**Oxford SU Student Council Minutes (Draft)**

Date: 25/04/23  
Time: 17:30  
Venue: 4 Worcester Street and Online

Chair: Yasmin Poole, Wadham College

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| Present | Michael-Akolade Ayodeji, President  Anna-Tina Jashapara, VP Charities and Community  Shreya Dua, VP Graduates (joined later)  Grace Olusola, VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities (joined later)  Yasmin Poole, Wadham, Chair  Gabriel Lazar, Mansfield, Returning Officer, Suspended Students’ Campaign Co-Chair  Bella Done, Hertford, LGBTQ+ Campaign Co-Chair  and other Council Members |
| Apologies | Jade Calder, VP Access and Academic Affairs |
| Absent | MPLS Undergraduate Divisional Rep  MPLS Postgraduate Divisional Rep |

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| In Attendance |  |

# Welcome

The Chair welcomed all those present and reminded members the meeting was being recorded.

RECEIVED

# Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting

No issues or matters were raised.

Approved

# Elections in Council

The Returning Officer stated there were no elections in Council and noted nominations for campaign by-elections were open.

# Sabbatical Trustees’ Reports

The Chair noted reports and other papers could be found online.

## President

The President did not submit a written report. He gave a verbal report:

* They have been away recently.
* The Oxford Period (a campaign for colleges and departments to provide sanitary products): working on research on costs, sources, environmental implications.
* Vacation Residence: with Class Act, working on vacation residence for care leavers and estranged students and what Oxford can do collectively.
* SU Governance: Setting up for next year and working to improve student engagement.
* UCU: Communications, ensuring disruption for students not too great and pressuring Vice Chancellor.

Niall Pearson-Shaul (Merton) asked for detail about Trustee Board work. The President replied that they have been looking at the Returning Officer’s reports, evidence from elections and referendum, and trying to find reasons for poor student engagement. They were working on new SU strategy with in-depth workshops with Common Room Presidents and the University amongst others, and changing the way the SU operates to make it more student led and considering students’ perceptions.

Received

## Vice-President (Activities and Community)

The VP summarised their written report, and noted:

* The Sustainability Tracker was now available on the website.
* The Keep Campsfield Closed Open Letter for heads of colleges, academics, societies and common rooms has been released, and they were encouraging Common Rooms to pass motions to push colleges. This was pressing, since the Government wants to approve the detention centre by end of year.
* BOGOF Food Bank: Following success last year, working on collaboration with Cambridge SU for towards end of term. They were collecting students in each college to get involved.
* Cycle Safety Charter by University was being taken to Environment RepCom. The VP appealed for anyone interested to get involved.

Received

## Vice-President (Welfare and Equal Opportunities)

The VP gave a verbal report:

* Arts Week: will be writing a report.
* Race Equality Training Survey: analysing responses and looking at writing new training with help of incoming Sabbs.
* Bodleian Writing Competition: celebrating winners and writers, this Saturday.
* Welfare Training: Will be piloted towards end of term, inviting welfare reps to comment.

Received

## Vice-President (Graduates)

The VP did not submit a written report and was not present at the beginning of the meeting to give a verbal report.

## Vice-President (Access and Academic Affairs)

The VP did not submit a written report and was not present (with apologies) to present a verbal report.

# Campaign Reports

## Suspended Students’ Campaign

Gabriel Lazar (Co-Chair) summarised the written report. In the report, ‘Standing Committee’ should read ‘Steering Committee’. They noted the Standalone Pledge ‘got lost’ during Covid.

## LGBTQ+ Campaign

Bella Done (Co-Chair) summarised the written report.

The VP (Charities & Community) asked about approaches to making SU space ‘cooler’, suggesting books or a ‘queer corner’. The Co-Chair agreed that might be cool.

Received

# Divisional Representative Reports

## MPLS Undergraduate

The MPLS (Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences) Undergraduate Divisional Representative was not present and did not provide a written report.

## MPLS Postgraduate

The MPLS Postgraduate Divisional Representative was not present and did not provide a written report.

# Returning Officer’s Reports

## Elections Report

The former Returning Officer (Joe Bell, Merton) directed members to the written report which was available online. They highlighted the disappointing turnout numbers, and their recommendations.

Niall Pearson-Shaul (Merton) asked whether a reply had been received from the Board. The former Returning Officer replied they had not and were not necessarily expecting one. The VP (Charities & Community) stated the Board had discussed the reports.

## Referendum Report

The Returning Officer directed members to the written report which was available online.

# NUS Delegates’ Report

Luda Di Bona (St. Hilda’s, NUS Delegate) had submitted a report but it was not available online. They noted the process was unclear. They summarised their section of the report:

* They attended the 2-day conference in Harrogate in person, despite the SU’s original decision. The SU’s delegates got to take part in decision-making workshops and had a great voice.
* Day 1: various policy development workshops. Most delegates discussed education policy, by recommending amendments to already drafted policy.
* Day 2: Debate around initial proposals and amendments. All amendments and policies passed (information on NUS website). Voted in elections to committees.
* They would try to reach out and list delegates’ voting records.

Niall Pearson-Shaul (Merton) asked whether the agenda included discussions on antisemitism. The NUS Delegate that all present Oxford delegates attended a drop-in session. The Acting President, VP Liberation (of the NUS) and various NUS employees discussed the investigation, which was reasonably productive but legal reasons prevented some discussions relating to dismissal of the ex-President, who sued the NUS after the conference. The delegate thought the mood amongst delegates involved anger on both sides; some believed the NUS should not have dismissed ex-President, some thought NUS was too slow in acting. Most delegates agreed NUS taking positive steps and on-track to implement the Tuck recommendations along the deadlines. In terms of disaffiliation, several Sus have held referendums, and most have remained affiliated (at least 5-6).

Bella Done (LGBTQ+ Campaign Co-Chair) noted the SU and Campaigns got an email from Jewish Students for Justice, making some suggestions for holding the NUS accountable beyond referendum. The suggestions included demanding the NUS

* hosts an annual Holocaust Memorial Day event
* recognise Jewishness as a faith
* re-establish ARAF (Anti-Racism Anti-Fascism) Committee with Jewish representation
* provide Kosher food
* seek advice from other (Jewish representing) organisations than UJS (Union of Jewish Students).

The Delegate said it would be a good idea to record these for the next Delegates. Joe Bell (Merton) offered help in writing a motion to make SU Policy.

# Items for Resolution

## Working Group Rule Change Recommendations

Joe Bell (Merton) proposed the motion, summarising it. Gabriel Lazar (Mansfield, Returning Officer) seconded it.

There was no opposition, and the Chair allowed the motion to pass, in the following form:

**Council Notes:**

1. It established the Working Group on SU Rules in Hilary Term, to produce proposals for amendments to the Bye-Laws and Regulations, and rules, by the first meeting of Trinity.
2. The Working Group’s report (available), containing a set of proposed amendments to the Bye-Laws and Regulations, which include
   1. various formal changes to improve clarity,
   2. formalising the Board-imposed 4% quorum for binding Referendums,
   3. giving Council the power to set its own quorum (and procedure) and the duties of the Scrutiny Committee, and expanding Scrutiny Committee to at least 3 students, with at least one Graduate,
   4. a prescribed procedure for annual Student Members’ Meetings, including the required approval of affiliations with External Organisations,
   5. replacing vague campaign election rules with clearer Campaign appointment provisions, which require the election of the (co-)Chairs,
   6. when there is no Returning Officer, having a member of the Election Committee take over political elements of the role, as opposed to a Sabbatical Trustee, and
   7. formally specifying that there should be 3 Student Trustees and setting a deadline for By-elections.
3. Amendments to the Bye-Laws and Regulations require approval by Council at two successive meetings.

**Council Believes:**

1. The proposals are sensible and will improve governance and procedural clarity at the SU.

**Council Resolves:**

1. To approve the proposed amendments of the report in full.

RESOLVED

## Project: The Education Audiocast

The Proposer was absent. The Chair summarised the motion and noted the £200 request was absent from the agenda. Niall Pearson-Shaul proposed the motion.

There was no opposition, and the Chair allowed the motion to pass, in the following form:

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this project is to provide a platform for expert speakers to share research-based advice and practical recommendations on supporting children’s learning and development.

Scientific and theoretical research has established the importance of the early years of a child’s life, highlighting it as a critical window for parents, educators, and policymakers to facilitate a healthy foundation of skills and knowledge for lifelong learning and success. Contrary to scientific research, early childhood education remains an undervalued and equally underfunded sector here in England. Sadly, this is also reflected in the public’s attitude, with data suggesting that nearly 70% of adults (n=3,733) do not recognise early years as the most critical time for a child’s learning and development (Beaver, et al., 2020)1. This research, supported by The Royal Foundation, emphasises the need to raise awareness in the public consciousness, and one of the recommendations are to disseminate research on the primacy of early years to the public, specifically to carers and future carers. This is exactly what this project aims to do.

Since dedicating the past five years to studying the field of education and qualifying as an early years educator, I learnt to recognise the importance of early childhood education, and why research-informed discussions need to be facilitated to inform parents, future parents, and the general public on how to better support children’s learning during these critical years of development. Throughout my short time here at Oxford’s Department of Education, I was privileged to meet and be taught by leading thinkers and researchers in the field via lectures, workshops, and seminars. However, after listening to rigorous and rich research data, I always found myself asking what could be done with this knowledge to help parents and educators improve their daily practice for the betterment of children’s learning. This reflection inspired me to start this podcast project, with the aim of inviting leading thinkers, professors, and researchers to answer the question, “What Now?”, and provide listeners from around the world with insight into what the research says and what could be done to support children with various learning and developmental needs.

Firstly, this project aims to raise awareness regarding the critical importance of early childhood education and its fundamental value in children’s academic and personal success. Additionally, the podcast will present listeners with episodes on different topics, ranging from emerging literacy to executive function skills, with the core aim of providing practical ideas and research-based recommendations on how to facilitate or create learning opportunities for a child. Moreover, raising awareness among Oxford students, many of whom will be leaders of tomorrow, parents and future parents, is a critical aim of this project, especially for prompting discussions around the importance of early childhood learning beyond the Department of Education.

In summary, to make this project a reality, the following requirements need to be met:

**Objectives:**

* Buy necessary equipment
* Launch podcast
* Invite speakers
* Create local, printed and digital campaigns

**Total estimate of budget:**

£200: necessary to buy the equipment, incentives, and support the marketing campaign for advertisement purposes. Any additional charges will be supplemented from my personal budget.

Resolved

## Project: Intersectionalising Oxford Event Series

Mathilde Labuthie (St. Hugh’s) and Rosie Duffy (St. Hugh’s) proposed and summarised the motion.

They noted the idea of the Trans event was partially in response to recently expressed anti-trans sentiments. They introduced the speakers they had confirmed.

Bella Done (LGBTQ+ Campaign Co-Chair) asked whether they would like to work with the LGBTQ+ Campaign. The Proposer stated they had a discussion with Elliott [ex-Co-Chair of LGBTQ+ Campaign] and an interest in working with the Campaign during Pride Month.

There was no opposition, and the Chair allowed the motion to pass, in the following form:

**Purpose:**

Spotlight the histories of Black students at Oxford, increasing knowledge and understanding of these histories across the student and broader Oxford community.

This event will be a panel style conversation exploring the relationship between space and race in Oxford, with a particular focus on the histories and experiences of Black students. The event will aim to highlight the historical contexts of these experiences and link them to the present to encourage attendees to better understand the cities past and critically imagine its futures. Topics to be explored include: the architectural and collections histories of the University, the spatiality of student activism including the Rhodes Must Fall movement and stories of significant past and present individuals. Confirmed speakers include: - Patricia Daley: Professor of the Human Geography of Africa and co-founder of the Oxford University Black and Minority Ethnic Staff network - Doyin Atewologun: Dean of the Rhodes Scholarship and member of the Race Equality Taskforce - Junie James: Founder and director of the African and African Caribbean Kultural Heritage Initiative - Tinashe Mushakavanhu: Author and Junior Research Fellow in African and Comparative Literature

**Objectives:**

Present an engaging panel about Trans histories and presents at Oxford, increasing knowledge and understanding of these histories across the student and broader Oxford community.

- As one of the most prominent trans cities in the UK this event aims to explore the histories and experiences of transgender students and staff at Oxford. Specifically, the event will look at the placement of trans issues in the context of second wave feminism, present day trans politics and will spotlight the experiences and histories of notable trans alum such as Michael Dillon and Jan Morris. The event aims to explore the way that trans individuals and communities have contributed to, and existed within, institutional, political and activism spheres of the University, feminism and the broader LGBT+ community. Confirmed speakers include: - Jack Doyle: Oxford History Faculty's first Departmental lecturer in LGBTQ History with an interest in combat, queerness and grassroots care solidarity networks. - Fleur MacInnes: DPhil Student studying the experiences of transgender women and transfeminine people in the Women’s Liberation Movement in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s.

Engage with a wide audience increasing the reach and sustainability of the project

- Establish a dedicated Intersectionalising Oxford social media presence across Instagram and Facebook. Pay a student of a marginalised background to design graphics and promote our two upcoming events. These platforms will work to engage a wider array of students, alumni and members of the broader Oxford community by posting consistently about our upcoming events and sharing information gleaned from past events.

In addition to increasing the attendance of our two planned events, this social media presence provides an opportunity to increase the sustainability of this event series. It will work to engage incoming and continuing students who can work to create future events that align with Intersectionalising Oxford’s aims. Furthermore, professional and consistent social media engagement will bolster Intersectionalising Oxford’s the event series’ perceived legitimacy in funding applications for future events.

**Council Resolves:**

To supply £500 necessary to support the promoting, running of the event and guest speakers on the panel.

Resolved

# Items for Discussion

## Student Friendly Oxford Strategy being developed by Oxford City Council

The VP (Charities & Community) proposed the item for discussion, noting Oxford City Council’s (OCC) staring point was compiling a list of places providing student discounts.

An International Student Campaign committee member noted they were working on a guide for settling into Oxford. The VP (Charities & Community) said OCC may be able to organise a city tour in freshers week.

A member noted AfriSoc have a welcome guide, and the Postgraduate Consultation Group could likely set up a session for discussion this.

Received

## UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott

The VP (Charities & Community) introduced the item, noting that the Sabbs were in regular contact with UCU. They wanted the Vice-Chancellor to try and get a better deal. The University has stated exams were unlikely to be cancelled, but some language assessments already have been cancelled.

A member suggested the current Policy should be interpreted to support action short of strikes and escalating action.

The VP (Graduates) said that as a representative of Graduates, they would have to support the action despite effect on Undergraduates. A member remarked that whilst there may be short-term impact on student experience, the long-term benefit would be shared both by staff and students.

Members discussed the importance of awareness of possible and likely disruption, the need both to support the UCU and not to neglect advocating for students, by pushing the University and Vice Chancellor to solve the problems. Members agreed collating student concerns and measuring impact would be useful. A member emphasised the importance of a centralised response, as their department told them it had no control over this issue.

The VP (Charities & Community) noted it was difficult to anticipate impact due to the University’s contingency plans; language assessments had been cancelled mainly because the oral exams fell so early in the term.

Members were in favour of updating the SU strikes policy to explicitly include non-strike action and a motion being brought to the next Council meeting doing so.

# Any Other Business

## Questions to Trustee Board

Niall Pearson-Shaul (Merton) noted the questions raised last term by him and Joshua Loo (Oriel). The Chair stated they had the questions, but did not think they had been passed on, and expressed concerns about lack of clarity on a point of contact.

The President said that, through the CEO, they would be making a response to another student member’s similar questions. The VP (Charities & Community) noted they have been asking questions and have some answers. The President received some legal advice and information from those who did the Article review. They thanked the members for the questions, but stated they would not be in a position to answer the questions accurately and would seek answers from the CEO and Trustees. Niall summarised the questions, asking what times the Board, under Article 11, had made or altered Bye-Laws without Council’s approval, and how those changes were publicised. President stated all ratified Board meetings have been uploaded.

Joe Bell (Merton) asked whether the President could give the answers they did have, and the President stated answers would be communicated in writing to those who asked them.

## Appointment of a new Divisional Representative

The VP (Graduates) raised some last-minute business relating to the appointment new Divisional Representative for the Social Sciences Division without a full selection process, to replace one who had resigned. No member expressed any opposition.

## By-election of the VP (Women)

Joe Bell (Merton) moved that Council decide not to hold a by-election in the Vice-President (Women). They said anyone elected would hold office for a too short amount of time and that the Board had made a similar decision.

VP (Charities & Community) stated they were not expecting a lack of representation on any committee, given many committees were shared by multiple Sabbs. The VP (Welfare & Equal Opportunities) noted that they would try to continue involving Campaigns in decision making.

There was no opposition, and the Chair allowed it to be carried.

*The Chair brought the meeting to a close at 18:47.*