



UGM Minutes 13th October 2017

Time:	17:00
Date:	13th October 2017
Location:	Atrium
Agenda	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome 2. Minutes & Matters Arising 3. Reports from officers 4. Fight for Free Education 5. SOAS Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy 6. Eliminating Plastic Cutlery at SOAS S.U. Shop & Bar 7. Using SOAS Main Building at weekends 8. Securing and improving student representation during restructuring 9. Emergency Motions 	
Motion details: https://soasunion.org/democracy/ugm-motions/	

REF	ACTION/ DISCUSSION	NOTES
1	<p>The chair (Nuz Fatima, Goldsmiths Students' Union Democracy Coordinator) introduced herself and gave an overview of how the meeting would proceed.</p> <p>Two emergency motions were brought forward to the chair, and she okayed them to be included at the end of the UGM.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support for the Academic Senate Motion 2. Halt the changes to Doctoral school student spaces 	
2	<p style="text-align: center;">Co-President Reports</p> <p>Nisha Philipps [NP], Co-President Democracy & Education gave an overview of progress – Student Rep trainings, Freshers Fortnight activities</p> <p>Halimo Hussain [HH], Co-President Equality & Liberation gave an overview of progress – work being done towards developing a BME mentorship scheme, activities organised for Freshers Fortnight, Positionality workshop organisation,</p>	<p>90 second speeches</p> <p>5 minutes for questions – no questions asked</p>



	<p>Student Rep training to include decolonising SOAS, Black History Month</p> <p>Mehdi Baraka [MB] co-president Activities & Events gave an overview of progress - including supporting students to run their own events, supporting room bookings, campaigning for more S.U. space with Estates, activities organised for Freshers Fortnight, Society president trainings, and gave a call out to students to get in contact if they want to organise any events</p> <p>Dimitri Cautain [DC] co-president welfare & campaigns gave an overview of progress – emphasized the huge success by J4W campaign & the need to build on that work, democratise SOAS campaign, supporting other campaigns, Consent workshop progress & work to be done, efforts to set up a Welfare Network</p>	
3	<p>Executive Committee Reports</p> <p>Max Gleissner [MG] – co-officer Campaigns, outlined Community Week of Action coming up to showcase campaigns & create strategizing + networking opportunities</p> <p>Robyn Waite [RW] – Postgraduate research Officer outlined all the Research students events during Freshers Fortnight & RSA election</p> <p>Fran Floris [FF] - Women's officer, has set up a women's mailing list, called out to women to come, Friday & Monday office hours in room 238, happy to help support, Setting up a FB women's network</p> <p>Hamish Anderson [HA] Academic Affairs co-officer – office hours drop-in Mondays in Room 238 11-12:30, focusing on capping & scrapping library fines, working on supporting reforming mitigating circumstances procedure</p> <p>Valeria Racu [VR] – Working Class Students co-officer, setting up a working class network as space where we can talk about class issues, created links with Shakira Martin from NUS working on poverty commission, wants to re-introduce weekly breakfasts for self-identifying working class students, developing working class caucuses, a call out for students to</p>	60 second speeches



	<p>reach out, in the process of sorting out office hours drop-in sessions</p> <p>Pauline Ankunda [PA] – Entertainment officer, helping to organise an event coming up on October 27th with POC officer for black history month, call out if students want support organising events</p> <p>Tom Balderstone [TB] – LGBTQ officer, outlined things organised during Freshers Fortnight, highlighted LGBTQ society as a way to organise welfare & advocacy for marginalised students, has created a marginalised students survey to help figure out how to get further support for students, is developing a mailing list for all the events happening throughout the year</p> <p>Jess Barnes [JB] - Trans & Gender Identity Officer, working to develop Trans caucuses, will have office hours, working with TB, promoting inter-London trans events, is part of the LGBTQ society, wants to have more connection with other University Trans groups, also did a plug for the upcoming Justice for Dana event at LSE</p> <p>Anna Gretton [AG] – Environment Officer (written report read out by NP) Lots of freshers fortnight events, encouraged students to join the SOAS Environmental Movement facebook page to keep up to date with upcoming events, outlined No More Pollution campaign</p>	
4	NP outlined that there are no recordings, either video or audio, of UGMs	
5	<p>Fight for Free Education</p> <p>Speech For: Motion Proposer HA outlined marketization of higher education</p> <p>Amendment of the motion of the date of the national demo from 14th to 15th of November</p> <p>No speech against</p>	<p>Motion</p> <p>Passed</p>
6	SOAS Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy	Motion passed

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	<p>Speech For: Motion Proposer Alexandra Abdelwahab [AA] outlined the need for a clear policy related to sexual violence & misconduct, to make this information</p> <p>No amendments</p> <p>No speech against</p>	
7	<p>Eliminating Plastic Cutlery at SOAS S.U. Shop & Bar</p> <p>Speech For: Motion Proposer Sugandha Paramar [SP] outlined how terrible plastic is for the environment & impact of BPA in plastic on health, and the other options that are available instead</p> <p>Question about how to condemn one-use plastic cutlery elsewhere</p> <p>SP said we can be very vocal and public about our own policies</p> <p>No Amendments</p> <p>No speeches against</p>	Motion Passed
8	<p>Using SOAS Main Building at weekends</p> <p>Speech For: Motion Proposer Saly Toure [ST] made an argument for keeping the Main Building open during the weekend and that the school pays for extra security rather than the Students' Union (as it has been under Boygues), and outlined how this would be helpful for student groups & local campaigns/ groups</p> <p>No questions</p> <p>No amendments</p> <p>No speeches against</p>	Motion Passed
9	<p>Securing and improving student representation during restructuring</p> <p>Speech For: NP outlined context of restructuring and how that has threatened student representation</p>	Motions Passed



	<p>Question about how we have access to info about what is going on</p> <p>→ NP spoke about how there are ongoing informal discussions about things that are going on, but that in general the Union is not adequately briefed or informed about changes. She said that proper board meetings will start next week</p> <p>No speeches against</p>	
10	<p>EMERGENCY MOTION</p> <p>In support of the Academic Senate motion</p> <p>Speech For: Motion proposer Prema Goet [PG] outlined the need to support the academic senate motion of October 11th about calling for staff to support the motion related to reviewing how events are organised at SOAS, and how events should consider the concerns of the SOAS community before going ahead with potentially controversial events e.g. Mark Regev event. Thus the S.U. should resolve to support this motion. Further, this calls for SOAS to be accountable for their lack of engagement with the SOAS community.</p> <p>Question – can more time be given for speaker to explain the motion</p> <p>Question – what are the resolutions from the UGM</p> <p>Question – SU should support the motion, call upon students to also get encourage their academics to support the motion.</p> <p>Question – what is the content of the Academic Senate Motion</p> <p>No Amendments</p> <p>No Speeches Against</p>	Motion Passed
11	<p>Halt the Changes to Student Spaces in the Doctoral School</p> <p>Speech For: Motion Second Simon Leese [SL] outlined that a whole floor of the doctoral school is being taken – a floor which has 25 work stations, for 9 administrative staff to come in. The move is to happen Wednesday October 18th, while doctoral students were only informed (and not consulted) on October 12th. The motion resolves to lobby the school to halt the change</p>	Motion Passed



	<p>to doctoral school & ensure that the RSA be consulted in future decisions that will affect doctoral students.</p> <p>Question – has any alternative space been provided?</p> <p>SL - Alternative space suggested has only included the basement, which is much smaller, with no windows! Also work stations have been improperly counted and compensated for. There has been no consultation.</p> <p>Question – is there anything else we can do?</p> <p>SL - Writing a letter with student signatures will help put pressure on Executive Board to rethink the decision!</p> <p>Amendment suggested for students to protest outside the Executive Board meeting October 16th, or on October 18th</p> <p>SL – It would be more effective for this motion to pass without the addition of a threat of student action. Further, we don't want students protesting outside the executive board meeting, as this may negatively influence discussions.</p> <p>Amendment suggested about considering further action, but not specifying what – to be discussed based on the outcome of the meeting on Monday October 16th</p> <p>Amendment: This Union resolves that students will consider further action in the event of an unsatisfactory response following the executive committee meeting on Monday 16th October</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Amendment passes</p>	
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EMERGENCY MOTIONS

In support of the academic senate motion “campus events”

Proposed by: Prema Goet - 604161

Seconded by: Mohammad Marey - 644751

The union notes:

- A motion titled “Campus Events” has been brought to the floor of the last academic senate calling the administration to account for the role it played in organizing the event wherein Mark Regev spoke at SOAS last academic year
- This motion was brought up at the last academic senate meeting on the 11th of October, voting on the motion will potentially open on the 16th of October and close on the 23rd of October
- The event went ahead as planned despite protest from both students and staff against the event
- The event and the ensuing protest resulted in the harassment of SOAS students by non-SOAS protesters, the details of which have been documented and released in a memo, which has not been sufficiently addressed by the SOAS administration
- Details of the motion can be found in the minutes SNT 17/18 1E, when they are made available
- That communications between SOAS and the Israeli Embassy regarding the event at SOAS with Israeli Ambassador Mark Regev, held on the 27th of April 2017, have been released as a result of a Freedom of Information request.
- That the Israeli Embassy, among other organisations, has been involved in coordinating a campaign against BDS on UK campuses.
- That Mark Regev’s presence at SOAS was met with opposition from the student body on the grounds of students welfare in addition to his history as a spokesman for the Israeli prime minister - a position in which he was an apologist for the treatment of Palestinians at the hand of the Israeli state, including the military assaults against the people of Lebanon in 2006 and the people of Gaza in 2008-2009, 2012, and 2014.
- That the SOAS Student Union has adopted the BDS principles through its democratic processes.
- That a referendum of all SOAS staff and students on the question of SOAS support for the Academic Boycott in 2015, returned a yes vote of 73% of the SOAS community.
- That SOAS management has failed to act upon this vote.



- That several SOAS students and academics, including several Palestinians, have been banned from entering into Palestine by the Israeli state without explanation.
- That SOAS management has failed to act in response to these violations of academic freedom.
- That Palestinian students at SOAS wrote to SOAS management to express their concern for the event and the consequences it would have on their welfare.
- That SOAS management ignored those students and refused to acknowledge their concerns.

The union believes:

- That the presence on campus of Mark Regev, given his official role, his past justification of war crimes for which he has shown no remorse, and the threat to the welfare of Palestinian students he represents is unacceptable.
- That the presence on campus of armed Israeli embassy security is unacceptable
- That the School should be held accountable for its role in planning the event and the manner in which it cooperated with the Israeli Embassy.
- That the School should also be held accountable for endangering and disregarding the welfare of students - Palestinian and others - and for disregarding the democratic will of the SOAS community.
- That the School has a duty of care to its students and that the safety of SOAS students, both on campus and while conducting fieldwork in support of their studies, should be the School's highest priority.
- That the SOAS Management have offered a disproportionate amount of support to the Israeli Embassy in organising the event, as demonstrated in the above mentioned communications.
- That SOAS management has a duty of care, which applies on all its students, including Palestinian students
- That it should take a stance in support of academics and the academic senate when it pertains to the concerns of students and their safety

The union resolves:

- To support the motion up for debate in the academic senate
- To release a statement from the SU supporting the motion and calling on staff to vote in favour of it
- To call upon students to encourage staff to support the motion and urge them to vote in favor it



Emergency Motion - Halt the changes to student spaces in the Doctoral School

Proposer: dimitri cautain dc23@soas.ac.uk

Seconder: Simon Leese 208900@soas.ac.uk

This Union notes:

- There are few dedicated spaces for postgraduate research students at SOAS, including in the Doctoral School (on the first floor and the underground floor), as well as the R301 in the Main Building.
- Postgraduate research students carry out independent study on a more intensive basis than other students at SOAS, so study spaces are key places for students to find support, community and get through issues of isolation and mental wellbeing.
- Increasing staff numbers in the Doctoral School have been used as a reason to push through a decision on changing the use of space in the Doctoral School.
- A decision was first communicated to all Research Students by the Doctoral School on 12th October, that the changes to space use will happen on 18th October, when the whole building will be closed to students.
- As a result of this change what is now student space on the 1st floor will be turned into office space, and current, smaller office space on the 3rd floor will be turned into student space.
- There was no consultation of the research student body about these changes to space use in the Doctoral School.
- This emblematic of a broader trends with the Doctoral School failing to provide outlets for students and the RSA to engage with it in meaningful consultations.

This Union believes:

- That SOAS Doctoral School needs to fully consult all staff and all student concerned by changes in Doctoral School.
- Taking decisions without full consultation works against the interest of staff and students who work and study in these spaces.
- Furthermore, any policy or space changes impacting PhD candidates must be meaningfully consulted and disseminated well in advance.

This Union resolves:

- To lobby SOAS Senior Management and the Doctoral School to halt the planned change in use of space on 18th October in the Doctoral School.
- To demand a full consultation on the use and needs of the Doctoral School building and to ensure that the RSA be fully consulted about any issue pertaining to PhD candidates