

UGM AGENDA

Time:	18:00
Date:	5 th November 2015
Location:	JCR

Agenda

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Minutes & Matters Arising
- 3) Report from Sabbatical Officers
- 4) Report from executive officers
- 5) Motion for a referendum on Occupy SOAS
- 6) Voter Registration Drive
- 7) No confidence in NUS President Megan Dunn
- 8) Rethink Trident
- 9) Remembrance Acts
- 10) No Borders to Education
- 11) 30 Minute Idle Time-Out For School Workstations
- 12) No to course and job cuts
- 13) Pursue disciplinary action against Senior Managers for intimidation of staff and students
- 14) Diversity of Tactics
- 15) Support our staff
- 16) Regarding Tim Miller, Chair of the SOAS Board of Trustees
- 17) No political disciplinaries
- 18) Emergency Motions

UGM MOTIONS – 5th November 2015

Title:	Motion for a referendum on Occupy SOAS
Proposer:	Adwoa Darko
Secunder:	Zain Awan
This Union Notes:	
<p>1.1 A group by the name of Occupy SOAS have been occupying the Brunei Suite since the 6th October in response to course cuts, potential job losses and outsourcing.</p> <p>1.2 The group have 6 non-negotiable demands which they say must be met before they leave the Brunei Suite.</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>2.1 That the occupation is undemocratic, exclusive and not reflective of our diverse student body.</p> <p>2.2 That the occupation was strategically unwise and essentially a waste of time.</p> <p>2.3 That Occupy SOAS disproportionately affects SOAS' BME community, alienates them and has been racially insensitive.</p>	
This Union Resolves:	
<p>3.1 A referendum should be held asking the student body whether they believe that Occupy SOAS should continue occupying in the Brunei Suite.</p> <p>3.2 That we should look into more inclusive and transparent activism in order to solve issues with management.</p>	

Title:	Voter Registration Drive
Proposer:	Will Armston-Sheret
Seconder:	Nisha Sarojini Mahanty Phillipps
This Union Notes:	
<p>1.1 The change over to Individual Electoral Registration in December 2015 is set to wipe up to 1.8 Million Voters off the electoral register</p> <p>1.2 Within London an estimated 400,000 voters could be lost</p> <p>1.3 This change will have a particular impact on the numbers of Students and Young workers registered</p> <p>1.4 The switch is being done a year ahead of schedule to and could impact the result of the Mayoral elections in London</p> <p>1.5 The new electoral register will be used in a boundary review, and will make constituencies less representative if thousands of voters are missing</p> <p>1.6 All SOAS students who are Commonwealth of EU citizens with a London postcode are eligible to vote in the Mayoral elections.</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>2.1 Despite SOAS' reputation for being a political there are many people unaware of this change.</p> <p>2.2 Many international Students are not aware they are able to vote in the Mayoral elections</p>	
This Union Resolves:	
<p>3.1 To actively publicise the change in IER and help with registration, particularly ahead of the December 1st deadline for the new electoral register which will be used in the boundary review.</p> <p>3.2 To promote registration for those eligible to vote in the May 2016 Mayoral elections.</p> <p>3.3 To generally promote voter registration going forward, and work with the university to ensure all SOAS students eligible to vote are on the electoral register.</p>	

Title:	No confidence in NUS President Megan Dunn
Proposer:	Tom King
Seconder:	Hannah Slydel
This Union Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) that Megan Dunn is the elected President of the National Union of Students 2) that NUS has policy opposing Prevent and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 3) That these policies were passed at various autonomous NUS liberation conferences, including the Black Students Campaign 4) that Megan Dunn withdrew support for the anti-Prevent "Students not Suspects" Tour 5) that campaigning against the Prevent is a priority for SOAS Students' Union 6) that Megan Dunn changed NUS policy without any democratic consultation 7) that Megan Dunn has failed to respond to a letter from the Union's Co-Presidents regarding her decision on Prevent 	
This Union Believes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) that this is symptomatic of NUS' repeated concern for the so-called 'normal student' at the expense of Muslim students and other students who are structurally marginalised 2) this is rooted in a colonialist mentality that the normal student is a white, secular man, not affected by technologies of power and state apparatuses 3) A national union should be fighting alongside its most marginalised members and calling out violence in all of its manifestations, not campaigning for a slight reduction within an oppressive fees system or for cheaper pints 4) that the climbdown in NUS' opposition to Prevent demonstrated weakness in the face of increasing Government pressure on organisations which are opposing this Islamophobic agenda, when what is needed is continued defiance 5) that instead of providing the national leadership we needed, Megan Dunn's decision has undermined the key means by which NUS was opposing Prevent and weakened the work of students' unions on our campuses 7) that decisions about policy should be taken in line with the proper democratic procedures and should not undermine the autonomy of the liberation campaigns. 	
This Union Resolves:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) to express that we have no confidence in NUS President Megan Dunn 	

Title:	Rethink Trident
Proposer:	Nobuhiko Ono I34087
Seconder:	Camilla Rechchad 611431

This Union Notes:

1. The British government intends to replace Trident, its current nuclear weapons system.
2. Estimates for the cost of a replacement over its 30 year lifespan are in excess of £ 100 billion.
3. Public opinion remains consistently against the replacement of Britain's nuclear weapons, while senior military figures say that it is 'completely useless' in modern warfare.
4. The recent economic crisis has prompted massive cuts to public spending, with tuition fees lifted to £9000 and 1 in 10 libraries closing. Meanwhile, the number of people using food banks has tripled over the past year alone.
5. A single Trident missile is capable of delivering a payload of 100 megatons, in excess of 5 times more powerful than the bomb that killed at least 100,000 at Hiroshima.
6. The UK is a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); replacing the Trident system would be in direct contravention of the obligations established under it.

This Union Believes:

1. At a time of widespread economic hardship, government spending should not prioritise a weapon of mass destruction that we cannot afford.
2. The money intended to be spent on Trident could be put to better use, for safeguarding our NHS, reducing tuition fees, or funding the construction of new, affordable homes.
3. The use of nuclear weapons in any circumstance would be fundamentally wrong, since their only capability is indiscriminate killing of a civilian population and instilling terror.
4. The UK should fulfil its obligations as a signatory to the NPT.

This Union Resolves:

1. Maintain an active stance against nuclear weapons and the replacement of Trident.
2. Support students taking action against nuclear weapons.
3. Publish a statement expressing this.
4. Become a signatory to Rethink Trident, calling on the government to cancel Trident replacement.

Title:	Remembrance Acts
Proposer:	Nobuhiko Ono I34087
Seconder:	Camilla Rechchad 61143
This Union Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The example of the soldiers and artists such as Siegfried Sassoon who turned their experience of war into the Peace Pledge Union that today raises money for the civilian victims of war through the White Poppy appeal. 2. Peace News has represented the Peace Pledge Union and War Resisters International. 3. The legacy of the Labour's founding fathers Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald is continued through Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Vice-President Jeremy Corbyn. 	
This Union Believes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both the 100th anniversary of the First World War and events of the near present demonstrate the urgency of acting for peace. 	
This Union Resolves:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SOAS union will help make the White Poppy available for the remembrance season. 2. SOAS union will help make Peace Pledge News available for the remembrance season. 	

Title:	No Borders to Education
Proposer:	Alistair Rooms 565576
Seconder:	Hannah Slydel

This Union Notes:

- 1.1 A conversation started in September about how SOAS could respond to the so called 'refugee crisis' through showing solidarity in an academic and practical way.
- 1.2 SOAS decided to create 7 scholarships (4 undergraduate, 3 postgraduate) specifically for 'refugees'.
- 1.3 This move is in part a response by universities to create scholarships for refugees. (Warwick, York, UEL, Keele, Sussex)
- 1.4 Some universities have merely created Fee Waivers; this is the model that SOAS is currently pursuing.
- 1.5 SOAS originally planned to procure the living and maintenance funds for these through fundraising.
- 1.6 This would leave those with a temporary protection status who wish to apply having to cover the full costs of living in London as they would have no access to student finance.
- 1.7 Furthermore, other universities' scholarships contain the caveat that you must be Syrian to apply. We feel this excludes people from other countries who have also faced hardship.
- 1.8 Although these scholarships were created as a response to the current 'refugee crisis', issues around migration, displacement and access to education are not new and will be not resolved any time soon.

This Union Believes:

- 1.1 All refugees no matter what nationality should be eligible for SOAS 'refugee scholarships'.
- 1.2 We believe that SOAS should cover the living costs of these scholarships in order to make them fair.
- 1.3 To fundraise for essential living costs for vulnerable people is irresponsible and unsustainable.

1.4 We believe that there should be a broad interpretation of the term refugee, including Asylum seekers, those with humanitarian protection, those with leave to remain as a result of an asylum claim and as a result of Article 8 and those considered stateless.

1.5 They should be offered on a sustainable yearly basis as opposed to a one off.

1.6 The scholarships should include foundation level courses as many applicants have to do language access courses in order to apply.

This Union Resolves:

1.1 To pressure the school to ensure a broad interpretation of who is considered a refugee.

1.2 To call on SOAS to provide living costs for these scholarships from their annual budget.

1.3 To make sure that these scholarships are implemented before December so they are available to the next years' students.

1.4 To make sure SOAS offers these scholarships on a yearly basis.

1.5 The scholarships are extended to cover foundation level courses as well.

Title:	30 Minute Idle Time-Out For School Workstations
Proposer:	Hannah Slydel
Seconder:	Zain Dada
This Union Notes:	
<p>1) That currently SOAS computers in computer rooms and the Library remain logged in indefinitely if they are left.</p> <p>2) That there is a shortage of computers particularly during exam periods.</p> <p>3) That logging in to a computer and then leaving it logged in without using it means the computer cannot be used by anyone else</p> <p>4) The School's Library and Information Systems department used to have a 30 minute idle time out system when the computers were on Windows XP, which did not cause many complaints but freed up idle computers for other users.</p> <p>5) That the library have been asked by a number of students to reinstate this.</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>1) That anything that could temporarily take you away from your logged in workstation (finding books / printing / going to the toilet / cigarette & coffee breaks) can be achieved within 30 minutes.</p> <p>2) That the workstations are for all students and therefore it is reasonable to not expect to reserve one when not using it for more than thirty minutes.</p>	
This Union Resolves:	
<p>1) To agree to LIS reinstating the 30 minute idle time-out and log off on all SOAS shared workstations in the Library and Computer Room.</p> <p>2) To monitor feedback on this and consult with the Library if excessive complaints come in.</p> <p>3) To work with LIS to publicise this widely and make sure students are aware of this new policy.</p>	



Title:	No to course and job cuts
Proposer:	Tom King
Seconder:	Hannah Slydel
This Union Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) that SOAS now plans to cut £6.5 million from its budget 2) that cuts on this scale will inevitably lead to course being closed and jobs being lost 3) that SOAS ran a surplus of £1 million in 2014/15 4) that this surplus was made despite significant under-recruitment of both undergraduate and postgraduate taught students 5) that SOAS has run surpluses for 7 out of the last 8 years 	
This Union Believes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) that these cuts are unnecessary and will put the future of SOAS as a unique, important and special institution at risk 2) that SOAS' specialist languages and niche courses are most at risk 3) that no member of staff should be forced from their job 4) that any Curriculum Review must be about improving the academic experience, not shutting down courses 5) that changes on the scale proposed require wide and meaningful consultation with the SOAS community 	
This Union Resolves:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) to condemn the £6.5 million cuts plan 2) to reaffirm our opposition any compulsory redundancies 3) to call for the Board of Trustees to put forward a vision for SOAS that is not based on inevitable decline 4) that SOAS must ensure full, meaningful consultation that allow students to shape the proposals 5) to call for Valerie Amos to hold an open forum with students to explain and discuss the plans 	

Title:	Pursue disciplinary action against Senior Managers for intimidation of staff and students
Proposer:	Hamish Quinlan Anderson 625365@soas.ac.uk
Seconder:	Dimitri Cautain 593573@soas.ac.uk

This Union Notes:

That on Wednesday 28th October 2015, Mr Sandy Nicoll was suspended from his job in the library on information services department, on grounds of alleged 'gross misconduct'.

That suspension is a neutral act under the disciplinary procedure for support, research, teaching & scholarship and casual staff, but is required 'in exceptional circumstances' only.

That the allegation of gross misconduct is seriously disproportionate to any facts that can be established on Mr. Nicoll's actions on Tuesday 27th November 2015.

That on the 4th November 2015, the suspension was dropped with immediate effects and the gross misconduct allegation and threat of dismissal was also dropped.

That senior management is spearheading a new outsourcing program is being planned and soon implemented.

This Union Believes:

That senior management allowed for such excessive disciplinary actions against Mr. Nicoll, a trade union representative for Unison.

That the suspension and allegations of gross misconduct were lifted by senior management following resistance by students and workers including an open letter to Baroness Amos signed by 182 SOAS academics on November 4th.

That this action against Mr. Nicoll but not other workers exercising their right to peaceful protest on Tuesday 27th October 2015, indicates a direct victimisation of a vocal trade union representative.

That this action against Mr. Nicolls was an act of intimidation against all workers and students at SOAS wishing to exercise their right to peaceful protest.

This Union Resolves:

That a working group be set up to consult with affected workers of this act of



intimidation in the aim of identifying disciplinary actions to take against senior management.

That the students union executive call on senior management to write an official apology to all staff for continued acts of intimidation and threats to workers' job security and fundamental freedoms.

Title:	Diversity of Tactics
Proposer:	Sophie Colell (610703)
Seconder:	Anna Fox (633858)
This Union Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student body has a proud history of campaigning. 2. This campaigning has seen a historical use of diverse tactics. 3. Some of the greatest achievements brought about by this union have been enabled by the coordination of a variety of tactics. 4. Actions taken by students outside of the union structure are not and cannot be regulated by the Union. 	
This Union Believes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are members of the union but also autonomous actors outside of the union structures. 2. Student in the UoL are benefitting from direct actions taken by SOAS student (i.e. free use of senate house library was achieved through the SOAS library being occupied in 1999 - date to be confirmed). 3. That autonomous actions from within the student body have given way to and thus enabled positive change by other actors within the structure. 	
This Union Resolves:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To be a space that fosters a constructive environment for students to explore a diversity in tactics to propagate change. 2. To respect the autonomy of students taking diverse forms of political action/engagements. 	



Title:	Support our staff
Proposer:	Tom King
Seconder:	Hannah Slydel
This Union Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) that as well as impacting on the courses we study, the cuts proposal will have a direct impact on SOAS staff and their jobs 2) that students and staff have regularly stood together in campaigning on campus and at a national level 3) that the Students' Union is already working with UCU and UNISON to oppose the cuts 3) that many staff - for example, cleaners and fractionals - already see their labour undervalued, casualised and informalised on our campus and have had to fight for improved conditions 4) that it was only through industrial action that the cleaners and fractionals were able to win concessions 5) that staff may need to take industrial action to defend their jobs 	
This Union Believes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) that student-staff solidarity is vital to building successful campaigns 2) that industrial action is a necessary and important tactic 3) that academics and support staff should not face their jobs being cut 4) that UNISON and UCU are our obvious allies as fellow unions on campus 5) that working together with staff unions will be essential to preventing cuts 	
This Union Resolves:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) to support staff as they fight against job cuts 2) to build campaigning tactics to unite students and staff 3) to express our support for staff industrial action 	



Title:	Regarding Tim Miller, Chair of the SOAS Board of Trustees
Proposer:	Marta Garcia Aliaga (597343)
Seconder:	Imran Jamal (271155)

This Union Notes:

- 1.1) that the Board of Trustees is chaired by Tim Miller
- 1.2) that Tim Miller's background is in market-driven economic development (which has proven to be detrimental to the communities in which Standar Chartered operates), and that he has no background in higher education. This results in a disconnect between our academic community and those most responsible for its management (eg its budget).
- 1.3) that Tim Miller has been and will continue to be one of the most significant obstacles to bringing the cleaners in house.
- 1.4) that Tim Miller's mandate is to chair meetings of the Board of Trustees six times a year; that he grossly oversteps this mandate by interfering in the day to day running of the school.
- 1.5) that Tim Miller has been instrumental in setting the unreasonable and unfounded target of GBP 6.5m in cuts.
- 1.6) that in the last 7 years SOAS has only run into a deficit in one year (of GBP 400k in FY 2013-4, which represented 0.6% of the budget in that year). Yet despite this, the Governing Body/ Board of Trustees is seeking to implement disproportionate cuts of GBP 6.5m (itself only a nice-to-have buffer against future potential mismanagement, and not a obligatory sum).
- 1.7) SOAS ran into a deficit because its' shortsighted planning of the purchase and development of the north block of Senate House, which happened under Tim Miller's leadership
- 1.8) that students are not the only ones who hold a poor opinion of Tim Miller, but also SOAS staff, as per the recent interview with Stephen Chan in the SOAS Spirit.

This Union Believes:

- 2.1) that Tim Miller does not hold the necessary skill sets, characteristics, and values required to fulfil the mandate of Chair of the Board of Trustees
- 2.2) that Tim Miller has been an impediment to the positive development of the SOAS community
- 2.3) that Tim Miller is instrumental in generating divisions between different cohorts and stakeholders within the SOAS community



2.4) that Tim Miller's association with SOAS produces a negative public image of the school which is harmful.

This Union Resolves:

3.1) to pressure the Governing Body to remove its head, Tim Miller, from both the Governing Body and any involvement in any SOAS institutions whatsoever.

Title:	No political disciplinarys
Proposer:	Tom King
Seconder:	Hannah Slydel
This Union Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) that Sandy Nicoll was suspended on charges of gross misconduct 2) that these charges and the suspension have now been dropped 3) that Sandy is Secretary of SOAS UNISON branch 4) that Sandy has been a hugely important activist on campus for more than a decade 5) that Sandy has always stood alongside students in struggle 	
This Union Believes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) that the charges against Sandy were clearly ridiculous and politically motivated 2) that this use of disciplinarys is clearly intended to victimise trade unionists and intimidate student and staff from protesting 3) that this is a clear attack on our right to organise collectively on campus 	
This Union Resolves:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) to condemn the use of disciplinarys for political ends 2) to call on management to issue an apology to Sandy Nicoll and the SOAS community 3) to call for management to provide urgent answers as to why these charges and suspensions were used in this way 	