



Minutes of 5th week MT2001 OUSU Council
Held on 9th November 2001 at 2pm in Wadham Refectory

Special council:

Executive candidate hustings:

Philip Thompson (St Johns), Anatole Pang (Wadham), P Duncan Wells (Somerville), Rachel Logan (New), Andrew Thomas (St Annes), Nicky Ellis (Queens), were present and husted in that order.

Philip Thompson outlines his experience as an F and F co-chair for 3 terms, and full attendance of OUSU council since then. He would like to broaden the range of OUSU campaigns, especially those related to access and welfare, and increase JCR involvement. He also feels we should be better represented to the NUS. He would be specifically interested in campaigning for longer library opening hours; Target schools, and is prepared to put in the hours on low profile campaigns.

Anatole Pang husts next. He has had experience of OUSU through being a delegate in Michaelmas term, and has helped the RO through elections committee.

P Duncan Wheeler is a first year but has regularly attended F and F, and is active in OULC. He says he is eager to get involved with OUSU, and first decided to run for delegate, but changed to an exec candidate after another slate candidate chose not to run. He is most interested in Target Schools committee, as he comes from a comprehensive school background.

Rachel Logan has served 3 terms as F and F co-chair, and has had experience of large-scale campaigns and consensus building. She is also currently serving a term as exec officer. Rachel is most interested in health and welfare and queer rights committees. She says she would like to increase involvement in OUSU through the range of entz provided, and has experience of such organisation with divinity, and through training of JCR officers in welfare provision. She also has worked with the battels sub-committee at new college, and would like to see OUSU providing more training in this area, and increase work against student hardship.

Andrew Thomas explains he is OUSU reps co-chair, and OUSU/NUS officer for ST Annes, and would like to campaign for longer opening hours for college libraries. He would encourage rotation of the JCR 3rd vote to increase involvement in OUSU, campaign against battels rises, and tuition fees.

Nicky Ellis is women's officer for OULC, secretary of her college welfare committee, and spends time mentoring. She feels she has the right experience to be involved in Target Schools and Access campaigns as she comes from a comprehensive school and attended evening classes prior to university. She says she would like to see a campaigning SU, especially on environmental issues and in the wider community.

All candidates declare membership of political parties and societies.

John Craig (New) asks if candidates will visit schools in the target schools Easter scheme. All agree to.

Eleanor Fletcher (Worcester) asks which areas the candidates are not interested in. All reply that they are willing to help in all areas, and are prepared to do mundane tasks.

Mel Marshall (Christ Church) asks if the candidates feel they can take on portfolios with limited support? Rachel Logan says she has prior experience of this through exec, and Andrew Thomas says the same applies to OUSU reps committee. All the candidates agree yes, they could.

John Kenicke (Magd) asks what the candidates like best about Oxford.

Andrew Thomas likes the green and the sunshine, Nicky Ellis enjoys meeting people, Philip Thompson enjoys the nightlife, Anatole Pang says he likes everything, even work. P Duncan Wheeler says that he is a first year, and needs more experience, and Rachel Logan cites the open atmosphere.

Ed Sutherland Somerville asks if the 3rd week Afghanistan motion should have passed.

Nicky Ellis says yes, that we need more discussion on the issues.

Philip Thompson agrees.

Anatole Pang says the motion was irrelevant to Oxford Students and that he supports the war.

P Duncan Wheeler believes we need more discussion on such issues

Rachel Logan believes anyone should feel free to bring a motion to council.

Andrew Thomas thinks it should have been passed and took the motion to St Annes JCR himself.

Nick Clark (Somerville) points out that only 11 people are running for 10 places, should the role of exec be changed to increase interest?

Philip Thompson believed that the candidates are all keen, and until he has experience of exec cannot comment on the role.

Anatole Pang believes the elections and OUSU should be run in a more closed way.

P Duncan Wheeler agrees it is a shame so few candidates are running, but also needs more experience of exec to be able to comment

Rachel Logan says it is a symptom of OUSU's low profile and wants to raise it in general.

Andrew Thomas says all the elections have a low candidacy level and effort needs to be focussed in this area.

Nicky Ellis says publicity and awareness but not role change could change the this.

Laura Santana (St Hildas) asks if the candidates are able to put in a lot of effort in their 3rd year and final term.

Anatole Pang says he doubts his workload will change

Duncan Wheeler says he is a first year

Rachel Logan says her work will be easy then

Andrew Thomas says it will also be fine

Nicky Ellis says she is a classicist and though will have work for mods in that term doesn't think it will affect exec duties.

Philip Thompson says he is an historian and will be fine.

Antonia Bance (Somerville) points out that all candidates have been interested in Target Schools, what else are they interested in?

Duncan Wheeler would like ethics and NUS portfolios

Rachel Logan would like F and F, Health and welfare and entz

Andrew Thomas would like Battels, and OUSU reps committee

Nicky Ellis would like One World and welfare committee

Philip Thompson would like a welfare-related committee, and access and academic affairs.

Anatole Pang would like ethics and F and F.

It was noted that candidates not present were: Chris Hanretty, Marc Stoneham, Edmund Sutton, and Julia Buckley

The next hust was for **VP Access and academic affairs**, Sonia Sodha, St Hildas:

Sonia explained she saw the VP's role in access as 2 pronged, myth breaking, and preventing inequalities in the admissions system. She has 2 years committee experience. She wants to expand the open day scheme and add an extra day, and improve the schools publications with, for example, student views. On the front of preventing inequalities she says she would campaign for the Oxbridge application form to be dropped, and provide equal opps training to interviewers.

In terms of academic affairs, she would like to see the libraries kept open for longer using corporate sponsorship, and draw up a charter of student rights, to prevent college based problems from being missed. She also wants to increase training for academic affairs and access CR officers and include welfare training, and organise revision schemes.

Finally she outlines her experience through Target Schools, organising away open days, and in the Bodleian campaign.

Dan Johnson (Corpus) asks if she believes unopposed elections are undermining to OUSU.

Sonia replies that not if the candidates are good. The Manifestos are more important, and the new RON option is a good idea.

Ed Sutherland (Some) asks if she believes this VP position should be paid for by the University.

Sonia replies that this may remove independence, which would be most damaging to campaigns against university actions, for example the scrapping of the application form.

Mel Marshall (Christ Church) asks what the candidate would do to encourage Northern and Scottish students (who have exams at different times) especially, to attend open days?

Sonia points to the initiation of the regional conferences which she wants to see twice a year, and which could be taken to Scotland. This is a problem which may now apply to more students as they sit AS level exams in the summer term.. A November open day may also help.

Helena Puig Laurraui (St Hildas) asks what the candidate plans to do about the problems of International students? Sonia replies she knows something about the problems of EU students, and that study skills training may help.

Dan Paskins asks why she thinks there is only one candidate for the position?

Sonia answers it may be because people are dissuaded from running if they know a candidate is already running.. But the OUSU adverts have been good as have the 'How to be a ...' guides, and that these should be expanded upon.

John Craig (New) asks what does she think the achievements of student led initiatives have been?

Sonia believes they are a good idea, and especially in Oxford, where only seeing current students can break the negative image of Oxford students. She also points to the success of the Belfast Open day, which received a positive media coverage and seemed to lead to an increase in applications.

Mel Marshall (Christ Church) asks what she believes the single biggest issue hindering applications is? Sonia believes it is the oxford student image, and that she would attempt to break this myth.

George Callaghan (Univ.) asks if she believes the bad Oxford restaurant service hinders applications?

Sonia says no.

The next hust was for **Vice-President (Women)** - Mel Marshall, Christ Church is the only candidate

Mel points to her previous SU involvement, which shows she can do jobs well. She was on Exec for a year, which gave her broad experience, and she has also been a co-chair of Women's Committee and Pro-Choice Committee. She has never lost an election and has experience of representation. Important issues that Mel will spend time on are fees, the nightbus, childcare, careers, applications, increasing the number of female graduate students and addressing the fact that fewer women than men get firsts.

Eleanor Fletcher (Worcester) asks if Mel will look into further sponsorship for the nightbus. Mel says that the nightbus is one of her highest priorities and that she will work closely with the business manager, aiming to have the nightbus operational on as many days a week as possible.

Catherine Finney asks whether, since the number of applications from women is up, there is still a need for this position. Mel notes that the number of female graduates is still very low, as is the number of women reading for science degrees.

Catherine Sangster (Merton) asks for more details on elections Mel has stood in. All Mel's posts were appointed or uncontested, except for Exec, where she was elected last.

Helena (St Hilda's) asks why women get fewer firsts. Mel says that women may be very conditioned, where Tutors expect very free-thinking, confident exam essays. Papers tend to be taught and set by men who see a different way of thinking.

Laura Santana (St Hilda's) asks what can be done to ensure that women get more firsts. Mel replies that finals forums are of great importance. She would like to see more tutors, especially male tutors, and also students from previous years sharing their strategies.

Trista De Genova (SEH) notes that the number of male and female admissions is approximately equal. Mel replies that there are more female applicants, so access is not equal, and that there remains a discrepancy between subjects.

Antonia Bance (Somerville) asks if Mel is pro-choice and whether it is important that the SU has such a policy. Mel replies in the affirmative to both questions.

Liz Chare (Linacre) asks why there are fewer women graduates. Mel says she hasn't really looked into this, but will work with the VP (Graduates) to research this area.

Antonia Bance (Somerville) asks Mel if she is a feminist and whether this is still relevant. She replies yes to both and says that there is always a role for women-only space.

Helena (St Hilda's) asks what can be done to improve childcare. Mel says that the current situation is really bad, but there may be a facility being built at St Hilda's. This should go some way towards solving the problems, but we need to pester the University to ensure that the project does in fact go ahead. Mel notes that there are, contrary to common opinion, no fewer than 600 parents at Oxford, and points out that the lack of childcare provision has consequences for access too, discouraging potential applicants who have children.

Laura Santana (St Hilda's) asks if Mel thinks that all-women colleges are a good idea. Mel says that she used to hate the idea, but since being here has fallen in love with St Hilda's. She hopes it stays all-women and will do whatever she can to help maintain its status, should her help be requested.

Laura Santana (St Hilda's) asks how awareness of health issues can be raised and how people can deal with harassment. Mel says that publications such as the Unplanned Pregnancy Pack are good, but she will put them on the web to make them more accessible and will promote them heavily. Existing college structures are good for dealing with harassment, but OUSU has more of a role to play.

Aodhnait Fahy (Merton) asks Mel if she thinks that colleges should have Women's Officers. Mel says she wouldn't impose a position on any college, but would support any CR who would like to protect the post.

The next hust was for Vice-President (Welfare) - Andrew Copson, Balliol.

Andrew says that he was LGB rep for two years and is currently JCR president. He has had much experience of representation, both for harassment and for general issues. He has co-ordinated jobs in the JCR, worked with sub-committees and helped with "Horizon", similar to Diversity Week. He has campaigned on Section 28, edited the welfare section of his JCR freshers' guide and lobbied for disabled access.

Dan Paskins (Magdalen) notes that the OUSU offices are inaccessible for wheelchair users and asks what can be done to encourage access. Andrew says that a chairlift must be installed and that he will talk to JCR disabilities officers and colleges.

Andrew Thomas (St Anne's) asks if Andrew supports Gladrag. He replies that he does.

James Rowlands (Pembroke) asks what Andrew believes to be the main welfare issues for students. He replies that disabled services should be expanded and that there should be more advice on sexual health.

Alex Grouet (SEH) asks whether peer supporters should be introduced to all colleges. Andrew replies that the pressure on one person can be very great, but he would look into it.

Josh Kearn says that the University welfare training is not very good. Andrew disagrees.

Nick Clark (Somerville) asks whether peer support should be centralised. Andrew says that it can be useful to have people who have been in a similar environment, but also sees the usefulness of having someone more detached in some circumstances. He would look into introducing something centralised, but would make it clear that this is not an exclusive system.

James Rowlands (Pembroke) asks if Andrew would extend the contract of the University Advisor, which is due for renewal within the next year. Andrew says that this is very important, and that pressure must be put on the University to ensure that this does go ahead. The Advice service is vital, and should be available for as many hours as possible.

Andrew Thomas (St Anne's) asks about the quality of OUSU welfare training. Andrew replies that he done listening skills training and found it very useful.

Hust for OUSU Vice-President (Finance)

Ben Harris, St Hughs: Some say that political cliques are a problem in OUSU and that those involved should be non-political, but this is nonsense. It is political beliefs that ground the commitment of those involved and ensure that OUSU runs well. For example, it is not exclusivity to consult members, to involve and support JCRs over battels, or to listen to students about low pay. These are the real issues of the VPF election. The 'common sense' approach is not the answer.

Campaigning and service provision go hand-in-hand. As VP Finance, I would prioritise funding for the equality campaigns and look to extend the OUSU Card scheme.

There are differences between the two candidates. If you want more involvement and campaigning, together with good publications, then vote for me.

Sean Sullivan, SHE: I am standing as an Independent for VP Finance because it is the least political of the sabbatical positions. It is about service provision - I do not see how you can get political about typesetting, for example.

OUSU campaigns that are relevant to students are important, but only those campaigns. They must not be allowed to detract from the other work that OUSU does, such as its publications.

I am prepared to take on the responsibility of producing good quality OUSU publications. I have also been a trustee of the OUSU shop and have the experience to make this a success also. I would look to help distant colleges make more of the OUSU shop.

I would also expand Freshers' Fair, looking at allowing in 2nd and 3rd years. On Battels, I would campaign to make sure that JCRs have all the available information. All this would make me a competent and efficient VP Finance.

Nick Clark, Somerville: How would you provide more support to JCRs over battels?

Sean: Happy to become a battels freak, finding out all the available information, accompanying JCR officers to meetings and launching a University-wide campaign to spread information.

Ben: Wants to see the information that JCRs have improved, advice and co-ordination for JCRs from OUSU, solidarity in rents campaigns between colleges and to ensure that OSU safeguards the interests of its members.

Andrew Thomas, St Anne's: Are Van Noorden rises in college rents acceptable?

Ben: It depends on the college and on the views of the JCR. As VPF, he would back the views of the JCR

Sean: Agreed that it depended on the college and JCR. He noted that colleges often targeted their rent rises at first years, and that OUSU had to watch out for this.

James Kettle, New: Are you prepared for the responsibility of becoming publisher of the Oxford Student

Sean: Would facilitate the work of the OxStu and make sure that OUSU benefited financially from the available advertising space. He would appoint good quality editors, safeguard editorial independence and was willing to help with the late nights before going to press.

Ben: Agreed that the role of the VP (finance) in relation to the Oxford Student was one of a facilitator. He would help out with the late nights and safeguard editorial independence. He noted that he had experience himself of being an editor, having co-edited the OUSU One-World Guide.

Alex Grouet: Did you consider standing for any other OUSU sabbatical position?

Ben: Not really. The VP (Finance) job is very broad, including providing information for students, PR and battels. It is therefore fundamental to what OUSU does.

Sean: Has been on the OUSU executive since last Michaelmas. Those portfolios he has had since then have shaped his interests in OUSU and led him to stand for VP (Finance). He considered no other position.

Eleanor Fletcher, Worcester: The job involves a lot of driving and lifting heavy loads, are prepared for this.

Both candidates said that they were, and that they had valid UK driving licences.

Josh Yaphe, college?: How would you work to support MCRs?

Ben: Would use an email list for treasurers to spread information and would seek feedback from colleges on these issues. Would look at the issues around ethical investment and listen to JCRs.

Sean: Agreed that it was a two-way process, and that feedback from JCRs and MCRs was crucial. However, because the VP (Finance) is a full-time, sabbatical position, they must be pro-active. He noted that OUSU currently has its web-based battel-buster pack, and that this must be kept up to date.

John Cook, Lady Margaret Hall: How would you deal with hostile college administrators?

Sean: Would be diplomatic, negotiating carefully to achieve goals.

Ben: Agreed that diplomacy was important. However, if there is a clear case of injustice, must shame administrators into submission.

Catherine Sangster, Merton: What are the differences between the two candidates?

Ben: The differences concern their conceptions of the nature of what an SU is. To him, it is about services, but also student hardship, for example - campaigns. Relevance is important, but there are different ways to achieve that. He is a democrat, who believes that all students should know more about OUSU's finances.

Sean: Agreed that the differences concerned their conceptions of what an SU was for. Sus are there to serve their members. He is, therefore, not averse to campaigning, but services are the central plank of what they do. It is not a political job, and he is the better qualified candidate.

Sacha Ismail, Somerville: Are the two candidates in synch with the views of the leaders of their respective political parties.

Sean: The question is irrelevant. However, to answer it, Sean did not support the candidature of Iain Duncan Smith in the recent leadership contest.

Ben: Is not in agreement with Tony Blair, on issues such as asylum, the minimum wage and tuition fees. The question is not irrelevant; the job of VP (Finance) involves setting the priorities for spending, and, in many ways, politics is the language of priorities. He is being honest about those priorities, and therefore, political. He believes in tolerance, democracy and equality.

Oscar Van Nooijen, Queen's: How would the candidates respond to disaffiliations from OUSU?

Ben: Subscriptions from colleges are quite important. Sus depend on solidarity in order to provide services, etc. Would deal with disaffiliations, for example, Oriel's, by giving services to individuals, but withholding college services. He would work to show why people should be members of OUSU. For example, events such as Freshers' Fair, and the cost of entry to non-members, show why further disaffiliations should not take place.

Sean: It is very difficult. Other college should not have to subsidise Oriel. Furthermore, the fact that it costs more to get a first year into Freshers' Fair than it does to member of OUSU per capita makes a mockery of Oriel's decision. At the level of college service provision, they should be withheld from non-members.

David Furness, Keble: Given the current economic climate, is it realist to pledge more money to particular campaigns?

Sean: Because of problems with advertising revenue, the VP (Finance) will have to look seriously at the budget. As a result, he has made no commitments to increase spending. All changes to the budget would be made as a result of consultation.

Ben: Yes, it is realistic, because it is about priorities. It is important that minorities get the support that they need from their Student Union. Because campaigns are a small part of the budget, it is not unrealistic to promise increases in particular cases.

Dan Paskins, Magdalen: Do the candidates have experience of raising money?

Ben: Yes. Was Treasurer of Oxford University Labour Club, and during his term he raised more than any other treasurer had managed.

Sean: Limited experience, but he does realise how much work needs to be done.

Heenal Rajani, Merton: What other elected positions have the candidates held?

Sean: OUSU Executive, OSSL trustee, member of Publications Board (all since the start of Hilary). Was also an officer of Oxford University Conservative Association.

Ben: Was an OUSU Council delegate during his first year. Has been OUSU Executive for Finance & Funding and co-chair of OUSU One World committee. In the Oxford University Labour Club, he has been Campaigns and External Links Officer, Treasurer, and was co-chair during the last General Election.

Josh Kern, Pembroke: Are you prepared to break the Ultra Vires laws?

Ben: Democracy is paramount. If Council mandates him to sign a cheque, he will sign. He will look at setting up a special UV fund, as other Sus have done. OUSU should look hard to find reasons to spend money that fit with its charitable terms. It is the VP (Finance) that gets in trouble as an individual, not OUSU.

Sean: Felt that Ben had got a little confused about the legal situation. It is OUSU that gets taken to court. Mandates are very important, but they do not count if they are illegal. It would be irresponsible to follow illegal mandates, and he has sat in lectures on the subject, so he ought to know. It is also the case that people give money to OUSU knowing the UV laws, so then to break them in what we spend that money on has an element of fraud in it. It is also crucial to remain relevant to students.

Presidential hust

Declarations

Adam Killea - University Lib Dem Society, Liberal Democrat Party

Will Straw – None

George Callaghan – one expulsion, OUCA, Conservative Party, CAFE, Monday Club, Bow Group

Speeches

Adam Killea

3rd Year PPEist. Thinks OUSU for both campaigns and services. Believes can meet students' needs better – e.g. against charging commercial interest rates on loans, for longer library opening hours, better accommodation, environmental action, more entz. He's realistic – won't promise a CSV but will try hard to get one.

He wants more officers, execs, co-chairs to go to JCR meetings and more publicity about what OUSU does. People should vote for Adam because the President has a crucial role to do with providing services, and because he might even enjoy the job.

Adam has relevant experience – he was LDYS Campaigns director, an OUSU delegate, and has campaigned against hall charges in Balliol and been involved in the Grants not Fees campaign in Oxford.

“That's my three minutes – please give me 12 months!”

Will Straw

Will was JCR president at New College last year, where he was responsible for several initiatives – for example setting up a financial aid committee to alleviate student hardship. He was Freshers' Fair organiser and was co-chair of Finance and Funding Committee, where he was responsible for the Gold Ribbon campaign.

He believes in Representation and Relevance, in meetings, committees and in the job of president. He won't pander to cliques.

He'll listen and act. To get a CSV, he'll lobby the university and try to attract private sponsorship.

He wants to improve services –with more online information, a web-based housing bank, more publicity for the shop and for the photocopying service.

He sees some areas of the student union as absolutely vital – the “liberation campaigns”, the campaign for ethical investment, work on keeping battels low. He doesn't believe that the student union is the UN or that it should work for world peace.

George Callaghan Esq.

George commented that he wanted to be the next OUSU president, but that he was against two excellent candidates, one of whom could even be Foreign Secretary one day. He wanted to reflect the dignity of the student union by increasing his own salary and decreasing the number of officers.

He has his own ideas about how the student union should be run – OUSU needs to co-operate with the University, who are trying their best – for example in the area of rent rises. George would cut the sabbaticals down to only President, Welfare and Finance, and would decrease the number of executive officers and delegates, as there is currently no quality control as so few people stand - last year George was elected 8th as an Executive Officer – that shows this. There is no need for a VP Graduates – look at what they did to Adam Storch, who would have been a fine officer. He would also ensure that OUSU kept its nose out of Afghanistan and other matters that didn't concern it.

“That's my 3 minutes – make me your President for Life!”

Questions

John Craig, New

You've said that you want to make OUSU more “relevant” by visiting JCRs, and increasing publicity. Have you any ideas about increasing “relevance” that the current sabbatical team aren't already carrying out?

AK – Knows that sabs do these things already. Will do more of the same.

WS – OUSU is moving towards “relevance”. There's no such thing as perfect “relevance”. He'll make sure he talks to students and listens to JCR officer and does lots of work to achieve the elusive “relevance”.

GC – He will be presidential, although as he will have no executive powers he will be directed by Council. He has a problem with the unicameral nature of OUSU and would like to create a hereditary second chamber, as well as decreasing the membership of Council itself.

James Kettle, New

What is your plan for the first 100 days of “relevance”?

GC – He'll take office, start implementing his policies and lobbying Parliament, and cut some publications which are too costly.

AK – he'll start slowly, by talking to Presidents. He wouldn't cut publications as there are lots which are very useful.

WS – He'd start to put his initiatives into action, such as increasing OUSU's web presence, and begin to prepare for students coming up.

Nick Clark, Somerville

Scientists are underrepresented in OUSU –in committees, at Council and in the election. What would you do to change this?

GC – They can't come to Council as it is at a fixed time every two weeks. He would put it at different times. Scientists do not have so much spare time and don't enjoy public speaking etc – he'd try to rectify the situation.

AK –Agreed that fixed times for OUSU events was not great as scientists had more fixed academic commitments.

WS – As co-chair of F&F he had moved the meeting time to 5pm to make it more accessible. He would investigate moving Council to a Saturday or later in the day.

Andrew Thomas, St Anne's

Is OUSU Reps Committee important?

WS – Yes. OUSU/NUS Reps work hard. Via these officers is the best way for OUSU to get its message out.

GC – Wasn't aware that it existed

AK – Yes it is important and would encourage people to attend.

Ed Swann, Balliol

What is your experience of NUS?

AK – Went to Conference this year – found it useful, although daunting as a first timer. He'd have no problem with defending Oxford to NUS.

WS – took lots of New students to the Grants not Fees demo last year. NUS information and resources are aimed at sabbatical officers, not JCRs. He'd start condensing the information and giving JCR presidents only the relevant stuff. More colleges should get involved in NUS – he'd look at the benefits of affiliation.

GC – Doesn't have any time for NUS. At Oriel there used to be an Anti-NUS Committee (ANUS) and a Pro-NUS Committee (PNUS). NUS costs too much and uses too much paper.

Antonia Bance, Somerville

You'd be a president for both undergraduate and graduate students, but none of you have yet mentioned graduates or MCRs. What will you do for graduate students?

GC – read all mentions of JCRs by him to include MCRs, and SUs. He wants to be a graduate himself so will look after the interests of graduates, although he doesn't like the position of VP(Graduates).

AK – Many people forget about graduate issues. He'd press for increased graduate funding – he'd looked at doing graduate study but was worried about the funding position. He'd work on childcare and other issues relevant to graduate students.

WS – He'd thought that all MCR members were members of JCRs. He's responsible for graduates too, and would especially look at graduate funding, and college fees. As JCR president, he worked with the MCR president.

Dan Paskins, Magdalen

Previously, a candidate mentioned "unrepresentative political cliques". Who are these?

WS – He said it originally. He's been coming to Council since his second year, and has seen the time of sabbaticals and JCR presidents wasted with motions of no "relevance". OUSU is not a political society – it is composed of groups of individuals with their own opinions. The ultra vires laws stops the student union campaign on issues that don't affect students. You can't solve the Arab-Israeli conflict in five lines.

GC- The expression is valid as there is a far-left clique. He'd stop the tendentious motions as they'd detract from his real job.

AK – OUSU needs to effectively represent all students. There are cliques – not just political cliques but also social cliques.

David Furness, Keble

Lots of students would have felt excluded by the motion to condemn war in Afghanistan. Do you feel that running on a political slate excludes some students?

AK – A political slate can be good and inclusive. A president doesn't just represent those who agree with them, they represent all students.

WS – As an independent he can represent all students.

GC – He hoped that everyone present agreed that he had not stood on a political slate.

Chris Akrill, Merton

What are the strengths of your opposition?

GC – Will in particular is very tough opposition, although both are formidable opponents.

AK – His opponents have different virtues. Will will try hard and believes in his manifesto. George has unique qualities and is entertaining.

WS – George has a fantastic sense of humour. Adam is very impressive and his manifesto is "relevant" to students.

Chris McBride, Wadham

Referring to the Cherwell's account of the Presidential hust at New College, is it appropriate to talk about time wasting in Council?

WS – Some quotations are wrong. We should only discuss motions if they are intra vires and important to students. He'd extend the deadline for motions to two weeks, thus excluding "irrelevant" motions.

GC – Wasn't at the meeting in question.

AK – The article was reasonable. Wasn't sure that Council was entirely unrepresentative, but nor was it perfect.

OUSU Council Minutes

Quorum count: 40

Minutes passed without opposition

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

There were no ratifications or elections in Council.

Sabbatical Reports - Additions to written reports.

Ruth Hunt, President: Explained the decision that there would be no campaigning for RON in the election. The amendment to this effect was not included in the original constitutional motion, because it failed to secure the two-thirds majority that a constitutional amendment requires. As a result, the decision on campaigning for RON was left open. Because the amendment did secure a simple majority, when this decision had to be made, it was decided to follow the view of Council.

Eleanor Fletcher, VP (Finance): Noted that one place on Publications Board remained unfilled, and asked those interested to get in touch.

Antonia Bance, VP (Women): Apologised for not having submitted a written report, but noted that she had had a very busy 2 weeks, not least because of elections, without any days off. The Accenture Women's dinner went very well, as did the Women's march in London. Improvements are being made to the Women's Committee web site. Antonia reported the great success of the Parent-Student Welcome, held at St Hilda's last weekend. She thanked all those who had made the afternoon possible.

John Craig, VP (Access & Academic Affairs): Raised the issue of the Cherwell article, which alleges that places at Oxford can be bought. He drew Council's attention to his response in the paper, but said that if anyone felt that OUSU should be doing more to focus on this issue, please could they get in touch.

John was asked about his investigation of years abroad in Modern Languages. He said that his concerns were both academic and welfare-related. He listed some of the points that might be made, but asked that any information on this issue be forwarded to access@ousu.org.

Catherine Sangster, VP (Graduates): Plugged Postgraduate Assembly, which will take place on Monday 12th of November. There will be 3 motions, concerning Ostle, graduates who teach and graduate finance. Catherine noted the success of the recent Tutors for Graduates meeting, at which she had been able to raise many of the issues that are crucial to what she aims to achieve this year. She also plugged MCR Presidents' drinks, which are organised by Laura Timms at Oriel, which will happen next on Monday of 9th Week. International Students' Drinks, at which there will be representatives of the International Office, will be held on Thursday of 7th week at 8pm in Balliol College Massey Room).

Executive Reports

4/12 OUSU Executives were still present (Sonia Sodha, Laura Santana, John Cook and Eleanor Thompson). No apologies were received.

There were no questions to the Executive.

Passage of Motions Nem Con

Ordinary Motion 1, 'Temporary shop loan', passed nem con.

Constitutional Motions

Motion 1

Equal Opportunity Campaigns

Antonia Bance, Somerville: This motion is about redressing a simple inequality that exists between representative and non-representative campaigns.

(?)

For 39

Against 0

Abstentions 1

Ordinary Motions

Motion 2

College Redistribution

Josh Kern, Pembroke: This motion is not about the end of the college system or massive redistribution. It is about finding a solution to the effects of the grossest of inequalities that exist at present. The current system of distributing cash has been developed over 25 years. What the motion seeks to do, therefore, is not to find a solution to the problem in a few lines, but mandate OUSU to run a student-led investigation into possible solutions. Students in different colleges are not receiving the same provision. For example, library size and tutor/student ratios differ markedly. It is for these reasons that the College contribution scheme has come under scrutiny. There are two key problems. Firstly, colleges are required to fulfil certain criteria in order to receive money under the scheme. For example, it is required that they be maximising their possible income, which impacts on rent rises. Secondly, and more importantly, the money can only be spent on an annual basis. This means that the money has to go into a college's endowment, meaning all that it can spend of it is the interest that it generates.

Tuition fees have also made a difference. Previously, college negotiated individually with the government for their funding, which meant that rich colleges received less. This functioned in practice to even out provision. With the introduction of fees, funding is negotiated on a University basis, and distributed by them on a per capita basis, leaving inequalities in endowment income untouched.

As a result, more money is spent on a student in a rich college. The question is, therefore, why can't colleges use the money they receive from the contribution scheme for students.

Short factual questions

Josh Yaphe, : By income, do you mean interest?

Josh Kern, Pembroke: Yes, and dividends, etc.

Josh Yaphe, : Is there any evidence that colleges have made dodgy investment decisions

Josh Kern, Pembroke: Yes, some, for example, Pembroke.

David White, Christ Church: Is there any evidence of a correlation between academic achievement and college wealth?

James Rowlands, Pembroke: Yes, this correlation was noted by the North Report.

Speech of opposition - David White, Christ Church:

It is important that this motion was opposed in order that we could here the speech of proposition that places it in context. JCRs across Oxford ought to be aware of the thinking behind the motion, and feel able to feed into this debate. What in fact was needed was a University policy to deal with the inequality of academic provision.

He went on to raise points that he had been mandated to raise by his JCR. They noted that college wealth was not necessarily determinant of academic performance (other factors were very important). It is also important that the aims of the Student Union in this regard be made as clear as possible.

James Rowlands, Pembroke: Important that OUSU challenges the nature of the existing scheme, which is simply to stop poorer colleges going bankrupt. For example, in 1997, 80% of 2nd years in rich colleges lived in; the figure for poorer colleges was 44%. It is therefore a problem that goes beyond simply academic concerns. The principle of the Central Disabilities Fund should be extended to the larger college contribution scheme.

John Craig, New: Thanked the JCR President of Christ Church for the points that he had made. Agreed with James Rowlands, and added that, given varying levels of social capital among prospective applicants, it was crucial to be able to say that college choice was not too important. There was a danger that this could become misleading, and this was a further reason to pass this motion.

Melanie Marshall, Christ Church: Move to a vote. No one is disagreeing

Mark Stoneham, Merton: Opposed move to a vote. He disagreed with the current line of argument and wished to speak.

Move to a vote failed.

Mark Stoneham, Merton: Colleges are individual. Most people do get in to their first choice college, therefore people know where they are going when they apply. There could be a voluntary fund, but it is acceptable for there to be meritocratic variations in college wealth.

Eleanor Fletcher, Worcester: The system will never be perfect, but the point is that we can make it better. Poorer colleges find it harder to invest well, compounding inequalities. Furthermore, we are now consumers, so that it is patently unfair for provision to vary. The differences between colleges are not made clear in the University Prospectus.

Laura Santana, St Hilda's: Mover to a vote.

John Buzzard, Christ Church: Opposed move to a vote.

Move to a vote failed.

John Buzzard, Christ Church: What we really need is the end of the college system.

John Craig, New: Move to a vote. Feared that the meeting would become inquorate.

John Buzzard, Christ Church: Opposed the move to a vote.

Move to a vote passed (28 to 13).

Josh Kern, Pembroke: Did not believe the motion was about the abolition of the college system. The motion was critical to the survival of the college system. He urged that Council support the motion

Eleanor Murray, University: Money was not the answer to academic problems. If there were particular problems, for example, students hardship, they should be dealt with by particular, dedicated funds.

For 41

Against 1

No abstentions

Motion Passed