

Thursday 24th October 2019

UGM Agenda

Time:	16:00 – 18:00
Date:	24th October 2019
Location:	JCR
Chair:	May Gabriel, Re:think Mental Health
Agenda:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ground Rules and Introduction2. Exec Committee Reports3. Motion 1: Mandatory Environmental Education Workshops4. Motion 2: Introducing Online Voting System for UGMs5. Motion 3: Proposal for SOAS Students' Union to become the first Earth Protector Institution6. AOB

UGM MOTIONS

Motion #1

Title:	Mandatory Environmental Education Workshops
Proposer:	Prachi Singhal
This Union Notes:	
<p>1.1 We only have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe, a crisis which is affecting/will be affecting ALL OF US. Most global organisations attest to this data and while we might have more time and less, immediate attention and action on the environment is the need of the hour.</p>	
<p>1.2 SOAS and SU have acknowledged this by declaring a "Climate Emergency" and committing to integrate climate justice and education for sustainability across SOAS curricula. No action has been taken yet on this and might take a lot of time to update the curricula.</p>	
<p>1.3 SOAS and SU already runs Mandatory Consent Workshops, a successful example on how they can fill in the gaps left by our outdated academic world and help bring attention and awareness among people, leading them to act better, and advocate for change a very important step towards combating pressing phenomenon like harassment.</p>	
This Union Believes:	
<p>2.1 Globally, most universities and academic institutions do not run a basic environmental education discourse as a result of which most of us graduate without knowing what we can do to protect our environment and ecosystem, how it affects us and the current scenario.</p>	

2.1 Climate Change and Environmental Degradation is happening at a rapid pace and lot of trends and developments have emerged in recent times. These workshops will ensure all students are equipped with the same base level knowledge in environmental action.

2.2 Resultant awareness and behavioural change from these workshops will improve our SOAS as a leader in change and may apply more pressure to the govt / school to bring systemic change.

This Union Resolves:

3.1. To pilot an environmental education workshop in Freshers 2020 mandatory for all current and new students by SU.

3.2 Form a working group including experts and representatives from staff, SU, Existing societies etc to decide the workshop curriculum.

3.3 Similar to Consent workshops, these workshops will be run by pre trained students and funded by SU with possible support from SOAS.

Amendments:

Motion #2

Title:	Introducing an Online Voting System for UGMs
Proposer:	Maxine Thomas-Asante

This Union Notes:

1.1 Open ballots can influence the voting of participants due to a pressure to vote in line with the majority in the room, and may discourage participation by union members in some votes

1.2 Encouraging more members to vote could improve the health of democracy at SOAS SU considering the UGM is currently the main method of participation for our members.

1.3 Participation with UGM votes could potentially be improved by a secret ballot or an alternative voting system.

1.4 The union already uses online voting systems for other methods of democratic participation such as elections. Introducing a new voting system in this context would bring UGM systems into line with this.

This Union Believes:

2.1 Potential reformation of the voting system in UGMs would improve accuracy compared to the current system of counting by human sight, and could improve inclusivity as members may feel more confident to participate.

2.2 It is in our interest to encourage healthy participation from Student Union members. This includes accounting for members who may want to participate but find the physical space of UGMs a deterrent.

2.3 Anonymous voting could safeguard individuals in heated motion debates.

2.4 An online voting system would allow more time for constructive debates in the actual UGM meeting.
This Union Resolves:
3.1 Students will be openly invited to attend a focus group before the 21st November, to design an alternative voting method that they feel would be most appropriate.
3.2 The voting system chosen during the student focus group will be trialled in the two following UGMs of this year: Thursday 21st November and Monday 20th January.
3.3 After the third UGM of the year (Monday 20th January) we will propose a referendum with the following 2 options: 1) Keep the current voting system 2) Implement the alternative voting system
This will be open to all students to decide whether an online voting system would be preferable.
Amendments:

Motion #3

Title:	Proposal for SOAS Student's Union to become the first Earth Protector Institution
Proposer:	Narjiss Seffar
This Union Notes:	
1.1 SOAS student's union and university have declared a Climate Emergency and thus recognise the need for meaningful action to prevent further destruction of life on Earth.	
1.2 One way to act on the climate emergency is to become an Earth Protector Institution. Earth Protectors can be individuals, towns, cities or any institutions which are part of a global collaborative movement to protect the Earth by setting goals and guidelines to address in a meaningful way the climate crisis. The Earth Protector movement aims to increase collaboration and cooperation with local communities, councils, local government bodies and educational and other organisations to protect land, air, wildlife, soil and water and work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2025.	
1.3 This movement comes under the umbrella of the 'STOP ECOCIDE' campaign (which aims to establish an international criminal law to stop investors from backing and engaging in ecocidal practices). ECOCIDE is serious loss, damage or destruction of ecosystems, and includes climate and cultural damage.	
1.4 Becoming an Earth Protector Institution involves:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing a strategy and a date to achieve a carbon zero future. • Practice the movement from a sustainable to a regenerative culture wherever possible. • Protect and enhance eco-systems, habitats and species in and around the institution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pioneering the reduction and elimination of single-use plastics. • Promote awareness of climate and ecological emergencies. 	
1.5 SOAS is currently not an Earth Protector Institution	
This Union Believes:	
2.1 In declaring SOAS Student's Union an Earth Protector Institution, this institution can take significant steps to addressing the climate emergency. As the first Earth Protector Institution,	

SOAS will be paving the way for other organisations, communities, towns, etc to join this movement of conscientious protectors of the Earth.

2.2 This motion will make the Student's Union more aware of its impact in the world and incentivise the Union to take meaningful action to prevent further destruction of life on Earth.

2.3 As 'Earth Protectors', SOAS students and staff will feel inspired to take collective and individual action to adjust their lifestyles to be more sustainable and to become more globally aware of the devastation felt by people on the front lines of climate disaster around the world.

This Union Resolves:

3.1 To pioneer SOAS Student's Union as an Earth Protector Institution, the first of its kind and acting in a meaningful way to address the climate crisis. This involves meeting the requirements stated in section 1.4.

3.2 To make students and staff aware of their legal duty of care towards all inhabitants that have been or are at risk of being significantly harmed due to ECOCIDE and encourage all to sign up to become Earth Protectors, thus helping to fund the legal support required while creating awareness and momentum for the crucial amendment to the Rome Statute - to declare ECOCIDE a crime at the International Criminal Court

3.3 To encourage SOAS Student's Union as an institution to actively divest from any practices considered to be harmful to the health of the environment and its inhabitants both locally and globally. To promote life on Earth before profit and promote a culture of care among members.

3.4 To lobby SOAS University to do the same.

Amendments: