

CUSU Council (Michaelmas IV)

Monday 25th November 2019, 7pm

Lecture Room 1, Mill Lane Lecture Rooms

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Agenda

1. Objections to the order of items on the agenda
2. Matters arising from the minutes of the last Council Meeting
3. Announcements by Committees, Campaign Teams and the Executive
	1. **Officer accountability**
	2. **Updates from Campaigns and the Executive**
4. Ratification of Trustee appointments
5. Proposed Standing Orders amendment
6. Ordinary Policy Motions from Previous Council
	1. **Motion to support and encourage a boycott of the NSS (National Student Survey)\***
7. Proposed Ordinary Policy Motions
	1. **Campaigning for Antiracist training for University Staff**
	2. **Campaigning for Improving Unconscious Bias training for University Staff involved in Admissions Procedures**
8. Proposed Ordinary Action Motions
	1. **Motion to fund a portion of the cost of running CamQueerHistory’s Events for LGBT+ History Month**
	2. **Action motion regarding CUSU support for UCS/DRC appointments**
9. Any other business

\*For note, except where these items are unstarred by a vote of Council members, or amendments are submitted.

Supporting Information

1. Objections to the order of items on the agenda
2. Matters arising from the minutes of the last Council meeting
	* Council must approve the minutes of the last meeting, which was non-quorate.
	* Minutes can be accessed via the CUSU council page at [www.cusu.co.uk](http://www.cusu.co.uk) and in the papers circulated for this meeting.
3. Announcements by Committees, Campaign Teams and the Executive
	* For updates from Sabbatical officers, please see accountability documents
	* Campaigns and Ethical Affairs will update at Council.
4. Ratification of Trustee appointments
	* To be presented by the Trustee Selection Committee
5. Proposed Standing Orders Amendment

**5A. Standing Orders amendment proposal**

Proposer: Edward Parker Humphreys (President)
Seconder: Joe Foye (Council Chair)

*Purpose: To allow full-time officers representing CUSU Campaigns to send a proxy vote to Council and Executive if they need to be absent.*

* D.7.ii.b: Add, “excluding where a sabbatical officer represents one of the CUSU Campaigns”.
* D.7.ii.c: Delete and replace with “The proxy votes of the Campaigns representatives, including Sabbatical Officers who represent a CUSU Campaign, i.b)(1) and i.b)(2) partially, are limited to Ordinary Members of the respective Campaign Executive.
* H.3.ii.a: After “Full-Time Executive Officers”, add “excluding those representing one of the CUSU Campaigns”.
1. Ordinary Policy Motions from Previous Council

Policy requires approval at two consecutive Councils. The approval of the ‘starred’ motion at the second Council will be deemed to be automatic unless this ‘star’ is removed by a single member at the second Council wanting to revisit the motion for further discussion.

Please find the starred policy motions that were passed at the last Council listed below:

**6A. Motion to support and encourage a boycott of the NSS (National Student Survey)**

Proposed by: Ali Hyde, CUSU Education Officer

Seconded by: Edward Parker Humphreys, CUSU President

**CUSU notes:**

1. That the NSS (National Student Survey) requires a 50% response rate to be valid;
2. That Cambridge students have successfully boycotted the NSS for the past three years, response rates not having reached 50%;
3. That NSS data is used as a metric in the TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework);
4. That institutions with a TEF award can charge higher fees;
5. That CUSU has current policy to oppose the TEF and to support Free Education;
6. That the HE (Higher Education) sector is waiting to see the outcomes of the Pearce Review of mthe TEF, particularly the implications of any continuing proposals for subject-level TEF and of any continued link to tuition fees;
7. That Oxford is the only other university to have boycotted the NSS for the past three years;

**CUSU believes:**

1. That the TEF does not accurately reflect the educational excellence of an institution, as the NSS places weight on non-educational related outcomes, such as graduate destinations, and has been shown to reveal a negative bias towards female and BME academics;
2. That we should use the leverage students collectively have through the NSS to express our discontent with the TEF and to disturb its implementation;
3. That invalid NSS results due to a student boycott would frustrate the implementation of the TEF in the future and show how easily TEF data can be manipulated;
4. That CUSU’s continued boycott of the NSS is a powerful signal of students’ discontent with the marketisation of HE and the extortionate level of fees students are charged;
5. That we do not yet know the potential implications of Cambridge and Oxford’s boycotting of the NSS for our position in the TEF and what that could mean for the undermining of this facet of marketisation;
6. That boycotting the NSS would not negatively affect CUSU’s ability to make students’ voices heard at a University level due to the existence of other more robust student surveys, such as the Student Barometer and CUSU’s Big Cambridge Survey;

**CUSU resolves:**

1. To actively encourage finalists to boycott the NSS.
2. Proposed Ordinary Policy Motions

**7A. Campaigning for Antiracist training for University Staff**

Proposer: Stella Swain (CUSU/GU Welfare and Rights Officer)

Seconder: Tyra Amofah-Akardom (BME Campaign)

**CUSU Notes:**

1. CUSU has been working with the University's Equality and Diversity Department on Unconscious Bias training for College staff, fellows and custodians;
2. In recent years, CUSU and the BME campaign have collated evidence and testimonials that a large proportion of students from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds believe racial or culturally-based prejudice is a problem at the University;
3. Proposals for carrying out Unconscious Bias and Equality and Diversity training have been being presented to Bursars, Senior Tutors and HR Managers from 2016, and in 2016 Hughes Hall carried out an Unconscious Bias Training session as a pilot;
4. In 2018 CUSU and the Preventing Prevent Campaign gathered testimonials from BME students on how the Prevent strategy affects them, and found that students who feel they are being racially profiled because of the Prevent Duty experience a “chilling effect”;
5. Also in 2018, the University asked Colleges to report details of welfare meetings to their Prevent board, which CUSU opposed (<https://www.facebook.com/presidentcusu/posts/215201419399806>)
6. The Vice Chancellor Vice Chancellor stated that Prevent “poses a threat” to our students, because they are being racially profiled (<https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/15188>);
7. The University has been working towards the Bronze Race Equalities Chartermark, and as part of which they have committed to “Provide workshops and training on race awareness, white privilege and allyship – for all staff”;
8. The University Equality and Diversity department have developed a training course for staff on unconscious bias;
9. The BME Campaign have run antiracist training with BME Officers across the Colleges;

**CUSU Believes:**

1. That all staff at the University and Colleges should be consistently trained in how counter their own biases and actively oppose racism;
2. That whilst Colleges seemed supportive of the proposals for Unconscious Bias training at the time, not enough Colleges have demonstrated a willingness to train and educate staff, fellows and custodians in this area;
3. That the Prevent training being rolled out across collegiate Cambridge encourages participants to rely on their biases in the pursuit of preventing people from being drawn to "extremism" as defined by UK Government policy leading to a disproportionate targeting of BME and Muslim students;
4. That Unconscious Bias training is by no means a perfect solution to tackling the concerns consistently raised by BME students, but it creates a platform for starting the conversation and mitigating elements of the Prevent training which disproportionally affects BME students.

**CUSU Resolves:**

1. To campaign for all members of College and University staff, fellows and custodians to attend compulsory Unconscious Bias training sessions, coordinated or supported by the Equality and Diversity department in conjunction with CUSU and the BME Campaign, and targeting those individuals who regularly interact with students;
2. To work with College JCR and MCR Committees to lobby their respective Colleges to carry out this training;
3. To work with E&D and the Schools and Departments of the University to make unconscious bias training a mandatory part of training for supervisors and tutors;
4. To continue to actively oppose the racist Prevent Duty by:
5. Providing J/MCRs with information about how to effectively argue against it in colleges;
6. Setting up antiracist training to challenge the profiling encouraged by the Prevent training;
7. Providing support for those students most affected by the Prevent Duty.

**7B. Campaigning for Improving Unconscious Bias training for University Staff involved in Admissions Procedures**

Officer responsible – Lily-Rose Sharry (CUSU Access and Funding)
Seconder: Arran Parry-Davies (BME Campaign)

**CUSU Notes:**

1. Every year University staff who have been appointed as interviewers in admissions procedures for the first time must attend in person unconscious bias training ran by a team of trained admissions tutors.
2. The University's Equality and Diversity Department have collated existing and created their own resources on what unconscious bias is (particularly in relation to ethnicity and gender), how it can affect admissions decisions and how to mitigate the effects of it.
3. These resources are accessible on Moodle for anybody with a raven account.
4. Once a year before interviews take place all University staff that will be conducting admissions interviews not for the first time are reminded by email of the unconscious bias training resources online available on Moodle.
5. There currently exists no mechanism to record if University staff have or have not completed the online training each year.
6. Whilst there has been a positive shift in the admission of students identifying as BAME in the University in the long term, these students are still highly underrepresented within the University. Overall Cambridge University admits a lower proportion of students who identify as BAME than the sector as a whole (Access and Participation Plan 2020-25) with the starkest difference within Black students, Cambridge’s intake being 2.2% compared to the sector’s being 10.5% (APP 2020-25).
7. For Asian and Black students there is a significant entry rate gap; fewer applicants are admitted than would be expected from application numbers (APP 2020-25).
8. For Black students, this gap is explained by prior academic attainment to an extent but not completely (APP 2020-25).
9. The gap for Asian students is currently less well understood consequently the University has acknowledged that this requires further investigation (APP 2020).
10. Whilst the percentage of students identifying as women within STEMM subjects has been increasing incrementally since 2013-14, they currently remain to be underrepresented within the discipline (36.1% in 2015-16 according to the E&D report).

**CUSU Believes:**

1. That presenting staff with the impact that their biases can have on admissions decisions can be an effective method of challenging those biases.
2. That unconscious bias training is by no means a perfect solution to tackling concerns of underrepresentation, but it creates a platform for starting the conversation and mitigating the effects of such biases to an extent.
3. University staff conducting admissions interviews should complete refresher unconscious bias training every year before the interviews take place.
4. Such training should be essential and completion should be recorded to ascertain who needs to be reminded to complete it.

**CUSU Resolves:**

1. To campaign for the University to adopt a mechanism to record whether or not staff responsible for conducting admissions interviews have completed the online unconscious bias training.
2. To additionally campaign for members of staff who have been recorded as not having completed such training to be reminded by the Cambridge Admissions Office and / or the team of admissions tutors that completing such training is mandatory every year.
3. Proposed Ordinary Action Motions

**8A. Motion to fund a portion of the cost of running CamQueerHistory’s events for LGBT+ History Month**

Proposer: Alex Russell (Magdalene College)

Seconder: Ali Hyde (CUSU Education Officer)

**CUSU Notes:**

1. That CamQueerHistory is made up of undergraduates, postgraduates, fellows, and administrative staff from the LGBT+ community in Cambridge who volunteer their time to produce a comprehensive set of events for LGBT+ History Month in Cambridge which are open to all members of the University as well as members of the local community;
2. That there is no funding immediately available for this and so seeking funding from across the university and beyond is absolutely necessary for these events to run;
3. That attendance at last year’s series of events was high and the events made a real difference, attracting people from the local community as well as the university;
4. That CUSU’s own self-defined mission as set out in the Constitution is to “ensure that the diversity of its membership is recognised and that equal access is available to all Members of whatever origin or orientation”, and to “pursue equal opportunities by taking positive action within the law to facilitate participation of groups discriminated against by society”;
5. That, to run a full programme of events, it has previously cost over £850. Other methods of funding being sought include from Selwyn College and CUSU LGBT+;

**CUSU Believes:**

1. That LGBT+ students are under-represented at Cambridge University and can find their experience at university alienating and isolating on the basis of their status as a marginalised group that is discriminated against;
2. That the above are obstacles to “equal access” and “equal opportunities” within the University, and that further visibility is an important part of ensuring inclusion, as has been demonstrated by the University’s recent collaborative efforts;
3. That as a month dedicated to the celebration of LGBT+ heritage and the contribution of LGBT+ communities to the cultural, social, political, and economic life of the UK, LGBT+ History Month is the perfect chance for CUSU and the University to take positive action, and facilitate participation of groups discriminated against by society;
4. That, to be able to run a programme of events for LGBT+ History Month, funding is necessary;

**CUSU Resolves:**

1. To use a portion of the Council Free Budget amounting to £250 to cover a portion of the costs for History Month events that CamQueerHistory are going to run. These funds shall be spent in proportion to student attendance of these events.

**8B. Action motion regarding CUSU support for UCS/DRC appointments**

Proposer: Henry Wright (Homerton Union of Students JCR)

Seconder: Emily Hall (Robinson College Students’ Association)

**CUSU Notes:**

1. The University Counselling Service (UCS) provides essential counselling services to students, many of whom are the most vulnerable in the university.
2. The Disability Resource Centre (DRC) provides essential support to disabled students, especially regarding diagnoses in the lead up to exams and equal access to opportunities.
3. The CUSU Disabilities Officer posted from the official CUSU disabilities account about the strikes on 18th November 2019, actively pressuring students with DRC/UCS appointments to miss their appointments.
4. The UCS and DRC are already overstretched with students facing considerable delays in getting appointments.

**CUSU believes:**

1. That the welfare of students is paramount at all times of year
2. The students targeted by this messaging are already likely to be put under more stress during the strike period
3. That a lot of students who have appointments for counselling may already feel anxious about attending, and it may have taken significant personal effort to book the original appointment
4. CUSU’s advice may dissuade students like this from accessing the help they need
5. That the message from CUSU’s Disability Officer demonstrated a disregard for the welfare of vulnerable students

**CUSU resolves:**

1. To issue the following statement:
	* ‘CUSU recognises the importance of students being able to access UCS and DRC services. Students who have already made the decision to seek help in the form of counselling should not be required to weigh the ’necessity’ of their appointment against the political value of a strike. Nor is it suggested or expected that students wait until it is an emergency before they seek support from the counselling service.
	Students using the DRC and UCS are likely to be vulnerable students, who may already be adversely affected by strikes. The need for these students to be able to access support, and to feel comfortable doing so, is not an open question. Students should feel able to attend appointments during the strike period, without pressure not to do so, and CUSU will support students in doing this where help is sought.”
2. To provide, when possible, an officer to accompany students who still have appointments to the UCS/DRC building and advertise this
3. To provide advice on alternative avenues of support for cancelled appointments via official CUSU social media channels
4. Any Other Business