

Termly Council Minutes

Termly Council Trinity Term 2014

Termly Council took place at 5.30pm on Wednesday 11th June 2014 at St Anne's College.

- I. Election of Chair of Council
- II. Election of Returning Officer
- III. Termly Reports of the Sabbatical Officers and the Chair of the Trustee Board
- IV. Termly Reports of the Executive
- V. Termly Report of the Scrutiny Committee
- VI. Constitutional Business (Final Readings of Motions to Change the Constitution)
 1. Final Reading of Motion to amend the Bye-Laws.
 2. Final Reading of Motion to amend General Regulations
 3. Final Reading of Motion to amend Election Regulations (Direct Elections)

I. Election of Chair of Council

Anna Bazley (St Peter's) nominated.

Hust Requested - Candidate not present.

Anna Bazley was elected.

II. Election of Returning Officer

Joe Smith (Somerville) and Martine Wauben (Pembroke) nominated.

Hust Requested

Joe Smith (Somerville) - Informed Council that he is a first year German student and currently RO at Somerville. Stated that he believes it is essential that elections are run freely and fairly, and stressed that election turnout is crucial. Explained that turnout is something he would want to focus on, and would attempt to target the relevant people in order to improve current turnout figures. Concluded that he a friendly and approachable individual which he believes is key as RO.

Martine Wauben (Pembroke) - Informed council that she has experience as RO at The Union. Stated that she would focus on ensuring that negative press was kept at a distance during elections in order to protect the candidates involved. Added that she would also increase the use of websites during elections, increase interactivity and make available to all.

Jack Matthews (University) - Stated that there have been significant governance issues surrounding the position of RO this term and questioned what the candidates would do about this.

Martine - Answered that she is not aware of the ins and outs of the situation but believes it is common sense to ensure that in terms of running the election she is not working alone, and will always ensure that there are lots of people around her during the process.

Joe - Agreed with Martine and claimed that elections require transparency. Stated that others need to be present when setting up elections and further involvement of the Deputy Returning Officers should be encouraged.

Eden Tanner (St John's) - Asked if the candidates considered hustings to be important for uncontended positions.

Joe - Confirmed that he does believe this, as hustings are important for democratic accountability.

Martine - Stated that the option of RON is essential, as one candidate cannot possibly represent the needs of every single person voting.

Martine - 32 votes

Joe - 29 votes

1 spoiled ballot

Martine was elected.

III. Termly Reports of the Sabbatical Officers and the Chair of the Trustee Board

Tom Rutland (Jesus) - Updated council regarding a previous mandate about the status of visiting students, and reported that this is ongoing and was raised at the University Joint Committee. Recognised that it is a potentially controversial issue that will require changes to the governing documents if visiting students gain status as student members. Added that if the proposed general regulations are passed later in council, they will provide visiting student with attending and speaking rights. Informed council that CEO recruitment is ongoing and nearing the final stages with final interviews taking place in the following week. Advertised OUS's 40th birthday, which would be taking place at The University club on Saturday evening and encouraged attendance. Stated that he believes next year's sabbatical team are very well placed with an increased budget, additional staff and a tidier set of governing documents. Concluded by encouraging Council to stay involved and emphasised the importance of democracy.

Garlen Lo (Wolfson) - Informed council of his petition which requests that the VC invests in graduates by injecting more money into the Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Fund. Explained that the fund is due to run out of money this summer which will deny students, that are good enough but not wealthy enough, with the opportunity to attend Oxford. Encouraged council to sign the petition. Directed council to the Masters Student Survey, which has now been released.

Rachel Pickering (Hertford) - Introduced OUSU's new Academic Representation Officer, Matt Tennant, who will be joining OUSU full time from the start of August and will be working on academic representation in departments. Stated that she will be releasing a survey on bursaries and student support funds, the results of which James will be looking at over the summer.

Charlotte Hendy (Pembroke) - Informed council that the Student Advice Service now has a manager which has resulted in doubling the capacity of the service. Encouraged students to email the advice service if they ever need anything, and requested that they advertise it amongst their friends. Thanked all students which she has had the pleasure of working with

over the previous year.

Sarah Pine (Wadham) - Announced to council that the first draft of the University Harassment Policy is complete and will be finalised in Michaelmas. Informed council that she has continued to run training sessions on sexual violence, with JCRs, MCRs, Nightline and Welfare Reps.

Dan Tomlinson (University) - Explained that in his manifesto, he stated that he would lobby for a University wide Living Wage. This is almost complete; in a few weeks University Council will consider a recommendation from two other University Committees that the University become an accredited Living Wage employer. Quoted University minutes, which stated that "PRAC therefore agreed to recommend that the University should support the principle of paying the Living Wage...on the understanding that it should seek accreditation via the phased route by May 2015" Updated on his research into alternatives of the Safety Bus. Informed council that he has met with Royal Cars who are willing to provide a potential option, however this needs to be discussed with OUSU's CEO and Business Manager. Stated that a potential problem is the University's unwillingness to go ahead with something that requires students to hand out their University cards. Another option is extending a scheme with Nightline, which would ensure that there is always someone available to stay on the phone to those feeling vulnerable or at risk when on their way home at night.

Tom Rutland (Jesus) - Informed council that his report of the Trustee Board is available to read in the report booklet. Stated that this is a yearly report as opposed to a termly one in this instance, however confirmed that from next year, termly reports will be provided. Added that he is happy to answer any questions that people may have.

V. Termly Reports of the Executive

Lucy Delaney (Wadham) - Stated that she has been involve in a working group, alongside James Elliott, the Disabled Students' Officer, with Oxford Brookes, and aims to build up stronger links between the two. Informed council that WomCam are holding a meeting to discuss how they can make it increasingly organized and accountable. Finally, stated that she has been working really hard on the harassment workshops.

Eden Tanner (St John's) - Announced that she has fulfilled her primary manifesto pledge to have compulsory consent workshops in at least a third of common rooms. Thanked Sarah Pine for all her hard work over the year.

James Elliott (St Edmund's) - Explained that his main focus is still on the proposed cuts to Disabled Students' Allowance and reported that he has set up two lobbying days. Added that Andrew Smith has now joined a growing number of MPs in opposition to the cuts. Informed council that he will be attending a meeting with the University Estates Committee to discuss disabled building access. Finally, informed council that the Disabled Students Campaign is in need of a new chair so encouraged people to get in touch.

Will Neaverson (Christ Church) - Reported to council that he is working on institutionally bringing representatives from colleges into OUSU, ensuring that they have an increased level of involvement in active decision making. Added that he has been involved in various committees working on OUSU finances and budget.

Jamie Wells (Corpus) - Reported to Council that he has been researching the viability of a safe zone project in Oxford, and considering what local businesses would be willing to have a sign up.

Anna Bazley (St Peter's) - Reported that the constitution for clubs is still messy but will be worked on over Michaelmas. Added that she ran a workshop on registering clubs and

societies.

David Bagg (Balliol) - Asked the Common Room Support Officer when he last met with affiliation reps from Balliol.

Will - Confirmed that he hadn't.

Jack Matthews (University) - Questioned why the Divisional Board Representatives hadn't submitted any reports to Council.

Emma Alexander (Keble) - Responded that she thinks that everything is covered in the Scrutiny Report but is happy to answer any questions.

VI. Termly Report of the Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Report

Council Notes:

1. That Scrutiny Committee has been interviewing the elected officers of OUSU and has compiled its termly report.

Council Believes:

1. That Scrutiny of OUSU and reflection on its practices is of great importance.

Council Resolves:

1. To note and accept the report of the Scrutiny Committee for Trinity Term 2014. (Appendix 1)

***Proposed:* Will Obeney (Regent's Park)**

***Seconded:* Danny Waldman (St John's)**

Will Obeney (Regent's) - Explained to council that the Scrutiny Committee meet every term and reflect upon what OUSU officers have been up to. The report provides a summary of the Sabbatical Officers and Divisional Board Representatives throughout the year, and of the Part-Time Executive during their role so far. Summarised that the sabbs have done a really good job throughout their time, yet noted that while the amount of hours they put into their work is appreciated, they are perhaps dedicating too much of their own time. Added that better definition of each sabb role as required and that the 'extras' that fall outside the core remit of the roles are arguably those that are difficult to manage. Suggested that council could consider delegating more of their mandates to the exec, in order to relieve the workload of the sabb team. Commented that there is sometimes a murky divide between the personal and the private, which needs to be thought about. Praised the teamwork of the sabbs, but noted that communication between them decreased as they became increasingly comfortable in their individual roles. Encouraged discussion between them all to continue throughout the year. Moved onto the general comments about the exec and summarised that they were a mixed bag, with attendance often poor at council, and a limited numbers of reports received. Stated that this is the very minimum that the exec should be doing, however acknowledged that they may not all be aware of these parts of their roles. Strongly recommended that an exec handbook is created to avoid this issue in the future. Reported that the primary issue with the div reps was that they required far more support in their roles, particularly in terms of understanding what exactly their positions entail. Concluded with the overall comments that OUSU need greater clarity for all remits; there needs to be more work done to get graduate students involved, which should begin with the graduate

officers, and campaign organisation needs considerable work as their structure and relationship with OUSU is every confused.

Scrutiny Report accepted with no opposition.

VII. Constitutional Business

1. Final Reading of Motion to amend the Bye-Laws

Council Notes:

1. Its previous decisions to make Bye-Laws, Election Regulations (for Direct Elections and for Referenda etc.), and General Regulations, all of which are required by the governance arrangements introduced in 2010 when OUSU became an incorporated charity.
2. Its resolutions in Hilary Term 5th Week Council to give a **First Reading**, and in Hilary Term Termly Council to give a **Second Reading**, to proposals before Council to amend the Bye-Laws approved by Council on 9th May 2012 ("the 2012 Bye-Laws").
3. The commentary of Internal Affairs Committee (Appendix 2).

Council Resolves:

1. In the exercise of its power under Article 59 of OUSU's constitution, and in accordance with Bye-Laws 4.3 to 4.6 of the 2012 Bye-Laws, to give a **Final Reading** to the proposal now before Council to amend the 2012 Bye-Laws (Appendix 3).

Proposed: Tom Rutland (Jesus)

Seconded: Alfred Burton (Queen's)

Tom Rutland (Jesus) - Reminded council that this is the third time the Bye-Laws have come to council, having passed twice last term. Stated that the commentary of changes could be found in the appendix and offered council a moment to look through it.

Motion passed with no opposition.

2. Final Reading of Motion to amend General Regulations

Council Notes:

1. Its previous decisions to make Bye-Laws, Election Regulations (for Direct Elections and for Referenda etc.), and General Regulations, all of which are required by the governance arrangements introduced in 2010 when OUSU became an incorporated charity.
2. That Council, Campaigns and the *Oxford Student* are currently governed by older Rules and Standing Orders.
3. Its resolution in Trinity Term 5th Week Council to give a **First Reading** to proposals before Council to amend General Regulations 2013.
4. The commentary of Internal Affairs Committee (Appendix 2).

Council Believes:

1. That the time has come to replace Rules and Standing Orders with newer-style General Regulations.

Council Resolves:

1. In the exercise of its powers under Bye-Laws 3.1 and 3.2 of the 2012 Bye-Laws, and in accordance with Bye-Laws 4.3, 4.8 and 4.9, to give a **Final Reading** to the proposal now before Council to amend General Regulations 2014 (Appendix 4).

Proposed: Tom Rutland (Jesus)

Seconded: Alfred Burton (Queen's)

Tom Rutland (Jesus) - Explained that for the most part these regulations are a copy and paste of Standing Orders, with the intention of having just one set of governing documents. Added that there are very few changes, however these can again be viewed in the commentary.

Motion passed with no opposition.

3. Final Reading of Motion to amend Election Regulations (Direct Elections)

Council Notes:

1. Its previous decisions to make Bye-Laws, Election Regulations (for Direct Elections and for Referenda etc.), and General Regulations, all of which are required by the governance arrangements introduced in 2010 when OUSU became an incorporated charity.
2. The reports of the Electoral Review Group and the Returning Officer made to 5th Week Council, Hilary Term 2014.
3. Its resolution in Trinity Term 5th Week Council to give a **First Reading** to proposals before Council to amend Election Regulations (Direct Elections) 2013.
4. The commentary of Internal Affairs Committee (Appendix 2).

Council Believes:

1. That elections should be fairly and properly conducted.

Council Resolves:

1. In the exercise of its powers under Bye-Laws 3.3 and 3.4 of the 2012 Bye-Laws, and in accordance with Bye-Laws 4.3, 4.10 and 4.11, to give a **Final Reading** to the proposal now before Council to amend Election Regulations (Direct Elections) 2013 (Appendix 5).

Proposed: Tom Rutland (Jesus)

Seconded: Alfred Burton (Queen's)

Tom Rutland (Jesus) - Explained to council that the Electoral Review Group (ERG) was set up in order to discuss these changes, and then consulted their recommendations with council. Stressed that this motion required a two-thirds majority to pass and it was important that they did. Reported that the voting system for NUS delegates, although left open, was a stop gap until best practise was received by NUS Wales. Directed to the commentary to see further changes and explained that the final two both allowed more flexibility to the RO. Urged council to pass them.

Nick Cooper (St John's) - Asked council if there was any objection to dealing with the amendment first.

No objection.

Amendment

...to amend Regulation 32.2(f)(g) Election Regulations (Direct Elections) 2013 to read...

- (f) *system access, by a person entitled to vote, to a relevant manifesto, and*
- (g) *general system access to be restricted to*
 - (i) *the Returning Officer,*
 - (ii) *the General Manager,*
 - (iii) *OUSU's democratic support officer, and*
 - (iv) *one or more persons authorised jointly by the Returning Officer and the General Manager*

A person with general system access under (i) to (iv) must not deny access to another such person.

Proposed: Tom Rutland (Jesus)

Seconded: Dan Tomlinson (University)

Tom - Explained that the amendment would ensure that the CEO and the DSO have access as necessary, and that no-one with full access can remove anyone else.

David Bagg (Balliol) - Questioned what the penalties would be for infringing this regulation.

Tom - Stated that there will be separate admin levels to ensure that this does not happen.

David - Stated that recently, one of the admin users blocked another. Asked what would happen if this was the case again.

Tom - Responded that a motion of no confidence would be brought against them.

David - Asked what more the amendment does if this is the case.

Tom - Replied that it has been added for purposes of clarity.

Amendment accepted with no opposition.

Opposition to motion.

David - Informed council that he is speaking again against changes that he firmly believes are a step in the wrong direction. Stated that the broad concern is that OUSU elections should be fair, accessible and simple (even to those many students not involved), and believes that there are areas in these regulations which compromise these principles. Argues that the changes surrounding the RO could be very problematic if the RO were to have any difficulty in clarifying the rules. Added that these regulations give an unfair advantage to those that follow OUSU and attend council, and do not engage with those beyond this circle. Urged council to oppose the motion.

Sarah Pine (Wadham) - Argued that limiting the number of NUS delegates avoids successful slates taking all of the valuable positions, and is more consistent with what we already do.

James Blythe (Brasenose) - Reminded council that these regulations have be brought before them as many times as possible, and have been spoken about an awful lot. Pointed out that they are not forever, and they are reviewed every year for a reason.

Jack Matthews (University) - Stated that OUSU may well be re-affiliating with the NUS, therefore gender balancing provisions are necessary. Added that any decision of the RO can be repealed if needed so council do not need to worry about this point.

Move to vote - opposed.

Raj Dattani (St Peter's) - Claimed that this has now been debated at significant length and everyone is informed enough to vote.

David - Insisted that one side of the debate is being trampled, and there are certainly further things to be said.

Vote on move to vote.

Move to vote.

Tom - Reminded council again that these regulations require two-thirds to pass and urged people to vote in favour of them. Added that they have been heavily discussed and that lots of time has been put into them.

David - Accepted that they have been through ERG and council but confirmed that a member of ERG is standing up against them. Explained that not all changes here are required by the NUS, and claimed that this is an attempt to pack everything that is not required into a motion with that which is. Argued that they need more careful and thorough thought, and urged council to vote them down.

For - 52

Against - 2

Abstain - 6

Motion passed.