

Union General Meeting Minutes

Time:	17:00 – 19:00
Date:	30 th April 2015
Location:	JCR

Agenda

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Minutes & Matters Arising
- 3) Report from Sabbatical Officers
- 4) Report from executive officers
- 5) Rebuild Kobane
- 6) Abolish £150 administration fee on payments of tuition fees by instalment
- 7) SOAS Students' Union Stands with Pakistani Universities
- 8) Create a Palestine Education Fund
- 9) Trans*form SOAS
- 10) End Austerity Now! Supporting the People's Assembly National Demo
- 11) Support NUS Trans Officer
- 12) Essay Double Whammy
- 13) Separate Coursework Deadlines
- 14) Emergency Motions
- 15) Any Other Business/Announcements

Ref#	Action/Discussion	Notes
1	The UGM began with a presentation by about Kobane. Following the presentation, DS thanked the speaker and introduced the chair.	
2	There were no objections to the minutes and no matters arising.	Minutes approved
3	Report from Sabbatical Officers Georgie Robertson – Co-President Welfare & Campaigns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GR reported victories in a number of campaigns; 	



	<p>i) Charges against Ghoncheh Ghavami (ex-SOAS student imprisoned in Iran) have been dropped</p> <p>ii) Free Graduation campaign has been successful</p> <p>iii) Fossil Fuel Divestment paper was passed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A funding proposal and presentation was taken to Governing Body re Co-President Liberation and Diversity. GR is hoping it will be approved; if not, the Union will escalate. • SOAS Housing Network has been set up online. GR encouraged students to sign up and advertise housing/rooms. • Guarantor scheme – a paper taken to Student Experience Committee asking for a pilot was passed. Working group set up. • Exam Wellbeing – GR has worked with student advice and wellbeing to set up a programme of events and advice throughout exam period. • NUS Conference – GR endorsed the officers who were elected into the NEC. She also reported that the motion for a full-time NUS trans officer was voted down. • Rent Strike – GR encouraged students to sign the petition in support of the rent strike at Dinwiddy and Paul Robeson. Negotiations are on-going and needs more pressure. • Next Governing Body – BDS, Justice for Cleaners and other campaigns will be taken. <p>Kabir Joshi – Co-President Activities & Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepal fundraiser organised by Nepal society for humanitarian aid – 1st May in the bar • KJ reported that the 2 intra-mural football tournaments were a huge success. • SOAS Festival – 30th May. Groups, bands, workshops, stalls. Encouraged people to get involved. Societies can still sign up until 10th May. • End of year party, 3rd June – more information to follow. • With it being the last UGM of the year, KJ thanked everyone for their involvement. <p>David Suber – Co-President Democracy & Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DS reported that a working group had been set up regarding UGM format & accessibility. Proposals include practical suggestions such as sitting down when delivering speeches, avoiding clapping and 	
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	<p>cheering during speeches, the availability of a quiet room. Further suggestions will be discussed at first UGM of next year & will be published on the website for comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing Body meeting – Ethics panel to be formed which will include considerations of BDS. • Free Fede campaign – DS encouraged students to keep writing letters. 	
4	<p>Report from Executive Officers</p> <p>There were none present.</p>	
5	<p>Rebuild Kobane</p> <p>David Suber proposed that the Union starts a committee to explore how support can be given to the reconstruction of Kobane.</p> <p>He discussed the possibility of fundraising initiatives such as talks & concerts, and supporting other initiatives such as the building of a music academy and increasing pressure on the government to open the humanitarian corridor.</p> <p>A student reported that an initiative had been set up to collect text books, and if students had textbooks to hand in, a collection will commence in the first week of June</p> <p>There was no speech against</p> <p>Vote on the Motion: Passes (unanimously)</p>	
6	<p>Abolish £150 administration fee on payments of Tuition Fee by instalment</p> <p>Rosie Rawle presented the motion, stating that this paper came out of a talk with reps. She reported that the admin fee doesn't occur in other institutions and requested support from the Union.</p> <p>Vote on the Motion: Passes (unanimously)</p>	



<p>7</p>	<p>SOAS SU stands with Pakistani Universities</p> <p>Bilal Zenab Ahmed, the proposer of this motion, amended the motion by adding 'supporting a film screening' to Union Resolves. They requested that the Union will assist in a fundraiser in solidarity with the activist who was shot.</p> <p>Bilal reported that Balochistan has been historically marginalised, and is a place with continuing poverty, discrimination & violence. After a talk and documentary screening was cancelled twice in Balochistan, Bilal requested that the Union stands alongside these people and supports Pakistani Universities.</p> <p>Vote on the Motion: Motion passes (2 abstentions)</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Palestine Education Fund</p> <p>Melissa Plant explained that most Palestinian families have very little chance in finding good access to University education.</p> <p>David Suber explained that the Union already has a funding system called the scholarship of resistance in which the Union commits to spending £20,000 a year to support students from conflict areas to come and study at SOAS.</p> <p>He proposed that the motion on principal is voted on, but that the Union would have to investigate the legal aspects of this decision to see how the objectives can be furthered.</p> <p>Vote on the Motion: Motion passes (unanimously)</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>Trans*form SOAS</p> <p>Airlie Ogilvie proposed a Trans Officer to be added to the Union Executive. They discussed the marginalisation faced by Trans people and what an exciting time it is for liberation politics, and encouraged SOAS to be a part of that.</p> <p>David Suber commented that the Union is about to go through a governance review and this motion would be a part of that.</p> <p>Vote on the Motion: Motion passes (unanimously_</p>	

<p>9</p>	<p>End Austerity Now</p> <p>Rosie Rawle told UGM about a demonstration happening in June. She stated that the student movement's involvement is essential and requested that the Union spreads the word to increase attendance.</p> <p>Vote on the Motion: Motion passes (unanimously)</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Trans Officer NUS</p> <p>Airlie Aird informed UGM about the NUS conference decision to vote down a motion to introduce a Trans Officer. They explained that in trans caucus, this motion was voted unanimously in favour. However, due to the caucus not owning any power or autonomy, this was overruled by the LGBTQ conference and National Conference votes.</p> <p>Both Airlie Aird and Georgie Robertson highlighted the importance of SOAS leading the way to mandate conference to support the motion next year.</p> <p>Vote on the motion: Motion passes (unanimously)</p>	
<p>11</p>	<p>Essay Double Whammy</p> <p>Pamela Mounter proposed changes to the Turnitin system in which essays can be submitted late, with penalties the same as late paper submission.</p> <p>A debate followed, including proposed amendments regarding submission dates and rule changes.</p> <p>David Suber made a point regarding the School's 3 week return policy for marked work, stating that this may be subject to change if this motion was implemented</p> <p>A final amendment was posed; 'in case of people wanting to recall their essay and resubmit, they should be judged on a case by case basis with no specified timeframe'. This amendment was passed.</p> <p>Pamela Mounter highlighted that this motion is not a change of any rules; it is already possible for students to submit via email – this motion just proposes a technical change to the system.</p> <p>Vote on the motion: Motion passes (1 against, 5 abstentions)</p>	

12	<p>Separate Coursework Deadlines</p> <p>Karmel Carey explained that the current rule in which there is no gap between coursework deadlines and the School deadline, made little sense and should be changed.</p> <p>Vote on the motion: Motion passes (unanimously)</p>	
13	<p>Emergency Motion – No Borders</p> <p>David Scheuing proposed that the Union supports the actions of SOAS borders society, showing that everyone has the right to seek refuge.</p> <p>Vote on the Motion: Motion passes (1 abstention)</p>	
14	<p>Emergency Motion – Affiliate with Trans Action for Health</p> <p>Amar Al-Shabandar proposed that the Union affiliates with Trans Action for Health, to further support Trans students in accordance with Union policy.</p> <p>Vote on the Motion: Motion passes (unanimously)</p>	
<p>Any Other Business/Announcements</p> <p>There were none</p>		