



Union General Meeting Minutes

Time:	18:00-20:00
Date:	10 th November 2015
Location:	JCR

Agenda

1. Welcome
 2. Minutes & Matters Arising
 3. Report from Sabbatical Officers
 4. Report from executive officers
 5. No Borders to Education
 6. Diversity of Tactics
 7. Rethink Trident
 8. Motion for a Referendum on Occupy SOAS
 9. Voter Registration Drive
 10. No Confidence in Megan Dunn
 11. 30 Minute Idle Time-Out for School Workstations
 12. No to Course and Job Cuts
 13. No Political Disciplinaries
 14. Pursue Disciplinary Action against Senior Managers for Intimidation of Staff and Students
 15. Remembrance Acts
 16. Support our Staff
- Regarding Tim Miller, Chair of the SOAS Board of Trustees

Ref#	Action/Discussion	Notes
1	HS introduced the meeting by explaining the order of the UGM and how it works.	
2	There were no objections to the minutes and no matters arising.	Minutes approved



<p>3</p>	<p>Tom King – Co-President Welfare & Campaigns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on procedure on how to respond to sexual violence • School have agreed to implement mandatory consent workshops for all new students • Pushing for the Director to hold an open forum for students as she does with staff • Launched student consultation regarding the curriculum review & course cuts • Documents created; '7 things you can do to oppose the cuts' & 'SOAS by numbers' • The School has agreed to consider an insourcing option for the cleaners tender process <p>Hannah Slydel – Co-President Democracy & Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved a manifesto pledge – Participatory Budgeting. Meeting on Thursday 12th November in JCR • Rep training ongoing • Democratise SOAS campaign • Launching campaign called Divest from Detention. • Developing a preventative sexual violence strategy • Been selected to partake in NUS initiative partnered with Rape Crisis called #standbyme 	<p>All Co-President reports unanimously accepted</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Will Paintin & Adwoa Darko – Entertainments Officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologised for cancelled events • Hip Hop Karaoke on Friday 13th November • Winter Ball 7th December 90's Prom themed <p>Monique Bell – Mature Students' Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature students' society up and running. • First meet on Friday at 7pm. Open to all. • Careers service improving services for mature students. Never been done before specifically for mature students. <p>Alaa Ahmed – Black Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologised for events cancelled/postponed for Black History Month. • Wants to keep awareness/momentum going. • Thanked BME students for articulating their views on the occupation, allowing us to reflect on problems 	

within the occupation.

Laila Ahmed – Disabled Students and Carers’ Officer

- Launching Disabled Students and Carers’ Committee
- Discussed Educational/Non-Educational Priorities for the year
- Discussed mental health subgroup & support group starting Friday 13th Nov

Hannah Short & Isobel Annan – Environment Officers

- Solar SOAS awarded £20,000 to cover initial cost of project.
- Invited to hold a stall to raise awareness at Imperial Climate Symposium
- New bike tools
- Screening of ‘This Changes Everything’ on December 3rd
- Climate March held on November 29th

Jovian Salak – Campaigns Officer

- Working on issue of increased securitisation on campus. Engaging in dialogue with management to solve.
- Increased Justice for Cleaners dialogue with management
- Sandy’s suspension was an attack on the right to protest. He’s been reinstated but there are still ongoing disciplinaries for political activity

Caitlin Comins & Tom Costerton – Accommodation Officers

- Getting in touch with other University Accommodation Officers to set up a network.
- This year the School decides what to do regarding private Halls of Residence for the next 15 years.
- Updating communications

Aida Balafkan – Womens’ Officer

- Working on a document about gender based violence.
- Free sanitary products in the SU.
- A range of events coming up.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office hours – Wednesday 4-5 in 394. <p>Osamah Aiar – Anti-racism Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged students to engage with the Islamaphobia awareness exhibition. • Working on issues surrounding racism in the occupation – accessibility/the occupation not representing the student body. <p>Matija Vlatkovic – Academic Affairs Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged students to email him with any problems regarding marking & academic affairs • Postgraduate credit agreement being changed • Course cuts, curriculum review; working on ways to fight these cuts <p>Nate Reidy – Trans* and Gender Identity Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently elected. New position created • Creating a mailing list • Office hours being set up • Campaigns they will run include toilets without borders 	
<p>5</p>	<p>No Borders to Education</p> <p>Alistair Rooms introduced the motion, explaining the context & the notion of fee waivers being offered instead of grants which would be more helpful to students. He proposed all scholarships should not only be open to Syrian refugees.</p> <p>There were no questions or amendments.</p> <p>Vote on the motion: UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Diversity of Tactics</p> <p>Marta Garcia Aliaga introduced the motion, stating that SOAS has a strong history of being the most politically engaged university in the UK. She expressed the importance of having a variety of tactics to fight against issues.</p> <p>There were no questions or amendments.</p> <p>Vote on the motion: UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.</p>	



<p>7</p>	<p>Rethink Trident</p> <p>Camilla Rechchad gave context of the motion, explaining that in 2016 members of UK parliament will vote on whether or not to replace UK nuclear weapons. This will cost £100 billion.</p> <p>There were no questions or amendments.</p> <p>Vote on the motion: UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Motion for a Referendum on Occupy SOAS</p> <p>Adwoa Darko introduced the motion, explaining that the issues raised by BME students hadn't been registered properly and the problems fought for the occupation disproportionately affects black and brown students in the SOAS community. She highlighted that a referendum would bring legitimacy to the movement and explained that the essence of an occupation is racially alienating.</p> <p>Speech against: A student argued that having a referendum is misguided and to negate the tactic of occupation is detrimental to the gains made. Removing the occupation would dissipate the pressure placed on management.</p> <p>Speech for: AD responded, saying all students are against course cuts & Sandy's suspension. However, the way in which occupy SOAS conducts its activities is alienating to BME students. For example, Black History Month was disproportionately affected with events being cancelled.</p> <p>Speech against: HH stated that she understands the issues about inclusivity and racist issues. However, she believes there is a misunderstanding on both parts. She agrees that BME students can't necessarily use the space but they should let these students use their privilege. She also stated that she didn't believe that the occupiers playing Skepta's Shutdown was cultural appropriation.</p> <p>Speech for: A student highlighted that the occupation movement has been successful in a number of ways but is costing the School money and therefore seems counter-productive.</p> <p>Speech against: A student directly responded to this point, asking whether, in the context of cuts, campaigns</p>	

	<p>against austerity shouldn't happen? He added that a motion had just been passed championing a diversity of tactics.</p> <p>Amendment was proposed: Drop 'This Union Resolves 2.1' and modify 3.1 to 'An enquiry about whether the occupation is undemocratic, exclusive and not reflective of our diverse student body'.</p> <p>Speech against the amendment: A student argued that removing 2.2 & changing 3.2 would distort the whole motion, putting the onus on BME students. She explained that BME students shouldn't have to explain why they think something is racist in order to legitimise their claim</p> <p>Speech for the amendment: A student explained that they feel the last statement was problematic. As someone of colour who is part of the occupation, they don't believe it is racist.</p> <p>Speech against the amendment: A student argued the importance of having a referendum, which is a key part of the motion. They added that is it a big issue to say that the occupation wasn't racially insensitive. To take the point out would be denying that we are saying it is racist.</p> <p>Speech for the amendment: The referendum would undermine campaigns not only within SOAS but within the UK.</p> <p>Vote on the amendment.</p> <p>FOR: 42</p> <p>AGAINST: 53</p> <p>ABSTENTION: 2</p> <p>Amendment fell</p> <p>Another amendment was proposed: TK proposed to amend This Union Resolves 3.1 to 'The Executive Committee is empowered to call a referendum should the negotiations between management and the occupation end'.</p> <p>Vote on the amendment.</p> <p>FOR: 53</p>	
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	<p>AGAINST: 10</p> <p>ABSTAIN: 17</p> <p>Amendment passed.</p> <p>Another amendment was proposed: OA proposed that This Union Resolves 3.2 should be changed to 'resolve to look into more inclusive and accessible modes of activism without compromising modes of activism that by their nature can't be inclusive and transparent.'</p> <p>Speech against the amendment: A student explained this motion is about the Students' Union and what they champion. The type of activism the SU champions should be inclusive and accessible to all.</p> <p>Speech for the amendment: A student responded to the previous point, stating that this makes the assumption that there hasn't been inclusive activism at SOAS for years. Democratise SOAS is an example of inclusive and accessible activism.</p> <p>Vote on the amendment: AMENDMENT PASSES</p> <p>Speech for the motion: A student asked why wouldn't we want to have a referendum and why should there be activism that doesn't include everyone.</p> <p>Speech against the motion: DC said that he thinks this motion would demonstrate a misunderstanding of what an occupation is. He explained that it is not meant to represent the student body; rather, put pressure on management. He admitted that the occupation had been late to engage with the wider student body but they are now holding safer spaces and working on their tactics.</p> <p>Speech for the motion: A student argued that if you try to offer advice or criticism you're labelled as someone who is undermining a cause. He explained that they just want a rethink of tactics, and by having the dialogue that this motion proposes we can form a solid, united opinion.</p> <p>Speech against the motion: A student argued that opposing the motion isn't undermining the experience of students. They stated that the conversation needs to take place but the referendum isn't the only way forward. It might mean that management break down negotiations. Alternative channels need to be looked at.</p>	
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	Vote for the motion: MOTION FALLS	
	It was agreed by attendees that the rest of the motions would be taken to another UGM the following week.	