

Council Minutes

5th Week Michaelmas Term 2014

5th Week Council took place at 5:30pm, on Wednesday 12th November 2014, at Wadham College, The Moser Theatre.

If you have any questions about OUSU Council, please feel free to contact the Chair, Anna Bazley, at 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 and the Divisional Board
Representatives who wish to make reports
- g. Questions to Members of the Executive and the Divisional Board
Representatives
- h. Passage of Motions without discussion
- i. Motions of No Confidence or Censure
- j. Emergency Motions
 1. Mexico Solidarity Campaign
 2. Withdrawing support for the November 19th 2014 Free
Education Demonstration
- k. Motions Authorising Capital Expenditure
 3. Motion for a One-Off Donation to Oxford Women for
Women International Society
- l. Other Motions
 4. Amendment of Articles to extend membership to visiting
students
 5. Introduction of a Student Parents and Carers Officer
 6. Change in Raise and Give General Regulations
- m. Any Other Business

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

No issues raised.

b. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None.

c. Ratifications in Council

None

d. Elections in Council

Martine Wauben (Pembroke) – Stated that no nominations had been received this week and flagged the upcoming statutory elections.

e. Reports from the Sabbatical Officers

Louis Trup (Brasenose) – Informed council that they could read an update on his work in his written report. Explained that he wished to use this time to speak about motion 4, which had been withdrawn due to a misunderstanding between himself and the proposer. Informed council that, having heard back from the University, the situation regarding visiting students was far more complex than originally thought, and it seemed highly unlikely that the University would consider changes without conducting a complete review of all the types of visiting students there are. Added that the motion would not be worthwhile right now but the possibilities of an officer position or campaign could be considered in the future.

Ruth Meredith (Brasenose) – Informed council that she has had a really busy few weeks, with both RAG Ball and Firewalk taking place. Added that both were successful and went very well. Explained that Jailbreak will be launched next week, as well as the opportunity to either climb Kilimanjaro or trek Morocco. 6th week and 7th week will be opening information about the leadership and training course which will be running next term for people that want to be campaigners but do not feel confident enough or currently have the skills. Based on the Women in Leadership programme. Informed council that there are two exciting pieces of information about Living Wage which cannot yet be released but assured Council that just because they are not yet hearing anything does not mean that the work is not being done. Gave a shout out to Xav and the great work he is doing with Veggie Pledge.

Anna Bradshaw (Wadham) – Informed council that she has been in meetings with the teams working around sexual violence prevention in both the army and Thames Valley Police. Will be working on mock consent workshop training sessions and thinking about rolling out the model. Encouraged council to get involved in International Women's Day in March. Added that there will be a number of events around women and art, which consider art as a method of coping and expressing yourself. Asked students to get in touch regardless of whether they are interested in the organising or performance side of this.

James Blythe (Brasenose) – I promised in my written report a verbal update on today's meeting of the Joint Sub Committee of the Education Committee with Student Members where we are discussing an OUSU vision for an Oxford education. Will be brought to council in 7th week. The idea is that students should be able to create a framework of the kind of things that are essential to an Oxford education. Wanted to flag up on behalf of the whole of the Executive Committee that we are taking a position on the assessment boycott by University College Union which is very briefly that council should decide on the politics of OUSU and until such time as council takes a stance, exec will do all that they can to

facilitate the communication to students about the impact on education and assessment of the strike action. Exec and OUSU staff will support any student who chooses not to cross the picket line and faces academic sanctions as a result. We will bring a motion to gain Council's view on the strike.

Chris Pike (St Edmund Hall) – Updated that he has only been back in the office for three days so has little to update on beyond catching up on campaigns etc. Announced intention to present a small report to 7th week council regarding the accessibility motion, and hopefully a fuller report in the 1st week council of Hilary. Encouraged students to get in touch about ways in which OUSU needs to be more accessible.

Yasser Bhatti (Green Templeton) – Informed council that the University has asked for the student perspective on part-time policy which he intends to bring to Council in 7th week. In principle, the opinion seems to be that we support greater availability of part-time courses for graduate students, however there seem to be issues surrounding provisions, including welfare support, for these students. The other major issue on the consultation is the ability to shift from being a part-time to full-time student during your studies if your circumstances change.

f. Reports from the Executive Officers and the Divisional Board Representatives who wish to make Reports

Eden Tanner (St John's) – Advertised the panels organised for the following week for undergraduate STEM students and encouraged them to attend.

Adam Ward (Exeter) – Flagged that a new campaign would be launched over the next week called Bye Bi Prejudice which will aim to dispel stereotypes about people who identify as bisexual.

g. Questions to Members of the Executive and the Divisional Board Representatives

Chris Rawlinson (Harris Manchester) – Asked the VP Access and Academic Affairs how the bursary package negotiations are going in light of the Free Education policy.

James Blythe (Brasenose) – Stated that the free education policy does not impact on this and therefore hasn't affected negotiations.

Helena Dollimore (St Hilda's) – Asked for an update on the status of the proctors investigations on the NUS referendum.

Louis Trup (Brasenose) – Confirmed that the proctors haven't told us anything so we cannot say anything.

Josh Platt (Hertford) – Asked if OUSU will ever be able to provide an update on this.

Louis Trup – Confirmed that OUSU would not be able to announce anything.

Oriel student – Asked for an update on the OUSU voting system and questioned if it would be available for colleges by the following week.

Louis – Responded that OUSU would be focussing on the statutory elections next week and will not be able to offer this for the following week. Directed to alternatives online.

Anna Bazley (St Peter's) – Stated that she had received a request from the proposers of the Motion for a One-Off Donation to Oxford Women for Women International Society to table it until 7th week.

No objection to this.

Anna Bazley – Confirmed that motion 4 (Amendment of Articles to extend membership to visiting students) had been withdrawn.

h. Passage of Motions without Discussion

None.

i. Motions of No Confidence or Censure

None.

j. Emergency Motions

1. Mexico Solidarity Campaign

Council Notes:

1. Mexico is in the middle of a humanitarian crisis; since 2006, at least 22,000 people have disappeared and in roughly 40% of these cases there was no criminal investigation.
2. One recent disappearance was of 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Teaching School on the 26th of September 2014. It is clear that the students were abducted by the police and handed to criminal cartel organisations.
3. The Cartels have confessed that the 43 students are dead. They were taken to a dump, interrogated about their politics, tortured, shot and burned.

4. HSBC were fined \$1.9 Billion got laundering money for cartels and are therefore complicit in the crisis in Mexico.
5. It is clear that there is no distinction between big business, the state and cartel organisations in the aid and abetting of disappearances.
6. "The Year of the UK in Mexico" will further roll back the welfare gains of the Mexican people.

Council Believes:

1. The attacks on these student teachers were politically motivated and will not go unnoticed.
2. That this incident has acted as the catalyst to nation wide protests against the corruption of the Mexican government, privatisation and lack of funding in education.
3. The struggle of the IPN students and work of the Rural Teachers are inspirations for the labour and student movement world wide.

Council Resolves:

1. To issue a statement that explains the "Students' Union Believes" section to all students affiliated to Oxford University Students' Union.
2. To forward this resolution to the NUS, NEC and urge the NEC to take a decisive stance in support of the students and all those joining the struggle in Mexico to fight for a better world.
3. To urge the NUS, NEC and local trade union branches (UCU, Unite and Unison) operating in the university to seek out the practicalities of affiliation and forging links with the IPN and Democratic Teachers Union in Mexico.

Proposed: Zakir Gul (St Benet's College)

Seconded: Manuel Araujo (Christ Church College)

Jack Matthew (University) – Requested clarification from the chair as to why this was accepted as an emergency motion.

Anna Bazley (St Peter's) – Responded that it was originally a regular motion however was updated due to developments in Mexico over the weekend.

Zak Gul (St Benet's College) – Explained that on the night of the 26th September, a number of students on their way to a protest about their rights as students. They were students training to be teachers. On their way to Mexico City they were stopped by the police. Three were killed on the spot, a further 23 were injured. The students that ran off were chased by the police and handed over to criminal cartels. The cartels have since confessed that these students are all dead. Provided a graphic description of the murders. Argued that it is essential that as a Union we support the students in Mexico, where the very act of being a student is incredibly hard.

Ruth Meredith (Brasenose) – Interrupted to state that this motion should have a trigger warning.

Anna Bazley (St Peter's) – Apologised that this was not provided.

Zak – Argued that it is very close to certain that the cartels and the police are together in this and urged council to come together in support. Urged that we simply cannot overlook this.

Motion passed with no opposition.

2. Withdrawing support for the November 19th 2014 Free Education Demonstration

Council Notes:

1. That in 1st week Michaelmas Term OUSU council, Council voted to support the Free Education demo taking place in London on the 19th November by organising and subsidising transport to the demonstration.
2. NUS President Toni Pearce has issued two statements in which she announced that the NUS have withdrawn support for the demonstration due to safety and accessibility concerns. The text of these statements is included in Appendix 1.
3. The OUSU trustee board has discussed these concerns via correspondence and has decided that Council is best placed to make a decision on whether OUSU should continue to support the demonstration.
4. Some members of the OUSU Trustee board share some of the same concerns as the NUS regarding safety and accessibility.
5. OUSU will not incur financial cost if the bus is cancelled at this stage.
6. If we continue to support the demonstration, OUSU's public liability insurance will only cover students before and after the event, not at the demonstration itself.
7. The concerns of the OUSU Chief Executive Officer who is trained in risk assessment, " I would require evidence that the number of stewards will be as described in the risk assessment (and I note that this is proving problematic); details of contractors and their risk assessments; a list of which roads will be closed and confirmation that St Johns are indeed providing first aid. The risk assessment as issued by the demonstration organisers reads like a provisional risk assessment, not one that is ready for an imminent event with thousands of attendees. I am very concerned by this and would also like the organisers to have public liability insurance."
8. The members of the trustee board and the Chief Executive Officer are personally liable in the event of an incident.
9. As this is a safety issue, the failure of this motion to pass will not limit the ability for the trustee board to withdraw OUSU's support for the demo if further grave concerns about safety arise.

Council Believes:

1. All events OUSU support should make best efforts to ensure that they are accessible to all students.
2. That the safety of students is of paramount concern.

Council Resolves:

1. To withdraw OUSU's support for the Free Education demonstration.

Proposed: Louis Trup (Brasenose)

Seconded: Christina Toenshoff (St-Annes)

Louis Trup (Brasenose) – Explained that the OUSU Trustee Board has a duty to ensure the safety of its members in OUSU activities, a duty which is enshrined in OUSU articles and the law. The NUS have expressed safety concerns with what has in some way become OUSU activity. The trustees therefore need to address these concerns as without doing so we would be acting in a negligent way. The board have noted that there are issues with the substance of NUS concerns as the legitimacy of them have been questioned by many. We are therefore coming to Council to question if support of the demo should be continued. Noted that he is bringing this with motion with Christina, in their roles as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board respectively. Reminded council that the board could have just cancelled the buses without consulting but are opting to bring this to council. The 1994 Education Act constrains the board as they are personally liable for OUSU activities. Confirmed that he is a supporter of free education and that free education remains OUSU policy, but reiterated that this motion is about risk and safety. Added that there is a further concern regarding accessibility.

Chris Rawlinson (Harris Manchester) – Asked if Louis consulted with the Disabled Students' Officer when making the decision about what is best for disabled students and if not why not.

Louis – Responded that the decision has not been made yet. The Trustee Board made a decision and sent this motion out as soon as possible in order to be transparent.

Keble student – Asked how other student unions have reacted to this.

Louis – Answered that this is varied, some are supporting, some are not. Explained that Brookes have cancelled but this is not the case with all SUs.

Eden Tanner (St John's) – Asked if the buses are accessible for wheelchair users.

Louis – Confirmed that yes this has been requested.

Annie Teriba (Wadham) – Asked which other liberation groups in particular had raised concerns.

Louis – Stated that the NUS Women's liberation group had and that he was unaware if there were any in addition to this.

Kristina Carney (Herford) – Asked for an explanation or example on what is meant by the term risk.

Louis – Answered that a key risk outlined was an issue with stewarding. NUS stated that there were not enough stewards arranged, which could result in the demo going off route, or in no one being present to assist in the event of a health/safety incident.

- Asked Louis to be completely specific about the exact safety concerns raised.

Louis – Directed council to appendix one where specifics are listed, and reminded council that these are not the concerns of OUSU but of the NUS.

James Elliott (St Edmund's Hall) – Asked if the NUS has provided risk assessment to OUSU.

Louis – Responded that they have not but confirmed that we have received the organisers risk assessment which the Trustee Board have looked through.

James Elliott – Asked what we are making a decision on, given how vague the points on accessibility are.

Louis – Responded that the key issue are these general concerns and the original risk assessments. Stated that we cannot simply ignore concerns because they are vague.

Adam Roberts – Proposed a procedural motion to grant Amelia Foster (OUSU CEO) permission to speak.

No opposition.

Barnaby Raine (Wadham) – Stated that he is speaking in a personal capacity as opposed to a trustee of the board. Argued that the points about liberation don't actually say anything. Ran through the points regarding safety and risk and updated council on how they currently stand. Informed council that the NUS lost a vote to not support this demonstration and have therefore constructed health and safety concerns as they disagree with it politically. Added that NUS Scotland and several other unions have reaffirmed their support. Argued that we should not be going against a democratic decision that has already been made by council and lots of JCRs.

Chris Casson (St Catherine's) – Prefaced his question by stating that he would be voting with Barnaby against this motion. Asked for clarity on the exact number of stewards as he of the understanding that the proposed number of 200 stewards is now 100.

Barnaby – Confirmed that this is correct. Expected turnout was considered and it was decided that this number was more appropriate.

Will Obeney (Regent's Park) – Stated that he had concerns about the stewarding issue so had contacted the organisers himself for a list of names. Stated that he had only received the names of the head stewards and that none of them seem to have been professionally trained. Asked for more information regarding their training.

Barnaby – Firstly, the names of all students are not given out due to privacy concerns. With regard to training, the chief steward has stewarded many successful events in the past without issues.

Anna Bradshaw (Wadham) – Stated that she is going to relay something from the NUS Women's Campaign as this is her duty as VP Women. Stated that she wanted to make it clear that this is nothing to do with her role as a trustee, but is rather linked to her portfolio. The women's campaign is behind the NUS position as their priority is that women are able to protest in safety. Some people from the campaign will be at the demo promoting safety but will not be attending as a committee. Reiterated that this is the NUS women's campaign, not the OUSU women's campaign.

Jack Matthews (University) – Stated his opinion that he considers the demo a political waste of time and resources, however reminded council that they have voted in support of it. Added that that said, he believed the board had made the right decisions by both raising concerns, and by bringing them to council. Stated that he finds the NUS concerns to be entirely vacuous, and focused on party politics rather than the safety of students.

James Elliott – Explained that he has been elected by Oxford students to represent disabled students in Oxford, and by students around the country to represent students at a national level at NUS. Added that if there are clear concerns about accessibility and safe spaces, this is something he would take very seriously, however this has not been spelled out. Informed council that he initially responded to the concerns by calling Toni Pearce, but received responses which were incredibly vague, which seems to be the feedback in general from anyone that has spoken to her on this issue. Reaffirmed that Maddie, the NUS Disabled Students' Officer will be on hand at the demo.

Annie Teriba – Reminded council that withdrawing our support means withdrawing funding given for the coaches to the demonstration, which risks making the demo less accessible to students unable to fund themselves. Announced her disgust that the language of accessibility and the language of liberation is being used to cover up a politically motivated attempt to ruin the demo.

Move to vote.

For – 5
Against – 57
Abstain - 12

Motion fell.

k. Motions Authorising Capital Expenditure

I. Other Motions

5. Introduction of a Student Parents and Carers Officer

Council Notes:

1. There are at least 200 student members who are student parents or carers.¹
2. The current responsibility for student parents and carers lies with the Vice-President (Women).
3. The NUS has put out two reports on student parents and carers, *Meet the Parents* (2009) and *Learning with Care* (2012), which make a number of recommendations for Universities and Student Unions.
4. Many other Student Unions have representative positions for student parents and carers.²

Council Believes:

1. Student parents and carers face particular and specific challenges, including but not limited to sourcing and funding childcare and integrating into student communities.
2. The challenges that student parents and carers face are important, and the fact that OUSU is working to address them should not depend on the year-to-year priorities of the Vice-President (Women).
3. It is inappropriate that no student parents and carers who are not women are currently able to run for the position that has responsibility for working for student parents and carers.
4. OUSU should take steps to address some of the recommendations made in *Meet the Parents* and *Learning with Care*, including but not limited to:
‘Students’ unions and institutions should work together to enable student carers to participate in student life to as great an extent as they wish.’ (*Learning with Care*)
‘Students’ unions should consider the ways in which student parents’ interested can be represented through their democratic systems, given the restraints on their time.’ (*Meet the Parents*)
5. Introducing a new Part Time Officer role, the Student Parents and Carers Officer,

¹ A conservative estimate based on the Student Parents’ mailing list and University Childcare figures.

² Including, for example, Cambridge University Student Union.

³ This is likely to involve determining whether this position should function like other PTE positions (e.g. the International Students’ Officer) which are generally filled by someone who represents the group describing it, as well as, of course, the University Student Union consideration because student parents and

would solve the problems discussed in **Believes 2.** And **3.** and would increase OUSU's ability to tackle the challenges discussed in **Believes 1.** and the recommendations discussed in **Believes 4.**

Council Resolves:

1. To introduce a new Part Time Officer role, the Student Parents and Carers Officer, by making the following alterations to the General Regulations (additions are in **bold**, removals are in ~~strikethrough~~):
 - 2.1 The number of Part Time Officers for the purpose of Bye-Law 16.1 is ~~18~~ **19**
 - 2.2 The titles of Part Time Officers for the purpose of Bye-Law 16.1 are:
 - Academic Affairs Campaigns Officer
 - Access and Admissions Officer
 - Black and Minority Ethnic Students Officer
 - Clubs and Societies Support Officer
 - Common Room Support Officer
 - Community Outreach and Charities Officer
 - Disabled Students Officer
 - Environment and Ethics Officer
 - Graduate Academic Affairs Officer
 - Graduate International Students Officer
 - Graduate Welfare Officer
 - Graduate Women's Officer
 - Health and Welfare Officer
 - International Students Officer
 - LGBTQ Officer
 - Mature Students Officer
 - Rent and Accommodation Officer
 - Student Parents and Carers Officer**
 - Women's Campaign Officer
2. To note and accept the proposed remit for this role (Appendix 2).
3. To mandate the Vice-Presidents (Women) and (Graduates) to work closely with the new Student Parents and Carers Officer to refine the remit of the role, anticipating that this role may require more support than others, and report to Council on this progress in Trinity Term 2015.³

³ This is likely to involve determining whether this position should function like other PTE positions (e.g. the International Students' Officer) which are generally filled by someone who represents the group descriptively as well as functionally. This will need serious consideration because student parents and carers often have greater restraints on their time than other students.

Proposed: Anna Bradshaw (Wadham)
Seconded: Yasser Bhatti (Green Templeton)

Anna Bradshaw (Wadham) – Explained to council that the representation of student parents and carers currently falls within her own remit. Argued that this is not right, as student parents require specific attention for particular issues, and it is inappropriate that men cannot stand to represent this group. Informed council that this is the first reading of this motion to make a new member of the part-time executive whose role will be purely focused on the representation of parents and carers, and providing it passes will return for a second reading in 7th week council. Acknowledged that a lot of thought has gone into this, however it is a new role and feedback on what is needed from those represented will be requested and appreciated.

Rowan Davis (Wadham) – Asked if this would be a protected role.

Anna – Responded that she does not have the ability to make that decision. If we have someone in post who is not a student parent or carer, then we will be exceedingly vigilant about doing consultation and it is something that can be changed and added to the role.

Jack Matthew (University) – Asked if there were any concerns about the increasing size of the Executive, and if there any worries that no students will run for the position.

Anna – Responded that she had no concerns about the size of the exec. Added that a few people have already discussed their interest in the role and that it will be a new and exciting position. It is certainly worth trying this out, and if we are struggling to fill the position, the use of the role will be a decision that should be made by those it is there to represent.

Will Obeney (Regent's) – Asked which sabbatical officer the proposed officer would be expected to work with and if this should be in the remit.

Anna – Explained that the relevance of the sabbatical officers may vary from year to year depending on if any of them are actual parents themselves, so this is something that needs further consideration before it is set out in the remit.

Motion passed first reading with no objection.

6. Change in Raise and Give General Regulations

Council Notes:

1. Raise and Give (RAG) is one of OUSU's biggest and most successful campaigns, and raised approximately £195,000 in 2013-14.
2. RAG's current operation does not conform to the governance provisions in OUSU's General Regulations due to funds raised through raids and national collaboration.

3. The current regulations prevent RAG from supporting student fundraising events organized by students who are not members of RAG's committee, and from spreading best practice by collaborating on external events.

Council Believes:

1. RAG should continue to increase its fundraising total.
2. RAG should spread best fundraising practice amongst Oxford University students.
3. Believes 1.-2. will best be achieved if the RAG committee is responsible for agreeing an annual programme with Council for the raising and distribution of funds, and the selection of charities and fundraising events.

Council Resolves:

1. To replace the current provisions for RAG in the General Regulations with those in Appendix 3, and to make any necessary consequential amendments.
2. To mandate the Vice-President (Charities & Community) to work with the RAG executive to bring an annual programme to Council by 3rd week Hilary Term 2015.
3. To continue to support RAG in distributing funds as currently happens until such time as Council has passed the annual programme in Resolves 2.

***Proposed:* Ruth Meredith (Brasenose)**

***Seconded:* Molly Gilmartin (Queens)**

Ruth Meredith (Brasenose) – Explained that this is also a governance motion so has to come to council twice. Explained that it is important as it affects RAG who raise a large amount of money for charity. The way in which RAG currently operates doesn't really conform to the regulations, which state that RAG can only raise and give money to student elected charities. Wants to change to governance which means that RAG would come to council once a year to approve a program of fundraising. This is a motion which will give RAG a chance to grow. We can only support RAG events and we want to change this. We also want to build RAG as a foundation, so we can support those that come to us with really great ideas, as well as offering workshops on charity events and offering training. Urged council to support her and RAG on this motion.

Motion passed with no opposition.

m. AOB

James Blythe (Brasenose) – Encouraged council to stay for hustings at 7:30pm. Advertised pizza available for those staying.

Jack Matthews (University) – Informed council that he sat on the University Consultative Committee for Health and Safety. Acknowledged that there are a number of serious health and safety concerns throughout the University, however stated that this information is very disparate. Would like to go to the next meeting with a full pack of issues so he can raise them. Encouraged people to contact him with any health and safety concerns which they have whatsoever, so he can build up this information.