

3rd week Council Hilary 2005

Held at 2.30pm on Friday 4th February
in the Buttery, St Antony's College

Rob Vance (Wadham): Welcome to St Antony's. Thanks to Dan Russel.

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Rob Vance (Wad): 7th week minutes partially done. Remainder may have to be a summary of discussion and is coming asap.

Dan Russel (St Antony's) Can they be rejustified?

c. Ratifications in Council

John Blake (St Hugh's): Elections for VP Grads. PGA has selected Julian Brown to do the representative functions.

All: Claps

JB: We are very grateful to him.

RV (Wad): Ratifications from Post Graduate Assembly. PGA meets as a closed caucus and all decisions need to be ratified here. Normally a formality but here some motions are unconstitutional.

RV (Wad): Motion 4 asks for a supplement to the VP Grads salary. This can't be done outside of the amended budget.

Nicky Ellis (Queen's): Addition to salary or increased overheads?

RV (Wad): Salary

DR (StAnt): Salary. Essential discussion. Is very hard to get a VP Grad when they could be earning a lot more.

RV (Wad): Not ratified. Taken as a strongly indicative poll.

Graduate Campaign

RV (Wad): Requests for funds must come under the budget.

DR (St Ant): Taken into consideration?

RV (Wad): Yes.

IT motion

RV (Wad): Exactly the same.

JB (St Hughs): IT in OUSU atrocious. Will update IT across the board as fast as we can when we have the money.

Motions 6 7 9 10 also all ratified.

Motion 8 fails.

d. Elections in Council

JB StH: I am acting RO. Elections for junior tribunal reserve panel. The rest stay on until they resign, which they may want to do. We have to have a hust.

Elections for junior tribunal reserve panel

Husts

Ed Mason (Trinity): OUCA. Ashamed. More than happy to put in the time and follow the rules, be impartial and fair

Joanna Lee Morrison (ChCh): No political affiliations. Have the time. Am a JCR Pres so understand constitutions. I'm impartial I have no OUSU connections. Sounds like fun.

Chris Allen (Som): OULC. Been in past two elections. Junior tribunal important. Got the time if needed.

Questions

Timothy Bennett (SPC) Letter of the law or spirit?

JLM: Combination but spirit

CA: Letter of the law where it's written. Elect regs carefully written.

EM: Letter has to be most important thing. Passed by council. Shouldn't have passed if not right.

RV (Wadh) RO VS Blake. Commonly known as 'The Vance Interpretation'. I love myself. Are you aware of it?

CA: Many RO vs Blakes.

JLM: No comment

EM: No comment.

Nicky Ellis: How many times will you read the electoral regs?

EM: Til I understand

JLM: Same

CA: Once or twice.

Elections for DRO

JB (StH) There is one candidate. Who is not here. Would anybody like a hust?

e. Reports from the Sabbatical Officers

The President: John Blake (St Hugh's)

Much work is in process. There will be cheese in Filth tonight. Thanks to Chris and Gareth for ZooNaNa which is very good. Holocaust memorial day also excellent. Thanks to all especially Claire Chalmers.

Questions to the President

TP (St X): When can we expect an RO's report?

JB: Coming soon. Probably 5th week.

The Vice President-Welfare: Nicky Ellis (Queen's)

Not much to all to my written report. Holocaust memorial day very successful. There is a long delay in getting appointments with the counselling service. I am meeting with them next week. If anyone comes to see me I will outline other options.

Questions to the VP- Welfare

Emily Pull (Exeter): How long is the waiting list?

NE: Am trying to find out exact length.

The Vice President- Academic Affairs: Linsey Cole.

Absent.

The Vice President-Women: Rebecca Wilkinson

On Wednesday I went to the pro-choice conference with Claire. PGA- remembered to go. Very good. We should all involve ourselves, not just the VPG. I've been approached by people thinking about standing for VP-Wo which is good.

The Vice President Graduates: Julian Brown

I was ratified last night to take on representative parts of the job sitting on the university academic affairs and welfare committees. I'm not taking on the case work but the other OUSU sabbaticals are covering it and are very good. Any questions come and ask me or them.

The Vice President- Charities and Community: Ian King

Most is in my report. I apologise for the long waffle. This morning we started jail break. 8.20-8.50 hyper police officer showed us cells and we had photos taken caged in a lorry etc. Very fun. Will hopefully be bigger next year. Tsunami gig going well, need help with technical and need to borrow some gear.

Questions:

Stephanie Johnston (Hert): We've got some equipment you could borrow. Can you transport it?

IK: We can arrange it. We have temperamental OUSU van.

Reports from Part-time exec

Claire Chalmers (Univ)

Holocaust memorial day follows on from Sab Reports. Nicky's service and vigil the main focus but film also interesting and well attended. Emma and Matt organised Amnesty Letter writing. Good to have variety.

Emma Jones (Keble)

Thanks for support for Azim and his brother especially St Johns JCR President.

Another part of my job is campaigns co-ordination. New Exec very committed to helping JCR officers – WomCam, OUSU Reps. Trying to compile information about who common room officers are. They've been very useful to Keble.

h. Emergency Motions

Motion of Support for some Iraqi's and their trade unions.

Laura Schwartz (Wadham): This guy has been kidnapped and had disgraceful things done to him. Would like to support by letter and by supporting fundraising gig organised by OULC to support Iraqi unions.

TP (StX): 3 aspects concerning.

- 1) Spends £20 on political causes. Not students as students.
- 2) "Increasing violent repression" – would like substantiation of this claim.
- 3) Not good to associate with particular political groups.

NE (Queens): We can't mandate the OxStu. Worries about the slogan

RV (Wadh): Advertising in OxStu controlled by OSSL. We can't mandate the board. the £20 is subject to council.

Nat Ogborn (Magd): Concerned about cheap anti-americanism.

Ls (Hert): UV?

JB: We can't rule on UV til it's passed. The rule was made a year ago. If council resolves we should do it in principle I'll look into whether its UV?

DR (St Ant): I just oppose this motion. I agree with sentiments but it's badly phrased. The slogan is troublesome particularly among grads – very diverse range of backgrounds and areas of study. They don't want to get involved in OUSU because OUSU is too political. Our jobs become bad if OUUS adopts that slogan. Personally happy to amend to remove objectionable parts and sentiment focussing on particular groups. Iraq is rough. Solidarity with suffering but not the correct forum.

RW (SEH): Move to Vote

MTV Contested

In support of MTV

RW (SEH): I believe we've had discussion and should vote.

In opposition

NE (Queens): Amendment on the table. Parts of this are sensible.

MTV failed.

NE (Queens), Seconded by CA (Som) to remove the slogan.

NE (Q): Remove the slogan. It's a dodgy slogan. The working classes do not need glory. We shouldn't be wishing disgrace on people. However kidnapping is bad.

L Schwartz (Wad): The slogan is theatrical but a translation. Not supporting terrorists – it's a good expression of solidarity to trade unions.

CA (Som): Move to Vote on the amendment.

CA (Som): Don't think we need to debate about translation. Other issues behind this.

In opposition

RV (Wad): Voting on the amendment

Amendment passes.

EM (Tri): Was about to suggest that amendment. Very good amendment. These people are working under difficult conditions. We should support them. But student's as students at the same time.

RW (SEH): Move to Vote

MTV Contested

In support of MTV

RW (SEH): We've heard all of the arguments.

In opposition

TP (StX): I have an amendment. Don't agree with the money. And we haven't looked at the ideology.

MTV passes.

RV (Wad): Voting on motion as amended.

In support:

LS (Wad): I'm a grad. This is an issue that concerns me as a graduate. This is £20 spend on students as members of NO SWEAT and OULC. Political factions – support for a kidnapped person and not just one trade union but all of the equally.

In opposition:

DR (St Ant) Should have solidarity with the Iraqi people but this is too specific, it doesn't deal with the complexities. Suni's this week, Shias next – how often? If you want motion for the people of Iraq then fine but OUSU shouldn't take sides. We should reflect the wider world and this university.

Motion as amended passes 25 votes to 23.

RO's announcement:

JB (StH) Those standing elected to junior tribunal in the following order: Jo Lee Morrison, Ed Mason, Chris Allen.
Andrew Grey appointed DRO by 38 votes to 9.

i. Passage of Motions Nem Con

Motion 2. "Academic strategy Green Paper" passes nem con.

n. Other Motions

1. Oxford Student Services Limited

Council notes

1. That last term No Sweat and Ethics Committee put proposals to Oxford Limited to incorporate workers' right to organise independent trade unions into its Ethical Code.
2. That Oxford Limited has provisionally agreed to this, is currently in negotiation with its contractors and will report back in March.
3. The effectiveness of past OUSU petition campaigns on issues such as free education and University investments in the arms trade.

Council believes

1. That the student body needs to show its support for incorporating workers' rights into the Ethical Code in order to guarantee the strongest possible outcome from Oxford Limited.
2. That a petition campaign would be a good way to do this.

Council resolves

1. To work with No Sweat to organise a petition with the wording set out below, with a target of 3,000 signatures, mandating the Executive to write to all JCRs/MCRs etc and relevant University societies asking for their help in gathering signatures.

"We the undersigned support the proposals currently being discussed by Oxford University to include workers' right to form independent trade unions and bargain collectively in the ethical standards governing production of University merchandise."

Proposed: Laura Schwartz (Wadham) Seconded: Kate Ferguson (Wadham)

In proposition

LS (Wad): Motion fairly self-explanatory. All ready encouraged Oxford Limited to sign up to ethics committee code. Tom Dale has been talking to the university who have been very cooperative. The petition will make people aware and let students know what OUSU is doing. Also it will put our efforts in the public eye and make them keep their promise to adopt the code.

SFQ's

TP(StX) Is it true that No Sweat is dominated by the revolutionary Trotskyite group the 'Alliance for Workers Liberty'?

RV (Wad): The chair rules that question out of order.

Steve Longdon (Merton): Given that education is no longer free, in what way were past OUSU campaigns effective?

LS(Wad): Willing to retract, I think this is one of the best ways to resolve an issue as opposed to OUSU doing it in a close room.

TP(StX): Is it not true...

RV(Wad): Neither short nor factual. Ruled out of order

NE(Q): What is the relationship between the AWL and No Sweat?

LS(Wad): Yes, many members of AWL are members of No sweat but No sweat has 3,000 members and the AWL only 200. OUSU policy all ready supports No sweat.

RV (Wad): I'm not allowing it to be called domination. Move to debate, any opposition?

Alan Strickland (Merton): I question the neutrality of the chair.

RV (Wad): I am neutral.

MTV

MTV Opposed

In proposition:

RW(SEH): This is all ready policy. Lets just vote on it.

In opposition:

TP(StX): We haven't had the opposition speech yet. We need one speech against.

MTV ruled out.

TP (StX): 3 problems. Firstly No Sweat is dominated by the AWL. Secondly I think OUSU needs to prioritise issues. We can't concentrate solely on ethical campaigns. There are other, more important student issues. Our energies should go towards students. Thirdly I find ethical trading iffy in principle. You end up buying from the most affluent workers and it has ironic and perverse effects.

JB(StH): We will hear from the chair of ethics committee in a moment. The composition of the student body changes by 1/3 every year. No Sweat may have some links with the AWL but we have policy in favour of it. Tom's last statement is a gentle way of saying people who get every little should be grateful for getting anything at all. We should solve the root cause. Laura – this is all ready policy but I don't think a petition is the best way of getting what we want.

MTV

MTV opposed.

RW(SEH): Great but boring.

Tom Dale (CCC): If I'm going to be mandated to do something I think I should be able to say something about it.

MTV defeated.

Peter Hughes (Hertford): I'm opposed to sweatshops. However I'm for students for students. This motion has an explicitly socialist agenda. Not all students are socialists. We shouldn't alienate them.

TP (StX): There are big changes in admissions coming. That is something we should prioritise. Students as students. There is a large variety of poverty. This gives more to people who are relatively well off and makes the very poorest poorer. Don't think we should be taking a political stance.

TD (CCC): I have no political affiliations. Ethics committee and No Sweat are all ready mandated to work closely together. Clean Clothes 1998 is about standards not money – basis of human rights and self-respect. Don't think that a petition would be effective against Oxford Limited. We don't know what they're going to offer. It's indeterminate so we shouldn't push now. Petitions are hard work. We shouldn't undertake to do one without a clear idea of what they're offering. It may be that in a couple of weeks ew can have everything we've asked for.

Emma Jones (Keb): We can have a conversation about the best way to show solidarity but we all have a right to be in the student union. Hypocrisy to us doing business badly. World affairs do impact on student life. Student's want to engage – we're here to get an education.

MTV

In proposition:

LS (Wad) We're not voting on whether or not sweat shops are good or bad, just about the petition. It's not going to be energy that should go elsewhere – I've done it and it's not that hard. We just need a seal of approval. Tom Packer – we're not talking about taking contracts away but improving standards in situ. We have a human right to trade unions here in the UK and US – we shouldn't deny other people this. Tom Dale – We shouldn't wait until we've had a firm comeback. This will pressure them to give us one. We should push now so that we don't have to spend 3 years in meetings and this will raise awareness.

RV(Wad): No new info in summing up speeches.

CA (Som:) We should be allowed to respond.

NE(Q): Point of order. Allow somebody to give a comeback.

TD (ccc): On Thursday/Friday of 4th week Mike Davis will come back to us having spoken to the lawyers. We'll have a firm proposal then.

TP (StX): I oppose us spending energy on time as this and it distracting us from fundamentals. I think this is bad at this stage in negotiations to do this: we don't know the other side's position. Many things have been said but even if you disagree you shouldn't upset negotiation.

Motion fails.

Motion 3. Access to Academic Resources

Council notes

1. The variability in the provision of libraries across Oxford's colleges - both in terms of opening hours and resources contained within them.
2. That current user rights vary across Oxford's libraries, with reference and borrowing libraries fulfilling different user needs.
3. OUSU's current policy on College Inequality and the need to work towards equalising the differences between colleges.
4. That all Oxford students, regardless of their college, are assessed under the same conditions, have to meet standardised criteria and are awarded a qualification by the University of Oxford.

Council believes

1. That the inequalities between colleges should be equalised.
2. That all students should have access to all the academic resources of the University of Oxford.
3. That this access to resources should not be affected by a student's college.

Council resolves

1. To mandate the Vice-President (Access and Academic Affairs) to write to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic), the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic Services and University Collections) and the Chairman of the Conference of Colleges Librarians Committee, expressing OUSU's desire for all students, regardless of college, to be given access right to all college libraries.
2. To mandate the Vice-President (Access and Academic Affairs) to liaise with the University and the Colleges, to discuss possible logistics for this proposal, including access and borrowing rights.
3. To mandate Academic Affairs Committee liaise with common room officers to establish current college library provision and support common rooms in lobbying for greater access across all colleges.

Proposed: Linsey Cole (St. John's) Seconded: Siobhan McAndrew (Nuffield)

JB(StH): There is a discussion in the university about libraries provision. Libraries in colleges are very expensive. Everyone agrees the bod is good but discussion re departmental libraries and their rationalisation. One idea is opening up college libraries. Some already are. This is one way of beginning debate on this issue. The motion isn't sharp and neither is Linsey.

CA: The motion as it stands is too vague: could mean any number of things.

JB: No doubt it will need clarification before it can become the basis of a formal policy. Should we get to that stage, clarifications will be brought to council.

EM (Ed Mason, Trinity): What about the Green Paper's Library Strategy?

JB: The discussion in question goes beyond the scope of that.

RS (Rachel Standing, St. Hilda's): Some colleges – e.g. St. Hilda's – aren't signed up to OLIS. Will this be a problem?

JB: These things do need to be worked out. This will be a mandate to try to work them out.

No more SFQs. Debate ensues.

TB (Tim Bennet, SPC): It is nice that this is relevant to students. But what if we tried to equalise all differences between colleges? Then there would be no colleges. And there are lots of practical difficulties. And it might discourage college libraries to build their collections.

JB: We already have policy against college inequality, and for good reason. This in no way implies the end of the collegiate system; it is about justice. This motion will enable us to be part of an ongoing discussion in which these issues are raised.

RV (Rob Vance, Wadham, Chair): Tom Packer has tabled an amendment to replace 'academic resources' with 'libraries'.

For:

TP: it makes things clearer and tighter.

Against:

DR (Daniel Russell, St. Antony's): but, in fact, it would be good to equalise access to academic resources.

VOTE ON AMMENDMENT: PASSES

LS (Lorna Stevenson, Hertford): The requirements of artists and scientists are different. Colleges often buy books for scientists to use for a whole term. Artists typically need books for a week at most; thus it would be more disruptive to scientists because they could lose access, for such a long period of time, to their college's books. How about a system where artists could e-mail librarians at other colleges for access?

JL-M (Jo Lee-Morrison, ChCh): I'd like to respond to John. It's no huge problem if your college hasn't got a book; you've always got the bod and departmental libraries, so it's ok, really. Chch library is very nice and often makes provision for others to use it.

SC (Stephanie Charalambous St. Hugh's): I'd like to agree with JL-M. St. Hugh's library is very good but equalisation of access will be impractical and is not ideal. What is needed is equalisation of funds; that would be much more worthwhile. So let's look at standards of equal provision; for example, making sure all libraries have certain textbooks.

RW: In fact, JL-M's point is actually in favour of the motion – access is sometimes widened and works quite well. People wouldn't use other college's libraries spuriously. Equality is good. Support this in principle and it will allow us to work out the difficulties.

Someone moves to a vote. No opposition.

RV: speech in summary?

JB: This won't be a matter of bossing people around or imposing unworkable programmes. It will allow us to present a set of ideals to the university which we would like to move toward.

NE (Nicky Ellis, Queens): Linsey no doubt knows what she is doing, but the motion is not clear. It should be clarified so as to make it a good general policy which we can look back on, in the policy document, in a few years and understand. The VP (AccAcAf) should bring another motion on this subject.

There is a vote. The motion passes.

RV: Any Other Business?

RW: Women's cabaret will be on the 26th February; if you know potential participants bring them to me. I can't dance or sing.

RV: Do people like this room? Do we want council here next week?

All: grumble rough acceptance

NE: how many people are there here this week as opposed to last?

TP: A map would be helpful.

IK (Keble): Pancake race tomorrow organised by the city centre manager, in Gloucester Green. Some JCR presidents taking part. Come and watch.

JB: Noone stood for either the VP (Women) or VP (Graduate) posts for next year so far. We will be reopening nominations until Tuesday midday.

JL-M: Next week can we have easy to print minutes, and nicely justified etc.?

RV: yes.

EJ (Keble): I'd just like to highlight that international students don't all have equal libraries rights, even within college. If you know anyone in that position, please get in contact.