



3rd Week Council Hilary Term 200 St John's Auditorium

Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes will be presented at next Council.

Ratifications in Council

All PGA motions were ratified with no questions or opposition.

Elections in Council

Election for Complaints Committee:

Sanjay Nanwani (St Peter's) was the only candidate.

Sanjay husted. OUSU is promising, would like to contribute. Aligned to personal values. Effective and meaningful. Objective decisions.

Sanjay Narwani was elected unanimously.

Reports from Executive

Martin McCluskey (President) spoke about the Policy Lapse Booklet. There hasn't been a discussion since TT 2004, so we've now created a new Policy Lapse Booklet. Email policylapseatousu.org We'll stagger discussions in Council.

Ingrid Frater discussed the graduate event planned for sixth week and also asked about mature students.

There were no questions to the exec.

Motions passed nem com

Constitutional Review Working Groups
Equivalent and Lower Level Qualifications
Mardi Gras

These three passed nem com.

Other Motions

Protecting OUSU Members

James Lamming proposed the motion.

Sara Ahmadi (Univ) : Inciting violence? Is that just physical violence?

James Lamming: assumed physical violence, but left to Executive to decide and Council to check.

Move to vote

53 voted in favour of motion.

Motion passed.

Access and Admissions Policy

James Lamming proposed the motion.

Andrew Scott Taggart (Wadham): what's our policy on module grades?

James: up to you to decide

There were twelve amendments discussed, as follows:

i. Submitted by James Lamming

Always call admissions tests "pre-admissions tests"

Accepted as friendly.

ii. Submitted by.....????

Re-word Council believes 1:

"The University should make every effort to ensure that the students applying and being admitted to study at Oxford are the top students with sufficient levels of English,, in terms of academic potential, in the world".

Accepted as friendly.

iii. Submitted by Jonny Medland (Queen's)

Re-word Council believes 3:

"When judging academic potential, educationally based contextual data, including full secondary school education history, must be used to inform decisions about admitting students at the margin after interviews".

Jonny Medland (Queen's). more data at margins to be used.

Martin Williams (St Anne's): why after interviews?

Jonny: not sure

Stefan Baskerville (Univ): why not in the next sentence?

James Stafford (St Hugh's): would this include things like suspension?

Jonny: this was the sort of thing we were going for

Aidan Simpson: will schools hand over this data?

Jonny: yes

Dani: mitigate against moving school

James Lamming opposed the motion. Would want this to be used at all places, concerned after interviews. Should be objective data.

Martin Nelson (LMH): there's a large difference between data and asking a headteacher about a pupil.

Lack of clarity

Ben Karlin (New): contextual data would be about school, not individual. Change of school.

James Stafford (St Hugh's): is there evidence of such a change of schools.

Dani Quinn: tabloids say so

Sian Renwick (Queen's): surely it could work the other way?

James Stafford: can it not come from the schools?

James Lamming: contextual data from all schools.

Vote on the amendment

18 in favour

39 against

9 abstentions

Amendment failed.

i.v. Submitted by Jonny Medland (Queen's)

Delete last sentence of Council believes 3 (about what contextual data is used).

Jonny Medland proposed: nothing inherently wrong with looking at socioeconomic background at margins.

Ben Karlin: just deletion not a replacement?

Jonny: leaving it optional

Claire Addison speech in opposition .This will put off state school pupils.Would be embarrassed to know that interviewer knew their social background.

James Lamming: you would be looking at schools, not individuals.

Ben Karlin (New): this will be overlap or double counting. Best way is to look at academic results.

James Stafford: this smacks of dissecting applicants.

Sian Renwick: would oppose this amendment, should be on basis of academic potential.

Amendment failed.

v. Submitted by Jonny Medland *Queen's)

In Council believes 5, change "provide more bursaries" to "provide adequate bursaries"

Jonny: should be adequate, creating more wouldn't necessarily help.

Accepted as friendly.

vi. Submitted by Sam Wheeler (LMH)

Strike Council further believes 1 (pre-admissions tests)

Sam (LMH): amendment re admissions tests. they should exist all the time, not just when there are lots of applicants.

Sian Renwick: HAT is the only one that is Oxford-only.

Sam: is in favour of pre-admissions tests.

James Lamming: PATs are to test aptitude. There is now a need for over-subscribed tests. Not to be coached, more aptitude testing.

Martin Nelson (LMH): works with this, it is impossible to be coached for these tests.

Marrius (Worcester): W also voted to strike this. Should be up to tutors.

Sam: not fair

James Lamming: this is only about Pre-Admissions Tests

Summary speech in proposition:

Sam: PATs should not be used

James: PATs are a good way of doing this

Amendment failed

vii. Submitted by Chris Bennetts
Strike Council believes 2

Chris Bennetts (Pembroke): Oxford should go for positive discrimination

James Lamming: against everything Chris said. Should have an objective, fair and transparent system.

Daniel Lowe: clarified what this means.

Chris: should be mindful of people's backgrounds.

Jonny: disagree with this amendment. Queen's thought about this. Don't want to feel they're here because they were discriminated for positively.

Sam (LMH): more female undergrads at the moment here. Should we positively discriminate in favour of women.

Andrew ??? (Wadham): agree with Jonny. Should feel we're here because of academic merit.

Move to vote.

Amendment failed.

viii. Submitted by James Stafford (St Hugh's)
Strike Council further believes 2 on written submissions, and replace it with "Continue the use of written submissions as an integral part of the admissions process".

James Stafford (St Hugh's): proposed.

Martin Lennon (St Anne's): opposed the amendment. Written work takes time and effort and should be rewarded.

James Stafford: if you've been coached through an essay, you'll be screwed at interview.

Isabel Thompson (Balliol): it says on the form how long you've had to do the work.

Amendment passed.

ix. Submitted by Jack Wellby (Jesus)

Change the last sentence of Council believes 3 to:

"This contextual data does not include anything reflecting the socioeconomic status of an applicant's background including, but not limited to, the number of students in receipt of Educational Maintenance Allowance or free school meals, as this does not reflect an applicant's own academic potential."

Accepted as friendly.

x. Submitted by Claire Addison (OUSU/Pembroke)

Insert into Council believes 3:

"or equivalent qualifications such as Scottish highers and advanced highers, and the International Baccalaureate"

Accepted as friendly.

xi. Submitted by Marius Kempe (Worcester)

Strike Council Believes 3

James Lamming spoke against.

Amendment failed.

xii. Submitted by ????????? (Balliol)

Strike Council further believes 3 and replace with "Provide honest information on subjects, including a list of subjects that will harm the application."

James Lamming: this would not be a good idea, as it's incredibly negative and makes it look like there are obstacles to getting into Oxford. Cambridge have tried and it hasn't worked well.

Amendment failed.

xiii. Submitted by Ingrid Frater (OUSU/St Hugh's)

Call this motion "undergraduate Access and Admissions"

Accepted as friendly.

Motion passed.

Appointment of a New Vice Chancellor

Martin McCluskey proposed the motion. He encouraged the use of the email address.

Amendment proposed by Ben Karlin (New)

"To submit Martin McCluskey as the preferred OUSU candidate for Vice-Chancellor."

Amendment withdrawn.

James Lamming: would like a VC with a proven track record of working with students and pro-student representation.

Amendment proposed by Ingrid Frater (OUSU)/Stefan Baskerville (Univ)

“Council Resolves:

1. To encourage JCR and MCR Presidents to advertise this email address around their colleges and on their email lists and for OUSU to continue ongoing consultation with Common Rooms to determine what students would like from the new Vice Chancellor.
2. As stands
3. To mandate OUSU's President to write to the University asking for greater representation for students in the future when selecting a new Vice Chancellor.”

Amendment accepted as friendly.

Motion passed.

University Funding

Ingrid Frater suggested that this is a very important motion which has perhaps been overlooked so far, and which should really be discussed in Common Rooms more.

Motion tabled to 5th week,

Alternative Assessment

Amendment proposed by Dani Quinn to strike Council further believes I.

James Osun-Sanmi (St John's): would this have a detrimental effect?

Jonny Medland (Queen's): strong feeling in JCR that it should be up to students to structure their own degree.

Dani Quinn (Merton): no one expects undergrads to do any meaningful research.

David Giles (CCC): this is irrelevant for maths. Projects have to be very difficult to be meaningful.

Claire Addison (OUSU): if there's no time put aside for research, people can't.

St Catz: we should be improving it as an option

Ben Karlin (New): compromise situation. Lobby university to make it better-managed.

Amendment passed.

Amendment proposed by Ingrid Frater

“Council further believes:

1. All Oxford undergraduate courses should have at least one optional module that is not assessed by a timed written examination, but by an alternative assessment method, and that optional modules should be encouraged by departments and faculties with sufficient time allowed for students to complete this module.”

Amendment accepted as friendly.

Motion passed.

Language Centre

Daniel Lowe (SEH): wouldn't work to have language learning too much.

Sarah Hutchinson (St Cross): good to learn languages, especially in work.

Mark Mills (SEH): not keen to have it as a module in my degree

Jack Graves (Jesus) could be unfair if you're already a linguist?

Procedural motion to pass the motion in parts – agreed that this would be the easiest way.

The following was passed:

“1. What language skills Oxford students should possess:

All Oxford students should graduate having had the opportunity to develop competent communication skills in at least two different languages.

All Oxford students should graduate having had the opportunity to develop basic communication skills in at least one language other than their native tongue.

Oxford University should at the least maintain the status quo of providing language support at different levels for some students.

2. How Oxford students should develop language skills:

All courses should offer options that allow students to use and develop language skills.

The Language Centre should provide language tuition separate to a student's course, preferable free of charge.

3. How Oxford students should be required to demonstrate language skills:

Language skills should only be mentioned on a transcript when a student has gained a qualification from the Oxford Language Centre.”

AOB

Martin McCluskey asked for people to contact him if they're keen to be involved in OUSU working groups.