



# Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

19 October 2021  
11am - 1pm

**Chair:** Ella Spencer

## Agenda

1. Officer Check In
2. Autumn Election
3. Potential Upcoming Strike Action
4. AOB

**Apologies:** n/a

**In attendance:** Ella Spencer, Lucia Rodriguez-Pedroso, Ankunda, Felix Henson, Hisham Parchment-Pryce, Grace Weston, Rbeeza Mobeen, Anika Chauhan, Ellora Singh, Lena Koch

# 1. Officer Check In

**Ella:** This week we launched the Enough is Enough consent workshops, which had to be pushed back by 2 weeks because of issues with SOAS' timetabling. I spent lots of time last week preparing for this launch. I've been attending lots of committees recently such as Start of Term Planning, and I'm hoping to catch up with Felix to talk more about these. I also attended EDI and SOAS' Trustee Board which involved lots of preparations and debriefing - there was nothing useful from these to pass on. I've also been supporting campaigns with their first meetings and great to see lots of student engagement!

**Rbeeza:** I'm settling into the year as my tutorials are still changing. I've been discussing ideas for Black History Month with Ellora, where we're hoping to have a panel discussion on Black Women in academia.

**Felix:** I've been organising events for Freshers which has been difficult because of room bookings. I'm trying to organise an event for Black History Month about how colonialism has affected how we perceive bodies and disabilities, but I'm waiting for a response from a potential host. I'm looking to run a campaign with the Disabled Students Society around clear face masks as SOAS is reluctant to get clear face masks to help hard of hearing students - might join up with Birkbeck on this.

**Anika:** This is my first year on campus so I'm getting used to the layout of campus and finding rooms. I'm hoping to do a fortnightly clinic for poc students to check in and hangout, and am hoping to do a BHM event on whistleblowing and exploring sources. I've been sending emails to Adam Habib to try and open a discussion between him and SOAS students on retribution. It could be good to have this meeting broadcast online for all students to see, but I want to know others' thoughts.

**Ella:** I think the clinics are a great idea. I also think it's good to think about how we're going to respond to the events of March 11th but there's already work going on into this with Art & The Afrikan Mind so I would not want to duplicate work - we should see how we could work collectively so maybe you should speak with AAM about any work.

**Anika:** I also think perhaps creating QR codes with maps of campus could be useful for accessibility and making it easier to find rooms around campus. Would be interested in working with Felix on this.

**Hisham:** I've mainly been working on getting the Enough is Enough workshops up and running, which has been a difficult process. I'll probably end up repeating what's been said already so I'll leave it there!

**Khadijah:** I'm looking to reinstate the removal of Habib UGM motion in the November UGM - could use support in sharing this on your mailing lists. I'm also putting back up the UGM motion for a Black Students Sabbatical Officer role. I'm looking for ways that the Trans\* network can happen regularly and sustainably. In terms of events I want to do something around being Afrikan, queer and neurodivergent. Well done to everyone who ran events during Freshers!

**Grace:** As myself and Val are both studying remotely and are not on campus we've not done much so far. Once we're back on campus it will be a lot easier!

**Ellora:** I'm mostly stressing out about my dissertation right now! We're planning some events right now for Black History Month and we're thinking ahead at events for further months and societies to collaborate with.

**Lucia:** I've been dealing with the student reps system, and we now have over 141 reps elected. It's the first time we've had more than 50% of rep positions filled. I've also been dealing with SU elections - nominations are now open and people are already running as candidates. It would be great if you all could try and advertise the election as much as you can as there's lots of vital positions up for election, including roles which normally go unfilled such as Working Class Students Officer or Trans\* & Gender Identity Officer. I've also been attending lots of meetings across SOAS such as TELSOC this week and Academic Board happening next week. I've also been helping Ella organise around the strikes and the other Unions on campus.

**Ella:** Nominations close on Monday 25th October 10am for the SU Election. We also really need someone to fill the Accommodation Officer role as it's really important and would be good for anyone living in halls or interested in organising.

## 2. Autumn Election

(This was covered in Lucia's update, above)

## 3. Potential Upcoming Strike Action

**Ella:** There are 2 other Unions on campus, UCU (academic staff) and UNISON (professional services staff). UNISON have a live ballot over a pay dispute where after the pandemic they were offered a pay rise which, in the context of inflation, is actually a pay cut. Over the last 20 years HE staff have experienced a 20% pay cut. This live ballot means they can go on strike whenever they want to. UCU is now balloting to see if they will go on strike too. They need to cross a threshold of 50-60% voting in favour of striking, and if this happens they will go on strike mid to late November. UNISON will coordinate their strikes for the same time. UCU are striking over [cuts to] pensions, and the national '4 fights' (pay, casualisation, gender and racial pay gaps). We've got a good relationship with both union reps and we're meeting to discuss how we can all support each other. We held a Strike Forum yesterday as a space for students and staff to discuss the potential strike action and how they've got to this point. We're looking to organise another event next week to talk about what strikes actually are, why they're important and effective, and why people might be going on strike.

Justice for Workers have just called off their strike because management implemented their demands over just the threat of a strike. It's important to be aware about the potential strike action, and I would recommend coming to these events to find out more directly from the people who would be going on strike. Strikes will also affect you as SU Trustees as we would then have to make a decision about how as Trustees we would support a strike (e.g. we've closed the Students' Union before so staff don't have to cross the picket lines of their workers unions), and there's often issues that arise during strikes such as access to prayers

rooms where in the past we've kept the SU open past 5pm after the pickets have closed to allow students to use these facilities without having to cross pickets.

**Lucia:** A main piece of work for the SU before the strikes will be getting people informed about the strikes and supporting the strikes. It might be difficult this year as students have been online for so long and may not appreciate the idea of missing out on more teaching.

#### 4. AOB

Nothing to raise in AOB.