JCR Committee Meeting Minutes 19.10.14

# President’s business

**OUSU – Anna Bradshaw – committee – talking about what OUSU does**

* She is the VP for Women – sabbatical officer
* Deals with access, admissions, equal ops, charities and academic affairs
* As JCR is the focal point for a college, OUSU doesn’t have the bar and other facilities commonly associated with an SU
* It is the democratic part of Oxford University – Council is made up of reps from every college
* They have decided to give people more time to talk to their colleges before they come back to vote at OUSU
	+ Setting policy at college first
* They run various campaigns – general causes and specific issues – e.g. women and living wage
* They run freshers’ fair
* They do welfare stuff and run the student advice service
	+ This is professional and confidential – separate to the university
	+ Email at advice@ousu.org
	+ Anything from small problems to major issues
* Are there any plans for a central social hub for all colleges?
	+ In longer term – hoping to get a better space
	+ Short term – trying to get bookable spaces for clubs and societies
* In middle of a 5 year plan the moment
* Presidential candidate who was running on the main pledge of getting a new building got defeated – sense that this wasn’t wanted
* Monorail
	+ City council have been called, they told him that it would be expensive
* Idea of OUSU working for the JCR
* Trying to improve participation

# President’s business

## Rent negotiations:

* 1) Rates paid for vacation residencies. The grade system was explained. However, in vacation you pay a median rate that doesn’t depend on room quality. Alfie had suggested a lower vac rate for grades 1-3 – idea that they’d move in earlier, and thus it would be economically viable. Pledge from Tim that this should be in place for December.
* 2) Lockable storage in rooms – pain of moving items in and out. We are pushing for a lockable receptacle in each room to keep stuff over the vacation. The staff response to this was vague, but generally positive. It shouldn’t be too much of an undertaking.
* 3) Rent negotiations – Worcester traditionally has a good record with negotiations. However last year we weren’t included in them. This year it has been arranged that negotiations will start at the beginning of Hilary so that there can be consultation between JCR and college.
* 4) We never get to talk to Finance Committee – we talk to Tim, who is answerable to FC. Tim has pledged to having a rep from the committee at Finance Committee.

## Other:

* 1) Communal punishment. The Dean is very fair, but practical. He likes to find out who has done things, and will threaten to close the bar until someone comes forward. There has been a dialogue with him about this. Now, rather than bar closures straight away, Ben will offer a quota of community service that has to be filled, and if not the bar will be closed. Anyone can do the service. Idea is that culprit would do it, but without the community pressure currently seen.
* 2) OUSU Meeting – was very hectic. Made a lot of progress, and there was an important vote relating to NUS Demonstration motion (see below). Question whether we should we fund students to go to a demonstration in London on fees? Our reps voted to move that vote back to 3rd week.
* 3) Update from charities rep – since 1992 Worcester has raised over £30k for Helen and Douglas House. Last year raised over £2000 for Helen Douglas, OxPAT, Against Malaria Foundation and Anthony Nolan

# Election for new ethnic minorities and anti-racism officer

* Serving on JCR Sub-committee until Trinity 2015 – answerable to Gayatri
* Dealing with issues of racism and culture
* There was 1 runner for this position - Loully Saney
* There was a brief husting – she made the point that it was valuable to have a JYA involved in the JCR in some way, and that her background meant that she was particularly interested in anti-racism and awareness
* Move to vote:
* Majority voted in favour – Loully Saney gets the position

# Festival Motion

Motion:

* I would like to propose a motion for more funds for the Diwali and Eid party. I would like up to £100 pounds in order to finance food, drink, refreshments, henna and the cost of a Bollywood dance teacher, in the interests of celebrating different cultures and fostering an environment of respect and acceptance.
* Proposer: Gayatri Gogoi
* Seconder: Rhys Dore.

Speech in proposition:

* We have a budget for this for equal ops, but we don’t want to blow this on the event as that budget is limited.
* The event will be quite expensive – food, dance teacher etc.
* Will be a fun night.

Short factual questions

* How big is the motions budget for this year? - £2000
* Have we considered looking at students involved in societies who could help out? She has contacted Indian Cultural Arts societies, but none are getting back. Only a professional actually responded. But she will keep working on this
* This money is to fund everything
* The equal ops budget is £400
* Is it possible to give Gayatri the money, but we can take it back if not needed? She is not obliged to give any money back beyond her word.

No speech made in opposition

General points

* Is there an alternative to Bollywood dancing that would be cheaper? Not really
* Oxford Dance Society might be able to provide a teacher
* An entrance fee has been considered

Move to vote:

In favour: 41

Against: 1

Abstentions: 5

**The motion passes**

# OUSU/NUS Demonstration Motion

* **Support for NUS Demo:**
* This JCR Notes:
* 1.      Tuition fees and associated marketisation have failed to create a sustainable funding system for universities.
* 2.      In order to fund tuition fees, the Government can now expect to loan in excess of £10 billion per year, much of which it will never recover.
* 3.      Fees act as a deterrent to access, making education seem unaffordable to some.
* 4.      Recently, the National Union of Students (NUS) voted to campaign for a new deal for education, that is free, publicly-funded, accessible, and funded by greater progressive taxation and clamping down on tax avoidance.
* 5.      Free education is also the policy of the University and College Lecturers’ Union (UCU), and the Trades Union Congress (TUC).
* 6.      Germany has recently abolished tuition fees.
* 7.      UK Conservative and Liberal Democrat politicians have made several statements calling for uncapped tuition fees, while our own Vice-Chancellor asked that fees be raised to £16,000 in a speech last year (condemned by OUSU at the time).
* 8.      The NUS is supporting a national demonstration for free education on November 19th at 12 noon in Central London.
* 9.      That the financial costs of travelling to the demonstration in London may deter students from attending who nevertheless wish to support the cause.
* This JCR Believes:
* 1.      We face a clear choice in education funding: either our system is going to continue down the road towards an American-style model of private universities with uncapped fees, or we can take it closer to a German model of free, public and accessible education.
* 2.      Access is a public benefit, and as such requires a public-owned and funded education system rather than the current model of privatization with ever-increasing fees.
* 3.      That national co-ordinated action, through bodies like the NUS, is the best way to achieve national policy changes from political parties, as evidenced by recent campaign successes.
* 4.      With a year until the general election, there are clear opportunities to make substantial gains for students, if we put out a clear message and mobilise the movement.
* This JCR Resolves:
* 1.      To support free education as a policy and the NUS campaign against fees and debt.
* 2.      To support the national demonstration for free education on 19th November, and pass £50 from JCR funds to help subsidise coaches to London for the national demonstration.
* Proposer: Mary Reader
* Seconder: Lucy Taylor

Speech in proposition

* The motion is quite self-evident
* We were sold the idea that tuition fees would be nominal, but now they are by no means small
* People say that applications have increased, and thus access isn’t an issue. However they don’t realise the debt they are getting into to.
* The interest system benefits the rich who can pay off the loan straight away
* £50000 loan could cost £150,000 in total, if you have a starting salary of £26,000
* Argument that the government can’t afford to pay for free education – but they are racking up debt
* Need to avoid inequality
* There is an NUS demo in November – year before election – could have a big impact. Growing discontent about how students being saddled with debt. This is relevant given Germany stopping fees.

Short factual questions

- How many people are intending to go to the demo? As many as they can. Motion went through OUSU – they were trying to get subsidies for coaches. So far they have £200. Trying to get return ticket to London to cost £5 PP so as to not deter people.

- Is the money going to a central fund or Worcester students? Needs to be clarified – assumption that it is for the JCR, not the university as a whole.

- How much does a coach cost? £600 for 60 people – relatively cheap. If cost is £10 PP then trying to get it subsidised by £5

- Does NUS policy on cost apply to internationals? Not known – probably not. Only undergraduates as well. Scotland – internationals pay but nationals free – probably similar

- Germany – free for international students there though

- OUSU put the money through, but as they had lumped the two together, they have tabled to revote later on free tuition fees. They did so because they thought the vote might affect relationship with university – less leverage. This doesn’t affect the JCR so much – it isn’t a written constitutional change.

Speech in opposition

- How many Worcester people actually want to go – want to know this before giving money? Even if not many, we should support the cause in principle.

- Motion combines us declaring that it is a JCR policy as well as subsidising the motion. Scotland and NI admissions statistics for low income backgrounds haven’t improved for having free education – doesn’t really benefit the poor. Good to support the demo, problem with lumping the to two together. Also needs to be clear whether the funds are for Worcester – can we deter the vote?

- Can’t vote on the two bits separately, but we could re-vote on them in a later meeting separately

- What does supporting the principle matter? Just a statement of validity. We do have affiliations, but this isn’t a constitutional motion.

- If we vote in favour – we give the money and nothing changes otherwise. Although it might be used by OUSU as a bargaining point.

- Point that some Scottish students are missing out on university as a result of their policy.

- Suggestion that we vote on whether to put the motion back to next week. Might want to give the money but not do the principle – do the two motions side by side.

- Table it for fourth week – would it matter that the money is given later? Not really – although the earlier the better so we can sell tickets

Procedural motion to move it to next JCR Meeting

36 in favour

5 against

6 abstentions

The motions will be moved and separated for the next meeting.