

Council Minutes

3rd week Michaelmas term 2013

3rd Week Council to start at 5.30pm prompt, with sign in opening at 5.15pm on Wednesday 16th October 2013 in Habbakuk Room, Jesus.

If you have any questions about OUSU Council, you should feel free to contact the President, Tom Rutland at president@ousu.org

- a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- b. Matters Arising from the Minutes
- c. Ratifications in Council
- d. Elections in Council
- e. Reports from the Sabbatical Officers
- f. Reports from the Executive Officers who wish to make reports
- g. Questions to Members of the Executive
- h. Passage of Motions Nem Con
- i. Motions of No Confidence or Censure
- j. Emergency Motions
- k. Other Motions
 1. Lecturers' Strikes
- l. Any Other Business

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

None.

b. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None.

c. Ratifications in Council

None.

d. Elections in Council

1 Position for Divisional Representative for Humanities Postgraduate - Samuel Hall was elected.

1 Position for Divisional Representative for Medical Sciences Postgraduate - Raj Dattani was elected.

1 Position for Divisional Representative for Social Sciences Undergraduate - A hust was requested for the candidates, Emma Alexander and Michal Gain.

Emma hust - 2nd year PPE Keble, excited to represent students. Through OxHub, run charity Linkages, more volunteers, gained transferable skills of advocacy, raising awareness, caring, gaining funding. Also Freshers Week President this year, against resilient body who didn't want change - some gains. Aims - two. Mark schemes - examiners' report inadequate, increase cross divisional.

Michal - 2nd year lawyer- lots of time. Experience of representation from school (although smaller than SSD); learnt to represent students' interests. Also on two committees at University; degree involves arguing with tutors. Important as this is education institution; need student input on how it works. Post £9000 rise, SSD students expect high quality of tutoring from Oxford. Few contact hours so need good feedback system for lectures, as this is missing. Got students to answer questions in lecture - found students didn't know answers.

Sarah Pine (Wadham) - finals gaps especially in SSD. Can you reassure us you will deal with this?

Michal - depressing fact we have this. Not in schools so see why this happens here. Want to bring up and emphasise work on this issue, but can't promise within year that this will disappear.

Emma - v important issue. SSD seen as laddish boys' club. Important way to deal with problem to talk to JCC reps who are female (or male and have points) to see if they feel marginalised. Take active steps to change; assess general morale on issue. Can be staggered.

James Blythe (Brasenose) - SSD very diverse. How would you ensure you cover all areas?

Emma - would sit on UJCC committee. Can sit on committee but for participation, can talk to them afterwards. For awareness of Depts where I have less knowledge e.g. Law; to speak to individuals to avoid subject bias.

Michal - crucial point because 14 Depts in SSD. Important that someone meets with people. Linked to crucial issue of 23 academics on board, only 2 students. Where interests overlap, need to speak with one point.

Emma Alexander was elected, 47 votes to 17.

2 Positions for Steering Committee - no nominations.

1 Position for Deputy Returning Officer - no nominations.

3 Positions for Budget Sub Committee - William Triner and Will Neaverson were elected. One position remains unfilled.

1 Position for the Scrutiny Committee - Charlotte Baker was elected.

2 Positions for the Rules Committee - no nominations.

5 Positions for Complaints Committee - no nominations..

1 Position for International Students Officer - no nominations.

1 Position for Graduate Women's Officer no nominations.

1 Position for Graduate Welfare Officer - no nominations.

1 Position for Graduate International Student's Officer - no nominations.

e. Reports from the Sabbatical Officers

Sarah - read my report. New update: bringing together Womens' officers. Manifesto pledge to open consultation. Also Domestic Abuse policy being updated, in conjunction with City Council.

Charlotte - Homesickness - new part of website. Please share with common rooms; 57% of students feel it based on NUS report.

Tom - fees, have written to VC as in 1st week. Visible on website and emailed. Still waiting on response. PVC (Planning) arranged meeting with Rachel. Re: strategy and funding - going to JS(EC)SM. Hope to endorse even if they have no power; will go to budget response. More time for Sabbs to do representational work.

New posters - don't rent; no need to sign so early. Also looking at cost of transcribing illegible scripts. Significant amount to pay especially at end of degree; most colleges have no funding for this. Finally elections - nominations open tomorrow. Posters to raise awareness - please take.

Also Rachel & Dan are off but have written reports.

Garlen - 1. Raised issue of grad scholarship matched fund scheme Phase 2 to Education Committee. 2. Finished writing letter to NUS, who are part of decision making body re: HEFCE postgraduate support scheme. 3. Ox Grad Match Fund - read report; has highlighted 21 scholars at university this year thanks to Matched Fund. Will talk to all, and work with Development Office to promote these people and promote Phase 2.

f. Reports from the Executive Officers who wish to make reports

Jonathan Metzger - Friday, 4, G&Ds St Aldates - OUSU RepCom. How are you doing etc. don't need to be an OUSU rep but it helps.

Michael Davies - Jailbreak launching tomorrow. Movember starts Friday. Each college has Mo rep and page set up. Biggest fundraisers in country, so will reward college. Please grab stash.

Will Neaverson - Disability Awareness Week, 6th week. Working hard with Disability Services. If JCR committees want to hold event, contact Will.

Nick Cooper - Exam Regs being updated and put online, checked whether people had used them. Half of participants had.

g. Questions to Members of the Executive

Will Neaverson - please avoid acronyms and abbreviations when giving reports.

h. Passage of Motions Nem Con

None.

i. Motions of No Confidence or Censure

None.

j. Emergency Motions

None.

k. Other Motions

1. Lecturers' Strikes

Council notes:

- 1) University staff have been offered a pay rise this year of 1% at a time when inflation stands at almost 3%, amounting to a pay cut in real terms.
- 2) University staff have seen their pay fall by 13% in real terms since 2008, one of the most sustained cuts in wages since the Second World War.
- 3) The most recent reported figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show the Higher Education sector has accumulated over £1 billion in operating surpluses.
- 4) The University of Oxford has an operating surplus of over £53 million.
- 5) The University and College Union (UCU), which represents lecturers, researchers and tutors, has been supportive of students' campaigns, and joined OUSU in condemning Andrew Hamilton's recent comments about tuition fees.
- 6) The UCU, Unite and Unison trade unions have all voted to take strike action on 31 October in protest at pay cuts.

Council believes:

- 1) University staff should be properly supported and remunerated. The services they deliver are an essential part of our society, and they should be paid fairly in recognition of that fact.
- 2) Students stand to lose from the continuing depreciation of academic pay, which risks discouraging talented people from entering the sector.
- 3) The current trend of steadily declining pay presents a real threat to the student experience, as staff motivation and productivity take a knock when academics are increasingly under-paid, overworked and reliant on insecure terms including zero hours contracts.
- 4) The persistence of the gender pay gap demeans all women at Oxford, and unions are right to cite the consistent failure of universities to deal with this problem as a reason for strike action.

Council resolves:

- 1) To express OUSU's support and solidarity to all staff at the university taking strike action on 31 October.
- 2) To encourage students to engage with tutors to move tutorials planned for 31 October, to show their support for strike action in line with the actions of the 'Support Our Staff' campaign.
- 3) To encourage students to abstain from attending lectures on 31 October.

Proposed by: Nathan Akehurst (Lincoln)

Seconded by: Barnaby Raine (Wadham)

Nathan Akehurst (Lincoln) - no motions since July so looked forward to this. Oxford has operating surplus of £53m - payrise possible. However pay cuts most sustained since WWII. However some staff not paid living wage; average academic £900 paycut in real terms. About sort of community we want to live in. Do we want one with falling pay packets, gender gap, where academic jobs not considered desirable, casual labour especially among postgraduates (. Our support is important. Sat on group in Balliol last week. Uni using bureaucracy and even intimidation. If we stand behind staff on Thursday, support them on picket

lines, would be huge step forward. If we want university governed by desire for shared learning rather than government higher education policy.

Short Factual Questions:

Shyam Thakerar (St John's) What proportion of staff on strike?

Nathan - Not sure till on day, UCU has 50/100 members.

Anya Metzger (Wadham) - Uni has operating surplus but also funding chasm for students. How does this tally?

Nathan - Andrew Hamilton wants to discuss future planning and how it works down line. Current discussion is about operating.

St Peter's MCR OUSU Rep - what is £53m as percentage of revenue?

Nathan - no figures to hand.

Harry Burt (Trinity) - think about why they can justify their decisions. Do you know university line, and what uni's hiring plans are for next couple of years?

Nathan - university position is national. Confederation of national employers but manifests itself in Oxford. In nationwide perspective of cuts to higher education.

Raj Dattani (St Peter's) - Point of information: 2014 Research Excellence Framework will be decided soon, after last exercise was in 2008.

Garlen Lo (Wolfson) - will you be joining the lecturers sharing biscuits and drinking tea?

Nathan - make up tea, come to Bear Lane.

Darren Vanning (Oriol) - what impact will strike have on students; will it have negative impact?

Nathan - expect most lecturers won't be working on that day, so students don't have lectures. Hopes to expand for as much disruption as possible; not to disrupt learning, but so it is resolved for future as it is important issue.

Angie Normandale (Wadham) - why is this an equality issue rather than just lecturers being paid less?

Nathan - gender pay gap mentioned in motion. Strong evidence from UCU that this plan will exacerbate. Alexander Rankine (Corpus) - provision to abstain lecture, moving tutorial. To what extent is this sympathetic strike action?

Nathan - not strike action (solidarity) because we aren't in dispute, not employed by University. But is support for strike.

Move to debate

Jack Matthews (University) - despair that I am only person that is willing to debate this issue. Have to return to WCR and I don't want to say that, can't say to students, many of whom are here for three years, . Lot of discussion on UCU and solidarity; only when it suits them. When it matters to us on issues like student feedback, reviews of lectures, UCU has stood out because it is "opportunity to name and defame" lecturers. I can't support this because I can't stand up to students and say that. UCU often don't show solidarity to us.

Sarah Pine (Wadham) - want to speak in favour. Picked up by Angie that pay gap is 22%. Higher than rest of country, cause for concern. Should support strike because they care about this. Care about equality,

especially gender equality. Academic attrition - at every level, lose women (from undergrad to PGR to PGT) - 11% women at lecturer level, but only recruiting at 9%. Depressing but OXFEST focus groups talk about fear of risk. Talk about 1 year, 3 year, zero hour contracts as putting them off academia, and into integrity. If these reasons cited by UCU are reasons, to encourage women and value equality, we should support strike.

Darren Vanning (Oriol) - is it about pay cuts or equality?

Sarah Pine - both.

Michael Davies (Somerville) - are gender pay gap stats across UK or across Oxford?

Sarah Pine - UK.

James Elliott (Teddy Hall) -test for whether we can stand shoulder to shoulder against marketization of education. Same forces that scrapped EMA. We should mandate Tom to email all students to encourage students to attend 2pm Carfax. If we don't support them, can't encourage them to support us.

Barnaby Raine (Wadham) - important to return to what it means to support education. Every year uni finds it harder to encourage people into academia; higher pay in industry. Look in other countries where pay is better. Damaging effect on education if universities like this with surpluses cut pay because it doesn't encourage best students. UCU weren't forced to march with students on fees, but they marched with us as they said money for education should come from state. We should march with them.

James Blythe (Brasenose) - in Humanities, misinterpretation of non attendance at lectures as apathy. How can we signify this to lecturers?

Nathan - Facebook, upload pictures, visit picket lines. Also visit Carfax.

AMENDMENT - Insert Council Resolves 4)

4. Mandate Tom Rutland as President to inform students of our decision and encourage them to attend the rally at 2pm at Carfax, via email this evening.

Proposed: James Elliot, SEH

Seconded: Josh Benfoot, SEH

Taken as friendly; no objections.

Vote: 45 for, 5 against, 15 abstentions

Motion passes.

I. Any Other Business

Jack Matthews (University) - Really likes Student Union and OUSU Council. Had immense honour to serve students in one form or another; even those around me, and this provided rich and diverse debate and supported students. Council is there to promote students, elect, and hold those in power to account. Debate stifled, by urge of people not to be here or people feel they can't state things. I get negative reaction from legitimate questions and make points but hear moans. Every student has right to speak, but what must those brave few think when they arrive? Do they get environment where every view is welcomed and heard? Rolled out unity; proper debate and scrutiny is hindered. Views of students and CRs not being heard, and this scares me. Will continue to talk. Love SU, but feel Council has no con in what I do. People have associated Scrutiny report severity with my presence. Won't let my presence affect work of Scrutiny Committee. I know other people feel like me about Council so we can return to responsibilities bestowed upon us.

Alex Cibulskis (Wadham) - Chair of SC for past couple of terms. Say few words. Very sorry Jack feels position is untenable. No doubt that Jack and no-one had agenda in what they wrote. Always seek to provide accurate synthesis of what was said in confidence, so people are held to account. Thank Jack for all he's done, especially re:scrutiny. Take what he's said seriously - difficult to speak. Often only one

person speaks but 5 vote against. Important to represent students that we welcome all debate and consider it. Important that this SU represents all students, and looks not inwards and outwards. Discuss communication problems, seems we blame students. Important we take this seriously, and how we reach out to more students, and get more dissenting students and say what we feel we should be doing as a SU. Scrutiny is part of that, and anyone interested, please contact me. Interested to hear people's view - important role to represent all Oxford students. Thank you to Jack for all work he's done; take what he's said very seriously.

Tom Rutland - we want Council to be welcoming, representative. Looking at Council this year - on fundamental level, and intricate - any views appreciated. Will be emailed. Have a think in advance. We don't want body where people don't feel they can speak. We know Council doesn't work perfectly. Jack and I disagree on a lot, and agree on a lot but we don't . Lot of respect despite disagreements.