

Council Minutes

5th Week Trinity Term 2016

5th Week Council took place at 5:30pm, on Wednesday 25th May 2016, at St Hilda's College College, Jacqueline du Pre Auditorium.

We aim to make council as accessible as possible, and ensure that it is always in accessible venues. However, if there are any accessibility requirements that we are not meeting for yourself or others, please contact OUSU's Democratic Support Officer on 01865 611831, or at dso@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

If you have any questions about OUSU Council, please feel free to contact the Chair, Matt Collyer, at chair@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

- a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- b. Matters Arising from the Minutes
- c. Elections in Council
- d. Reports from and questions to the Sabbatical Officers, Executive Officers, Representatives of the OUSU Campaigns and RAG (*Raise and Give*)
- e. Items for Resolution
 1. Electronic Watch – Ethical Procurement of IT Hardware
 2. Student Parents Barbecue Event
 3. Abortion Rights Re-Affiliation
 4. New Regulations
 5. Associate Membership
 6. Consequential Changes to Policy on Returning Officer Vacancies
 7. OUSU motion to pledge support for the Oxford University Society of Biomedical Sciences (OUSBMS) campaign to make commoner's gowns compulsory in viva exams
- f. Items for Debate
 1. Student Media and OUSU Council
 2. Access Vision
 3. Welfare Vision
 4. Higher Education White Paper
- g. Any Other Business

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

No issues raised with the minutes.

b. Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matters arising from the minutes.

c. Elections in Council

No elections in council.

d. Reports from and questions to the Sabbatical Officers, Executive Officers, Representatives of the OUSU Campaigns and RAG (*Raise and Give*)

Ali Lennon (St John's) – Reported that he has attended some of his last committees, and that work on Prevent is continuing. Informed council that the Equality and Diversity Unit are seeking nominations for diversifying portraiture, and urged people to look at the website which has details on nominations.

Lucy Delaney (Wadham) – Reported that she has finished all of her training for the term, and consent workshop planning for next term is underway, whilst also making sure that other liberation workshops are prioritised. Added that she is doing lots of campaigning for NUS.

Becky Howe (Pembroke) – Informed council that the White Paper came out last Monday which is not very good, which will be discussed later in the meeting. Highlighted the Welfare Report, which they have put together from nearly 6000 students who filled in the survey last term, noting that they are just finalising it so that it is ready to publish to students in 7th week council. Added that the previous evening she had been on a panel called Students not Suspects which is the NUS campaign against Prevent. Thanked everyone that came, and thanked the other panelists.

Cat Jones (Pembroke) – Reported that she has spent two days on the review of biochemistry, and noted that the reports contain the main issues which came out on the graduate side and the undergraduate side. Informed council that there has been progress with suspended status, and that senior tutors have released some draft guidelines, which will be passed at Senior Tutors Committee in week 6 for all colleges. Stated that it is really positive and appears to be heading in the right direction with things like re-entry assessments. Added that some elements were not as good, including the proposal to have a blanket ban on suspended students on college property at all times at all colleges. Explained that they tried to justify this as protecting on-course students who had work to do, but in consultation with suspended students and residents, we have proposed that they change that to requiring permission Monday to Friday, and being allowed in Saturday and Sunday.

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Reported that he had mostly been working on his two big surveys, one for masters students and one for DPhil students, neither of which seem particularly happy. Flagged the opening of the divisional board reps nominations later this week and urged people to apply.

Emily Silcock (New) – Informed council that a lot of her week has been spent on voter registration, and congratulated Hertford and Jesus over the last few days on their pledges. Added that she has been working on a plan for OUSU selling bikes to students at the end of Freshers' week., and also has been given a vegetable plot by the University outside the Science Park, which will be a community garden for students to plant in.

Benjamin Peacock (St Hugh's) – Informed council that he is from Target Schools, and a big alteration to their written report to is that the shadowing day with the Afro-Caribbean Society is no longer taking place as there were not as many applicants as hoped for. Also highlighted the statement in their report and encouraged people to read it.

e. Items for Resolution

1. Electronic Watch – Ethical Procurement of IT Hardware

Council Notes:

1. The use of sweatshops is prevalent throughout the electronics industry;
2. Sweatshops lead to gross human rights violations:

- i. Health and safety problems, caused by a lack of safety equipment and checks, as well as excessive exposure to toxic chemicals;
 - ii. No living wage;
 - iii. Excessive working hours;
 - iv. Forced overtime;
 - v. Punitive fines enforced for any mistakes made by workers;
 - vi. Abuse of vulnerable workers, increasingly migrant workers and student interns;
 - vii. Disrespect of union rights.
- 3. Companies known to use sweatshops include: Apple Inc., Dell, HP Inc., Lenovo (Motorola), Sony, Nokia;
- 4. UAS (University Administration and Services) currently purchases electronic hardware from several of the above companies;
- 5. Other human rights abuses in the electronics industry include the purchase of conflict minerals (defined in US Legislation and by the OECD as tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, funding the country's ongoing conflict;
- 6. Electronics Watch is an independent monitoring organisation that assists public buyers to meet their responsibility to protect the human rights of electronics workers in the factories of their global supply chains, and to do so more effectively and less expensively than any single public buyer could accomplish on its own;
- 7. The Universities of Edinburgh, Durham, Leeds, Leicester, Aberdeen, Barcelona, and Transport for London are already members of Electronics Watch;
- 8. Last term Electronics Watch Oxford launched their campaign with an action in the Radcliffe Camera Square. The cost of materials (promotional and building) was £96.11, and this was spent by individual campaign members;
- 9. As a Global Justice OUSU campaign, Electronics Watch will be receiving funding from OUSU from July 31st.

Council Believes:

- 1. Opaque supply chains conceal, and thus allow, ongoing and unacceptable abuses in the electronics industry;
- 2. Oxford University is responsible for investigating and addressing human rights violations in our supply chains;
- 3. Electronics Watch can bring Oxford University's ethical procurement into the Digital Age;
- 4. Combining market influence with other public buyers is a better way to improve conditions in our supply chain than acting alone;
- 5. It is important to support the campaign financially until July 3st.

Council Resolves:

- 1. To support the Electronics Watch Oxford Campaign in its aim to work with the university in order to establish more ethical practices in the procurement of electronics hardware, through Electronics Watch membership;
- 2. To mandate OUSU Sabbatical officers to raise the issues highlighted by the Electronics Watch Oxford Campaign, and the possibilities for joining Electronics Watch, at a University level;
- 3. To make Resolves 1 OUSU policy;
- 4. To reimburse the £96.11 spent during Hilary term.

Proposed: Clare Carlile (Keble)

Seconded: JaeJune Lee (Hertford)

Claire Carlile (Keble) – Stated that if she were to ask council to picture a line of apple macs, they

would probably picture somewhere like Missing Bean on a Monday afternoon, and would be unlikely to think of the production lines where they are being made. Explained that in the electronics industry, the reality is still forced overtime, child labour, 70-hour working weeks, exposure to toxic chemicals and suicide nets around the factories; these are things that we would not tolerate in this country, and sound more like Victorian England or a Channel 4 documentary than reality. Stressed that it is a reality that she really struggles to think about, particularly because there is no ethical alternative, making it a problem which the University is largely able to ignore. Noted that the University already have an ethical procurement strategy, stating that “suppliers will not use forced, bonded or involuntary labour, and must take steps to eliminate child labour. They should ensure that employees work in safe and healthy environments. Suppliers must also ensure that the hours worked by employees are not excessive, and that overtime is voluntary.” Noted that when it comes to the electronics industry, these are things which are very difficult to enforce. Informed council that the University spend £12million each year on electronics, which sounds massive, but to big brands like Dell and HP is actually very small, meaning that even if the University were to demand changes in line with the procurement policy, they would probably be ignored. Explained that despite this, even for the biggest brands, €12billion is too much to ignore, and this is the amount spent on electronics each year that electronics watch currently controls, adding that 1 in 5 computers in the EU are bought by public institutions representing a huge amount of economic might. Informed council that Electronic Watch is an organisation uniting this economic might under a single voice in order to make demands which each member institution alone cannot. Reported that it is already conducting tests on factories around the world and forcing brands to make changes in response to the violations found, and that its members include the Universities of Durham, Nottingham Trent and Leeds as well as Transport for London. Stated that we are asking the University of Oxford add their economic might and voice to these institutions in order to make changes.

Andrew Dwyer (Mansfield) – Asked if there are any receipts for the money already spent.

Claire – Confirmed that they have.

Motion passed with no opposition.

2. Student Parents Barbecue Event

Council Notes:

1. Green Templeton are holding a summer barbecue, particularly for student parents and carers.
2. We have advertised the event on our student parents and carers mailing list, and know there will be reasonable attendance.
3. 3-4% of the student body are parents or carers, and we are keen to engage more in OUSU's work.
4. There is no specific budget at OUSU for parents/carers event (but this is being looked into).

Council Believes:

1. It is important to provide social activities for student parents and carers, and this will be useful for OUSU to interact with this important but underrepresented group.

Council Resolves:

1. To give £150 from the Council Discretionary Campaigns Budget to contribute to food and drinks for the event.

Proposed: Nick Cooper (St John's)

Seconded: Holly Roy (Queen's)

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Stated that Holly Roy was not able to attend council so he was proposing the motion on her behalf. Explained that this BBQ will be for student parents and carers, and will be held at Green Templeton College.

Motion passed with no opposition.

3. Abortion Rights Re-Affiliation

Council notes:

1. OUSU is currently affiliated to Abortion Rights.
2. The last time OUSU Council voted to affiliate to Abortion Rights was 6th week of Trinity Term 2015.
3. It is required by the Education Act 1994 for Student Unions to report on external affiliations at least annually.
4. According to our Articles of Association (38.4), 'at least once in each Academic Year, the Board must submit the current list of affiliations to external organisations to Student Members for approval.'
5. According to our Bye-Laws (12.1) 'OUSU may only affiliate to an External Organisation following a Council or Referendum decision to that effect.'
6. Affiliation to Abortion Rights costs £40, which includes them sending us a pack of materials (stickers, posters etc.)
7. That OUSU has pro-choice policy, which resolves 'to support the right of all pregnant people to choose', 'to campaign to extend students' right of practical access to an abortion', and to 'extend their rights over their own pregnancies'.
8. That this policy further resolves 'to work with other groups campaigning for the above objects'.
9. That Abortion Rights is the only abortion-focused campaigning and advocacy organization in the UK, providing up-to-date information to campaigners and campaigning materials.

Council Believes:

1. That OUSU's pro-choice policy should be acted upon.
2. That Abortion Rights offers helpful resources and support to assist OUSU in its work.

Council Resolves:

1. To affiliate to Abortion Rights at a cost of £75 per annum.

Proposed: Lucy Delaney (Wadham)

Seconded: Becky Howe (Pembroke)

Lucy Delaney (Wadham) – Requested to table the motion to 7th week.

Student questioned why.

Lucy – Replied that she does not have the energy to do this motion justice this week, and that she found out that we can table it to 7th. Noted that this motion means a lot to her and this is not because she doesn't care. Added that there are also further elements which she wants to look into surrounding inclusivity, and that she would not be doing a good job to bring it today.

No opposition – motion tabled to 7th week council.

4. New Regulations

Council Notes:

1. Its decision to give a First Reading to these Regulations in 3rd week, without discussion or objection.
2. OUSU amended its highest governing document (the Articles of Association) at a General Meeting in December 2015, and its second highest document (the Bye-Laws) in Hilary and Trinity Terms, with consequential amendments required to Regulations beneath this.
3. That a new set of Regulations have been proposed (Appendix 1), condensing the current Election Regulations (for Direct Elections and for Referenda), making these consequential changes, and making further changes outlined in Appendix 2.
4. That the University have considered the new Regulations, in accordance with their legal duty to ensure the fairness and propriety of OUSU elections, and are content that the new Regulations ensure this.

Council Resolves:

1. To give a Final Reading to make new Regulations (Appendix 1).
2. That for the purpose of Regulation 1.1, the day appointed by Council shall be Sunday 9th week, Trinity Term [19th June].

Proposed: Nick Cooper (St John's)

Seconded: Becky Howe (Pembroke)

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Noted that council have already agreed these once and asked that they agree them again.

Motion passed with no opposition.

5. Associate Membership

Council Notes:

1. LMH is introducing a new Access scheme from the academic year 2016/17 called the 'LMH Foundation Year'
2. Students on this scheme will not be fully registered or matriculated members of the university, but will be integrated into college life as essentially a full student
3. There is a danger that Foundation Year students will not have sufficient representation in dealings with the University or individual Colleges if they are not JCR members or OUSU members
4. Foundation Year students should also have access to essential OUSU services such as welfare provision, the liberation campaigns, etc.
5. LMH JCR has adopted Foundation Year students as full JCR members
6. The current Bye-Laws only give associate membership to those in categories 18.1a and 18.1b
 - a. Adding clause 18.1c allows for fuller flexibility in adding new groups, such as the LMH Foundation Year Students, to associate membership of OUSU and means that

repeated Bye-Law changes will be unnecessary should other colleges adopt such a scheme

Council Believes:

1. OUSU has a commitment to support Access and Outreach schemes like the LMH Foundation Year
2. OUSU has a commitment to representing the views of the whole body of students, including those who are not necessarily fully matriculated members
3. Such a change to the Bye-Laws to allow for more flexibility will help not only the LMH Foundation Year Students, but any future similar schemes that may be set up

Council Resolves:

1. To give a First Reading to replace Bye-Law 18.1 with:

18.1 A person included in a class of associate membership established by the Board under Article 8.1, and who is not a Student, is an Associate Member. Classes are:

- (a) persons admitted by the University to
 - (i) the Register of Visiting Students, or
 - (ii) the Register of Recognised Students,*
- (b) persons studying for a certificate or diploma of the University, and*
- (c) such other classes as the Board (having consulted the University) may establish.*

2. To encourage the Trustee Board to make the LMH Foundation Year students a class of Associate Members before Michaelmas Term 2016, if these amendments pass.

3. To give a First Reading to make minor and consequential amendments to the Bye-Laws in accordance with Appendix 3 (which contains the new wording of all amended Bye-Laws).

Proposed: Joe Hill (LMH)

Seconded: Emma Andrews (LMH)

Amendment received:

To change Council Believes 2 from “representing” to “listening to”.

Proposed: Emma Andrews (LMH)

Seconded: Jack Langley (LMH)

No objection to amendment.

Emma Andrews (LMH) – Introduced herself as the LMH JCR president and informed council that LMH are introducing a foundation course, and this motion means that the foundation course students will be represented by OUSU, which is really important, as the University could screw them over quite easily, and we want them to be as integrated into University life as possible.

Motion passed as amended with no objection.

6. Consequential change to policy on Returning Officer vacancies

Council Notes:

1. Recent changes to OUSU's Bye-Laws and Regulations.
2. That these changes have made the current policy for filling vacancies of the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer out-of-date.

Council Resolves:

1. To overturn the existing Policy for filling vacancies of Returning and Deputy Returning Officers, and replace it by making the following Policy:

Policy for filling vacancies under Regulation 4.2:

1. If there is a vacancy in the role of Returning Officer, a Returning Officer shall be appointed in the following order of succession:
 - a. where there is a Deputy Returning Officer, the Deputy Returning Officer;
 - b. where there is not, a Sabbatical Trustee chosen from among their own, except where all Sabbatical Trustees are intending to campaign in an upcoming or ongoing Referendum;
 - c. where neither a nor b apply, the Democratic Support Officer shall be appointed as Returning Officer.
2. If there is a vacancy in the role of Deputy Returning Officer, the Returning Officer may appoint one in the following order of succession:
 - a. a Sabbatical Trustee of their choice, except where all Sabbatical Trustees are intending to campaign in an upcoming or ongoing Referendum;
 - b. the Democratic Support Officer.
3. Where an appointment is made under 1) or 2), Council shall continue to advertise the vacancy, and where a candidate is elected, the temporary appointment under 1) or 2) shall cease.

Proposed: Nick Cooper (St John's)

Seconded: Becky Howe (Pembroke)

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Waived right to speak.

Motion passed with no opposition.

7. OUSU motion to pledge support for the Oxford University Society of Biomedical Sciences (OUSBMS) campaign to make commoner's gowns compulsory in viva exams

Council Notes:

1. Viva exams are oral presentations in many science degrees which involves presenting a research project and answering questions from an examiner.
2. It is currently compulsory for students to wear full subfusc with the appropriate gown.
3. The examiner being aware of the student's academic history has the potential to introduce unconscious bias. (I.e. a scholar may be asked harder questions or given the benefit of the doubt if near a grade boundary).
4. All students buy a commoner's gown for matriculation.

5. The support of the OUSU Council will be a show of solidarity, demonstrating that students value fairness in examinations.

Council Believes:

1. That unconscious bias should be minimised in viva exams.
2. That students should be judged on performance in that exam, and not on previous academic history.

Council Resolves:

1. Pledge support for the OUSBMS campaign to make commoner's gowns compulsory in vivas.

Proposed: Emily Gowers (LMH)

Seconded: Alice Wright (LMH)

Emily Gowers (LMH) – Explained that this is an attempt to reduce unconscious bias and prejudice, that may be present by the fact that an examiner can see your previous academic performance by which gown you are wearing. Suggested that compulsory commoner gowns are a very easy way to remove this bias.

Cameron Quinn (Merton) – Asked if these vivas are just for undergraduate degrees.

Emily – Replied that the issue was first brought to them in relation to undergrad biomedical sciences, and we are focusing our efforts on undergrad sciences, but that is not to say that it doesn't affect postgrads and that the campaign cannot be extended.

Sarah White (St Catherine's) – Asked if there is scope in this to include language oral exams.

Emily – Replied that there absolutely is, and that if you focus on a really specific area, it will be easier for other people, and it will hopefully be a catalyst for changes across the whole University.

Motion passed with no opposition.

f. Items for Debate

1. Student Media and OUSU Council (10 minutes)

Requested by Matthew Collyer (New College) - Council needs to ensure that it engages with all students at the university, an effective way of doing this is through working with the student press (Cherwell, the Oxford Student, etc.). How can this engagement be carried out, and should the current precedent that filming and photography does not occur in council be retained?

Matthew Collyer (New) – Stated that council may have noticed articles in certain publications reporting on the fact that we did not allow filming in the council debate on the NUS affiliation referendum. Noted that he asked council to vote on this, and did not allow filming without the consent of all present, which is the precedent that we have. Reminded council that everyone has access to the written minutes, and that any students can attend council. Asked council two questions: firstly, should we continue with this precedent that we don't allow filming without full permission of all people in the room, and secondly, how do we improve the engagement of OUSU council with the student media.

Andrew Dwyer (Mansfield) – Noted that on the first question it is non-negotiable, and council students always have the right to withdraw their consent to filming.

Eden Bailey (Magdalen) – Stated that she opposed changes in relation to question 1, as there are very specific concerns there. Added that in relation to number 2, a number of people were invited to be interviewed after the meeting, and it is very possible to provide video content in this way from individuals.

Catherine Kelly (St Hugh's) – Asked what the legal situation is around filming, as someone told her that if people who are over 18 it is OK to film them.

Matthew – Replied that he is not a legal expert so looked into it himself, but could not find a law preventing filming at a public meeting.

Eden – Stated that OUSU council is not a public meeting.

Matthew – Noted that this resolves the filming issue.

Matilda (Wadham) – Asked if it would be possible to list the motions in the email where the agenda is sent out, so people don't have to go through the pdf.

Matthew – Agreed to do that for next council.

Lucy Delaney (Wadham) – Noted that individual student journalists probably do just think that they are reporting wider news, but we should remember that here is always a bias on reporting, and that they want to get a story. Added that a lot of the issues that are debated here are debated by marginalised and under-represented groups, and we need to remember that they will garner more press attention, particularly for so-called controversial issues. Asked that people are wary of this.

Kelli Francis-Staite (St John's) – Asked if she is mandated to report back to her common room.

Matthew – Replied that common room reps are here representing their common rooms, but it depends on their particular constitutions if they are mandated to report back.

Tom Turner (St Catherine's) – Informed council that he is a recently elected OUSU rep, and one of the things that he said he would do, and has started to do, is to mention issues first and OUSU second, as a lot of the work that affects students is done by OUSU, but students often can switch off when OUSU is mentioned, so it makes sense to talk about the issue first, and then explain that it is OUSU doing the work.

2. **Access Vision (10 minutes)** (Appendix 4)

Requested by Nick Cooper (St John's) and Cat Jones (Pembroke) - As mandated by Council, we have produced an Access Vision, setting out OUSU's stances on various aspects of undergraduate and graduate access to education, and our campaigning priorities in the medium-term. This comes after our successful Education Vision last year, which helped to set out students' stances and priorities for changing education at Oxford.

Following several focus groups and other consultation, our first draft is now complete. We would welcome comments on the draft, either at Council or by completing the form here: <http://bit.ly/22m6F6w>. Some areas that may be interesting to discuss in Council include:

- In undergraduate admissions, views on changing student numbers across subjects, or differential offers to different applicants
- Centralising the undergraduate admissions process (that is, applications go to the university and not the colleges)

- Whether to increase or hold static graduate student numbers
- An increase in foundation, bridging and part time provision
- Changing admissions tests and interviews
- How to improve the graduate offer (including with accommodation and funding offers, or changing the timing of the admissions process)
- ... or anything else

Cat Jones (Pembroke) – Explained that we were mandated earlier in the year to produce an Access Vision, and noted that OUSU already has an Education Vision and is working on a Welfare Vision, the purpose of which is to provide sabbatical officers who sit on committees with a steer on issues when there is not time for consultation, noting that it useful to have an evidence base in advance. Added that this also allows for continuity between teams, and lays out a longer term vision of what OUSU are trying to achieve. Urged council to look at the vision, which sets out a definition of access in the broadest terms, what we want to achieve and our campaigning priorities. Reported that it has been developed based on a series of focus groups, which we haven't yet finished. Noted that there are a lot of people left to talk to, but that we wanted to bring this to council at this stage to get any important thoughts that we need to include. Noted that primarily it would be useful to have a steer on the most controversial issues.

Nick – Directed to some of the issues that we feel are less obvious that we may need a steer on.

Cat – Explained that one issue is about undergraduate admissions, which relates to the size and shape of the University, which has very suddenly become a hot topic. Noted that when you look at the spread of courses, you will see that they have very very different success rates across subjects. Added that it has also become clear that student from non-traditional Oxford backgrounds disproportionately apply for the most over-subscribed subjects, so they are much more likely to apply for example medicine or law or than for classics or theology. Questioned if the University should consider the effect on demographics when deciding how many students we take for each course. Cautioned that we modelled this to see what would happen if for example we shifted some of the numbers from classic to maths, and there was an increase in BME representation and low income backgrounds.

Benji Woolf (Christ Church) – Asked if the shift is significant.

Cat – Replied that it is small but significant.

Yoni Stone (Pembroke) – Asked who decides how many people each course will take.

Cat – Replied that technically it is for the college to decide how many students they want for each subject, but on the flip side the department set their own strategies for growth and their own target numbers.

Nick – Noted that at the graduate level the department set the college numbers, but that if you don't get a college place you don't get in.

Andrew Dwyer (Mansfield) – Asked what access work is done by subjects with less diversity.

Cat – Selected classics as an example, and informed council that they actually do a huge amount of outreach work, perhaps more than any other department, which is why they are upset by their name being involved in this. Noted that their outreach work doesn't work.

Emma – Asked if you have to study latin to do classics.

Cat – Replied that this is one of the most common misconceptions, and that there are actually different routes in. Explained that it is split between those that have studied either Greek or Latin, those that have done both, or those that have done neither.

Archie Jones (Hertford) – Suggested that the vision skips over how the University can influence reform at secondary curriculum level.

Emma – Asked what the momentum of the University is on this recommendation.

Cat – Replied that a paper went to a University with 9 recommendations and this was the 9th. Noted that 8 were discussed and this disappeared. Added however, that she is raising consciousness of this, so it is happening, despite the recommendation no longer appearing.

Nick – Asked for thoughts on the offer made to graduate students, and for ideas on what the University can do to encourage postgraduate study and make it a more appealing option.

Eden Bailey (Magdalen) – Asked if it was possible to include the graduate application costs.

Nick – Replied that it is already included.

Josephine Lyon (St Peter's) – Asked for an elaboration on the suggestion for different offers to different applicants.

Cat – Noted that other institutions do this, and Oxford do this at the point of application. Noted that they take into account issues such as whether you have been in care, and if your school has terrible GCSE results. Explained that some universities take this further, and consider it when making it an offer, and it can affect what the offer is. Recognised very obvious advantages to this but that there is the worry that it could look like tokenism, or create a two-tiered system. Flagged imposter system as a very real issue which this could exaggerate, and also noted that offers cannot go too low, in order to get a certain level of students capable of doing the course.

3. Welfare Vision (10 minutes)

Requested by Becky Howe (Pembroke) and Ali Lennon (St John's) - Following on from the success of the OUSU Welfare Survey the union is looking to create, through liaison with students, a set of medium term priorities which will bind future OUSU Officers and lead to a more cohesive and consistent pursuit of a better welfare landscape. The vision shall include points that regard: OUSU, the University, and the Colleges. We will seek to highlight the importance of liberation voices in the pursuit of such a vision and we would welcome contributions from all students on all related matters.

Becky Howe (Pembroke) – Reported that they had been working all year on the welfare survey, and wanted to talk through the process. Explained that the report was launched in Hilary Term, and over the Easter vacation, OUSU took on two data analyst students who created their own code and looked at the frequency of reporting, as well as people's responses based on their characteristics, which was very interesting. Added that analysis also focused on year group, BME students, religion, disability, gender, mature students and LGBTQ students. Informed council that the University's data management team came to look at the work, noting that they arrived skeptical, and left not skeptical. Apologised that they cannot give out the data now, but explained that they do not want to release it in dribs and drabs, and would prefer to do it when the full report is ready. Continued that that other part of this project was to be able to set campaigning priorities in the form of the Welfare Vision. Asked council what they thought we should be focusing on.

Ali Lennon (St John's) – Suggested that we go through the sections by heading and look at things that we might miss. Suggested that for example if looking at academic life and welfare, a suggestion may be looking at desk checks, to ensure that students do not get bad backs when working in labs.

Emma – Suggested greater welfare support for language students outside of Oxford.

Sarah White (St Catherine's) –Suggested welfare training at a very basic work for all tutors.

Becky – Asked if the graduates in the room feel that there is enough safeguarding in place if there is an issue with their supervisor.

- Comment that there is a problem with having just one supervisor, and that if that relationship is not strong, there should be a second person to talk to.

Sarah White – Stated that there is really rubbish provision for those who fall pregnant or give birth while studying, as well as for those who have small children.

Ali – Asked for comments on mental health and mental illness.

Matilda – Informed council that she is chair of the LGBTQ campaign, and something that seems to come up is the counselling service, which people say is not always great, and is something that should be looked into.

Catherine Kelly (St Hugh's) – Suggested that staff within the service could specify what issues they are experts in and trained to speak about, so students get the best support.

Becky – Informed council that the report showed that most students who are having a crisis, or are in need of support, turn to their common room reps as their first port of call. Asked how we can better support these reps, and also if we should be shifting away from that being the expectation.

Catherine – Suggested a system where if you are in a position of welfare support, that you have bi-weekly counselling sessions if you want them, as it is normal to require that, even if you are not having a crisis.

-Comment that this can be provided by peer support supervisions.

Adam Kellett (Herford) – Suggested something in the same vein as the consent workshop, as a basic grounding in how to help students.

Ali asked for a straw poll on whether or not your common room pays for peer support: only two students raised their hands.

Becky – Concluded that this will come as a document to 7th week council.

Ali – Urged students to email them with any additional thoughts.

4. Higher Education White Paper (10 minutes)

Requested by Nick Cooper (St John's) - The Government released their White Paper on higher education last week – detailing their proposed new legislation and other changes to how higher education works. You can read the White Paper

here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-white-paper> We will do a short presentation of the White Paper at Council, followed by discussion about how OUSU should respond. Some further detail on the White Paper is given below.

The White Paper, which follows from last year's Green Paper (to which OUSU responded following extensive consultation), proposes the following changes:

- Easing the process by which new universities can be created, and awarded degree-awarding powers
- Creating a new Teaching Excellence Framework [TEF], where a panel will assess the quality of universities based on a set of metrics (including the National Student Survey and the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey)
- Linking the TEF to a power for universities to raise tuition fees. From the third year, there will be a differentiation of fees based on the "quality" of the university (so higher-quality universities can raise fees by more than others)
- Requiring universities to increase their transparency of information about admissions and outcomes, with respect to students from disadvantaged background and/or students who are black or minority ethnic (BME)
- Merging the existing Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Office for Fair Access (OFFA) into a new "Office for Students", who will distribute teaching income, monitor universities, and have overall control of the TEF and ensuring education quality
- Merge the existing Research Councils and the research funding side of HEFCE into a new body: UK Research and Innovation

Several suggestions in responses to the Green Paper (including in OUSU's) have been listened to. The White Paper:

- Removes plans to rush the introduction of differentiated fees in the TEF, delaying this for several years
- Reverses on a proposed shift of fee-setting powers from Parliament to Government
- Scraps proposals to further regulate the transparency of students' unions, following responses that students' unions are already heavily regulated and transparent as a result of the Education Act 1994 and other legislation
- Maintains the current situation whereby universities are subject to the Freedom of Information Act
- Protects the "dual funding" model whereby universities get some research income based on past performance, and some on future projects

The Government have now launched a technical consultation on how the TEF should operate, to which OUSU will be responding. We are also aware that the University will be responding, and will work to ensure their response is not contrary to students' interests.

If you have further thoughts, please email Becky at president@ousu.ox.ac.uk, Nick at vpgraduates@ousu.ox.ac.uk or Cat at vpaccaff@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Informed council that the government released their white paper on higher education the previous week, explaining that this follows the green paper which came out last year. Noted that there was a period of time for responses following the green paper, one of which was submitted by OUSU. Explained that the government takes these responses to help form the white paper, which tells you pretty much what the legislation will look like, before it is turned into a bill, which is currently making its way through parliament. Informed council of the main features of the white paper: it makes it easier for new universities to form, it makes it easier for universities to shut down, it makes it easier for students to change courses or universities, it introduces a new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which will be linked to the power to increase tuition fees, it sets out

extra requirements about transparency within universities, and it sets up a new Office for Students, which goes against the feedback from the majority of student unions in the country. Recognised a small number of changes between the green paper and the white paper, including the fact that the link between the TEF and the power to set different fees at different universities has been stalled for two years, the suggestion for the government will have the power to unilaterally change the maximum fees for undergraduate studies have been removed, there is a slight recognition that access does not stop at the point of admittance, they have kept universities subject to the freedom of information act and they are no longer imposing extra restrictions on student unions. Informed council that the TEF will take place over the next few years, although we do plan to lobby against it. Explained that if it goes ahead the first year will be 2017, and universities will have the power to raise tuition fees by inflation, noting that it seems unlikely that the University will not opt into this. Continued that universities will be assessed on a range of metrics, including the National Student Survey, graduate employment data and an assessment by the University itself. Added that there will be a differentiation of fees based on the quality of universities according to the TEF: if universities are seen as outstanding or excellent, they will be able to continue raising their fees by inflation each year, if they are considered to meet UK quality standards, they will be able to raise their fees by half of inflation, and if they do not meet UK quality standards, or do not choose to opt in to TEF, the fees will remain at £9000.

Cat – Noted that to be able to participate at all, universities need to have an access agreement with the Office for Fair Access, which Oxford does have, but could give us some god leverage as we are very far from meeting our access targets.

Nick – Added that the metrics will be contextualized to the demographics of the institutions student body. Continued that in the 4th year, the plan is to have subject-based assessments.

Nick – Explained that the government have released information on how the TEF will work, including the metrics, which we will respond to. Added that we will bring some points on this to 7th week council, and will circulate the full raft around the student email. Reminded council that universities actually have to opt in to TEF, and that we are very keen to try and persuade Oxford to not. Argued that it would be a very powerful message if Oxford said no to TEF.

Sarah White (St Catherine's) – Stated that the destination job is a ridiculous metric and questioned how that can possibly be judged.

Nick – Agreed and stated that it will be based primarily on salary.

Josephine Lyon (St Peter's) – Asked if it looks like Oxford will be opting into TEF.

Cat – Replied that it is too early to say, but it is certainly not impossible that they will not.

Becky – Added that it could depend on what the rest of the sector do.

Hilal Yazan (St Hugh's) – Asked if we can organise student opposition if it looks as though Oxford will opt it.

Cat – Replied that she hoped so.

Nick – Noted that it will be partly based on the National Student Survey, and it is up to students how they fill that out. Added that we currently support the NSS, but if in the future we find that it comes at a big cost, we can look at changing the policy.

Andrew Dwyer (Mansfield) – Asked if are working with wider unions that lecturers are part of.

Cat – Replied that we are not yet, but it is a very useful point.

Archie Jones (Hertford) – Asked if there can be any sway from colleges.

Becky – Replied that it will be the central University Council making the decision, but this has college representatives on it, and it can also be over-ruled by congregation.

Adam Kellett (Hertford) – Asked if there has been any discussion with those universities that are most likely to lose out.

Becky – Replied that they have been having conversations with Russell group universities, as they are most likely to move upwards with TEF, but noted that NUS are having discussions with those that do not fall within this category.

Cat – Added that it would be very hard to know who would be likely to move up and down at this stage, as you would be surprised how under-valued teaching can be at more research intensive universities.

Nick – Added that there is a suggestion that 80% of universities will be able to raise fees in accordance with TEF.