

Council Minutes

7th Week Michaelmas Term 2015

7th Week Council took place at 5:30pm on Wednesday 25th November 2015, at St John's College, Garden Quad Reception Room.

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

- a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- b. Matters Arising from the Minutes
- c. Ratifications in Council
 1. Raise and Give (RAG) Constitution
- d. Elections in Council
- e. Reports from and questions to the Sabbatical Officers, Executive Officers, Divisional Board Representatives, Representatives of the OUSU Campaigns and RAG (*Raise and Give*)
- f. Emergency motions
- g. Passage of motions without discussion
- h. Motions of No Confidence or censure
- i. Motions to amend Bye-Laws, General Regulations or Election Regulations
- j. Motions authorising expenditure
 2. Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality
 3. Funding 'This Changes Everything' screening by OUSU Environment and Ethics Fossil Free Oxfordshire (**MOTION WITHDRAWN**)
- k. Other motions
 4. SusCam
 5. Student Written Submission
 6. Scrutiny Report Michaelmas 2015
 7. Green Paper on Higher Education
 8. National Student Survey Consultation Response
 9. #PledgeDecrim
 10. Evaluating carbon risk in the University's Endowment (**MOTION WITHDRAWN**)
- l. Any other business

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Not yet released.

b. Matters Arising from the Minutes

N/A

c. Ratifications in Council

1. Raise and Give (RAG) Constitution

Council Notes:

1. The requirement for any changes to the RAG constitution to be approved by Council. (Bye-Laws 29.6 and 30.1).
2. The substantial changes and growth which RAG has undergone over the last few years, as explained in Appendix 1.

Council Believes:

1. It is important for RAG to have a constitution which in is line with how it functions in practise.

Council Resolves:

1. To approve the new Constitution for RAG as set out in Appendix 1.

Proposed: Chris Williams (St John's)

Seconded: Emily Silcock (New)

Chris Williams (St John's) – Introduced himself as the president of RAG, and explained that the current constitution does not reflect how RAG operates, now that RAG has a specific executive committee, as well as a part-time member of staff. Noted that it is not a big change, and is simply to make clear what RAG does.

RAG constitution ratified by council.

d. Elections in Council

Chair of Council – Marina Lambrakis (St John's) nominated.

No hust requested.

Marina – 64

RON – 10

SBV - 3

Marina Lambrakis was elected.

Returning Officer – Stanislas Lalanne (Merton) nominated.

No hust requested.

Stan – 67

RON – 6

SBV – 4

Stanislas Lalanne was elected.

Graduate International Students' Officer – Gabe Rusk (St Stephen's House) nominated.
No hust requested.

Gabe – 67
RON – 5
SBV - 5

Gabe Rusk was elected.

Common Room Support Officer – Luke Cave (Christ Church) nominated.

Hust requested.

Luke – Introduced himself as the JCR president of Christ Church, and explained that in this role he has witnessed a lot of discrepancy between JCRs, as well as a distance between these and OUSU. Informed council that he would like to mediate communication between the common rooms and OUSU, informing the common rooms of what OUSU are up to, as well as improving the communication between common rooms themselves, creating documentation that would answer the questions that are frequently asked on the Facebook group.

Tom Barringer (St Hugh's) – Asked if Luke would push for the introduction for an OUSU rep in every common room.

Luke – Answered that this would fall to the presidents of common rooms which do not currently have reps, although he considers it important that they have them, and would encourage them to do so.

Eden Tanner (St John's) – Asked if he had any specific ideas for graduate engagement.

Luke – Answered that he wants to have meeting with the OUSU reps and generate feedback from them, ensuring that there are open lines if communication in both directions.

Alastair Graham (St John's) – Noted that the previous officer in role had been working on a document which would help common rooms to create and run committees for balls, and asked if this would be continued.

Luke – Replied that this sounded like a very good idea and he would be happy to work on it.

Luke – 66
RON – 8
SBV – 3

Luke Cave was elected.

Graduate Welfare Officer – Rebecca Kuperberg (Somerville) nominated.

No hust requested.

Rebecca – 64
RON – 6
SBV – 7

Rebecca Kuperberg was elected.

Student Parents and Carers Officer – Holly Roy (Queen’s) nominated.

No hust requested.

Holly – 68

RON – 4

SBV – 5

Holly Roy was elected.

Trans Officer – Jessy Parker Humphreys (Jesus) nominated.

Hust requested.

Jessy – Stated that this role is very important, which is why they proposed the motion to introduce it in the first place. Stated that they want to work with presidents on a very individual one to one basis on implementing trans policies, and that they want to work on an event which will raise money for Action for Trans Health. Added that they would push more faculties for gender-neutral toilets.

Jessy – 68

RON – 4

SBV – 5

Jessy Parker Humphreys was elected.

3 Positions for Steering Committee – Matthew Collyer (New) nominated.

No hust requested.

Matthew – 66

RON – 6

SBV – 5

Matthew Collyer was elected.

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

Cat Jones (Pembroke) – Updated on prelims feedback, an issue that OUSU has been campaigning on for over ten years, stating that the result of the previous year’s consultation showed that students very clearly want this feedback. Noted that there continues to be serious objection from members of University staff, several who have argued that students do not know what is best for them and are wrong, and if students received a better breakdown of marks, it would not be helpful at all. Urged council to send her concrete examples of how this would have helped, so she can make the best possible case on their behalf.

Ali Lennon (St John’s) – Apologised that he had not submitted a report due to illness. Reported

that HIV/AIDS awareness week is ongoing, and encouraged people to find out more on Facebook. Informed council that he had just found out about government plans to cut all funding to the Terrence Higgins Trust in Oxford, a charity that does all the HIV/Aids awareness, prevention and support work in Oxford, explaining that this plan had no intention of providing a replacement or alternative, it would just disappear. Flagged a petition that had been left outside council for students to sign if they wished, including their position if they held one, and that he would take the signing of names as consent to include them in an open letter. Clarified that if they did not wish to be included in this, they just needed to mark their names with an asterisk.

Lucy Delaney (Wadham) – Reported that she is establishing and setting up priorities for next term, including a Women in Leadership Development Programme, and gathering template motions for common room liberation officers, so colleges are able to make changes with the right people leading them. Thanked WomCam, in particular Stephanie, who has worked tirelessly as Womens Campaign Officer.

Becky Howe (Pembroke) – Thanked everyone who ran and voted in the OUSU elections. Updated council that she has been working on her pledges surrounding rent and accommodation, and the welfare survey with Ali, which will be launched in Hilary.

Emily Silcock (New) – Reported that she has been matching up students with local families for Christmas, and urged people to get in touch if they would like to be involved, and that she is running a training course over Hilary called Campaigning to Change.

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Highlighted the review on OUSU council which is available to read on the OUSU website. Selected two positive notes from the spending review, firstly that postgraduate loans are coming in, and secondly that the maximum age will be raised from 30 to 60. Presented the chair with a cake to mark his 85th council, and the end of his term.

Rita Nissim (St John's) – Introduced herself as the Graduate Welfare Officer, and reiterated Ali's request that people sign the petition to support the Terrence Higgins Trust.

Nikhil Venkatesh (Corpus Christi) – Introduced himself as the BME Officer, and updated council that he has been to the inaugural meeting of the race equality working group, an informal university group set up to talk about what the University can do to improve race equality, that he has been involved in the Rhodes Must Fall movement, and has been continuing to work on preventing Prevent.

Gabe Lawson (Lincoln) – Introduced himself as the RAG Treasurer, and updated council that RAG are currently in the process of paying out to their charities selected last year, yet due to staff illness at OUSU, they do not yet have a final figure to present.

Becky Howe (Pembroke) – Informed council that every 5 years we have to review our articles of association, which OUSU has now completed, however to pass them we need 200 student members to make quorum at the general meeting which will be taking place at the Sheldonian next week. Urged council to complete the proxy forms available if they were unable to attend the meeting.

f. Emergency motions

g. Passage of motions without discussion

4. SusCam

Council Notes:

1. That many students suspend their studies at some point in their Oxford career and that this number is increasing
2. That there is little or no consistency between the colleges in regard to suspension policy or the information given to students who suspend their studies
3. That there is little or no support for students who are suspended
4. Council's power under Bye-Law 29.2 to set up a new Campaign, if a Sabbatical Officer supports this and provides a draft constitution.

Council Believes:

1. That it is crucial to support students who suspend, to reduce the level of disparity between colleges, and to change the punitive policies imposed by many colleges that fail to support students.
2. That an OUSU Campaign would ensure that the voices of suspended students are heard and could support common rooms to improve the relevant policies imposed by their college.

Council Resolves:

1. To create a new Campaign (pursuant to Bye-Law 29.2), called the Suspended Status Campaign.
2. To endorse the draft constitution in Appendix 2.
3. To mandate the Vice President (Access & Academic Affairs) to form an Executive for the Campaign and ensure the Executive endorses the draft constitution within a month of this motion passing.

Proposed: Kate Cole (Regent's Park College)

Seconded: Cat Jones (Pembroke)

Motion passed without discussion.

5. Student Written Submission

Council Notes:

1. The University will be reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency in March, for which we have to submit a Student Written Submission outlining student opinion on the quality of education here.
2. The lengthy consultation that has been conducted into the draft Student Written Submission.
3. That the final deadline for the Submission is the end of 10th week.

Council Believes:

1. It is important that students' voices are heard, to improve the quality of the academic experience at Oxford.

Council Resolves:

1. To endorse the preliminary Student Written Submission in Appendix 3.
2. To permit the Vice President (Access & Academic Affairs), as Lead Student Representative for the Review, to make minor amendments to the Submission before sending it to the QAA (including, for the avoidance of doubt, to complete sections marked in red), and to delegate approval of the final draft to the Executive.

Proposed: Nick Cooper (St John's)

Seconded: Catherine Jones (Pembroke)

Motion passed without discussion.

h. Motions of No Confidence or censure

i. Motions to amend Bye-Laws, General Regulations or Election Regulations

j. Motions authorising expenditure

2. Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality

Providing £200 to allow the Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality (CRAE) to send two delegates to the NUS Black Students' Winter Conference (2-days)

Council Notes:

1. The CRAE budget has been heavily depleted through contributions to Rhodes Must Fall initiatives and the OUSU Liberation Library.
2. NUS conferences are usually paid for through OUSU, rather than from campaign budgets (as seen by OUSU's financial support of delegates to the Black Student Conference last year) – Black is defined by NUS as students of African, Asian, Arab and Caribbean descent, i.e. students of colour.

Council Believes:

1. It is imperative that Oxford's BME students are represented a national level through participation with such conferences, where there are discussions of crucial initiatives which can improve the BME experience at Oxford (for example, with the Anti-Prevent Movement) and build a culture in which students of colour are able to thrive.
2. OUSU holds responsibility to its BME students to ensure that they are able to gain key skills and more resources to network with other Students of Colour, and then collaborate in National Black Activism.

Council Resolves:

1. To provide £200 from the OUSU budget for the opportunity to send 2 nominated CRAE delegates to the NUS Black Students Conference taking place on 28th-29th November.

Proposed: Yunqi Shi (St Cross)

Seconded: Farheen Ahmed (Pembroke)

Yunqi Shi (St Cross) – Introduced herself as the co-chair as CREA, and explained that she is requesting £200 from the discretionary fund, in order to send two delegates to the conference this weekend. Explained it is important that we keep connected with the black student movement nationwide, and make use of great networking opportunities for black students.

Tom Barringer (St Hugh's) – Asked if the money would be coming out of the discretionary fund.

Jack Matthews (University) – Confirmed that it would.

Kanta Dihal (St Anne's) – Asked where the conference is.

Yunqi – Answered that it is at SOAS, University of London.

Vivian Holmes (Wadham) – Asked why the money did not come from a welfare budget.

Ali Lennon (St John's) – Answered that the winter conference had not been budgeted for as the summer conference had.

Motion passed with no opposition.

k. Other motions

6. Scrutiny Report Michaelmas 2015

Council Notes:

1. The Scrutiny Committee was established in Hilary 2010 to monitor the work of the OUSU team, and ensure they are held accountable to the students of the university.
2. The Scrutiny Committee must present a report evaluating the work of OUSU Sabbatical Officers, Part Time Executives and Divisional Board Representatives to the termly council in 7th week.

Council Believes:

1. That the Scrutiny Report in Appendix 4 should be accepted by OUSU Council.

Council Resolves:

1. To accept the Scrutiny Report in Appendix 4

Proposer: Alastair Graham (St John's)

Seconder: Omar Mohsen (Jesus)

Alastair Graham (St John's) – Thanked Benji, Omar and Dan for their work on scrutiny, noting that it had been a particularly difficult few terms. Informed council that they had been very pleased with the sabbatical officers, noting that there have been a couple of issues but they had been dealt with very well. Urged the sabbatical officers to look after themselves, and not burn out, due to the sheer amount of hours that they put in. Stated that they were very happy to see a full set of divisional board reps, however reported that there needed to be much more clarity regarding what the role entails. Reported that they had a mix of part time executive officers, some who had been in office for three terms, and some who had stepped into the role this term, but stated that they were generally very happy, with the exception of having to deem one of the officers inadequate. Advised that in the future, council and OUSU officers consider

nominations forms for officers, ensuring people have to state what they intend to do in the role, therefore giving guidance to scrutiny committee.

Motion passed with no opposition.

7. Green Paper on Higher Education

Council Notes:

1. The Government's Green Paper on Higher Education, released a couple of weeks ago.
2. The deadline for responding to the consultation is 15th January 2016.
3. The University will be submitting a response as well, and the Sabbatical Officers will see a draft of this in 8th week. The University have also indicated a willingness to work together in students' interest on our respective submissions.
4. The Sabbatical Officers are very busy with other things such as elections and the Student Written Submission, and have therefore only managed a draft as of now.

Council Believes:

1. It is important that we respond to this Paper, which proposes the most radical change to Higher Education in many years.
2. It is important to consult with as many students as possible, and with the University to compare our respective responses.
3. Increasing fees for supposed "high-quality" higher education institutions could create a two-tier system, which may have access implications.
4. Improving teaching quality is important, but that doing this using vague metrics will not necessarily be in students' interest.
5. It is important for student unions to be transparent and accountable to their members, but that this is currently already written into law.
6. It is disappointing that the Green Paper makes no reference to postgraduate study, which has significant barriers akin to those at undergraduate level.
7. Access to higher education is crucial, and institutions such as the University of Oxford should continue to work on this, listening to students on how best to do this.
8. It is imperative that universities remain accountable to students as a public body, and are not exempted from the Freedom of Information Act.

Council Resolves:

1. To endorse the principles outlined in the draft consultation response in Appendix 5.
2. To mandate the President to consult students before the end of term on the questions in the Green Paper.
3. To permit the President to write and submit a final consultation response on behalf of OUSU, based on: the draft in Appendix 5, any discussion in this Council, and consultation with students.

Proposed: Becky Howe (Pembroke)

Seconded: Nick Cooper (St John's)

Becky Howe (Pembroke) – Explained to council that these are proposals that could really change the face of higher education, which is why it is essential that we have lots of input on it. Summarised that the paper includes a proposal to introduce a teaching excellence framework, the metrics of which we are concerned about, as well as the fact that higher education

institutions will be able to charge higher fees in line with inflation, based on their teaching excellence ratings. Explained the concern that this could lead to the marketization of higher education. Reported that the green paper also proposers changing the architecture of how higher education is regulated by the government, with very concerning sections about student unions. Flagged a two-page document produced by the NUS, which summarises the changes. Urged council to read and comment on the draft response produced by OUSU. Noted that additionally the government could make the University exempt from Freedom of Information requests which we don't want at all.

Taisie (Wadham) – Asked if they would be consulting with the University, who may have a different take on freedom of information.

Becky – Answered that they are in regular conversation with the University about this, and that they may have a different approach on freedom of information, but that we feel it is a very worrying issue.

Motion passed with no opposition.

8. National Student Survey Consultation Response

Council Notes:

1. All final-year undergraduate students are currently asked to complete the National Student Survey, a national data collection exercise.
2. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) are currently running a consultation on potential changes to the NSS, with a December 4th deadline.
3. The University and OUSU use NSS data as part of improving undergraduate students' academic experience.

Council Believes:

1. Data collection from students is important in ensuring the academic experience is as positive as possible, and it is similarly important that the data collected is appropriate for our needs.
2. The primary purpose for surveys such as the NSS should be for improving the academic experience, rather than for potential applicants to compare universities or for the benefit of the general public.
3. The current question on Students' Unions (question 23) is not especially useful, and we would favour an optional set of more useful questions.

Council Resolves:

1. To endorse the draft consultation response in Appendix 6.
2. To permit the Vice President (Access & Academic Affairs) to make minor amendments to the draft before submission, based on any discussion in Council and to correct any minor errors.

Proposed: Nick Cooper (St John's)

Seconded: Catherine Jones (Pembroke)

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Informed council that they are submitting a response to a consultation on the National Student Survey. Flagged that there is a question about why this

survey is done, with the reasoning being that it is useful to potential applicants, however noted that they consider it to be more useful to representatives who are attempting to lobby for change, and highlighted that Q23 'What do you think of your Student Union', should go, in favour of some more useful questions which would actually allow us to tease out some data.

Greg Auger (St John's) – Asked if it should still be published for all to see if we consider it to be primarily for internal use.

Nick – Answered that we would not particularly in favour of that, and it would probably be subject to freedom of information anyway, and the thing to focus on is what questions are asked and how useful they are.

Motion passed with no opposition.

9. #PledgeDecrim

Council Notes:

1. Sex work refers to escorting, lap dancing, stripping, pole dancing, pornography, webcamming, adult modeling, phone sex, and selling sex (on and off the street).
2. Sex workers are adults who receive money or other forms of compensation in exchange for consensual sexual services, either regularly or occasionally.¹
3. Selling sex is not illegal in the UK per se, but many practices sex workers utilize as safety measures are criminalised. This includes, but is not limited to, the criminalisation of women loitering or soliciting on the street, provisions of the Policing and Crime Act of 2009 that drive sex workers off the street and into more isolated areas, and the definition of an illegal brothel as association of two or more individuals (criminalizing sex workers who associate together for safe practice.) In 2006, the Home Office acknowledged, “the present definition of brothel ran counter to the advice that, in the interests of safety, women should not sell sex alone.”²
4. Criminal laws threaten sex workers' access to health and social services, and exposes them to violence, discrimination, and arbitrary arrest.³ Amnesty International's recent report coming out in support of the decriminalisation of sex work cites UN agencies, human rights organisations, and scientific research in attributing criminalisation to “increased risk of human rights abuses” for sex workers.⁴
5. Criminalisation of sex work is a safety and health issue: decriminalisation of sex work could prevent up to 46% of new HIV infections among female sex workers over the next decade.⁵
6. The lack of institutionalised and legal protection for sex workers has driven them to create their own safety mechanisms: “National Ugly Mugs” collects reports from sex workers about violent incidents or dangerous clients and makes the data available via a

¹ “10 Reasons to Decriminalise Sex Work” *Open Society Foundations* (224 West 57th Street, New York, NY – www.osf.to/health)

² *The Times*, 18th January 2006.

³ international Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe, Declaration of the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (2005), <<http://www.sexworkeurope.org/en/resources-mainmenu-189/declaration-mainmenu-199>>

⁴ “Draft policy on state obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of sex workers”, *Amnesty International*. <<https://amnestysgprdasset.blob.core.windows.net/media/10243/draft-sw-policy-for-external-publication.pdf>>

⁵ Shannon et al., Global epidemiology of HiV among female sex workers: influence of structural determinants. *The Lancet* 385(9962), (2014): 55-71.

paid service, while forums such as Redbook (which the authorities have since shut down) promoted the collection of similar information so sex workers could protect themselves.⁶

7. Stigmatisation of sex workers leads to false and damaging mass misinformation, such as a causal link between the sex industry and human trafficking. In fact, less than 6% of sex workers in the UK are trafficked⁷, while only 22% of trafficking internationally can be attributed to sexual exploitation.⁸
8. Models of criminalisation of sex work, such as the Nordic model, have not been proven to decrease the demand for prostitution, ensure the safety of sex workers, or prevent sexual violence or human trafficking. In fact, research by Dr. Jay Levy found that the law increased difficulties in street work, jeopardised safety, increased violence, led to sex workers' child custody being revoked and being evicted from housing arbitrarily. Additionally, criminalisation of sex work meant that clients were reluctant to give identifying information, ensuring that any client violence was virtually anonymous and not prosecutable.⁹
9. Decriminalisation is a deterrent against violence, as has been shown by the New Zealand model, a country in which sex workers have the ability to screen clients, work in safe areas with access to security services, and refer incidents of violence to police.¹⁰

Council Believes:

1. Sex work is work: it is the exchange of money for a form of labour. The difference between sex work and other forms of labour is the degree to which its workers are criminalised and stigmatised.
2. Though undergraduate students at Oxford University are not permitted employment during term time, the flexible nature of sex work means that it can be taken up during the vacations as a form of income. It is highly probable that there are students OUSU seeks to represent who are sex workers: they deserve full support and protection.
3. People should be free to choose a profession and exercise autonomy with regard to their labour and bodies. Restricting the choices of individuals only perpetuates existing violent structures, and encourages further criminalisation.
4. Violence against sex workers is symptomatic of workers' vulnerability: if the law does not protect sex workers or allow them the freedom to operate without fear of arrest, violence that sex workers face will continue to go unchecked. Decriminalisation would ensure that sex workers feel able to report unsafe clients or workplace violence without the worry of criminal repercussions, that several sex workers can ally and work together for safety, and that those who leave the sex industry can do so without criminal records.
5. Stigma and risk of prosecution or police violence means that sex workers are less likely to seek out help and support if and when they need it.
6. Whether one's impetus to enter the sex industry is by choice, circumstance, or coercion, all sex workers deserve protection of human rights. This includes sex workers who do

⁶ <<https://uknswp.org/um/>>

⁷ Dr. Nick Mai (Senior Research Fellow in Migrations and Immigrations), "Migrant Workers in the UK Sex Industry", *Institute for the Study of European Transformations*, London Metropolitan University. <<https://metranet.londonmet.ac.uk/fms/MRSite/Research/iset/Nick%20Mai/Migrant%20Workers%20in%20the%20UK%20Sex%20Industry%20Project%20Final%20Policy%20Relevant%20Report.pdf>>

⁸ UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, 2012 <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Trafficking_in_Persons_2012_web.pdf>

⁹ "Sex work is not commercial sexual exploitation", briefing from SCOT-PEP

¹⁰ New Zealand ministry of Justice, *Report of the Prostitution Law Review Committee on the Operation of the Prostitution Reform Act 2003, 2008*

not find their work “empowering”: whether or not one enjoys a job ought to have no bearing on the rights one has while doing it.

7. Former New Zealand MP Tim Barnett was correct in asserting that “prostitution is inevitable, and no country has succeeded in legislating it out of existence.”¹¹
8. This evidence combined with opposition to all forms of trafficking and forced labour require the government to recognise that the only effective way to tackle these abuses when they occur in the sex industry is to apply the measures which are known to improve the situation of migrant workers in other industries. Trafficked persons are not found in sectors where workers are organised and where labour standards are monitored and enforced.

Council Resolves

1. To support and campaign for the full decriminalisation of sex work.
2. To campaign against any attempt to introduce the Nordic model into the UK.
3. To campaign particularly for the rights of student sex workers, including mandating Sabbatical Officers to advocate on behalf of sex workers’ interests to the University.
4. To support any student that comes out privately as a sex worker to any member of Exec, including supporting health, safety, and legal needs.
5. To support and be led by sex-worker led organisations, such as the English Collective of Prostitutes, Sex Worker Open University, and SCOT-PEP, who work to improve the lives of sex workers across the UK.

Proposed: Stephanie Kelley (Regent’s)

Seconded: Lucy Delaney (Wadham)

Stephanie Kelley (Regent’s) – Directed to footnotes which provide very thorough scientific evidence for the things she is saying in the motion. Noted that on 3rd November, there was a symposium of parliament, in which sex workers and organisations, academic and health workers all came together from around the world to do an evidence gathering session to find the conclusion that it is the criminalisation of sex work which jeopardises the health and safety of sex workers and puts them at greater risk of violence. Clarified that decriminalisation is not a celebration of prostitution, but instead it intends to improve safety. Argued that under austerity, the people that are entering the sex industry are often single mother, carers, and people that are economically impoverished. Suggested people visit tinyurl.com/pleadedecrim, where she has collated books, articles and extra evidence about this issue. Quoted Gary Ridgway, the Green River Killer who murdered at least 71 women: “I picked prostitutes as victims because they were easy to pick up without being noticed, I knew they would not be reported missing right away, and might never be reported missing. I thought I could kill as many of them as I wanted without getting caught.” Claimed that criminalisation works for predators like Ridgway.

St Catherine’s student – Asked if there are currently any student movements for this.

Stephanie – Answered that there was and informed council of the Student Sex Worker Project, which both campaigns and conducts research into this area. Added that there are student sex workers who need support.

Opposition to motion received.

¹¹ <<http://prostitutescollective.net/2009/02/04/letter-from-tim-barnett-former-new-zealandmp-on-the-policing-and-crime-bill-2/>>

Elsa Field (Magdalen) – Stated council that she has many issues with this motion, as do many feminist campaigners, and many prostitute campaigners. Acknowledged that the current model of legislation is not accurately protecting prostitutes, or ensuring that justice is served against those who commit violent acts towards prostitutes. Disputed that the strategy proposed in the motion is the best one to deal with the problems, and suggested the Nordic model of legislation, which explicitly prosecutes people who buy sex, rather than criminalising the prostitutes involved. Informed council that in the countries where this model has been put into place, the demand for buying sex has reduced. Noted that alternatively, in countries where prostitution has been legalised, it has led to an explosion of prostitution and an increase in sex trafficking. Urged council to look into this and offered to provide information. Insisted that they should consider the moral question of whether men should be able to purchase sex on demand, and added that studies show that men who do buy sex, are more likely to commit rape or sexual assault. Urged council to read testimonies of prostitutes and men who buy sex before they vote in favour of the motion.

Vivian Holmes (Wadham) – Asked the opposition if the difference between legalisation and criminalisation is noted in the studies quoted.

Elsa – Questioned what the difference is between these is.

Ronnie Blackwood (Pembroke) – Noted that it is important to point out the difference between the two. Noted that in the Nordic model, prostitutes will still not be safe, in the sense that it is still not legal for two women to operate together without be considered a brothel. Argued that no form of consent should be worth any less than another, and if a person consents to have sex for money, their consent should not suddenly be worth less, as this is illogical and awful.

Esther Fisher (Harris Manchester) – Firstly noted that she was not particularly supporting the Nordic model. Raised the point that this motion does not really take into account the women who don't have a voice, with the decriminalisation campaign stating that only 6% of women are trafficked, and only 6% of women are on prostitution against their will. Noted that this research is based on 100 people, which is 100 out of 80,000 in the UK, and furthermore those 100 women are probably not the most oppressed, they are not the women who are silenced, and who need our protection the most. Concluded that this means that those supporting the sex worker decriminalisation are only able to speak for those who have the freedom to speak, rather than those who do not have a voice.

Lucy Delaney (Wadham) – Clarified that most of the facts gathered are from sex workers and sex worker organisations, so people who are sex workers themselves or support them.

Elsa – Asked if they have ever considered that these do not reflect the views of most of prostitutes.

Lucy – Stated that in Sweden, prostitution is slowly returning to previous levels, whereas in New Zealand, where prostitution was decriminalised in 2003, there is no increase in prostitution.

Catherine (Corpus Christi) – Stated that there are an awful lot of statistics on both sides, and it is a big statement to make, one that shouldn't be taken lightly. Encouraged people to consider abstaining until they have had time to research all the facts.

Vivian Holmes (Wadham) – Raised the fact that this is an issue that disproportionately affects trans women, but also one that affects men, as 25% of men who buy sex, do so from other men. Asked that people use the term sex worker.

Taisie (Wadham) – Reminded council that we are representing marginalised groups, who we should prioritise in our politics. Reiterated the safety element of sex workers being able to work in groups, and also the importance of workers being able to exit the sex industry without a criminal record.

Tom Wadsworth (St John's) – Informed council that OSDC fully support the motion.

Kellogg student – Stated that with the important work that OUSU has already done on consent, it would now be counter-productive to not pass this motion.

Eden Tanner (St John's) – Informed council that passing this motion does not prevent us from targeting human traffickers, which is still a big problem that we are not forgetting about.

Stephanie – Noted that Elsa and her speech has given council an option, and that it is a question of the best strategy. Explained that there is a myth that if you criminalise sex work, then the sex work will just disappear which is categorically not the truth, as we can see from history. Added that it is problematic for the issue of consent, as by saying that all sex work is violence against women, you erase the consent of sex workers, which is a confusion of consenting sex workers and trafficked prostitution.

Elsa – Argued that decriminalisation does not necessarily make prostitutes safe, and urged people to look at the countries where it has been decriminalised and no violence has decreased at all. Asked council to go away and read statistics before they vote on it, as a statistics battle is pointless, and people should make their own informed decision.

Vote:

For – 63

Against – 5

Abstain - 9

Motion passed.

I. Any other business

Jack Matthews (University) – Reminded council again about the General Meeting taking place next week and urged council to attend.

Alastair Graham (St John's) – Reminded all of the part-time executive that they have a duty to do an adequate handover to their successors.