

Council Minutes

1st Week Michaelmas Term 2015

1st Week Council took place at 5:30pm, on Wednesday 14th October 2015, at Christ Church, Blue Boar Lecture Theatre.

If you have any questions about OUSU Council, please feel free to contact the Chair, Jack Matthews, at chair@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

- a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- b. Matters Arising from the Minutes
 - 1. Verbal update on referral of motions from previous council
- c. Ratifications in Council
- d. Elections in Council
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- f. Emergency motions
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 - 3. Postgraduate Loan Consultation response – or lack thereof
 - 4. OUSU Elections
 - 5. Graduate Accommodation Guarantee for 1st Years
 - 6 Opposing the Abolition of Maintenance Grants
 - 7. Oxford University Student Refugee Campaign
 - 8. Supporting students from middle income families
Subject to the passage of Motion 8, there will be a debate on financial support for students from middle-income families.
- l. Any other business
 - 1. Student Written Submission

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

No issues were raised with the minutes.

b. Matters Arising from the Minutes

- 1. Verbal update on referral of motions from previous council

Jack Matthews (University) – Reported that there were a few motions that were referred to the next council, mainly ones pertaining to the Scrutiny Committee, however, having spoken to the committee, they have agreed to bring the motion later on in the term, in order to both give themselves a little more time, and to make first week council smoother.

c. Ratifications in Council

No ratifications in Council.

d. Elections in Council

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Explained that he is Acting Returning Officer until the position is filled.

Returning Officer – Matthew Collyer (New) nominated.

No hust requested.

Matthew – 68
RON – 8
SBV – 2

Matthew Collyer was elected.

Deputy Returning Officer – Matthew Collyer (New) and Stanislas Lalanne (Merton) nominated.

Nick Cooper – Explained that he would count the votes for Returning Officer, and then based on the outcome of that, would decide if the candidate would still like to run for Deputy Returning Officer (as the positions cannot be held concurrently), and would amend the count for deputy accordingly.

Matthew – Informed council that he is also running for the role of Returning Officer, but as this position is specifically for the role of Deputy Returning Officer, he informed council it was a position that he had filled before during the VP Graduates By-Election, and also during his previous two terms spent on OUSU's Steering Committee, he has gained an understanding of how OUSU's rules work. Stated that he could fulfill the role competently and impartially, adding that he had never been on any political committee, or attended any political society meetings.

Stanislas – Noted that whilst he has not been an OUSU DRO, he has now been a Union DRO for three terms, and is currently RO at the Union. Added that while this is different to OUSU, he has gained transferable skills, including the counting of votes, hack stopping, scrutiny, and knowledge of election formulas. Stated he would be very happy to work with Matthew as Returning Officer.

Stanislas – 67
RON – 8
SBV – 3

Stanislas Lalanne was elected.

Graduate International Students' Officer – Allen Schaide (St Antony's) and Lauren McKarus (St Catherine's) nominated.

Allen – Introduced himself to Council and informed them that he is from a small town in Illinois with less than 1000 people, completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Kansas, and recently completed a masters of International Education from Columbia University in New York City. Added that he was on student government at both of these universities. Informed council that he has been working in the private sector, on NGOs, particularly focusing on international student issues, including isolation problems surrounding student exchanges, has directed international education committees for the United Nations Posse Foundation, and for several universities.

Lauren – Explained that two years ago, she was a visiting student at Wadham, and nominated for Undergraduate International Students' Officer, however two weeks into running, was told that visiting students don't have the right to run, or the right to vote, among other things which they cannot do. Stressed that there is a huge issue with how the University deal with International students, and argued that everyone here has the right to feel that they are a true student of Oxford.

Eden Tanner (St John's) – Noted that the successful candidate would only be in office for this term, so asked what three things they could get done in that time.

Lauren – Answered that firstly would be what she mentioned regarding visiting students, as this is a really big issue, that secondly she wants to get a forum started, to provide a space for graduate international students. Noted that she would like to hold off on a third, as she is very passionate about putting the first two into place.

Allen – Agreed that the idea of a forum was great, with somewhere for international students to come forward. Added that an international graduate alumni network is very simple and easy to set up, and as his third thing, he would like a programme, which brings together international and domestic students, as there are currently pockets of isolation which exist. Urged how great it is to bring together people from different cultures, and how he finds it such a privilege to be here learning from people with different nationalities and different cultural backgrounds.

Allen – 18
Lauren – 53
RON – 2
SBV – 5

Lauren McKarus was elected.

Mature Students Officer – Wagner Nogueira Neto (Kellogg) nominated.

No hust requested.

Wagner – 68
RON – 3
SBV – 7

Wagner Nogueira Neto was elected.

Trans Officer – Elliot Parrott (Oriol) nominated.

No hust requested.

Elliot – 67
RON – 4
SBV – 7

Elliot Parrott was elected.

Graduate Womens' Officer – Rebecca Kuperberg (Somerville) nominated.

Hust requested.

Nick Cooper – Informed council that Rebecca had emailed in advance sending her apologies, and had asked that her nomination be read out:

“I am currently the MCR President at Somerville and have worked to ensure that the Somerville MCR remains an open and tolerant community for MCR members and visitors. In my pre-Oxford life, I worked on women’s issues, as a legal assistant providing advice and guidance for domestic abuse survivors and as an employee in university administration at a women’s college. Furthermore, my current academic research focuses on violence against women. I have received training in sexual assault counselling and am personally, professionally, and academically committed to gender equality, as well as ensuring that women and men have safe spaces to confront gender inequality in their own lives and in the spaces in which they inhabit (college, university, country, etc.).”

Rebecca – 65
RON – 7
SBV – 6

Rebecca Kuperberg was elected.

Academic Affairs Campaign Officer – Gareth Sessel (Harris Manchester) nominated.

No hust requested.

Gareth – 69
RON – 3
SBV – 6

Gareth Sessel was elected.

Graduate Medical Sciences Divisional Board Representative – Hayley Han (Green Templeton) and Shahnaz Ahmadi (St Anne’s) nominated.

Hayley – Explained that she has been a student at the medical science division for three years, and has gone through the transfer of status, confirmation of status, and many other academic procedures that are required, and not once has she been asked to give feedback. Noted that this is a really big problem, as there is a lack of communication, and opportunities for students to participate and raise concerns. Stated that she would like to better represent the students, so would conduct a division wide student survey, addressing key issues regarding the academic procedures in place, the current curriculum, the training offered etc. Claimed that she would ensure that any issues which came up would be properly addressed, and would work to make every student in the division feel included, and aware of who to go to if in need of support.

Shahnaz – Introduced herself as an Msc student studying Clinical Embryology, from Australia. Informed council that prior to this, she was working in a clinic as a medical technician, as well as a volunteer tutor. Stated that she is really interested in OUSU, and wants to help everyone that she can, including both students and staff. Informed council that international students do not have much knowledge about the division, or the individual departments that are a part of it, particularly as many of them are very small. Stated that she wanted to change this, so students are aware of their fellows.

Hayley – 51

Shahnaz – 14
RON – 5
SBV – 8

Hayley Han was elected.

Graduate Humanities Divisional Board Representative – Eden Bailey (Magdalen) and Mirela Ivanova (Balliol) nominated.

Nick Cooper – Informed council that Mirela was not present, but invited Eden to hust.

Eden – Reported that she had already been the undergraduate rep for humanities for the past year, and now she would like to extend her work to graduate students. Flagged the main issues as representation, communication, and equality and diversity. Informed council that at undergraduate level, the consultative committee that brought all the faculty reps together with the division to communicate about issues in the humanities, had stopped existing, but she brought this back when in the role. Added that she also did a survey on workload and the impact on welfare, which had more respondents at the time than any other OUSU survey, and argued that this is the sort of thing we need to be doing to find out about graduate issues. Reported that she worked on curricular diversity, and initiated several pilots, which are now running in the humanities division.

Jacob Williams (Exeter) – Asked if Eden had any plans to run for other positions in OUSU in the future.

Eden – Answered that she is only here for a one-year masters, and has not yet made plans for after that. Stated that it would depend on how the first few months of her masters goes.

Marina Lambrakis (St John's) – Asked how Eden envisages div reps to slot in with the overall OUSU structure.

Eden – Answered that there are already internal meetings with the Academic Affairs Officer, as well as with Matt Tennant, the Academic Representation Officer, which has been a big help with improving communications. Added that the role within the division really depends on how people choose to use the role, but adds that she hopes to continue the relationships, which she set up last year.

Eden – 61
Mirela – 9
RON – 3
SBV – 5

Eden Bailey was elected.

Tom Barringer (St Hugh's) – Asked if the following two positions for Rules Committee and Complaints Committee could both be filled by the same person.

Nick Cooper – Confirmed that they can.

Rules Committee – Hossein Sharafi (Keble) nominated.

Hust requested.

Hossein – Informed council that he is running for Rules Committee as he really loves looking through bureaucratic stuff, and finds reading OUSU Bye-Laws surprisingly fun. Assured council that he would be able to successfully navigate the bureaucracy and rules, to support student welfare and make sure the committee to not force anything that would negatively affect students.

Hossein – 58
RON – 9
SBV – 1

Hossein Sharafi was elected.

Complaints Committee - Hossein Sharafi (Keble) nominated.

Hossein – Stated that this is less of a hust, and more of a plea for others to run. Reported that he was on the committee last year and understands the rules and procedures, but noted that proper panels cannot be formed without more student members sitting on the committee.

Sarah (Keble) – Asked how Hossein would handle a complaint about the Rules Committee.

Hossein – Answered that he would not be able to deal with it, as Complaints Committee is for Complaints about OUSU, and the Rules Committee is a University committee.

Hossein – 54
RON – 12
SBV – 2

Hossein Sharafi was elected.

e. Reports from and questions to the Sabbatical Officers, Executive Officers, Divisional Board Officers, Representatives of the OUSU Campaigns and RAG (*Raise and Give*)

Jack Matthews (University) – Informed council that all of the Executive were either in attendance or had submitted apologies. Listed the apologies received: Will Brown, Clubs and Societies Officer; Rita Nissim, Joe Reason, Common Room Support Officer; Danny Waldman, Rent and Accommodation Officer; Graduate Welfare Officer; and Sam Shearn, Student Parents and Carers Officer.

Nick Cooper (St John's) - Introduced himself as Vice President for Graduates and asked to see how many graduates were present. Explained that in addition to graduate students, his role is to represent mature students and international students. Updated council that he and Cat, along with Matt Tennant, OUSU's Academic Representation Officer, have been writing the first draft of the student written submission. Explained that there will be review of the University by a government agency in March, which happens every six years, and as a part of this, we, as students, write a submission filled with details on various issues that students have with the university. Urged people to read the consultation and take part.

Lucy Delaney (Wadham) – Introduced herself as the Vice President for Women. Flagged the consent workshops that have been happening, and went very well, adding that there were 16

facilitator training sessions within the space of a week and a half. Added that there will be lots more training over the term, including lots of first responder training and a full time womens' officer training day.

Ali Lennon (St John's) – Introduced himself as the Vice President for Welfare and Equal Opportunities, and announced that the new welfare officer course is being designed and will be mostly professionally lead, with councillors, advisors, a mental health charity will be coming in to do a session on tackling stigma, and will aim to well equip officers for the term ahead.

Cat Jones (Pembroke) – Introduced herself as the Vice President for Access and Academic Affairs. Thanked everyone who has worked with her on the Alternative Prospectus over the summer, which is a publication that goes out to potential applicants, particularly from state school backgrounds, and tries to convince them that Oxford students are normal students. Added that almost 200 students have submitted opinions which have contributed to this, and for the first time, it will all be going online once it is launched in February, so even more potential applicants have access.

Emily Silcock (New) – Introduced herself as Vice President for Charities and Community, which also covers a responsibility for environmental issues and sustainability. Informed that over the summer she has carried out a really thorough evaluation of the community wardens scheme, as well as hiring and training new students for the roles.

Becky Howe (Pembroke) – Introduced herself as OUSU President and picked out two elements of her report. Stated that there would be common room president training in a couple of weeks, and urged presidents to check their emails for upcoming information about this. Added that another mandate she was elected on was a promise to look at welfare systems in colleges, and has been working with Ali on this over summer, adding that they would be launching a big consultation in Hilary Term.

Marina Lambrakis (St John's) – Asked for clarification on the sanitary product scheme, on behalf of welfare officers in her MCR.

Lucy Delaney – Answered that this is being launched in second week, which is partly to do with the freshers' week consent workshops, and partly because they are planning to do it on a college by college basis this time, as we cannot fit all orders in the OUSU office.

Chris Casson (St Catherine's) – Raised the issue of recent allegations that have been made against a former officer and delegate of OUSU in the press. Noted that many people have read WomCam's response to this and asked if there was anything that the officers wanted to add.

Lucy Delaney – Responded that in addition to the WomCam statement, she has also provided a statement herself, which was printed in the Cherwell and numerous other publications. Noted that this is available to read and that she has nothing more to add.

Eden Tanner (St John's) – Asked where students can find the First Response App.

Lucy Delaney – Answered that it can be downloaded on the Apple Store, is available from college JCR officers and reps, and at <http://www.firstresponseoxford.org>.

Chris Casson – Raised the decision taken by the Exec concerning the banning of the distribution of a particular magazine at Freshers' Fair, noting that he had read the justification for this, and asked Ali if he know why in 1961, the students representative council was founded.

Added that if he did not know the answer to this, then he would ask the same question in 3rd week council and expect a response.

Becky Howe – Replied that it was set up to defend freedom of speech, adding that she does not believe that the No Offense issue is about freedom of speech, as we did not say it couldn't be published, as we do not have that type of authority, we said please do not bring it to our event, as it is not what we want our new students to be seeing. Confirmed that that is what we did, that is the decision that we took and that we stand by it. Invited people to ask her any further questions.

Marina Lambrakis (St John's) – Acknowledged that she failed to submit a report this week as it has been very busy, so informed council that she is working on suspended status students, and ask a grad panels, adding that she will provide a full report in 3rd week.

Minerva Lim (Keble) – Reported that there will be a meeting for all international freshers' in Keble College on Sunday from 3pm to 5pm.

f. Emergency motions

1. Response to Consultation on Student Loan Repayment Threshold

Council Notes:

1. That students taking out student loans after 2012 begin to repay that loan upon earning £21,000. Under the original plans, this £21,000 figure would rise with inflation starting in 2017.
2. In the Budget 2015, the Government announced its intention to consult on freezing the repayment threshold of £21,000 for five years; that is, to cancel the plan for the figure to rise with inflation.
3. That if this occurred, borrowers earning more than £21,000 would repay more per month than if the original plan were followed.
4. [Information](#) from the Sutton Trust that this move would disproportionately affect women, and via the "Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education" survey, [information](#) from the National Union of Students (NUS) highlights that it will disproportionately affect black & minority ethnic (BME) students.
5. On Friday 9th October, after the deadline for motions to Council, the NUS issued its own response to the consultation, with a call for student unions to do similarly.
6. That the consultation response deadline is tonight, Wednesday 14th October, 11.45pm.
7. That the Sabbatical Officers have been very busy since Friday with Freshers Fair and the aftermath, and apologise for the short notice of this motion accordingly...

Council Believes:

1. A retrospective hike in repayment rates is unfair, and sets a dangerous precedent for the student loan system.
2. That while we do have a student loan system for funding higher education, this should be done in a fair and equal way.
3. OUSU has a long tradition of responding to consultations such as this one, and as it directly affects current students, is a relevant issue for us to discuss.

4. It is important for Oxford students' voices to be heard in this consultation, given data from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey, which shows starting salaries and a substantial gender gap among Oxford graduates.

Council Resolves:

1. To endorse the consultation response in Appendix 1, and mandate the Vice President (Access & Academic Affairs) to respond to the consultation accordingly tonight.

Proposed: Catherine Jones (Pembroke)

Seconded: Nick Cooper (St John's)

Cat Jones (Pembroke) – Apologised for the short notice, and explained that this is because the NUS only asked for students to respond to this on Friday night, and the deadline for submissions is tonight. Explained that there is no time to re draft, so if you would like us to send this, you can pass it, but if you would rather us send nothing, you can vote against it.

Sufyen Buras-Stubbs (Lincoln) – Asked what the three options referred to in the report are.

Cat Jones – Answered that the options are: to keep things as they are, continuing to allow the loan repayment threshold to rise with inflation; to retrospectively unfreeze the loan; or to unfreeze the new loan.

Chris Casson (St Catherine's) – Raised a concern that the consultation was prepared in July when inflation was positive, and is now negative.

Amendment received:

To add resolves 2: To mandate the exec to amend the consultation response by inserting the following sentence at the end of the response to question 1:

“However, when the UK is experiencing deflation, we would support not linking the threshold to this negative inflation, and thus freezing the threshold accordingly during this time.”

Proposed: Chris Casson (St Catherine's)

Seconded: Cat Jones (Pembroke)

Amendment accepted as friendly.

No objection to amendment.

Motion passed as amended with no opposition.

g. Passage of motions without discussion

3. Postgraduate Loan Consultation response – or lack thereof

Council Notes:

1. At the Autumn Statement 2014, the Government announced its intention to introduce a new loan system for postgraduate taught Masters students.

2. Its decision in 3rd week, Trinity Term 2015 to mandate the Vice President (Graduates) to respond to the Government's consultation expressing support for these loans.
3. That the consultation response was due within 12 weeks of the closing date of May 29th (that is, by 21st August). No such response has been made, with the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills [BIS] tweeting that there will be "further details in the autumn".
4. Preliminary details of the loans scheme suggest they will only be available to those aged under 30.
5. The upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

Council Believes:

1. Transparency is integral to Government, and it is disappointing that no response has been made, and no reason given for this.
2. That the University should continue to expand its provision of fully funded scholarships across graduate education.
3. Postgraduate loans are important to improve graduate access, until more graduate funding becomes available.
4. That access to graduate education should not depend on financial status, age, full/part-time status or choice of course.
5. Providing education to mature students is crucial to an accessible University, and providing financial assistance is integral to this.

Council Resolves:

1. To mandate the Vice President (Graduates) to write to the Secretary of State for BIS expressing OUSU's disappointment at the lack of response to date, and conveying OUSU Policy on the importance of Government postgraduate funding, for all students.
2. To make Council Believes 2-5 Policy Guidelines.

Proposed: Nick Cooper (St John's)

Seconded: Marina Lambrakis (St John's)

Motion passed with no discussion.

4. OUSU Elections

Council Notes:

1. OUSU's Annual Elections are coming up in 6th week, with nominations open from Thursday 3rd week, 12pm, until Thursday 4th week, 12pm.
2. All Student Members (students who haven't opted out of OUSU membership) are eligible to run – and to vote.
3. OUSU's Regulations require Council to approve: a voting system that meets certain requirements, the list of possible members to sit on a Junior Tribunal [a body that decides appeals to complaints from the Returning Officer], and the counting system for NUS Delegate elections [to ensure at least half of Delegates are women].

Council Believes:

1. All students should consider running in elections!
2. It is important for elections to be fairly and properly conducted.

3. MSL's voting system fulfils the requirements in Election Regulation 32.2, as it did last year.

Council Resolves:

1. To approve the use of the MSL (Membership Solutions Ltd) electronic voting system for OUSU's Direct Elections.
2. To approve the list of officers in Appendix 3a for Junior Tribunal.
3. To mandate the Returning Officer, in the event a Junior Tribunal is called, to contact all approved individuals below who have expressed an interest. The Returning Officer shall compose the Tribunal of the three individuals who first reply to this call and who can meet simultaneously.
4. To approve the NUS Delegate voting procedure specified in Appendix 3b.

Proposed: Nick Cooper (St John's)

Seconded: Catherine Jones (Pembroke)

Motion passed with no discussion.

5. Graduate Accommodation Guarantee for 1st Years

Council Notes:

1. There is no guarantee of University/college accommodation for all new graduate students (even if there is at certain colleges).
2. That this year, over 1/3 of graduate applicants submitted an open application (that is, did not specify a college).
3. The combination of Notes 1 and 2 means that some graduate students do not find out until late in the summer, upon receiving a college offer, that they will not be accommodated.
4. That the City Council imposes a cap on student numbers living outside of University/college accommodation.
5. The paucity of graduate funding, especially for Masters courses.

Council Believes:

1. It is crucial for the University & colleges to provide as much graduate accommodation as possible, given the cost of living in Oxford.
2. It is especially important that students who are new to Oxford can concentrate on their studies and not on finding and dealing with expensive private accommodation.
3. That any new accommodation should reflect the needs of all graduate students, including mature students, student parents and carers, disabled students and international students.

Council Resolves:

1. To mandate the Vice President (Graduates) to lobby for the collegiate University to provide a guarantee of accommodation for all first-year graduate students who are new to Oxford.
2. To mandate the Vice President (Graduates) to consult with graduate Common Rooms on the accommodation needs of graduate students within their colleges, and how best to meet these.
3. To make Council Notes 1, Believes 1-3, and Resolves 1 Policy Guidelines.

Proposed: Nick Cooper (St John's)
Seconded: Marina Lambrakis (St John's)

Motion passed with no discussion.

7. Oxford University Student Refugee Campaign

Council Notes:

1. The ongoing refugee crisis has displaced many thousands of students worldwide.
2. These students have been deprived of the chance to pursue higher education courses in their native countries.
3. The University of Oxford and its constituent Colleges have yet to provide funded scholarships and financial support to refugee students.
4. The University of Oxford has a tradition of aiding students seeking asylum as proven by the efforts of the Bureau of Information for Refugee Scholars in the 1930s.
5. Several other UK Universities have committed to funding scholarship places.

Council Believes:

1. The University of Oxford has a moral duty and the resources to support refugee students.
2. The University of Oxford should provide access to higher education based on merit, not nationality, immigration status or race.
3. Given that the University of Oxford is one of the leading universities in the world, by supporting this cause, it has the potential to influence the policy pertaining to student refugees at an international level.

Council Resolves:

1. To mandate the OUSU Sabbatical officers to call on the University of Oxford to provide a proportionate, clear and comprehensive institutional response to welcome students who are fleeing persecution by classifying them as home students and creating studentships or bursaries.
2. To mandate the OUSU sabbatical officers to call on each Junior and Middle Common Room in Oxford, to financially support the expected living costs incurred by a refugee student studying at the University.

Proposed: Thaís Roque (Magdalen)
Seconded: Emily Silcock (New)

Motion passed with no discussion.

8. Supporting students from middle income families

Council Notes:

1. That the Joint Fees and Student Support Advisory Group (JFSSAG) has launched a consultation on the Oxford Bursary packages for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

2. That the current Oxford Bursary package provides £4,500 per year for students with household incomes of up to £16,000. The financial support is tapered down to £500 for those from household incomes of up to £42,875.
3. That around 65% of students applying for hardship come from household incomes above £42,875.

Council Believes:

1. That non-repayable financial support is important and should be used to maximum effect to ensure that no student's Oxford education suffers as a result of their financial situation.

Council Resolves:

1. To discuss, for a time to be determined by the Chair of Council, how best to target financial support.
2. To mandate the Vice-President (Access & Academic Affairs) to submit a response to the JFFSAG consultation, taking into account the views of current students.

Proposed: Cat Jones (Pembroke)

Seconded: Becky Howe (Pembroke)

Motion passed with no discussion.

Jack Matthews – Noted that that passing this motion triggers a debate on financial support for students from middle-income families prior to AOB.

h. Motions of No Confidence or censure

i. Motions to amend Bye-Laws, General Regulations or Election Regulations

j. Motions authorising expenditure

3. Funding for 'Disability, Sex and Relationships: A day of workshops and training for staff and students'.

Council Notes:

1. OUSU's commitment to campaigning for the four liberation groups that it recognizes, including disabled students;
2. That "OUSU recognizes that Sexual Consent Workshops may not be accessible to all students (e.g. because the materials are triggering, or because of a disability), and should seek to provide alternatives." (Policy passed HT15);
3. Despite the plethora of welfare services available to students at Oxford University there is a relative paucity of resources, discussion and training available to give disabled students support and guidance about sex and relationships;
4. A relatively large-scale event would kick-start work in this area, and enable the Disabled Students' Officer to make a strong case for more sustainable funding for this kind of project;
5. The "Disability, Sex and Relationships" Workshop will take place at Wadham College on October 24;

6. OUSU Council passed a resolution in TT15 to fund this event with £800 from the discretionary fund;
7. Expenses due to accessibility adjustments have caused a funding need beyond this original £800 sponsorship.

Council Believes:

1. A day of workshops and training for both disabled students and staff who support disabled students would begin to rectify the lack of support and guidance about sex and relationships;
2. This event would complement the general Sexual Consent Workshops and Disabled Consent Workshops (piloted HT15) that OUSU currently runs;
3. It would be valuable for the day to aim¹ to:
 - a. Raise awareness of the prejudice and lack of understanding surrounding the sexual needs of adults with disabilities;
 - b. (Consider the ways to) empower adults with disabilities to discuss and take part in responsible, loving romantic relationships;
 - c. (Consider the ways to) empower adults with disabilities to discuss and take part in responsible sexual behaviour;
 - d. (Consider ways to) promote the need for equal access to mainstream sexual health services for students with disabilities.

Council Resolves:

1. To support 'Disability, Sex and Relationships: A day of workshops and training for staff and students' with £300 additional funds from the Council Discretionary Fund. A full proposal and budget is attached as Appendix 2, and
2. To reiterate the mandate passed in TT15 for the Disabled Students' Officer to report to Council on the event during Michaelmas Term 2015 or Hilary Term 2016.

Proposed: Lindsay Lee (Wadham)

Seconded: Holly Anderson (Wadham)

Lindsay Lee – Reminded council that last term she brought a motion to council authorising £800 for a day of workshops that she is running called 'Disability, Sex and Relationships', which will talk about the unique barriers that disabled people face when they are pursuing relationships of both a sexual and non-sexual nature with other people. Added that the morning session is designated for staff, and the afternoon session is aimed at students, Noted that while the afternoon is directed at students with disabilities, anyone is welcome to attend and learn. Explained that planning has been on-going all summer, and the event will be taking place on October 24th at Wadham college, however, they have reached a point where they have realised they need a little more money, as some of the people attending have specific requirements. Hoped that the £300 they are asking for will be more of a cushion, but as the nature of disability is that it is not always predictable, and wants it to run as smoothly as possible. Explained that the biggest expense is having someone come along to do live captioning.

Hossein Sharafi (Keble) – Asked why the original number of £800 has changed.

Lindsay – Answered that this was based mostly on estimates, as we didn't yet have exactly nailed down who would be invited and therefore what accessibility requirements they would

¹ Emulating the objectives of the work done by the *In Touch Project* (Leonard Cheshire Disability 2013)

have, and that there is limited information online about the costs of captioning for this type of event, which turned out to be more than expected.

Motion passed with no opposition.

k. Other motions

6. Opposing the Abolition of Maintenance Grants

Council Notes:

1. That in the emergency budget this summer, the chancellor announced plans to remove student maintenance grants and replace them with increased loans.
2. That approximately 16% of Oxford students currently receive maintenance grants
3. That the change would result in the poorest students graduating with bigger debts than the current system and with more debt than their peers.
4. That OUSU conducted a survey of Oxford students over the summer, which received 263 responses. 88% of respondents believed that the changes would negatively affect students from low-income backgrounds.

Council Believes:

1. That maintenance grants are an important source of support, which encourage students from low-income background to apply to university and allow them to fully participate in student life once here.
2. That replacing grants with loans is regressive and will increase the level of stress experienced by students from low-income families.

Council Resolves:

1. To mandate the President and Vice-President (Access & Academic Affairs) to publicly oppose the abolition of maintenance grants.
2. To mandate the Vice-President (Access & Academic Affairs) to lobby the university to mitigate the real and perceived financial implications for future students.

Proposed: Cat Jones (Pembroke)

Seconded: Becky Howe (Pembroke)

Cat Jones (Pembroke) – Informed council that she doesn't have anything to add which isn't already in the motion, but is happy to take questions.

Motion opposed.

Colin Malaney (Queen's) – Argued that passing a motion like this is adding to the problem of people from low-income families feeling like there is a barrier against coming to university, and suggested that the solution is to work on awareness instead on knee-jerk reactions. Added that replacing grants with loans will not add to the stress whilst at university, as these do not have to be paid back until after graduating.

Greg Auger (St John's) – Asked about the reasoning for thinking that higher debt will put people off, as it is not clear to him that people are put off studying in London for instance, where the costs are the highest.

Henna Shah (Regent's) – Responded that having done quite a lot of access work, there are two points she would like to make. Stated that firstly, often for students from families who do not have a history of attending university, the concept of taking out loans, when culturally they do not like the idea of being in debt, is actually very very scary. Added that secondly, we want students who come to university to be planning a future career based on what they actually want to do, rather than what they think they need to do, in order to earn as much money as possible to pay of their debts.

Eden Bailey (Magdalen) – Explained that she is from Newcastle where average wages are much lower than the south the England, and unemployment rates are much higher, and it absolutely affects people's decisions about whether or not to come to university, not just in London, but everywhere. Urged that we want people to be encouraged to come to university rather than out off.

Sam Barnett (Worcester) – Asked how this will be phrased to the public eye is this motion passes, as there is a lot of disagreement about rigorous evidence, anecdotal evidence etc.

Jacob Page (St Cross) – Stated that he considers it important that when considering debt and student experience to note that it is quite clear that we have a student loan system and people go to university on that system, have a great experience and get a degree. Noted however that the debt is still a barrier, and increasing the debt, can only increasing the barrier, particularly to people from low-income backgrounds and oppressed backgrounds. Argued that the university needs these people, academia needs them, as a diversity of experience adds to the academic cannon and makes the world a better place.

Cat – Responded to the idea that motions like this could do the exact opposite to what they are trying to achieve, and acknowledged that they are very conscious of that, and the last point of the motion was an attempt to make it clear that we are aware of this. Argued that we would be conspicuous by our absence if we did not contribute to this, as eyes of the world are always on Oxford, however in response to the second point, yes we completely acknowledge that we need an entirely different rhetoric, to applicants, to parents, to teachers, that we are working with the University to mitigate. Informed council that she surveyed maintenance grant holders over the summer, and received 211 responses. Noted that it was free text, so the word stress was not used in the survey, but a phenomenal number of students replied with the word stress, and not just stress at the point of application, but on course stress, particularly noting that maintenance grants allow you to keep up with your peers, while maintenance loans adds to stress. Regarding evidence that it actually puts people off does exist, however it is not the largest sample size. Argued that the fact that there is not hard and fast evidence that it does not people off is what scares her most, as the government have not collected this.

Colin Malaney (Queen's) – Stated that he is still not convinced by this argument, and still views the perception of the debt as the problem. Argued that the motion would be scare mongering, rather than dealing with a perception issues, which is why he will be opposing the motion. Added that In Scotland, there are no fees at all, yet there are less people from low-income backgrounds attending university as a proportion.

Jack Matthews (University) – Moved to a vote.

For – 65
Against – 4
Abstain - 7

Motion passed.

Jack Matthews (University) – Informed council that they would now move to a discussion on supporting students from middle income families, as passed in motion 8.

Cat Jones (Pembroke) – Explained that she did not want to express an opinion on this matter, but instead really needed to hear what students think about where university student funds are best spent.

Student – Asked how middle income families are defined.

Cat – Replied that this is also open for discussion, but currently above £42,000 means you are outside of the university bursary provision, and it is only £500 at that point.

Vivian Holmes (Wadham) – Stated that income is not always a great indication of how well off a student will be, particularly for those who may be estranged from their parents, which may especially be the case for some trans students, as well as students from families where the parents may earn a lot of money, but are also in a lot of debt.

Michelle (Kellogg) – Asked if £42,000 is for 1 or 2 parents, and if it is defined differently for single parent families.

Cat – Replied that it is total household income, regardless of whether this is 1 or 2 parents.

Benji Woolf (Christ Church) – Suggested that this may not be a totally appropriate time to have this motion, considering the previous motion on grants, arguing it would be better to know what is happening with that first.

Cat – Replied that if we want to put a response in for this year's committee, we need to put a response in imminently, adding that council can choose to delay it to next year.

Claire (Keble) – Stated that she is in the cheapest 3rd year accommodation her college offers, and as her family are slightly above the £42,000, this term alone she is at a £400 shortfall between accommodation and her student loan, and overall this year it will be about £1800. Noted that Keble is particularly bad, but argued that they are not alone.

Henna Shah (Regent's) – Urged that it is really important to take the view that different colleges do provide different standards of accommodation and different facilities for different prices. Advised that this is not clear when you apply to Oxford. Suggested that there could also be some kind of geographical element to it, as £42,000 is not the same in London as in other parts of the country.

Dom Cullura (Mansfield) – Added that the size of families and number of siblings could also be considered.

Colin Malaney (Queen's) – Stated that middle-income families are often overlooked and this is really important to recognise. Stressed that students from middle-income families can, and often do struggle financially.

Chris Cason (St Catherine's) – Informed council that he does not support the idea of location or size of families being factored in, believing that these are choices that families should make. Requested a sentence in the report saying that there was a dissenting voice on this.

Sarah (St Catherine's) – Argued that we should include all dependents, and in addition to siblings, elderly dependants should be factored in.

Sufyen Buras-Stubbs (Lincoln) – Argued that the differences in colleges, in terms of cost of food and accommodation is brushed under the rug, and not made available to prospective students who are looking to decide which college to go to. Suggested that this should be publicly available so people can take this into account.

Andy (Queen's) – Suggested that it could be very difficult to quantify economic factors, and although it is important, we should avoid making the application process very difficult.

Sarah (Merton) – Stated that she actually feels in a very fortunate position being in Oxford from a low-income family, and realistically did not spend half of her grant in the last year. Argued that this could be spread across middle-income families, and actually finds that many of her peers look at the amount of money she receives in envy.

Andrew (Mansfield) – Suggested a top level of income that could be applied for, which discounts grants, so that the amount of total money available is not reduced according to background, but the amount of free support (grants) is.

Cat – Updated council, on the point of debate about differences between colleges, that the new alternative prospectus will have an online college selector, where cheap accommodation will be one of the numerous ways to break down the colleges. Thanked Greg for all of his hard work on this over the summer.

Nick – Added that the average price of graduate accommodation is already listed on the university website.

Student – Added the fact that living out is approximately £3000 more expensive, which should be taken into account.

I. Any other business

1. Student Written Submission (Appendix 4)

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Explained that, as stated earlier, we have to write this submission to the Higher Education Review, and flagged that the current draft is available on the website as an appendix to the council agenda. Urged that people read it, even if they just look at the list of recommendations to see if there is anything that they believe has been missed or shouldn't be there. Noted that the next few weeks will include a process of consultation, and the process for this is included in the document online. Acknowledged that they are aware that a few areas are

lacking, including race and international students, and would particularly appreciate feedback on these areas. Stressed that it is very important that this document represents the views of as many students as possible.