



Tuesday 17th March 2020

UGM Agenda

Time:	14:00 - 16:00
Date:	17th March 2020
Location:	Atrium
Chair:	May Gabriel, Rethink Mental Illness
Agenda:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ground Rules and Introduction2. Ratifying Previous UGM Minutes3. Exec Committee Reports4. Motion 1: Cops Off Campus and No Victimisation of Student Activists5. Motion 2: Strategic Boycott of the NSS 20206. Motion 3: Latin American Activist to be Painted in the SU Bar7. AOB



UGM Motions

Motion #1

Title:	Cops Off Campus and No Victimisation of Student Activists
Proposer:	Valeria Racu

This Union Notes:

- 1a. That SOAS is private property and police ordinarily need a warrant of permission to enter;
- 1b. That in the past, SOAS has worked closely with the police and border control agencies to deport 9 cleaners in 2009, and to intervene in student protests in 2010-2013. This close relationship was challenged by student activists in the past and thanks to "Cops Off Campus" activism, it was visibly weakened;
- 1c. That there has been a rise in the securitisation of university campuses, through the installation of more and more sophisticated mechanism of crowd control (ID cards scans, CCTV cameras, etc) as well as an increase in the presence of private security on campuses and government securitisation programmes such as PREVENT;
- 1d. That Higher Education institutions have increasingly used police intervention to deal with student activism on campus, ie. King's College London calling the police on student protests or the University of Exeter calling the police on a student occupation;
- 1e. That London Metropolitan Police are institutionally racist, even according to their own officers, with a record of disproportionately targeting BME people, in particular through stop and search practices;
- 1f. That the Metropolitan Police have a record of violent transphobia and homophobia;
- 1g. That student activists tend to be victimised for their activism, and are treated differently because of it. This discriminatory treatment goes from being denied access to particular events (KCL) to being issued with inconsiderate and disorbitated disciplinary actions;
- 1h. That incoming SOAS Director Adam Habib engaged with the police when dealing with #FeesMustFall student activists in 2015-2016, by first largely increasing the number of private security on campus and later calling 1000 police officers onto campus to disperse the crowds at Wits University in South Africa.



This Union Believes:

- 2a. That no student should be victimised for their activism on campus;
- 2b. That the police and border control agencies actively intimidate and endanger students, rather than protecting them;
- 2c. That our campus should be a space controlled by the community of students and university workers;
- 2d. That students should feel safe from police harassment and brutality on their campus;
- 2e. That the SOAS community is capable of ensuring the safety of students and staff on campus without police interference;
- 2f. That the presence of police can be intimidating to students and makes many students feel unsafe on campus. This may particularly apply to students from marginalised groups that are regular targets for police harassment, discrimination and violence;
- 2g. That, unless invited by students and/or staff, the presence of police on campus should be limited to necessary responses to specific and material threats to, or attacks on, the safety of people on campus;
- 2h. That survivors of sexual and gender based violence as well as other kinds of violence by misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, racist or ableist harassment and/or attacks are free to choose whether or not to involve the police in their experiences. Either choice is legitimate and should be respected and supported.
- 2i. That SOAS security rarely call police on campus, but that there is still a need for a formalised and completely consistent policy.



This Union Resolves:

3a. To operate under a "Cops Off Campus" policy;

3b. To refrain from inviting the police on campus unless absolutely necessary to counter a specific or material threat to, or attack on, the safety of people on campus.

3c. To actively reject the victimisation of student activists and to stand in solidarity with them, supporting them in whatever ways necessary;

3d. To liaise with SOAS to create a clear and public policy that:

SOAS shall refrain from inviting the police onto campus unless absolutely necessary to counter a specific or material threat to, or attack on, the safety of people on campus;

If SOAS invite police onto their spaces and events, SOAS SU will be consulted first where possible;

Where appropriate and necessary, members of the SOAS community should be notified in advance about expected police presence on campus;

3e. To lobby incoming SOAS Director Adam Habib in issuing a statement prior to his starting date at SOAS recognising the danger he put his former students in by calling the police on them at Wits University, and formally committing to a "Cops Off Campus" policy and to no victimisation of student activists during his time at SOAS.



Motion #2

Title:	Strategic Boycott of the NSS 2020
Proposer:	Valeria Racu

This Union Notes:

1a. That the National Students Survey (NSS) is a nation-wide questionnaire held for all final year undergraduates in the UK to fill in. It asks for their opinion regarding several factors affecting their university experience, such as resources, student voice, and teaching standards.

1b. That the results of this survey play an important part in affecting a university's position on the league tables, which then have a key role in the decision-making process for students applying for universities in the coming year.

1c. That in the 2016/17 academic year, the National Union of Students (NUS) led a nationwide campaign to boycott the NSS. The boycott was held in protest of the linkage of the NSS to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which would give universities with higher rankings the ability to increase their tuition fees and was protested by the NUS on the grounds that this would "accelerate the marketisation of our sector, entrench inequality and damage the UK's academic reputation". Following the nation-wide boycott, the TEF/NSS linkage was dropped, and the NUS boycott was ended.

1d. That in 2017/18, SOAS Students' Union UGM passed another motion to boycott the NSS, as a moral stand against the marketisation of higher education. Despite this call for boycott, 52% of students still filled out the NSS and therefore the data was valid. Last year, 2018/19, the SU ran a referendum on whether to boycott and 62% of those who voted, voted against the boycott. The NSS was completed by more than 70% of finalists.

1e. That the survey is currently open and finalist undergraduate students are being actively asked to fill it in until the deadline on 17th April 2020.

1f. That currently only 33% of SOAS undergraduate students have filled it in, while the threshold for it to be valid is 50%, and SOAS' target is 80% completion.

1g. That the boycott would mean not filling in the NSS by those who have not done it yet, and to cancel a submission in retrospective, by emailing NSS, for that 33% who have completed it already.

1h. That SOAS has committed to donating 5 pounds per student who fills in the NSS to the Students' Union society Solidarity with Refugees and Displaced People (SRDP).

1i. That the Students' Union has a list of active campaigns on campus with clear demands from the School that need to be addressed and committed to.



This Union Believes:

2a. That the student body has a lot of power and has a history of successfully putting pressure on management when mobilised;

2b. That students have imagined a different kind of university through our demands, which would make this space and institution a more accessible and decolonial place;

2c. That the NSS has relevant importance for SOAS as an institution and therefore can be successfully used as a negotiating tactic against management;

2d. That SOAS has been going through a lot of change in the last few years and will most likely continue doing so in the months to come;

2e. That a narrative of extreme financial crisis is being used to advocate for cuts to the most precarious members of our academic community, after a similar narrative was used in the past to push for the OPS restructure, which has negatively impacted student and staff experience at SOAS, as well as recruitment numbers.

2f. That the SOAS Students' Union should stand in solidarity with affected members of staff by past and future cuts;

This Union Resolves:

3a. To strategically boycott the NSS until all demands attached to it are met or, at least, satisfactorily addressed with adequate commitments put in place;

3b. To put together a list of demands that are to be met by SOAS management. These demands should include those fought for by already existing SU campaigns such as Fractionals for Fair Play (FFFP), Justice for Workers (J4W), My Reading List is Black, Demilitarise SOAS, Account for This (A4T), BDS, Preventing PREVENT, Enough is Enough and others. All these campaigns have already been endorsed by the union through UGM policy.

3b. To encourage students to complete the NSS if/when all demands are met or, at least, satisfactorily addressed, ensuring SOAS meets its 80% target.

3c. To support other actions that members of staff, both permanent or fractional, may take in order to oppose cuts and attacks on them. Some of these could be marking boycotts, walkouts, protests, etc.



Motion #3

Title:	Latin American Activist to be Painted in the SU Bar
Proposer:	Gabriela Ramos Sarmet Dos Santos
This Union Notes:	
<p>1a. That international solidarity is a must within our university, and although Latin America is not one of our major regions of study we still have a lot to exchange and learn from this region' struggle and resistance. The best way to demonstrate solidarity is to have a Latin American face on the SU bar's wall along with the other international activists</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>2a. That among the great representatives of Latin American struggle, one of the faces to be considered is the Brazilian activist Marielle Franco, for the upcoming second anniversary of her assassination. The black and bisexual human rights defender from the peripheries of Brazil has a very important and relevant background, especially in the current moment as her assassination has been connected with Jair Bolsonaro, the president of Brazil. This Saturday it will be 2 years of the unresolved investigation on her assassination, and there are loads of evidence that the reason behind it its exactly the connections with the president. Please find more in https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/marielle-franco-murdered-brazil-lgbt-black-rights-activists</p>	
This Union Resolves:	
<p>3a. To call the same people who have been painting other leaders in the SU bar walls and paint the face of a Latin American activist</p>	