



# Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

19th January 2021  
12pm - 2pm

**Chair:** Roza Atac

## Agenda

1. Officer Check In
2. Elections / UGM
3. NUS Liberation Conference
4. AOB

**Apologies:** Sohane Yahya

**In attendance:** Roza Atac, Josh Mock, Yasmin Elsouda, Ella Spencer, Dideolu Olufelo, Oscar Ward, Jake Isaac, Sabrina Shah, Emma Thackwray, Victor Max Smith, Hasan Zakria, Felix Henson, Sara Lloyd Knibbs, Hisham Parchment, Kate Saunders

# 1. Officer Check In

**Roza:** Met with Hisham last week to work on some new projects - very exciting! Consent workshops have started and things are going well. Organising Survivor consent workshops with Not the Only One, so if you get questions about this please forward them to the Enough is Enough team (su-consent@soas.ac.uk), and we're going to have a staff workshop too.

**Oscar:** Facilitating Enough is Enough workshops. Getting lots of student questions about rent strikes - would appreciate any help on rent strikes. Dinwiddy are striking.

**Sabrina:** Fielding questions and concerns around SOAS' new safety net and no detriment policy. Lots of student organising around fee strikes which I'm supporting Yasmin with, based on last week's all student forum. Looking at bringing in a UGM Chair.

**Felix:** Want to work more on the Disabled Students Society going forward, but I now understand why officers run for 2 years as there's so little time to do things in just 1 year.

**Emma:** As Sports Officer we haven't been able to do much this year due to all the national lockdowns. The governing bodies of the competitions we play for have cancelled all matches until the next academic year, however after lockdown we'll look into reinstating training as we still have the budget to train. We're meeting with Jesse this week to discuss what we can do online for sports - we did online workouts last year but it took a lot of time that I don't think we can replicate now. Please let us know if you have any suggestions of things we can do!

**Jake:** Currently trying to help some students with VISA queries. I've got ideas I wanted to do this year but have been restricted by lockdowns. Will speak with Hasan to help set things up for the years ahead.

**Josh:** LGBTQIA+ History Month - trying to organise events but not getting much responses from external people for now.

**Hisham:** Met with Roza recently to help out where I can on projects. No real updates aside from this.

**Yasmin:** Main focus has been everything happening nationally in the HE sector. SOAS has actually been quite good compared to others in the sector with introducing policies. Working into the 'free education' stuff. Working with Justice For Workers - organising an email flurry - and FFFP for an event coming up this week.

**Dideolu:** Gotten some feedback from some PGR students - some dropped out as they don't want to pay school fees given the problems they're experiencing - lots of distress. Lots of challenges for PGR students - first years don't have extensions on deadlines, and 3rd years don't want to pay for a 4th year extension. Invited to work on a bit with BAME for PGR Research students, creating a bid.

**Victor:** Finding it difficult to represent the community as we can't meet in person and online events aren't well attended.

**Sara:** Finding it difficult to achieve things in 1 year in this role, especially as my MA is only 1 year so outcomes won't happen while I'm here.

**Hasan:** Finalising LGBTQIA+ History Month events - the calendar is looking pretty good right now! Just finished Refreshers - had around 20 events, which is the same as last year, showing consistent engagement from societies. Our engagement rate for the weekly Events newsletter has gone back up to around 75% opening rate, so lots so students should know about events happening. We're also making good traction with self-certification, having met with one of the Directors at SOAS - currently you can only self certify twice, but we've made suggestions for changes.

## 2. Elections / UGM

**Sabrina:** Our first UGM is going to be held on Monday 22nd February, 3pm - 5pm. Motion deadline: Friday 12th February, 12pm. We're going to be advertising this now for people to submit motions, giving enough time for myself and Jack to support submitted motions if they need help with their wording to make the motions more clear and achievable if they pass. Will be held online as agreed at Trustees. I'm looking for a Chair currently - someone external to SOAS who should be neutral to make sure the meeting runs smoothly. Myself and Jack will be testing the Zoom webinar feature soon to make sure it works, and making sure staff are set up to support the meeting - as Exec are voting members we don't want you to have to do administrative support when you can be engaging in the meeting. We're also creating guidance for students to understand the new online process. We also want to encourage Exec to propose any motions you might have - Jack can help form any motions. We also need Exec to submit officer reports for the meeting. Please can you submit these to Jack by 12th February.

We've also confirmed the timeline for the Spring Elections. 4 Sabbatical Officers, 14 Exec Officers, and 2 NUS Delegates up for elections. Nominations open February 1st - the UGM will be a good opportunity to get people democratically engaged and thinking about the elections. Nominations close March 7th. Candidate Meeting March 8th, Hustings March 10th via Zoom webinar. Voting opens 9am March 11th and closes 5pm March 12th. Complaints deadline 6pm March 12th, and results 6:30pm March 12th. We reduced to 1 week of campaigning last year due to being online and it worked well, so we're doing this again this year. We want to encourage Exec to run for Sabbatical Officer roles if you're interested, or run again for your positions! It's been a difficult year to fulfil manifestos this year with the greater need to support students through Covid, but hopefully next academic year we will be able to return to campus and you could do more of your goals. Would anyone be interested in helping Jack make some short Instagram videos about being a Trustee - what that means, etc? Please contact Jack if you are!

**Roza:** Sabbatical Officer roles are difficult, but they offer lots of professional growth and opportunities!

**Felix:** I have a class at the time of the UGM, what should I do?

**Sabrina:** As voting will be online you'll have 24 hours to vote so can access the materials after the meeting.

**Sara:** Can we not ask the school to move classes?

**Roza:** The school wouldn't be able to do this, but you can still vote after the meeting so can get involved in the democratic process even if you can't make the meeting.

**Sara:** How many candidates do we normally get for Sabbatical roles? Are there any challenges around democratic engagement (UGMs or Elections) that we know from last year?

**Roza:** Depends on the year and the role.

**Sabrina:** This is our first online UGM which brings challenges, but could also resolve some issues we had with in person UGMs. I'm not directly involved in running Elections, but Jack has worked to fine tune the process based on experiences from last year.

**Victor:** I've found UGMs inaccessible as I haven't understood the structures and couldn't be sure that they would lead to any actual outcomes. Would be willing to help create accessible language to explain what a UGM is, how it works, and why we should take part?

**Action Point:** Sabrina, Jack, and Roza to meet with any interested Exec to help create resources about the UGM.

### 3. NUS Liberation Conference

**Roza:** There's an NUS Liberation Conference and we're looking for 6 delegates. Online, 23rd - 25th March. If you're interested in applying this opportunity is open to Exec first, and we'll open it to the wider student body for any roles unfilled. Please email Jack by the 29th January to express your interest in any of the 6 positions.

### 4. AOB

A brief discussion was had around LGBTQIA+ History Month event planning.

**Sara:** I feel optimistic that the mature students Whatsapp group is growing! Finally started a conversation with student parents and there's 2 things arisen from this: (1) Is there a possibility of having an Exec Student Parents' Officer? (2) We should probably do some active intervention with these students as they're struggling and the current mitigating circumstances policy doesn't fit for them. Could we raise this with the School to get provision for students with school aged children. Two take away points: (1) Mitigating Circumstances not being fit for purpose, and (2) Some student parents are required to attend things which they can't attend.

**Roza:** (1) We'd probably need to speak with Anna about this because the idea would probably have to go through the Trustee Board. (2) I'll take this forward.