

OUSU

council minutes

5th week Council held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 17th February in the Vernon Harcourt Room at St Hilda's College

- 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. Emergency Motions
- i. Passage of Motions Nem Con
- j. Motions of No Confidence or Censure
- k. First readings of Motions to Amend the Constitution or Standing Orders
- l. The Budget or Amended Budget
- m. Motions Authorising Capital Expenditure
- n. Other Motions
 - i. motions affecting ousu members as ousu members
 - ii. motions affecting ousu members as students at Oxford University
 - iii. motions affecting ousu members as members of the student movement
 - iv. motions affecting ousu members as residents of Oxford
 - v. motions affecting ousu members as residents of the United Kingdom
 - vi. motions affecting ousu members as citizens of the world
- o. Any Other Business

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Chair confirmed the procedure for procedural motions.

Minutes Passes

Husting for the VP Graduates Bi-elections

Beth Evans (Wadham)

No political parties, never thrown out of council, no expected absence

Want to keep it short, doing a Masters in Women's studies did an undergraduate degree at Kings College London. Experience in student politics, at Kings was President of LGBT Society, leading and organising social events. NUS delegate for 2 campaigns at Kings as well, used to conferences and motions and chairing. Lots of Campaigning.

Questions:

Daniel Lowe (St Edmunds):

Do you have welfare training?

Beth Evans (Wadham):

No, but I would love to do some.

James Sago (Blackfriars):

What are important issues for graduates and what can we do?

Beth Evans (Wadham):

In Oxford in particular, high-pressure, lots of welfare issues, particularly amongst international students. Did study in France, know what its like. Make sure graduates are informed. Make sure people feel part of community.

David Bowe (Somerville):
Isolation is a big issue, do you see this as part of your role?

Beth Evans (Wadham):
Welfare week is good, would like regular events for grads. Isolation is an important issue. Send out regular emails.

Dani Quinn (Merton):
Thing about being in OUSU is finding out what grads want from OUSU. What changes would you bring?

Beth Evans (Wadham):
Online community would be good. Surveys don't work. Drop in hours would be good. Will be there at end of email address. Being as welcoming as possible. Get people involved.

d. Elections in Council

The following positions were elected in OUSU Council of 5th week.

2 members of the OUSU Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the work of the OUSU Executive in line with the OUSU Standing Orders. Any member of OUSU is eligible to run – email president@ousu.org for more information.

Candidates for Scrutiny Committee:

Joseph Wales (St Hughs):

No political parties, never thrown out of council etc, no expected absences

Hi, I'm Chair of council. Would be sad to not be on it, on all other committees. Very involved in OUSU, speak to exec a lot and understand issues. Have deep understanding of the standing orders.

Thomas Scott (New):

AUGIS, member of Lib Dem FB Group, never thrown out etc, no absence expected.

Should be on committee as it important and I will be good. No reason to think the Exec cant be better. Important people are scrutinised. JCR President at New, good at things like this.

Loren King (St John's):

Amnesty International, Never thrown out etc, no absence expected.

Ran because came to council and saw what happened with budget, important to scrutinise what is going on. Would be good because I don't know anyone on the OUSU team, used to have a sceptical view of OUSU, think this is what is needed of scrutiny committee. Know people from Cherwell, could tell them about what is going on, maybe they won't be so critical.

Questions:

Nathan Roberts (Queens)

What does this committee do?

Stefan as RO:

Scrutinise the exec once a term, produce report for OUSU council on what they have been doing

Dani Quinn (Merton):

How will you go about scrutinising?

Thomas Scott (New):

2 main ways. Need to talk to Sabs about what they're doing, are they doing it. Secondly, check if they are doing what they should be according to the Standing Orders. Also they make manifestos, are they doing what they promised?

Loren King (St John's):

Agree on that, compare manifestos and SOs.

Joseph Wales (St Hugh's):

Agree with both candidates. Scrutinise what they are saying to council, especially reports to council from those that don't send reports.

Jesse Harber (St Hilda's):

After recent power in Jonny Medland – will you be scared of execution?

Loren King (St John's):

No

Joseph Wales (St Hugh's):

No

Thomas Scott (New):

Birthday tomorrow so he gets that off

Ross Evans (Jesus):

Are you current interests in conflict with Scrutiny Committee?

Joseph Wales (St Hugh's):

In terms of time, have been JCR VP and that takes lots of time which I now have spare. Not on Exec even though Chair so not in conflict.

Thomas Scott (New):

Not a problem, JCR President makes me use my time well. Knowing them already doesn't affect me, will be impartial.

Loren King (St John's):

Can't see any problems, only OUSU Rep. Don't see conflict with job of Cherwell, has made me critical of OUSU, good thing. Critical approach is good.

James Nation (Merton):

If you find something wrong, what can you do about?

Stefan as RO – If I was doing it, would write report with strong message. Then there is the possibility of motions of censure and no confidence.

Dani Quinn (Merton):

Can you tell me anything a sab has done recently?

Thomas Scott (New):

Dani has done Well Being Week and also training, self-confidence and eating disorders. Scrutiny Committee could explore feedback and how well those things went.

Loren King (St John's):

Have got SO and manifestos, can check if you have done what it says. Can then be more critical of individual events. Lots of ways to effectively be critical

Joseph Wales (St Hugh's):

Interesting question, can look at reports to council, at end of day what Scrutiny Committee should be doing is asking people to prove what they have done and come to decision about whether that is good enough.

e. Reports from the Sabbatical Officers

Stefan Baskerville – President

Hello, I'm back. Reports on front page. Summarises what been going on, met with 6 JCR Presidents, discussed student representation and rent etc. Talking about how to build institutional relationships. Attended MCR PresCom, was very useful. Attended GPC for the 2nd time. Deal with issues of governance and lots of other things, good we have won representation. Will be forum for some very substantial discussions. JCC endorsed the paper from 3rd week. Were a little reserved about amount but endorsed without reservation the principle. Have support from Education Committee as well, now goes to PRAC. University council was on Monday, much was discussion on HE funding, not just undergraduate, but also what is overall funding picture. Spent hour discussing, I spoke and detailed repercussions on students.

Met Keith Zimmerman and Mr Sibley, following up on 3rd week mandate regarding asylum seekers. They were receptive. Got to go away and see how this has worked elsewhere and get back to them. Urgent challenges continues to take up time. Hope to have it done and get "Yes" from PRAC and get on to issues that really matter to students.

Kat Wall – VP Women

Hello, organising female finals forums, please advise student to come along, information has been sent out on maillists.

Organising Thirst Lodge campaign, protest this Saturday on Bonn Square, please do come along and support it.

Dani Quinn – VP Welfare & Equal Opportunities

Start to discuss with University and Nightline about having one night a week service for Chinese students, initially in Mandarin. Important issue. University may give money.

Question:

David Townsend (St John's):

How can you have language for academics but not welfare?

Dani Quinn

University is waving requirements. Also people like to talk about Welfare issues in own language, can convey academic issues but may not know how to convey welfare thing in English.

David Townsend (St John's):

Are you looking into other cultures?

Dani Quinn

Looking into with International Student Campaign. Started with Chinese due to number who have contacted SAS. Will look into other things. This is pilot but looking at other options.

Sarah Hutchinson – VP Graduates

Helped with a grad assertiveness session with race equality unit. Was very over subscribed so will be looking to have more sessions. There is a demand for it. Went to NUS post grad forum, was a little frustrating, not as many issues discussed. Was still interesting, discussed international students and funding, where should resources be focused, or should they be focused.

Went to grad committee, discussed maternity policy, seem to be support from colleges. Gives student right to time out of course if get pregnant, still a few thing to iron out though. Also discussed lack of data on admission on grads, but they are getting it together now. Interesting to see results.

Jonny and I went to language centre committee, raised issues about support for students who haven't got English as first language. They do have courses to help but they are over subscribed, reinforcing this is an important issue. Looking at how better to send out information through cultural maillists.

Been to CR meetings. Held PGA at lunch yesterday, more people turned up but still not very many. Discussed ways to engage graduates so going to discuss more with graduates in coming weeks. Think PGA doesn't work so going to explore different ways. If any ideas, let me know.

Week on Saturday is the Oxford International Festival – venue has been changed to Exam Schools.

Jonny Medland – VP Access & Academic Affairs

Lot is in report but here is update. Sent around teaching model report. It will also be on website. This will be major area of work in coming weeks. Review is happening in response to changing funding. Hope to have this going through committees very soon. Please do speak to your colleges about what is happening there. Would be good to find out what is happening in colleges. Just come from University group on complaints and appeals. If anyone has any input about anything which this covers, please do let me know and can feed into the group. Just got email, student survey results is only 35%, needs to be 50%, please please advertise survey in your common rooms, we need to get 50%. Deadline is mid April, but if like other years will drop off after 7th week. Passed motion about people getting phone calls. It went to senior tutor committee, but they said that college and CR must give permissions, and only 8 did.

Eorann Lean – VP Charities & Communities

Hello, sorry not here last time, was at Beyond Profit Fair. Have lots of booklets about it if you would like them. RAG blind date tonight, its going to be good. Please come to Po Na Na, all the money comes to RAG.

f. Reports from the Executive Officers wishing to give reports

Jack Matthews – Common Room Support Officer

Holding a Societies workshop, on how to set up a university society next week, including lots of issues, such as funding, and the help that OUSU can offer. Please advertise this to your common rooms.

We want to visit common rooms, even if we've already attended, whether or not you're affiliated. If you have a particular issue going on in your common room, we can talk about that.

Nathan Roberts (Queen's):
What's happening with ATMs in colleges?

Jack Matthews:

Magdalen are looking into this, but has met the company, and will raise at the various PresComs. Basics are that the machine would be free, and there would be no withdrawal fee, but the JCR would need 800 transactions per month. The problem is that the common room needs to stock the machine with cash itself, so it's a good way for common rooms to move money into your account as it avoids deposit fees. Not sure if it's feasible, but I will continue to look at this issue, as there is obviously demand out there for this service.

Hannah Cusworth – Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

Working with Jonny on paper to university committees. Working on council mandates. Visiting common rooms, went to Hilda's JCR. Also went to Brasenose. Also working on Teaching review.

David Bowe – Graduate Welfare Officer

Hello Council, went to PGA. Was a productive meeting, lots to work on. Working on student parent friendly events. Please, when planning events, think that some people have kids.

Nathan Jones – Access & Admissions Officer

Going to assoc of teachers and lecturers conference to get rid of Oxford myths. All else in report.

i. Passage of Motions Nem Con

1. Equal Opportunities Campaigns

Passes Nem Con

1. Complaints and Appeals Policy

Passes Nem Con

2. Iranian Students

Opposition

3. Oxford Gurdwara

Passes Nem Con

k. First readings of Motions to Amend the Constitution or Standing Orders

1. Equal Opportunities Campaigns

Council Notes:

1. The motion "Tidying up the OUSU Governing Documents", which received its first two readings last term- removed the names of the OUSU Equal Opportunities Campaigns from the OUSU Constitution.
2. That if the motion "Tidying up the OUSU Governing Documents" passes its final reading in Termly Council this term, the names of the Equal Opportunities Campaigns will not be in the OUSU Governing Documents.

Council Believes:

1. That the names of the Equal Opportunities campaigns should be in the OUSU Standing Orders to allow greater flexibility with regards to name changes.

Council Resolves:

1. To Insert into the Standing Orders E- Committees and Campaigns

E5 The Equal Opportunities Campaigns

5.1 There shall be the following Equal Opportunities Campaigns:

- i. Women's Campaign*
- ii. LGBTQ Council*
- iii. Students with Disabilities Campaign*
- iv. The Campaign for Cultural and Racial Awareness and Equality*
- v. International Students Campaign*
- vi. Mature Students' Campaign*

Proposed: **Jonny Medland (The Queen's)**

Seconded: **Madeline Stanley (Lady Margaret Hall)**

Passes Nem Con

n. Other Motions

1. Complaints and Appeals Policy

Council notes:

1. The University is currently reviewing its complaints and appeals procedures

2. Conference of Colleges is currently reviewing Colleges' complaints and appeals procedures
3. The conclusions of these reviews will have a significant impact upon students

Council believes:

1. Colleges and departments should usually resolve complaints and appeals within 3 months. Colleges and departments should aim to complete procedures within 3 months of receiving a complaint, or two months for 1-year Taught Masters. It is acknowledged that this may not be possible or appropriate in a minority of cases.
2. Colleges and Departments should make information about their complaints and appeal procedures easily available and accessible. Colleges and departments should remind students about complaints and appeals procedures, and extenuating circumstances, at appropriate times (e.g. prior to deadlines for special arrangements for exams). Colleges and departments should clarify the processes involved at each stage of a complaint or appeal.
3. Complaints and appeals should be dealt with by someone seen as independent of the College or Department. The OIA (Office of the Independent Adjudicator, 2009) cited concerns that the Proctors Office cannot be seen as an 'ombudsman' (as advertised), given students' perceptions of the role of the Proctors. The Proctors' role of receiving complaints and appeals should be separated from their discipline roles (for academic and non-academic offences). A similar distinction should be made by Colleges and Departments.
4. Students should be supported through the process of a complaint or appeal. Students' attention should be drawn to sources of support, information, advice and representation. Colleges and Departments should not exercise their ability to access superior advice and representation (e.g. legal advice) unless the student has done so. Colleges and departments should also ensure regular communication with the student throughout the process.
5. Students should be present at all formal discussions regarding their status and progress, and written records of these discussions should be made available to the student, with opportunities for correction.
6. Institutions should have clear guidance tackling the perception that students will be disadvantaged if they make a complaint. Particular care should be taken for complaints regarding harassment, bullying or discrimination. Clear policies and guidance on confidentiality should be available, and pro-active measures taken to ensure that students understand these.
7. Colleges and departments should report annually on the number and outcome of cases, including the number which progress to the OIA.

Council resolves:

1. To encourage Common Room Officers to discuss these policies with their Common Room and, where applicable, bring them to the attention of their College.
2. To mandate the Vice-President (Access and Academic Affairs) to communicate these policies to the working groups on Complaints and Appeals

Proposed: Dani Quinn (Merton)
Seconded: Jonny Medland (The Queen's)

Passes Nem Con

2. Iranian Students

Council notes:

1. Iranian students have been instrumental in the current wave of democratic protests in Iran (popularly called the Green Movement.)
2. Iranian students in Iran have been routinely imprisoned and tortured for their role in the current democratic uprising.
3. The Iranian government has routinely authorised the raiding of student dormitories at the University of Tehran and elsewhere in an attempt to intimidate student leaders.
4. Many student leaders are presently imprisoned for their roles in organising the largely peaceful and nonviolent protests that have ensued from the June 2009 presidential election.
5. Queens College has set up a scholarship in honour of a student killed by security forces during protests in

Iran called the Neda Agha-Soltan scholarship.

6. Wadham SU's statement in support of the scholarship, the Green Movement in Iran and in condemnation of the violation of human rights by the Iranian regime.
7. The University as a whole has been ambivalent towards the movement.

Council believes:

1. It is the ethical responsibility of every global citizen to speak out against the violation of human rights, wherever they occur.
2. As students we should stand in solidarity with the non-violent and democratic student protestors in Iran and condemn the violation of human rights in Iran.
3. The ambivalence and silence of all moral agents buttresses the sense of impunity that enables the government of Iran to violate human rights.
4. OUSU taking a stance on the issue would make a difference by helping to detract from the government of Iran's sense of impunity.

Council resolves:

1. To mandate the OUSU President to issue a statement encouraging the Vice-Chancellor to take an active position in support of the creation of the Neda Agha-Soltan scholarship.
2. To mandate the OUSU President to issue a statement that will:
 - i) Condemn the Iranian government's oppression of pro-democracy activists in Iran.
 - ii) Condemn the imprisonment of students for their peaceful participation in protests, and condemning attacks on Student Halls of Residence.

Proposed: **Binesh Hassanpour (Wadham)**

Seconded: **Rebecca Hay (Wadham)**

Speech in Proposition:

Binesh Hassanpour (Wadham):

After elections, huge uprising, similar numbers to 1979. Similar junction to when Nelson Mandela was freed. Certain gravity in Oxford that we should use it for better ends.

Stefan Baskerville (Univ):

Is scholarship at threat?

Binesh Hassanpour (Wadham):

University has wasted its hand and said its not its issue

Dawn Hollis (Balliol):

How much will this motion matter?

Binesh Hassanpour (Wadham):

This motion will chip away at sense of impunity. Adds more voices to those already there.

Stefan Baskerville (Univ):

West has historically steered around subject, is it a calculated decision that the VC speaking out will have a positive impact. Could it lend a hand to Achmadinajad?

Binesh Hassanpour (Wadham):

OUSU doesn't have same power or history as western nations. The least we can do is show solidarity.

Immel (St. Catz):

Why has Oxford washed its hands of the Scholarship?

Binesh Hassanpour (Wadham):

It's the way things are, but we must push, it's not the end of things

Speech in Opposition:

Daniel Lowe (St Edmund)

Support spirit, just need to change a few things, have tabled amendment.

First amendment :

Insert word 'innocent' in CR 2 ii) and insert "imprisoned for political crimes'.

CR2 ii) would read:

To condemn the imprisonment of innocent students imprisoned for political crimes.

Proposed: Daniel Lowe (St Edmund)

Seconded: Jesse Harber (St Hilda's)

Daniel Lowe (St Edmund)

We shouldn't support people who have committed crimes?

Opposition: It should stand

Amendment withdrawn

Second amendment:

CR 1:

Replace "issue a statement requiring" with "issue a statement encouraging"

CR2 ii)

Add "imprisonment of students for their peaceful participation in protests,"

Proposed: Husayn Kassai (Keble)

Seconded: Binesh Hassanpour (Wadham)

Amendment accepted as friendly, no opposition.

Nathan Jones (Queens):

Had vote in CR. College regrets introducing it due to problems from university and government. College have concerns and won't appreciate OUSU passing this motion.

Stefan Baskerville (Univ):

Is the intention for VC to take position or for OUSU to lobby him?

Proposer: Both.

Summary in Proposition:

Need say no more

No speech in Opposition

Passes unanimously

Meeting closed

4. Oxford Gurdwara

Council notes:

1. Oxford's only Gurdwara, at 69 Cherwell Drive, is at risk of imminent closure
2. The Gurdwara is at risk of closure due to an unsuccessful (retrospective) planning application and local residents' complaints about noise, congestion and parking issues
3. An appeal hearing was held on 26th January, and a report is due soon

4. Approximately 30 people attend and make use of the Gurdwara on Sundays, and 12 on other days of the week
5. In addition to being a place of worship, the Gurdwara facilitates the community work of Sikhs in the Oxford Community
6. The Gurdwara Committee has received no support in finding an alternative location, no reassurances from the Council that they will be assisted in finding an alternative if the Cherwell Drive one is shut down, and that no mediation or discussion was entered into on the complaints that arose
7. OU Sikh Soc and Gurdwara Committee are committed to resolving this issue without creating hostility in the local community
8. The next closest Gurdwara's are in Southall, High Wycombe and Uxbridge

Council believes:

1. It is important that the Sikh community in Oxford has a space to worship and undertake its community work
2. Alternative resolutions have not been exhausted

Council resolves:

1. To support Sikh Soc's work to ensure that a Gurdwara is available to Oxford's Sikh Community (either through a formal licence for Cherwell Drive, or a suitable alternative venue)
2. To mandate the OUSU Executive to sign Sikh Soc's petition <http://www.gopetition.co.uk/online/33821.html>
3. To mandate the OUSU President and VP (WEO) to advertise the petition to the student body
4. To mandate the VP (WEO) to liaise with the Sikh Soc to draft and jointly sign letters to Andrew Smith MP, Evan Harris MP, the City Council, the Vice-Chancellor, Andrew Hamilton, the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Personnel and Equality, Sally Mapstone and Felicity Cook (Head of the Equality and Diversity Unit).
5. To encourage Common Rooms to draw this issue to the attention of their Governing Bodies
6. To assist the Sikh Soc in contacting other interested groups (e.g. BBC Asian Network, etc)

Proposed: **Priya Atwal (Oriol)**

Seconded: **Dani Quinn (Merton)**

Passes Nem Con

o. Any Other Business