



## SU Executive Minutes

<b>Time:</b>	18:00
<b>Date:</b>	20/10/2014
<b>Location:</b>	286
<b>Trustees Present:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Suber – CP Democracy &amp; Education <b>[DS]</b> – <b>Chair</b></li> <li>• Georgie Robertson – CP Campaigns &amp; Welfare <b>[GR]</b></li> <li>• Kabir Joshi – CP Activities &amp; Events <b>[KJ]</b></li> <li>• Simon Campbell – Academic Affairs Officer <b>[SC]</b></li> <li>• Max Lohnert – Academic Affairs Officer <b>[ML]</b></li> <li>• Roisin Crowley – Disabilities Officer <b>[RC]</b></li> <li>• Tom King – LGBTQ Officer <b>[TK]</b></li> <li>• Nate Reidy – LGBTQ Officer <b>[NR]</b></li> <li>• Phoebe Fisher – Environment Officer <b>[PF]</b></li> <li>• Hannah Slydel – Womens Officer <b>[HS]</b></li> <li>• Harriet White – Environment Officer <b>[HW]</b></li> <li>• Ruman Hasan – Anti Racist Officer <b>[RH]</b></li> <li>• Mohamed Taha – Post Graduate Research <b>[MT]</b></li> <li>• Luna Cottis – Entertainments Officer <b>[LC]</b></li> <li>• Grace Wilcocks – Campaigns Officer <b>[GW]</b></li> <li>• Ana-Luiza Olanescu – International Officer <b>[AO]</b></li> <li>• Tom Oliver – Accommodation Officer <b>[TO]</b></li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Others Present:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vic Casambros – Governance &amp; Communications Coordinator <b>[VC]</b></li> </ul>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karmel Carey – Disabilities Officer <b>[KC]</b></li> <li>• Mollie Hanley – Womens Officer <b>[MH]</b></li> <li>• Manuella Schwarz – Black Officer <b>[MS]</b></li> <li>• Tracey-Ann Munroe – Mature Students' Officer <b>[TM]</b></li> </ul>
<b>Absent:</b>	•

Action/Discussion	Who	When
<b>1) Greetings to what will be newly elected Exec members (accommodation and mature students officers)!!!</b>		

<p><b>Exec</b> welcomes Tom to Exec.</p>		
<p><b>2) Discuss about the co-option of Wael Omar as PGT-students officer</b></p> <p><b>DS</b> updated <b>Exec</b> on the situation about Wael's Nominations Status.</p> <p><b>DS</b> proposes Co-opting Wael as PGT Officer as he was the only student who nominated themselves.</p> <p>Options are to run another election online only or co-opt.</p> <p><b>GW</b> says nominations should be re-opened. There is no guarantee he would have gotten elected.</p> <p><b>KJ</b> suggests reopening nominations is more unfair on the candidate as he tried to nominate himself.</p> <p><b>TO</b> The rules said everything must be submitted online, he made the mistake. If he is the best candidate then he will win.</p> <p><b>HS</b> he had only been at SOAS 3 weeks, its harsh to enforce the rules on him. Post Grad students are only here for a year, every week counts and we are getting close to reading week. Nearly one quarter gone.</p> <p><b>NR</b> I have a problem with a small group taking this decision</p> <p><b>LC</b> How do people feel? Can we have a vote?</p> <p><b>GR</b> two years ago the PGR Officer was co-opted after two elections failed to find a candidate. They voted on exec but not trustee.</p> <p><b>GW</b> co-opting would compromise the integrity of Exec.</p> <p><b>KJ</b> I don't think its breaking a democratic mandate to assume he would have won against RON.</p> <p><b>LC</b> I feel this is going in circles</p> <p><b>GW</b> I feel like Co-opting is just covering up the guilt of messing up the election.</p> <p><b>HS</b> – If we re-open nominations and no on runs, can we then have a vote to co-opt him?</p>		

<p>RH – Lets move to a Vote (<b>Secret Ballot</b>)</p> <p><b>Options for vote:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1) Co-opt Wael</li> <li>• 2) Re-open Nominations</li> <li>• 3) Abstain</li> </ul> <p><b>Result of Vote</b></p> <p><b>Cooption – 13</b> <b>Reopen Nominations – 3</b> <b>Abstain – 0</b></p> <p><b>Wael</b> Will be Co-opted.</p>		
<p><b>3) Statement on problems in harassment/complaints/etc. procedures</b></p> <p><b>GR</b> briefed <b>exec</b> on a statement acknowledge some of the problems that have been brought up. Evidence includes the harassment survey from last year.</p> <p><b>GR</b> Would like feedback from <b>Exec</b> if this should be done.</p> <p><b>HS</b> reaches out to anyone that wants to help draft the initial statement.</p> <p><b>GR</b> to add to exec email thread.</p>		
<p><b>4) Costs for printing and other materials</b></p> <p><b>GR</b> This point was to clarify if part time exec members get printing credit. If they need things printed relevant to their position, come to the Sabb Office.</p> <p><b>KJ</b> For complex printing there is a budget you can claim from if you bring a receipt. The budget depends which officer you are.</p> <p><b>HS</b> An idea would be to get an exec card that can be printed from</p> <p><b>GR</b> we may not be able to do this at SOAS, but should be able to get a print card for Student Central. It's not as convenient as printing at SOAS though.</p>		

Action Point – <b>SEB</b> to get a card from Student Central	<b>SEB</b>	<b>Next Exec</b>
<p><b>5) Update on equality and diversity training</b></p> <p>Point from <b>ES</b> but not present.</p> <p><b>HS</b> updated <b>Exec</b> that <b>ES</b> had tried to contact NUS but had no reply.</p> <p><b>HS</b> apologises if the above is wrong</p> <p><b>GR</b> we are pushing to make this training compulsory for all School Staff eventually.</p>		
<p><b>6) Debrief on Student Reps Elections</b></p> <p><b>DS</b> – Student rep elections were held last week. This was done via Google Docs as the school failed to give us the student data required to run this via our website. Candidates who were not contested were returned unopposed.</p> <p>Some elections are being run between now and Wednesday at Noon. There is a rep welcome meeting that day. Faculty Officers will also be elected at that meeting.</p> <p>The aim is to elect returning student reps in May before they leave for summer. They will be in places for when term starts. This means in September only first year reps and PGT Reps will need to be elected.</p> <p><b>GW</b> objects to students being returned unopposed and not running against RON.</p> <p><b>DS</b> It's better to have someone than no one. The biggest difficulty for these elections was getting people to stand.</p> <p><b>DS</b> we are currently piloting a new online service with one course per faculty. This forum helps students submit issues amongst their courses and vote on the priority of those issues. It runs off Moodle.</p>		
<p><b>7) SOAS Summer Festival – updates</b></p> <p><b>DS</b> updated exec on his plans for a Summer Festival outside</p>		



<p>of London after exams.</p>		
<p><b>8) Set date for next Trustee meeting</b></p> <p><b>DS</b> explained what a <b>Trustee Meeting</b> is to those who aren't aware.</p> <p><b>DS</b> proposed having it next Monday instead of <b>exec</b>.</p> <p><b>GW</b> proposes having <b>Trustee Meeting</b> next Monday then exec on Tuesday.</p> <p><b>GR</b> Suggests having a party afterwards to welcome the new members</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Exec = Monday Trustees = Monday</p>		
<p><b>9) Julie Bindel - MSA</b></p> <p><b>TK</b> passed around some articles written by Julie Bindel</p> <p><b>GR</b> updated <b>Exec</b> on the situation – <b>MSA</b> have organised a debate, of which Julie Bindel is one. <b>TK</b> highlighted that some of her past remarks are offensive and breach the safespace policy and dignity policy. <b>MSA</b> have left the decision on allowing the invite to Julie Bindel to <b>Exec</b>.</p> <p><b>GR</b> invited contributions from <b>Exec</b>.</p> <p><b>HS</b> Julie Bindel is named in the NUS LGBT No Platform Policy. Would not feel comfortable inviting Julie</p> <p><b>RH</b> Does not think she should be stopped from coming. It's a debate and her views will be challenged. Some of her articles are bad, but the debate will focus on feminism and Islam and not about trans.</p> <p><b>NR</b> Holds views on free speech. My view is that calling Julie Bindel Homophobic or Transphobic is reductionist. This place is the safest place that out students will have to engage with this woman. We are all in agreement that this woman is horrible.</p> <p><b>NR</b> I don't believe NUS would be opposed to grassroots organisation, especially in one with as left wing as a</p>		

reputation as us.

**NR** I don't believe in Censor, but want to make it clear I do not agree with Julie Bindel. I would urge everybody not to go down this slippery slope.

**TK** Even if the event stays on topic, Lots of feminists will object to her presence. MSA asked me and NR to consult with relevant students. I've had a student email me who feels uncomfortable with Julie Bindel coming on campus. I don't feel this would negatively impact on her views.

**RH** The purpose of this debate is to get her views on Islam. I agree with **NR**. If we don't allow her to debate it's a slippery slope.

**HS** There are many spaces open to Julie Bindel. We need to carve out spaces where students aren't subjected to homophobia/transphobia. To ask people to allow to Julie Bindel to come along and stick to an agenda would normalise her. If we allow her are we prividging certain types of oppression.

**HS** NUS represents a bigger students population than us, I don't think it would be right to say NUS would be ok with this.

**GR** Julie Bindel coming on campus would make the space unsafe for some students. This would make some students feel less safe in out spaces. The union is responsible for all society room bookings. It's not like this is just some other event happening in the school. If we allow her to come on campus I feel like it's the union saying we condone her views.

**GR** The safe spaces policy says we as union are committed to making the union safe. It's not just about opinions but how they are expressed. She uses violent and hurtful language. We don't want explicit oppression and prejudices. Her Views are everywhere; we want to create a safe space here without those views. There is freedom of speech but Julie doesn't represent anything academic. There is no productive academic debate with her. This decision is taking a stand against prejudice and discrimination.

**NR** we are not in this meeting to discuss the weekend past.

I wasn't able to canvas the Trans community properly. Of this I spoke to; the only negativity came from a UCL student. The LGBTQ Committee of 8 people was elected by 16 people. I was shut down when I tried to engage with them. The trans students in this institution are marginalised and I don't think the CIS community can speak for the Trans community. The LGBT Community can speak for them. Don't dictate to the Trans Community. That is a form of oppression in itself. We need to be representative of everyone and there are probably students in the school who agree with Julie Bindel.

**NR** I can see past my own views against her and see the other side of the coin. IF we don't allow them to speak we are just becoming conservative with our liberalism. If people are going to be that offended they can protest or not go.

**NR** I tried to ask my community for views on this but was blocked by a dictator that took over the LGBTQ Society. I can't vote on this and neither should **TK**. We've people in last year who contravene safe space and no one said anything.

**HS** It's not just trans students who are affected by Julie Bindel. It's sex workers, womens too.

**DS** I think we should focus on "there is a controversial speaker coming". We should work around the event to make it safe. This is not an event happening in the JCR, but its in a closed space where people know what they are going to.

**DS** Its not a lecture by just one person, it's a debate that will be challenged.

**TO** We need to look at how the LGBTQ Society Committee and how they have behaved. They have lost legitimacy and professionalism. If there is an argument about safespace, the committee need to make sure they are following it themselves.

**TO** Is there anyway this can be held off campus?

**TO** These opinion Julie Bindel holds are mainstream and everywhere. How are we able to challenge these? Inviting

someone to a debate does not mean they are being condoned.

**TO** Safe spaces is not something than can be created instantly. I would like to see this debate happen but I don't want to sacrifice anyone's welfare. We can't create a safe space by just shutting down debate.

**RC** We need to not just throw around terms like 'Real World' we know it sucks.

**GW** The whole thing is uncomfortable. When everything went on on Facebook it was not a safe space. The whole thing about safe spaces is complicated.

**GW** There are a group of students who want this debate to happen, and one who don't. It makes me uncomfortable to choose as its like we are saying one group is more importable than the other. How can we say to one group of students: "you can't do that because it offends me?"

**RH** The MSA would like to make this event happening on campus.

**TK** The Policy says it applies to SOAS Events off campus. We need to think about the damage to the union when the headlines come the next day. The Priority of the policy needs to protect minority oppressed groups.

**RH** The MSA were under the impression that the event was fine if it was taken off campus.

**RH** The problem is some Trans students are saying its ok and some are saying its not ok. Who do we listen to?

**HS** This isn't just Trans workers who are affected. It's sex workers and women. People in marginalised groups are forced to face the real world everyday. Trigger warnings and no platforms are ways of trying to work towards a safe space.

**HS** Julie Bindel is not critical and having her would not be of benefit. I wanted people to see her work. I wanted people to see her work is continually oppressive and its not just a one off.

**GR** to reiterate, the Policy was only passed at the last UGM that's why controversial speakers were on campus last year.

We are starting a mediation process with regards to the facebook issues.

**GR** About the content of the debate – it's going to be islam vs feminism. Saying her views about sex workers and transphobia won't come out is contradicted by people saying the purpose of the debate is to challenge these.

**GR** Having Julie Bindel represent feminism is problematic when she doesn't consider trans women.

**GR** The Policy passed is about underpinning that we support equality and taking a stance towards that.

**GR** The argument against bring her on campus to challenge her is that students welfare is the priority. I've had both trans students and past sex workers come to me saying they are concerned about this speaker coming on campus.

**GR** Its great people feel empowered to come challenger her, that's great but there are students who feel unsafe and we have this policy which we should be committed too. This is not about silencing people.

**RC** We should setup a safe space people can goto whilst the debate is happening if this goes ahead. Even if this is the JCR or somewhere.

**GW** Where is the event?

**RH** Brunei Gallery but wanting to move it to Vernon Square.

**GW** Whilst you empower one person you may be silencing someone else

**NR** There are great members on the LGBTQ Committee but they have lost credibility as a committee what they have been complicity in has done them no favours. I have had trans students come in so she can be retorted.

**NR** I want Her to come on campus because I don't want to be policing peoples thoughts. Are we turning into 1984? I was targeted because I asked for views from the Trans community.

**HS** We need to think about the long term effects of this event.

**RH** I don't feel that we in this room can decide this.

**GR** This motion passed at UGM people should come to the next one and ask to repeal it if they don't want it.

**GW** proposes postponing the vote to give more times to speak to students

**HS** This has been on the agenda for five days. Its our job as part time officers to speak to students.

**DS** I believe we will have the same arguments next week.

**GR** Postponing this may end up conflating the argument.

**TK** proposed a recorded vote to hold people to account

**KJ** is against a a recorded vote as some people vote on how they are perceived.

**TO** I am worried it looked like people are covering their back if they hide their vote. People should be comfortable to stand by their vote publicly.

**PF** A recorded vote may make it hard to deal with students later on especially if this doesn't directly affect your portfolio.

**NR** I want this recorded due to the vilification I have had over the weekend over this issue.

**GW** I don't feel like I can vote on this.

**GR** You can abstain

Consensus says that there will be a recorded vote.

**Moved to a Vote**

**Option for vote:**

- **1) Allow Julie Bindell**
- **2) Not Allow Julie Bindell**
- **3) Abstain**

<p><b>Officers who voted to allow Julie: = 2</b> RH DS</p> <p><b>Officers who voted to Not Allow Julie Bindell: = 5</b> GR RC PF TK HS</p> <p><b>Officers who Abstained: = 7</b> HW NR TO GW KJ MT ALO</p> <p><b>Result – Julie is not allowed to come.</b></p>		
<p><b>10) Union Showcase/protest of all SOAS Campaigns at open day on 29th of October</b></p> <p><b>DS</b> introduced this point as coming from a UGM Motion. There was an amendment to create a committee to organise the protest/showcase.</p> <p><b>DS</b> Add it to your diaries.</p>		
<p><b>11) Communications</b></p> <p><b>GW</b> raised the issue that we come together once a week, and there are minor side conversations etc.</p> <p><b>GW</b> Proposes create an <b>exec</b> calendar to prevent double booking really important events.</p> <p><b>GW</b> We need to use Social Media More. I am worried we aren't reaching students.</p>		

<p><b>NR</b> Agrees. Keeping up with the emails along is a mammoth task.</p> <p><b>TO</b> If we are moving to social media more can we ensure that safe space is included in this.</p> <p><b>Action Point</b> – Setup exec Calendar – <b>KJ</b></p> <p><b>Action Point</b> – Create a new thread for exec after each meeting – <b>KJ</b></p> <p><b>GR</b> asked if <b>exec</b> wanted office hours to update her on when?</p> <p><b>KJ</b> Office Hours aren't compulsory.</p> <p><b>GW</b> It would be good if we learned out to use our website pages.</p>	<p><b>KJ</b> <b>DS</b></p>	<p><b>By next exec Each week</b></p>
<p><b>12) campaigns updates</b></p> <p><b>GW</b> gave an update on campaigns</p> <p><b>GW</b> There is a meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup> about the Detention campaign.</p> <p><b>GW</b> asks if exec thinks students should pay a refundable deposit to secure their place for the transport to the demo. The bus is £400 for 50 people.</p> <p><b>GR</b> We can sell a Free ticket on the website.</p> <p><b>KJ</b> That may not work people will just get one because its free</p> <p><b>GR</b> The website has a campaigns calendar. If you want anything in it just send it over to me.</p> <p><b>GW</b> There is a Free Education Demo on November 19<sup>th</sup>. We need to build for this and get people on this demo. Regardless of politics this is something we can unite for.</p> <p><b>DS</b> We need to organise events to help build for this. Banner making sessions. Debates on this. We need to make sure we buy things like paint, banner etc.</p> <p><b>GR</b> Campaigns assembly is after reading week. The week before the demo. Can use this as platform to build for the</p>		

<p>demo. We have also booked the KLT two days before the event. To Hold something big.</p> <p>Action Point – GR to make sure this is discussed on the new exec thread.</p>	<b>GR</b>	<b>After meeting</b>
<p><b>13) student engagement</b></p> <p><b>GW</b> we need to find more ways to get people involved in the union. Get people involved in the non-politics side of things.</p> <p><b>RH</b> this would go hand in hand with using Social Media.</p> <p><b>HS</b> The liberation officers can help you make your events more accessible.</p> <p><b>NR</b> As officers we should be advertising ourselves.</p> <p><b>KJ</b> we need to make people aware of what constitutes the union. Like making sure people know the societies are the union. Not just us officers. We should goto events so people can see that we care what they are doing.</p> <p><b>KJ</b> We are a political body at heart, but our societies don't have to be.</p> <p><b>AL</b> Societies are such an important part of the union. Communicate with societies you are interested in and help them where you can. Engage with society presidents.</p> <p><b>GW</b> Proposes doing a survey on students views of the Students' Union.</p> <p><b>GR</b> One has held just before summer, and about 250 responded.</p> <p><b>GW</b> It would be good to find out what people don't like and why they don't get involved.</p> <p><b>KJ</b> We can such broad answers it's very hard to make specific conclusions. It may be worth holding out a short while before doing another.</p> <p><b>DS</b> we are thinking about communications. We look at what content goes in our emails vs Peter Baran ones. All this input is great. Before we do another survey we need to</p>		

look at the ones that have been done before.

**GR** We need to pull together all surveys and look at the data and think about.

**ALO** Can we add a feedback form to the website.

**Any other Business**

**HS** Can we ensure there are access breaks in future meetings

**MT** brought up the issue of the PGR Officer and the RSA President. They were previously combined but now they are now split.

**MT** Says it is better to keep the two posts together.

**MT** The RSA constitution needs to be passed.

**NR** The more people representing the better. Look at what has happened to the LGBTQ Society Committee. I know the previous role holder and the roles were split as it was too much work for just one person.

**GW** We now have our NUS delegates. After Christmas, we need to create a process where we communicate with our delegates and ensure people know how to engage with NUS.