**AHSS PGR College Forum Meeting Minutes – 28th April 2021 at 2pm**

**Attendees**

**Staff:**

Jane Chukwu (JC) - VP Postgraduate

Annabel Hurst (AH)- Head of Catering and Foodservices, Estate and Facilities

Hannah Fatkin (HF) - Student Voice Coordinator

Martha Ashford (MA) - AHSS Library Team Leader

Paul Jones (PJ) - IT Service Manager

Rob Gossedge (RG) - AHSS Postgraduate Dean

Sian Lewis (SL) - AHSS Education Manager

**Students:**

Debbie Cabral - ENCAP

Hanna Marie Pageau (HMP) - SHARE

John Peirce - CARBS

John Poole - CARBS

Josie Cray (JCR) - ENCAP

Samta Marwaha - CARBS

Yundong Luo - CARBS

**Apologies**:

Jane Harding – Student Adviser

Ani Saunders - GEOPL

Dewi Alter - WELSH

Nia Rees - GEOPL

JC welcomes everyone and opens the meeting.

PJ states there are no specific updates from IT but has to leave at 3pm so is happy to take any questions now.

JCR asks for an update on doctoral affiliation. PJ responds there have been lots of discussions about keeping students’ @cardiff email addresses and access to the associated apps and services. It has been agreed that, once they have completed their Viva, PGR students looking to continue with a career in academia will be offered a new status in SIMS where they are offered a one-year extension to access to their @cardiff email and all services, including library e-journals. There is a risk this could breach licencing agreements but it has been agreed with Tracey Stanley (Director of Library Services) that there is a low risk because of the low numbers involved and that any access wouldn’t be for commercial use and would be for academic use only. For alumni, PJ has started a project to review what services can be offered to alumni, using email addresses different to @cardiff. Alumni would be able to access less than the ‘Bridging Postdoc’. There will be a meeting with Registry w/c 10th May to look at the ‘Bridging Postdoc’ idea.

JCR asks whether bridging postdoc will be applied retroactively to students who have already completed. PJ responds the scheme is for students who want to get a postdoc position and it will allow those students to continue research while trying to apply for postdocs, so it would not be appropriate for it to be retroactively applied. JCR asks whether students who completed their Viva in March would be able to use it. PJ responds that those students would have access to it. HMP asks to clarify whether it is the date of completion of the Viva or whether it’s the date of acceptance of corrections. PJ responds it will be the after the date of acceptance of corrections and that students would then offered the new status for the year.

JC comments that at the last forum there was mention of extended library hours for PG students to study. JC says this has been discussed with the library team and but is not sure if it will be possible with the new system. Library hours have already been extended from 2 hours to 3 hours. There is also the Study Caffi in the SU available 9am-6pm where students can stay for longer. JCR comments that the most students have said the 3 hour cap is okay if that’s the most that can be offered.

MA updates that there have been enquiries with the Customer Services Manager (Helen) about extending beyond 3 hours. At the moment, the library must close for an hour at lunch time to allow for ventilation and cleaning. This would also have to apply to any extended opening hours which is why there is the current 3 hour cap. However, this is always under review and can be reviewed if the guidance changes.

JC asks for update from RG about marking. JCR also asks for an update about tutor contracts.

RG responds there have been two more meetings looking at contracts, sick pay, maternity leave etc.. There is another meeting lined up for two weeks time. JC and RG have separately agreed to meet with other people who have raised concerns over last few years. There are some actions that can be picked up slightly quicker this way through individual schools rather than the wider institutional position on contracts. RG comments there are some short-term things they can do that will probably have a more lasting benefit.

RG has also heard from Salaries and, since the move to remote working, none of the PG tutors have received a statement unless they have requested one directly. All PG tutors are being added to core HR for the purposes of being able to receive statements. RG doesn’t know when deadline for bringing tutors on will be – it will probably be in place for next academic year.

JC asks for an update from AH. AH states that not much has changed since last time. The John Percival café has opened but is takeaway only until they can have seating inside but there are benches out in the courtyard. International students arriving from ‘amber’ listed countries who need to isolate can fill in separate form not on SIMS to let the university know when they are arriving and where they are living. AH stresses the importance of making sure this form is filled in correctly. The support was originally only for students in Cardiff University residences and some local private residences but this has now been opened to all students living within a 2 mile radius of main building. Students can also apply to have the costs of their Covid tests reimbursed and for financial help towards food. Click and Deliver and credits will continue until June. They are aware of PG students who may still be in Cardiff over the summer and if they have credit left in their account, these students can flag it up and AH will find out if the university can extend it.

JC asks for an update from MA. MA comments there is no specific update. Further to HMP’s previous enquiry about PGR study carrels, this is unable to be offered at the moment for various health and safety reasons, social distancing and equity of service to all students.

JCR raises an issue from the SSP about problems with the Welsh translation service and students doing research with schools that require some documents to be bilingual. When students go to the translation service with ethics forms or questionnaires for translation, they are being told the service is at capacity and is unable to translate their documents. Instead, students are having to pay £150 + VAT to get it done privately. JCR goes on to ask if there could be an option for an in-school or in-college translator for PGR students doing front facing work in community, especially as Cardiff is pushing research in the community and has bilingual standards. Although these students were funded and able to get the money back, other students who are unfunded in the future may have to pay out of pocket if the service is unavailable at peaks.

RG will raise this issue with Huw Williams (Dean for Welsh). It might be linked to programme costs in the same way as consumables need to be costed for students working in labs. Supervisors would be expected to give advice on it. The translation service is at capacity and has been for a while. Huw Williams is keen on supporting PGR students in terms of the wider Welsh language strategy and particularly wants it to be made as relevant as possible to PGR students and this would be an ideal opportunity. Coleg Cymraeg is about to appoint a project officer who may be able to do some work on this. It couldn’t be at a school level as there wouldn’t be the budget for it and probably not at a college level either but Coleg Cymraeg might be good place. RG will pick it up with Huw Williams and keep JCR in the loop.

JC mentions that HMP discussed Welfare in the previous meeting. HMP responds that they haven’t responded. JC asks HMP to send a follow-up email and copy JC in. HMP states there has been an email from DSA about £350 to spend on a particular website but won’t reimburse anything spent on the website in the last 16 months. HMP adds that at least this was given to both UG and PG students.

JC states that the John Smith [the website disabled students were given £350 for] message was well received by students. Things such as opticians or dentists are not covered by this but students can also apply for the Covid support. Student Support have talked about the Covid support attached to it and students are also entitled to £350 which can also help. This funding is quite flexible and you don’t need any financial evidence, just explain why need it. JCR adds it was a really quick process which took 5 minutes and got £350 in 20 working days. HMP agrees.

HMP states she received £2000 less this semester because of the exchange rate. HMP was told to apply for financial relief fund but £350 is not enough. HMP doesn’t think anyone present will have solution, but it might become a problem with other international PGs and JC/RG should be aware. The current solution is to apply Covid fund because students are not eligible for other support. JC comments that financial support can geared towards anything such as rent or medical but is not for helping to reduce tuition fees.

JC states they need to have understanding about best way to give support to all students. There is an ongoing campaign about tuition fees within the SU and in affiliation with other unions as it is issue that most students have had all through the year. JC hopes there will be something for home students but there haven’t been discussions about international students yet. There has been a petition going round and all students are encouraged to sign it.

JC provides an update from the SU that the Enriching Student Life Awards (ELSAs) are now live. ESLAs give an opportunity to recognise staff or students who have been particularly helpful or supportive and have gone above and beyond. HF shares a link in the chat for finding out more about the ESLAs and to nominate: https://www.cardiffstudents.com/your-voice/academic-reps/eslas/

JC continues to update that the AGM started yesterday (Tuesday 28th May) and there will be another one on Friday. Yesterday’s meeting was more about the accountability and operation of the SU. Friday’s meeting will be more about interacting with the officers and asking questions.

JC states there will be a PGR awareness campaign coming up this week. It will be applicable to PGR students who teach and will also educate students on what it is like to be a PGR student starting a PhD and what graduate demonstrators do. It will be a chance to highlight the distinction between taught students and research students and will be an opportunity for PGR students to get to know their rights. Student Advice will take on any complaints/feedback. JC encourages students to get in contact with Student Advice about any issues relating to Code of Conduct and any other feedback or problems in general.

JC adds that it used to be possible to provide food at the Study Caffi but they can’t because of restrictions. Students are free to bring their own food and snacks but no alcohol.

RG concludes that PG tutors will be discussed as a separate item. RG encourages students to continue raising issues with Jane and the team and also with RG.

JC adds that students can send comments to the student reps email so Student Voice get to see things.

JC thanks everyone for attending and ends the meeting.