



## **Graduate Union Minutes of a Meeting of the Student Council**

*Held at 7pm on 30 January 2017, in the CUSU/GU Lounge at 17 Mill Lane*

### **Voting members of Council present:**

Representing the Affiliated Common Rooms:

- Sam Ainsworth (Churchill MCR)
- Tobias Roeder (Clare MCR)
- Tom Chudley (Downing MCR)
- Susanna O'Brien (Emmanuel MCR)
- Millie Papworth (Fitzwilliam MCR)
- Ettie Unwin (Jesus MCR)
- Rachel Crosby (Newnham MCR)
- Harum Mukhayer (Pembroke GP)
- Leonardo Paoli (Peterhouse MCR)
- Ivanna Didur (Robinson MCR)
- Parker Lawson (Selwyn MCR)
- Arjun Sharath (Sidney Sussex MCR)
- Aila Bicer (St Catharine's MCR)
- Jonathan Shanahan (St John's SBR)
- Vera Graup (Trinity Hall MCR)
- Sebastien Wrobel (Wolfson College Students' Association)

Representing the Faculties:

- Lana Bazy (Judge Business School)
- Yoshe Watson (Music)

### **Voting members of Council present by proxy:**

Representing the Affiliated Common Rooms:

- Maria Iossifidou (King's MCR)
- Filip Szczypinski (Trinity BA Society)

Representing CUSU:

- Amatey Doku (CUSU President)

**Non-voting members of Council present:**

- Chad Allen (President)
- Ellie Chan (Vice-President)
- Sophie Buck (CUSU-GU Welfare & Rights Officer)
- Nikta Daijavad (Academic Affairs Officer)
- Shanshan Wang (Environmental Officer)
- Heidi Beljorden (Families Officer)
- Mical Rodriguez (Families Officer)
- Sophia D'Angelo (International Officer)

**Other GU Members in attendance:**

- Mark Mawdsley (Queen's)
- Mark Driver (Robinson)

**Also in attendance:**

- Rob Richardson (GU Manager – acting as Secretary)

*The Council appointed the President to Chair the meeting.*

*The Council confirmed that the proxies of voting members of the Council count towards quorum.*

*There were 20 voting members of Council (or their proxies) present, so the meeting was quorate.*

Meeting opened at 19.05

### **1. Approval of the minutes of the previous Council meeting**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 05 December 2016 were approved.

The President welcome newly elected MCR Officers and Faculty Reps to their first meeting of the Council.

### **2. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Council meeting**

There were none.

### 3. Reports to Council from Sabbatical Officers and Officers of the Executive Committee

#### a) Returning Officer's Report

The Returning Officer's report on the Michaelmas Term 2016 election was circulated for approval [C.170130.A]

A vote was taken: nineteen votes in favour; none against. The Report was approved.

#### b) President's Report

Since the last meeting, the GU had participated in the University's first Postgraduate Open Day. Feedback from the event has indicated that future Open Days would benefit from having one larger central hub as opposed to several sites across Cambridge, and that colleges heavily involving their MCR in the day appeared to receive the most positive comments. The date for the 2017 Open Day had been set as 3 November and the President encouraged MCRs to speak to their college about their plans for the day. The Vice-President had attended a meeting of the Postgraduate Open Day Colleges' Working Group, and believed that colleges would benefit from a greater steer from their students as to what prospective applicants would like to see during the day.

The University staff member responsible for coordinating the Open Day had expressed an interest in addressing Council, and the Council agreed to invite them to speak at the next meeting.

Within the President's representational work, he reported that the University's proposed new policy on sexual harassment had temporarily stalled and the Grace withdrawn, following feedback from lawyers who have experience working with accused students. This feedback has been uncontroversial, and small amendments are being made so that the new version is likely to be ready for the end of February. It is anticipated that colleges will imminently begin developing their new policies to dovetail with the new University policy, and MCRs were encouraged to participate in this where possible.

Invoices for the current academic year's affiliation fees will be circulated in the coming fortnight. On the future of affiliation fees, the President and the CUSU President had continued to work with the University to develop a strategy for proposing the new system as approved by Council previously, and it was hoped this would progress during Lent Term.

The Board of Graduate Studies had been seeking to define what constitutes a thesis and the President was looking forward to inputting into the process. The Grace on divestment discussed at the last GU Council had been passed by the University's Regent House, and it remained to be seen how the University would respond. The committee responsible for the New Museums' Site redevelopment had asked for suggestions as to new public art, and the President intended to recommend the committee speak to the Fitzwilliam Museum Society.

He had stood successfully for the CUSU Elections Committee and was pleased to be able to support the elections, as CUSU had regularly supported the GU in this way previously.

The President had spoken to the International Student Team about the US travel ban, and anyone with concerns was advised to contact the Team directly. Similarly, the GU was hosting a Welcome

Event for new international students tomorrow to provide orientation and social opportunities, at which members of Council would be welcome.

**c) Vice-President's Report**

The Vice-President had taken office on 1 January, and had prioritised supporting the new part-time officers, who began their term on the same date. The first meeting of the Executive Committee had been held and she looked forward to continuing to assist the officers with their work.

She had been working with the Academic Affairs Officer on reinstating the three-minute thesis competition the GU successfully hosted two years ago. The plan was to sign up to participate in the official competition, so that the winner of the Cambridge competition would be able to compete at the national finals.

She was also working towards developing an alternative prospectus for postgraduate students and had been communicating with Graduate Admissions on this. Alongside the GU's work supporting the Postgraduate Open Day, an alternative prospectus would be a useful way in which the GU could support the University's work on postgraduate access. MCRs were encouraged to consider how they could support their colleges with this.

**d) Welfare and Rights Officer's Report**

The Welfare and Rights Officer had been holding regular forums for J/MCR Welfare Officers, as well as continuing to hold training sessions, which had been well attended by MCR officers. The handbook for officers had been comprehensively updated over recent weeks and was almost ready for final circulation.

She had been planning a campaign aiming to break down the barriers to accessing support services in Cambridge. She also ran an event looking at masculinity and mental health, which had received positive feedback.

She had run a focus group to gather insights from students on how the Counselling Service could be improved, and gained some useful information from students attending.

Another upcoming project was on confidentiality, and how colleges could better implement confidentiality policies.

**4. Motions to be ratified**

There were none.

**5. Council discussions and questions to Council**

There were none.

## 6. Ordinary motions

### (a) HeForShe

The following motion was put to the Council:

*Resolved:*

1. *That the Graduate Union adopts the policy of actively supporting the United Nations' HeForShe campaign*

*Proposed by the Women's Officer and the Vice-President*

The Vice-President spoke to the motion. The new Women's Officer had been voted into the part-time officer position on a mandate of working towards securing a University commitment to the HeForShe initiative. Other Universities in the UK had made similar commitments, and it was felt that the University of Cambridge held the necessary values and had acted on them previously, for example the Athena SWAN awards programme. The Vice-President appreciated the fact that HeForShe challenged the idea of a white middle class man as being the norm, in that it was trans-inclusive.

A commitment, it was hoped, would take the form of a University-wide policy covering all departments, whereas Athena Swan is carried out on a department by department basis. The aim was also that an adoption of policy by the GU and the University would encourage colleges to follow suit.

It was noted that pursuing this could represent a time-consuming project and it could be the case that the University would not make the commitment. But it was hoped that even if this were to be the case, progress in furthering the underlying values could still be made.

A member of Council enquired as to the likelihood of the University making the commitment. The Vice-President felt there was a reasonable chance of success and that a risk of failure should not be seen as a reason not to undertake the endeavour.

Another Council member asked whether there could be any issues of branding, in particular the intertwining of HeForShe and Athena Swan. The VP felt the two were fairly complementary and that in Oxford, she believed HeForShe was felt to be a step up from Athena Swan.

The Women's Officer added her support for the motion and gave an overview of HeForShe's origins within the UN. She was supportive of the aim to promote gender equality via an implementation focus rather than advocacy.

Speeches against the motion were invited; no members wished to make a speech.

A vote was taken: nineteen votes in favour; none against. The motion passes.

## **(b) Spouse Cards**

The following motion was put to the Council:

*Whereas: The University has re-established its committee governing the administration of and policy relating to University Cards.*

*Resolved: That the Graduate Union campaign to introduce a University policy by which the spouses, civil partners and long-term partners of graduate students can be allocated a card which could, if desired, be activated by Colleges to allow access to College spaces.*

*Proposed by the President*

The President spoke to the motion. Given that the University and Colleges have been systematically moving away from keys and towards cards, spaces that were previously accessible to partners and spouses are no longer. The University has reinstated its Card Committee to review the technology within the card access system, which was now fifteen years old, and this would be an appropriate time to pursue a policy idea.

A member of Council noted the wording of the motion was unclear- was it the case that colleges could not be mandated to allow access, even if the University granted cards to partners? The President noted that colleges and departments manage their own access systems; the presence of the card doesn't grant access as this is a matter for each college and department to administer. This was reflected in the wording. He also noted that the word 'long-term partners' was vague, but had been keen not to define eligibility too rigidly as the University may utilise different definitions.

Speeches against the motion were invited; no members wished to make a speech.

A vote was taken: twenty votes in favour; none against. The motion passes.

## **c) Unconscious Bias Training**

The following motion was put to the Council:

*Whereas: On 19 January 2017, CUSU Council adopted a policy campaigning for unconscious bias training all members of College staff, fellows and custodians.*

*Resolved: That the Graduate Union support CUSU's campaign for unconscious bias training in Colleges.*

*Proposed by the President of CUSU*

The Welfare & Rights Officer spoke to the motion. The training was aimed at making college staff aware of unconscious bias and the impact it may have on students. In 2016, 5 of 31 colleges received

the training and the aim is to roll this out to all colleges. CUSU Council voted in favour of this policy last week, and the GU was now being asked to support it.

A member asked whether the training made sense for all staff, for example, catering staff and housekeeping staff who are unlikely to have regular contact with students. Another member noted that their department requested all students undertake the training and that the motion was trying to encourage as many parts of the University and Colleges as possible to follow suit.

Another member enquired as to whether the Council could stress emphasis on particular staff. The room felt that a general statement could be added to emphasise the importance for staff in student-facing roles.

A friendly amendment was proposed; to amend Resolved to: "That the Graduate Union support CUSU's campaign for unconscious bias training in Colleges, with a particular emphasis on student-facing staff".

A vote was taken on the friendly amendment. All in favour: 6. Against:9. The amendment falls.

Speeches against the motion were invited; no members wished to make a speech.

A vote on the motion was taken: nineteen votes in favour; one against. The motion passes.

#### **d) Electoral Scheme**

A proposed electoral scheme for elections and appointments scheduled from Lent Term to the Long Vacation 2017 was circulated [C.170130.B].

The electoral scheme proposed the delegation of the election for GU President to CUSU, as is usually the case, as both unions carried out elections at this time of year. The President had been elected as a member of the CUSU Elections Committee, and within the scheme it was proposed that the Vice-President fill the President's usual role as GU Returning Officer.

A member asked whether the VP would sit on the CUSU Elections Committee. They were to act as a member of the CUSU Elections Committee ex-officio, for the purpose of decisions relating to the election of the GU President.

A vote was taken: nineteen votes in favour; none against. The scheme is approved.

### **7. Emergency motions**

There were none.

## **8. Elections by Council**

The President noted that the constitution requires the Council Chair to be elected by the Council. After the last meeting, two expressions of interest had been received and it was hoped that a Chair could soon be appointed.

## **9. Dates of upcoming meetings**

The dates of upcoming meetings of GU Council are as follows:

*Lent Term:*

Monday 20 March 2017

*Easter Term:*

Monday 8 May 2017

Monday 12 June 2017

*Long vacation:*

Monday 10 July 2017

Monday 4 September 2017

*Michaelmas Term:*

Monday 16 October

Monday 4 December 2017

All at 7pm in the GU Lounge

## **10. Any Other Business**

The International Officer introduced herself and outlined her plans while in office. She would be giving a presentation at the International Students' Welcome tomorrow and was interested in helping students with the settling in process. She had met with a member of the University's Equality and Diversity Division and wanted to reiterate that Cambridge is very much an international community and she was hoping to promote this within her work as a GU Officer. The President noted that the E&D Division was working on a Race Equality Charter.

The Vice-President and President encouraged Council to solicit interest in the position of GU President among their members, in advance of the upcoming election.

Meeting closed at 19.50.