

# UGM AGENDA

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|---|-------------------|
| Time:   | 15:00             |
| Date:   | 17th January 2019 |
| Location:   | JCR               |
| Chair:  | Mohamed Salhi     |
| <p>Agenda</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome &amp; intro</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Minutes from last UGM 20/11/18</a> &amp; matters arising</li> <li>3. Co-Presidents reports</li> <li>4. Update on outcome of NSS Referendum</li> <li>5. Motion #1: Introduce a uniform bin system across the school</li> <li>6. Motion #2: Allow students to access the content of the S. U's meetings with SOAS management</li> <li>7. Motion #3: Reaffirm commitment to Justice for Workers</li> <li>8. Motion #4: To continue supporting students who have been victimised by SOAS</li> <li>9. Motion #5: Funds for Yarls Wood Demo</li> <li>10. Motion #6: Trans Mental Health Support</li> <li>11. Motion #7: Creation of a fund to support PGR to attend conferences</li> <li>12. Motion #8: Against the library cuts</li> <li>13. Motion #9: Stop the Registry (fees &amp; scholarships team) sanctioning late payment by blocking access to BLE and learning resources</li> <li>14. Motion #10: Demand big containers in the refectory for sauces and salt/ pepper</li> <li>15. Motion #11: Install Ecosia as default search engine on all SOAS computers</li> <li>16. Motion #12: Remove non-metal cutlery in the refectory</li> <li>17. AOB</li> </ol> |                   |

## UGM MOTIONS – 17th January 2019

### Motion #1

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|--|--|
| Title:   | Introduce a uniform bin system across the school |
| Proposer:  | Ines Rodier - 652165                             |
| Seconders:   | Anna Gretton - 635820                            |
| This Union Notes:  |  |
| <p>1.1 SOAS has different rubbish bins across the school, making it difficult to know where to throw rubbish</p> <p>1.2 Different types of bins are not respected, and people mix their rubbish all the time</p> <p>1.3 There are only 3 food waste bins across the S.U.</p> <p>1.4 There was a bin trial which had good, clear bins (in the JCR &amp; hallway) - but this didn't lead to them being rolled out across the school</p> <p>1.5 The school is being resistant to rolling out bins due to financial reasons</p> <p>1.6 There have been lots of UGM motions in the past related to waste &amp; environmental concerns, which have not been properly adopted</p> |  |
| This Union Believes:   |  |
| <p>2.1 Recycling is a basic responsibility we have towards the environment</p> <p>2.2 Consistent bins with recycling/ general waste/ food waste make it more likely that people will use them properly</p> <p>2.3 Logical distribution around the school make them easier to use</p>   |  |
| This Union Resolves:   |  |
| <p>3.1 For the S.U. to pay for 10 bins (with recycling, food waste &amp; general waste sections) to have in the shop &amp; bar</p> <p>3.2 This to be part of an S.U. campaign to pressure the school into introducing bins across the school, and making this a priority</p> <p>3.3 To also run an awareness campaign educating students about how to use the bins properly (i.e. what is recyclable etc.)</p>   |  |

### Motion #2

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|------------|--|
| Title:     | Allow students to access the content of the S. U's meetings with SOAS management |
| Proposer:  | Valeria Racu (640629)  |
| Seconders: | Malena Bastida Antich (639858)   |

This Union Notes:

- 1.1 Co-presidents and the union executive regularly meet SOAS management, including senior members of staff, to discuss important developments happening in the institution.
- 1.2 The student body is largely unaware of these meetings, their subject matter and the outcomes of the discussions.
- 1.3 These meetings are currently not being recorded or minuted. Their content is not accessible to the student body. It is also inaccessible to members of the exec who might have been unable to attend the meetings.
- 1.4 SOAS management does not engage directly (open forums, inviting student observers to meetings...) with the student body regarding important issues. Students are consulted via the students' union or through email consultations once discussions have already occurred. This makes it impossible for students to make their concerns timely and relevant.
- 1.5 The administrative structure of the institution is complicated, and management are faceless bureaucrats to a large amount of the student body. The only body we directly rely on is the Students' Union.
- 1.6 There is no record of the meetings with management to know when discussions about a given issue have started, what was their agenda and how it might have evolved.
- 1.7 SOAS management has taken advantage of the lack of information within the student body to take arbitrary decisions in the past.

This Union Believes:

- 2.1 SOAS and all academic institutions should uphold standards of transparency, accountability and student participation in current affairs.
- 2.2 Students deserve to know who governs their institution and what their stance is on important matters.
- 2.3 The Students' Union and its elected members are granted representative powers by the student body. Students should be able to hold them accountable and know their positioning as a union regarding current issues and management decisions.
- 2.3 Students need to access relevant information in order to engage with the issues faced by the institutions on an equal basis in regard to management. Transparency and easier access to information would foster student participation at SOAS.
- 2.4 The fact that members of management and the Students' Union do not consent to share discussions about the future of the university with the SOAS community at large is alarming. It demonstrates the level of transparency and accountability with which SOAS currently operates as an institution.

This Union Resolves:

- 3.1 Executive members of the Students' Union should record/minute meetings involving SOAS management staff and make this content accessible to the student

body via the S. U's website. If students wish to sit on these meetings as observers, they should be allowed to do so.

### Motion #3

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Title:  | Reaffirm commitment to Justice for Workers |
| Proposer:   | Malena Bastida Antich (639858)             |
| Seconder:   | Valeria Racu (640629)                      |
| This Union Notes:   |  |
| <p>1.1 The campaign was key in bringing formerly outsourced workers in-house</p> <p>1.2 Just because the workers are in-house it does not mean that the issues they face have been resolved</p>   |  |
| This Union Believes:  |  |
| <p>2.1 There is a continued need to support the campaign as workers still face discrimination</p> <p>2.2 SOAS has failed to deliver their promises i.e. there are still no English classes, outsourced workers in the canteen, workers still do not have regular meetings with their managers</p> <p>2.3 There is a need for sustained pressure to ensure that workers are treated with dignity and respect</p> <p>2.4 That there needs to be a review of how the in-housing process has aligned with expectations of the workers and the wider community</p> <p>2.5 That the (lack of) dignity and respect with which SOAS treats its staff is an issue of solidarity and concern for the Union.</p> |  |
| This Union Resolves:  |  |
| 3.1 To stand with the other unions in the continued fight for dignity and respect for all workers.  |  |

### Motion #4

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Title:  | To continue supporting students who have been victimised by SOAS |
| Proposer:   | Imran Jamal 271155   |
| Seconder:   | Valeria Racu (640629),   |
| This Union Notes:   |  |
| <p>1.1 The role of the Union is to protect students from harassment, intimidation and victimisation from the School;</p> <p>1.2 As a body that protects students it is politically and morally important to support students who are currently facing unfair disciplinarys.</p> |  |

This Union Believes:

- 2.1 That the School's disciplinary of students from last academic year are politically motivated;
- 2.2 That the School has unfairly undertaken disciplinary hearings against students which the School have repeatedly broken their own procedural policies.

This Union Resolves:

- 3.1 To continue providing support to students facing the disciplinaries;
- 3.2 To financially contribute to the legal fund(s) of student(s) who are or face suspension to fight the judgement;
- 3.3 To have officers of the Students' Union involved in disciplinary cases to work with and for students undergoing disciplinaries;
- 3.4 To condemn the School for the farcical process.

**Motion #5**

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|--|--------------------------------|
| Title:   | Funds for Yarl's Wood Demo     |
| Proposer:  | Imran Jamal 271155             |
| Seconder:  | Malena Bastida Antich (639858) |
| This Union Notes:  |                                |
| 1.1 That this and previous governments' policies of migration detention is racist  |                                |
| This Union Believes:   |                                |
| 2.1 That it is needed to put pressure on all institutions involved in order to put an end to these practices                                     |                                |
| 2.2 Migrants and refugees should be at the forefront of the struggle and to do that free transport is required for them to travel to Yarl's Wood |                                |
| This Union Resolves:   |                                |
| 3.1 To continue providing support to groups supporting the fight against migration detention   |                                |
| 3.2 To financially contribute towards the coach cost of the Yarl's Wood Demo on 16th March   |                                |

### Motion #6

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|--|--|
| Title:   | Trans Mental Health Support              |
| Proposer:  | Sonja Shah (trans@soas.ac.uk)            |
| Seconder:  | Peadar Connolly-Davey (lgbtq@soas.ac.uk) |
| This Union Notes:  |  |
| 1.1 That the union is committed to creating a positive environment in academic and social life for all students, including trans students.   |  |
| 1.2 That the union's role is to support students where the school's services fall short.   |  |
| This Union Believes:   |  |
| 2.1 That trans students should be given specific and appropriate support guided by their needs.  |  |
| 2.2 That there are specific mental health needs that trans people face to which cis counsellors without intensive training may not be sensitive to.  |  |
| 2.3 That 'Advice and Wellbeing' has been unable to provide adequate support, including limited availability in urgent cases, insensitivity to trans identities and traumas, use of abusive terms ('tran, a trans'), general lack of knowledge and sensitivities. |  |
| 2.4 That the trans officer or any other SU officers should not and cannot give adequate counselling.   |  |
| 1.5 That trans people of colour face transphobia and racism.   |  |
| This Union Resolves:   |  |
| 3.1 To hire an external counsellor who is a trans person, and ideally also a person of colour, or who has extensive experience in trans counselling.   |  |
| 3.2 To have regular (at least monthly) individual sessions open to all members of the SOAS lgbtqia+ community.   |  |

### Motion #7

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Title:   | Creation of a fund to support PGR to attend conferences |
| Proposer:  | Kira Brenner 621042                                     |
| Seconder:  | Gabriel Huland 657377                                   |
| This Union Notes:  |   |
| 1.1 SOAS grants PhD researchers a one-time conference grant of a maximum of £500 to attend or present at a conference in their third or fourth year. This sum cannot be split amongst many conferences, and is limited to third and fourth year students. The lack of support available limits the number of conferences PGRs can attend, as they are expected to use their own funds to attend conferences. |   |

This Union Believes:

2.1 That participating and presenting research in conferences is a core part of the PhD experience. It is an opportunity for PGR to join the broader scientific community, receive feedback on their research, and make connections with other scholars. It is also an excellent opportunity for SOAS to enhance its impact in society as an institution.

This Union Resolves:

3.1 To create a dedicated fund for PhD researchers to attend conferences. We would like this fund to be allocated at £5000, which would allow 100 PhD researchers £50 of conference funding. This will allow PhD researchers to attend some of the many conferences in and around London, without having to forego the allocation from the School.

### Motion #8

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|-----------|--------------------------|
| Title:    | Against the library cuts |
| Proposer: | Gabriel Huland 657377    |
| Seconder: | Hashim Rashid 655813     |

This Union Notes:

1.1 As part of the so-called restructuring process, SOAS is planning on reassigning, reducing, and eliminating a number of positions. The library is one of the most affected areas in this plan. According to the #SaveSOASLibrary campaign, 4-5 subject librarians will be cut, as well as e-resources staff, digitisation staff, and most archives team will be gone.

This Union Believes:

2.1 The library is one of the most significant SOAS assets, as it is part of the UK National Research Library for Asia, Africa and the Middle East. It is a core part of the academic experience for university students, scholars, and members of staff. The proposed staff reduction will negatively affect the maintenance of the collection and the support offered to library users.

This Union Resolves:

3.1 Join the campaign #SaveSOASLibrary and create awareness among students about the consequences of the proposed cuts.

### Motion #9

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|--|--|
| Title:   | Stop the Registry (fees & scholarships team) sanctioning late payment by blocking access to BLE and learning resources |
| Proposer:  | Saly Touré 652704  |
| Seconder:  | Valeria Racu (640629), Malena Bastida Antich (639858)  |
| This Union Notes:  |  |
| <p>1.1 Currently the fees team is able to stall registration and suspend BLE access if a student has not been able to pay at least 50% of their fees by late September.</p> <p>1.2 Students are not notified before their access to BLE is suspended.</p> <p>1.3 Access to BLE is blocked even if the student has paid to the best of their ability at the time. The fees office is reluctant to offer alternative instalment plans.</p> <p>?1.4 Students will need to pay their year in full in order to pass. When their access to BLE has been blocked for some time, students end up paying for a service they have been partly denied access to</p> <p>1.5 Students affected can request a provisional access to BLE by contacting the admin services of their department(s). This is a lengthy and stressful process. Most students are unaware of this possibility because it is not mentioned by the registry. The fees office insists that BLE access can only be restored upon full payment.</p> |  |
| This Union Believes:   |  |
| <p>2.1 Students from working class backgrounds or experiencing financial hardship, if unable to meet the payment deadlines, should not be further penalised by suspending their access to educational resources.</p> <p>2.2 The registry should not be encouraging risky financial behaviours such as short-term borrowing. Most of the students affected by this issue already had to take on important debts to access higher education.</p> <p>2.2 Making arrangements for poorer students is not unfair to students who are financially able to meet payment deadlines. Putting students through unnecessary stress and guilt for their inability to pay their fees on time is unfair.</p> <p>2.3 Most students facing financial difficulties try to pay their fees to the best of their ability and would agree to a scheduled payment plan with smaller instalments.</p>   |  |
| This Union Resolves:   |  |

3.1 The Registry (Fees & Scholarships team) should not have the power to restrict access to BLE by stalling the registration process of students. The Fees & Scholarships team should arrange and agree on realistic instalment plans for students who are financially unable to meet the fee payment deadlines.

### Motion #10

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|--|--|
| Title:   | Demand big containers in the refectory for sauces and salt/ pepper |
| Proposer:  | Inès Rodier 652165   |
| Secunder:  | Soniya Nahata 656473   |
| This Union Notes:  |  |
| 1.1 The refectory has recently replaced small container of sauces by small individual sachets, which each cost money |  |
| 1.2 Salt and pepper are also distributed in individual sachets, these are free                                       |  |
| This Union Believes:   |  |
| 2.1 This represents an enormous and unnecessary use of plastic and paper   |  |
| This Union Resolves:   |  |
| 3.1 That the refectory put in place a system of big container for sauces   |  |
| 3.2 That the refectory replaces small sachets of salt and pepper by salt and pepper cellars                          |  |

### Motion #11

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|--|---|
| Title:   | Install Ecosia as default search engine on all SOAS computers |
| Proposer:  | Sarah Bittner - 666827  |
| Secunder:  | Sam Griffin - 666683.   |
| This Union Notes:  |   |
| 1.1 Climate change   |   |
| 1.2 Installing the search engine is free of charge   |   |
| 1.3 Ecosia plants trees!   |   |
| This Union Believes:   |   |
| 2.1 That this is a cost-effective way for SOAS to counter effects of deforestation and lower global CO2 emissions  |   |
| 2.2 Supports goals of SOAS Environmental Movement<br><a href="https://www.ecosia.org/">https://www.ecosia.org/</a> |   |

This Union Resolves:

3.1 Introduce idea with relevant department (IT?)

**Motion #12**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Title:  | Remove non-metal cutlery in the refectory |
| Proposer:   | Inès Rodier 652165                        |
| Secunder:   | Soniya Nahata 656473                      |
| This Union Notes:   |   |
| 1.1 The refectory provides single-use compostable cutleries<br>1.2 The refectory does not provide enough metal cutlery  |   |
| This Union Believes:  |   |
| 2.1 single-use cutleries produce a big amount of unnecessary waste<br>2.2 providing metal cutlery is a more eco-responsible action                              |   |
| This Union Resolves:  |   |
| 3.1 The distribution of single-use cutlery should stop in the refectory<br>3.2 To replace this cutlery, more metal cutlery should be accessible to the students |   |