

# UGM AGENDA

<b>Time:</b>	17:00
<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
<b>Location:</b>	JCR
<b>Agenda</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Welcome</li><li>2) Minutes &amp; Matters Arising</li><li>3) Report from Sabbatical Officers</li><li>4) Report from executive officers</li><li>5) Expansion of the SOAS Food Co-operative</li><li>6) Grade Capping System at SOAS</li><li>7) To establish a Disabled Students and Carers' Committee</li><li>8) Support the struggle to resist immigration detention</li><li>9) Emergency Motions</li><li>10) Any Other Business (AOB) and announcements</li></ol>	
<b>Time &amp; Date of next meeting:</b>	
17:00 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	
<b>Motion Deadline:</b>	
17:00 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	

# Union General Meeting Minutes

<b>Time:</b>	17:00 – 19:00	
<b>Date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	
<b>Location:</b>	JCR	
<b>Agenda</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Welcome</li> <li>2) Minutes &amp; Matters Arising</li> <li>3) Report from Sabbatical Officers</li> <li>4) Report from Executive Officers</li> <li>5) Motions</li> <li>6) The SOAS UGM Format is not Accessible or Inclusive</li> <li>7) Pro Israel, Pro Palestine, Pro Peace</li> <li>8) Emergency Motions               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Happy Hour for the Bar</li> </ol> </li> </ol>		
<b>Ref#</b>	<b>Action/Discussion</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>1</b>	Chair explained that the meeting was not to be recorded and that abusive behaviour would not be tolerated in the meeting. Introduced Amy Dawson, new Governance and Communications Coordinator and minute taker of UGM.	
<b>2</b>	There were no objections to the minutes and no matters arising.	<b>Minutes approved</b>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>David Suber – Co-President Democracy &amp; Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BDS Referendum begins week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb</li> <li>• Voting in elections begins the following week (2<sup>nd</sup> March)</li> <li>• Progress made with Liberation Co-President</li> <li>• Encouraged students to feed into profile of new Director</li> <li>• 2 delegates needed for NUS London Council meeting Sat 21<sup>st</sup> Feb</li> <li>• Democratise SOAS Activists meeting Friday 20<sup>th</sup> Feb</li> </ul>	<b>All Co-President reports unanimously accepted</b>



	<p><b>Georgie Robertson – Co-President Welfare &amp; Campaigns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University Mental Health and Wellbeing Day, Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February – range of activities</li> <li>• Accessibility and Inclusivity project – encouraged involvement</li> <li>• Democratise SOAS meeting</li> <li>• Justice for Cleaners – Management have finally agreed to meet with cleaners – never happened in the past</li> <li>• Mitigating circumstances – lots of work being done</li> <li>• LGBTQI+ meeting Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> Feb</li> </ul> <p><b>Kabir Joshi – Co-President Activities &amp; Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met with Inter Active – advocating disability equality in sport</li> <li>• Intra-mural football team over Easter – encouraged involvement (see website)</li> <li>• Space – Building works can't happen until Summer 2015</li> <li>• Governing body meeting – lobbying the University to give the staff common room space to the Union once Senate House move takes place</li> <li>• Core events; TTIP Debate, Decolonising our Minds, Storytelling 'Open the Gate', Out of Sequence, BDS Debate.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Hannah Slydel – Womens' Officer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passed paid Co-President Liberation Officer</li> <li>• Encouraging Liberation groups to run for election</li> <li>• Galentine's party – dry event for self-identifying women 26<sup>th</sup> Feb</li> <li>• Women's History event in March</li> <li>• SOAS cohort at abortion rights demo</li> </ul> <p><b>Simon Campbell – Academic Affairs Officer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student reps – meetings mid March to feed back what's been happening</li> <li>• Taking a group to world social forum in Tunisia end of April – setting up a society to fundraise &amp; make accessible. Info meeting coming up</li> </ul>	



<p><b>5.1</b></p>	<p><b>The SOAS UGM Format is NOT accessible or inclusive</b></p> <p><b>Grace Wilcock</b> presented motion on behalf of Richard McDonald. Explained how students suffering from disabilities feel intimidated &amp; unable to participate in democratic processes of the Union. Proposing working group to come up with solutions. Amendment to add 'to set up a working group' in Union Resolves 3.1 (unanimously agreed)</p> <p><b>Speech for amendment:</b> Take out online voting.</p> <p><b>Speech against amendment:</b> Should at least put online voting on the agenda.</p> <p><b>Comment on amendment:</b> Change wording to 'will consider online voting'.</p> <p><b>Approved</b></p> <p>Discussion &amp; suggestions about UGM accessibility and inclusivity included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical space vs online voting</li> <li>• Thinking of alternatives to speaking in front of large group</li> <li>• UGM as dry space</li> <li>• Moving out of JCR into more private room</li> <li>• Filming can infringe on people's ability to feel safe</li> <li>• Considering parents, carers etc</li> <li>• Use of a lectern so that students have something in front of them</li> <li>• Opportunity to sit down</li> </ul> <p><b>Vote on the motion: Unanimously passes</b></p>	<p><b>Action:</b></p> <p><b>Students who want to be involved in working group, contact David Suber</b></p>
<p><b>5.2</b></p>	<p><b>Pro Israel, Pro Palestine, Pro Peace</b></p> <p><b>Richard Galber</b> presented the motion. Explained historical background surrounding boycotts. Encouraged talking and debate.</p> <p><b>Speech against:</b> Explained the benefits of boycott. Not divisive. Boycott is to support Palestinians in their struggle.</p> <p><b>Speech for:</b> Boycott is negative and won't solve</p>	

	<p>occupations</p> <p><b>Speech against:</b> Misunderstanding about ideologies. Pro BDS campaign maintains separation from religious grouping. Dialogue was attempted but didn't work.</p> <p><b>Speech for:</b> Problematic to separate religion from the discussion. Misunderstanding about the complexity of the issues. Apply SOAS thought and nuance to this situation.</p> <p><b>Speech against:</b> Serious questions have been raised - how do we fight against oppression. BDS is a way to stand in solidarity with oppressed.</p> <p><b>Speech for:</b> Countries shouldn't be boycotted because of what their government do. Lots of students don't know about BDS and need explanation.</p> <p><b>Speech against:</b> People are personally affected by this. A lot of misunderstanding about what BDS is and does. The boycott is narrow.</p> <p><b>Summation for:</b> The biggest problem is a refugee issue and needs to be resolved before there can be peace.</p> <p><b>Summation against:</b> Refugee issue is a consequence of colonialism. Encouraged people to engage in both campaigns.</p> <p><b>Vote on the motion: Motion falls</b></p>	
<p><b>6.1</b></p>	<p><b>Happy Hour for the Bar</b></p> <p><b>Elias Schneider</b> presented the motion. Students don't have much money and happy hour would encourage more custom in the bar. 6-8, £2 pint for example.</p> <p><b>Speech against:</b> Other ways of raising income for the bar. Opening the doors and let members of the public enter.</p> <p><b>Vote: Motion Passes</b></p>	
<p><b>Announcements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BDS Video to be shown after the UGM</li> <li>• National Conference for Unite Against Fascism</li> <li>• Anti Racism Demonstration, Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March</li> <li>• 4D video released on Facebook to download</li> </ul>		

# Union General Meeting Motions

## 1. Expansion of the SOAS Food Co-operative

Proposer: Jovian Salak 593913      Seconder: Alexandra Griffitts 596751

### **The Union notes:**

- 1.1) That the SOAS Food Co-operative has come a long way since its early days - a table manned by some students with a few grains and a vision.
- 1.2) That the SOAS Food Co-operative is bursting at its seams - it has been expanding this year and would like to continue doing so. This means they can continue to bring students healthy, ethical, and cheap food.
- 1.3) The SOAS Food Co-operative has doubled its opening days this term, and last week received its highest income to date. The Co-operative would like the environment to continue this.

### **This Union Believes:**

- 2.1) That SOAS' expansion into Senate House in 2016 should take into account the needs of students -and that this includes the accessibility of affordable, healthy food.
- 2.2) The Union should fight on behalf of students to secure and/or designate the SOAS Food Co-operative greater, more practical space. This should include the possibility of shifting location within the JCR in the short term as well as acquiring a more suitable location in the long term.
- 2.3) That any new site offered to the Co-op must include: access to power, permanence, access to footfall, greater storage and display space.
- 2.4) The Co-op is a core feature of your union and it supports many campaigns. It is over-worked and under-staffed, while being totally voluntary, so the passion of the team deserves to be recognised by allowing it to blossom.

### **This Union Resolves:**

- 3.1) To discuss this proposition with Co-op representatives and the other relevant parties (inside and outside the union).
- 3.2) To work both alongside, and on behalf of, the Co-op in discussions with university management when needed.
- 3.3) To regard the needs of the Co-op as a legitimate concern of the union.

## 2. Grade capping system at SOAS

Proposer: Anonymous    Second: David Suber

### **The Union notes:**

- 1.1. Students who miss an exam at SOAS and take the resit exam instead, are faced with a huge disadvantage and capping of their grades.
- 1.2. Students who have to redo the exam of any module do not have the right to produce and submit the corresponding essays in order to progress positively towards their final grade and start automatically in a disadvantaged position.
- 1.3. Students are expected to retake the exam and no matter how well you did throughout the year and/or in the resit exam your grade will be capped to 40.
- 1.4. Students who are enrolled in master's degrees and miss an exam will never have the chance to retake it and hence lose important marks towards their final grade and much more...

### **This Union Believes:**

- 2.1. That students pay a high price to be in university, we work hard for our futures and worry about getting a good grade, as such administrative staff should support students in doing so by providing a flexible, accessible and supportive "exam system".
- 2.2. Students who have missed an exam because of misfortune or an unpredicted event should be eligible to defend their case in front of a panel or exams staff members in order to retake the exam on neutral grounds if proven to be a genuine fault.
- 2.4. Missing an exam could happen to anyone and retaking it on neutral grounds should be made available for students, what is the point of retaking an exam if you know you are going to get a 40, how does that possibly help students become better and learn from the subject? It can only contribute negatively to your final grade and possesses no motivating factor whatsoever.
- 2.5. The exams office immediately reject and ignore any reason (other than death of a relative or illness) when it comes to enabling students to become eligible to pass the resit examination on neutral grounds. Students when at fault are sanctioned by the administration with hindering penalties such as these, but when there is negligence from their side nobody sanctions them, even though we are the ones paying to be in this university that is supposed to have students interests at heart.

### **This Union Resolves:**

3.1. To pressure the exams office to consider better resit conditions for students. Only students who have been ill or have lost a relative (amongst other few exceptional cases) are eligible to start the resit exam on neutral grounds but could there be space for students who have had other issues that could happen to anyone?

3.2. To enable students who are retaking an exam to complete and submit the corresponding coursework in order to progress and continue learning whilst challenging your knowledge on the subject in question.

3.3. To end the capping system and stop excusing it with the fact that students will take advantage of a neutral resit examination procedure.

3.4. To demand the exams office to have a more compassionate and supportive role vis-a-vis students who have missed an exam instead of shutting them down.

### **3. To establish a 'Disabled Students and Carers' Committee'**

Proposer: Karmel Carey 584498    Second: Georgie Roberson gr14

#### **The Union notes:**

- 1.1 That the remit of the Disabled Students' and Carers' Officer is to represent the interests of people affected by disability – that is, those with disabilities and impairments as well as their friends, family and carers.
- 1.2 Disabilities and impairments include, but are not limited to: specific Learning Differences (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia), long-term health conditions (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, ME, cancer, MS), mental health issues (e.g. depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, eating disorders), sight impairments, hearing impairments, mobility impairments (e.g. those who use crutches, a walking frame, a wheelchair), autistic spectrum disorder, Asperger's syndrome and short stature.
- 1.3 There is currently no list of students included in this remit available for the DSC officers, and there is no group to represent them.

#### **This Union Believes:**

- 2.1 That it is important for Students' Union officers to consult students affected by issues in order to better represent them.
- 2.2 That it is often difficult to survey students affected by disability before making decisions.

#### **This Union Resolves:**

- 3.1 To establish a 'Disabled Students and Carers' Committee' to represent disabled students and carer students at SOAS.
- 3.2 That the 'Disabled Students and Carers' Committee' will be overseen by the Disabled Students and Carers' Officer.
- 3.3 The Disabled Students and Carers' Officer will arrange an open meeting in which anyone can put themselves forward to be on the committee, which could be determined via election if members of the meeting deem this appropriate.
- 3.4 That the Disabled Students and Carers' Committee will meet at least twice a term, which non-committee members can also attend.

## **4. Support the struggle to resist immigration detention**

Proposer: **Sam Tippet**    Seconder: **Hannah Slydel**

### **The Union notes:**

1.1 That on the 10th October 2014 this Union passed a motion to 'make a campaign to end detention' and has repeatedly emphasised its opposition to immigration detention.

1.2 That there have been mass protests occurring in detention centres across the country over the last week including Harmondsworth, Colnbrook, Dungavel, Yarl's Wood, Morton Hall, Tinsley House, Brook House and The Verne.

1.3 That these protests include mass hunger strikes.

1.4 That those protesting risk further extra-judicial punishment, forced removal from the country and in many cases their lives.

### **This Union Believes:**

2.1 That it is our responsibility to stand in solidarity with those resisting detention.

2.2 That as allies of those in detention we must respect the actions and decisions of those people currently being detained.

2.3 That immigration detention will most likely be brought to an end by internal resistance rather than through external lobbying.

### **This Union Resolves:**

3.1 To set aside £500 to be used to support those currently resisting the detention estate.

3.2 That this money will be managed by a group of students (and invited non-students) through open meetings in which all students will be welcome.

3.3 That information about these meetings will be sent via the Co-Presidents' Weekly Email or by Peter Baran's Students' Union e-mail.