**Student Council 7th Week Hilary Term 2021**

**Tuesday 2nd March 2021**

**Virtual – 5:30PM**

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| **Item**  | **Agenda**  | **Actions**  |
|  | **Welcome and Apologies**  Wesley Ding (Chair of Council) welcomed council members to the meeting and explains how Student Council will run, and some ground rules.**Chair’s announcements:**  SU President By-Election 2021Following the resignation of the President-elect Oxford SU is running a by-election for President. The informs members that the Returning Officer Caleb will give us an update on the timeline and plans. Chair informs council members that there is a trigger warning on items J1: antisemitismand K1: transphobiaChair also informs members no amendments were submitted, voting is now open online for both motions and council roles.  |   To note  |
| **A** | **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**Chair opened the floor to questions and comments regarding the minutes of the previous meeting and any matters arising from the minutes.  | To receive  |
| **B** | **Matters arising from the minutes** There were no matters arising | To receive  |
| **C** | **Elections in council**Chair hands over to the Returning Officer Caleb. The returning officer goes through all 4 council roles that are up for election **Candidates for Chair of Council**: Chair of Council is elected in 7th Week Council each term to serve for the following term. They are responsible for the running, operation, and pre-planning of the meeting as well as sitting on Steering Committee. Council’s decisions have an impact across all levels of both the University and the Student Union, and as Chair you will be responsible for ensuring that this student decision making body is as effective as it can be.Chair invites Wesley Ding for a short speech. Full manifesto and speech can be found [here](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/)**Up next is** Chané J Rama Dahya: Chane was not present at the meeting therefore the chair read out the candidates manifesto statement which can be found [[here](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/)](https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/OUSU-StudentUnion/Shared%20Documents/.Oxford%20SU/Student%20Engagement/Student%20Council/Student%20Council%20Meeting%20Archive/Student%20Council%202020-21/Student%20Council%20HT21/7th%20Week%20Student%20Council/Nominations/Chan%C3%A9%20J%20Rama%20Dahya%20%28Chair%29.docx?web=1)The Returning officer hands back to the Chair to conduct the Returning officers election process. **Candidates for Returning Officer:** The Returning Officer is responsible for all things to do with Elections and voting. In Council they look after the electronic voting pads. During Oxford SU's Leadership Elections they chair the Elections Committee, handle complaints and count the results!The Chair invites Caleb to present a speech**:** Full manifesto and speech can be found [here](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/)Next up is Otto Barrow. Full manifesto and speech can be found [here](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/)**Chair hands back to the Returning officer to complete the reminder of the elections** **Candidates for Rules Committee:**Rules Committeeis the University Committee which sets Regulations on all matters of student conduct. Currently the Committee has set Regulations on Societies, Sports, Publications, vandalism, trashing, and rowing on the river.Alongside the 5 elected student members, the Committee’s membership includes the Senior Proctor, two Proctors-elect, two College Deans, a member of Congregation, and the Oxford SU Vice President Charities and Community.You can find the full Terms of Reference for the Committee [here](https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/council-regulations-42-of-2002) and their current Regulations on student conduct [here](https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/rules-committee-regulations-1-of-2017).Returning officer invites Otto Barrow to present a speech: Full manifesto and speech can be found [here](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/)Next up is Nelson Fernandes Serrao: Full manifesto and speech can be found [here](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/)**Finally, candidates for steering Committee:** is comprised of two elected student steering members, the Chair, the President, and the Returning Officer. Steering is the committee tasked with deciding the agenda for the coming Council. They meet the week before to discuss whether submissions should make it to the agenda, whether they need to be amended, or whether they require ‘steering’ to another committee first. Steering are also the group responsible for ensuring that an All Student Consultation is held, if called forAsif Khadim Malik invited for a speech: After sitting on the steering committee, I would like to extend my role into next term for the same and contribute to SU.  Full manifesto and speech can be found [here](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/)**Next up is** Otto Barrow I'm eager to help further promote the Student Union and I think it would be good to have someone who has just started to be involved to help ensure that Oxford SU can be as open and transparent as possible. .  Full manifesto and speech can be found [here](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/)**Returning officer informs members that’s it for the elections, voting is now open and I would encourage you all to vote. Thank you.** Returning officer hands back to chair Full results for Chair of Council elections can be found [here](7th%20Week%20Hilary%20Term%202021%20Student%20Council-Chair%20of%20Council-Results-3435.csv) Full results for returning officer can be found [here](7th%20Week%20Hilary%20Term%202021%20Student%20Council-Returning%20Officer-Results-3436.csv) Full results for rules committee can be found [here](7th%20Week%20Hilary%20Term%202021%20Student%20Council-Rules%20Committee-Results-3437.csv)Full results for steering can be found [here](7th%20Week%20Hilary%20Term%202021%20Student%20Council-Steering%20Committee-Results-3438.csv)  | To receive  |
| **D** | **Reports from and questions to Sabbatical Trustees**Chair informed members that full officer written reports can be accessed on [student council website](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/). Sabbatical Trustees supplemented their written reports with a short verbal update.**Chair opens the floor for Questions and comments on officer reports**  | To receive  |
| **E** | **Reports from and questions to Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality** **Key highlights from Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality:** We have also been working with some of the VPs on the issue of decolonisation. We have had numerous meetings with Tucker Drew and other student groups, such as Melanin and Uncomfortable Oxford, to discuss how we might best approach it. The work is very challenging primarily due to resistance from the University and subject faculties.  Progress on the race report is slow but is taking place. Oxford SU understandably has its hands full with supporting the student body through the pandemic and lockdown, which has meant that work like the race report has been of a lower priority. We sincerely hope that the next CRAE committee will work hard to carry out the survey and ensure the completion of the report. **Chair opens the floor for Questions and comments on Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality report:**There were no questions from delegates. **Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality** submitted a[written report](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/) which can be found online  | To receive  |
| **F** | **Reports from and questions to PG and UG Humanities Representatives** **Key highlights from the Daniel Grimmer PG Div Rep:**There has been some talk about cutting down on international flights to fight climate change. There have been suggestions that additional fees will be charged for international flights. It is unclear who will bear this cost. Ideally it would not be the international student, and more-so on senior academics travelling for conferences. **Chair opens the floor for Questions and comments for the PG Rep.**There were no questions from delegates. **Key highlights from Jamie Slagel UG Div Rep:**Collating list of course & Faculty reps in Humanities departments Considering the utility of academic-social activities (e.g. talks, panels, discussions, and general meetings) to combat student loneliness. (Put on hold whilst dealing with COVID and online exams.)**Chair opens the floor for Questions and comments for the UG Rep.**There were no questions from delegatesBoth PG and UG humanities [written report](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/) found online.  |  |
|  **G** | **Report from and questions to the Trustee Board**Chair informed members that this is the second a report has missed coming to council Chair to follow-up on this matter |  To receive  |
| **H** | **Report from and questions to the Returning Officer** **Key highlights from the report:** The returning officer express his gratitude to the Oxford SU staff, who dedicated significant time and exertion to the considerable logistical task of conducting the leadership elections. In particular thanks Josh O'Connor for his tireless effort and invaluable insight as Deputy Returning Officer. Returning officer also thanked Gaurav Dubey on the Elections Committee for his contributions to the rules governing the conduct of the election.**Chair opens the floor for Questions and comments****Zaman Keinath-Esmail:** Not a question, but i'd like to point out that there is a lot of misinformation about voting for su-related elections in general (and information is difficult to find) so it might be worth addressing the lack of information or misinformation before tinkering with voting mechanics(Jamie, he/him, Hum Div UG rep): I think a related issue is that students tend to go into the vote just backing one candidate rather than having thought about a ranking of candidates (often a friend of friend of friend). Moreover, I think there's an issue about the whole dialogue surrounding elections - rarely do my friends seem to discuss the pros and cons of candidates (unlike at the JCR level), but just back someone whose page they were invited to like. I know this is an age-old problem, but I think it would be good to encourage healthier and more robust debate around this (which would probably encourage greater usage of the "ranking" system). It shouldn't just be about getting more people to vote (although ofc that's key) but also to try to make them more informed decisions imo. Perhaps the existing system would be useful if/when this occurs. TLDR: we shouldn't just try to increase raw number of votes but also cultivate a more holistic discourse & discussion among students leading up to voting.Irem Kaki: If the objective is to make the ballot easier to follow, it might be worth considering separating the times of the election and not elect every single SU position in the same ballot? Just an initial suggestion, this may potentially keep the election process keep going on longer and put more work on the elections committee but it seems to work on a JCR level to distribute elections of different positionsJames (he/him, Brasenose) agree with what Aaron said - STV didn't increase voter turnout whereas hard work of sabbs, SU staff and returning officer - just don't think STV is the issue for historical low turnout!**Harry Twohig:** Thanks for bringing it to the table Caleb, really important to have the discussions!Chair informs members to send anyfeedback they might have to the ROs email returningofficer@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk **Returning officers** [written report](https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/student-council/21ht7w/) can be found online. |  |
| **I** | **Report from and questions to the Scrutiny Committee** **Chair informed members that this is the second a report has missed coming to council** **Chair to follow-up on this matter**  |  |
| **J** | **Items for Resolution** |  |
| **1** | **Motion to tackle antisemitism on campus** **Council Notes:**  1. There have been recent incidents relating to antisemitism within the University.
	1. The protests of Jewish students over how the event held by St Peter’s College with Ken Loach was conducted prompted extensive antisemitic abuse of Oxford University Jewish Society (JSoc) members (particularly online).
	2. The Cherwell published an article called “Reappraising Richard Wagner” in January 2021 which it later had to retract because it was considered antisemitic, and as a result the paper had to be investigated by its parent company Oxford Student Publications Limited (OSPL).
	3. The Oxford Student published an article in June 2020 in which they allowed an individual (who had made remarks plagued by antisemitic tropes at a Rhodes Must Fall rally) to “refute” claims that these remarks were antisemitic, without providing an effective counterpoint from the consensus of Jewish students, and after this repeatedly refused to apologise, or to contextualise the article with the individual’s documented history of antisemitic remarks, or to publish a response piece from a Jewish student.
	4. In July 2020, The Flete published an article alleging that members of Christ Church Boat Club had attended parties which included a Jewish student ‘jokingly’ put into fake gas chambers.
	5. More recently, the SU's ex-President-Elect was found to have posted a caption on Instagram trivialising the Holocaust through inappropriate ‘humour’ and to have equated Rhodes to Hitler at a hustings event. The individual in question initially refused to acknowledge that this might be considered insensitive or to apologise, instead insisting that these comments were acceptable.
	6. Many Jewish students have experienced uncomfortable personal interactions because of antisemitic comments from other students e.g. claiming that the pointing out of established antisemitic tropes is a “sinister” tactic to deflect from Israeli war crimes.
2. For all of the above-mentioned incidents, Jewish students and JSoc have had to educate others about why it is antisemitic, and work to prevent it from occurring again, to the detriment of their personal wellbeing. 3. While the sabbatical officers this year have undergone antisemitism training, there is currently no formal obligation for sabbatical officers to do so.

**Council Believes:**  1. Antisemitism is never acceptable.
2. The Student Union should be committed to tackling antisemitism on campus.
3. Antisemitism, the passive tolerance of antisemitic beliefs, and a lack of understanding about what antisemitism constitutes are a problem at this university.
4. There is a lack of understanding of what antisemitism constitutes and how it can present among both students and staff, which can result in the perpetuation of antisemitism and cause harm to Jewish students when they are trying to deal with incidents of antisemitism.
5. It is unacceptable to rely on individual students to deal with incidents of antisemitism without being supported by the SU, their Common Room, and college staff who can be trusted to understand what antisemitism is and take appropriate action against it.

**Council Resolves:**  1. To mandate the Oxford SU Sabbatical Officers from 2021 onwards to undergo antisemitism training external to the SU, such as that provided by the Union of Jewish Students (UJS).
2. To mandate the Oxford SU VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities to maintain regular contact with JSoc and arrange for a conversation between JSoc and the Advice Service at the SU to talk about supporting the Jewish community at Oxford before the end of Hilary term 2021.
3. To mandate the Oxford SU President to:
4. Lobby People and Organisational Development (POD) to create a training module on antisemitism that all staff of the University can access. After the training has been created, the President should lobby the university to establish a policy requiring heads of colleges, welfare staff, and racial equality staff to undergo the training.
5. Collaborate with JSoc / UJS to create online antisemitism training and upload it to the Oxford SU website, and publicise it to Common Rooms and at the next BAME RepCom for them to organise antisemitism training within colleges e.g. in Freshers Week. This resource should be finished before the end of Trinity term 2021.
6. Proactively reach out and consult with JSoc when a matter relating to antisemitism arises within the SU or the wider university community before deciding on a response to the situation.

**Proposer:** Uri Sharell, Wadham College **Seconder:** Guy Dabby-Joory, Worcester College **Opening statement from Uri:** **Chair opens floor for discussion:** Jamie Slagel: Fully support this (as a Jewish student myself), this is very necessary! My solidarity to everyone affected**Freddie Seddon:** I don't have a microphone right now so I can't speak, but it seems that this motion is a way of protecting the welfare of Jewish students when incidents like these arise, whilst sidestepping the slippery slope of the 'cancel culture / platforming' debate.**Motion to tackle antisemitism on campus**Total: 45For: 44Against: 1Abstain: 0Motion passed  |  |
| **2** | **Overseas Compulsory Year Abroad Fees transparency** **Council Notes:** 1. Some courses have a compulsory year abroad component. All students continue to pay tuition during these years. In the Humanities Division (HumDiv), all Modern and Middle Eastern languages students have a compulsory Year Abroad.
2. For most students, no teaching or other instruction is offered while abroad. Students are normally not in Oxford to make use of physical resources.
3. The tuition fee for compulsory overseas year abroad students in HumDiv is £10,620, and there is no public information available to justify such a large fee when no instruction is taking place.

**Council Believes:** 1. The compulsory year abroad fee should not be a means to extract as much money as possible from overseas students.
2. Where no teaching or other instruction is taking place, the overseas compulsory Year Abroad fee for HumDiv should not exceed the fee set for Home fee-status students during their Year Abroad. The fee is ridiculous and may prevent many students from applying to Oxford for these courses.

**Council Resolves:** 1. To mandate the Oxford SU President to commence lobbying for the overseas compulsory year abroad fee in HumDiv to be set to the same level as the Home fee-status Year Abroad tuition fee with effect from 2021-22.
2. To mandate the Oxford SU President to commence lobbying for the University to make public how £10,625 is spent to individually benefit the student, and to declare whether this fee represents the true cost of having an individual student enrolled at the university even though they are not being offered any tuition and instruction in the vast majority of cases.
3. To mandate the Oxford SU President to publish reports on lobbying progress once every 6 weeks.

**Proposer:** Vihan Jain, Worcester College **Seconder:** Hannah Powell, Worcester College **Opening statement from Vihan:** I hope you have all had a chance to read the motion however happy to take any questions **Chair opens floor for discussion:** **No further discussions** **Overseas Compulsory Year Abroad Fees transparency**Total: 45For: 39Against: 0Abstain: 6Motion passed  |  |
| **3** | **University Sustainability Strategy****Council Notes:** 1. The University has developed an Environmental Sustainability strategy, which commits the University to achieve net zero carbon and biodiversity net gain by 2035. The full strategy can be read on the Oxford SU website.

 1. Oxford SU has been consulted in the creation of this strategy.

**Council Believes:** 1. The strategy is an important step forward for the University to take action on the environmental crisis. It is important for students to highlight their support for the strategy Oxford SU should play an important role in supporting the implementation of the strategy.

**Council Resolves:** 1. To mandate the President to speak in support of the Strategy at the next meeting of University Council.
2. To mandate the VP Charities and Community to support the University to implement the strategy by providing representation on the newly formed committee and working with the University’s Sustainability team on projects relating to the strategy.

**Proposer:** Ben Farmer, Oxford SU **Seconder:** Ellie Holton, New College **Opening statement from Ben:** **Chair opens floor for discussion:** **University Sustainability Strategy**Total: 44For: 42Against: 0Abstain: 2Motion passed |    |
| **K****1.** **2.****3** | **Items for discussion****Adopting the Trans Actual definition of transphobia, and lobbying the University to do the same****Notes:** The University has consistently failed to acknowledge and address issues faced by trans students, especially with regards to institutional transphobia and transphobic professors. Part of the issue is that they do not have an accurate, actionable definition of transphobia, so it is easy to write off instances of transphobia as 'free speech', 'academic debate', or mistakes. The 2018 Trans Report details the extent to which trans students have experienced transphobia at the University, and its effect on their mental health (98% of trans students at Oxford report mental health issues, with a further 65% reporting that the University had had a negative impact on their mental health; 63% of trans students have experienced discrimination from the University, with 97% of this being reported as transphobic discrimination: 35% of respondents reported this transphobic discrimination as coming from staff and administrators of the University.). To be able to address transphobia at an institutional level, it is first necessary to adopt an accurate, specific, actionable definition of transphobia, such as the Trans Actual definition ([www.transactual.org.uk/transphobia](http://www.transactual.org.uk/transphobia)). The SU should adopt this definition of transphobia, and lobby the University to adopt it as well, to create a platform from which to identify and address transphobia across the University. [I am unable to paste in the full definition, but it can be found at [www.transactual.org.uk/transphobia](http://www.transactual.org.uk/transphobia) **Proposer:** Zaman Keinath-Esmail, Corpus Christi College**Simplifying the SU Voting System to Improve Turnout****Notes:**1. While the number of voters increased by 62% in the 2021 election, turnout remains low, at only 20%. Under the current electoral system of the SU, which is STV, voters are asked to rank all the candidates running for a position, which can be time consuming and inconvenient process. In the case of NUS Delegate elections for example, this meant ranking 10 different candidates. In the 2021 election, the current voting process involved each voter casting over five times as many ballots as they would in a first-preference system.
2. The 2021 Oxford SU elections saw over 40 candidates run for 16 different roles, and in every case the candidates who won the most first-preference votes were successfully elected to the roles. If only first preference voters were counted, the outcome of the 2021 Oxford SU elections would have been identical. Including the campaign elections, during my time as Returning Officer I have overseen the election of over 65 candidates to SU positions, and over 98% of these elections would be unchanged under a first-preference system.
3. A first-preference voting system would increase the ease with which elections can be conducted, and has the potential to make voting more approachable and convenient for members of the SU. This would potentially assist in improving student engagement in the democratic processes of the SU, in line with its role as ‘the representative body for all University of Oxford Students’ according to the SU manifesto.
4. Given that a change to a first-preference voting system would also have a minimal impact on the results of SU elections, would Council support consultation of the Board and the University on such a change, prior to a vote in Council on the issue?

**Proposer:** Caleb van Ryneveld, Christ Church College**Addressing racial inequalities in access, education and student experience****Notes:** I have successfully lobbied the University for myself to cochair the Student Issues Working Group of the Race Equality Task Force, as I believe it is vital that this group should be student-led. I would like to get student feedback to inform my work in this group, especially on the following points, - What can the University do to make more BAME students apply and feel more welcome when they first join? - What does a successful decolonisation of the curriculum look like? - How can counselling/careers support BAME students more? - What are things the University can do to promote a more inclusive culture and celebrate diversity?**Proposer:** Nikita Ma, Oxford SU |  |
| **I** | **Any Other Business** **Chair opens the floor for AOB to members**  | To note    |
|  | **Chair declares meeting finished at 19:39** | To note  |