. The proposal to create gender neutral toilets in the bar area passed through council. She and the Sports and Societies Officer ran a sports day with 15 other colleges.

Motion: Accommodation preference for KCGS Executive Members

Lewis Mervin, proposing the motion, outlined the three options of motions:

- a) The principal administrative officers should be given a category one choice in the accommodation ballot system. Specific details would be arranged, along with continued discussions with the Graduate community, to ensure a fair and preferably simple system is implemented.
- b) The KCGS committee (in order of the Standing Orders) should be given the opportunity to move into vacant accommodation that is central to college.
- c) The KCGS executive should not be given priority in the balloting system or the option to move more centrally.

He noted that a) is an attempt to incentivise nominations for KCGS exec positions, in light of decreased political engagement of the general KCGS membership. He presented data to support the assertion of decreased engagement. B) responds to the issue that exec members must be in college regularly, and they lose significant amounts of time to travel if they do not live centrally. He stressed that these options were not fixed; the motion was a provocative attempt to get KCGS members to address the problem of decreased engagement. The vote needn't be as laid out in his motion, but the form can be debated now. He also stressed that KCGS work is not just

grad drinks and formals—there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes, which is less evident to members.

A KCGS member commented that he was unhappy with the process of this nomination and had heard a number of complaints that this was not being addressed with a referendum. The Chair raised a point of order: Motions can be submitted by any member prior to a meeting and are circulated in advance, then discussed at the meeting before being taken further, e.g. to a referendum. The Chair further clarified that the topic has been discussed informally with college and would always have been put to a referendum.

The Chair was asked how many nominations had been received for the current elections, to clarify problems of engagement. 9 positions had had nominees, 6 did not. Only one position was contested.

A KCGS member pointed out that incentivising the top 5 exec positions does not incentivise people to stand for any of the other positions.

Another member noted that they agreed with incentivising, but not with using the room ballot for this. They suggested free formal tickets instead. The Social Secretaries responded that KCGS does not have money to do this. Superformal tickets are already subsidised by college, and to give exec free tickets it would be necessary to raise the price of all other tickets. Giving exec priority booking was another suggestion. The President pointed out that KCGS only has control of grad superformals, and cannot offer anything for undergraduate formals. Lack of funds means that exec cannot be remunerated monetarily. The Senior Tutor withdrew funding for the only prior incentive, the handover dinner, because it was too expensive.

Lewis asked to amend proposal a) to refer only to the President role, not principal administrative officers, noting that one room from the ballot is a minimal effect. Especially given the amount of work the president does. The number of people in each category of the ballot changes each year anyway.

A member suggested asking college to discount the cost of the President's room. This would require college approval, however.

Some questions were raised from the floor on how to deal with nominees for positions who want the perks without intending to do any work.

A past exec member noted that there wasn't enough discussion about the range of perks: jumping from the traditional handover dinner to category 1 room choice is a big leap, especially given that the handover dinner was not just a perk but a way for old and new committees to discuss KCGS matters. Giving priority in the ballot undermines the principle that all KCGS members are equal. Regarding handover dinner, it was suggested that the figures of declining participation should be shown to the Senior Tutor.

A member noted that they haven't seen so much evidence of exec work this year in comparison to previous years, and would prefer greater communication. The Chair

clarified that the number of emails sent out by the exec have been reduced following complains, and most matters are put into the weekly bulletin. There are contradictory opinions on this among the membership.

Another member noted that general perception of the committee is very positive but largely focused on the social and community side, not the political. It would be a good thing to present more of the political side of each role and more options for engagement. The President responded that the Joint Rep and Domus Officers are the most political roles, but neither have been present in Cambridge this term. She organised meetings regarding the development of the Grasshopper/Cranmer site that only three people turned up to.

Another member noted that his first impression of exec meetings upon arriving 3 years ago was that they were cliquish, which put him off engaging (he hadn't attended since). The Chair noted that that has changed, all meetings are advertised and open to everybody. The President added that there are opportunities for general engagement such as the Freshers' Week committee, but there are generally few volunteers.

Another member argued that when he arrived it was not at all cliquish but highly politically engaged. The subsequent Presidents have all put a lot of work into KCGS, for which they should be thanked. KCGS should become more of a lobbying force for students again.

The Chair proposed taking a number of straw polls:

-To acknowledge that there has been a lack of engagement with the exec committee.
—40 for, no abstentions, no against.

-That the principle of incentivising positions is a good one, without specifying how this should be done.
—35 for, 3 abstentions, 2 against.

A number of potential incentives were then listed, with further suggestions welcome: Return of handover dinner; category 1 positions in room ballot; formal tickets (free or preferential booking); use of empty central rooms.

The Chair proposed another vote:

-Should we hold a referendum on whether incentives should be given to exec, and on the possible options for this (open to suggestions from the membership)?
—38 for, 1 abstention, 1 against.
(The against vote was specifically targeted against the use of the word 'incentive')

-Should the incoming President be charged with working to increase political engagement of the KCGS membership? (This work would need to be reported at the next general meeting.)
—36 for, 3 abstentions, 1 against.

Motion: Timing of Graduate Lunchtime Seminars

The President outlined the motion to change the timing of the lunchtime seminars. Currently, Friday lunchtime conflicts with Muslim prayers, and daytimes are also difficult for scientists working in labs outside of central Cambridge. The Academic Affairs Officer added that she had received similar feedback, however the arrangement with college is relatively fixed. College wants to cutback on costs relative to the current low turnout. Bagels would have been cut without popular opposition to this, but changing to different food items (for different times of day) is likely to be difficult. The current cost of each event is around £200, for food and room hire (currently being charged between different departments of college).

The floor discussed current turnout and its relation to the decline in engagement of KCGS members. The last seminar had around 6 attendees, despite greater numbers of grad students in college overall. In previous years it was standing room only. It was asked whether posters were still being made to advertise events—currently no. Some were made last year, but several speakers dropped out, making the information incorrect. It was agreed to bring back posters.

New timings were discussed. It was noted that changing the time to 4pm or 5pm still does not help scientists—it would need to be 6pm or later to allow them to return from labs. It was also noted that fellows with young families may not be able to make times that are too late. It was asked whether the time had to be the same each week, but it was agreed that it should have a constant slot. It was suggested that 6.30pm on Mondays be trialled for 4 weeks in Lent term. It was suggested that scheduling it for dinner times would allow people to bring their own dinner from hall, with money redirected into refreshments (wine/tea/coffee). A note of caution was sounded that if the current food was given up, that money may not be reinvested in the seminars by college. Suggestions will be taken to the Senior Tutor.

King's Grad Bar Election Process

The Chair outlined several ambiguities in the constitution and rules of the KGB which need to be clarified in advance of the election of the KGB Chair(s). Current rules state that the KCGS exec appoints this position and can appoint “any” nominee, but how do they find who to appoint? There is no nomination procedure, and a lack of transparency about the process for people who may wish to stand.

The KGB Chair outlined that the current rules had been written by a previous manager with college and the college alcohol licence holder. Practically, the outgoing Chair should nominate somebody who has had experience working in the KGB and is informally vetted. This is a response to a recent situation with the Bunker, where a manager was elected by popular vote and proceeded to mismanage funds. College strongly wishes to avoid such a situation and popularity contests in general. Practically, all appointments must have college approval. Loose wording of the constitution is to take account of this.

A previous KGB Chair and author of the KGB constitution clarified that the intention was that the outgoing chair would train and nominate their successor. Open nominations would lead to people standing who simply wouldn't be appointed as they hadn't been trained, creating bad feeling all round. It was added by the current KGB

Chair that the training process is very prolonged, and required the active assistance of the previous Chair for 3 months of the current Chair's tenure.

It was noted by a previous KCGS President that experience is key to the role. The role of KCGS President could be learned on the job, but the KGB Chair is a managerial position dealing with money and alcohol licensing—people need to have at least volunteered at some point.

The KCGS President noted that there have been complaints the position isn't transparent, and may appear cliquish—it shouldn't just be a central friend group nominating each other.

A KCGS member commented that changing it to an election would be absurd, as the position is a managerial position, not one representing the student body. There is no restriction on getting involved with the KGB, people just need to respond to the emails requesting volunteers. He disagreed that the process is vague.

A KGB volunteer noted that the issues of the KGB are very unique to the KGB. It's not a question of whether one can run a bar, but whether they can deal with those issues (and previous bar experience may not be necessary). It was added that the KGB subcommittee has a vote on the nominees, at meetings from which minutes are available.

The KCGS Chair clarified that what was wanted was info on prerequisites for nomination, e.g. the amount of time previously worked in the bar. The KGB Chair responded that amount of time is not a good measure, given that three months currently amounts to a single opening, and that they are having to fight with college to keep the openings that they're entitled to. There is no strict definition of 'ready.' She also added that the college alcohol licence holder has final decision over everything and KCGS cannot change the nomination process without his approval.

A previous KGB Chair suggested putting a job description and explanation of the appointment procedure on the KCGS website, with a recommendation that one gets involved beforehand. This was agreed upon.

The ambiguity of the constitutional wording was left unresolved, for future discussion.

Chetwynd Court Development

As reported by the President, the proposal to cover Chetwynd Court was approved by governing body. A working group has been created, with student representatives.

KCGS 2017 Budget

Figures for the budget were not currently available.

There is £353 in discretionary.

A motion was proposed to move £40 to the welfare tea and coffee budget, which had run out of money. Passed with 23 for, no abstentions, no against.

A motion was proposed to move the remaining money to the Social Secretaries' budget. Passed with 23 for, no abstentions, no against.

Any Other Business

The KGB will be open next week. Anyone who wants to be trained to work should get in contact with the managers.