

Oxford University Student Union: OUSU Termly Council, 7th Week Hilary Term, 2003.

Friday 7th March, 2003.

Notes and apologies: Paul Afshar (St. John's) explains that Sandy Toksvig will be arriving during Council to speak about her candidacy for Chancellor. This will require the interruption of Council's normal business. P.A. asks if there are any objections to giving her speaking rights, and there are none.

OUSU Termly Council, Hilary Term 2003.

i. Election of Chair of Council

Lyndsay Lomax (Keble) acting as Returning Officer.

There is one candidate: Paul Afshar (St. John's)

Paul Afshar (St. John's): I have been chair for a few seconds already. If you like what I did last Council then vote for me. If not, don't!

Jamie Johnson (Somerville): Will you be louder?

Paul Afshar (St. John's): Yes I will.

P.A. is duly elected as Chair of Council.

ii. Termly Reports from the Sabbatical Officers.

President (Will Straw, New College)

Will Straw (New): A number of things to add. Firstly, the march from Jowett Walk – there are a number of good speakers coming along including Paul Lewis and Dr Mike Woodin. Come along and support. Secondly, Congregation. This is happening on Tuesday of 10th week – check the University Gazette for information and details of those tutors who support it. The motion has been supported by 40 tutors. Talk to your tutors and find out their opinions. Students can observe proceedings and some graduates have the right to vote. Check the internet too.

Ros Dampier (St. Hilda's): You mention in your report that this is a march for free education but the publicity has concentrated on promoting access.

Will Straw (New): It's about both.

Helen McCabe (St. Hilda's): What does the Congregation motion actually say?

Will Straw (New): Argues that top-up fees hamper access and increase debt. The exact text is on the internet.

Ros Dampier (St. Hilda's): I don't think you answered my question. If my JCR asks me, what do I tell them?

Will Straw (New): It's about free education, and it's about promoting access.

Vice President (Finance) (Sean Sullivan, St. Edmund's Hall)

Sean Sullivan (SEH): I have nothing to add to my report.

Helen McCabe (St. Hilda's): It's a little on the short side Sean. Is there nothing you can add?

Sean Sullivan (SEH): I have no comments to add that are relevant to a termly report. Reports take up too much paper.

Penny Burrill (St. Hilda's): I'm concerned by a line in your report that expresses your thanks to the

too much paper.

Penny Burrill (St. Hilda's): I'm concerned by a line in your report that expresses your thanks to the Returning Officer. What would a 'not' superb job be from an RO?

Sean Sullivan (SEH): That's a silly question. I'm not going to comment.

Vice President (Welfare) (Andrew Copson, Balliol College)

Andrew Copson (Balliol): Not much to add really. Thanks to the Exec, and I'm sorry that Andy is leaving.

Penny Burrill (St. Hilda's): Is it fair to say that the university is not taking a great enough interest in disabilities?

Andrew Copson (Balliol): Yes.

Vice President (Women) (Melanie Marshall, Christ Church College)

Melanie Marshall (ChCh): Nothing to add except my best wishes to Andy.

Vice President (Graduates) (Andy Garlick, Christ Church College)

Andy Garlick (ChCh): There are now 80 subscribers to my new email list. There is also growing concern about graduate fees – it's looking like an extra £4,000 for some students which is worrying. Thank you, and goodnight.

Laura West (St. Cats): You said that you had a good response to the mature students survey. Roughly how many is that?

Andy Garlick (ChCh): About 150 or so.

Michael Girling (St. Edmund Hall): Sean has mentioned that we may have too many sabs. Do you think it is worthwhile having a VP (Grads)?

Andy Garlick (ChCh): Some sort of representation is definitely needed. There is a fundamental difference between undergraduates and postgraduates. I found the position difficult; 50% of postgraduates are mature students and lots live out which means that communications break down and I can lose colleges. There is a feeling that colleges should provide more. I hope my successors find ways I haven't. It can be an isolated and difficult job.

Vice President (Access and Academic Affairs) (Sonia Sodha, St. Hilda's)

Sonia Sodha (St. Hilda's): I would like to add that I am acting as senior steward on the march. Contact me by email if you want to help out and steward. In the last JCC meeting we discussed a proposed student contract. The Chair said they wanted to include our student charter – this is a very positive step.

Dominic Curran (St. Hugh's): What does JCC want to see in this contract?

Will Straw (New): Some additional content to what the University proposed.

iii. Termly Reports from the Executive and Committee Chairs

John Blake (St. Hugh's): Nothing much to add; I've been to all but one Council and 90% of International Students committee.

Lindsey Cole (St. John's): Nothing to add to my report.

Stuart Colville (Queen's): Nothing to add.

Lyndsay Lomax (Keble): Nothing to add.

Helen McCabe (St. Hilda's): I have nothing to add to my report.

Louise Radnofsky (University College): Nothing to add.

Daniel Rees (Merton): Nothing.

Daniel Rees (Merton): Nothing.

Laura West (St. Cats): Sorry my report was late. We're interviewing the entz co-chair next Monday – please turn up.

Georgia Toynbee (Balliol) was not present.

Anti-Racism Campaign: Nothing to add, no questions.

Environment Committee: Nothing to add, no questions.

Mature Students Committee: Thanks to Andy for all his hard work.

Queer Rights: Nothing to add, no questions.

Disabilities Action: Get hold of Disability Guides in Common Rooms. Let people know contacts. It's all in the guide.

Louise Radnofsky (University College): We need a new co-chair for Queer Rights.

Ethics Committee: Nothing to add, no questions.

Finance and Funding Campaign: We need shirts! It's part of our visual petition. Also, please come tomorrow.

Health and Welfare Committee: Nothing to add, no questions.

International Students Committee: Nothing to add, no questions.

OUSU Reps. Committee: Nothing to add, no questions.

Womens' Campaign: Sorry about the mention of cakes in the report. We're lazy and it was raining!

iv. Constitutional Business

iv. 1. Vice President (Charities and Communities) – FINAL READING

Will Straw (New): This is the final piece of the jigsaw that will allow us to have a 7th sabbatical.

No questions, no opposition.

Motion passes without opposition.

iv. 2. OUSU Policy – FINAL READING

Will Straw (New): We discussed this back in Micheltas Term. At the moment policy lasts for five years – that's longer than the average student is present in Oxford. We shouldn't bind students to policy in which they cannot have any say. We need a policy lapse booklet that will allow things to be renewed if relevant – a mechanism to renew things more quickly.

No questions, no opposition.

Motion passes without opposition.

iv. 3. Vice President (Welfare and Equal Opportunities) – FINAL READING

Andrew Copson (Balliol): This will bring us in line with new legislation.

No questions, no opposition.

Motion passes without opposition.

iv. 4. Council – FINAL READING

Will Straw (New): This sorts out what the Executive has to do. Please vote for it.

No questions, no opposition.

Will Straw (New): This sorts out what the Executive has to do. Please vote for it.

No questions, no opposition.

Motion passes without opposition.

iv. 5. Student Council – SECOND READING

Will Straw (New): At the moment the Constitution refers to this as OUSU Council. We felt that this was an un-descriptive term. Anyone can come along so in order to get as many people here as possible, we should make the title more accurate.

Ros Dampier (St. Hilda's): I wanted to clarify: you're saying that any member of the university can come and speak here?

Will Straw (New): Any student member, yes.

Helen McCabe (St. Hilda's): Students are already members of OUSU though, hence the title. It's already descriptive.

Will Straw (New): But 'Student Council' will be clearer if your college is disaffiliated.

Rosie Buckland (St. Hilda's): I think we're going to need a bigger room with all these new people.

Will Straw (New): It's a matter of supply and demand. We'll get a bigger room if needed.

Penny Burrill (St. Hilda's): Consignia. Railtrack. Changing the name of an organization does not change the product.

Tom Hart (Univ): Is it not the case that students are only here for three years, and during that time they might not know they're members of OUSU, but they're probably going to know they're students?

Will Straw (New): Yes.

Dave Wright (Wadham): Will there be an effort to advertise?

Will Straw (New): In the Oxford Student, and we also send out minutes. We hope to increase understanding.

Andrew Copson (Balliol): Aren't members of Oriel college still members of OUSU?

Will Straw (New): Yes, but they might not understand that.

Louise Radnofsky (Univ): If people know they're students but not members of OUSU then I think we have big problems.

Will Straw (New): Quite possibly.

Andrew Copson (Balliol): I think that if people don't realize they're members of OUSU then we should try to inform them.

Point of Order: Call for a move to a vote.

Move to a vote passes.

Voting on the substantive motion –

For: 53

Against: 21

Abstentions: 3

Motion passes.

iv. 6. Council Review – FINAL READING

Will Straw (New): Conor can't propose this today for the same reason he can't chair this meeting, so I'm going to propose it for him. We used a consultative body to learn what we needed to make Council better. Please vote for this motion.

John Blake (St. Hugh's): I'm going to propose it for him. We used a consultative body to learn what we needed to make Council better. Please vote for this motion.

John Blake (St. Hugh's): I'm not too keen on letting the Chair specify how long we can speak for – that's too much like the Union. It's an unnecessary change.

Will Straw (New): Good point, but there is a provision for Council to override that. Conor spoke for more than 5 minutes when originally proposing this, and that's one example of where more time would be useful. Council as a democratic body can override any decision.

Point of Order: Call for a move to a vote.

Hinesh Rajani (Merton): This is all common sense, it speeds up Council and is logical.

Ros Dampier (St. Hilda's): No, there's more that needs saying.

Vote on procedural motion:

For: 30

Against: 27

Abstentions: 5

Move to a vote fails.

Marcus Walker (Oriol) [Into phone]: No, no, I'm in Council. Yes. Sorry.

Alex Denner (New): There is flexibility in this motion. Things that aren't working can be overturned.

Greg Stafford (St. Peter's College): Move to a vote.

Point of Order: Move to a vote

Move to a vote fails.

Ros Dampier (St. Hilda's): I was the person that brought up the idea of limited speeches, but now I've changed my mind. It limits people's opportunity to speak.

Cat Wallis (Keble): There are already effectively limits on the length of speeches.

John Blake (St. Hugh's): At present Conor can ask Council to impose time limits. Not faster or more efficient.

Omar Salem (St. Hugh's): Not faster, but more efficient. Loads of people are always on the list and can't speak. This is a fairer system.

Paul Afshar (St. John's) (Chair): I'm making a ruling – please keep speeches to two minutes now.

Dominic Curran (St. Hugh's): I wanted to make the same point as Omar.

Hinesh Rajani (Merton): It's always the same people who speak. This would force them to stop their rambling and I think it would make them more concise. It would make Council more accessible to clique outsiders.

Chris Hanretty (St. Anne's): It won't speed up the process – everyone's going to go on for more than 2 minutes then ask for a vote on whether they can continue. It will actually lead to more time wasting.

Point of Order: Call for a move to a vote.

Sean Sullivan (St. Edmund's Hall): Move to a vote. We've heard a number of points from both sides.

Melanie Marshall (ChCh): I disagree – I think new things have come up.

Move to a vote fails.

Jamie Johnson (Somerville): I don't like debating tactics so didn't interrupt John Blake, but on points of information – these did not originate in the Union. The opponents of this motion are concentrating on a small part of it. Other parts of the motion are good.

Clifford Biddle (Oriel): What's the point of moving to a vote if you can't get a vote?

information – these did not originate in the Union. The opponents of this motion are concentrating on a small part of it. Other parts of the motion are good.

Charlie Pickles (Queen's): What actually puts off people is that Council lasts for so long.

[Clapping]

Paul Afshar (St. John's) (Chair): No clapping in Council.

Charlie Pickles (Queen's): Vote in favour of this motion.

Ros Dampier (St. Hilda's): Basically, I don't think this will work. There is no difference in terms of how accessible Council will be.

Helen McCabe (St. Hilda's): People are calling for a move to a vote before they've heard anything. That's the sort of danger.

Melanie Marshall (ChCh): Three points. 1) More people get to be heard? No, not true. 2) Sophisticated arguments are good things, and we need full arguments. Time limits compromise that. 3) People are just going to put their hands up again after 2 minutes.

Alex Denner (New): It seems strange that we're talking about this one small part of the motion. If we never do anything, never improve anything and see if it works then nothing will ever get better. If we don't like the changes we can always drop them.

Andy Garlick (ChCh): On a point of Order: Let's take the motion in parts. Motion does four different things and there's only a problem with one part. Shame to lose the whole thing because of one difficulty.

Tom Hart (Univ): A waste of time and unnecessary.

Procedural motion to take the resolves in parts receives 38 votes in favour, and **Point of Order passes.**

The motion will now be taken in parts.

Eleanor Thompson (Wadham): We already have effective time limits, we're just formalizing them. If you like what Conor was doing, then vote for this.

Tom Hart (Univ): This will stop me rambling and give other people a chance. Vote for it.

Cat Overton (Somerville): This is a regressive move. It limits debate and is unnecessary. How will it limit the length of debate? People who aren't used to arguing will need the 2 minutes.

Point of Order: Call for a move to a vote.

Move to a vote passes.

Will Straw (New): Sorry for filibustering. 1 – 4 are uncontroversial so please pass them. New standing orders just change limits. Let's give it a try. We can always change back if it doesn't work.

John Blake (St. Hugh's): 1, 2 and 4 are obviously fine, but resolves (3) is a problem. A long debate is not the same as time-wasting. When the person who came up with the idea in the first place says it's bad then something must be dodgy.

Voting on Resolves (3) only.

For: 43
Against: 30

Resolves (3) falls.

All other Resolves pass without opposition.

Paul Afshar (St. John's): I propose a 5 minute break

Council (Various): No! No! We want more! Carry on! Etc.

Council (various): No! No! We want more! Carry on! Etc.