



CUSU Council

Lent I

Small Exams Hall, 19th January 2015

Changes to the Order

End Week 5 Blues motion to be put first - voted in favour

Sabbatical Updates

Helen Hoogewerf-McComb (CUSU President) Working on CUSU Conference - was successful, asks for feedback forms to be filled in & to look out for resources being sent out.

Amelia Horgan (CUSU Women's Officer) Hosted Women's Officer Conference, working on Reclaim the Night & Gender Agenda, and planning the Anti-Valentine's Day Party with CUSU LGBT+

Jack Wright (CUSU Welfare and Rights Officer) Planning Mental Health Week - several workshops throughout the week.

Rob Richardson (CUSU Education Officer) Faculty Rep training at CUSU Conference, produced a new Faculty Rep handbook, has been sitting on a lot of committees.

Helena (CUSU Access and Funding Officer) Planning for the Shadowing Scheme

Jemma Stewart (CUSU Coordinator) Looking into bulk buying cheap sanitary products, wants to start a project working with Treasurers on JCR & MCR funding across the University

Motion to End Week Five Blues

Proposed: Adam Robertson

Seconded: Oscar Addis

Speech in favour of the motion: Cambridge has a problem with students not having enough time, with academic pressure raising mental health issues. The 'Week 5 Blues' should not just be accepted. The "End 'Week 5 Blues'" initiative suggests adding a reading week by adding another week to term, as many other universities already have. CUSU have been campaigning for a Reading Week for many years.

Speech against the motion: [Fitz JCR Vice President]; Not convinced that a reading week would target the problem addressing welfare of students. All the extra reading would go into this week - Cambridge wouldn't allow this week to be for relaxing.



Economic issues as money problems create a lot of stress and Cambridge is an expensive place to live. People associate term-time with work, and holidays with rest. Employers appreciate that we have super-intensive terms.

Question: Why has campaigning for a reading week failed so many times before, and why is Week 5 the solution?

Response (CUSU): The University might have been resistant. Amelia describes past campaigns of CUSU prioritising mental health and petitioning for a reading week - thinks it didn't work as they asked nicely and the VC may have been unsupportive. In 1983, CUSU produced a report about mental health in Cambridge. We don't know if it is the solution, and should see if it works. The National Student Survey has fairly consistently shown that students are under too much pressure and unable to complete work at Cambridge - they cannot digest information and other universities have this week to allow it, which suggests a pretty reasonable correlation.

Question: Have there been any other alternatives considered? Suggestion of a more staggered workload

Response: We could do both

Question: Is there any evidence of reading weeks doing any good towards this?

Response: Not that it is known of - no universities have introduced reading weeks recently.

Question for CUSU: Is anything similar to this happening at Oxford?

Response: Not a CUSU policy that we have and so we haven't researched into whether anything similar is happening at Oxford - we would look into this if the motion were passed

Question: Would there be any safeguards in place stopping supervisors from setting work during this week?

Response: That's the sort of thing that CUSU would work on, but is something that would require a lot of work - there will be supervisors not toeing the line and we'd need to put measures in place for stopping this.

Speech in favour of the motion: [Trinity MCR VP]: Large agreement that we should have longer terms with students he's consulted with. In response to the argument of it not solving mental health issues, it would at least go a little way. This shouldn't only be about mental health - a reading week would help intellectual development. Time is more efficient in Cambridge which is where we should be spending this time. In responding to the economic argument, colleges don't continuously rent out rooms. In



response to a shortening of holidays - we have very long summer holidays. In response to companies prizing us for intensive terms: other universities have longer terms. A boycott of handing work into supervisors is a good way of friendly protest. This should be being discussed all over Cambridge, and all committees should get behind the initiative. There isn't a demand for more contact hours or anything that would harm students in any way.

Speech against the motion: [King's MCR Rep]: Not totally against the notion, and is appreciative of the mental health issues, but isn't sure that changing Week 5 is the answer. We should be accessing pastoral support. 8 weeks at a time is nothing compared to how long you're going to work in later life. Most colleges allow you to stay for at least a week outside of term. Response to 'CUSU Notes (4)': not handing in work in Week 5 is disrespectful to supervisors who care a lot about the work of students and put a lot of time into supervising - these are not the people who have the power to make decisions and change. Would ask that a different way of protest is brought up.

Question: Would it be any better if only fellows boycotted?

Response: Supervisors would know in advance. If the University is not going to give us it then we should do it ourselves; a petition to the University might not do anything.

Second response: Students should talk to their supervisors if they're feeling overworked, as supervisors can be supportive.

Question: Wouldn't students handing in work detract from what the campaign is trying to achieve?

Response: It wouldn't be compulsory - other suggestions are welcome. If we say we aren't going to do anything other than to get CUSU to write a report, it will fail. If there's a motion from CUSU supporting this, all supervisors would be notified that this is going on and is a strong symbolic action.

Response: This is a campaign that students are already working on. CUSU supporting it would be that CUSU will assist communication of the protest and strike - academics understand the principle. The campaign doesn't get created by this motion getting voted in, students would get protection.

Point of Clarification: The set number of nights you have to study in Cambridge to complete a degree. We have 9 week terms.

Amendment Proposed: CUSU Resolves (4): To actively campaign for 9 week terms including a reading week

Amendment accepted as friendly



Amendment Proposed: CUSU will undertake to investigate the effects of a 9 week term including a reading week

Speech against: It's implied that the research would be undertaken anyway. We should pass the motion now as workload and time restrictions would mean the campaign could not be done until next year.

Speech in favour of the amendment: We should have the research done properly - we're trying to change a culture and we shouldn't rush through this and lose legitimacy

Response: It wouldn't be rushed through - anything in this university takes so long. The committee structure of the University does not meet quickly enough. If we can broadly agree on the principle of a reading week then we should vote in support of it.

Vote on amendment: Majority against, amendment falls

Speech in favour of the motion: [Jack Wright, CUSU Welfare & Rights]: Research into this topic: something grounded in what we see every day around us in Cambridge. Concern for people with chronic and mental illnesses. In the vast majority of cases above, people need to sleep a lot and space out their work. They need time that they can take a break; we need to think who we are campaigning for. For a lot of people it isn't just a matter of pleasant-ness, it's a matter of people being able to stay at the university. Even relatively able people here crash at the end of the term. We shouldn't be setting a standard for ourselves against the world of work - that world of work is deeply inaccessible and we shouldn't be judging people who are unable to cope with full-time work.

Speech against: Research would be respected more than sentiment - would be more powerful towards making change.

Neutral speech: Not handing in work is still a problem, though we agree with the principles of a campaign

Amendment proposed: Change CUSU Resolves (1) to 'to publicise the "End 'Week 5 Blues'" Campaign and offer protection to students'.

Amendment passes

Summative speech: People are usually able to work for 40 hours a week - any more than that, and people crash after eight weeks. Working people intensely does not increase effectivity. This isn't academic excellence, this is working without sleep. The Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education wants to talk - people are thinking about why it should be different.



Votes on the motion

For: 19

Against: 7

Abstentions: 4

Motion Passes

Motion to Reform the Part-Time Executive

Proposer: Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, CUSU President

Seconder: Rob Richardson, CUSU Education Officer

Motion Proposed: Helen Hoogewerf-McComb (CUSU President): Last term, CUSU consulted to change how people volunteer with our organisation. The basic information is that the executive would be structured into five teams, which is each headed by a sabb or a shared role. Students in teams choose core campaigns for the year. They can do other things as well, which makes it easier for students who care about an issue to get involved in what they care about. People won't have to be elected at Council, which can be intimidating. Mechanism in place to ensure that if a campaign is bad it doesn't go through, and student campaigners would get a lot of support from CUSU.

Question: C.1.iii - accessibility?

Response: Trying to move away from paper voting, but would do a study to look into the kinds of voting (e.g. someone could do voting for people unable to vote on the computer), but this needs more thought.

Question: Ethical Affairs currently has 5 campaigns, but would be changed to only having two campaigns officers. How would this work?

Response: The Head of Team can co-opt/recruit volunteers who work under the mandate of the head of the team. Two campaigns officers would be elected to run campaigns, but under the mandate other campaigns could be run - CUSU would be focussing resources on the two campaigns. Autonomous groups are different. Campaigns officers wouldn't get to vote at Council in order to protect Council as a democratic space of students, not CUSU reps.

Summative Speech: A step forward in what CUSU is doing.

Votes on the motion:

For: 26

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1



Motion passes

Motion to Create a Part-Time Students Representative Position

Proposer: Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, CUSU President

Seconder: Rob Richardson, CUSU Education Officer

Motion Proposed: Helen Hoogewerf-McComb (CUSU President): The University is ignoring that it legally has to allow students to do courses part-time because of disabilities.

Speech Against: Highly doubted that part-time students would like to be represented at CUSU - we aren't their age/don't face their problems at all

Clarification: CUSU represents graduate students. That there aren't people represented at this Union means we should have a representative.

Question: What about the Graduate Union?

Response: There have been both organisations. As the idea of what Students Unions were, both of the organisations decided to develop. They evolved into a Union rather than separating from CUSU.

Speech in favour of the motion: There will be many issues had by part-time students that other students have - we shouldn't miss them out. We've done well as an organisation in representing and dealing with two groups. It's better to have representation when people aren't often very aware of their needs - it's good to have two places they can air their needs and have their problems amplified.

Summative speech: It's CUSU's job to represent all students in the University.

Votes on the Motion

For: 20

Against: 0

Abstentions: 2

Motion passes

Motion to Create a Mature Students Representative Position

Proposer: Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, CUSU President

Seconder: Rob Richardson, CUSU Education Officer



Motion Proposed: Helen Hoogewerf-McComb (CUSU President): CUSU really should be thinking about mature students. And giving them a representative position would allow us to do that.

Speech against: There might be one or two mature undergraduates but CUSU doesn't need to represent graduate students

Summative speech: There are arbitrary cut-off lines - the University definition is that a mature student is 21 or over when you start a degree - things are going to be different and this should have representation

Votes on the Motion

For: 19

Against: 1

Abstentions: 1

Motion passes

Motion to Create a Student Parents Representative Position

Proposer: Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, CUSU President

Seconder: Rob Richardson, CUSU Education Officer

Motion Proposed: Helen Hoogewerf-McComb (CUSU President): The University assumes that graduates are the only ones that have children - we should represent everyone who has children at University, but also challenge assumptions.

Speech in favour of the motion: This would enable the Women's Officer to represent the group more effectively at committee level, as student parents' positions can only be imagined currently.

Speech against: Someone with a child is in a completely different world, particularly a graduate. CUSU shouldn't be voting on graduate matters and is attempting to copy the Graduate Union. There shouldn't be a representative for people just because they are different or have particular characteristics (e.g. no representative for student partners)

Response: We don't have a representative for student partners because our core focus is on those who are currently students, and CUSU isn't trying to copy what the Graduate Union is doing, rather to try and improve on what CUSU has been doing for years.

Speech in favour: It doesn't make sense to say that because a group is small we shouldn't represent them - we should amplify their voices and hear their rights



Comment against: They shouldn't have equal voting rights

Votes on the Motion

For: 18

Against: 1

Abstentions: 2

Motion passes

Motion to Amend the Faculty Forum Constitution

Proposer: Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, CUSU President

Seconder: Rob Richardson, CUSU Education Officer

Motion Proposed: Rob Richardson (CUSU Education Officer): Updates the membership from previous membership

Votes on the Motion

For: 20

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1