

# GU Council Minutes

13/1/20

Name	Role	Voting?
Yasmina El Chami	President, Christ's MCR	Yes
Eric Belche	External Rep, Pembroke GP	Yes
Torkel Loman	Chair, GU	No
Daniel Kottmann	External Officer, Darwin	Yes
Efthimios Karayiannides	VP, Magdalene MCR	Yes
Stella Swain	VP, GU	No
Alessandro Ceccarelli	President, GU	No
Jacob Deasy	President, Magdalene MCR	Yes
Will Lloyd Regan	President, Trinity Hall MCR	Yes
Jack Smith	Alumni, Trinity Hall MCR	No
Conor Hefferman	VP, Fitzwilliam MCR	Yes

## 1. Objections to the order of items on the agenda

There were no objections to the order of items on the agenda.

## 2. Approval of minutes of the previous council meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

## 3. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous council meeting

There were no matters arising.

## 4. Reports from the sabbatical officers and officers of the executive committee

### a. Report from the President

The President gave a verbal report of his activity:

- Attended University committees on student numbers
- Internal restructuring of the staff team and
- Work with CUSU on the Cambridge SU project including arranging meetings with the directors and beginning to draft By-laws
  - Including the remits of the Presidents and the By-laws required for running the elections.
- Mandatory training for PhD supervisors and fair allocation of teaching campaigns making good progress
- First meeting of the GISOC will take place later this month
- Secured funding from the University for Cambridge Pride and secured an ambassador from the University to work with local charities
- Continued work on Brexit to keep students aware and informed
- Planning a working group on International Student Experience Strategy to which all of the members of Council were invited – Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2pm, details to be circulated
- Longer term project on reform of the PhD to look at new models for how PG research work could be done, working with the university student numbers committee

### b. Report from the Welfare & Rights Officer

The WARO gave an update on her work:

- Working up to CUSU Conference which was open to MCR Presidents and worked with liberation roles
  - Ran workshop on supporting student sex workers and opposing the hostile environment
- Free sexual health screening coming up in the SU Lounge on 24<sup>th</sup> January
- Attending working groups on the new students' union

## 5. Discussions

### a. Proposed By-laws for Cambridge SU

The GU President introduced the paper which was one of several by-laws for the Student Union which would need to follow on from the Articles of Association.

The GU President asked for clarification on the role of the democracy committee

This would follow in a later By-Law

Christ's MCR President worried that the role review might be a way to change the roles to limit the protection of PG students.

As the roles will be a class A By-Law, postgraduates would need to approve any proposed changes resulting from a role review.

Christ's MCR & Magdalene MCR raised concerns about the possibility of UGs voting for PG roles

Fitzwilliam MCR asked the quorum set for UG and PG students would be different, as it was for the referendum.

The different levels of quoracy were the result of difference between CUSU and the GU, in future these would be the same.

The WARO asked the council for feedback specifically on the role descriptions

Christ's MCR noted that the WARO reads as being a overly demanding role, in particular on housing which varies a lot between UG and PG students

Magdalene MCR asked for clarification on the role of the campaigns at the moment

The WARO explained the roles of the Campaigns in Cambridge SU and CUSU currently

Trinity Hall MCR expressed support for open ended role descriptions, as it gives people the opportunity to run on a manifesto of their own.

Christ's MCR asked if there was a quota for elections for the sabbatical team as for referendums?

There was no such quota, but other measures were being taken to ensure turnout.

The WARO noted that it is important that we get postgrads to run to push the cultural change with the new union

Magdalene MCR asked if there were safeguards against all the sabbatical roles being taken over by undergraduates

The WARO noted that there are at least as many guaranteed postgrads roles as at the present time and that she is confident this will lead to more PGs having influence and support within the union. GU President is the most contested of the roles in the current structure so we could have more postgrads running for sabb.

The GU President noted that the most important benefit is the hugely increased staff support that helps sabbatical officers get a lot more done.

Fitzwilliam MCR asked if the Democracy Committee would have the power to hold campaigns to account for representation of pg/ug students?

It would not but this power will sit with Student Council

## **6. Motion in Support of a Formal Institutionalised Language Policy and Collegiate Contribution for Insessional Academic English Courses for Non-native Speakers**

The motion was deferred as the Council was inquorate.

## **7. Emergency Motions**

There were no emergency motions

## **8. Dates of Upcoming Meetings**

The Council noted the dates of upcoming meetings for this academic year

## **9. Any Other Business**

### **a. Elections for the Sabbatical Officers of Cambridge SU**

The President encouraged members of the Council to run for elections for the new unions.

- It is a rewarding role with much valuable experience to be gained and changes that you can make.
- The members of Council were also encouraged to ask their constituencies to consider running.
- Christs MCR asked about:
  - Visas requirements for International Students
  - Ensuring a long enough notice period for people to run
  - Events for potential candidates to ask questions about running
- The President noted these points and committed to ensuring they were followed through on in promotion of the elections.

The President asked for thoughts about the future of the PhD system, and promised to upload an article to the GU website soon on this issue.

Christs MCR asked for further clarification about where the idea came from for this thinking.

The President explained his view that the current system clearly wasn't working. People in Cambridge were having terrible experiences, there were minimal jobs and declining applications but growing numbers, there are doubts about the development of work-related skills, the role of the thesis in some subjects, the possibility of modular systems, and pay for research work. The current system is at breaking point.

There was a sector context to this, which the University is considering via the student numbers committee. UCU have also been thinking about this in the context of research work undertaken by PG students.

Magdalene MCR noted support for the idea of challenging the structure of the PhD but expressed the view that it would be good to start from data so that this is more focused and so that the Council can make an informed decision on whether to give this support.

AC proposed to submit a motion to the next Council offering more detailed information about the figures and the causes of the change.

Christ's MCR also noted support in principle, but this proposal also came with big risks and that there was a need to include a larger group of students and make sure that we are not being too fast with this. We could decide based on the motion whether we want to proceed with this.