

Medway Student Forum – Wednesday 21st October

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

Students:

- Carl Troiza
- Christine Bishop (sent apologies)
- Dave A Campbell-Walters
- Elizabeth Aladefa
- Emmanuel Odunaike
- Jaisal Tanna
- James Bray
- Kyra Daini
- Lelde Spure
- Olaoluwakitan Ariyo
- Oluwatomisin Ilori
- Priyanka Aulakh
- Sophie Saint-Firmin

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 (shared screen to show Medway Student Forum Infographic)	<p>Aldo introduced the meeting and explained Medway Student Forum process. He then showed the Medway Student Forum Infographic. 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 in order to help shape what you want Student Officers and GKSU to work on.</p> <p>Discussions are used as a consensus building process explained</p> <p>Mayo 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. She asked students to be respectful when speaking about things and try to provide balanced feedback. Staff or us officers will be involved as facilitators in the group discussions but</p>	Minutes to be circulated to all attendees within 5 working days

won't be providing information or participating. We have a strict role as facilitators of the discussions.

Mayo 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,

If actions drafted by the Assembly require approval, an online vote will take place after the meeting.

Aldo explained that students will be invited to separate Teams meetings to do some group work. Everybody will receive an invite in which will enable them to leave this main meeting and go into a group meeting for 10 minutes to discuss an issue. After a discussion in which key points are put in the chat, students should return. So in the chat, firstly you would write what the issue is, then discuss it and write down key issues or notes surrounding the subject. Hopefully following the discussion, you will as a group be able to come up with some proposed actions that you think would Students Agenda items provide a question needs discussions to form actions to be taken forward – please ensure these recommendations are written in the chat function. These 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.

Following this Student Forum, in the event that actions are unclear or there is a split of student opinion about what the next step should be (is more information required), students in a rep role will be contacted to vote on issues about what the next steps are.

	<p>Safe space policy announced and procedure that staff are not accountable. Role of staff was facilitators explained. Students asked to be respectful and balanced with feedback.</p> <p>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>	
<p>Mayo Femi Obalemo (GSU Full Time Officer) Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have worked on Black History Month programme across the 3 campuses focusing on Black Excellence 	
<p>Aldo Manella (KU Full Time Officer) Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medway’s student voice to be upheld with a lead medway/ full time medway officer to be present in the years to follow. • For BAME and LGBT+ events to be promoted and shared all year round rather than just in their respective liberation months. • Social media and marketing to be consistently good and on platforms that students care about. (note that medway are already fantastic at this) 	
<p>Main Agenda Item 1: Transport around Medway</p>	<p>Travel / Transport Around Medway:</p> <p>Group A: Cat as Facilitator: Commuters/students have to £25 year to pay for parking. One student felt this was expensive</p> <p>Some people live too close to get a permit but still need to drive because they are uncomfortable using public transport (with the Covid).</p> <p>Kent shuttle: Generally, the Kent shuttle is a good service / usually on time. Did outline that the shuttle evening service is limited.</p> <p>Not everybody used the local Arriva general Medway buses. Most stuff in walking distance for students - walk to station.</p> <p>Group B: Aldo as Facilitator</p>	<p>GKSU to speak with University of Kent Parking to see whether they will offer more permits to students for this year so less students have to use public transport.</p> <p>GKSU to feed back to the University of Kent that more information is needed when expecting students to</p>

	<p>The group also discussed the timing of the buses, Parking & permits</p> <p>Group C: Mayo as Facilitator Discussed transport around Medway. Explained that with the local buses, there used to be issues with buses from Liberty Quays accommodation – they didn't show up, late, unreliable and students were late to lecture because of it. This affected a lot of people and cost money – but they were unsure if this is still the case</p> <p>A Greenwich student said that though students can purchase yearly tickets, there isn't the quality of a regular bus service</p> <p>Students questioned whether the frequency of the buses is enough. Students said some arrived at the same time so it would be sensible to break them up – so business students on dockyard and then some to main campus</p> <p>Group D: Claire as Facilitator Students said that the Walk is 45 minutes from Pier Quays to Business School and coaches only run hourly</p> <p>Some students wanted a more frequent and environmentally friendly transport system for students</p> <p>Some students said it would be useful to know what the local bus service routes were – more information about Arriva</p> <p>Students said that navigating around the DockYard is really hard at first. Much better signage is needed and more information should be sent out in induction about how to get to the individual buildings.</p> <p>One student didn't know about the free campus shuttle that University of Kent students can use at all even though she lives at Pier Quays</p>	<p>attend classes on the Dock Yard.</p>
<p>Main Agenda Item 2: Mental Health and Library Hours</p>	<p>Mental Health and Library Hours</p> <p>Group A: Cat as Facilitator: The Pier Quays Accommodation wifi is really poor quality and just can't cope with the load (this is a really big issue!)</p>	<p>GKSU to get in contact with the University of Kent and raise this as an issue and request that Pier Quays improves</p>

	<p>Accommodation is loud and hard to work in Some people don't have access to computer facilities from home.</p> <p>So the library being open longer is really important. It's open 24 hours in Canterbury. Going to a library can be a relief - especially while working from home all the time, it's a break from that. Better for mental health.</p> <p>There are no group spaces in the library, yet students are desperate to socialise. Students are having to try and find spaces which actually could encourage students to engage in non covid secure spaces.</p> <p>Students don't all know how to access mental health support / counselling. Those who do, say there's a long waiting list.</p> <p>There should be more wellbeing events - university and union should offer more and not just during Welcome</p> <p>Societies are more active in Canterbury. Need more active societies in Medway. It's not fair to expect people to commute to the main campuses to get involved in activities.</p> <p>Can feel excluded when only working online. Need more interactive software. It would be good for people to put cameras on and get to know each other.</p> <p>Students are stuck in and can't socialise - Pier Quays' wifi cuts out so students are missing out on lectures and international students can't call family. Students feel that they are having to continually rejoin meetings and reconnect. They are finding it difficult to unwind.</p> <p>Students are struggling do regular meet ups and can't get to know people as well so want to reach out to people from home. Students are saying that they find evenings are especially difficult.</p> <p>Group B: Aldo as Facilitator</p> <p>Mental health issues are really prominent. One student went to personal tutor, was then referred on to student</p>	<p>the quality and speed of wifi.</p> <p>GKSU to work with Drill Hall library to send out some better communications with students about the library hours</p> <p>GKSU to approach Drill Hall to request an Update Google with the correct Library Opening Hours</p> <p>GKSU to contact University of Kent and Greenwich to ask the wellbeing departments what activities are running and to promote these to their students.</p> <p>GKSU to get involved in the next University Mental Health Week</p> <p>GKSU to recommend that the Universities make it mandatory for personal tutors / academic advisors to do regular check ins</p>
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	<p>services. She felt that the department just referred again to GP.</p> <p>Workshops where students don't turn on mics are difficult – students feel that this is needed for social interaction</p> <p>Students have said that it is really difficult not knowing how to go about things online. Thankfully academic advisors have helped students to settle in and things are becoming clearer and easier.</p> <p>Another student said that mental health was a big issue for her but she did not know where to go or who to talk to about it. She spoke to Academic Advisor and she signposted her to the wellbeing department but she personally felt as though they were quite dismissive and just told me to see my GP. Especially in this season that we are in, with students being stuck in rooms and not going out, it was suggested that check ins by Academic Advisors be conducted for their groups just to make sure people are doing alright etc.</p> <p>Group C: Mayo as Facilitator</p> <p>Pier Quays wifi is really bad. The impact on people's mental health is being affected by it. Students are having to take off video options to try and mitigate the impact of it.</p> <p>People can't call back home which is bad for isolation</p> <p>There are no group spaces in the library and students are desperate to socialise. As a result, students are having to try and find spaces which actually could encourage students to engage in non covid secure spaces.</p> <p>Group D: Claire as Facilitator</p> <p>Students didn't even know that the library was going to be open to study but are really pleased that the library is open</p> <p>Many students are unaware of what the library hours are and felt there needed to be better communications about the library hours</p>	<p>with their students.</p> <p>GKSU to work on finding students Covid secure spaces to conduct group work in.</p>
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<p>Main Agenda Item 3: Students being included in Online Learning</p>	<p>Students being included in Online Learning</p> <p>Group A: Cat as Facilitator Students felt it should be compulsory to have camera on (feels more face to face) - except that wifi issues make that hard!</p> <p>One example of a seminar where no one has camera on - it's self-perpetuating so no one talks!</p> <p>Suggested ways to counter this: Speed meeting - 5 mins to get to know everyone in a seminar. Would be harder for larger groups/courses. Should have done this to start with as first meeting. Ice breaker ideas: 2 truths 1 lie Introduce yourself to a partner, who then introduces you to the class</p> <p>Societies should be the bridge for students.</p> <p>Students said that students at Pier Quays miss Cargo</p> <p>University needs to do a lot more for mental health.</p> <p>Students said that Medway feels like a 'Poor Man's Canterbury'</p> <p>Societies should go across them and intermingle.</p> <p>Group B: Aldo as Facilitator Students wanted lecturers to do more group activities in seminars to allow students to build stronger ties</p> <p>Academics not to pressure students to have cameras on due to anxiety and other associated mental health considerations. Students generally felt that (due to Covid) it is understandable that it is harder to interact and become invested and engaged with their courses right now.</p> <p>Group C: Mayo as Facilitator</p>	<p>GKSU to relay this feedback to the University of Kent and Greenwich to help generate some best – practice in seminars and lectures to encourage student participation. This needs to occur ASAP and before new modules are started in Term 2.</p> <p>GKSU to promote student group activity and events more widely on its socials so students have more opportunities to engage and socialise with others.</p> <p>GKSU to promote the new Buddy Network via its' socials. GKSU to work with the Universities and the Network Chair to do some proactive work to</p>

	<p>Students said that they had to do ice breakers in Year 1 and this should be happening now. What Universities should have done this year is to allocate 2 minutes to do a speed meeting to help people open up. 25 people in a seminar, 2 talk, 1 person has their camera on.</p> <p>Group D: Claire as Facilitator</p> <p>Students living in halls or in Medway are quite isolated whereas those that are working remotely and are with their family are probably experiencing less isolation and anxiety</p> <p>Students are struggling with lack of freedom which can be detrimental to students' overall mood and well-being.</p> <p>The University should put in more measures for students to be able to be social and safe</p> <p>A student mentioned that she thought there was a Buddy System.</p> <p>A student gave an example of arriving 1 month ago and had to self-isolate which was a really strange experience and quite unpleasant.</p> <p>Students expressed that they struggle with putting their cameras on and that most people don't put them on. Students said that they don't participate in lectures / seminars because they feel awkward. Students outlined that the rapport has been lost with online teaching. When lecturers ask question in seminars, there's an awkward silence and people don't contribute or that it's the same 2-3 students that do participate.</p> <p>One student said there was a very brief ice-breaker but everybody kept their cameras and microphones off. Also people don't go to every seminar meaning they could have missed it – people don't know each other.</p> <p>There was a discussion to say that students really need break out rooms - in the one module this happens for, people participate. But big group seminars are too daunting.</p>	<p>reach out to students who may feel isolated and encourage students to join the Buddy Network so that students have that option to engage with others.</p>
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	<p>One student said that her course was the exception – she has 4 on campus courses a week as they need to do in studio work so these issues don't affect her so much.</p> <p>Students also said that they have lost the ability to just ask a question of a lecturer by there not being immediate communication. Can't just grab a lecturer after the session either – they have to book a Microsoft Teams meeting.</p>	
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Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 17th February 2021, 5pm – 7pm