



UGM AGENDA 20th Nov 2018

Time:	15:00
Date:	20th November 2018
Location:	JCR
<p>Agenda</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome & intro 2. Minutes from last UGM 10/10/18 & matters arising 3. Discussion point: new UGM policy page on the website 4. Reporting of hate speech/ harassment etc. seen on-campus 5. Motion: Make SU events and media fully accessible 6. Motion: Allow ALL exec members to send mass emails to entire school 7. Motion: Trans and non-binary inclusion in sport 8. Motion: Against Jair Bolsonaro's plan to move the Brazilian embassy to Jerusalem 9. Motion: Follow Up with GBV Action Plan 10. Motion: Solidarity with Extinction Rebellion! 11. Motion: Solidarity with Bulgarian Women (#YouAreNotAlone) 12. Motion: National Union of Students to End Precarious Work 13. Motion: More direct contact between administrative staff/ staff carrying out admin duties and students 14. Motion: Support all-class feedback on assignments by course lecturers, and all-class note-sharing systems, across year groups and departments. 15. Discussion point: NSS 16. AOB 	

UGM MOTIONS – 20th November 2018
Agenda item 5.

Title:	Make SU events and media fully accessible
Proposer:	Indigo Ayling, 626565
Seconder:	Beulah Samuel-Ogbu, 645308
This Union Notes:	
<p>1.1 Until this academic year, most SU events external to the SOAS buildings were not wheelchair accessible.</p> <p>1.2. Much of the SU media (such as the event timetabling and pdf documents) are inaccessible to students with impairments.</p> <p>1.3. There is not adequate information about the access of venues on event postings.</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>2.1 Ableism within the SU needs to be tackled in order that any form of disability liberation can begin.</p> <p>2.2 More attention should be given to disability and access issues more widely at SOAS, as it is a intersection that is too often ignored.</p> <p>2.3 The Students Union should be fully accessible to all SOAS students.</p>	
This Union Resolves:	
<p>3.1 Detailed and specific access information must be present on all media associated with SU events.</p> <p>3.2 The SU must refer to the Disabled Students and Carers Empowerment Network document on accessibility to ensure full accessibility of said events.</p> <p>3.3. The SU must only host events at venues that are fully wheelchair accessible.</p> <p>3.4. If under specific circumstances, providing an accessible venue is not possible, this fact must be publicised on all advertising, e.g. posters, along with contact information of the organisers.</p> <p>3.5. The SU is required to ensure that all media it disperses online is fully compatible with screen-reading technology.</p> <p>3.6. The SU must ensure its calendar and event system is fully accessible and compatible with common calendar software e.g. google calendar.</p>	

Agenda item 6.

Title:	Allow ALL exec members to send mass emails to entire school
Proposer:	Krish Aurora 640721
Seconder:	Enum Naseer 656195
This Union Notes:	
<p>1.1 Currently democratically elected members of the executive committee cannot communicate directly with their constituents (for example, there is no "people of colour" mailing list)</p>	

This Union Believes:

2.1 In order to create a non-hierarchical union democratically elected members should be able to coordinate with the students, or make clarifications when the sabbs have put forth a unified image of the SUs stance on particular issues. Often times exec members have radically different opinions and do not want to someone else speaking on their behalf to give the idea of a united union.

This Union Resolves:

3.1 Allow all members of the exec team to send mass emails (this can be done through the emails of the sabbs or Hannah Short or Peter Baran, but with the original author in the title - so please avoid claims of logistical impossibility or IT issues)

Agenda item 7.

Title:	Trans and non-binary inclusion in sport
Proposer:	Anna Jordan 612631
Secunder:	Peadar Connolly Davey 639409
<p>This Union Notes:</p> <p>1.1 Union notes BUCs current policy BUCS Transgender Policy 2016 :</p> <p>Delivering more than 50 sports as the national governing body (NGB) for university sport in the UK, BUCS is not able to agree a single policy which works effectively in every situation which may arise surrounding transgender students' participation in competitive sport. where issues arise regarding transgender students' eligibility, the policy of the respective sport's national governing body should be adopted.</p> <p>BUCS would like to draw attention to section d) of appendix 2, specifically IOC guideline iid), which states that "compliance of these conditions may be monitored by testing". BUCS members must note that any and all financial costs and/or logistics associated with such testing will be the responsibility of the student's university or the student.</p> <p>"gender-affected" sport, defined as one where "the physical strength, stamina or physique of average persons of one gender would put them at a disadvantage to average persons of the other gender as competitors in events involving the sport". In the case of such a sport, a person whose change of gender has been recognised under the Act may be excluded from playing in their affirmed gender where this is necessary to ensure 'fair competition' or 'the safety of competitors' according to section 19 of the Act.</p> <p>1.2. the above policy does not make provision for non-binary people. nor are non-binary people mentioned anywhere in their policy.</p>	
<p>This Union Believes:</p> <p>2.1 trans students should be allowed to participate in sports which their self defined gender most closely aligns with.</p> <p>2.2. both women's and men's sports must be open to non-binary people.</p> <p>2.3 gender non confirming students should be chosen to play on teams even in leagues with transphobic policy.</p> <p>2.4. BUCS transgender policy is transphobic and the union rejects it.</p>	

This Union Resolves:

- 3.1 Ensure each sport must specify on their page that they are open to either:
- people of all genders.
 - women and non-binary people.
 - men and non binary people.

3.2 support any trans people attempting to reject BUCS transgender policy and play in the BUCS leagues.

3.3 any soas sports team found to be excluding trans and non-binary students will be suspended for the rest of the academic year. This includes not allowing trans or non-binary people to join, not picking them for the teams because they are trans or non-binary, policing individuals gender, not accepting self defined gender and using transphobic language or practice.

3.4 The union will lobby bucs to change its policy to include self defining trans and non-binary students.

Agenda item 8.

Title:	Against Jair Bolsonaro's plan to move the Brazilian embassy to Jerusalem
Proposer:	Gabriel Silva Huland / 657377
Seconder:	Bruno Huberman / 667359

This Union Notes:

1.1 The Brazilian President-elect recently stated his plans to move the Brazilian embassy in Israel to Jerusalem once in office. Brazil would then join the US and Guatemala in the list of countries that recognised Jerusalem as the legitimate capital of the state of Israel. Jair Bolsonaro is a long-time supporter of Zionism and the state of Israel. He declared that "Israel, as a sovereign state, has the right to decide where its capital is". The recent recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by the United States was sharply rebuked by the United Nations on 20 December 2017, with 128 states voting against it and only nine voting for it. A long-standing international consensus sees Jerusalem as a disputed city whose status is to be settled in a peace agreement between Palestine and Israel.

This Union Believes:

2.1 The measure, if carried out, would further destabilise the Middle East and encourage Israel to escalate its policies of settler colonialism in Palestine. It breaches international law and numerous UN resolutions. It ignores the struggle of the Palestinian people against occupation, for their right of return and for their right to build a sovereign state, fully recognised by the international community.

This Union Resolves:

1. Condemn the move of the Brazilian embassy to Israel.
2. Organise a campaign to create awareness among the SOAS community about its possible consequences.

Agenda item 9.

Title:	Follow Up with GBV Action Plan
Proposer:	Chandni Chawla (665873)
Seconder:	Siddharth Chakravarty (554823)
This Union Notes:	
<p>1.1 That there is no accessible evidence that any of the deadlines the SU set themselves in the Action Plan to tackle gender-based violence (GBV) have been met.</p> <p>1.2. That the Action Plan was sent out before the resignation of the Welfare and Campaigns Officer and no new point of contact for follow up was established.</p> <p>1.3. That there is no active communication and follow up with Account For This on their demands.</p> <p>1.4. That the SU adopted the Equality and Diversity Policy, including the elimination of harassment, which is not actively practiced.</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>2.1 That SU spaces need to enable the development of individuals (whether academic or otherwise) in its spaces without fear of GBV and related harms.</p> <p>2.2 That the SU needs to proactively aim to dismantle oppressive structures, to disrupt the reproduction of racism, elitism and cis-heteropatriarchy particularly among the members of the Students' Union, and more generally within the SOAS community.</p> <p>2.3 That the SU needs to hold SOAS management accountable on behalf of the student body.</p>	
This Union Resolves:	
<p>3.1 To support, materially, logistically and otherwise, open forums organised by Account for This on behalf of the SU's members, and the SOAS community.</p> <p>3.2 To follow up with management on the training of ALL SOAS staff (academic and otherwise) for disclosure and confidentiality on matters of GBV.</p> <p>3.3 To implement the Report + Support system by the beginning of term 2.</p> <p>3.4 To publish by the beginning of Term 2: the formal and informal complaints procedures, explicitly indicating their applicability (or lack thereof) to visitors in the SU spaces, as well as the SU's existing GBV policies & timeline of resolution; and to invite comments on such by the SOAS community.</p> <p>3.5 To publish by the end of Term 1: the accreditation of GBV-specific training (such as on disclosure, bystander support, and first response etc.) of all SU staff, including the SU shop, SU bar and other un-elected staff, in order to be held accountable.</p>	

Agenda item 10.

Title:	Solidarity with Extinction Rebellion!
Proposer:	Anna Gretton - 635820
Seconder:	Grace Richardson - 639119
This Union Notes:	
<p>1.1 Climate change, as well as environmental problems in general such as air pollution, our reliance of single-use plastic and overconsumption, is a grave threat to not only other species, but human species too</p> <p>1.2 According to the UN Environment Programme, an estimated 150 to 200 species become extinct every single day</p> <p>1.3 The IPCC, a famously conservative scientific body, stated that we have 6 to 12 years before 'irreversible' climate change, meaning that we will reach the 'tipping point' and will no longer be able to do anything about it</p> <p>1.4 For decades, the environmental movement has signed petitions, organised mass demonstrations, emailed MPS, and although some things have improved (for example 5p charge on plastic bags), government are not creating effective enough strategies in a realistic amount of time to mitigate climate change. If anything, they are going backward by being the only G7 country to still be increasing fossil fuel subsidies</p> <p>1.5 Extinction Rebellion is an environmental organisation founded out of the organisation 'Rising Up!' in early 2018, which uses non-violent direct action to demand three specific policy changes for the UK government: to go carbon neutral by 2025; for the government and news outlets to tell the full scope of problem and not water down the problem; and to form a sortition assembly (a sample of people who represent all aspects of society)</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>2.1 Extinction Rebellion is a welcome new energy in the climate movement which has non-violent direct action at its core – indeed it is the last and final tactic we can try to effect change</p> <p>2.2 From analysing past Extinction Rebellion events it appears that their strategy has been effective due to an increased news coverage about climate change and Extinction Rebellion now spreading internationally over approximately 15 countries</p> <p>2.3 Non-violent direct action has been shown to be incredibly effective at establishing laws, rights: The Suffragettes, the civil rights movement and CND all could not have achieved what they did without getting arrested</p> <p>2.4 Student unions have a responsibility to show solidarity with actors who are working hard to make the world a better place</p> <p>2.5 It is important to show solidarity with Extinction Rebellion because it will give the movement added legitimacy and support, as well as giving SOAS Student Union added integrity as unions are designed to support and assist the values of democracy and peaceful protest</p> <p>2.6 That supporting Extinction Rebellion would bolster support for the movement and make our support heard</p> <p>2.7 In the midst of the climate crises, the student union must spread its climate activism outside to the wider community</p> <p>2.8 Many SOAS students are part of Extinction Rebellion, so our support is meaningful to them personally</p>	
This Union Resolves:	

- 3.1 To issue a statement in solidarity with the Extinction Rebellion to go on our website & social media
- 3.2 To post information about Extinction Rebellion events coming up on S.U. channels (all-students email, social media, website)

Agenda item 11.

Title:	Solidarity with Bulgarian Women (#YouAreNotAlone)
Proposer:	Krum Tashev (666404)
Secunder:	Hau-Yu Tam - (hy12)
This Union Notes:	
1.1 That Bulgarian women are victims of systematic patriarchal oppression in Bulgaria, which was highlighted by the death of 22 women who felt victims of domestic violence.	
1.2 That the Bulgarian constitutional court announced the Instabul convention as unconstitutional and now it cannot be implemented not only by Bulgaria, but by the European Union	
1.3 That Bulgarian women have called for international support in their fight against the struggles they face	
This Union Believes:	
2.1 That SOAS SU needs to response to the call for international solidarity with an upcoming protest in Sofia, Bulgaria that will voice women anguish with a growing violent wave of misogyny in the country	
2.2 That child care in Bulgaria is being dislocated from the social sphere, while the government promotes completely inadequate measures against gender based violence and plainly refuses to admit its existence	
2.3 That operation of women should be condemned, and that the Students should send there solidarity to the women of Bulgaria.	
This Union Resolves:	
3.1 To write protest letters to the Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association and demand they withdraw their demand and apologize to the working people in Bulgaria	
3.2 To write a letter of solidarity which will be published in dVERSIA (http://dversia.net/category/english/) and available online to all women in Bulgaria.	

Agenda item 12.

Title:	National Union of Students to End Precarious Work
Proposer:	Nicolás Navarro - 657484
Seconder:	Piotr Kwasiborski - 628755
This Union Notes:	
<p>1.1. Precarious employment has become a typical feature of our lives under capitalism Over 10 million people in Britain are currently considered to be in precarious employment Low pay, poor working conditions, zero-hour contracts and minimal rights have become standard This leads people to be barely able to live off their wages and are living in a desperate social and financial situation At Universities, the result of this has been recent campaigns to bring cleaners and other staff in-house The Conservative government has been promoting and encouraging precarious employment An upsurge in precarious work is a natural product of capitalist crisis</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>2.1 We have the technology, resources, and ability to plan the economy so that no-one has to work in precarious employment All workers should get a real living wage, fixed-term contracts, and full workers' rights</p>	
This Union Resolves:	
<p>3.1. To support, with financial help and active participation, the struggles of precarious workers To help organise a joint committee of union representatives of all precarious workers at universities, colleges, and schools To make the case for and participate in joint union action, on a national scale, in defence of the rights of precarious workers To campaign for the election of a government for the many, not the few, that will fundamentally transform society so that the economy is planned and run in the interests of need, not profit</p>	

Agenda item 13.

Title:	More direct contact between administrative staff/ staff carrying out admin duties and students.
Proposer:	Hau-Yu Tam (hy12)
Seconder:	Justyna Wroblewska (657224)
This Union Notes:	
<p>1.1 That students have complaints of non-response, slow/inefficient response rate, selective responding and at times aggressive behaviours from administrative staff/ staff carrying out admin duties.</p> <p>1.2 That the above is a longstanding issue at SOAS, and significant in its pervasiveness.</p>	

1.3 That the above has negative impacts on students' welfare, students' education and students' experience and engagement.

1.4 That some administrative staff/ staff carrying out admin duties have advertised their office or support hours, and make themselves available to students - but equally many do not. It is not always sufficient or possible to reach staff via phone, via SID or on email. Students have work or other commitments, and cannot always be present on campus.

1.5 It is the job of SOAS admin to resolve issues students have raised.

This Union Believes:

2.1 That there should be greater awareness of staff's responsibility to students; handling of admin matters being an integral component of that.

2.2 That staff should be more timely, compassionate and comprehensive in their responses to students.

2.3 Students should always be kept in the loop with regard to receipt of their message, and the follow-up of it. This should mean they receive responses in a reasonable number of working days, or are informed if there is to be any delay.

2.4 This is not to decontextualise administration from the human labour that goes into it, and students should maintain fair expectations, approaching admin staff in a timely and respectful manner, and generally taking ownership of their issue/complaint/general student experience.

2.5 Ultimately however, students should not have to spend disproportionate amounts of time and energy on chasing up administrative matters.

This Union Resolves:

3.1 That the Students' Union should lobby the school to insist on better response rate and quality of response from administrative staff/ staff carrying out admin duties.

3.2 That the Students' Union to work internally, and with reps, departmental staff and professional staff to insist upon clear guidelines or codes of conduct from all student-facing staff - including dedicated office support hours on the School website, and holding staff accountable to responding within a certain timeframe, and responding sufficiently and effectively.

Agenda item 14.

Title:	Support all-class feedback on assignments by course lecturers, and all-class note-sharing systems, across year groups and departments.
Proposer:	Malena Bastida Antich - 639858@soas.ac.uk
Seconder:	Hau-Yu Tam (hy12)
This Union Notes:	
<p>1.1 That students are co-producers and co-creators of the knowledge circulating at SOAS - and that peer/group learning is an integral part of this journey. Students learn not simply through individualised feedback & reflecting on their own journey, but also much from each other.</p> <p>1.2 Currently peer/group learning is fostered and sustained with department and class socials, the work of student reps and the Students' Union, and it happens organically. There is a lot of potential here to develop further mechanisms of support and information sharing, however the onus should not solely be on students themselves to do this year upon year.</p> <p>1.3 That students do not necessarily have opportunities beyond/between to learn from each others' perspectives, reasoning, accomplishments and mistakes - and that this constitutes gaps in the student learning experience. Where such support exists, these are models for improving peer/group learning.</p> <p>1.4 That this suggestion comes from UG politics reps; however seems to be endorsed by students across year groups and departments.</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>2.1 There should be more structures to support peer/group learning through means of all-class feedback on assignments, and through note-sharing systems - and these structures should be rolled out across the School, and supported by the Students' Union (designated contacts Co-President Democracy & Education and student reps) and departments (designated contacts tbc).</p> <p>2.2 Two notable structures are: all-class feedback - which entails markers briefing the entire class with a summary of facts and evaluations (e.g. which questions were most/least popular, which sources were most/least used, whether there were any common mistakes, etc), and would be useful for students to know in order to develop their work, besides encouraging dialogue between classmates. The second is encouraging, and supporting, the usage and maintenance of class-wide/programme-wide note-sharing systems.</p> <p>2.3 That all-class feedback could take the form of verbal updates, and a more formal type of document circulated over email or Moodle. This would take place after grades have been released. The process would recur with each round of marking. Note-sharing systems could be hosted on Google Drive, Facebook Group etc, besides of course BLE/Moodle</p> <p>2.4 Equally, departments and teaching staff could better develop best practices, as well as understand issues and trends common to students, through undertaking such exercises.</p>	
This Union Resolves:	
<p>3.1 The S.U. and student reps will consult and work with students and staff, across year groups and the departments, to advocate for & advise on implementation of these support structures.</p> <p>3.2 The designated contacts for following up for the time being, will be the Co-President Democracy & Education and the reps who raised this issue.</p>	

