

Council Minutes

1st Week Michaelmas Term 2016

1st Week Council was held at 5:30pm on Wednesday 12th October 2016, Pontigny Room, St Edmund Hall.

We aim to make Council as accessible as possible, and ensure that it is always in accessible venues. However, if there are any accessibility requirements that we are not meeting for you or others, please contact OUSU's Democratic Support Officer at dso@ousu.ox.ac.uk. If you have any questions about Council, please contact the Chair, Matthew Dawe, chair@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

- a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- b. Matters Arising from the Minutes
- c. Elections in Council
- d. Reports from and questions to the Sabbatical Officers, Executive Officers, Representatives of the OUSU Campaigns and RAG (*Raise and Give*), and Trinity Term 2016 report from the Scrutiny Committee
- e. Items for Resolution
 1. Good Night Out campaign
 2. Supporting United for Education Demonstration on 19th November
 3. Refunding the LGBTQ Campaign for the costs of printing their LGBTQ+ Survival Guide
- Below the Line*
 4. OUSU Divisional Board Rep Appointments 2016/17
- f. Items for Debate
 1. OUSU Council voting reform
- g. Any Other Business

* We mark some items as "below the line" if we think they are uncontroversial – these will not be discussed unless someone in Council requests this, and at least ¼ of voting members present agree.

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes were approved.

b. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None.

c. Elections in Council

Deputy Returning Officer – Anna Mowbray (New) ran. No hustings requested.
Anna Mowbray was elected. 58 (3 RON).

JSc(EC)SM (Joint Subcommittee of the Education Committee with Student Members) (x2) –
Fraser Boistelle (New) ran. No hustings requested.
Fraser Boistelle was elected. 44 (6 RON, 1 abstention).

Rules Committee (x2) – Fraser Boistelle (New) and Matthew Collyer (New) ran. No hustings requested.

Fraser Boistelle and Matthew Collyer (New) were elected. (15, 33, 2 RON).

d. Reports from and questions to the Sabbatical Officers, Executive Officers, Representatives of the OUSU Campaigns and RAG (*Raise and Give*), and Trinity Term report from the Scrutiny Committee

Jack Hampton (St Catherine's) – working on 5 main projects, in written report. Includes academic structures review: built on welfare survey, which found problems; now moving to what causes of welfare issues are, especially academic structures (workload, term length). Will write report so OUSU have data to make change. Also clubs and societies – most SUs in the country look after this; not at Oxford. OUSU to give help and support – providing training for clubs and socs' executives; also launching pilot club mark scheme for accountability. Also working with Eden on workload, to get guideline for weekly workloads for all students and work with course reps to convert this to number of pieces of work.

Orla White (Brasenose) – role is to advocate for women students (as defined by OUSU). Also lead on sexual violence and consent workshops. Report on consent workshops to follow once feedback is there. 3 main areas for year – tackling sexual violence on campus (consent workshops, better harassment policies, first responder training); supporting trans students, policy being rewritten, seeking submissions if you are trans students; supporting student sex workers, working out how this can be done.

Marina Lambrakis (St John's) – here to represent graduate students, but also all international, mature, parents and carers, and part-time. Focused on: graduate welfare, graduate access, employment at graduate level (including teaching opportunities), and review of postgraduate research courses. Also taking lead on EU referendum outcome – if you have concerns, EU student or otherwise, contact her.

Beth Currie (Corpus) – oversee RAG, with ball and Lost coming up. Tickets selling out so get soon. Need chair for Environment and Food campaigns – get in touch. Also looking for community wardens for East Oxford team – earn £45 for 5 hours/week.

Sandy Downs (Corpus) – Mind Your Head campaign has elections in next week. Please run or encourage others. Organised sexual health testing – special spots for LGBTQ and graduate students. Careers service to host disability friendly slots – more accessible, quieter, employers more on ball.

Eden Bailey (Magdalen) – represent students and prospective students to University on committees. Hoping to work with outreach and admissions office for more support/better policy to equalise admissions process for BME (black and minority ethnic) students. University want to address this, looking at how. Any students of colour, get in touch. Also setting up group with academics, administrators and students on curricular reform.

Chair asked if there were further reports.

Sandy Downs – reading out report from Katy Haigh, Health and Welfare Officer. Sends apologies – forgot to send report in, and can't make Council due to essay. Setting up plan for completing manifesto pledges. If emailed me, please message on Facebook while going through backlog.

e. Items for Resolution

1. Good Night Out campaign

Council Notes:

1. Its powers under Bye-Law 34.2 to establish new campaigns, if a Sabbatical Officer supports this and provides a draft constitution.
2. Its endorsement of Good Night Out in 5th Week Council, Hilary Term 2016.

Council Believes:

1. That harassment in licensed venues is an ongoing problem in Oxford.
2. That this harassment should not be tolerated and it is important that something is done to tackle it.
3. That Good Night Out has had great success in other cities and student unions, proving that it has the potential to help tackle this problem.

Council Resolves:

1. To create a new Campaign (pursuant to Bye-Law 34.2), called the Good Night Out campaign.
2. To endorse the draft constitution in Appendix 1.
3. To mandate the Vice President (Welfare & Equal Opportunities) to form an Executive for the Campaign and ensure the Executive endorses the draft constitution within a month of this motion passing.

Proposed: Rebecca Redding (St John's)

Seconded: Hannah Cheah (Corpus Christi)

Chair asked if anyone wished to discuss. No requests.

Motion passed.

2. Supporting United for Education Demonstration on 19th November

Council Notes:

1. The Higher Education Bill is currently making its way through parliament
2. The HE Bill contains proposals to increase tuition fees, and allow differentiation of fees between institutions based on highly questionable assessments of 'Teaching Excellence'. It also proposes to form an 'Office for Students' with no student representation whatsoever.
3. With parliamentary approval, Oxford University already intends to increase fees for on-course students in 2017-18 to £9250
4. The NUS (National Union of Students) and the UCU (University and College Union) have called a national demo in London on November 19th for free, accessible and quality further and higher education across the UK, and to demand an end to the marketisation of university and college education.
5. That a full risk assessment of the demonstration is being undertaken by the NUS.
6. That NUS have taken measures to ensure that the demo is as accessible as possible and there will be specific provision for disabled students

7. In 2014, OUSU Council voted to support the NUS campaign for free education and put forward £300 to the cost of a coach to the national demonstration. It was also passed by fifteen JCRs.
8. In 2015, OUSU Council contributed £300 to the national demonstration against the abolition of maintenance grants, also supported by numerous JCRs.

Council Believes:

1. Oxford students should be given the opportunity to speak out against changes that will significantly affect their access to education
2. The Student Union should enable students to engage with and inform education policy on an institutional and national level
3. In addition to current students, if implemented, numerous policies in the HE Bill would be exceptionally detrimental to encouraging access and widening participation at Oxford, disproportionately affecting those from marginalised and/or underrepresented groups who have are more inclined to be debt averse.

Council Resolves:

1. To mandate the sabbatical officers to organise coaches from Oxford to the demonstration appropriate to the number of people who want to attend or who we expect to attend.
2. To mandate the sabbatical officers to provide students attending the demonstration with information and support ensuring their safety.
3. To pass £300 from Council's discretionary fund to go towards the cost of the coaches, and to mandate the sabbatical officers to sell tickets for the coaches at a cost of £3.
4. To mandate the sabbatical officers to email the student body with information about the demonstration and coach tickets.
5. To encourage common rooms to pass motions for more supporting funds.

Proposed: Bethany Currie (Corpus Christi)

Seconded: Eden Bailey (Magdalen)

Eden Bailey (Magdalen) – NUS and UCU holding demo on 19 Nov in London protesting Government proposals on higher education, which threaten access to higher education. Council has provided similar funding to demos in previous years, so students can attend regardless of financial circumstances. Will affect students so want to give opportunity for students to attend.

Taisie Tsikas (Wadham) – how much hoping to get from JCRs?

Beth Currie (Corpus) – need £400 from common rooms - less than previous years. Can reimburse common rooms if we go over, or can put on extra coach.

Will Jarrett (Exeter) – if you get enough from common rooms, will £3 be refunded?

Eden – no – small sum encourages people to come. Have done it for free in past and find there are more no-shows. Also to provide water and other safety issues.

Matthew Collyer (New) – how many students have come to similar events before?

Eden – Depends but budgeted based on 97.

Olly Rice (St Cross) – what is Council budget for year?

Chair - £1500.

No more debate. Vote held – 52 for, 1 against, 3 abstentions.

Motion passed.

3. Refunding the LGBTQ Campaign for the costs of printing their LGBTQ+ Survival Guide

Council Notes:

1. That OUSU's LGBTQ Campaign put together and printed 200 copies of a 'survival guide' aimed at providing LGBTQ+ freshers with advice and support.
2. That the LGBTQ Campaign has a budget of £200 per term to cover all events and expenses.
3. That the cost of printing the Survival Guide came to £280.

Council Believes:

1. That the LGBTQ Survival Guide provides a friendly introduction to life at Oxford as an LGBTQ+ student, and will be a helpful source of resources and advice for LGBTQ freshers.
2. That part of the role of the LGBTQ Campaign is to improve the experiences of LGBTQ+ students at Oxford, and that the survival guide contributes to this goal.

Council Resolves:

1. To pay £280 to the LGBTQ Campaign to cover the costs of printing the LGBTQ Survival Guide.

Proposed: Catherine Kelly (St Hugh's)

Seconded: Tilda Agace (Wadham)

Catherine Kelly (St Hugh's) – from welfare survey, find that LGBTQ (and especially trans) students are particularly affected. Guide contains welfare resources, information on self-care. Went down well at Freshers' Fair. Cost £280; can't afford to pay with Campaign budget as they have other events, expenses for speakers, snacks. Next term is LGBTQ History Month so don't want to use up.

Brendon Casey (St Edmund Hall) – how much did the campaign spend last term?

Catherine – don't have exact figure. Usually use up budget.

Marina Lambrakis (St John's) – clarified this is from this year's budget – as this is new financial year.

Zoe Mathias (Regent's Park) – can argument be made for raising budget?

Catherine – would be in favour. Can be hard to organise speaker events, can't offer fee, don't want marginalised people to speak for free. In favour, ditto similar campaigns.

Marina Lambrakis – Clarified that OUSU has 12 campaigns, with standardised system for assigning budget to each. Higher for Disability Community as costs more for accessibility. If we do this for one campaign, will have to do for others. Only limited amount from university, have to budget in advance; this is amount at the moment.

Catherine – added that Campaign asks common rooms for funding as well, where possible.

Dan Mead (St John's) – is there precedent for bringing motions after money has already been spent?

Nick Cooper (St John's) – confirmed it has happened before.

Alex (Somerville) – is plan for survival guides to do every year; incorporated into costs for each year?

Catherine – first year so campaign need to discuss; would like to, need to think ahead.

Vote – 56 for, 0 against, 2 abstentions.

Motion passes.

Below the line:

4. OUSU Divisional Board Rep Appointments 2016/17

Council Notes:

1. In Hilary 2016, OUSU conducted a review of the appointment, support and role of the Divisional Board Representatives after consultation with various stakeholder groups. The result of the review was to move the appointments of Divisional Board Reps from OUSU Council election to an application and appointment based system.
2. In Trinity 2016, OUSU opened applications for the 8 available positions and interviewed a number of candidates for positions. Interviews were undertaken by the 2015/16 OUSU Vice Presidents (Access & Academic Affairs) and (Graduates).
3. OUSU Council are still required to approve the appointments.
4. Appointments for the remaining positions will happen this term.

Council Resolves:

1. To approve the appointment of:
 - a. Anastasia Tsikas as Undergraduate Social Science Divisional Board Rep
 - b. Oliver Rice as Postgraduate Social Science Divisional Board Rep
 - c. Zoe Firth as Undergraduate Medical Science Divisional Board Rep
 - d. George Hagggett as Undergraduate Humanities Divisional Board Rep
 - e. Ayush Prasad Undergraduate MPLS (Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences) Divisional Board Rep

Proposed: Eden Bailey (Magdalen)

Seconded: Marina Lambrakis (St John's)

No request for discussion. **Motion passes.**

Marina Lambrakis (St John's) – three graduate positions still up for grabs. Please contact us if you want to run.

f. Items for Debate

1. OUSU Council voting reform - Will Jarrett (Exeter), Harry Williams (Exeter) (15 minutes)

Will Jarrett (Exeter) – plans to bring motion, but gathering thoughts first. Current Council voting system flawed: 3 votes per common room – President, OUSU rep, President-appointed third vote.

Eden Bailey – clarification; up to common room's constitution to decide how votes are allocated.

Will – Clarified it was only *some* common rooms where President appoints, but as OUSU rep only holds one vote, don't have =whole college incorporated into vote. Difficult for OUSU rep to encourage people to vote as most votes disregarded in first past the post system. Presidents often appoint third vote – get two thirds of the votes, so undemocratic. Third vote system undemocratic – can be stacked on controversial motions. Proposes that Council still meets fortnightly, has motions in same way, and amendments can be made. Votes would only be advisory – sent to all students, who can then vote. Results of motions then distributed to entire university. Benefits – every Oxford student gets a vote, which is democratic. Engagement with OUSU would also go up. OUSU reps sometimes go against common room; has happened before. Council can still amend.

Chair – option for short factual points to proposer first.

Matthew Collyer (New) – asked what position is within University rules on extent to which OUSU Council can make on how it runs, and how long University approval would take.

Nick Cooper – some changes could need University approval. Has taken 12 months in past, but those changes were more complicated.

Dane Rodgers (Merton) – how will amendments work? Will they be discussed at Council?

Will – idea was to have them debated in Council, and then all amendments sent out to students.

Dan Mead (St John's) – what is open rate of emails?

Jo (OUSU staff) – New communications manager at OUSU. Was 27% last year; most recent 73% on fees email. Facebook engagement also up. Hoping to go up more with time.

Tom Wadsworth (St John's) – how much time would it take to campaign like this and not Council?

Will – can't see why it would take more time. More democratic.

Eden Bailey – are you aware of new provision in Council rules for all student consultations if Council doesn't vote clearly by a 2/3 majority?

Will – yes, but problem is motions often pass unanimously. Difficult to oppose in Council if person wants to, if all others have spoken in favour. Easier to oppose online.

Eden Bailey – how would people be equally informed of arguments; would Council debate be filmed online? How much resource do you think that would take?

Will – good point. Advisory vote from Council could be used to give summary of arguments.

Taisie Tsikas (Wadham) – stated she sympathises that most don't understand Council, but lots of Council are administrative motions. Referendums takes up lots of time and effort – was difficult in NUS referendum, with campaigns explaining to students; needed lots of technological effort, and lots of rules. Was similar format in that Council put question to student body. Having referendums all the time, people would lose interest; usual referendum topics are interesting. Also giving people the power to set the question, gives the power; Council could still act as normal, for example by putting in large amendments. Should encourage people to engage by giving Council power so reps turn up.

Sandy Downs (Corpus) – do you envisage requiring a minimum response rate/quorum?

Will – good point. Happy to include.

Linde Wester (Teddy Hall) – asked what turnout was for OUSU elections, and difference between undergraduates and graduates. Also asked how it would affect Council turnout.

Will – Second question: Council would still have power, so don't see problem with turnout. Currently ends outside the Council room; slight dip in Council attendance might be ok if more people engaged.

Eden Bailey – clarified 18% overall student turnout (4% graduate students) in last main elections.

Orla White – Council gives votes to OUSU liberation campaigns and officers to ensure representation of minority groups. Asked how similar representation and expertise would be ensured.

Will – agree that is weakness of proposed system. Question of campaigns getting out to members.

Matt Hoser (Harris Manchester) – asked if there would be a need to publish turnout on every vote. OUSU may find embarrassing if low turnout numbers.

Will – felt current cycle of low turnout and low engagement; giving everyone vote should increase turnout. If it didn't, indicative of low interaction with OUSU; important to flag.

Lucas (Wadham) – asked if current “below the line” motions would also go to referendum.

Will – not sure at this stage. Similarly considered veto for motions that were horrendously opposed in Council. Seems sensible to have them resolved in Council instead.

Tom Wadsworth – takes time to campaign: representatives from OUSU campaigns and minority groups were on both sides of NUS campaign; felt need to spend time publicising. Very difficult for minority groups; easier in Council as better represented. Will force minority groups to use time.

Marina Lambrakis – encourage you to consider logistics. Running referendum – requires a lot of resource; staff time, money. Limited pots of money – on a bi-weekly basis, would be a strain. Needs a staff member to do just that. Precedent in electing divisional board representatives. Used to be elected in Council, moved to all student ballot for similar reasons to this, but abysmal turnout.

Sam Banks (Merton) – explains how it works in Merton JCR about votes allocated for common room. Require third voter to be member of committee; directly accountable to JCR. Do on occasion mandate all three to vote in particular ways if we want to. Concern that it takes time to go through motions, go through what has been discussed, come to decision. Asking Oxford students to do this fortnightly a lot to ask. Very few people who don't have vote turn up to Council; difficult to engage.

Dan McAteer (Pembroke) – said we'd either have to decide what goes to referendum or not (decision would be with Council), or spam everyone with administrative motions. Better to do like Pembroke; have Survey Monkey for controversial motions. Follow them if turnout above 25%.

Eden Bailey – is possible to mandate officers. Worry about opportunity to debate and discuss, and if voting would be informed decision. Huge effort for those informing – making accessible videos, providing info. Delegation system allows distribution of labour for discussion. All student votes this frequently would damage engagement. Engagement with OUSU is issue, but have strategy, social media up. Should try out recent changes first. This change would affect minority groups more.

Request to close meeting. No requests to continue. **Meeting ended.**