



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

11th February 2022
2pm - 4pm

Chair: Ella Spencer

Agenda

1. Officer Check In
2. Elections
3. UGM
4. Strikes
5. Womxns History Month
6. AOB

Apologies:

In attendance: Lucia Rodriguez Pedroso, Ella Spencer, Rbeeza Mobeen, Ellora Singh, Jacynthe Roesch, Anna Lofstrand, Arianna Simonetta, Ankunda

1. Officer Check In

Ellora: I've been organising events with Fem Soc that will be coming up

Hisham: I've been starting work on a number of projects I've been hoping to get started - will update more when there's more to say. One project is Art Through Liberation; initially started by Roza last year this series looks at the ways in which art offers possibilities for liberation and thinking differently. There are 5 workshops in the series, the first starting after Reading Week. More information is on the SU Instagram and the workshops are open to all students.

Arianna: Had our first part-time students meet up recently which went well and more people joined the part-time students group. Looking to host a mindfulness workshop soon, and I'm hoping to do something for Womxns History Month. I've also been circulating information about strikes to part-time students and they've raised concerns back to me (to be raised later in this meeting).

Jacynthe: I've been working with Jack to organise activities for Green Week - lots of societies are keen to get involved.

Anna: Had first mature student social recently which went really well.

Rbeeza: Running a book fayre / trade soon!

Lucia: I've been attending lots of committees (academic board, TELSOC, SEOC); wanted to update you all that exams have been decided by SOAS - they'll be 24 hour open book exams with an expectation you'll take 2-3 hours to complete. Students with SIPs will get 12 extra hours. We also had our UGM yesterday but we had to postpone due to low attendance and not even all of the proposers attending. I'll also be presenting a presentation to you all soon about decision making in the union, feeding in work by myself, Jack and Lucia.

Ella: I've been dealing with a lot of student complaints this week. I'm excited about the strikes next week. We had a good meeting between J4W and senior management and it looks like we're making progress with getting their demands met. I've also been working on the sanctuary scholarship with SOAS. There were 7 'fully funded' places available although the money given doesn't cover the amount needed for rent. SOAS reduced the number of places this year from 7 to 2, so I've been working to restore the scholarship back to 7 places and to increase the amount of money given from £6k to £12k and it looks like SOAS will be doing this!

Ankunda: Not feeling great about recent SOASkMeOut posts related to me.

2. Elections

Ella: Elections are open right now until 7th March for all SU Sabbatical Officers, SU Executive Officers, and NUS delegates.

Lucia: This is our biggest number of positions available in an election so we need you all to help advertise these elections! After nominations close there's 1 week of campaigning followed by 1 week of voting, with winners being announced on Friday 18th March. If you're going to be on campus we'll have posters to give out / put up around campus so please stop by and pick some up.

3. UGM

Ella: We were meant to have a UGM yesterday but not enough people showed up so it's been postponed.

Lucia: We've contacted all proposers to ask when they're available next and we'll organise for as soon as possible when everyone is available.

Ella: For our next UGM we need to collectively put in more energy to ensuring people attend! We were also hoping to have an open Q+A with the SU at the end of the UGM if there's time, also presenting the work done on student decision making to students. We've spoken about doing a townhall to do this, with a provisional date of March 25th.

Lucia: It would be good for Exec to turn up to the townhall as students may have questions for you. This also feeds into our work on decision making as we're looking to expand the number of spaces we have for students to feed into the decision making of the union. Please let me know if you have any ideas about what you think we could do, and it will make more sense after the presentation.

4. Strikes

Ella: Strikes start next week (Reading Week; 8am - 1pm). There will be an in person picket and online events. We may not be on the picket every day as we'll be going to visit the Goldsmiths picket and GOSH picket. We've also created an online Strikes webpage for students to learn more - it's got everything you need to know about the strikes such as an FAQs, a list of alternative study spaces, a space for students to share concerns, the teach out schedule, a template email to send to management, information on the NUS Walkout, etc. Does anyone have any questions about the strikes or any concerns from students you'd like to raise?

Arianna: Some exams have been postponed because of the strikes. Some part-time students have asked if they can postpone their exams until July/August?

Lucia: Unfortunately not as those exams have to happen in term 2 due to quality assurance around the number credits you're awarded each term.

Arianna: Regarding the year of absence, students have asked if they can stop paying fees and start paying again after their year of absence has finished.

Ella: You don't pay during your leave of absence provided the leave has been approved by the school.

Lucia: There are deadlines however by which you need to request your leave of absence before you're charged for each term. The student should contact Susanna for more help.

Arianna: Can a student defer all modules?

Lucia: You can only defer assignments, not modules. Although if you're taking leave of absence you will do the entire year once you return. Susanna will be able to guide the student further.

Arianna: In regards to exams, if a student has caring responsibilities can they get an extension on their exams?

Lucia: Provided they get a SIP they'll be able to get an extra 12 hours, and this should be possible.

Ella sent Arianna more information on how to get a Study Inclusion Plan and a survey for students with caring responsibilities to hear more from the individual.

Ella (in response to a question from Anna in the chat): *"Lots of full time MA students have complained about missing contact time because of the strikes and want to know if they can access lectures next year, especially if they're online?"*

I've received similar requests from students. I don't think SOAS would let students audit classes if they're no longer students as they already are hesitant about current students auditing classes. I would recommend students direct their frustrations to the appropriate people in the school. Unfortunately due to the relatively small number of strike days (compared to previous strikes) it would be unlikely for SOAS to give student compensation over these strikes as in total they've only affected 8 days of teaching.

Lucia: Last year MA students, due to the pandemic, managed to get an extension of their access to BLE and Moodle. We can also ask for this again this year so students have access to these resources for longer. I'll take this forward to SOAS management.

5. Womxns History Month

Ella: Womxns History Month is next month (March). I've spoken to some students who have expressed interest in running events for international womxns day but I've not heard more than this for now. I'll put a Google doc together to start organising for this.

6. AOB

n/a