



UGM AGENDA

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 	

UGM MOTIONS – 13th October 2017

Title:	Fight for Free Education
Proposer:	Hamish Anderson, 625365
Seconded:	Nisha Phillipps, Co-President Democracy and Education
This Union Notes:	
<p>1. Rising tuition fees, crippling student debt and the scrapping of maintenance grants have all been part of the government's agenda to marketise education. This process of marketisation is characterised by the current state of the higher education sector, in which universities are forced to compete against each other for both students and 'excellence'. A university's excellence is measured by their performance in the Research Excellence Framework and the Teaching Excellence Framework. While these frameworks operate under the auspices of creating an incentive for universities to improve research and the 'student experience', the scrapping of maintenance grants and cuts to disabled students' allowance shows there is little actual concern within the government for the wellbeing of students. Instead we, as students, are treated as consumers by our universities while we face a future of compounding debt and job insecurity.</p>	
This Union Believes:	

1. As fees continue to rise in 2017 - to £9,250 for home students and £16,250 for international students - and our debt is sold off to private companies, the SOAS Students' Union must fight for a free education.
2. Students' Union efforts should go towards building a national network, thinking about the future of the university, as well as SOAS-specific.
3. The fight for a decolonised education is very much intertwined with the fight for free education which is a call for a removal of fees, in addition to the end of outsourcing and precarious working conditions.
4. The removal of economic barriers does not only require the removal of fees, there is also a necessity for adequate levels of economic support to be in place for students who need it most i.e mainly BME and working class students.

This Union Resolves:

1. The Students' Union will hold regular campaign meetings, aimed at engaging all members of the SOAS community in discussions on free education. Going forward, they will be opening up discussions about what free education should look like, the aim of which is not simply to oppose but also to propose alternatives to the current higher education system.
2. The Students' Union will build a bloc for the national free education demo on the 14th of November. The Students' Union will work with other London students' unions in the lead up to this, hosting a series of events and organising meetings across campuses.
3. The Students' Union will also be looking to improve transparency around the hidden costs of education at SOAS. We will fight for an end to uncapped international students fees, which are currently subject to rising over the course of a student's time at SOAS. The Students' Union will work to ensure that the school brings an end to installment fees, continuing the campaign launched by the postgraduate taught student officers in 2016/17. Finally the Students' Union will look into alternatives to the library fines system as we hope to ensure that students are not overburdened with debt, but also continue to respect the value of the library as a resource for our community. Finally, looking to utilise the student reps in order to ensure that accessible and ethical alternatives to essay banks, proofreading and note sharing for pay services can be allowed to emerge within the student body which further drive education into the hands of those with an economic privilege.

Title:	SOAS Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy
Proposer:	Alexandra MacAulay Abdelwahab 655893
Second:	David Mazzucchi 657026
This Union Notes:	
<p>1) Several universities in the UK have already implemented policies to deal with issues of sexual violence and misconduct, examples include Durham University, the University of Sheffield, University of St. Andrews, University Arts London, University of Oxford, Keele University, among others.</p> <p>2) In 2016, the Report of the Universities UK Taskforce examining violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting university students recommended that universities involve their students' union in developing, maintaining and reviewing all elements of a cross-institution response.</p> <p>3) The task force also recommends that universities develop a clear, accessible and representative disclosure response for incidents of sexual violence and rape, working with relevant external agencies where appropriate.</p> <p>4) Sexual violence policies are the norm at universities in other countries, including in every university in the Province of Ontario in Canada (as required by law) and Harvard University.</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>1) The SOAS Students' Union has been tackling sexual harassment and violence for years now with the goal of providing (and improving) support for those who experience gender-based violence and also changing the culture of impunity and silence on campus.</p>	
This Union Resolves:	
<p>1) To work with the university to create a clear policy on sexual violence and misconduct.</p> <p>2) To make this information prominently available in a single location on the student union and/or SOAS university website.</p> <p>3) To better promote existing policies and procedures by training union staff (especially those leading Enough is Enough workshops) of their existence and scope.</p>	

Title:	Eliminating Plastic Cutlery at SOAS S.U. Shop & Bar
Proposer:	Sugandha Parmar -657011
Seconder:	Saumya Dadoo - 656312
This Union Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Students' Union has a green impact 'Outstanding' accreditation for the 2015/16 Academic Year; 2. Most disposable utensils contain chemical substances like Bisphenol A (BPA), which can cause severe health damage; 3. The the plastics industry results in high environmental costs and use of plastic cutlery everyday by thousands of SOAS students is a contribution to the high environment cause; 4. SOAS S.U. has supported the anti-plastic boycott the bottle/ Take it to the tap campaign (2016/2017) 5. One-use plastics are outdated, environmentally destructive, and unnecessary for students & staff to be able to eat food on campus. There are more environmentally-friendly options available. 6. More than 80% of all this plastic is used once and then thrown in the UK 	
This Union Believes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminating plastic is crucial for the environmental goals at SOAS and beyond; 2. The use of plastic cutlery usage negatively impacts the environment and individual's health, must be at the forefront to protect further degradation; 3. The banning of plastic cutlery at SOAS Cafes and other event stalls would be a significant step to bring in other environment friendly practices in future. 4. SOAS S.U. should set an environmentally responsible example in terms of our own consumption habits 	
This Union Resolves:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To stop the Union from buying one-use plastic cutlery on-campus and switch to more environmentally-friendly options e.g. compostable cutlery, bamboo cutlery, toxic-free wood, biodegradable cutlery made from only fallen leaves and steam, etc (brands include vegware, plastico etc. - decision to be made based on cost) 2. To call on SOAS to do the above as well 3. To condemn the use of one-use plastic cutlery elsewhere; 4. To organise campaigns to promote environment friendly cutlery, impact of environment friendly cutlery and eco-conscious choice in all spheres of student life. 	

Title:	Using SOAS Main Building at weekends
Proposer:	Saly Toure - 652704
Seconder:	Hau-yu Tam - 657519
This Union Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Students' Union is now being asked to pay for extra security on Saturdays and Sundays after 6PM; this is a recent change since Bouygues took over one of the outsourcing contracts; 2. Many societies and community groups organise events at SOAS, including but not only in the JCR, on weekends and they have done so historically; 3. Late events at SOAS Students' Union have 'Enough is Enough' welfare contacts present to work with security in providing protection and security for all at an event. 	
This Union Believes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The university should be a public space and not a private elitist corporation; 2. Our JCR historically being a site for community gatherings bringing together people who are linked to SOAS; via their passion and care; they have contributed an enormous amount to community building at SOAS; incidentally SOAS identifies 'community' as one of its core values 3. The Main Building remains open on Saturdays and Sundays after 6PM as the library and other facilities remain open; 4. It is unfair to put extra security costs for students who want to organise events out of their own initiative at a time that is convenient for them when weekdays are already very busy; 5. If we are to make SOAS a resource that is relevant to local communities and wider society we need to have the JCR and SOAS space available for these communities to use in cooperation with SOAS SU. 	
This Union Resolves:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That SOAS reinstate full reception and security staffing of the Main Building on Saturday and Sunday evenings; 2. That the Students' Union will actively provide the JCR and other Union resources grassroots community organisations, including those fighting for migrant rights and social justice. 	

Title:	Securing and improving student representation during restructuring
Proposer:	Nisha Phillipps - np40
Seconded:	Blanca Yanez Serrano - 627665
This Union Notes:	
<p>1. During the academic year 2016/17, the school decided to undertake a process of restructuring, moving from three faculties to eleven schools. The school also decided that 2017/18 would be an interim year in the restructuring process.</p> <p>2. On the 1st of August the school made an announcement that they had transitioned to this new structure.</p> <p>3. Both the process followed regarding decision-making on restructuring, as well as the abrupt manner in which the new structure was introduced does not reflect discussions students and staff had about restructuring across the school.</p> <p>4. It is important that, going forward, students are able to take an active role in discussion had and decisions taken in the school.</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>1. One potential advantage of having eleven schools as opposed to three faculties is that this provides more opportunities for student reps to have their voices heard across the school. This is because, without the faculty level boards, school boards will have greater decision-making powers.</p> <p>2. Some heads of school wish to restrict the number of student reps attending school meetings. This is particularly true for East Asian Languages and Cultures and Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, which, due to the number of programmes offered by these schools have proportionally higher numbers of student representatives. Languages and Cultural programmes do not bring in high profits due to low student to teacher ratios, however they are at the heart of postcolonial approaches and studies. However, it is especially important that student voices remain prominent within EALC and LCL which are particularly at risk as SOAS moves towards a model in which schools will have to own their financial shortfall.</p> <p>3. Student representation is vital to governance and decision-making within the school, particularly as SOAS moves to a new academic and professional structure.</p>	
This Union Resolves:	
<p>1. As per the current 'Student Rep Code of Practice,' all student reps should be invited, as full members, to school meetings. To quote the 'Code of Practice': All</p>	



elected reps should be welcomed to department meetings, with at least one student rep from each year of Undergraduate Study, Postgraduate Taught and MPhil and PhD in attendance wherever possible. Reps will be full members of Departmental meetings with the same status, rights and responsibilities as other members.

2. The Students' Union executive will work with student reps and all students to develop a new 'Code of Practice' for student reps that will ensure student representation is not simply maintained but increased in the new school structure. This 'Code of Practice' will then be passed at Academic Board in 2017/18 to ensure that all departments are accountable for inviting reps.