

Present:

Scrutiny Panel Members: Jamie Cox (JC), Shreya D (SD), Ellie Rose (ER)

Officers: Reeve Isaacs-Smith (RIS, Welfare & Community Officer), Acacia Matthews (AM, Guild President), Ness Chigariro (NC, Education Officer), Alice Liu (AL, International Officer), Ben Lockley (BL, Postgraduate Officer), Izzy Lawson (IL, Activities & Employability Officer).

In Attendance:

Guild Staff: Rozena Nadeem (RN, Democracy Coordinator), Scott Dawson (SD, Student Voice & Representation Manager)

Apologies:

Scrutiny Panel Members: Sarah Aray (SA), Rebecca Hudson (RH)

Officers: Florie Craddock (FC, Sports Officer)

Absence Without Apologies: N/A

Trigger/Content Warnings: Cost of living crisis, safety in Selly Oak, mental health, social media, dietary/food requirements, stabbing, knife crime, consent, modern slavery,

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| Panel Briefing 3:05pm - 3:10pm | The Panel were briefed. |
| Guild President 3:10pm- 3:25pm | AM arrived for panel session. JC: Question: Noted the positive social media work undertaken by AM. Asked if other officers were also able to do this? |

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| | <p>AM: AM noted it takes up to 30 minutes to complete each time and is a significant weekly time commitment. AM highlighted other officers didn't have these updates in their manifestos, but will encourage where possible.</p> <p>JC: Question: You talked about progress on the Democracy Review in your report. What parts have you been inputting into the Review?</p> <p>AM: AM noted they were on annual leave during most recent meetings. An external consultant is supporting the project and helping with consultations with both engaged and disengaged student groups for the review.</p> <p>JC: Question: Your work on the campus map is brilliant, as is your open door policy. How is the open-door policy being used?</p> <p>AM: Students are using the drop-ins. 3 students visited last week, although officer diaries made conversations difficult. Students were understanding of the busy nature of office diaries.</p> <p>JC: JC also noted the positive work around consent undertaken by AC.</p> <p>SD: Question: Do you have any feedback on the University Strategic Planning and Resource (SPRC) meetings and what your plans are for this?</p> <p>AM: AM noted they have worked closely with committee members and Chair of Council on this. The Vice Chancellor (VC) is interested in student perspective. Most recent discussions were on ethnicity and gender pay gap. AM raised that there should be more professors from diverse backgrounds up to a senior leadership level. The relationship with the VC has been positive so far.</p> <p>SD: Question: For the fossil fuel plan of action, is there any progress on this, in particular for students?</p> <p>AM: AM noted the money is invested in pool groups and then allocated to different groups and departments. The money is divested from fossil fuels – this will be built on further during Go Green Week.</p> |

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| | <p>SD: Question: Do you believe that the Safe Nights Out initiative has had an impact on students?</p> <p>AM: AM shared that up to 7000 personal safety alarms have been provided. Students have commented that Guild nights out are incredibly safe. AM notes work can still be done but highlighted positive work of Venues Team.</p> <p>ER: Question: How will you ensure all students and staff complete the consent course?</p> <p>AM noted that this is difficult, within halls there is currently an 80% completion rate for courses. It was highlighted that lack of completion could be brought up in reported cases.</p> <p>ER: Question: You mentioned that staff must also complete the course?</p> <p>AM: AM has encouraged and will work with future officers to encourage staff completion of the course.</p> <p>ER (on behalf of RH): Question: What is undertaken at Guild Finance Committee?</p> <p>AM: AM stated that the committee oversees Guild Finances, ensuring budgets and targets are met. There was a long-standing appeal with HMRC, and AM confirmed they were looking at that at the moment.</p> <p>AM and the Panel thanked each other.</p> <p>AM left the meeting.</p> |
| <p>Education Officer</p> <p>3:30pm-3:45pm</p> | <p>NC entered the meeting.</p> <p>JC: Question: What has been developed on the assessment and feedback methods work in the University?</p> |

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| | <p>JC: A comment alongside this question was also made to the success of NC recent hot chocolate stall events.</p> <p>NC: NC commented that they have been meeting regularly with the University on assessment and feedback issues. They and the Postgraduate Officer continue to push student perspective in these discussions.</p> <p>NC thanked the panel for the positive feedback on the Hot Chocolate Stalls.</p> <p>JC: Question: Have you made any plans on how to improve last Semester's Town Hall?</p> <p>NC: NC commented that this has been thought through as an officer team. The aim for the upcoming session is more likely to be a drop-in style event.</p> <p>JC: Question: How has the uptake of the Reps system been? I know you're using lanyards and hoodies, could Reps also have their own social media accounts?</p> <p>NC: NC highlighted this would be difficult due to there being over 1000 Student Reps, as well as increasing overall workload for those involved. Has been some consideration towards a Student Rep Facebook group.</p> <p>JC: Question: Societies vouchers sound great – how will this work and continue after your term is over?</p> <p>NC: NC presented this idea to the University and it has been taken forward by them. NC is optimistic this will be taken forward by the University next year.</p> <p>SD: Question: What is the Student Rep System Advisory Board (SRSAB)?</p> <p>NC: SRSAB is where the Guild and University make decisions on the Rep System and monitor Rep engagement and reward/recognition plans.</p> |

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| | <p>SD: Question: How will you deliver the Birmingham International Academy (BIA) Bingo event?</p> <p>NC: NC commented that there were wider issues with the BIA event which meant it could not be taken forward. There should be another event in the future.</p> <p>SD: Question: What is your next plan of action for the All Rounder Leadership Framework? What progress do you think will be made with it? (This is in reference to the University Graduate Attributes)</p> <p>NC: NC commented that the Graduate Attributes are skills students develop at the University to develop leadership and growth. These attributes should be included within coursework, assignments and volunteering opportunities. It is a University process.</p> <p>ER: Question: Great work on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission! The Rep Social is great idea and beneficial too. When will the new Rep recognition initiatives be implemented?</p> <p>NC: NC commented that the current goal is to get Rep T-shirts as a minimum and they are currently being designed. Rep of the Month started in January 2023 and this was also updated on at Guild Education Committee.</p> <p>ER: Question: What feedback did you get about the free hot chocolate?</p> <p>NC: Feedback from students was all very positive and appreciative of the effort.</p> <p>ER: Question: Would you do anything differently next time?</p> <p>NC: NC highlighted they would not run the event outside again during winter due to the cold, but otherwise it would remain as is.</p> <p>ER (on behalf of BH): Question: What plans do you have for next year's Black History Month?</p> |

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| | <p>NC: NC is working with Ethnic Minority Students Officer by recording content in advance for next October, to help support the new officers as it is a busy time of the year for them.</p> <p>NC and the Panel thanked each other.</p> <p>NC left the meeting.</p> |
| <p>Welfare & Community Officer</p> <p>3:40pm-3:55pm</p> | <p>RIS entered the meeting.</p> <p>JC: Question: How do you plan for the Community Pantry to continue in future years?</p> <p>RIS: RIS stated that they are looking into plans around sustainability at the moment. They are campaigning the University for more funding and highlighted supply chain issues around purchases for the pantry. RIS noted the guild is seeking best practice from other initiatives in the UK.</p> <p>JC: Question: Could you tell us more about the risks of students being involved with modern slavery, as I wasn't aware of this issue?</p> <p>RIS: RIS commented they are part of a national group which discusses modern slavery and its specific impact on international students. This covers going into employment without a contract and lower pay than should be expected.</p> <p>JC: Question: How are you addressing your manifesto for improving communications on safety in the Guild?</p> <p>RIS: RIS commented they are working on providing clear communications. They provided an example of bereavements and students/families needing to pay £40 for language translations. It was also highlighted that some medical documents for International students may not be accepted in the UK.</p> <p>JC: Question: How are you working to improve University Reasonable Adjustment Plan access and awareness to students who require them?</p> |

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| | <p>RIS: RIS is still working on this with the University, no significant update at this stage.</p> <p>SD: Question: Have you thought of ways of making the Community Pantry last longer, as initially the scheme was just for 6 months?</p> <p>RIS: RIS noted there are currently ongoing conversations with the University and Guild Staff Teams on options for long term funding.</p> <p>SD: Question: How will social media and the website be improved?</p> <p>RIS: RIS is working with the Guild Communications and Marketing Team around possible improvements.</p> <p>ER: Question: How will the Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAPs) communications be simplified? And how do you plan on doing this?</p> <p>RIS: RIS commented they would like to ensure there is consistency provided by the University Colleges. Such as through induction lectures. The panel also thanked RIS for their work in securing additional funding for the Pantry.</p> <p>ER: Question: How will the Selly Express be developed and expanded?</p> <p>RIS: RIS noted they are working with the Guild Senior Community Wardens Coordinator to look at possible routes. RIS aim is to conclude this prior to finishing in their role.</p> <p>ER (on behalf of BH): Question: What physical safety equipment is being updated?</p> <p>RIS: RIS noted that there has been wider local news around an increase in stabbings. RIS is investigating getting stab kits in the Guild, as well as defibrillators.</p> <p>ER (on behalf of BH): Question: Who makes up the Guild Cost of Living Working Group?</p> |

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| | <p>RIS: This is chaired by RIS and includes the Senior Voice Coordinator, Policy & Campaigns Coordinator, Guild CEO, Guild Advice and Communications & Marketing Team. It may also include Student Groups and Venues.</p> <p>RIS and the Panel thanked each other.</p> <p>RIS left the meeting.</p> |
| <p>Postgraduate Officer</p> <p>3:55pm-4:10pm</p> | <p>BL entered the meeting</p> <p>JC: Question: Positive to see development of a Postgraduate Society. . Are you planning for fee reimbursements because of UCU Strikes?</p> <p>BL: BL commented that the fee reimbursements is a campaign and therefore cannot be guaranteed. Education Officer and BL continue to lobby for this action to take place. University is yet to respond.</p> <p>JC: Question: How will you ensure that the PG Society continues after you finish?</p> <p>BL: BL is hoping to include this within the Democracy Review, with the Society ran by the Postgraduate Officer. BL noted PGT students who are only here for a year struggle to engage with the normal society format.</p> <p>JC: Question: Can you tell us more about the PG Buddy Scheme?</p> <p>BL: BL highlighted that they are working on safeguarding at the moment for the scheme and it will be in a position to develop further by February.</p> <p>SD: Question: Have you made plans for a Parent & Carer Network?</p> <p>BL: BL is hopeful this will launch before February. University staff are looking into how it can be promoted, it will run for a year initially. BL also noted that a third of Postgraduate Students have caring responsibilities and have encountered issues bringing their children</p> |

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| | <p>into the Library space. The impacted students have had an apology due to BL activity in this area.</p> <p>SD: Question: What does the buddy scheme entail and how have you ensured it will remain sustainable?</p> <p>BL: It's up to the University in terms of how it will develop and the activities that will progress because of it.</p> <p>BL: BL has spoken with the Graduate School about Postgraduate Engagement. It seems there will be a PG specific space within campus in the future. The barrier has been a lack of funding from the Grad School to progress this activity. BL has asked for support from the other officers to progress this project.</p> <p>ER (on behalf of BH): Question: Is there any more news on the Postgraduate Ball?</p> <p>BL: BL is currently still working on this; more information will be shared in the near future.</p> <p>.</p> <p>BL and the Panel thanked each other, and BL left the meeting.</p> |
| <p>International Officer</p> <p>4:25pm-4:43pm</p> | <p>AL entered the waiting room.</p> <p>The Panel asked AL how this week's Language Café event went. AL noted that it went very well and 300+ students attended.</p> <p>JC: Question: What are you doing to improve food diversity on campus?</p> <p>AL: AL is pushing the University to make this change, AL provided an example of sushi and noodles being provided now alongside paninis and sandwiches.</p> <p>JC: Question: It's been great to see the development of the Language Cafés, how did the Lunar New Year celebration go?</p> |

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| | <p>AL: AL noted it went well, with involvement from the Chinese Society. The venue was quite small and booked up quickly. There needs to be a discussion on how to both promote the event and if the event should be ticketed for next time.</p> <p>SD: Question: Has any progress happened on the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) to ensure it doesn't happen again?</p> <p>AL: AL reflected that it will probably be an issue again for next year, given international student numbers. AL has suggested that more digital solutions should be looked into by the University.</p> <p>SD: Question: Did the students find the pre-session courses inductions useful?</p> <p>AL: AL shared that they went well, with about 200 students engaging. AL also provided Guild contact details to this group. 30 students also reached out via Instagram to AL.</p> <p>ER: Question: How is your work with Dubai going?</p> <p>The panel also specifically thanked AL for her work in meeting the International Student Team and pursuing changes to their website.</p> <p>AL: AL commented that they have had meetings with the Student Leaders from Dubai Campus, specifically on activities they plan to run and overall student engagement. Another meeting will be scheduled in the near future.</p> <p>ER: Question: Is there any plan for the safety lecture to be recorded and put on Canvas for those who can't make it? If not, is it possible for it to be looked into?</p> <p>AL: AL noted they will ask the University to record it and place it on Canvas.</p> <p>ER commented even up to date information slides would be worthwhile.</p> |

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| | <p>ER: Question: Any progress on visa issues?</p> <p>AL: AL commented that they have spoken to the Director of Student Affairs regarding this. These meetings came about due to AL proactively visiting the International Student Team as they were not responding to AL follow up emails.</p> <p>AL and the Panel thanked each other.</p> <p>AL left the meeting.</p> |
| <p>Activities & Employability Officer</p> <p>4:50pm-5:06pm</p> | <p>IL entered the meeting.</p> <p>JC: Question: Well done on the clothes swaps idea. When will the next one take place?</p> <p>IL: IL noted another meeting will be a part of the University of Living Event and another shortly after as part of the Vintage Fair at the Guild.</p> <p>JC: Question: What type of clothing was involved?</p> <p>IL: IL highlighted it was mostly girly type clothing, alongside night out and fast fashion styles. IL said more could be done to get greater variety sized clothing for the event.</p> <p>JC: Question: How is the planning going for Grad Ball?</p> <p>IL: IL has met with Guild Venues Manager and Director of Engagement. Focus will be on more rides and spend less money around staging and tech. IL also looking to provide more food variety (Veggie/Vegan options) and photography. Due to inflation and current costs, tickets are likely to be around the same price. IIL noted communication needs to be better prior to the event, currently reviewing the title “Grad Ball” to something else, which may help with expectations.</p> <p>JC: Question: Will food prices be reduced in Joe’s bar?</p> |

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| | <p>IL: IL commented that there is a plan to have a February deal at Joe's, such as a £3 meal deal. This may be built on if successful.</p> <p>SD: Question: The clothes swap and initiatives on inclusivity are great. How much simpler will the digital handover be?</p> <p>IL: IL commented that digital handover will be in addition to pre-existing processes.</p> <p>ER: Question: What are you doing to discourage single-use plastic on club nights?</p> <p>IL: IL highlighted that this will need to be done across a 5-year plan. For items such as reusable plastic, dishwashers are needed to clean them – and this would need to match student demand. This impacts elements such as funding and space use. A large enough number of dishwashers could cost up to £20,000.</p> <p>ER: Question: Why did the accessible night out not happen?</p> <p>IL: IL was on sick leave at the time and officer capacity elsewhere was limited.</p> <p>ER (on behalf of BH): Question: Why do you think the 2nd Societies Night was unsuccessful?</p> <p>IL IL stated that the dates were agreed before they started. The event running after the Halloween weekend is difficult to promote. IL would like to run another one, but perhaps under a new name. This is looking to run on 20th March. The event itself for those who attended was still received well.</p> <p>ER (on behalf of BH): ER on behalf of BH commented that IL's initiatives were fantastic, but more detail on the initiatives would be helpful.</p> <p>IL and the Panel thanked each other.</p> <p>IL left the meeting.</p> |

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| 5:06pm- 5:07pm | The Panel were debriefed. |