



Activity Report to ICU Council
February 2020

Summary:

After the momentum at the beginning of the year, where we pushed to reach out to as many students as possible and increase awareness of the existence and purpose of the GSU, we are happy to say that we feel able to more successfully reach out to our students and engage them and feedback their opinions to college committees.

We have managed to almost completely fill all our committee roles in the Autumn elections, and have a few exciting activities that we are proud of including a survey about community building which garnered over 1600 responses as well as our upcoming Leap Year Ball for which sold out. We are excited for all our future activities too, and are still working towards our **Goals for the 19/20 academic year**, which are:

- Build PG community – including the Hammersmith and White city campus's
- Build the GSU's identity
- Improve engagement with the PG community

Finance:

Union Budgeting:

We submitted a budget of £3,300 for next year based on the events and spending this year. This averaged to ~£0.35 per PG student.

Graduate School Support:

The applied to the graduate school community building fund for £3,000 to subsidise tickets for the PG ball and were successful.

Dean's Fund Application:

A proposal and budget to al 4 deans for funding towards community and welfare events was submitted. We are waiting to hear back if it was successful.

Representation:

Mapping out our network:

We have been working with the representation team in the Union and the graduate school to map out our representatives.

PRES:

We worked alongside Ashley Brooks and union representation team to review the results of the PRES survey. Through PRQC we have created a working group to approve our recommendations. These have been divided into: Supervision, Welfare and research culture/ environment.

College Meetings:

1. QAEC – discussions surrounding curriculum review, disciplinary procedures, and mitigating circumstances.
2. PQRC –PRES actions and review on PG assesment and regulations.

- a. Postgraduate research regulations review - trying to understand the differences in landscape across different departments and how these could be made more uniform – ensuring the regulations are fair and make sense as there have been lots of developments since the last review.
- b. Passing through CDT 1+3 stipend payment gap (details below)
- c. PRES actions (see Union response)

AWO/SSC Meetings:

Business school:

- a. We met with Paula Socha (Business School Student Experience Manager, since we have had issues with engagement in the past. To try and understand how best to integrate our two representation systems together and ensure that our AWO has space at the relevant meetings.
 - i. One important take-away to highlight was that the Business School courses start in September, not October. We should focus some efforts on

Natural Sciences:

- a. PG Research:
 - i. Missed or delayed bursary payments for students who were unable to register on time due to problems with registry, we have since discovered this is an annual problem for stipend payments in October and the problem will be raised at the next Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC) meeting.
 - ii. On-going problems with the shuttle bus service which is inadequate. Particularly the 'vacation' timetable which makes little sense as the bus is used primarily by PhDs and staff travelling between campuses who are still working during UG holidays
 - iii. General issues with PGR pastoral care – these are an on-going faculty problem of which the faculty has recently carried out a review of which detailed the disparity between what the departments offer and what students are aware of.
- b. PG Taught:
 - i. As mentioned above, shuttle bus between South Kensington and White City is inadequate. The capacity and the hourly service is insufficient. Students that travel with their lab materials often complain about the constraint that it puts on their daily routines.
 - ii. Faculty Mitigation Oversight Panel (FMOP) had been set up. Its members will be responsible for ensuring consistency in the decision-making processes made by the individual Department Mitigating Circumstances Boards.

Engineering:

- a. PG Research:

- i. Different departments run things very differently. We are pushing for communications of best practice to be shared at operations manager meetings across departments, if there cannot be a new position allocated for a coordinator to manage implementation of systems that have shown to work in some departments.
 - ii. Created a Teams for the representatives to be able to more effectively communicate with each other.
 - iii. It has been noted that supervisors are meant to receive optional graduate school training every 6 years
- b. PG Taught:
- i. Project and course choices occur very early on that cannot be changed later on (first and second week). This is due to departments not being able to give info out beforehand until students are registered. The same applies for prerequisites; students can't get any information until the first day and then they are very rushed to make decisions which they cannot change. This is an issue in some depts only (especially materials) and is something we are working to resolve.

Medicine:

- a. PG Research:
- i. New funding has been allocated for PhD students – utility fund for community building event
 - £200 per event but not limited per rep
 - ii. PRES – 3 main actions to take place in the faculty
 - Group to look at mentoring activity in the faculty
 - Wellbeing action plans for new PhD students – fixed mentors and milestones (currently mentors need to be signed off and suggested by supervisors, which hinders the relationship)
 - Brought up mainly at the beginning of the PhD where relationships are poorly established and when issues come up they aren't comfortable speaking to them

Community Building:

- A survey on Community in departments and College was done – with over 1.6K responses, data is still being analysed but gave a massive insight into PG issues (see Appendix). Data is still being analysed.

Welfare Events:

Planned for the summer term and based on funding from Deans.

Festival of failure

1. Guest speaker then panel of speakers from different backgrounds (hopefully some alumni) speaking about their experiences followed by a networking break.
2. We will also have a dance/art showcase where students can express their feelings/experiences, through an artform (specifically related to wellbeing).
3. Coffee mornings to increase engagement with PG students

4. Sign-posting campaign on mental-health/Welfare and isolation
5. Working with Charity Student Minds

Operations:

Events:

White City & Hammersmith Board Game Nights:

Initiated Board Game Nights as shared event between Hammersmith and White City Campus. First event at MSRH was held and was very successful in bringing communities together. Next event will be on Hammersmith Campus. This event will run monthly for the foreseeable future.

Postgraduate Leap Year Ball:

- To take place on 29th February at Stamford Bridge
- Sold out 3 weeks before event with 435 tickets sold
- Will have Pick 'n' Mix sweets, finger/buffet food, drink packages available, photobooth, photographer, DJ and band

h-bar pub quiz:

We have hosted multiple pub quizzes with more in the future planned.

h-bar:

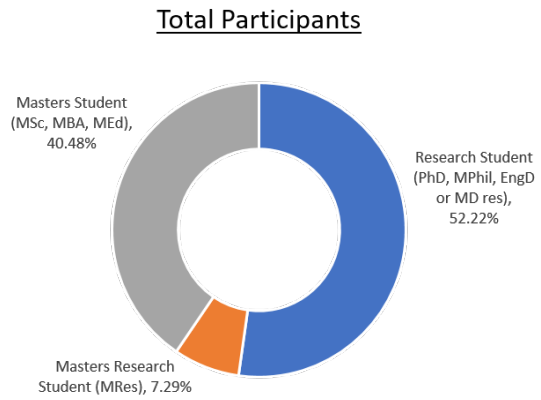
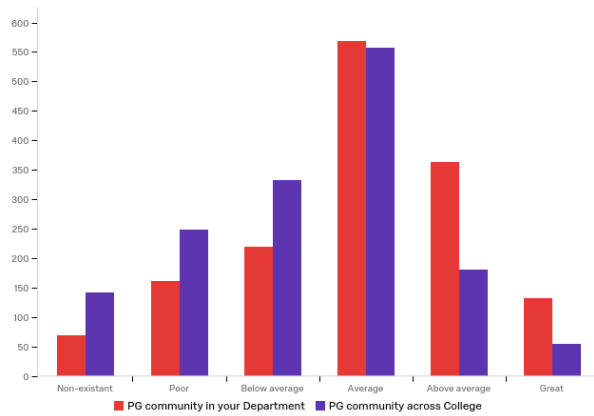
- Invited to meeting with campus services regarding h-bar
- Campus services want to work together to re-establish its purpose
- GSU suggest its purpose should be to facilitate PG and staff community building and multipurpose booths for informal work/meetings.
- GSU is to hold consultation with interested parties to include student groups, bar staff, university admin and academic staff.
- GSU and Campus services will work together with a proposal than benefits PG students and staff.

White City/Hammersmith Shuttle Bus:

- Insufficient number of seats and frequency causing issues for student and staff
- Continued to be raised from SSC's to faculty level
- Has been passed onto Campus services who pay for services, the issue being cost
- Campus services have reported that they will write a proposal for more funding to the president's board – waiting to hear an update

PG Community Survey:

- Active for 4 weeks (Dec 2019/Jan 2020)
- 1612 responses
- 985 comments received (120,000) on how to improve the community within college.
 - Four major themes identified:
 - Events (506)
 - Provisions available at all campuses (106)
 - Dedicated PG common space (236)
 - Social activities (137)
- 94% would welcome a PG community space



Proposal for PG Community Hub:

- Outcomes of the survey indicate the need for a PG community hub
- Written a proposal to College highlighting its need
- The purpose of a PG community hub will be to bring together students from across the college to be the focal point to build a vibrant community, support professional development and student well-being.
- The PG community hub will be the focal point for PG students in terms of providing professional development, as academic exchange, information and learning. The space will be used to celebrate postgraduate research and awards, developing a sense of pride, community and belonging. It will also showcase student work and achievements to external visitors to the College.