



Agenda of the Graduate Union Annual General Meeting

To be held at 7pm on Tuesday 6th June 2019, in the SU Lounge, Graduate Union, 17 Mill Lane, Cambridge CB21RX

Note emergency motions will be accepted up to the point the meeting is called to order by emailing vice-president@gradunion.cam.ac.uk

1. Ratification of the minutes of the previous GU Annual General Meeting

The previous AGM meeting was quorate, but questions to the Pro-Vice Chancellor meant that no business was transacted.

"It was noted that we were no longer quorate (20 non trustee graduate members). The business was noted, and the chair would ask the trustees to reschedule a meeting for the future"

2. Receiving the report of the trustees on the Union's activities since the previous AGM

Attached

3. Receiving the accounts of the Union for the previous financial year

Attached (to follow)

4. Appointment of the auditors

The Graduate Union has used the Cambridge based firm Chater Allan, and have kept their fee to below £4,000 for the audited accounts

5. Approval of the list of affiliations of the Union

The Union has previously decided to affiliate to the Living Wage Campaign (£60 a year)
The UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs) (£0 per year)

6. Open questions to the trustees by the Members.

7. Permanent establishment of GU Vice-President's position



Agenda of a Meeting of the Graduate Union Council

To be held at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 6th June 2019, in the SU Lounge, Graduate Union, 17 Mill Lane, Cambridge CB21RX

Note emergency motions will be accepted up to the point the meeting is called to order by emailing vice-president@gradunion.cam.ac.uk

1. Approval of the minutes of the previous Council meeting

The unconfirmed minutes of the last Council meeting, held on 30 April March 2019, are circulated for approval.

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

3. Reports from Sabbatical Officers and Officers of the Executive Committee

- A. President's Report (*Verbal Report*)
- B. Vice-President's Report (*Verbal Report*)
- C. Welfare and Rights' Report

4. Appointments by Council

- A. Student Trustees – Mr. Takashi Lawson and Ms. Tamzin Byrne

5. Council Discussion

- A. Improving postgraduate representation (*we will be discussing the survey [here](#)*)
- B. Anti-casualisation

6. Motions to council

- A. Making the University more child-care friendly

- B. Declaring a Climate Justice
- C. Departmental welfare
- D. Motion in support of boycott of Trinity College on Pension Scheme
- E. Elections for part-time positions

7. Emergency Motions

The Council will consider any emergency motions submitted between the circulation of the Agenda and the start of the meeting.

8. Dates of upcoming meetings

Long Vacation

08 July 2019

02 September 2019

At 7pm unless otherwise stated

9. Any other business

Student Trustee Update

Graduate Union Council

30/04/19

19.00 at Roger Needham Room, Chancellor Centre, Wolfson College

Name	Title
Sofia Ropek-Hewson	President, Graduate Union
Mrittunjoy Guha Majumdar	Vice-President, Graduate Union
Alessandro Ceccarelli	LGBTQ+ Officer, Graduate Union
Christine Pungong	Welfare and Rights Officer, GU/CUSU
Alberto Tppolito	External Representative, Pembroke
Emelyn Rude	Joint Representative, Kings College
Joe Stallars	MCR President, Queens College
Efthinos Karayiannides	MCR Vice President, Magdalene College
Anthony Bridgen	MCR President, Gonville & Caius College
Chris Mellor	MCR Vice President, Fitzwilliam College
Christopher Davis	External Representative, Darwin College
David Izuogu	MCR President, Wolfson College
Andrei Prahouam	Sports and Societies Officer, Wolfson College
Representatives of the Cambridge UCU (University and College Union)	

Agenda (Council)

Item 1. Approval of the minutes of the previous Council meeting

Unconfirmed minutes of the last Council meeting held on 11 March 2019, were raised for approval. It was clarified that the person responsible for the remarks on the WhatsApp group, ie, the 'Admiral of the punt', is not an outgoing president.

Minutes thereafter approved in absence of further comments.

Item 2. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Council meeting

Amended motions on '*Rethinking funding from the Student Support Initiative*' and '*Fair Conditions for Teaching Opportunities*', unanimously approved.

Item 3. Reports from Sabbatical Officers and Officers of the Executive Committee**A. President's Report (Delivered by Sofia Ropek-Hewson)**

- President notes that a lot of things currently in the works have been covered in her lent report. She reports that the application fee waivers for refugees and students with low income backgrounds has finally been approved by the Board of Graduate Studies.
- She is also working on developing new reporting systems to enable students report to their supervisors
- There is work as well on student support initiatives and we are nudging more expenditure on post graduates. We might get money for some master's studentships to address wider participation deficits.
- There is growing concern with the increasing post graduate numbers. The university keeps saying it's going to increase support but as the University is also saying they have financial constraints; this doesn't seem convincing.
- Currently have a student's campaigns fund with about a 1000 pounds so students are strongly encouraged students to take advantage of this.
- Recently conducted a study which found that the average number of graduate students per graduate teacher is around 100 -150 so we're looking at how to standardize the number across colleges. We're also trying to find out how much graduate teachers are paid in comparison to under graduate teachers and other working relationships.
- President notes that in last six weeks of her term she would be writing funding bids for university members of staff to work on the post graduate unemployment situation and access work; and would be making a presentation to students and members of the university in next few weeks, on the GU mental health report.

Q: (Alessandro) When are you planning to publish the mental health report and on which platforms would it be distributed?

(Sofia) The report is being designed at the moment and would be published next week on all platforms to ensure wide readership. Reminder to attend the documentary screening on mental health this Saturday and encourage students and staff to come along.

B. Vice President's Report (delivered by Mrittunjoy Guha Majumdar)

▪ Housing and living expenses campaign

Two specific aims under this project are to first develop a housing toolkit and to work with the MCRs to start college-based housing and living expense campaigns. Have developed and distributed a housing toolkit which comprises an introductory report; a feedback form and a compliance chart. Compliance Chart concerns the ANUK Code which all colleges have signed up to so if any colleges violate provisions of the chart, you can stand up against this.

Second, is to lobby for information on things like the number and kinds of rooms available, rent ranges and the system of allocation of rooms in colleges. Working with the Office for intercollegiate services for this and the process is underway to get this done on the graduate side.

▪ Engagement

Not much done on this front as we have had the Easter break season, but this will begin soon.

▪ Sustaining the Graduate Rights Campaign

We're looking into developing online resources to increase awareness about the rights and various provisions for graduate students within the university. Been working closely with Alice Benton of the Education and Policy team of the University. We have three specific demands of increasing awareness with workshops in collaboration with the University Counselling Service in the various departments; having wider consultation about graduate rights with students, teachers, admin and other stakeholders and; lobbying for our recently passed policy on fair pay and support for teaching and research opportunities across the Collegiate University.

▪ Personal Welfare Handbook

Recently developed the Personal Welfare Handbook which is a comprehensive document with provisions on various issues like mental health and financial problems. Has been submitted to the various MCRs and would like you to share with all members as that is a signposting document for all kinds of problems in the university.

- **Anti-Casualisation Working Group Campaign (Presentation by two representatives of the Cambridge UCU)**

Cambridge UCU Representatives report that this campaign started on the back of research delivered to the University last October. It's basically making a claim asking for better conditions for TES employees, early career staff, post docs, and other hourly paid people. We're asking for better contracts in some cases, and in respect of graduate students in particular, we're asking for better pay and even pay in general as there's a lot of teaching going on which is not being paid. We're also asking for the inclusion of preparation time and marking time; actual data on how much preparation time is actually needed; fairer allocation of teaching instead of word-of-mouth situation; and also awareness-raising about grad workers being workers.

There are ongoing series of meetings with the University - HR and experts in the university who are putting together a lot of things – but the monthly meetings may not end up in anything unless we put a lot of pressure on the university to deliver something. As a result, we have come up with the 'raise the bar' campaign. We have post cards with the key points of the campaign and we're seeking signatures from staff- academic and non-academic; graduates and undergraduates.

We propose that you take the posters with you and get signatures from MCR members (by setting up boxes in the MCRs; sharing by word-of-mouth; etc). Delivery back to Cambridge UCU possibly through one of the GU meetings. Can also return through the University mailing services ie, the porters lodge. Also, the portion of the post card with personal details for inclusion in the mailing list would be taken out before submission to the university.

Mrittunjoy added that filled post cards could also be placed in the ballot boxes at the GU.

- **Updates from Executive Committee Meeting (Delivered by Mrittunjoy)**

(Alessandro) Lots to organize in terms of events as term has just begun and it's a crucial time for inclusivity and making people feel welcome. Have several events across colleges especially Trinity, Clair and Emmanuel. There are also garden parties including the first Cambridge pride in June. Currently working on finding funding for the committee and working out logistics of walking across city or using punt for the parade.

Family Officer is looking at bursary scheme for students with children and families. Also working on maternity leave within the university and how to make them available.

Faculty liaison officer has been working on a survey of faculty reps and building close collaboration of faculties with GU.

Women's Officer is working on a speaker event to showcase women in the university who are doing well in their respective fields to motivate others to follow in their footsteps. Also looking at a working group and women's forum.

On Executive Business, we have started working groups and forums for each of the officers to have more hands working on respective areas. Want to start a forum for each of the officers so there is accountability and more engagement with the larger student population.

Q: (David) Doesn't seem as PRs are comfortable with the commitment of signing the code of practice. Do you have any plans in addressing this?

(Mrittunjoy) This is a basic minimum that should be expected and we're actually trying to supplement this with online resources; various workshops to have regular information building processes so people are aware of their rights not only at the beginning of the year but across the year. Not sure why this should be a big problem.

(Sofia) Last year the GU vice president worked on the code of practice with rights and responsibilities for grad students and added the signature element to encourage supervisors and students to sign the code – making it into a kind of contract. Currently not sure if this is happening yet but not sure why supervisors feel uncomfortable signing.

(David) Supervisor of a friend in one of the biological departments said that the code of practice for the department is completely different from this.

(Mrittunjoy) It is a uniform practice

C. Welfare and Rights' Report (delivered by Christine Pungong)

- Going to be holding more trainings for those that haven't taken them yet – with three sessions this week. For mental health awareness week, we'll be teaming up with the disabled students officer to run a series of events on mental health and disability. Exact nature of events still being considered so any ideas are welcome.
- Also working with the counselling service on reforming their feedback and complaint procedures. Currently, if you have any issues with your counsellor you either sort it out with them or speak with head of counselling service and if your issue is with the head of counselling services you would have to speak with the receptionist. Got a lot of feedback from students having serious difficulties with them so we're going to consult with welfare officers.
- (Sofia) Remember to encourage welfare officers to sign up for the training.

Item 4. Council Discussion**A. Improving postgraduate representation**

Survey has been developed to consult with students on how best to improve post graduate representation and membership is invited to share this with MCRs for student opinions.

Q: What problems do you face in engaging or representing graduate students at MCR or in Faculty?

- Hard to get people to step up to represent as few positions are contested in the year.
- Different political views are difficult to represent. Also, different groups have different needs - phd students being here for a long while and masters' students being around for less. Again, it can be difficult holding events at times appropriate for all.
- Only few respond to emails or give feedback so it's difficult to keep conversations going. Also, graduates are more engaged with their departments than their colleges. For example, in the sciences, most of the time is spent in the labs and you barely go to college. Some might not know that some of the various representatives exist and are accessible through direct communication.
- MCRs are sort of reactive - awaiting residents to come forward. We need to have ways of being proactive; reaching out to students.
- Students don't seem to be interested in any activities aside social activities. Any other events attract low turnouts. Also difficult to get people running for positions. During by-elections last week in Wolfson College, not one person had been nominated close to four hours to end of nominations and even after nominations closed with few nominees, only 24 people out of 900 voted in the election. Because of this lack of engagement by the students, those who put themselves forward also loose interest.

Q: What do you like or not like about CUSU and/or GU?

- Because of the lack of engagement between graduates and these bodies, the students don't see their usefulness. There was an issue last year with Wolfson college where there was push-back on payment of the CUSU fees as the college had just 18 undergraduates out of 900 students. The representatives tried to engage CUSU to allow a 50% discount of the fees but this was not allowed and the same issues have come up this year. A pilot program was run last year and this convinced members of the college about merits of engagement with GU so there is need for continuous engagement and need for education on incentives provided.

- GU struggles with visibility. CUSU has done a lot here but not GU. How is GU reaching students and publicizing what it is doing? CUSU is perceived as an undergrad focused institution and while there are not enough sabbatical officers to sustain the amount of work GU does, CUSU has the numbers. The number of graduate students should however be enough to ensure more sabbatical officers. There is also a perception that there is a lot of overlap of different projects between the two organisations and as a result it is unclear who is doing what.
- GU does a good job of focusing on issues really facing students and there is an impression that CUSU focuses on divisive political issues and not issues facing students.
- GU needs to aggressively recruit more colleges and to speak to the representation issues. There are about 10 colleges in GU? MCRs need to inform colleges that these seats are available in the GU.

(Mrittunjoy) In terms of publicity and engagement, we have started on this and had sessions in Darwin college and others; including having discussions on topics such as financing, housing and Brexit.

(Sofia) The GU is small and understaffed and isn't able to represent the post graduates effectively. While CUSU and GU shares some members of staff, CUSU has about 20 staff and GU has only 1 permanent staff member. CUSU is perceived as an undergraduate union but as long as GU represents post graduates, GU has no incentive to represent post graduate interests and therefore pushes post grad business to GU. CUSU tried to take over GU a few years ago but after a referendum, students voted to keep GU separate. The representation review is however coming up soon so there are ongoing discussion on the possibility of scraping GU and CUSU and forming an entirely new union that recognizes the number of post graduates and undergraduates and presents one strong visible presence for the students. Another option considered is to develop closer working relationships and shared structures between GU and CUSU. A proposal would be brought before the GU council in a few weeks and we would have different options for discussion among colleges. When the survey was run, only 8% of post grads felt well-represented by CUSU; a small percentage felt well-represented by the GU and few people understood what CUSU was and how the various representations worked together.

Q: Why can't we have the same number of officers as CUSU?

(Sofia) Because CUSU technically represents both graduates and undergraduates and the University is repeatedly saying it is having financial problems. There's no scope at all for more

funding for the unions in the next 5-10 years. If we looked into changing structures, we would save money and may be able to have more sabbatical representation and staff.

Q: Is it impossible to keep the unions fully separate – GU dealing with only post graduates and CUSU dealing solely with undergraduates? Is this a problem with CUSU and how strongly they feel about it?

(Sofia) This is one of the issues discussed. With these structures, you'll probably have shared staff because at the moment we share some services – running the student union together – and if we had separate Unions would still share a lot because we have developed work together over the years.

(?) There may be a danger of grad school losing any representation by GU being absorbed into CUSU. Absorbing into CUSU isn't going to change representation as CUSU hasn't done so in this respect in a number of years and that's why GU came along. There's rather the need to strengthen GU.

(Christine) Clarifying that once there is a merger, CUSU would no longer exist but rather a new entity entirely.

(Mrittunjoy) The discussion has been had that there would be no compromise of graduate representation in the new union. In terms of the numbers of officers, these are flexible but we're looking to make sure there is equal post grad and undergrad leadership roles. These are all options in terms of structure change.

(Alessandro) The structure once drafted should clearly have representation by graduate populations and there should be more full-time sabbatical officers.

(Mrittunjoy) It has been suggested that there be post graduate positions for each post but the concern is that it may make the structure too bulky so we may need to streamline for efficiency. We have discussions for post grad officers but not for each of these positions. Rather looking at having working groups for instance; post grad reps on certain specific issues as opposed to post grad officers for specific posts.

(Alessandro) there should be room for discussion on the point of representation of graduates because in respect of LGBT communities for instance, some students may feel more comfortable talking to a fellow postgraduate and not an undergrad representative.

(Sofia) Options could also include keeping the current number of sabbaticals and increasing the staff pool or number of post graduate representatives. When a set number of proposals are finalized they will be circulated to the colleges for feedback.

Q: In terms of leadership, would the joint structure envisage two levels of leadership for postgraduates and undergraduates?

Yes. The model being considered would have a president and vice president for both post graduate and undergraduate levels. Also two sets of communication and access officers for both levels.

Q: Do we need an access officer at both levels?

Yes. Because the access issues have been pushed up from the undergraduate level to post graduate level and there's a lack of funding for students at the masters level as well.

(Sofia) we'll have a meeting in next couple of weeks to discuss more fleshed out proposals for your comments.

B. Housing Toolkit

(Mrittunjoy) Thinking of having certain workshops for welfares offices and discussing this with them. Do you think the Colleges would be fine with this?

Q: Is ANUK Compliance now required for all Colleges?

Yes. Any entity with responsibilities under the ANUK code would have to comply with it.

Q: There is nothing in the code on rebates and this is a big issues in colleges.

The ANUK code is a very basic framework and not sure if rebates section is specific but it is possible to have more discussions on this at a later point.

Q: It seems like there is a big focus on campaigns around student expenses but what about the funding issues.

(Mrittunjoy) Have written to the international team to determine how international fees are regulated but there has been no positive response yet. The response given was that they did not have an answer so a sub-committee on finance needed to be convened to determine what information to share. That committee is yet to follow up. The Union also has a priority point of looking into means-based funding.

Item 5. Motions to Council

A. By-Election (Proposed by Mrittunjoy and Seconded by Sofia)

President moves motion to convene an elections committee for a by-election to fill positions of Faculty Liaison Officer, Disabled Students Officer and Open Portfolio Officer.

Motion passed. (Tamzin recorded a Yes vote by email; Alessandro not voting)

B. Call an extraordinary meeting of council on the 13th May 2019 to discuss improving postgraduate representation (on a time to be agreed)

President moves motion to call for an extraordinary meeting of council on the 13th May 2019 at 7pm to discuss improving postgraduate representation.

Q: Could Mid-June work for the meeting?

If held in June, we may struggle to have under-graduates involved as well in such a conversation.

Motion passed unanimously (Tamzin recorded a Yes vote by email; Alessandro not voting)

C. Departmental welfare (Proposed by Mrittunjoy and Seconded by Sofia)

(Mrittunjoy) As Post graduates students are more closely associated with their departments than colleges it is concerning that the university has most of its welfare facilities within colleges (ie. Graduate tutors, nurses, counsellors, etc). There is a lack of support in the departments so this motion is to set realistic targets in terms of what the council could potentially lobby for. Three demands for increasing departmental welfare in the university are increasing welfare and wellbeing support systems; incorporating welfare signposting duties in the mandate of Faculty representatives associated with the Graduate Union and; lobbying for increased collaboration between the departments and the University Counselling Service for workshops and support-based events in the departments.

(Sofia Reads out Email received from Tamzin Bryne (MCR President, Murray Edwards College) Tamzin proposes an amendment of the GU Council's resolutions (2) to read "To approach faculty representatives to lobby for better departmental welfare provisions and signposting".

(Mrittunjoy) Valid point raised by Tamzim. The discussion was initially on having separate dedicated welfare officers or champions but at the moment, the system is at an early stage so for instance we don't have faculty reps for all colleges – people are not standing for elections. We want to start with something basic just to do with welfare signposting and not have a very extensive welfare support provision for these reps. Happy in principle to incorporate Tamzin's amendment because if we keep them as faculty reps and thereafter graduate to having them as champions in the departments, we could have an amendment to Tamzin's motion.

Motion deferred to next Council.

Q: Do you think Departments should have welfare officers in the future?

Yes. Many graduates feel that there is a general lack of support on this front and as established earlier, many post grads don't associate much with their colleges so even if there are a lot of services out there, they don't interact much with them. There is also the feeling that some of these bodies are very formal and as a result there's some unease with dealing with them.

Q: Is the idea to have an officer in each department or at faculty level?

The idea is to have a dedicated champion in each department who at least knows the basic welfare signposting duties; directing the students to specific sources of support.

Q: Do you think people would feel comfortable opening up to people in the workplace?

We have had engagement sessions with various departments as well and there is the perception that there is little association with colleges and instead more time is spent in the work environments.

Q: Does the motion actually mention a specific officer/ champion as being in charge?

At the moment this is a priority in ongoing discussions but there are no specific proposals on this point as yet. This has been raised in conversations with the Vice Chancellor (Prof. Stephen Toope) and it's still in early stages of conception. An amendment motion would be proposed at a later point to cover this issue.

Q: (Sofia) Any thoughts on the amendment motion by Tamzin?

(?) There is a danger of people not getting the help they need if they are sent to a department.

(Mrittunjoy) They are not really being restricted to the departments as they would be directed to other services, they could take advantage of across the university.

Q: (Sofia) Is there a feeling that we need to have a broader discussion on where graduates could go to get support in departments and colleges?

Yes.

(Mrittunjoy) Clarifying that by this, we are not displacing welfare from colleges but rather supplementing available services. We're trying to get systems in place in departments to direct students to all services available to them.

President Proposes for broader discussion forum on departments welfare at the next GU meeting and table the motion at the GU Meeting on the 6th of June.

Item 6. Emergency Motions (Proposed by Mrittunjoy and Seconded by Sofia)

President moves emergency motion to support the CUSU disabled Students' Campaign Accessibility Pledge. The motion was passed last night by CUSU Council and it's about ensuring that across the university, disabled students are able to access buildings and events and to encourage clubs and societies have to give guidelines for disabled students in terms of accessibility.

Motion passed (Alessandro not voting)

Item 7. Dates of upcoming meetings

Easter Term (23 April to 14 June)

30 April 2019

13 April (Extra-Ordinary Council)

03 June 2019 (Annual General Meeting)

Long Vacation

08 July 2019

02 September 2019

At 7pm unless otherwise stated

Item 8: Any Other Business

- President reported that on the issue of funding for Cambridge's first Pride, the GU is pledging 500 pounds and would like to offer pride a bit more money if possible, because it would be great to have as many colleges and unions supportive.
- Alessandro reported that if the threshold of 1,250 pounds is raised we would have access to the silver package which would allow the committee invite special guests and support various types of initiatives on the day. On the day, there would be discussions on LGBT and sexual/ gender identity which is great for the student community and in creating a sense of community in general so if the CUSU could match our donation that would be fine. Donations from the MCR Representatives (on behalf of the Colleges); the Board of Trustees or the University Council, towards the outstanding 750 pounds would be fantastic.

- President added that if MCRs could find 50-100 pounds to support the project, they could get in touch with Alessandro.

Q: How soon is this needed?

(Alessandro) as there are some logistics that need to be take into account, as soon as possible would be best.

Next meeting is on the 13th of May

Meeting Closed at 9pm

5.A) Making the University more Childcare-Friendly

Proposer: Karthick Murukesan, Graduate Union Families Officer

Seconded: Mrittunjoy Guha Majumdar, Vice-President, Graduate Union

The GU Council notes

1. That the University opened its second nursery in 2019 at Eddington with 100 places for university members in which 92 is reserved for its staff and 8 reserved for its students.
2. That the first nursery already functional at North-west Cambridge has 100 places for university members in which 80 is reserved for its staff and 20 is reserved for its students.
3. That the University runs a central child care bursary to support the child care of student parents to the tune of £57,000 in academic year 2018-2019

The GU Council believes

1. That the seats reserved for students in the new Eddington nursery is not sufficient to cater the welfare and research productivity of graduate students. The University nurseries in comparison with private nurseries offer a great benefit for financially stressed student parent with its uniform fee structure irrespective of age group of kids. Hence the students should be given their due importance in reserving the places.
2. That the funds available in the child care bursary support are not sufficient

The GU Council resolves

1. To repeal University's child care vision "University nurseries are meant to cater the interest of staff" and commit to the inclusive vision of "University nurseries are meant to cater the interest of staff and students invariably", thereby maintaining the 20% seat reservation for students in the Eddington nursery.
2. To demand increase in the central child care bursary support
3. To demand at least one child friendly workplace with network facilities, with child rest area, within University of Cambridge premises to cater to the needs of graduate student parents.

5.B) Declaring a Climate Emergency

Proposer: Dan Whitaker, Vice President, Clare College MCR

Seconded: Mrirtunjoy Guha Majumdar, Vice-President, Graduate Union

The GU notes

1. That the GU already has a policy in place to support divestment of both direct and indirect investments from fossil fuels at a university-wide level.
2. That the UK parliament, the UCS and Cambridge City Council have already declared a climate emergency.
3. That the policy motioned is a show of continuing support and praise to the climate action being carried out throughout the University.

The GU believes

1. More can always be done to improve the environmental impact of the university
2. Those Graduate students involved in climate action at college or university wide level should have the support of the Graduates Union as long as the action falls within the rules of the college/university

The GU resolves:

1. To officially declare a climate emergency.
2. To provide our continuing support to environmental actions within the university.
3. To continue to help raise awareness about environmental issues throughout the university.

References:

[1] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48126677>

[2] <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/news/2019/02/22/cambridge-city-council-declares-climate-emergency>

5.C) Departmental Welfare

Proposer: Mrittunjoy Guha Majumdar, Vice-President, Graduate Union

Seconded: Sofia Ropek-Hewson, President, Graduate Union

The GU Council notes

Postgraduate and mature undergraduate students are often more closely associated with their departments than their colleges. As a result, the lack of welfare provisions and support in departments as against colleges is a matter of grave concern. We may have counsellors, tutors and nurses in colleges, along with MCR Welfare Officers, but there are hardly any such provisions for the students in their respective departments.

The GU Council believes

1. The welfare and wellbeing of the postgraduate and mature undergraduate students in the Collegiate University is of paramount importance.
2. Provisions for access and support should be available for students across the Collegiate University, be it in colleges or departments.

The GU Council resolves

1. To make the topic of increasing welfare and wellbeing support systems in departments a priority.
2. To encourage Faculty representatives to lobby for better welfare signposting in their respective departments and faculties.
3. To lobby for increased collaboration between the departments and the University Counselling Service for workshops and support-based events in the departments.

References:

[1] University of Cambridge. "Student wellbeing". Portal. Available here: <https://www.studentwellbeing.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

5.D) Motion in support of boycott of Trinity College on Pension Scheme

Proposer: Laura Gutierrez Gomez, PhD Student, Institute of Criminology

Seconded: Mrittunjoy Guha Majumdar, Vice-President, Graduate Union

The council condemns

1. The decision by Trinity College Council to withdraw from the USS pension scheme and to set up its own private scheme.

This council notes

1. The importance of the security provided by the USS pension scheme to its 400,000 members.
2. That Trinity's decision to leave USS undermines confidence in the Scheme, and might encourage other wealthy employers with small USS liabilities to withdraw, with potentially disastrous effects for the Scheme as a whole.
3. That Trinity admits the risk caused to the college through membership of USS is extremely small.
4. Trinity will be spending £30 million of its endowment to leave USS; this will reduce the College's income by 1.5% in perpetuity.

This council believes

1. Students should defend the working conditions of the staff who provide our research and learning environment.
2. Trinity College depends on the support and cooperation of academics in other Cambridge colleges and beyond
3. The threat to withdraw from USS indicates a refusal to accept the principle of a scheme shared across UK higher education, and a refusal to see beyond Trinity's financial interests extremely narrowly conceived.
4. If Trinity chooses to adopt such an attitude, it cannot expect the continued support of staff at other higher educational institutions for its own activities.
1. Trinity's decision puts its own students' education and research at risk by provoking a mass boycott of supervisors. It betrays the entire higher education sector by undermining a pension scheme that many thousands of university staff rely upon.

This council resolves to:

1. Promote the open letters from [students at Trinity College](#) [a] and from [University of Cambridge staff](#) [b].

2. Press the college to consider its obligations to their students, severed from excellent supervisors in Cambridge, and to their colleagues and the wider community of academia.
3. Encourage members who carry out supervisions or other discretionary teaching and research activities to boycott Trinity until the College commits to continue in or rejoin the USS scheme.

References:

[a] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D00X7LDFF8IfW49jP0APKj7mJq1s_6en6YGU4EhjiY/mobilebasic

[b] <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EHwkVrK5MAPsDfYOX3qIbRs6uaywPG88OLFAbn0zMwA/mobilebasic>