

# **OPBM REPORTS**

## **HT19**

## **Daniel Wilkinson, President**

### **Overview**

I have discharged the following responsibilities, pursuant to Rule 13:

- The general administration of the Society, subject to any direction of Standing Committee or the House.
- Chairing all Business Meetings of the Society and of the Standing Committee and Finance Committee.
- Deciding the motions for debate, allocation of paper-speeches, and invitation of guest speakers for my term of office.
- Ensuring that all members of staff, as far as is possible under employment law of England and Wales, conform to the Rules, Standing Orders, and Special Schedules of the Society.
- Ensuring that the Society's website, social media accounts, mailing list, and smartphone app are maintained and developed accordingly.

### **Speaker invitations**

A total of 3'714 invitations have been issued for Hilary Term 2019.

The significant majority of invitations were sent out during the Winter Vacation, supplemented by a number of invitations which were sent out during Hilary Term 2019.

An increased number of invitations were able to be sent out compared to previous vacations of significantly longer duration because of the reforms to the Appointed Committee. Unlike previous vacations, members of the appointed committee were required to work a number of vacation days in parity to members of the Elected Committee.

Members of the Appointed Committee, therefore, did exactly the same work as that of a member of the Elected Committee, namely, inviting speakers in a holistic and conclusive manner. Previously, Appointed Committee members would only assist the Elected Committee when it was deemed necessary, and for a fraction of the required vacation time.

Invitations were logged through CiviCRM – as in previous vacations, there were a significant number of technical issues encountered whilst using the customer relationship management system.

These issues were not fixed by our database developer but temporarily fixed by myself over the course of the vacation.

I oversaw all speaker invitations, assisted by the Librarian, Treasurer, Chair of the Consultative Committee and (at the time) the Director of Operations.

### Debates

The following debate motions were decided for Hilary Term 2019. Paper speeches allocated are to students are also included:

- This House Believes The Arab World Has Failed The Palestinian People
  - o Adam Wilkinson-Hill, Jesus College, Secretary's Committee
  - o Chaitanya Kediya, Exeter College, Standing Committee
- This House Would Embrace An Ever Closer African Union
  - o Dr. Garang M. Dut, St. Catherine's College, Graduate Officer
  - o Ayman D'Souza, Christ Church College, Secretary's Committee
- This House Cannot Separate The Art From The Artist
  - o Amelia Harvey, Kellogg College, Junior Access Officer
  - o Sara Dube, St. Hugh's College, Librarian-Elect
- This House Believes Thatcher Was A Hero For The Working Class
  - o Adithi Shenava, Mansfield College, Director of Press
  - o Mahi Joshi, Trinity College, Standing Committee
  - o Elliot Bromley, St. Edmund Hall College, 5<sup>th</sup> Elected Standing Committee
  - o Ray Williams, Wadham College, Ex-Standing Committee
- This House Believes That All You Need Is Love
  - o *No student speakers*
- This House Believes That The Left Must Reclaim Populism
  - o *Student speakers TBC*
- This House Believes That The Catholic Church Must Pay For Its Sins
  - o *Student speakers TBC*
- Brexit Debate – *motion TBC*
  - o *Speakers TBC*

There was an additional Public Business Meeting called for Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February, with the motion entitled "This House Would Go To War Over A Piece Of Paper".

### Special Events

Four panel discussions and one head-to-head debate were arranged for Hilary Term 2019.

- Artificial Intelligence Panel – *Artificial Intelligence: An Inhuman Future?*
- March For Our Lives Panel – *Gun Violence and Youth Activism in America*
- Grenfell Panel – *Voices of Grenfell*
- Press Panel – *The Future of the Media in a Post-Truth Age*
- Intervention Head to Head – *Humanitarian Intervention: A Contradiction in Terms?*

Three instalments of the Al Jazeera Head to Head series with Mehdi Hasan have been scheduled to take place throughout Hilary Term.

#### Committees

- Standing Committee: The Standing Committee has met, in accordance with the frequency prescribed in Rule 24.
- Finance Committee: The Finance Committee has met, in accordance with the frequency prescribed in Rule 25.
- Access Committee: I have attended meetings of the Access Committee in an advisory capacity. This term, the Society is fortunate to have a dedicated team of Access and Liberation Officers, who are dedicated to strengthening the Union's engagement, and improving the Society's accessibility.
- Debate Selection Committee: I have attended meetings of the Debate Selection Committee and advised on matters relating to the Union's administration and finances.

#### Projects

- Smartphone App
  - o In conjunction with the Director of Digital Operations, we created the software for an application scheduled to be published on the iOS App Store.
  - o The "Oxford Union App" housed a digital version of the termcard, with additional functionality to ballot for meet and greet spots or submit questions.
  - o The app was released at the commencement of first week and was used to release the termcard.
  - o The app was scheduled to be released on Android during the term.
- Financial Reform
  - o With the publication of the Audited Consolidated Financial Statements of the previous financial year, in conjunction with the Bursar and Senior Treasurer, I prepared the yearly budget for 2018/2019 academic year.
  - o I proposed reform to the Rules and Standing Orders relating to the Finances of the Society to improve the transparency and openness of

the Society's finances, especially in relation to the role the Junior Officers and Chair of the Consultative Committee should have in adhering to a termly operation budget.

- Plush
  - o I oversaw the installation of our new tenants into the Cellars, the Plush Lounge.
  - o Renovation of the Cellars was conducted over the Winter vacation and the club opened, with the inaugural "Re-Union" Oxford Union members night during the Second Week of Term (Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 26th of February)
- *FIXR*
  - o I have managed the FIXR ticketing platform, which has been the Union's exclusive provider for ticketed social events.
  - o FIXR was utilised successfully on three occasions during Hilary Term, for the: "Burns Night Social", the "Into The Wardrobe Ball", and the "Murder Mystery Night".

Elected and Appointed Officials for Hilary Term 2019

Position	Name	Vacation Day Completed	Vacation Day Required
President	Daniel Wilkinson	37	30
Librarian	Brendan McGrath	33.5	30
Treasurer	Amy Gregg	32	30
Secretary	Nicholas Leah	25	30
President-elect	Genevieve Athis	11	20
Librarian-elect	Sara Dube	21.5	20
Treasurer-elect	Charlie Coverman	17	20
CCC	James Dix	21.5	7
Standing Committee	Chaitanya Kediya	16.5	20
Standing Committee	Shining Zhao	16.5	20
Standing Committee	Mahi Joshi	21.5	20
Standing Committee	Jim Brennan	11.5	20
Standing Committee	Elliot Bromley	26	20
Standing Committee	Olivia Leigh	7	20
Standing Committee	Rai Saad Khan	16	20
Chief of Staff	Ray Williams*	14	20
Director of Digital Operations	Hugh Bellamy	14.5	20
Director of Operations	Amber Seaward	21.5	20
Director of Press and PR	Adithi Shenava	14.5	20

Director of Sponsorship	John Glance	10	20
Secretary's Committee	Sundeep Singh	1	10
Secretary's Committee	Spencer Cohen	10	10
Secretary's Committee	Jess Curry	11.5	10
Secretary's Committee	Adam Wilkinson-Hill	10.5	10
Secretary's Committee	Ayman D'Souza	16	10
Secretary's Committee	George Hargrave	5	10
Secretary's Committee	Noorie Abbas	11	10
Secretary's Committee	Bethany Molyneux	11	10
Secretary's Committee	Varuna Mitra	6	10
Secretary's Committee	Beatrice Barr	13	10
Secretary's Committee	Beth Chamberlain	16	10
Deputy CCC	Jack Blowers	6.5	N/A
Deputy CCC	Hugh Nicholl	8.5	N/A
CCS	Sam Burns	10	N/A
Logistics Officer	James Johnson	9.5	10
Logistics Officer	Nils Lovegren	9	10
Logistics Officer	Oliver Tushingham	10.5	10
Press Officer	Aastha Tyagi	6	10
Press Officer	Micah Oliver Lee	7	10
Press Officer	Miriam Ames Feldman	8	10
Sponsorship Officer	Benedict Altier	9	10
Sponsorship Officer	Jeremy Mbararia	10	10
Sponsorship Officer	Marcel Satria	9	10
Sponsorship Officer	Natasha Naidoo	2	10
Access Officer (Senior)	Brian Wong	0	20
Access Officer (Junior)	Amelia Harvey	16	20
Disabilities Officer	Elisa Gómez Alemán	9	10
Ethnic Minorities Officer	Jay Priyesh Patel	5	10
Graduate Officer	Garang Dut	1	10
International Officer	Alice Zhang	7.5	10
LGBTQIA+ Officer	Mohamed Hussein Iman	9.5	10
Socioeconomic Officer	Amelia Bircham	6	10
Temporary Membership Officer	Olly Woodhouse	1	10
Women's Officer	Priscilla Gui	1	10

Invitations Officer	Patrick Gwillim-Thomas	8	7
Invitations Officer	Cameron Bovell	13.5	7

*\* Resigned on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019*

Daniel Wilkinson  
Oriol College  
President, Hilary Term 2019

**Brendan McGrath, Junior Librarian**

Good evening, members, and what a joyous term it has been. I have had the most sincere honour of responsibility for the term's speaker events, and if you'll excuse my saying so it has been a term and a half. Most enjoyably I managed the process of committee invitations for individual speakers. It was in some ways a bumpy ride but in others a joy - quality control of invitations, approval of speaker requests, and monitoring output. This has resulted in one of the most packed terms of speakers in years!

More individually, I invited a large number of speakers and confirmed a number of speakers smaller than that. This has included a Professor, a President, and another Professor, to name but a few. My work also notably included overseeing speaker requests for half the debates, and managing committee invitations for those debates.

On a more particular note, I helped generally with putting together the term card, including working to put together the overall design and cover for the term card itself. Since then, I have had a whale of a term. As expected, I have entertained and interviewed some speakers, including a writer, a writer, and another writer, as well as chairing Library Committee.

It has been a wild ride, let me tell you, and I look forward to carrying out my duties for the rest of term!



### **Amy Gregg, Junior Treasurer**

As directed by Rule 19(a) – *General Duties*:

- I have worked a total of 32 vacation day during the Winter Vacation
- I confirmed a number of speakers, such as Jon Snow for the Press Panel, and Loyiso Gola, Desiree Burch, Jamie MacDonald, Tom Lucy, Tom Ward, Ahir Shah and Hal Cruttenden for the Comedy debate.
- I have ongoing negotiations with a number of additional speakers for potential confirmations in forthcoming terms
- I co-supervised debate speaker requests of committee members on our speaker database
- I oversaw (along with the President and Librarian) the conception and organisation of the Hilary sequence of Debates
- I took a primary responsibility for organising the Comedy and Catholic Church debate

As directed by Rule 19(b) – *Suggestion Books*:

- I have ensured that the suggestion book is kept on display at the Unions' entrance.

As directed by Rule 19(c) – *Finances of the Union*:

- I have ensured that DSC expenses are passed and claimed validly in conjunction with the Bursar.
- I worked with the Bursar, Senior Treasurer, President and President-elect to overhaul and pass the Union's annual and termly budgets.

As directed by Rule 19(d) – *Sponsorship of the Union*:

- I headed the team of sponsorship officers to acquire sponsorship from Schwarzman Scholars, SPG Law and MyTutor.
- I sought to acquire corporate sponsorship for speaker events, debates, and social events from a number of larger firms across the UK and US.
- I have ongoing sponsorship negotiations with the New York Times.
- I undertook a comprehensive contract review to ensure that all previous Treasurer's Treats and debate floor prizes were still able to be validly claimed
- I acquired a range of new debate floor prizes, such as with Jericho Kitchen Cookery, resulting in four debate floor prizes being offered at each debate, rather than the usual three.
- We acquired 16 new Treasurer's Treats to provide a wide range of discounts to across Oxford.
- Sponsorship Officers: John Glance, Benedict Altier, Jeremy Mbararia, Natasha Naidoo and Marcel Satria all contributed in the efforts outlined above.
- I worked with Natasha Naidoo to form the beginnings of an alumni database, which will contribute to the long-term Bicentenary sponsorship efforts.

## **Nicholas Leah, Secretary**

My principal responsibility over the vacation and during the term has been the organisation of the term's social calendar. The mainstay of my work in this regard has been directed towards the organisation of the Hilary Term Ball on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019, which will be a Narnia-themed event with the title 'Into the Wardrobe'. I'm pleased to say that when tickets were released on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January, they sold out in forty minutes. We sold 420 members tickets and 180 guest tickets.

As part of my ball-related work I have also put together a comprehensive budget, which has already been presented to the Finance Committee and Standing Committee. I will then present the accounts breakdown during the ordinary meeting of Standing Committee in sixth week.

I have also overseen the organisation of additional social events, including two socials spearheaded by members of the Union's Standing Committee: Rai Saad Khan and Elliot Bromley. These socials include a Burns Night celebration on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 and the Union's inaugural Murder Mystery night on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Both committee members have worked hard to confirm the arrangements for their respective socials, and I have helped them to prepare their budgets for presentation to Finance Committee and Standing Committee.

Alongside the main social events of the Term, I have organised three pub quizzes to take place on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January, Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February, and Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February. I have also given considerable thought to these quizzes to ensure that they are as enjoyable and accessible to society members as possible.

With regards to speaker invitations, I have confirmed Simon Pegg and Peter Moore, the CEO of Liverpool Football Club, for Hilary Term. I have also confirmed the Prime Minister of Nepal for a date to be determined in Trinity Term during his state visit to the UK in early June. In addition, I have also supported the President with the organisation of a Brexit debate to be held in eighth week, drawing on my extensive network of contacts that have spoken at previous panel events I have organised on the same subject. I am currently negotiating with Sir Keir Starmer and Lord Chancellor David Gauke to speak in this debate.

Another feature of my work this term has been the organisation of events designed to advance graduate involvement with the Union. I organised the inaugural graduate symposium on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> January. This event featured short presentations from four graduates representing a diversity of academic disciplines and postgraduate degree programmes. In order to put this together, I composed a call for abstracts form that was circulated during the first week of term, and successful applicants were notified at least a week before the symposium took place.

Finally, throughout the term I have been carrying out my administrative duties as Secretary: taking minutes during meetings of Standing Committee and during public business meetings, as well as making announcements on Thursday nights about available spaces on Bar Strategy Committee and the social events taking place during the term.

### **Sara Dube, Junior Librarian-Elect**

Over the vacation, I played a significant role in planning the #MeToo Debate, which took place in third week. I researched and invited many speakers for this debate as well as led a group of committee members in writing the blurb to plan the direction of the debate. I also planned a panel on the Grenfell fire aftermath, a March For Our Lives gun violence panel, and the Intervention Head to Head debate. In addition, I confirmed some individual speakers for the term, including Ella Mills.

During the term, I have been attending weekly meetings of the Consultative, Library, Finance, Standing, Access and Debate Selection Committees. In fourth week, I also facilitated the Union Ball.

For the rest of the term, I look forward to four further meetings of these committees as well as to continuing to plan the Grenfell panel for the 27<sup>th</sup> of February as well as the Intervention Debate for the first week of March.

### **Charlie Coverman, Junior Treasurer-Elect**

Over the vacation I worked 17 vacation days during which I confirmed 5 speakers: including Lowkey and Frank Turner. I am also in the process of negotiating several other speakers for this term and Trinity Term. I also organised the Palestine Debate, which I took the lead on for the first week of the vacation. Additionally, I secured a floor prize from One Ship Street. I negotiated sponsorship for the Catholic Church Debate from SPG Law, as well as a renegotiation of our partnership with MyTutor for the coming term.

This term I have facilitated both the Palestine Debate and MeToo Debate, as well as the Narnia Themed Ball. I have also attended meetings of Finance, Standing, Bar Strategy, and Consultative Committee. Finally, I have assisted in committee- wide tasks such as dealing with term card delivery and bench moving.

For the rest of this term, I will continue to attend and contribute to meeting of Finance, Standing, Bar Strategy, and Consultative Committee. In collaboration with the Treasurer and Director of Sponsorship, I intend to redesign the outdated sponsorship brochure, in time for the coming vacation. Finally, I shall help facilitate further events, as well as any further tasks required by the President or the Chair of the Consultative Committee.

### **Chaitanya Kediya, Standing Committee**

I, Chaitanya Kediya, as member of Standing Committee completed 16.5 vacation days over the winter to organise speaker events and invite guests to participate in weekly debates. I was successful in confirming two speakers for this term: Baroness Hale and Mr Brian Lara. Unfortunately, Mr Brian Lara was not able to then visit the Union due to other engagements. I have also maintained correspondence with potential guests for Trinity Term 2019, and informed the President-elect and Librarian-elect about the possibility of hosting such speakers. This term, I have assisted the Chair of the Consultative Committee in preparing for the ball, the Secretary during the ball, and will be chairing the Emergency Debate in fifth week. As Standing Committee Delegate to the Debate Selection Committee, I have attended meetings weekly (with the exception of the meeting in week 4) and taken minutes.

### **Shining Zhao, Standing Committee**

During the vacation, I worked 16.5 vac days. Until now, I have confirmed in Hilary term and the vacation the following speakers: Kenneth Cukier, Catherine Havasi, Tshilidzi Marwala, Sir Adrian Smith, Roberto Cavalli, Ada Hegerberg, Craig Revel Horwood. I have already organized the AI Panel. I have negotiated for OCF at the Union, which brings the Union 5450 pounds excluding VAT. I have confirmed 5 treasurer's treats. I also worked hard in the Union Ball. Right now, I am still in contact with speakers including Ding Junhui and Eason Chan.

### **Mahi Joshi, Standing Committee**

So far this term, I have helped facilitate the Oxford Union Ball on the Friday of 4th week, as well as a few other events, including the Burn's Night Social. I have completed several Guest Liason duties, a highlight being the opportunity to give Nick Offerman a tour of Oxford in 0th week. I was the student speaker at the 4th Week Thatcher Debate, in which I spoke in Opposition. I have also acted as one of the Secretaries of The Access Committee in my role as the Standing Committee Delegate to this committee. Aside from this, I have endeavoured to fulfill my general role as an Elected Member of the Standing Committee to the best of my ability.

**Jim Brennan, Standing Committee**

*Report not submitted on time. £10 fine issued.*



## **Elliot Bromley, Standing Committee**

*Report not submitted on time. £10 fine issued.*

I, Elliot Bromley, worked a total of 26 vacation days. During this period I invited a total of 182 speakers, 70 of whom being female. The invitations were largely sent to individual speakers, but also to potential speakers for the Africa, MeToo, Catholic Church, and Thatcher debates.

The only speaker I have confirmed for this term, thus far, is James Haskell. However, I received interest in speaking during Trinity term of Michaelmas term 2019 from Ronnie O'Sullivan, Vivienne Westwood, Gretchen Carlson, Al Murray, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Ray Winstone, Chris Robshaw, Adriana Lima, and Lea DeLaria.

In addition to speaker events/debates, I worked toward confirming Treasurers Treats for the term, the most noteworthy being securing a new discount of 25% with Carluccios.

So far during full-term I have facilitated 10+ speaker events, the Burns Night Social, as well as the Africa Union and Thatcher Debates. I have organised the Murder Mystery Social which will be taking place on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February (6<sup>th</sup> Week). Ticket sales are going well and are close to selling out. I have participated in committee wide tasks such as facilitating the Ball and term card delivery. I have consistently attended, and participated in, The Standing Committee meetings, as well as Consultative Committee, and a meeting of Bar Strategy (of which I am the delegate from TSC).

For the remainder of the term I plan on attending TSC as well as the Consultative Committee. I envisage myself delivering a successful Murder Mystery Social, continuing to facilitate events, and satisfying requests of the President and Chair of the Consultative Committee.

**Olivia Leigh, Standing Committee**

*Report not submitted on time. £10 fine issued.*

### **Rai Saad Khan, Standing Committee**

I have successfully invited Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, who will be attending on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2019. As part of my role, I had also organized a Burns Night Social, which took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January, having passed a budget for it in an Emergency Standing and Finance committee. I will now need to bring a final account before finance and standing committee to get it passed and scrutinized. Besides this, I have attended all standing committee meetings and all CC meetings. I have also attended all meetings of Access Committee, being the Standing Delegate to it, and am a joint-Secretary to the committee with Mai Joshi (with duties on a rotating basis). Besides this, I have facilitated other events where required or needed, such as the Ball, or acting as a Guest Liason for debates (Africa Debate, and Palestine Debate).

Best,

Rai Saad Khan

**Standing Committee**

*Christ Church.*

## **James Dix, Chair of the Consultative Committee**

### **James Dix, Chair of the Consultative Committee (Also on behalf of Logistics Officers)**

The duties of the Chairs of Consultative Committee are set out in Rule 20.

- (i) *They shall arrange the distribution of the term card at the start of the Term to resident and non-resident members who are still paying their facility fee.*

This was completed by myself on Friday of 1<sup>st</sup> Week, with the assistance of elected members of Secretary's Committee. Termcard distribution was once again done in record time this year, due to a new and improved route.

- (ii) *They shall produce publicity for events, to be distributed via Consultative Committee and College Secretaries.*

The position of college secretary has been deprecated, but events have been published at Consultative Committee in the absence of college secretaries.

- (iii) *They shall be the member of Standing Committee with responsibility for the Society's web-site, and shall appoint a Web Officer with the agreement of the President.*

I have worked with the President, President-elect, the Bursar and the Director of Digital Operations in the upkeep of the Society's website.

- (iv) *They shall be the member of Standing Committee with responsibility for the Society's Archives, and shall appoint an Archivist with the agreement of the President.*

I have worked with the Bursar to maintain the archives.

- (v) *They shall be the member of Standing Committee with responsibility for ensuring that the Society's rooms are set up by Secretary's Committee members prior to debates and speaker meetings, and shall ensure that any rooms so used are returned to their normal state after the event is concluded.*

Rooms have been set up with unprecedented efficiency and good humour by members of Secretary's Committee and Standing Committee for every event.

- (vi) *They shall chair Consultative Committee and brought matters of concern amongst members of Consultative Committee the attention of Standing Committee. They shall post the title of any Emergency Debate Motion on the Notice Board by noon on the day following the meeting of Standing Committee at which it was approved.*

I have chaired Consultative Committee efficiently and have diligently brought matters of concern as and when they have arrived. I have ensured that the Emergency Debate Motions have been posted by my Secretary.

- (vii) *They shall produce the Order Paper for debates on the President's instructions, select Tellers for Debates, and post the results of any Emergency Debate and the debate held in Public Business on the Society's notice board by noon on the day after the Debate.*

The production of Order Papers has been delegated to the Bursar and Office Secretary. Tellers have been appointed and results have been posted on the noticeboard.

- (viii) *They shall ensure that Public Business Meetings, Private Business Meetings, Informal Debates and Speaker Meetings are recorded on audio or video tape and further ensure these recordings are properly preserved.*

All relevant meetings have been taped and archived.

- (ix) *The duties of the Chair of the Consultative Committee outlined in (i) to (vii) of this Rule and elsewhere in the Rules (excluding the duties in Rule 5 (a), Rule 26 (d) (i), Rule 30 (d) (iii) and Rule 32) shall be performed primarily by the Chair of the Consultative Committee with the assistance of the Treasurer-Elect in weeks 1,2 and 3 of Full Term and with the assistance of the Secretary's Committee and the five elected members of Standing Committee through-out Full Term.*

The assistance of the Treasurer-elect and Librarian-elect have so far not been necessary.

- (x) *In 8<sup>th</sup> week, the outgoing Chair of the Consultative Committee, the President-Elect, and the Bursar shall meet together with the incoming Chair of the Consultative Committee to brief the incoming Chair of the Consultative Committee on the duties of the Chair of the Consultative Committee. If the outgoing CCC has been re-elected and is thus also the incoming CCC, they shall meet with the President-Elect and the Bursar in 8<sup>th</sup> week to discuss the duties of the CCC.*

When the time comes, and my successor is elected, this will be done.

In addition to the execution of the duties outlined above, I have worked alongside the CCS (Samuel Burns, St John's College) to lead the Logistics Team (Amber Seaward, Magdalen College; Ray Williams, Wadham College; Hugh Nicholl, Pembroke College; Jack Blowers, Oriel College; Nils Lovegren, Magdalen College; Jamie Johnson, Pembroke College ; Oliver Tushingham, St John's College) in ensuring the seamless running and execution of all speaker events and public business meetings, and will continue to do so for the rest of the term. I have also assisted the the Secretary in the execution of the logistics for the Burns Night Social and the Hilary Term Ball.

This concludes my report.

Yours sincerely,

James Dix,  
*Christ Church,*  
**Chair of the Consultative Committee**

### **Speakers invited by the CCC, Hilary 2019**

Lord James Mackay  
Mr Nile Gardiner  
Mr Conor Burns MP  
Mr Cuba Gooding Jr.  
Mr Channing Tatum  
Mr Trevor Noah  
Members of The 1975  
Mr Jamie Dornan  
Mr Cameron Thomaz  
Judge Anthony Kennedy  
Ms Uma Thurman  
Mr Richard Madden  
Mr Carl Bildt  
Mr Loyle Carner  
Mr Noel Gallagher

Mr Andrew Garfield  
Ms Emily Blunt  
Mr Bradley Cooper  
Mr Chancellor Bennett  
Mr Brad Pitt  
Mr Owen Wilson  
Mr Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Mr David Jason  
Mr Christopher Nolan  
Mr Ryan Giggs OBE  
Major Tim Peake  
Members of Red Hot Chilli Peppers  
Mr Jon Favreau  
Mr Christian Bale  
Mrs Wanda Sykes  
Sir Anthony Hopkins CBE  
Sir Lenny Henry  
Mr Chris Moyles  
Ms Tracey Ullman  
Mr Dermot O'Leary  
Mr Steve Harvey  
Mr Boris Becker  
Mr Micky Flanagan  
Ms Celia Imrie  
Mr James Gorman  
Mr Richard Hammond  
Mr Seth Meyers  
Mr Jake Tapper  
Ms Ayaan Hirsi Ali  
Mr Martin Amis  
Sir Salman Rushdie  
Lord Maurice Saatchi  
Mr Stephen Colbert  
Ms Sarah Vine  
Mr Mark Pritchard  
Mr Francis Beckett  
Mr Ian Hislop  
Lord Andrew Tyrie

## **Amelia Harvey, Access Officer**

### **Introduction**

The following report summarises and offers recommendations on the basis of the findings of Appendix 1 (the results of the Members' Survey, conducted in late November 2018). The survey was conducted with the purposes of: i) identifying areas for improvement in terms of access at the Union, ii) seeking prospective solutions to aforementioned problems, and iii) highlighting any and all related concerns that members have regarding the Union's accessibility. For the purpose of concision (the full data results are 79 pages long), the following report will first proceed with a highly condensed summary of points of interest, prior to delving into recommendations and prospective reforms that could be adopted in addressing the raised concerns. The disclaimer is that none of the following comments reflect the opinions of any members of the Union other than the current Access Officer (Ms Amelia Harvey) and now-former Access Officer (Mx Brian Wong). Section 4 is a summary and review of the general progress of the Access Committee members (Liberation Officers and Standing Committee Delegates) according to the current Access Officer.

### **Section 0: Survey Overview**

The survey received 631 responses, with a sizeable proportion of them from current members of the Union.

20.17% of the surveyed are first year undergraduates; 10.08% are second year undergraduates; 12.61% are third year undergraduates; 1.68% are fourth year undergraduates; 36.97% are postgraduates; 18.49% are no longer students – or, colloquially, no longer go here.

### **Section 1: General Engagement**

#### *Analysis*

76.38% (a plurality of answers) of all respondents visit the Union at least once a term (or more frequently), with the most popular items being the debates and speaker meetings (3.11 and 3.00 weighted averages, respectively). What is perhaps more surprising is that the Snooker's Room (whilst unpopular) has a higher usage frequency than usage of the Union's rooms for competitive debating – although given the niched nature of competitive debating this is perhaps not unreasonable.

The primary factors that could have deterred individuals from joining the Union (top three) are: the membership fees (66.72% of all responses), the Union's atmosphere (34.42%), and the reputation of the Union (32.95%). Three observations should be



made regarding the results here – firstly, the results suggest that the sociological (atmosphere) and discursive (reputation) components of the Union are somewhat off-putting to at least a sizeable proportion of the demographics who have considered or will consider joining the Union; secondly, fees remain a substantial perceived barrier or prohibitory bar for even members who have opted to join the Union, and (however) thirdly (as a methodological note), it is worth noting that the results here may be subject to a problem of sample bias. Recognise that most of the respondents are current members (and all of them have membership); thus what these individuals perceive to be the ‘detering’ factors may not map onto or reflect the actual reasons of *non-members* who *decide not to join*. It may be worth further investigating *those* reasons elsewhere (i.e. in a further survey).

The most-selected category with respect to socials attendance is ‘never’ (39.59%); yet perhaps this statistic is somewhat misleading – the other ~61% of members do attend Union social events, although a vast majority of them only do so ‘rarely’ (34.01%) or occasionally (20.47%). Either by some strange (and implausible) law of negative correlation all regular attendees of Union socials decided to not fill in the survey, or it can be inferred that Union socials are simply not attended by a vast majority of its members. To further supplement this conclusion, the three most popular reasons offered for non-attendance of socials are: i) busy-ness (44.58%), ii) prohibitive costs (27.71%), and iii) the socials are not “interesting” enough (26.67%). Whilst i) and ii) are unlikely to be fixable issues, it may be worth considering if iii) can be altered, given that over a quarter of the surveyed non-socials-attending population appears to be put off by their lack of interest in the specific events.

The surveyed members express a clear preference for more speaker meetings (58.02% have said so); furthermore, a significant number (32.25%) has requested more debates, and 26.49% have demanded more socials. Out of the following five items – bar, library, office, security, and union committee, the average surveyed member finds the library most satisfactory, and the union committee least satisfactory. Perhaps this is not surprising, given the above observations regarding the reputational and atmospheric concerns regarding the Union.

Holistically, the mode score for members’ rating of the Union’s accessibility is 5 (denoting ‘adequate’), and its openness, 5 as well. Over a half of the Union’s members finds it less than or just adequate ( $\leq 5$ ). Some of the highlights of the long rosters of comments and “Other” observations include calls for “maintaining freedom of speech” whilst also “not inviting fascists”. One must wonder if these two objectives are in fact opposed to one another, or can be reconciled.

## *Recommendations*

1. More speaker meet-and-greets, or expansion in capacity of meet-and-greets – this would be useful in engaging members who are otherwise disillusioned and view meet-and-greets as mere ‘committee members’ internal friends gatherings’
2. More opportunity to participate in debates – e.g. potential auditions or tryouts for public speaking or participation in debates
3. Expansion in committee outreach and outreach to organisations that traditionally view the Union as hostile, ‘fascist’ or unamenable to dissenting voices; as much as the Union may not be a fan of engaging individuals that disagree from itself, outreach and access are crucial and necessary to maintain the Union’s ‘reputation’ and ‘atmosphere’ as one that is safe and open for all
4. Installation of a Welfare Officer, which addresses specifically concerns about certain speakers or any and all other welfare issues
5. More and/or better member-driven or member-based socials events that are cognizant of members’ preferences
6. Cheaper socials? This may well be the job or task of the Secretary, but the Committee’s input would also be useful

## **Section 2: Specific Engagement/Interests**

For the following section, individual members are asked to answer questions on solely areas that directly affect them. There is no enforceability mechanism that guarantees that this was the case, although one would hope that members do not comment on the lived experiences of other individuals in ways that are epistemically disingenuous or unjust.

### *Analysis*

**With regards to disability, 27.27% of the 11 answers find the Union highly unsatisfactory (2 out of 10).** Only 18.18% of members find the Union more than adequate (5 out of 10) with respect to disabled access. Whilst the sample size is small, this should not be a reason for ignoring the results, on the grounds of three reasons: i) this particular sample size is the precise demographic the Union must cater to; it would make no sense to argue that we should not consider the opinions of a minority on policies that are designed to cater to specifically said minority; ii) it is unclear why the sampled 11 would *not* be representative of the disabled members in the Union – even when in doubt, we should grant the results the benefit of the doubt; iii) that there exist such strong opinions or feelings to the negative about the Union’s accessibility for disabled members is in and of itself a cause for concern. Maybe it’s merely perceptual, but a perception of disengagement and indifference is a perception that we ought to rectify. The primary identified issues regarding disabled members are: difficulty in accessing the front gate or books at the library; lack of power-assisted entrance doors and gate; the fact that the ladies’ toilet is placed on the first floor, and the inherent ableism in procedures such as queuing and collecting tickets in person.

**In terms of accessibility for ethnic minority members, 55.55% of the 18 answers find the Union adequate or less than adequate.** The primary issues identified concern i) the lack of diversity in speakers (particularly in debates), ii) a lack of diversity in the membership, and iii) the overwhelming perception of whiteness in the Union's reputation and public image. It appears that these responses point to two structural flaws underpinning the Union's attitudes towards BME members – i) the perceptual: BME members do not *feel* included within the Union in terms of decision-making, participation, and engagement; ii) the substantive: BME members are – at least according to certain key metrics – underrepresented in the Union's population. Some of the suggested measures for improvement include i) lowering the membership fee and hosting discussions prior to inviting particular speakers, and ii) improving the reputation that one response helpfully points out as 'inherited'.

**On the subject of accessibility for graduate members, a majority of the respondents (49) feel that the engagement of graduate members is at least adequate (e.g. ranges from adequate (5) to extremely satisfactory (10)).** This is potentially reflective upon the hard work and efforts of numerous graduate members in enhancing outreach on behalf of the Union amongst graduate members. The key trends amongst the identified issues include: i) the absence of access membership for graduates; ii) the timings of certain speaker events (far too late OR too early, which in reality suggests that different graduate members have schedules that are incongruent, in either direction, with the schedule of the Union's speaker events), and the absence of graduate-only events. Some of the suggestions (that have repeatedly cropped up) include: i) provision of access membership option for graduates; ii) establishing more graduate-only events with 'support, advice, and facilities for graduates', and iii) later event timings.

**25 individuals answered the question on international members. A vast majority of them feel satisfied with the Union; only 12% of the surveyed select scores that are not 5 or above for the question.** Most of the suggestions for improvements constitute requests or suggestions for more international speakers, alongside cutting down on the potentially excessive and thus inaccessible nature of the language employed by the Union on its Facebook events. Other recommendations include "better food in the bar", which is indubitably a request that has broader spillover benefits that all members can partake in sharing; cutting down on the "US-centrism" of speakers, and more internationals-only activities.

**21 individuals answered the question on LGBTQIA+ members. Most of them report feeling at least adequately satisfied with the Union, with less than 20% reporting that their experience is unsatisfactory.** Most of the issues raised surround the nature of the speakers invited by the Union – in particular, both the absence or underrepresentation of LGBTQIA+ speakers, and the overrepresentation of speakers with views hostile to LGBTQIA+ inclusion. Most of the suggestions are concerned

with the increase in events ‘targeting’ or focusing on LBGTQIA+ empowerment and inclusion.

**On the subject of socioeconomic disadvantage, 30 individuals answered the question, with a vast majority of the responses noting that they feel that socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals have an inadequate or unsatisfactory experience at the Union.** Most of the raised complaints concern the exorbitance of the membership fees, the fact that elections appear to have a distinct bias in the parties they favour, and the lack of diversity on committee. The overarching gist of the recommendations involves i) cheaper prices, ii) offering of more flexible memberships to graduate students, iii) greater discounts for members who receive a full Oxford bursary, and iv) greater transparency with respect to the access membership.

**8 responses were recorded for the question on temporary membership.** This low rate of response may well have been a result of the relative ambiguity in the phrasing of the term ‘temporary membership’ – it is somewhat unclear what counts as temporary membership; after all, we all are temporary members of this society. Most of the recorded responses note that the fees are far too high for Brookes members, with one particular response noting that the colouring of the membership cards to Brookes students is deeply discursively and symbolically oppressive, in shaping negatively the manner through which other members engage with Brookes members holding such cards. Recommendations include a call for an explanation as to why Brookes students are only entitled to temporary memberships.

**On the subject of female representation and accessibility, 54 responses were recorded. The plurality option amongst all ten provided options (20.37%) is 5 (“adequate”), although there is a greater proportion of the surveyed respondents who find the Union inaccessible for its female members, than those who find it accessible.** Most of the responses cite the issue that the Union is deeply male-dominanted, male-run, and comes across as disproportionately male. Even if this perception is not empirically grounded (quantitative and historical evidence suggests that it may well be), this perceptual disengagement is a clear and urgent problem that demands rectification – especially given the overarching feeling that the Union “can have an unwelcoming atmosphere”. Major suggestions include the establishment of women’s only socials that operate as effective safe spaces that ensure women’s interests, as well as the inclusion of more women in committee positions.

### *Recommendations*

1. All of the above sections include suggestions that should be considered, debated, critically engaged with, and potentially implemented
2. In particular, we have noted the following recommendations as particularly crucial:

- a. Lowering the membership fees and diversifying the range of options of membership fees that we offer to prospective members (cf. temporary members; graduate members section)
- b. Engaging members from disempowered groups and minorities through socials focussing on their experiences, as well as hosting events or speakers that engage with the minority experience in a predominantly cis-heteronormative, white, and able-bodied space
- c. Seeking to rectify the Union's reputation through outreach efforts and engagement with liberation groups and organisations around Oxford
- d. Greater transparency measures – e.g. informing members of access committee meetings, hosting prospective access surgeries, and allowing members to express their opinions and voices on individuals to invite

### **Section 3: Conclusion**

The Union has a long and proud history of being one of the most combative and intellectually rigorous spaces for critical debate and liberated discourse. It would be a massive shame, therefore, if it allows certain social structures of oppression and dominion hijack itself and sabotage the accessibility of the Union for its members. We hope that this report could become a regular fixture of all Access Committees, with its publication a mechanism to hold the Union to even greater standards of accountability. The Union is doing a lot of good – it'd be a shame to see its work being undermined by negligence and errs in the area of access.

### **Section 4: Liberation Officers and Standing Delegates**

This term, there have been a few officers who have shown dedication and commitment to Access Committee through attendance and taking initiative. Namely Mr Mo Iman, *LGBTQIA+ Officer*, has taken the most initiative of the liberation officers. Mr Iman has ensured the fulfilling of his responsibilities as *LGBTQIA+ Officer* specified for the month of February concerning the display of the Pride flag. He has also taken initiative in implementing Gender Neutral toilets, which will be taken in the form of a formal proposal to Standing Committee in the coming weeks. Mr Garang Dut, *Grad Officer*, has taken initiative for partnerships that benefit graduate students at the Blavatnik School, despite not being able to attend each meeting. Other officers, namely Ms Alice Zhang, *International Officer*, and Ms Amelia Bircham, *Socioeconomic Officer*, have been consistently present and inform the Access Officer in good time whenever an absence or late arrival is foreseen, as

well as actively participate during meetings. Mr Priyesh Patel, *Ethnic Minorities Officer*, and Elisa Gomez Aleman, *Disabilities Officer*, have been present at some, but not all meetings and have contributed when appropriate. Ms Olly Woodhouse, *Part-Time Officer*, began attending meetings as soon as her term began at Oxford Brookes University, which was later than the University of Oxford and has taken initiative in moving to make Oxford Brookes University students eligible for lifetime membership.

We have unfortunately had the automatic resignation of the Priscilla Guo, *Women's Officer*, due to an inability to attend any meetings this term. Other absence numbers and possible automatic resignations are currently being looked into by the current *Returning Officer (RO)*, Liam Frahm. Additionally, Mx Brian Wong, *Senior Access Officer*, has also resigned effective 13/02/2019. While this is unfortunate, Ms Amelia Harvey, *Junior Access Officer*, will look into the procedure for the appointment of a replacement and the procedure for the switching of her position from *Junior Access Officer* to *Senior Access Officer*. This will be looked into in tandem with the *President* and the *RO*.

There are two Standing Committee delegates to the Access Committee, Ms Mahi Joshi, *Standing Committee*, and Mr Rai Saad Khan, *Standing Committee*, who attend each meeting and act as secretaries for the Access Committee. Ms Mahi acts as secretary for odd-numbered weeks, and Mr Khan acts as secretary for even-numbered weeks. Ms Joshi delivers well-formatted minutes in a timely manner. Mr Khan has been tasked with fixing the formatting of the minutes from week 2, as requested by the RO during the Standing Committee meeting on Monday 11 February 2019. These have not yet been received by either the *Access Officer* or the *RO*, despite daily reminders. The week 4 minutes were formatted properly. Ms Joshi has also taken initiative and proposed outreach to schools in lower-income areas with information on debating.

### **Chin Wee Lee, Chair of the Debate Selection Committee**

Our competitive debaters continue to do the Oxford Union proud. The Christmas vacation saw strong performances from Oxford debaters at the World Universities Debating Championships (WUDC) in Cape Town, with Bryan Yan & Rachel O’Nunain (Oxford C) making the Semi-Finals, Louis Collier (4<sup>th</sup> Best Speaker) & Kit Mercer (Oxford A) and Gigi Gil (Best ESL Speaker) & Tommy Peto (Oxford B) making the Quarter-finals. Brian Wong was the Chief Judge of the ESL Grand Final and Vikki Perijainen judged the Open Grand Final. Raffy Marshall served as Deputy Chief Adjudicator for the tournament.

We are in the midst of convening the Oxford Schools’ Regional Rounds, with numerous regional rounds being organised throughout the United Kingdom. There has even been a Netherlands round and a Hong Kong round! Over 860 teams registered for the tournament, the highest number in history. The top teams from each regional round will be invited to the Oxford Union on 9 Mar (Sat) for a Finals Day, where an overall champion will be crowned. I would like to put on record my thanks to Dominic Brind, Joe Sisson (co-convenors) and William Prescott (deputy convenor) for their tireless efforts. This year’s edition of Oxford Schools is on track to be a roaring success.

Two members on the DSC, Rachel O’Nunain and Rosa Thomas, have worked with the Union Treasurer to initiate a series of workshops for non-male identifying Union members. Rachel has also worked with me to launch a key speaker series, where we invite distinguished debaters to conduct skills and content workshops for the society. We have also convened an internal tournament, Fresher of the Year, to give new debaters a learning and developmental opportunity. Ahead of the 2019 World Schools Debating Championships in Sri Lanka, the DSC is working on an exciting new tournament, the Oxford World Schools Championships, which promises to provide a world-class training experience for local and international teams alike.

Andrew Seow and Louis Collier have both resigned from the DSC. They have served the DSC with distinction, and I wish them all the best – I could not have asked for better colleagues.

Lee Chin Wee  
Chair of the Debates Selection Committee, Oxford Union

### **Adithi Shenava, Press Officer**

My role as Director of Press and PR of the Union means that I am continuously involved with maintaining the Union's social media presence at a national and international level. This includes checking of all major media outlets for any coverage of the union that is libellous, inflammatory or inaccurate, and then making sure that I rectify such situations. On a local level, I must maintain relations with various student publications, such as the OxStu, ISIS and the Cherwell, which involves working with them to ensure that their coverage of the Union is accurate, as well as to allow them to engage with the Union and access the events they would like to. On an external media level, my role involves maintaining relations with national and international media outlets, including the BBC, which includes ensuring journalists can access and cover events, and that their reporting about the uUnion is accurate and up to date. I also work with our video and photography team to ensure we can liaise well with guest speakers to meet their own media requirements. I have also managed the Press team to cover the events live on the Union's social media channels and overseen the sending out of weekly press releases to the liking of the speakers via mail chimp.

On a PR level, my role has been vital in ensuring that as an institution we can uphold our ethos in the media and that events which level more negative coverage are justified in the media for why they are taking place, which includes responding to and managing the protests and criticism that was levelled against the Marion Marechal and Beppe Grillo events this term. Finally, I have continued the process of formalising the press strategy that i inherited from the former Head of Press.



**Jim Brennan, Standing Committee – LATE: Submitted 13.33 15/02/19**

I have organised the speaker invitations for the Thatcher debate, confirming Edwina Currie. I have also worked on individual speaker invitations, such as Laura Mvula who came this term. I have assisted in all events asked of me, including the Ball.

I have raised no sponsorship for the Society.

I have undertaken no financial expenditure or financial liability to the Society.

**Elliot Bromley, Standing Committee – LATE: Submitted 15.29 15/02/19**

I, Elliot Bromley, worked a total of 26 vacation days. During this period I invited a total of 182 speakers, 70 of whom being female. The invitations were largely sent to individual speakers, but also to potential speakers for the Africa, MeToo, Catholic Church, and Thatcher debates.

The only speaker I have confirmed for this term, thus far, is James Haskell. However, I received interest in speaking during Trinity term of Michaelmas term 2019 from Ronnie O'Sullivan, Vivienne Westwood, Gretchen Carlson, Al Murray, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Ray Winstone, Chris Robshaw, Adriana Lima, and Lea DeLaria.

In addition to speaker events/debates, I worked toward confirming Treasurers Treats for the term, the most noteworthy being securing a new discount of 25% with Carluccios.

So far during full-term I have facilitated 10+ speaker events, the Burns Night Social, as well as the Africa Union and Thatcher Debates. I have organised the Murder Mystery Social which will be taking place on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February (6<sup>th</sup> Week). Ticket sales are going well and are close to selling out. I have participated in committee wide tasks such as facilitating the Ball and term card delivery. I have consistently attended, and participated in, The Standing Committee meetings, as well as Consultative Committee, and a meeting of Bar Strategy (of which I am the delegate from TSC).

For the remainder of the term I plan on attending TSC as well as the Consultative Committee. I envisage myself delivering a successful Murder Mystery Social, continuing to facilitate events, and satisfying requests of the President and Chair of the Consultative Committee.

**Olivia Leigh, Standing Committee – LATE: Submitted 01.05 18/02/19**

Over the vacation I worked 7 vacation days in Oxford and further remote days during which I confirmed 3 speakers: including Theo Paphitis for this term and Craig David for next term. I also negotiated with several other potential speakers who expressed keen interest but were prevented from attending this term due to factors such as illness.

This term I have facilitated the Palestine Debate, the AI Panel as well as the Narnia Themed Ball. I have also attended meetings of Standing, Library, and Consultative Committee. I have also assisted in wider tasks such as delivering term cards and moving benches.

For the rest of this term, I will continue to attend and contribute to meetings of Standing, Library, and Consultative Committee. I will make availability to facilitate any future events and undertake any tasks required by the President or Chair of the Consultative Committee.