



# Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

7<sup>th</sup> February 2020

2pm – 4pm

**Chair:** Peadar Connolly-Davey

## **Agenda**

1. Officer Check In
2. Action Point Update
3. Working Group Update
4. How Liberation Months Work
5. Changing Command / Responsibility in the SU
6. TEF / NSS
7. Trans Mental Health
8. AOB

**Apologies:** Nidah Kaiser, Serena Coulson, Nare Hakobyan, Hisham Parchment-Pryce, Valeria Racu, Ciro Puig, Paulien Broens, Sohane Yahya

**In attendance:** Inaki Arizabalaga, Peadar Connolly-Davey, Youssra Elmagboul, Oscar Ward, Maxine Thomas-Asante, Anabelle Jones, Katie Saunders, Charli Keely

**Quora reached!**



### 1. Officer Check In

Anabelle: Doing well! Planning for Womxns History month

Charli: Taking a step back as I'm overwhelmed

Inaki: Planning Green Week

Katie: Talking to students who access the hardship fund to find out obstacles. Meeting with the University of York next week as they're looking to introduce a working class officer

Oscar: Lots of accommodation case work. Looking at how to push the school or SU complaints procedure to cover accommodation

Youssra: It's a hard time of year for the sabs. Currently doing lots of strike planning and looking at the director recruitment

Maxine: Academic board passed 4/5 of the curriculum review, everything except the new core as the content and practicality wasn't what was wanted.

Peadar: LGBT History Month is happening but attendance hasn't been great. We're going ahead with the late licence during the strikes but unsure if the bar will be open in the normal evenings – it will go to trustees to decide and we've been asking for student input.

**Action points:** N/A

### 2. Action Point Updates

Action points from previous meeting | Update

Inaki to start a Green Week working group	Started work but not a working group
<b>Youssra to update working group doc</b>	<b>Sohane did this!</b>
All exec officers to welfare check other officers they are friends with	Done
<b>Jack to add agenda point on How Liberation Months Work for next meeting</b>	<b>Done</b>
Peadar/Youssra to create liberation month guide	No, but will do ASAP
<b>Jack to add agenda point on Changing Command/Responsibility in the SU</b>	<b>Done</b>



Sab to prepare Changing Command/Responsibility in the SU	Will cover in this meeting
<b>Action points:</b> N/A	

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3. Working Group Updates</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Peadar: Are working groups doing work?</p> <p>Womxns History Month: Planning 1 week of events as strikes take up most of the month. Want clarification of the SU position on the strikes</p> <p>Maxine: Our position is being shaped by student consultation meetings and will be spoken at length in Trustee Board next week. We need democratic legitimacy in our decision and we need all the information on what closures would mean for staff, students, our finances etc.</p> <p><b>Action points:</b> N/A</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4. How Liberation Months Work</b></p> <p>A discussion was had around how liberation months have worked previously, being organised in a very ad-hoc manner with support from the Equality &amp; Liberation co-president. This year committees have been formed for each month to lead on planning, however these have resulted in some people having very high workloads. In the liberation months run so far this academic year, the events organised by societies have had the best attendance which raises the question if the SU should use liberation months to simply facilitate student events as opposed to running our own that we assume students want.</p> <p>It was agreed that there is a need to have better exec handovers to ensure knowledge isn't lost between years.</p> <p>Youssra: [given the low turnout of LGBT History Month events] this adds to the conversation about if we should be doing more for these communities throughout the year, as February isn't a good time of year to host events</p> <p><b>Action points:</b> Maxine to make a Google Doc for Exec handovers (by end of March)</p>
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### 5. Changing Command/Responsibility in the SU

Maxine: In our last meeting it was clear that some people are working harder than others but we didn't reach a consensus in the room about what to do. There are less of us here, are we happy making a decision?

It was decided that there were not enough people to make a representative decision and that it was unlikely a decision would be reached. A discussion was had about the best approach and that perhaps it would be best to leave this year as it is and put instructions into place for the next executive team to take on to ensure that everyone understands the effort needed by an officer throughout the year.

**Action points:** Maxine to discuss with Jack including officer expectations into the candidate meeting of the elections

### 6. TEF / NSS

Maxine: The National Student Survey (NSS) has already started for this academic year and response are being received.

Yousra: The NSS used to be linked to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), where better TEF scores mean universities can charge more tuition. This isn't the case anymore, so our NSS score won't affect fees. NSS will affect our rankings and recruitment though! We had a bad NSS score after the last strikes and we're still seeing a downturn in student numbers. Last year we had a referendum about the NSS and we voted not to boycott the NSS. I'd be happy to join a national campaign to boycott the marketization of higher education, but SOAS can't do this on her own.

**Action points:** N/A

### 7. Trans Mental Health

Charli: I've been speaking with a lot of trans students at SOAS who are upset and are scared for their friends. We need more conversation and transparency about what's going on with looking for a mental health counsellor.



Youssra: Yesterday I met with Maysa's friend and we went through the spreadsheet of organisation and people I've contacted. Everyone that they suggested were already on the spreadsheet. Anna has reached out this week to other people she knows but I've already contacted all of those people too. It was raised in the meeting that what is the SU going to do until we find a mental health counsellor? It's unlikely I'll be able to find one before the end of term. Anna has suggested maybe we look at other methods of support. The original UGM motion asks for a trans counsellor who is ideally POC, but this is proving incredibly difficult to find.

Maxine: Because of the urgency, the exact specification required in the motion is difficult to find, but we need to find something to do for now

It was discussed how alternative spaces for trans students and alternative methods of support could be introduced.

**Action points:** Youssra to share spreadsheet of trans work done so far with exec

#### 8. AOB

Youssra: Please make sure to attend Trustees next week or get in contact to find another way to join in! We need to talk about strikes and make big decisions for the SU.

**Action points:** N/A