

Minutes of 3rd week Michaelmas 2001 OUSU Council
Held on 26 October 2001 at 2pm in Wadham Old Refectory

Items a & b: Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting (1st week Michaelmas) were made available. No objections were made to them.

Item c: Ratifications in Council

Appointments made at the Postgraduate Assembly held on Tuesday of 2nd week were ratified.

As a result of this, the Graduate Divisional Board Representatives are:

Liz Chare (Linacre) – Life and Environmental Sciences
John Cook (LMH) – Social Sciences
Andrew Ross (St Peter's) – Maths and Physical Sciences
Edward Pooley (Brasenose) – Medical Sciences

The Graduate Committee Representatives are:

Andrew van der Vlies (Lincoln) – Curators of the University Library Committee
Andrew van der Vlies (Lincoln) – Bodlean Subcommittee
John Cook (LMH) – Committee for the Careers Service
Heidi Kurtz (St Peter's) – Property Management Committee
Michael Izzo (Lincoln) – Rules Committee

In addition, Anthony Fairclough (ex-Somerville) was ratified as Returning Officer and Eleanor Thompson (Wadham) was ratified as Deputy Returning Officer.

Item d: Elections in Council

Husts were held for the election for University Council Representative.

Sonia Sodha (St Hilda's) and Trista de Genova (SHE) were the two candidates.

Miss Sodha husts first. She outlines her experience on OUSU executive and feels this will be of use to her on University Council.

Trista de Genova husts afterwards. She is a post-graduate and she informs Council that she has experience in student representation from her previous university in the United States.

Ruth Hunt (President) asks the candidates what the place of University Council is in the University's governing process.

Ms de Genova says that it can be important for student services and for liason with the community.

Sonia Sodha says it is the supreme governing body of the university.

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) asks the candidates what political parties they are a member of and what their political views are.

Sonia Sodha says that she is a Lib-Dem and would describe herself as left-of-centre.

Trista de Genova says that she is left-of-centre and would describe herself as a 'social democrat'.

Ruth Hunt asks the candidates how they would deal with the confidentiality requirement imposed on attendees at University Council.

Both say that they would find no problem with abiding by the requirement.

Ruth asks the candidates one final question as to whether they would be happy with the requirement to wear smart clothes and a gown to Council.

They both say that they would do so.

The next election is for OUSU's representative on the Oxford & District Trades Council.

Ruth Hunt is the sole candidate for this post. She husts for it and says that there is precedent for an OUSU president being on the Trades Council as Kirsty McNeill did it last year.

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) asks her if she thinks students should have anything to do with the trade union movement.

She says that they should as, among other things, OUSU is a union.

Oscar Van Nooijen (Queen's) asks her if she is a member of any union other than OUSU.

She says that she isn't.

Ed Griffiths (St John's) asks her if the Trades Council did anything she really agreed or disagree with last year.

She says that it didn't.

Nick Clarke (Somerville) asks her if she would be willing to discuss issues that weren't to do with students as students in the Trades Council.

Ruth says that she would if that was what the majority of the members of the Student Union Council wanted to do.

The next hust is for the Advisory Panel on Disabilities. The two candidates are: Regan Early (Wadham) and Penelope Berrill (St Hilda's).

Regan Early (Wadham) husts first. She explains that she has experience in this field due to her work on disabilities issues as part of her OUSU exec portfolio. She has worked closely with James Rowlands, the VP-Welfare on this issue.

Penelope Berrill (St Hilda's) says she has been active in disability campaigns and issues at home in Southport. She wants to empower disabled people and is committed to equal opportunities.

James Rowlands (VP-Welfare) asks if work needs to be done on access for disabled people.

The candidates agree this is necessary. Due to the large number of historic buildings it has, Oxford is not very accessible for people with mobility difficulties. Penelope said she would try and make the university take action on these matters by the 2004 deadline.

Josh Kern (Pembroke) asks if the central disabilities fund had proved useful.

They said it had because it leveled the playing field between rich and poor colleges, so that all could afford to make adaptations to help disabled students.

The next election in Council was for places on Election Tribunal.

John Craig husts on behalf of Ed Turner (Nuffield), who could not attend because he was doing work at the Housing Rights Centre. John says Ed has experience as a CRO, as an OUSU/NUS rep, as co-chair of Finance & Funding Committee (when fees were introduced) and as the chair of Publications Complaints Board. Although Ed is a member of the Labour Party, he says that he will be able to remain impartial when adjudicating over issues to do with this year's OUSU elections.

Katherine Wheatley husts on behalf of Helena Puig Larrauri (St Hilda's). Helena is St Hilda's JCR president and is not playing a role in this year's OUSU elections. As such, she feels she can be impartial and help deliver fair verdicts.

Antonio Orlando (Univ) husts on his own behalf. He says he is not a member of any political party and this will be useful for Election Tribunal purposes.

Stuart Hudson (Jesus) cites his experience as an ex-OUSU RO. He was also on Elections Committee last year and is willing to do it again.

Eleanor Fletcher husts on behalf of Jamie Corner (Worcester). He is the MCR president of his college and has a long history of involvement and experience in OUSU and common room matters.

Oscar Van Nooijen (Queen's) ask if the candidates have the time to devote to Election Tribunal. All say they can. Eleanor points out that Jamie will most definitely not be busy as he has finished his Masters and is yet to start his PhD.

An election in Council for OUSU exec follows. Rachel Logan (New) is the sole candidate nominated.

Rachel says that she is a 2nd year doing Modern History & Politics. She is also F & F chair. She says that, as she has just changed course from PPE, she does not have much work this term and is happy to devote more time to OUSU.

Mel Marshall (Christchurch) asks if she is happy to get 'lumped' with whatever portfolios are available.

She says she is.

Catherine Sangster (VP-Grads) asks if she will do her duty mornings.

Rachel promises she will.

The election in Council for places on OUSU Publications board follows.

There are two candidates: Adam Turnball (Balliol) and Sacha Ismail (Somerville).

Adam Turnball says he has 5 year experience on his school newspaper. He says that he is looking for a career in the media when he leaves here. He has work experience in a publishing firm.

Sacha says that he has experience in the field of publications from editing the OUSU anti-racism handbook. He was also on Pubs Board last year and so can provide continuity on the Board.

Nick Clark (Somerville) asks if any of the candidates have been censured by council.

Sacha says he has. Adam has not.

Craig Nott (Wadham) asks how the candidates would deal with the previous editors of the OxStu.

Adam Turnbull feels there needs to be some communication between the current Board and the old editors. But there mustn't be too much linkage, as it would be good to get new blood into the paper and to try our new ideas.

Sacha says he will take what past editors have to say into account.

Steven Black (Keble) asks if there is ever a case for censorship.

Adam says he is liberal on these matters and generally for freedom of speech, but that people shouldn't stir up "unnecessary hatred and controversy".

Sacha also says he is for freedom of speech. He feels the issue of censorship doesn't really arise for Pubs Board as the OxStu is editorially independent and thus can't have its content regulated by them.

There is a question from Chris Hanratty (St Anne's) about whether candidates would face any conflict of interest.

Adam Turnball says this can be avoided by people in a supervisory position not writing for OUSU publications or appearing in them.

Sacha Ismail says that the only OUSU publication he is likely to appear in is the OxStu and that Pubs Board doesn't have editorial control over it.

Mel Marshall (ChCh) asks the candidates their views about the reform of the women's page (Jezebel) in the OxStu.

Adam says he doesn't have much experience of it, as he is only a Fresher and hasn't seen the old-style OxStu.

Sacha feels the new features-driven style does tend to ignore women's issues and that, thus, Jezebel should be brought back.

The hust then ends, as does the whole series of elections in Council.

Item e: Reports from sabbatical officers

Ruth Hunt (President) tells Council that she is trying to get it moved to Oriel, as the acoustics of the room and its general layout are better than the current location in Wadham Old Refectory.

Eleanor Fletcher (VP-Finance) says that, as Vice-President Finance, most of her time over the last fortnight has been taken up with shop staffing issues. She also mentions that people can earn £8 for pigging careers guides to colleges. She tells Council that, because advertising income seems to be falling dramatically, blanket cuts may have to be made in budgets.

Nick Clarke (Somerville) asks when he will get paid for his work in delivering the OxStu in 1st week.

Eleanor says he can get his money by coming to her office.

Mel Marshall (ChCh) asks if committees can negotiate over cuts. She says that Women's Committee has already taken a 20 percent cut in its budget.

Eleanor says that blanket cuts seem fairer but she will keep an open mind over certain cases.

John Craig (VP AcAf) says that the targetschools.com website has been launched

Catherine Sangster (VP-Grads) draws attention to the Postgrad Assembly minutes – which are then ratified. She also issues a reminder of the invitation to MCR Presidents for MCR presidents' drinks.

Antonia Bance (VP-Women) asks for volunteers to look after children at the weekend at a student parent event.

Item g: Emergency Motions

Antonia Bance proposes an emergency motion to affiliate OUSU to the Oxfordshire Play Association. This is passed nem con.

Item h: Passage of motions nem con

Motions 1 (Freshers' Fair Report), 2 (Business Managers' Report), 5 (Higher education), 6 (NUS national demo), 7 (Future Outlook) and 9 (Campsfield) are passed without opposition.

Motion 8 (minimum wage) is withdrawn by the proposer.

Item m: Other motions

Andy Briggs (Hertford) moves a procedural motion that Motion 10 be debated first.

Ruth Hunt objects. She wants the Electoral Regulations discussed first so that OUSU has a legal framework in which to conduct its Statutory Annual Elections.

As a result of this, Andy Briggs changes his request to one that Motion 10 be debated second. This is accepted.

Motion 3 [Electoral Regulations] is now debated.

Ruth Hunt makes a speech in proposition. She says the provisions are much the same as last year, but new rules have to come to govern RON in sabbatical elections.

An amendment is proposed by Ed Southerden (Somerville).

Ed feels that candidates should have any national political parties they are a member of (or any university political society) listed underneath their name on the ballot paper. He said that he thinks candidates should not be able to hide behind disingenuous slate names when they stand for election. Instead, their political affiliation should be made manifest.

Eleanor Fletcher opposes this. She feels candidates may be a member of a political party but they may feel this is not relevant for an OUSU job. They might then describe themselves as 'independent' because they weren't on a slate and their national political affiliations wouldn't affect the way they did their OUSU duties.

Antonia Bance says that the more information the electorate is given the better. She says not everyone reads the JMB – in which candidates' party memberships are listed.

Nick Clarke (Somerville) speaks in favour of the amendment as well. He feels honesty is important. He says there are different types of independent and that the simple label 'independent' is thus not informative. He feels candidates' political opinions may, without them necessarily realising it, affect the way in which they do the job.

Sean Sullivan (Teddy Hall) feels that the ballot paper is not the place to list this information in an OUSU election.

Ruth Hunt points out that the ballot paper is quite small and that it would take up extra space if candidates' political society memberships had to be printed on them as well.

Adam Killea (Balliol) asks for a move to a vote.

Sacha objects. He says lots of people have comments to make on the matter in question.

The move to a vote fails.

George Callaghan (Univ) feels that labels, party affiliations and such descriptions on ballot papers may be misunderstood due to confusion over the meaning of words. Says supporters of the Socialist Workers' party voted for him under such a misapprehension at previous election.

Will Straw (New) speaks in favour of the amendment.

Mel Marsahl (ChCh) opposes the amendment. She feels that people should be able to choose their own tag line. She thinks that, if party affiliations were included on the ballot paper, it might give the erroneous impression that the parties endorsed the candidate.

Ed Southerden (Somerville) says that clarity is needed in OUSU elections. Having party labels on the ballot paper is a way to do this.

Matt Selwood (New) speaks in favour of the amendment.

Ed Griffiths (St John's) takes issue with the claim that party membership won't affect the way people do their job. He says that someone can't be a loyal member of the Communist Party and not bring your politics into any elected post that they hold.

Sonia Sodha (St Hilda's) opposes the amendment. She fears de facto 'slates' could be created if people with the same party affiliation are standing in the elections even if this is not what the candidates want.

Annen Blackmore (Wadham) asks for a move to a vote. This is carried, despite opposition by Sacha Ismail.

Summing up speeches are delivered by Ed Southerden for the proposition and Mel Marshall for the opposition.

The amendment fails.

Will Straw (New) proposes a move to a vote on the rest of the Electoral Regulations. This is accepted and the motion passes nem con.

Debate now moves to Motion 10 (World Trade Centre).

Josh Kern (Pembroke) moves a procedural motion that the motion not be put.

Antonia Bance argues against the procedural motion. She feels that the issue has now been fully debated in JCRs and they should have a chance to vote on it. She feels that debate on this matter shouldn't be stifled as it affects everyone.

The procedural motion fails.

A friendly amendment is incorporated into the text of the motion as Resolves 8:

“That all press releases should include the exact breakdown of the votes cast or transparency and to ensure that minority opinion is acknowledged on such a contentious issue.”

Robin Sivapalan (Somerville) speaks in favour of the motion. He condemns the New York atrocity and the American military action against Afghanistan. He says that military action is not the way to fight Islamic fundamentalist terror. Instead, it just imposes suffering on innocent Afghans.

Chris Hanratty asks whether the proponent thinks that the Pentagon was a legitimate target.

The Chair (Dan Johnson) rules the question out of order as he feels it is not factual.

Cat Overton (Somerville) asks what restrictions on civil liberties Rob opposes. She says she is pleased with government proposals to ban incitement to religious hatred.

Rob Sivapalan says that he feels existing legislation should be able to deal with this already, if it was enforced properly.

Sean Sullivan (Teddy Hall) speaks in opposition to the motion. He doesn't feel that OUSU should have a policy on this matter. He says we should only be concerned with Oxford issues. He says he fears that OUSU will look absurd if it passes this motion.

Ruth Hunt moves a procedural motion that the 'Resolves' part of the motion be taken in parts.

This motion is carried.

Then, Ruth proposes that a recorded vote be taken so that all can find out which way JCRs voted. This is passed as well.

Andrew Thomas (St Anne's) on behalf of St Anne's JCR moves an amendment to change Believes 7.

Jin-yu Cheong (LMH) opposes the amendment on the grounds it is too minor.

Will Straw (New) echoes these sentiments.

The amendment is defeated. Mr Thomas insisted that it be minuted that the 3 St Anne's reps voted for it.

Another amendment is moved by Mr Thomas. The amendment is to delete 'AFL-CIO' from Resolves 1 and to replace it with 'New York City'.

This amendment was defeated. Mr Thomas once again asked that it be minuted that St Anne's voted for.

Antonia Bance speaks in favour of the motion. She feels that OUSU should be political and have a view on political issues. She quotes from Pastor Niemoller and alludes to the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Chris McBride (Wadham) says that the war affects everyone – including students – and thus it should be debated. We all pay for warfare through our taxes and we all face the danger of terrorism.

Sophie Wall (St Hilda's) moves an amendment to insert "Washington DC and Pennsylvania" after "New York" whenever it appears in the motion. This is carried.

Rob Sivapalan says that, now that Council has agreed that the question should be put, people should start to engage with the issues in the motion rather than just talk about OUSU's remit.

A move to a vote is made. This is rejected by Council.

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) speaks in favour of the motion. He lists the precedent of last week's motion conveying sympathy to the people of New York and the Campsfield motion that Council passed earlier in the meeting. He feels these precedents show that motions of a political nature can be debated by Council. He also says that in the 1980s, student unions were involved in the fight against apartheid and this is an equivalent issue of justice. He feels the current US attack on Afghanistan is as bad as the Soviet invasion and should be condemned in the same way.

Matt Selwood (New) says the action of the US and Britain are creating a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. He says he is a Fresher and he would be disgusted if OUSU failed to pass this motion. He also promotes the City anti-war group.

Another attempt to move to a vote is made.

Mel Marshall opposes this. The procedural motion fails to get the required 2/3 majority.

Will Straw (New) opposes some of the 'resolves'. He says that, in contrast to what it says in Resolves 2, there are no proposed restrictions on civil liberties in the pipeline. He says Resolves 3 is irrelevant to the motion. He says asylum is a separate issue from the war. Resolves 5, Will feels, is wrong because it fails to take account of the fact that there is a wide range of views on the matter and they can't be summed up in a single line. He feels the issue should, in general, be debated in debating societies rather than in OUSU council.

Ben Harris (St Hugh's) objects to what Will Straw said. He feels that there are a lot of issues in the motion because the original terror attack had a lot of repercussions. He is outraged at the belief that students should not care about issues of world politics like this.

Will Straw now calls for a move to a vote.

Chris Hanratty (St Anne's) objects. He feels there is a wide range of views on the matter and they must all be heard before we vote.

The move to a vote is carried.

Rob Sivapalan (Somerville) delivers a summing-up speech on the motion.

Mel Marshall (ChCh) said there should be summing up speeches on each Resolves as Council is voting on them separately. The Chair agrees.

No speeches made on Resolves 1.

Rob speaks in defence of civil liberties on Resolves 2. Mel Marshall opposes the Resolves as she feels it is not specific.

Rob speaks in order to sum up the proposition case for Resolves 3.

Sean Sullivan (Teddy Hall) speaks against. He says that it is too extreme and over-simplistic to oppose the whole Asylum & Immigration Act which is dozens of pages of text. The motion, he feels, over-simplifies a complex issue.

For the debate on Resolves 5, Rob waives his speech to Sacha. Sacha says that international terrorism can't be topped by American bombs raining down on Afghans from the sky. The result of the American action will just be more suffering for ordinary people.

Eleanor Thompson (Wadham) feels that the majority of students support the war and so OUSU should vote down Resolves 5.

On Resolves 6, Will Straw says people should vote against it if they oppose the other contentious lines.

No speeches are made on Resolves 7.

Rob speaks in favour of Resolves 8. Says it will ensure minority opinion is properly acknowledged.

Sean Sullivan (Teddy Hall) opposes Resolves 8 because it concedes that Council is divided. He doesn't feel that we should have a policy at all.

The recorded votes now take place on all 8 'resolves' items.

The results are:

For Resolves 1: 65 for, 6 against, 13 abstentions.

For Resolves 2: 26 for, 36 against, 24 abstentions.

For Resolves 3: 36 for, 27 against, 21 abstentions.

For Resolves 4: 71 for, 6 against, 7 abstentions.

For Resolves 5: 33 for, 34 against, 17 abstentions

For Resolves 6: 22 for, 42 against, 20 abstentions

For Resolves 7: 54 for, 12 against, 18 abstentions.

For Resolves 8: 63 for, 12 against, 9 abstentions.

The final motion to be debated is Motion 4 (Ethnic Minorities Officers). Prior to the debate, a request is made for a quorum count. The number of voting members present is 43 and so the meeting is still quorate.

Rob Sivapalan (Somerville) makes a speech in favour of the motion. He feels a special Ethnic Minorities Officer is needed to represent students from ethnic minorities and issues of concern to them. He fears that, otherwise, ethnic minority voices might not be heard on JCRs. The motion doesn't mandate JCRs but only urges them to create these posts.

Catherine Sangster (VP-Grads) asks if consultation with International Students Reps should take place if Ethnic Minorities Officers are created.

Rob says that the roles are separate but that there is always room for co-operation.

Chris Hanratty (St Anne's) asks if training is available for ethnic minorities officers.

James Rowlands (VP-Welfare) says he tries to organising training sessions but there are limits to what is able to do.

Dan Paskins (Magdalen) asks what Anti-Racism committee's official policy is on the matter.

Rob Sivapalan replies that Anti-Racism Committee is not a representative committee with policy-making power. However, it has discussed the matter and is favourable to it.

Josh Kern (Pemb) said he felt the creation of the Ethnic Minorities Officer position might be too bureaucratic and not achieve that much.

Rob Sivapalan said he didn't feel one extra role would create new problems of bureaucracy.

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) said that the Equal Opps Officer in Somerville doesn't really have time to deal with all equalities issues. As such, there was a need for a new position to divide the workload.

Helena Puig Larrauri (St Hilda's) said that ethnic minority reps need not be on the main JCR committee, if JCRs wanted to keep their central committees small. They could be made non-committee officers.

Chris Hanratty (St Anne's) felt there was the danger of too many positions being created. He points out that St Anne's already has: a welfare officer, an equal opportunities officer and a woman's officer.

Andrew Copson (Balliol) feels that there is a need for ethnic minority representatives. He says there needs to be someone who can work with the Access Scheme, attend anti-racism committee and go to NUS Black Students Conference. He says this is why Balliol voted to create one.

Rachel Wakefield (Keble) says that Keble's idea of having an equal ops sub-committee is better than having an enlarged main committee with an ethnic minorities officer on it.

James Rowlands (VP-Welfare) emphasizes there is no compulsion in the motion. No JCR will be made to have an ethnic minorities officer if it doesn't want one. JCR autonomy is being respected.

Ben Newton (Jesus) says that, although Jesus currently doesn't want one, there is a need for OUSU training/help for reps in those colleges that decide to create them. Thus, he is voting for the motion.

Rob Sivapalan sums up for the proposition. A vote is taken and the motion passes.

OUSU Council then ends.

Appendix:

A. Results of Elections in Council:

OUSU Executive Officer

There were 87 valid votes cast and 1 place to be filled.

The quota = total valid votes cast / (places to be filled + 1)

$$87 / 2 = 43.5$$

First preference votes were cast as follows:

Rachel Logan (New)	84
RON	3

Therefore Rachel Logan had exceeded quota and was elected OUSU Executive Officer.

Oxford and District Trade Union Rep

There were 86 valid votes cast and 1 place to be filled.

The quota = total valid votes cast / (places to be filled + 1)

$$86 / 2 = 43$$

First preference votes were cast as follows:

Ruth Hunt (St Hilda's)	80
RON	6

Therefore Ruth Hunt had exceeded quota and was elected Oxford and District Trade Union Rep.

University Council

There were 87 valid votes cast and 1 place to be filled.

The quota = total valid votes cast / (places to be filled + 1)

$$87 / 2 = 43.5$$

First preference votes were cast as follows:

Sonia Sodha (St Hilda's)	55
Trista de Genova (SEH)	24
RON	8

Therefore Sonia Sodha had exceeded quota and was elected to University Council.

Advisory Panel on Disabilities

There were 85 valid votes cast and 2 places to be filled.

The quota = total valid votes cast / (places to be filled + 1)

$$85 / 3 = 28.3$$

First preference votes were cast as follows:

Penelope Berrill (St Hilda's)	43
Regan Early (Wadham)	42
RON	0

Therefore Penelope Berrill and Regan Early had both exceeded quota and were elected to the Advisory Panel on Disabilities.

OUSU Publications Board

There were 87 valid votes cast and 3 places to be filled.

The quota = total valid votes cast / (places to be filled + 1)

$$87 / 4 = 21.75$$

First preference votes were cast as follows:

Adam Turnbull (Balliol)	59
Sacha Ismail (Somerville)	27
RON	1

Magdalen JCR President															
Magdalen OUSU-NUS Rep															
Magdalen Third Vote															
	1			2			3			4			5		
	Y	N	-	Y	N	-	Y	N	-	Y	N	-	Y	N	-
Magdalen MCR															
Mansfield JCR President															
Mansfield OUSU-NUS Rep															
Mansfield MCR															
Merton JCR President															
Merton OUSU-NUS Rep															
Merton Third Vote															
Merton MCR															
New JCR President															
New OUSU-NUS Rep															
New Third Vote															
New MCR															
Oriel MCR															
Pembroke JCR President															
Pembroke OUSU-NUS Rep															
Pembroke MCR															
Queen's JCR President															
Queen's OUSU-NUS Rep															
Queen's Third Vote															
St Anne's JCR President															
St Anne's OUSU-NUS Rep															
St Anne's Third Vote															
St Anne's MCR															
St Catz JCR															
St Catz MCR															
St Edmund Hall JCR President															
St Edmund Hall OUSU-NUS Rep															
St Edmund Hall Third Vote															
St Edmund Hall MCR															
St Hilda's JCR President															
St Hilda's OUSU-NUS Rep															
St Hilda's Third Vote															
	1			2			3			4			5		
	Y	N	-	Y	N	-	Y	N	-	Y	N	-	Y	N	-
St Hilda's MCR															
St Hugh's JCR President															
St Hugh's Third Vote															
St Hugh's MCR															
St John's JCR President															
St John's OUSU-NUS Rep															

Motion	For	Against	Abstain	Votes Cast
1	65	6	13	= 84
2	26	34	24	= 84
3	36	27	21	= 84
4	71	6	7	= 84
5	33	34	17	= 84
6	22	42	20	= 84
7	54	12	18	= 84
8	63	12	9	= 84