



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

3rd February 2021
11am - 1pm

Chair: Yasmin Elsouda

Agenda

1. Officer Check-In
2. SU Elections
3. SU Annual General Meeting Planning
4. Student Submission for the Office for Students
5. Government Policing of Gender Neutral Toilets Consultation and Trans* and NB Visibility in LGBTQIA+ History Month
6. AOB

Apologies:

In attendance: Yasmin Elsouda, Sabrina Shah, Roza Atac, Hasan Zakria, Felix Henson, Oscar Ward, Ella Spencer, Hisham Parchment, Sohane Yahya, Jake Isaac, Victor Max Smith, Lucia Pedroso, Sara Lloyd-Knibbs, Dideolu Olufelo, Josh Mock

1. Officer Check-In

Yasmin: *Some updates:* Deadline to express interest in the NUS Liberation Conference has been extended to Friday - contact Jack if you're interested. UGM Officer Reports need to be submitted to Jack by Friday 12th February. Please also update your officer bio on the SU website as people will use these to get more information on the role for the upcoming SU Election.

Sohane: Got lots of feedback from last week's Black Student Caucus about what students want - currently organising some social events to take place across a week. The Robeson is also currently accepting submissions from students.

Oscar: Working with Yasmin and Anna, and making progress with accommodation issues. Students are unhappy.

Jake: International students are concerned about fees and refunds (to speak with Yasmin for more info)

Lucia: Students are unhappy. Working with the fee strike committee (with Yasmin and Ella). Starting academic drop in sessions every Friday, 2:30pm - 3:30pm for students to discuss academic issues with me. Also organising an event for LGBTQIA+ History Month.

Ella: Working with Lucia and Yasmin on fee strikes. Trying to work across campus with different groups (e.g. Liberating the University, and Pause and Pay). Sent out a petition on Monday to send off to SOAS management soon and communicate our demands.

Felix: Been working with Lucia and Sara on mitigating circumstances. Delivering autism sensitivity training to Urbanest. About to restart disabled student society socials.

Victor: Lots of things going on. Trying to plan a film screening for LGBTQIA+ History Month with Lizzy. It's hard to connect to people without being on campus.

Dideolu: Lots of meetings about student feedback - some don't understand if student fee strikes are beneficial or not. The RSA aren't sure how to support the students' union - I'm hoping to get more information to boost their confidence. Met with the Academic Experience team who asked us to send out the annual surveys to students.

Josh: Working on LGBTQIA+ History Month event.

Sabrina: Last 2 weeks have been hard. Think I've found a UGM Chair - to be approved by the Trustee Board. Meeting with the Mitigating Circumstances team with Sara and Lucia tomorrow. A lot of my time is going towards mitigating circumstances currently - trying to improve the PGR policy and making the PGT policy more in line with the UG. Trying to work

with staff on projects around assessments and reinvigorating the decolonising agenda. Also doing some small things around Prevent.

Roza: Have an Open Forum tomorrow with SAaW, BRC and Oscar on the theme of anxiety. Had a student parent forum last week with Sara, Lucia and Felix, and have another one today - a lot of things came up that needs to be done in terms of immediate action for student parents' who have kids out of school; and longer term things such as carers and parents can't get a student inclusion plan / there's no safety policy for students who get pregnant during their studies. Have the Clements Review Steering Group tomorrow. Also trying to set up an Enough is Enough steering group with the School to confirm plans and funding for next year, and meeting with external people to talk more about the campaign.

Hasan: We've sent out the LGBTQIA+ History Month calendar - we have around 15 events across the month. Getting ready for my events coming up in LGBTQIA+ History Month. Hisham suggested a sex and relationship expert to do a takeover of our Instagram account for Valentines, so I'm arranging this. Also organising blind dates for Valentines - we've had good sign up so far!

Sara: Roza, Lucia and Felix supported with last week's Student Parent Forum, and we have another today. The Mature Students WhatsApp group and the Student Parent WhatsApp group are both doing well - lots of members and lots of issues being raised. Mature Student socials are still running and a valuable space. Also working on mitigating circumstances.

Yasmin: Doing our best to organise around the fee strike, but it's difficult to bring people together with different personal opinions. Sending our petition which has over 800 signatures, and will be sending the letter to SOAS senior directors asking for a meeting to discuss the contents of the petition. Royal College of Arts SU has reached out to discuss fee strike plans. There's lots of complaints happening at SOAS right now, and they have to have an officer on the panels, so a lot of my time is going into that right now. Also trying to organise a cross-union forum.

A discussion was had around getting clarity on fee strikes.

2. SU Elections

Sabrina: Monday 8th February, 3pm - 5pm, myself and Jack will be doing a UGM drop-in to support people in forming their UGM policy motions. Jack will also be hosting an Instagram Q&A (similar to what we did for elections last week where students asked us questions).

There will also be election drop-ins in the future if anyone would like to get involved.

3. SU Annual General Meeting Planning

Sabrina: Last year our Annual General Meeting was hosted as a booklet with officer reports, financial reports, etc. We're constitutionally bound to host an AGM, and it's an opportunity for students to see what the SU has been up to this year. We still want to do a booklet for access and institutional memory, but we want to open it up to you all to host another more

interactive and dynamic AGM event. Exec should take ownership of what the AGM looks like - what do you want to see, what do students want to see? Just to get this on everyone's radar to start thinking about what we want to do with this meeting.

Yasmin: This is a good opportunity to create videos and zines etc that we can link into this document, to create a good piece of institutional memory.

A discussion was had around updating the SU website, specifically relating to cost and the financial position of the Union. This will be continued by the officers in the future, once there's a clearer image of the SU finances from this year.

4. Student Submission for the Office for Students

Roza: The goal of The Access & Participation Plan is to improve access, retention and continuation of students that fall under a protected characteristic from the government. It's trying to make the uni accessible to those who normally wouldn't find it easy to go to university, and to improve the retention of these students (e.g. BAME, working class, etc). The School recently got money from the OfS hardship fund and are now looking at what to do with the APP budget - supporting students by buying equipment, giving money to zero income students, etc.

SOAS has to report to the OfS annually how they're doing with access and retention. The OfS now wants the School to submit a student report submission relating to the APP - are they meeting the goals, what could be improved? If you're interested in helping with this or know someone who is interested please pass this information on!

Felix: What exactly would you need to do? Is this doing a consultation for the School?

Yasmin: You'd be writing a report on your opinions the APP, working with SOAS, but holding them accountable to the Office for Students.

AP: Roza to link Felix up with Marva to discuss this project.

5. Government Policing of Gender Neutral Toilets Consultation and Trans* and NB Visibility in LGBTQIA+ History Month

Hisham: I wanted to see if anyone is interested in helping me form a letter template for students to use to send in response to the government consultation. Please get in contact with me if you do.

Also wanted to raise that there is no trans* or non-binary events in our LGBTQIA+ History Month calendar - this is just something to make sure we're aware of and see if we can rectify. I have some event ideas that centre trans* and non-binary experiences, if we have the capacity or budget to host these additional events.

Hasan: We still have a budget for LGBTQIA+ History Month.

Victor: We tried to do something similar to an open safe chat space [from trans* and nb students] but only 1 person attended. It doesn't seem like there's an appetite for more casual events right now. We don't currently have the capacity to contact speakers and put on an informative thing, so we organised the film screenings. If someone does have the capacity to help organise something though that would be appreciated.

Lucia: Do we want to write a letter response from the SU [re: gender neutral toilets] and create a template for students, or just create a template and promote this?

Yasmin: As an open consultation it would be good to have an SU statement on this, if someone would like to draft this. We should then also create a letter template for students to use in response to the conversation.

Felix: I have the capacity to help organise a trans* and nb event. Having held lots of events over DHM attendance to social events varied from 1 - 5 people, so I don't think the attendance of 1 event is necessarily the overall appetite.

Hisham: Just in response to Victor it's completely fair that the film screenings were organised for this purpose. I know people are burned out so it may not be necessary to host an event, but I just wanted to make sure that people were aware of this when looking at the calendar so we as the Executive Committee can be aware of these things going forward.

Yasmin: I'm trying to chase up with the School the demands of trans* dignity, so hopefully I can update the campaign soon about this, however it's been difficult to get a response from SOAS.

Roza: I'm happy to help forming the letter, Hisham.

Hasan: I can reach out to Pride @ SOAS to see if they can organise additional hangouts (in addition to their weekly hangouts) specifically for trans* and non-binary students, in addition to the film screenings? Does this sound okay? [A: Yes] We do have speakers attending some of our other LGBTQIA+ History Month events who are Black trans* women, so there is representation of trans* experiences within events, however there are no specific events targeting at a trans* and non-binary audience.

A discussion was had around how to gauge what trans* and non-binary students would like for an event.

9. AOB

Sohane: I've created channels in this Teams space to organise for Womxns History Month and Students of Colour Visibility Week.

AP: Meeting to be held with Womxns Officers to organise around Womxns History Month.

Sara: In Womxns History Month I would like to talk about how the pandemic and lockdown is disproportionately affecting womxn, both students and staff. It could be a really nice theme to

bring together womxn staff and students, and maybe centralise student parents in that discussion.

Felix: I feel like communication within the Union has not always been the best. Maybe we could have a Google calendar of events happening. [This will be put as an agenda item on the following meeting as the meeting had ran over].