



Friday May 7th 2021

## UGM Agenda

<b>Time</b>	3pm - 5pm
<b>Date</b>	Friday 7th May
<b>Location</b>	Zoom
<b>Chair</b>	Sara Bafo (Goldsmiths SU)
<b>Agenda</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introduction &amp; Ground Rules</li><li>2. <b>Motion 1:</b> The University Should Cover Any Costs Associated with Mitigating Circumstances Applications</li><li>3. <b>Motion 2:</b> Sabbatical Role for Black African, Black Caribbean and Black Students of the diaspora</li><li>4. <b>Motion 3:</b> Introduce a 'QTIPOC Officer' to SOAS SU</li><li>5. <b>Motion 4:</b> To Stand in Solidarity with and Support the Mass Campaign to Resist the Police Crackdown Bill (the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill)</li><li>6. Executive Committee Reports</li><li>7. Ratifying the Minutes of the Previous UGM</li><li>8. AOB</li></ol>



## UGM Motions

### Motion 1

<b>Title</b>	The University Should Cover Any Costs Associated with Mitigating Circumstances Applications
<b>Proposer</b>	Felix Henson
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Notes</b></p> <p>1.1. That the average student income in the UK as of 2020 was £1,063.70 . The Metro claims that the cheapest place in London to house share still costs £531, leaving little money to spare for the month for food and utilities, let alone any study-related costs.</p> <p>1.2. That international students already have to fund their own studies and SOAS has a higher than average number of international students.</p> <p>1.3. That despite PEDs, disabled students are still more likely to access mitigating circumstances than most, and disabled people are more likely to have lower incomes associated with the increased costs of living with a disability (of which, this may be one).</p> <p>1.4. Doctor's notes have been known to cost anywhere from nothing to up to £120 on one occasion. They seem to average £15- £25. Medical records can cost around £50 to procure.</p> <p>1.5. There currently exists a fund for this, however it is poorly funded and little known.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Believes</b></p> <p>2.1. That the Student Union should support students on low incomes' access to university education</p> <p>2.2. That it should not cost students to prove they are going through a particularly difficult period in life to the university.</p> <p>2.3. That these costs may be prohibitive for some students, and that easing these costs may make mitigating circumstances more accessible for many.</p> <p>2.4. That particularly during the pandemic many more students than usual have needed to access mitigating circumstances more than ever and that these circumstances are difficult enough without additional associated costs and complications.</p> <p>2.5. That the university should bear these costs if it is going to demand this evidence.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Resolves</b></p> <p>3.1. That the Union should create a ring-fenced fund, paid for by SOAS, which students can access to pay for these costs, and any costs associated with accessing mitigating circumstances.</p> <p>3.2. That the existence of this fund should be made more widely known as barely anybody knows it</p>	



exists.

## Motion 2

<b>Title</b>	Sabbatical Role for Black African, Black Caribbean and Black Students of the diaspora
<b>Proposer</b>	Patrick Serrugo
<p>*Black does not refer to today's term of 'politically Black', which seeks to include all non-white students as one homogenous group. Instead, Black refers to students of Black African origin whose ancestry is rooted in Africa. This includes Black African students, Black Caribbean students and Black Students of the diaspora.</p> <p>*Anti-Black racism refers to the direct and indirect, systemic and systematic forms of discrimination that directly impact the lives of Black folks adversely; producing psychological, social, economic, spiritual, emotional, physical and internal degradation, suppression and erasure of Black folk.</p>	
<b>This Union Notes</b>	
<p><b>1.1</b> No one at a full-time level has placed Black students' issues as a top priority in the SU without it causing friction.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Black students constantly face anti-Black racism on campus (direct discrimination).</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Black students still face micro-aggressions and structural anti-Black racism (indirect discrimination).</p> <p><b>1.4</b> Black students are not adequately represented across the school's curriculum and reading lists. A curriculum that addresses Black cultures, experiences and politics are still predominantly taught through the medium of white epistemologies delivered by non-Black lecturers; hence demands are being made from campaigns such as My Reading List is Black. Furthermore, Black students even face backlash when incorporating Black scholars into their work.</p> <p><b>1.5</b> Black students are negated, erased and spoken over and spoken for at SOAS and not listened to.</p> <p><b>1.6</b> Black students are not accorded justice when racially abused.</p> <p><b>1.7</b> The institutional responses to the lack of representation of Black students and the school's pervasive anti-Blackness have failed. The Decolonising SOAS Working group has not managed to</p>	



achieve **any** fruitful results. All the meetings regarding the issue have failed to produce any action points to tackle structural anti-Black racism.

**1.8** The removal of the Africa Section has resulted in the deterioration of the Black student experience at SOAS. Many Black students joined the university based on its marketing as a leading institution for African Studies. The university has not compensated students for the adverse academic effects caused by reductions of module options and staff capacities in Africa related courses caused by this restructuring.

**1.9** The lack of representation and the pervasive anti-Blackness forces Black students to advocate for their rights which distracts them from focusing on their academic work and feeds into the cycle of low attainment.

**1.10** We have countless personal accounts, eye witness testimonies, qualitative data (emails/essay feedback etc.), and quantitative data of the challenges and anti-Blackness Black students face.

### **This Union Believes**

**2.1** All students deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, and many are. However, Black students continue to face the same issues that many of their previous alumni have faced at SOAS, at least since the days of Walter Rodney (PhD History 1966), Paul Robeson (Swahili and phonetics 1934) and Ivan Van Certima (1969).

**2.2** Although there are other marginalised groups, the marginalisation of Black students at SOAS and Black people globally is unique. There is a lack of respect for the Black person as a being to this day. The disrespect Black students face is often caused by the fact that the perpetrators of anti-Blackness are rarely penalised for their acts as the institution ignores the complaints of Black students by not taking credible action.

**2.3** Having such a role will make other SU Sabbatical Roles more productive for the rest of the student body for two reasons:

- a. They can focus on the issues that pertain to their office, which do not exclusively focus on Black students.
- b. This allows for more excellent representation of the body as a whole and provides time and resources to be redirected to the other responsibilities they are elected for.

**2.4** The attainment gap is racist: The lack of success associated with Black students is an external issue and not an inadequacy or deficiency of intellect. It reveals the institution's determinist approach, which perpetuates anti-Black racism, fueling hostility in a learning environment.

**2.5** The SOAS Student's Union has been insufficient in addressing racial abuse towards Black students, and complaints have not been adequately dealt with, as attested to by the Black



students. The latter still suffer from anti-Black racism in their classes without recourse. Some of these Black students have recently graduated with the racialised trauma incurred at SOAS.

**2.6** The Black student body shouldered the work on anti-Black racism and its injuries and spending inordinate amounts of time gathering limited resources to assist Black students injured by racism and not focus on their studies.

**2.7** The executive board has failed, the academic committee has failed, widening participation has failed, decolonising SOAS has failed. If all parts of the institution have failed, what will the welfare of Black students at SOAS continue to look like?

### **This Union Resolves**

**3.1** The Student's Union (SU) should create a new Sabbatical Role role as soon as possible due to the current events of the director, Adam Habib's racist attack on a student on 11th March 2021.

**3.2** This role should be full-time and paid akin to the other Sabbatical Role roles. The goal is to allow SOAS students to pick a Black Sabbatical Role based on the Black individual's merits and ability to support and represent the SOAS Black student body.

**3.3** This Sabbatical Role role will be focused on issues affecting Black and Minority Ethnic Students' intersecting struggles such as race, class and gender, attainment gap, and countering all forms of racism, particularly Anti-Blackness inside and outside the SU.

**3.4** This Sabbatical Role should represent Black students by making the institution accountable for their promises. See 'decolonising SOAS vision.'

**3.5** The selected individual must be a person of Black African Descent.

**3.6** This Sabbatical Role must go through diversity training specific to Blackness & higher education.

**3.7** The person in this role must be a current student or a final year student.

**3.8** The Sabbatical Role must go through a termly review by Black students peers, together with the Anti-Racism officer, making sure that the needs of Black students are met in bettering their experience.

**3.9** This Sabbatical Role will be the main point of contact for Black students to make confidential complaints about their learning environment, modules, lecturers and convenors.

**3.10** The SU should lobby the University for this role to be able to take measures and penalise anti-Black racist behaviour exhibited by any staff members and students regardless of seniority in accordance with the SOAS Dignity and Respect Policy and SOAS Students Union constitution.



**3.11** The role will work with the Black Student Support Coordinator and have the same access to resources within the SU to ensure and safeguard the Black Student Body.

**3.12** To lobby the university and allow the Black Student Body to make democratic amendments through a termly peer-reviewed of both roles to ensure Anti-Black racism is dealt with and the safety of Black Students upheld.

### Motion 3

<b>Title</b>	Introduce a 'QTIPOC Officer' to SOAS SU
<b>Proposer</b>	Hasan Zakria
<b>This Union Notes</b>	
<p><b>1.1</b> There has historically been a lack of PoC representation in the role of LGBTQIA+ Officer (2019, 2011, 2008)</p> <p><b>1.2</b> There has historically been a lack of PoC representation in LGBTQIA+ spaces on campus, including SU events</p> <p><b>1.3</b> An argument can be made that 1.2 is the result of 1.1</p> <p><b>1.4</b> QTPOC Students are a distinct demographic with distinct concerns and needs as a result of their personal circumstances;</p> <p><b>1.5</b> SOAS Student Union has a responsibility to represent and support its members (SOAS Students), which include QTPOC Students</p> <p><b>1.6</b> Presently, there is no dedicated Elected SU Officer to represent QTPOC students within SOAS SU;</p> <p><b>1.7</b> Since 2011 (earliest record), no Trans* Student was in the role of LGBTQIA+ Officer.</p> <p><b>1.8</b> Following the introduction of the Trans* and Gender Identity Officer since 2017, the role has consistently been filled by a Trans* student</p> <p><b>1.9</b> Based on 1.5 and 1.6, an argument can be made that the introduction of a Trans* specific role empowered Trans* students to join the SU and guaranteed the election of a Trans* student</p>	
<b>This Union Believes</b>	
<p><b>2.1</b> The introduction of a QTPOC role would allow for greater QTPOC representation in both the SU and SOAS spaces (1.1 / 1.2)</p> <p><b>2.2</b> The introduction of a QTPOC role would allow for QTPOC students to feel more empowered to run in SU elections, where they may not have felt confident running for the more general LGBTQIA+ role, knowing that a QTPOC student is being actively sought after in this role (1.5 / 1.6 / 1.7)</p> <p><b>2.3</b> The introduction of a QTPOC Officer would guarantee the election of a QTPOC student, in the event that a QTPOC student does not run for LGBTQIA+ Officer, or does not win the role of LGBTQIA+ Officer</p>	
<b>This Union Resolves</b>	



- 3.1 To add 'QTPOC Officer' to the list of part-time student officer roles in the Executive Committee, subject to the same terms as other liberation officers;
- 3.2 To hold an election for this position at the earliest reasonable opportunity
- 3.3 To actively promote this position, and make all reasonable efforts to ensure it is filled by democratically-elected, self-identified QTPOC students
- 3.4 To consult with QTPOC students about the responsibilities and remit of this role

## Motion 4

<b>Title</b>	To Stand in Solidarity with and Support the Mass Campaign to Resist the Police Crackdown Bill (the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill)
<b>Proposer</b>	Yasmin Elsouda
<b>This Union Notes</b>	
<p><b>1.1</b> That the government is attempting to pass the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill - that hugely increases police powers and severely curtails the right to protest and picket in this country.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> That this bill allows police forces to criminalise any protest, picket or gathering they deem a "public nuisance" - a deliberately broad definition that gives the police discretion to break up events and arrest people at protests as they see fit.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> That this bill will also lead to further criminalisation of GRT (Gypsy, Roma, Traveller) communities through the updating of trespass from civil to criminal breach of law, leading to increased evictions, property seizure, family separations and incarceration of GRT people.</p> <p><b>1.4</b> That this bill will increase forms of police harassment and abuse, such as the justifications and scope of stop and search powers that are disproportionately wielded against Black people.</p> <p><b>1.5</b> That this bill will provide the legal mechanism for the rebranding of Youth Offending Institutions as "Secure Schools," under the MoJ not the DoE, and incentivise charities to run these.</p> <p><b>1.6</b> That this bill ensures that actions of police officers are above the law during police car pursuit chases due to its amending of the 1998 Road Traffic Act.</p> <p><b>1.7</b> That this bill will needlessly increase surveillance powers, such as gaining access to electronic devices and holding people to obtain DNA or fingerprints.</p> <p><b>1.8</b> That this bill will extend the PREVENT duty, which already disproportionately targets those racialised as Muslim thus making educational institutions domains of surveillance, stress and threat for them, so as to increasingly also target Black young people.</p>	



**1.9** That this bill will increase the length and reach of criminal sentences, with longer sentences, minimum sentencing increased and mandatory, younger people eligible for whole life sentences, parole boards empowered to deny parole, and more; all of which will likely be used as ways of filling the 10,000 new prison places to emerge from the currently under-construction mega prisons.

**2.1** That an amendment put forward by an MP seeks to introduce the Nordic Model of sex work and criminalise certain online platforms used by sex workers, which would lead to the backdoor criminalisation of sex work and would deeply exacerbate the dangers of sex work without offering any meaningful support to survive or exit the industry if needed.

**2.2** That there are both historic and contemporary examples of employers using police against legitimate pickets, undercover police within the trade union movement, and retrospective arrest and incarceration of trade union organisers to intimidate, undermine and quash trade union activities.

**2.3** That, given this, extending police powers will almost certainly lead to such tactics becoming widespread amongst employers who want to subdue union organisation and industrial action, alongside causing increased jeopardy to our Black, GRT and sex working comrades.

**2.4** That the government is likely to make concessions with this bill in an attempt to demobilise the movement.

**2.5** That to allow any form of this bill to pass and be enforced would be to abdicate responsibility towards and solidarity with Black, GRT and sex industry workers and non-workers.

### **This Union Believes**

**3.1** That protests against this bill have been met with severe police repression and widespread media coverage of police propaganda.

**3.2** That many attendees, legal observers, medics, and even representatives of the press have been attacked and injured at these protests, often without any provocation whatsoever, by police officers.

**3.3** That this violence from the police is in no way comparable to the supposed disorder that they were allegedly responding to.

**3.4** That the police have historically acted to break-up student movement activities with similar displays of force, such as at 2010 protests against the fee hike.

**3.5** That different student led campaigns at SOAS have utilised protest tactics to achieve their demands and that this bill threatens student organising and mobilisation and therefore restricts what we can achieve as a movement.

**3.6** That protest is a part of learning/education and that the bill therefore threatens collective and alternative forms of learning.

**3.7** That such displays of force are a regular occurrence against Black communities, GRT communities and sex workers and, as such, these parallels serve as reminders of what we have in common across movements, communities and industries.

**3.8** That as a union we have a policy of non-compliance with PREVENT and that we must actively resist PREVENT's operation on campus and the expansion of its remit through this bill.

**3.9** That increased police power does not keep us safe and that British police are a racist institution



that should be defunded and abolished.

### **This Union Resolves**

- 4.1** To publicly support the national Kill the Bill coalition by signing this statement: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdxxoAcut2Z3BXU1qeiE824MCXHk7TKIFCDSfgbBoV1AuQ18Q/viewform> and contributing to national meetings, strategy and actions.
- 4.2** To commit to resisting this bill in its entirety in solidarity with the wider student movement, trade union movement, GRT communities, racialised people, and sex workers, who are all disproportionately targeted by police powers already and face an intensification of such with this bill.
- 4.3** To contribute to local organising efforts for the national Kill the Bill coalition by keeping the SOAS student community informed, sharing resources and more.
- 4.4** To mobilise for any "Kill the Bill" actions organised by the national coalition or by other local activists.
- 4.5** To stand in solidarity with other Kill the Bill actions and activists, regardless of whether the tactics they employ are commensurate with student union actions or tactics.
- 4.6** To support the actions of SOAS student organisers, student led campaigns and our local trade unions in resisting this bill.
- 4.6.1** That we will continue to support the work of the student led campaign resisting Prevent and seeking to abolish the policy, by pressuring SOAS to not comply and connecting with other campaigns working to pressure their university to not comply.
- 4.6.2** That we are committed to supporting students organising for a clear Cops Off Campus policy at SOAS.
- 4.7** To develop political education around policing, prisons, anti-racism, GRT lives, and sex worker politics in our community in service of building solidarity across communities and a mass movement against this bill.
- 4.8** To collaborate with other Student Unions and the wider national student movement to support the national coalition to Kill The Bill.