

Medway Student Forum – Wednesday 17th February, 5pm – 7pm

Attendees: 12 students, 5 Union staff and 2 Full Time Officers

Students:

Brett Wade
Nathan Arnold
Luke Arscott
Abigail Hook
Alexander Hayton
Alexandra Reid-Hudson
Boluwatife Sowunmi
Carla Davey
Panagiot Chantzara
Tiffany Stark
Syed Mahmood
Joey MacNamara

Full Time Officers and Co-Chairs: Mayo Femi Obalemo and Aldo Manella

GKSU/KU/ GSU Staff:

Present were Claire Friday, Cat Dennis, Mark Heffernan, Tom Barrass and Sam Mujunga.

Agenda Item	Notes	Actions
Introduction on Teams	<p>Aldo thanked everybody for coming, introduced the meeting and explained Medway Student Forum process. He explained this is a safe space to raise issues, air your views and collectively work together to come up with solutions. All feedback will be collated and suggestions presented in order to help shape what you want Student Officers and GKSU to work on.</p> <p>Mayo advised students to visit www.gksu.co.uk/MedwayStudentForum to check out previous actions from the action log and progress report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aldo made people aware that staff do not have a right of reply here so not to direct your questions or statements towards them. Instead please direct them to the Full Time Officers as your student representatives.• He asked students to be respectful when speaking about things and try to provide balanced feedback.	Minutes to be circulated to all attendees within 5 working days

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff or officers will be involved as facilitators in the group discussions but won't be providing information or participating. We have a strict role as facilitators of the discussions. • Aldo outlined the agenda selection process. The way this meeting will work will firstly be a vote on Mentimeter about what students want to discuss. Students can vote for 3 topics they'd like to see officially raised and discussed in this meeting. We will aim to cover the top 3 few topics in today's meeting. If you are a Rep or Student Leader, try to choose topics that you know affects the students you represent. • Aldo explained that students will be invited to separate Teams meetings to do some group work. Everybody will receive an invite which will enable them to leave this main meeting and go into a group meeting for 10 minutes to discuss an issue and suggest proposed solutions. After a discussion in which key points are put in the chat, students should return. These discussions and suggestions for change will shape the minutes and used as actions for GKSU and the Full Time Officers. • Mayo – Once students have returned back to the main meeting, they will be asked to feedback to the wider group. After this, we will take on the topic with the next highest amount of votes and you will break back out into your smaller groups to repeat the process. In total, this will occur for a minimum of 3 topics and the event will generally take an hour. • All of the discussion topics will be typed up and passed onto the GKSU Team. Staff and Full Time officers will use this information and work on change for Medway. Some items that are discussed here may have to go to the University Unions to work on through their official structures (for wider University changes) 	
<p>Mayo Femi Obalemo (GSU Full</p>	<p>Mayo is currently working on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is working on a number of issues regarding student dissatisfaction at the moment. 	

Time Officer) Update		
Aldo Manella (KU Full Time Officer) Update	<p>Aldo is currently working on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student group refunds for Canterbury. (Medway have refunded all sports clubs.) • Lead Medway Kent officer induction for leadership candidates. • World fest planning and organisation for student group involvement. • Digital engagement survey to see what comments students have on our websites. 	
Main Agenda Item 1: Social Isolation and Mental Health and Wellbeing of students	<p>Social Isolation:</p> <p>Group A: Claire / Aldo and Mayo as Facilitators:</p> <p>When students struggle with isolation, they aren't necessarily in the right place to proactively seek support. Students who need help don't always ask for help. They don't have the same connection with peers because students can't see others – students engage less with their mics and cameras off.</p> <p>Students do care about how staff are feeling – they acknowledge that it's a mutually disagreeable situation for all.</p> <p>Students raised the issue that students need to be able to interact socially in groups – sports teams and faith groups. Can this be rolled out at SU's? (as people can still attend church in the wider community)</p> <p>Group B: Cat as Facilitator</p> <p>Students should be able to access peer to peer support. One student has a course which does this weekly and thinks this should be rolled out. It was also suggested that provision should be made on a weekend when there are no classes. International students who are living in the UK require more support. Suggested that Table Talk was promoted further. Students haven't been able to build relationships with classmates and more social interaction is needed.</p> <p>A student mentioned that Discord would be a suitable platform for this. Suggested GKSU should reach out to</p>	<p>GKSU to explore bringing back student activities in the physical form as early as possible.</p> <p>GKSU to advertise Discord so that students can chat to each other peer to peer.</p> <p>GKSU to encourage lecturers and departments to advertise both Discord and the Buddy Scheme so that students have peer to peer interaction and support.</p> <p>GKSU to suggest to the Universities to send out personalised</p>

	<p>students. Suggested that departments should send out personalised (addressed to the students) emails that are positive and inspirational.</p>	<p>emails at a department level.</p>
<p>Main Agenda Item 2: Online Teaching and Learning</p>	<p>Online Teaching and Learning</p> <p>Group A: Claire / Aldo and Mayo as Facilitators: Could have been doing Online University. The University could do better. Students feel like they are teaching themselves. Some staff aren't adequately trained in Teams and as such, they don't deliver good lectures. Business was considered poor – no live lectures whereas Finance (from the same school) was really good and interactive.</p> <p>Digital poverty impacts students who can't access the library.</p> <p>Some students believed students have to take responsibility and adapt to the new changes – he did a placement and it's exactly the same at work. This is the 'new norm' and people need to accept that.</p> <p>Students struggle with the same four walls being used for studying, relaxing, sleeping.</p> <p>Group B: Cat as Facilitator Negatives: Unable to engage with recorded classes, can't ask questions in the moment. Easy to get distracted. Student parents struggle with attending long lectures 2-3 hours is too much with childcare responsibilities. Students with ADHD struggle with a 3 hour lectures. 9-7pm lectures (engineering) is too long. Accessibility for students who have a difficult home life or no internet.</p> <p>Positives: Can pause and refer back, some lecturers encourage questions.</p> <p>No disconnect from work and home, need a separate work space and need study groups and interactions</p>	<p>The University needs to offer training to all staff and outline some standards – like live lectures and interaction in sessions for those students that choose to engage with them. Pre-recorded sessions need to stay as an option for students that can't access live (time differences, child caring responsibilities, disabilities).</p> <p>The University needs to consider students with protected characteristics when timetabling and outlining expectations so that these students aren't further disadvantaged.</p>

<p>Main Agenda Item 3: University Management</p>	<p>University Management</p> <p>Group A: Claire / Aldo and Mayo as Facilitators:</p> <p>Understand that different staff and departments have different remits and chains of command. Are usually referred onto the right person.</p> <p>Students told they had to come to the UK, spent hundreds on flights, then after an update from government, the students that couldn't get to the UK had equipment posted to them.</p> <p>Students do appreciate that the University gets 10-minute advance warning on government announcements.</p> <p>Group B: Cat as Facilitator</p> <p>Students in Social Work - they need a letter for a Covid job but University didn't know – they need clearer guidance.</p> <p>During the first lockdown, there wasn't enough outreach from the University – especially to international students.</p> <p>Students have unanswered questions about opening back up campus.</p> <p>Don't understand why attendance is compulsory at the time slot, it should be that they access the content. Unfair to students across the world in different time zones.</p> <p>A master's student flagged that they needed to pay a deposit prior to registration. But in order to get their MA loan they had to register first. This is a process that really doesn't work.</p>	<p>University communications need to make allowances for Covid.</p> <p>Course requirements need to be given suitable considerations with the ongoing pandemic situation.</p>
<p>Main Agenda Item 3: Tuition Fee Refund</p>	<p>Tuition Fee Refunds</p> <p>Group A: Claire / Aldo and Mayo as Facilitators:</p> <p>Students feel it's unfair that they can't use the library or Nelson IT lab.</p> <p>A student gave an example where wasted seminars meant he essentially wasted £50-£100 because no</p>	<p>There should be a clear process so that students know how to complain and ask for refunds. They wanted GKSU to help</p>

	<p>students could access the content in advance. They wanted to complain and ask for a refund but this involved having a meeting with the Director of Studies and they didn't want to jeopardise their relationship with the University.</p> <p>Some students acknowledge that they have paid for an education / degree and they are getting it – just not delivered in the way they anticipated initially.</p> <p>Group B: Cat as Facilitator Students are paying for labs they can't access (particularly international students). They aren't able to access equipment and so should be entitled to some refund.</p> <p>The delivery of education is subpar but students are unsure how to protest about this.</p> <p>Some students have 'given up on the idea of refunds'</p> <p>Some students wanted a breakdown of fees from the University. They felt they have a right to transparency. The need to have the information in order to know what to protest. Students acknowledged fees cover staff wages, equipment, software, site rent, amenities and maintenance.</p>	<p>advertise this to students.</p> <p>Students wanted a breakdown of fees so they have the transparency on what they should ask for refunds for.</p>
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Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 5th May 2021, 5pm – 7pm