

Council Minutes

5th week hilary term 2012

5th Week Council at 5.30pm, with sign in opening at 5.15pm on Wednesday 15th February 2012, in the Old Dining Hall, St Edmund Hall

If you have any questions about OUSU Council, you should feel free to contact the Adam Tyndall at any time on chair@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. 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

Minutes passed no matters arising.

d. Elections in Council

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

1 position on Internal Affairs Committee - Reviews all proposed amendments the OUSU Governing Documents before they are presented to OUSU Council. To serve until the end of Michaelmas Term 2012.

Jack Matthews (Univ) elected.

3 positions on Complaints Committee - Hears complaints regarding the elected officers of OUSU and issues rulings to OUSU Council. To serve until the start of Michaelmas Term 2012.

Thomas Allsup (Somerville)

Chance to hust, passionate for this role, get lots of complaints about different matters in Somerville, would like to be involved in resolving complaints for OUSU and using this knowledge. Have the sensitivity needed.

Basil Vincent (Keble)

I had such a fantastic time on Nominations committee, get lots of complaints in college, lots of complaints good at dealing with flack. I love OUSU, involved in Housing Campaign, honoured if you'd vote me in.

Jack Matthews (Univ)

I think candidates may be over estimating number of complaints about OUSU. When do you think the last complaint against OUSU was?

Thomas Allsup (Somerville)

Don't know.

Basil Vincent (Keble)

Not for a decade or more due to the great job OUSU doe.

Alex Lans (St Catherine's)

What does this committee do?

Basil Vincent (Keble)

Remaining a neutral position, scrutinise format an opinion and deal with.

Thomas Allsup (Somerville)

Perhaps have to form own complaints, so we actually have something to do. It is a job you do as and when it comes your way.

Question

What is the most pedantic complaint you have received and how did you deal with?

Basil Vincent (Keble)

Domestic bursar complained I hadn't picked up a piece of rubbish outside my room, picked offending piece of rubbish up and sent them a full apology.

Thomas Allsup (Somerville)

Deans hour, domestic bursar had summoned me about a snowball which had been put inside a heated building. Tracked down culprits and had severe words now doing community service.

Basil Vincent (Keble), Thomas Allsup (Somerville) and Oscar Lee (New) all elected.

By-elections for Part Time Executive;

Graduate Welfare Officer- works with the VP (Graduates) and VP (Welfare) to coordinate graduate welfare and aid campaigning initiatives. For more information contact welfare@ousu.org.

Kirran Bashi (St Peter's) elected.

e. Reports from Sabbatical Officers

President - Martha Mackenzie and VP Access & Academic Affairs - Hannah Cusworth

Joint report about teaching awards, give background. We applied for a grant for student led teaching awards, have been putting together a model. Grant bid successful. Nominations opening in 7th week.

A couple of years ago did great report about teaching, how people value the tutorial system, but that students like innovation. Purpose two fold to celebrate great teaching, putting and highlighting best example of what goes on in Oxford and showing it to other people. We focus on design work, all seen OUSU website, we also think important want people from across University to get involved with. Have been doing filming, people talking about why they love their lectures.

You can vote online and we are keen to get as many students involved as possible. If you want us to talk about in your common room more than happy to.

VP Charities & Community - Daniel Stone

Next week Wednesday, city centre area forum, so can feed in about being student in oxford.

Next week Thursday, 7.30pm Living Wage Forum in Exam schools, great opportunity to hear about living wage campaign.

RAG charities elections, shortlist of 15 charities, election open from Tuesday to Thursday, encourage everyone to use their voting codes.

VP Women - Yuan Yang

Are you involved in a common room committee, might be interested in hosting leadership development workshop. If host workshop, then we will let individuals from your committee to attend.

I've been doing sexy training, sexual consent workshops, this is the start of a new programme of training that I'm doing with Seb. Active prevention methods, way common room can take ownership to prevent it happening, drop us an email if you wish us to come and run a workshop.

VP Graduates - Jim O'Connell

Analysing data from PG review I am spending time in small dark room crunching data. Graduate funding progress being made, can't let know details, college scheme that run last term, very successful, raised over £3 million funding for full graduate scholarship.

Will be holding more screening of the PhD movie, as really popular.

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

Tom Rutland, we've been working to propose amendments to motions that are going to NUS conference, will all be brought to 7th week council, have a facebook page, so please promote, and get your common rooms engaged.

f. Questions to members of the Executive

Sarah Finch - Women's Officer

St Hilda's gender equality week next week, please attend, should be a good week.

Jack Matthews

What do people who win Teaching awards win?

Martha Mackenzie

Don't actually win anything, but get recognition and will be recognised at two award ceremonies.

Clara Ferreira - Graduate Women's Officer

Athena Swann had a focus group 16 people attended, ideas gender and broad, so can be fed into divisional board level. Discussing issues to bring up at higher levels.

h. Emergency Motions

Ernst & Young Prize Tagging Competition

Council Notes:

1. Ernst & Young are running a nationwide "Prize Tagging Competition"
2. £10,000 will be awarded to the Student Union with the most entries into the competition to invest in up to 3 projects
3. Ernst & Young will provide impartial advice to the winning Student Union regarding the implementation of the proposed projects

Council Believes:

1. There are many worthwhile projects in Oxford which could use further investment
2. Advice from Ernst & Young would help to ensure that the money was put to the most effective use
3. The support of OUSU will make winning the competition much more likely

Council Resolves:

1. To support the Ernst & Young Prize Tagging Competition in order to increase the chances of being awarded £10,000 for investment in projects in Oxford

Proposer: *Gavin Daniel (Jesus)*

Seconder: *Martha Mackenzie (St John's)*

Gavin Daniel (Jesus)

What this motion says, is that Ernst and Young running a competition, to be entered by students who can win various prizes. University that has the most entries, then University will win £10,000 for a project, the company will provide informal support for this project. With OUSU support can get money.

Alex Lans (St Catherines)

What does it require of us?

Gavin Daniel (Jesus)

Raise the profile, more people that we can inform great opportunity. People hear from colleges who haven't heard of it get it across to them.

Jack Matthews (Univ)

Computer generated picture on facebook group, tag themselves in the prizes and they will win the individual prize, will then count up the number of Oxford University students.

Gavin Daniel (Jesus)

Competition doesn't take any skill, don't have to do anything. All input required.

Question:

Does the student union have feed in into what project and what advice do Ernst and Young do?

Gavin Daniel (Jesus)

Am sure project will be worthwhile and then the company will just advise. Will largely be implemented by student union

Kieran Quinn

Has Ernst and Young run this competition before and if so what projects have they funded?

Gavin Daniel (Jesus)

First time that had the University element, one last term but just individuals.

Question:

Is there a process for how OUSU chooses its sponsors?

Martha Mackenzie (St John's)

Had a conversation with OSSSL and it was decided that this isn't actually sponsorship.

Oliver Gleeson (Christ Church)

How likely is it we are going to win?

Gavin Daniel (Jesus)

The numbers aren't shared for confidentiality reasons, but would only take a small proportion of students at Oxford to enter, if OUSU can get behind reasonable chance that we could win.

Martha Mackenzie (St John's)

Wouldn't just be the student union who won the money, would open it out to the students as to what project they want to do.

Nick Adams (Wadham)

This is a sponsorship bid.

Alex Lans (St Catherine's)

Requires no endorsement by OUSU, other companies are allowed to bring to OUSU. So don't think requires special approval, we're just saying could help us out, not saying should work for them.

Gavin Daniel (Jesus)

Motion worded carefully, so not sponsorship just support, great care taken to not endorse the company, but just the competition.

Sean Robinson (Queen's)

Think endorsement by proxy, if other companies were to do this, we would accept their money, endorsing companies for financial gain. Is in effect.

Alex Lans (St Catherine's)

Beggars can't be choosers, I don't think that the two gentleman can open cheque books and give us £10,000. Just OUSU saying we could use £10,000.

Move to vote.

Gavin Daniel (Jesus)

The motion is to support publicise competition not company, £10,000 could do a lot of good for students here, we could do good with this money.

Nick Adams (Wadham)

Sponsorship deals, no skill element, precedent is the question.

Motion Passes.

o. Passage of Motions Nem Con

ii. motions affecting OUSU members as students at Oxford University

1. Collections Motion

Council Notes:

1. Annexe 1: the paper that the VP Access and Academic Affairs is taking to the Senior Tutors Committee
2. The data collected from the OUSU survey on collections, which showed that of the 270 collections sat 33% of them were returned by the end of 2nd week and 30% hadn't been given back by 4th week.
3. At the Feedback Strategy meeting, which took place in 2nd Week of this term (HT 12), JCR Presidents and Academic Affairs Officers highlighted collections as a priority; especially the timely return of collections.
4. The approach taken to returning collections and how feedback given to undergraduates can have a significant impact on the value of collections.
5. The meeting of Senior Tutors Committee, at which this paper will be discussed, on Monday of 6th Week

Council Believes:

1. Collections are a valuable exercise when undergraduates understand the role of collections and are prepared for them.
2. Collections are most valuable when both the undergraduate and tutor take them seriously.
3. In order to maximise the benefit of collections they should be returned to undergraduates in a timely way.
4. There is a role for tutors, working in partnership with the undergraduate, to ensure the student reaps the greatest benefit from the opportunity collections present.

Council Resolves:

1. To support the recommendations contained in the report
2. To mandate the VP (Access and Academic Affairs) to lobby the university to effect this change.

Proposed: Sara Polakova (St Hugh's)
Seconded: Hannah Cusworth (Brasenose)

Passed Nem Con

2. Motion to appropriate funds for the Ethical Careers Day

Council Notes:

1. This academic year the Careers Service ran careers fairs in advertising, PR and marketing, management consultancy, finance, science, economics, law, internships, international careers and a general 'Oxford Careers Fair'.
2. On Saturday 3rd March there will be an 'Ethical Careers Day' hosted jointly by the Oxford Careers Service, OUSU and the Oxford Hub.
3. The Ethical Careers Day will seek to replace the void left by the discontinued Beyond Profit Fair.
4. The Beyond Profit Fair was discontinued because of poor attendance and the inability of charitable and other 'ethical' organisations to offer jobs.
5. There is no provision in the current budget for an ethical careers event, so I am seeking funds from the discretionary campaigns budget.
6. There is £1600 remaining in the discretionary campaigns budget.

Council Believes:

1. That it is important to make students aware of the issues and opportunities available in pursuing an 'ethical' career.
2. That the Ethical Careers Day shouldn't detract from efforts to make existing careers fairs as 'ethical' as possible.

Council Resolves:

1. To donate £150 from the discretionary fund to the Ethical Careers Day to be held in the Examination Schools on 3rd March.

Proposed: Daniel Stone (St Peter's College)
Seconded: Oliver Gleeson (Christ Church College)

Passed Nem Con.

3. Trading Game Motion

Opposition

iii. motions affecting ousu members as members of the student movement

4. NUS Motion

Opposition

n. Other Motions

ii. motions affecting OUSU members as students at Oxford University

1. Collections Motion

Passed nem con.

2. Motion to appropriate funds for the Ethical Careers Day

Passed nem con.

3. Trading Game Motion

Council Notes:

1. The new Trading Game (www.TradeChase.com) developed by James Tromans and other students and Oxford alumni
2. We would like to organise, host and run a 'Cuppers' style competition with OUSU's support and associated marketing
3. The game is user friendly, exciting, and aims to make trading and finance accessible to a wider audience, especially to those not involved in a finance degree
4. The game is being simplified further with a 'Cuppers' style competition in mind

Council Believes:

1. The trading game is cool and fun
2. OUSU should support/promote it by all appropriate means
3. As Boris Johnson wrote in the Telegraph last Monday, it would be nice if Britain had a facebook. For trading, this student led initiative could be it

Council Resolves:

1. To endorse the Trading Game
2. To mandate the OUSU exec to promote the game accordingly

Proposed: *James Tromans, (Pembroke College)*

Secoded: *Bedeho Mender, (Wadham College)*

Adam Tyndall (Chair)

This motion needed to be referred to OUSU's trustee board and OSSL. Trustee board, 2 replied no opposition. OSSL would not allow OUSU to incur financial liability. But no opposition.

James Tromans (Pembroke)

Basically a start up as students, trading game for students, fantasy share trading game, educational tool worked with Said business school to create. Provide people with safe environment to work out how trading work. Some of things arranged, bank of America provided dinner. Non-financial degrees, will support advertisement, cost time and finance would be covered by website which is run by students and Oxford Alumni.

Hannah Cusworth (Brasenose)

Do you provide support, meeting or workshop to find out more?

James Tromans (Pembroke)

Yes, provide focus groups to understand finance, whole thing is that users want to use it.

Jack Matthews (Univ)

Is the game completely money free?

James Tromans (Pembroke)

At the moment yes, in the future, may have to pay a £1 to enter a game which is sponsored by one of partners. We are in talks with partners. Investors help to build it.

Chris

Main revenue from advertisement?

James Tromans (Pembroke)

Haven't thought about

James Tromans (Pembroke)

Building so clear to understand, will go through levels, getting more complicated

Jessica (Magdalen)

Web based marketing, formal access to JCR's. Mandate has to go out on one mailing. Part of a regular mailing?

Martha Mackenzie (St John's)

Don't have power can send out on MCR/JCR notices but can't be sure that they will send it out?

Jack Matthews (Univ)

Is the company behind the game profit making?

James Tromans (Pembroke)

But aim is for it to be.

Alex Lans (St Catherine's)

I've been trading stocks I started at 7 tons of these games out there. None are educational, as they don't give real world implications. He can't offer the service of offering knowledge that people. Think he just wishes to use the name of OUSU. You can't teach someone the skills of investing until you've given them the skills. Don't want people to learn how to gamble. I don't think any of you would want to participate in the losses. Make money using our name.

Jack Matthews (Univ)

Point of opposition, I think great idea, but main idea, is that hope company would make a profit, any other profit making company would have to pay for these services. The only company we have given to is a registered charity, you aren't but there are no controls. You don't need us. You only have to find one JCR president and get them to put it on the list. So don't think OUSU should put name to. Brilliant idea, but don't think we should have the risk.

Alex Lans (St Catherine's)

If this company proposes to compensate people, is there an amendment for it to be considered by OSSL board. OSSL board considered as non-profit.

Adam Tyndall (Chair)

Policy stays policy for 3 years unless it is removed.

Kevin Quinn (Magdalen)

OUSU doesn't endorse coppers. Why not use student finance society to promote.

James Tromans (Pembroke)

Want to raise awareness.

James Raynor

I will put on President's mailing list for you

Question from Balliol

Why should we promote this financial product instead of other?

James Tromans (Pembroke)

I'm asking because interested in, lots of people who are interested in going into finance, lots of people who would like to know more, but don't know where to find it.

James Tromans (Pembroke)

Number of interesting points, gambling, it is not gambling, this is a safe and secure environment for people to practice, ours is the best system out there, were offering as think a fun educational tool, better to learn with others than just by yourself.

Jack Matthews (Univ)

I think great idea, if got this far can move it forward himself. I don't think we need the risk.

Motion fails.

iv. motions affecting ousu members as members of the student movement

4. NUS Motion (FINAL VERSION - with amendments)

Council Notes:

1. That the National Union of Students is calling a national lobby of Parliament on March 7th against government higher education policy.
2. The marked drop in university applications, and Coalition plans to scrap significant numbers of student places, making university access harder than it already is.
3. The need to demonstrate continued opposition to the recently-shelved and controversial HE White Paper that if revived, will see the interests of profit placed before those of higher education, with students and staff treated as producers and consumers.
4. The challenges in accessing higher education at present.
5. The precedent of Oxford's role in organising for the biggest education demonstration ever in November 2010, and OUSU statement against the HE White Paper.
6. The calling of a national week of action from 12th-16th March by NUS.

Council Believes:

1. That the NUS are correct in pointing out the flawed nature of government higher education policy, and that universities should be accessible.
2. That students should be able to, and encouraged to, attend the NUS lobby and the march from University of London Union beforehand.
3. That one of the roles of a Student Union is to defend the integrity of higher education, the students and their staff that we represent.

Council Resolves:

1. To assign £500 to booking return coaches to London to ensure students wishing to attend the lobby can do so.
2. To advertise the lobby.
3. To issue a statement in support of the NUS lobby.
4. To support the national week of action.
5. To mandate Nathan Akehurst to organise an open pre-march meeting at which those who plan to go to the march can discuss how to coordinate and prepare (costumes, banners, placards, songs, dances, media message, recruitment) so as to make the best use of their presence in London on the 7th March.

Proposed: *Nathan Akehurst (Lincoln)*

Secoded: *Alexander Cibulskis (Wadham)*

Nathan Akehurst (Lincoln)

National lobby demonstration, public sector strike, and the NUS week of action. OUSU has established history of standing up for students in the face of dangerous changes in higher education policy. Sending coaches, sent a powerful message, biggest demonstration since 2003. White paper shelved need to keep up opposition so it is not brought back. Asking for funding and OUSU support for walk out.

Amendment Number (to be completed by the Chair): 1

Text of Amendment:

To mandate Nathan Akehurst to organise an open pre-march meeting at which those who plan to go to the march can discuss how to coordinate and prepare (costumes, banners, placards, songs, dances, media message, recruitment) so as to make the best use of their presence in London on the 7th March.

Proposer (name and college): *Sean Robison (Queens)*

Secoder (name and college): *Georgie Kay (Queens)*

Accepts amendment 1 as friendly.

Nick Cooper

How many people can get on coaches?

Nathan Akehurst (Lincoln)

About 60 students.

Precedent 9th November definitely had 60 people, lot more on public transport. The coach is going on 7th March for London March.

Point 5 of council notes

Jack Matthews (Univ)

Are UCU getting student support?

Nathan Akehurst (Lincoln)

Not sure with regards UCU support, there were lecturers at the November march.

Jim O'Connell (Univ)

What do you expect from OUSU exec.

Nathan Akehurst (Lincoln)

Promotion of march, travelling down and week of action.

Martha Mackenzie (St John's)

Strike notes 5 and resolves 4

Think separate issues, different issues, 7th March specific and focussed and think we could all get behind. Would make policy clearer.

Accepted as friendly.

Jack Matthews (Univ)

Oppose motion, as think it is divisive, always been a move to proactively engage with students to ensure that we are truly consulting them. Many points I would amend. Once I'd done would look like same motion. Liam Burns has asked for no march before lobby, security at palace of Westminster won't let you in so would muck up lobby. Defending rights and integrity of staff, no we are here to defend students and their concerns. Think should consult students.

Adam Tyndall (Chair)

Just want to confirm there is nothing against the strike in this motion that is now off the table.

Nick Adams (Wadham)

OUSU gave support to march 2 years ago, was a demonstration on 9th November, which OUSU didn't publicise but still lots of mobilisation. The message is that a major victory won by student movement by taking white paper of table, we can't afford to sit and wait, because government will try and push through without it going through parliament. Support will make this effective.

Another amendment.

Delete prior march from resolves 2. To advertise the lobby.

Accepted.

Sean Robinson (Queen's)

Oppose think changes.

Chris

Support amendment as an NUS lobby as don't want to destroy something which could be very successful for the NUS.

Nathan Akehurst (Lincoln)

If OUSU doesn't support march but if coaches arrive in time for people to attend march.

Sean Robinson (Queen's)

Please clarify purposes does anyone know anything about.

Martha Mackenzie (St John's)

NUS supporting lobby, want to be a lobby to lobby MPs. Not many plans for the week of action. NUS haven't spoken about march.

Alex Lans (St Catherine's)

Isn't it counter intuitive to do something, which is against the lobby. If come out with picket signs, don't think will be receptive to talking to you.

Matt

The NUS is pre-empting the student movement, the NUS is calling a movement without ground root support. There is something about a march which is different from a lobby. We are walking towards parliament part of demonstration before. It shouldn't be part of regulations that we shouldn't be able to march.

Not in our business, students right to stand with lectures, and workers together, not two separate entities. We have to stand together. We have to support strike.

Adam Tyndall (Chair)

We are only addressing amendment on march.

Georgina Kay (Queen's)

Would be interested to know the difference between marching to parliament and just turning up to lobby.

Jim O'Connell (Univ)

Trust Liam Burns political judgement and what he wants to achieve with this day of action.

Hannah Cusworth (Brasenose)

2 years ago, went to similar MP lobby, and that's where you get the fantastic pictures of Nick Clegg. We held him to account, as showed politicians not sticking to pledges. So might not say overall successful but wider point. We just turned up, invited in and have meeting with local MP's and they say will sign or won't sign the pledge. Trust Liam's judgement on this; don't want it called off for police protest.

Jack Matthews (Univ)

The march before the lobby to start at ULU arranged by VP of ULU all the Tories and Vince Cable should be put on a bonfire and burnt not very keen on. Liam knows what will happen if there is a march, as if people march towards parliament as they will close the doors of parliament if want lobby to work have to stop the march.

Sean Robinson (Queen's)

Don't see point if not having lots of students if we want masses of people then will still have loads of people approaching palace of Westminster. Don't see distinction between lobby and march. Supporting in principle a mass action if sending coaches, should support a proper one, not a limited one, perhaps not understanding nuances, seems confused.

Matt

The march will go from ULU anyway, even if OUSU doesn't support. IF leave to individual choice as to what they want to attend. Don't see problem, I'm going to be at march hope lots of you will be.

James Raynor

If going to do a lobby, then if going to send 85 people then won't let in anyway, have to keep numbers sensible.

Nick Adams (Wadham)

The point of debate is that we should support march and lobby, useful precedent in Oxford, in council in congregation no confidence motion passed through lobbying congregation. Important heard voices of students outside supporting them. It is to show support for this, so use powers of persuasion of lobbyists and the marching. Concerned about democracy and reaction of police, have used scare tactics, very worrying that having a discussion with the fear of illegitimate repression.

Oliver Gleeson (Christ Church)

Don't know much about, on one hand lobby organised by NUS, have trusted respected leaders. Other side ULU VP who may have standing. Think support lobby not march.

Alex Lans (St Catherine's)

Heed lessons of democracy. Protest doesn't work need to put a face to it. Politicians won't listen to a mob pissing everyone off but will listen

St Johns

Talking about endorsing something of OUSU, doesn't sound very democratic, if pass amendment of not will go ahead anyway. So not worth passing amendment won't help.

Move to vote.

Chris nothing to add.

Nathan Akehurst (Lincoln)

One of people made point, thousands of people will be there and obviously not all get into palace of Westminster. Hundreds of other student leaders, the march is where students can make presence felt.

Deleting march.

Amendment carried prior march deleted.

Nick Cooper

Is there any evidence, that there is a pressing financial need that they don't need our support.

Jack Matthews (Univ)

Second what said, very competitive transport route, if want to go then use your right to go. Think more students should know. Not passing doesn't mean students can't go, then you can choose which you go to march or lobby.

This is a single issue point, if look back at November 9th March NUS had to sign off on. More luck than judgement don't know who signing line at Scotland.

Support lobby and related things.

Nick - Corpus Christi

All do without talking to JCR's then no reason to support motion.

Unfair to criticise students not being able to go. Worrying about Cherwell's response, we support, but we won't provide any money to assist.

Chris Barrie

Does seem to me that you don't understand the potency that a Union can have if. If think a group of students has the same effect as 5 or 6 coaches going down to Oxford then I disagree.

Sean Robinson (Queen's)

I say that if we support that this is right politically. Should do what we think is right. An amendment stating that people are organised, should support and pass.

Oliver Gleeson (Christ Church)

Better things that we could spend money on. People who are already going to go. Can only afford, one coach, so don't think best use of OUSU money. This is not 22,000 students we are giving £500 for a free ride to council.

James

Think should be aware of financial issue, this isn't as big a march, don't think we will fill 2.5 coaches, can we find out how many people want to go, and spend money accordingly.

Tom Rutland

Think have right to vote on this motion, have consulted on this before.

Jack Matthews (Univ)

I more than many have been fighting for the power of council. I don't belittle power it has. Just think we should proactively engage with students. If you fee passionately about it so I find the money. I use my money to fund going to NUS in London once a month as I believe.

Martha Mackenzie (St John's)

We can afford, if does pass will personally pledge to ensure common rooms are informed.

(Green paper - lobby not march)

Nathan Akehurst (Lincoln)

Seems to be characterising as a jaunt it is about the future of higher education, it is to ensure that people who have other financial concerns can attend. Get community support and get a lively presence at lobby.

Jack Matthews (Univ)

Can spend money better, and think significant part of student body who won't support.

Motion passes.

Annex to Motion 1 “The role of collections”

Background

The wording of the recommendation that already exists in the Conference of Colleges template reports of academic provision is as follows.

“Colleges should use Collections or some other form of assessed work systematically as a significant element of formative assessment. Collections should be marked as promptly as possible, and collection marks should be recorded and monitored by Organizing Tutors and/or the Senior Tutor. Students who miss collections should be followed up. In addition colleges should regularly review whether each subject is receiving enough formative assessment.”

In Michaelmas Term 2011 colleges considered whether there should be an addition to the template that related to whether colleges should ask their tutors to make clear to undergraduates the way in which they marked collections. This paper is written with an awareness of the current quality assurance mechanisms and suggests a number of ways that colleges might ensure that collections are as beneficial as possible for undergraduates.

Summary

The paper results from an informal meeting in Michaelmas Term 2011 between the OUSU Vice President (Access and Academic Affairs) and the Senior Tutors of Balliol, Lincoln, Univ and St Hugh’s. It also draws on OUSU Student Advice Service casework and discussions with JCR officers, on the Undergraduate Response to the Teaching Review and on the results of the National Student Survey.

The aim of the paper is to enhance the value of collections for undergraduates. It suggests three areas for consideration; a) the explanation of the role of collections, b) how tutors and undergraduates might be best encouraged to use collections as a means of formative assessment and c) the timing of the return of collections.

In 2nd Week of this term (HT 2012) JCR Presidents and Academic Affairs officers gathered to consider their priorities with regards to undergraduate education. Collections was highlighted as one of four priority issues, with the sub topics of the promptness of the return of collections; consistency in system of setting collections and the relationship of collections to students’ academic progress.

a) The role of Collections

There is a broad consensus that collections have a valuable place within Oxford’s undergraduate educational provision:

Collections give undergraduates a clear understanding of the standard of their academic work. Since it may often be the case, for good pedagogical reasons, that tutorial work does not receive a mark, collections are important for undergraduates to gain a clear understanding of what level their academic work has reached. It is clear to both the OUSU Executive and JCR officers, from our interaction with students and the Undergraduate Response to the University’s Review of Teaching¹, that at the forefront of many undergraduates’ minds is how they are performing academically.

Collections are a key part of the formative assessment that Oxford undergraduates undertake. The comments that undergraduates receive on their returned collections can be used to improve future performance. While all undergraduates will receive oral comments on their written work in tutorials or classes, collections may be one of the few times when they receive written feedback.

Collections are an opportunity for undergraduates to prepare for exams.

If collections are sat under exam conditions they are an opportunity for undergraduates to practice exam technique. For some undergraduates, the practice of sitting three-hour examinations may take some getting used to; similarly, the way Oxford asks exam questions may be quite novel. Collections also give undergraduates a chance to practice revising for examinations at Oxford and a chance to refine their approach to revision in preparation for taking prelims and then finals. The opportunity to develop these

¹ <http://www.ousu.org/about/Teaching%20Review%20Report.pdf>

skills is becoming increasingly important as A-Level (and equivalent) examinations are becoming less and less like Oxford examinations.

It is clear that undergraduates value collections very highly. This comes across in both the Undergraduate Response to the Teaching Review and the comments of undergraduates in discussions. At a recent meeting of JCR Presidents and Academic Affairs Officers, undergraduates repeatedly emphasized how valuable collections were when they were taken seriously by the undergraduate and by the college. That colleges take collections very seriously is shown by their commitment to following up cases where undergraduates have missed collections and the role collections play in determining a student's academic standing. Undergraduates feel that the same importance should be attached to the return of collections and to the role collections play in formative assessment for undergraduates.

Formative assessment: the marking of collections

Given the prescriptive nature of school examinations, undergraduates are likely to have an increasingly mechanistic approach to examinations. This may especially be the case with essay writing, however in science-based subjects undergraduates will also tend to have limited experience of responding to the more expansive questions Oxford sets. This issue is pertinent to undergraduates who have had good schooling as well as those who may have faced educational disadvantage as all undergraduates are likely to be much less ready to tackle collections, even when compared to the undergraduates of five years ago, because of the changing nature of A-Levels (and equivalent examinations).

Making it clear to undergraduates early in their career through induction sessions and the information provided by tutors about the role of collections is very beneficial. Undergraduates should be made aware of the relationship between collections & tutorial work and which strategies they could explore when approaching collections. The extent to which undergraduates are clear about what they should focus on during their preparation for collections should also be considered. End of term meetings and OxCORT reports present clear opportunities for discussing these kinds of issues.

It is also vital that undergraduates understand the criteria against which they will be assessed so that they can gain the greatest formative benefit from sitting collections. Academic literature shows that the best students are those who can 'self-regulate'² and that, in order to do this, they must understand the task they are being set and how to complete it.³ It is also often the case that undergraduates cannot assess the quality of their own work or that of others without being supported in internalizing those criteria. This fact provided much of the rationale for OUSU's support for 'peer marking' as a means of academic development, as discussed with the Oxford Learning Institute and at Senior Tutors' Committee in the academic years 2009-10 and 2010-11.

Students frequently report an incomplete understanding of what is expected of them in their public examinations. As part of the Undergraduate Response to the University's Review of Teaching we asked undergraduates *What skills do you believe that you need to succeed in examinations at Oxford?* A common first response to the question in Humanities was 'I don't know'. However those in other essay based subjects also spoke about their belief that there was a lack of objective standards of quality within Oxford's assessment criteria and a feeling that they didn't know what first class work would look like or why certain pieces of work got the grades that they did. This qualitative evidence is supported by the response to the NSS question *The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance* where 56% of those surveyed definitely agreed in the last two years, below the sector and Russell Group averages and significantly below student satisfaction in other areas tracked by the NSS.⁴

During OUSU's undergraduate response to the Teaching Review, undergraduates also frequently made reference to the fact that they felt there was a mismatch between the skills they gain through the tutorial system and those needed to succeed in exams.

Collections are clearly one way to bridge this gap in understanding and for undergraduates to develop the skills they feel are particular to the format of the public exam. It is arguable that there is a significant difference between the preparation of the weekly essay and writing three essays in three

² Bransford, J.D. ,Brown, A.L. and Cocking, R.R. (2000) *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School*

³ Gibbs, G. & Simpson, C. (2004). Conditions under which assessment supports students' learning.

⁴ Average of the response to this question in the 2010 and 2011 survey

hours. This issue may also exist to some extent where undergraduates primarily complete problem sheets. Helping those undergraduates understand at an early stage how to prepare for and 'use' collections effectively could be an extremely good way to help them improve their performance in public examinations.

Another way the opportunity which collections present could be maximised is considering how undergraduates can capitalize on the comments they should receive on the completed collection. In response to a survey that OUSU ran in Michelmas Term some undergraduates spoke about how they received either very few comments on their collections. This was in sharp contrast to others who felt they received comments on how to improve in future as well as a clear explanation of why they received the marks they did. There were also a number of undergraduates who felt the comments didn't give an indication about what their answers were lacking or what they could have done to strengthen their answers.

Responses to the question on Collections in the QAWG surveys shows that in many colleges tutors organize meetings with their undergraduates to go over their collections. This is one way in which undergraduates can consider how they should internalize the comments they receive on collections and use them to improve their future collections and tutorial work. As students are increasingly being taught out of college by a number of different tutors how this model may support some students better than others.

b) Returning Collections

Alongside the question of how undergraduates can make the most of the formative opportunity that collections present, the question of when collections are returned should be considered. In 5th week of last term OUSU ran a survey on collections, of the 270 collections sat 33% of them were returned by the end of 2nd week and 30% hadn't been given back by 4th week. It was clear that there was a 'long tail' with regards to the return of collections and that if collections were not returned by 2nd week it was much less likely undergraduates would have received them back by 5th week. Many made positive comments about the value of collections and the feedback they received on them, indicating the appreciation undergraduates hold for collections and that those who were negative towards them were not disproportionately responding to the survey.

This data supports the evidence received in numerous conversations with student representatives. JCR Presidents, Academic Affairs Officers and Divisional Board representatives have all repeatedly raised the issue of the timely return of collections, indicating that it is consistently a live issue. Students feel that colleges which do not already have a deadline for the return of collections should consider instituting a fixed point by which collections must be returned, in order to ensure that undergraduates can receive marks and comments in good time to address any issues and before preparation begins for the next term's collections.

Senior Tutors' Committee is asked to initiate in colleges:

- a) **Reviewing** how the role of collections is explained to undergraduates in order to ensure that the purpose and importance of collections is clear.
- b) **Discussing** with tutors and undergraduates how undergraduates can benefit most from marks and comments on completed collections as a means of formative assessment (taking particular account of cases where collections are marked by tutors outside college).
- c) **Considering** the appropriateness of an expectation that collections will be returned by the end of 2nd week and a formal agreement that they will be returned by 4th week at the latest.

Further information

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