

Draft Minutes of

THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE ACCESS COMMITTEE

1st Week Michaelmas Term 2018

Friday 12th October

The President's Office, 13:00

Present: **The President** (Stephen Horvath, *New College*), **The Access Officer** (Brian Wong, *Wolfson College*), **The Access Officer** (Kirsten Stewart, *Trinity College*), **The Disabilities Officer** (Rebecca Wright, *Keble College*), **The Ethnic Minorities Officer** (Antonia Heng, *Christ Church College*), **The LGBTQIA+ Officer** (Dominic Gray, *New College*), **The International Officer** (Lee Chin Wee, *Trinity College*), **The Brookes Officer** (Olly Woodhouse, *Oxford Brookes University*), **The Standing Committee Delegate** (Anisha Faruk, *The Queen's College*), **The Standing Committee Delegate** (Rebecca Collins, *Balliol College*), **The Elected Member** (Sara Dube, *St. Hugh's College*), **The Bursar, The Librarian** (Genevieve Athis, *Christ Church College*), **The Secretary** (Nick Brown, *Magdalen College*)

Absent: **The Women's Officer** (Minal Haq, *Christ Church College*), **The Graduate Officer** (Thomas Crook, *Wolfson College*)

Late:

Access Committee Opens at 13:17

Ratification of Minutes

The Access Officer Brian Wong delays the ratification of the TT18 Access Committee minutes to the next week.

Business of The President

The President has no business.

Business of The Access Chairs

Item 1: Access Survey and Questionnaire

The Access Officer Brian Wong suggests the implementation of a questionnaire for members to reflect on the needs of access-related issues in the Union as there is no clear way at the moment for the Committee to gauge the needs of the wider membership in the university. They point out that this will be positive for the Union's access outreach as it will lead to more people feeling like they have a voice on the committee and will increase investment in access. They suggest holding either one or two surveys per term.

The International Officer suggests that fewer surveys may be a better option.

The Bursar points out that there is a danger of overloading people with more than one survey.

The Access Officer Brian Wong agrees that one survey per term would be effective.

The Bursar suggests holding one survey per year.

The Brookes Officer mentions that as the Access Committee changes every term it may be useful to have one survey per term.

The Bursar replies that it would take too much time to hold one survey per term and that the Committee will not be able to process the results quickly enough.

The Access Officer Kirsten Stewart points out that this depends on the kinds of responses that are given and suggests starting this initiative with one survey per term.

The International Officer suggests starting work on the survey over the vacation.

The Brookes Officer says that Brookes students will be back at university at this time.

The Standing Committee Delegate Rebecca Collins points out that people may not engage with the survey if it's particularly lengthy.

The Access Officer Brian Wong suggests minimizing the length of the survey, having one long answer question to voice any concerns and a second part to check a list of options that suggest access problems.

The International Officer voices a concern about selection bias and suggests sending out a survey to students who are not members to clarify why they have not purchased membership.

The Access Officer Brian Wong clarifies two conceptions of access at the Union: the first is that of members and the second is the general perception of the Union within the wider university. They suggest that the mandate of the Access Committee is to focus on the first conception.

The Brookes Officer suggests printing out the surveys and handing them out to members while they are queuing for events.

The Elected Member Sara Dube points out that Union events don't have queues extremely often.

The Standing Delegate Rebecca Collins suggests that there would be more responses if there are more quantitative questions as opposed to one long answer questions.

The Access Officer Brian Wong suggests having the survey compose predominantly of check boxes with the option to comment below, along with a 1-10 scale on Union experiences.

The Bursar voices a concern that the survey will only get responses from those who have particular issues with the Union and that there is a need to frame the questions in a more constructive manner.

The President suggests that those who respond to the survey either love the Union or have a specific complaint to make and says that it may be more useful to have a 1-10 scale in the survey where people can also suggest improvements. He agrees with the International Officer that sending the survey to non-members is also a good idea and that it can be advertised on the Union's Facebook page but suggests working on this during HT19.

The Access Officers Brian Wong and Kirsten Stewart will take the lead on the members-only survey in MT18 and ask each liberation officer to send the Committee questions they'd like to include in the survey.

Item 2: Committee communication and expectations

The Access Officer asks if there are any preferences for other modes of communication for Committee notices instead of email.

The Committee decides to continue using email as the primary form of communication.

The Access Officer Brian Wong states that the agenda for each meeting will be circulated by the Wednesday of each week and asks the Committee members to send any items of agenda to the Access Officers and the Elected Member Sara Dube before this day. The Elected Member will type up the agenda and circulate it to all Committee members before each meeting. The meeting minutes are to be circulated to the Committee members by Monday or Tuesday of every week and are to be put up on the notice board as well. The Access Officer Brian Wong asks Committee members to send the Access Officers and the Elected Member Sara Dube an email if they will not be able to attend a meeting. They continue to point out that each liberation officer is expected to organize at least one event this term and asks the officers to start thinking about what they will organize. They remind Committee of the need to communicate with the Bursar and the rest of the Union staff for this, to let them know when they are planning an event and to email bar@oxford-union.org for any requests.

Item 3: Access Committee Elected Members

The Access Officer Brian Wong points out that while there can be up to 5 elected members on Access Committee there is currently only one.

The President suggests advertising the access positions by putting out an announcement in the weekly newsletter on Monday.

The Access Officer Brian Wong suggests putting an access update in the newsletter if there is anything particularly important happening on Committee.

The President says to email him by Saturday if there is anything any members would like to include in the newsletter.

Business of The Disabilities Officer

The Disabilities Officer points out that drinks receptions can be scary and daunting and suggest having a screening of the Bake-Off final as an alternative social event. She asks if this can be shown in the Union and if it is possible to get cupcakes and milkshakes for this event instead of alcoholic drinks.

The Access Officer Brian Wong suggests framing this as an access event.

The Disabilities Officer suggests framing it as a donation event to link it to the disabilities aspect of her role and mentions that the final starts at 8pm.

The President says that this may clash with the Peter Higgs event on October 30th.

The International Officer suggests screening the semi-final instead.

The Disabilities Officer agrees.

The Ethnic Minorities Officer points out that this would be on the 23rd of October.

The President says that this would clash with the Georgina Beyer event at 8pm on that date.

The Disabilities Officer asks if there are any Tuesdays when the event could take place and not clash with a speaker event.

The President says that the coming Tuesday may be possible.

The Disabilities Officer replies that this would be too soon to properly plan the event.

The President asks the Disabilities Officer to send him a list of potential dates so that he can go through them and get back to her.

The Disabilities Officer agrees. She goes on to point out that people who purchase an access membership have a different colour form to fill out and says that this feels discriminatory and can upset people.

The Bursar points out that there are different coloured sheets for all kinds of membership and that this is necessary for organization in the office. She also mentions that those with access

membership have the same coloured card to those who purchase the non-access lifetime membership.

The Brookes Officer agrees with the Disabilities Officer that the different coloured forms may offend people.

The Bursar responds that the yellow sheets ensure that the staff in the office ask students to show proof that they are eligible for access membership.

The Access Officer Brian Wong suggests a compromise where they can investigate the problem as something to be reformed.

The Bursar disagrees and says that the different colours are a logistical necessity.

The International Officer asks if there is any way to make all the membership applications and records electronic.

The President says that he does not think that this is technologically viable at the moment. He agrees that the differentiation between forms is a sensitive issue but that it is also logistically necessary in the office at the moment.

The Ethnic Minorities Officer asks if there is a way to give everyone the same coloured sheets and to write the access qualifications on the top corner of each sheet.

The Bursar says that it will take too much time to implement this change.

The International Officer suggests highlighting the top of the paper in different colours instead of having different coloured paper.

The Bursar disagrees.

The Access Officer Brian Wong says that they will have to postpone the discussion to a later time in order to be able to address the concerns without affecting the office logistics.

Business of The Ethnic Minorities Officer

The Ethnic Minorities Officer has no business.

Business of the LGBTQIA+ Officer

The LGBTQIA+ Officer has no business.

Business of the Women's Officer

The Women's Officer is absent.

Business of the Graduate Officer

The Graduate Officer is absent as he did not receive the email notifying committee of the date and time of the meeting.

The Access Officer Brian Wong mentions that they will send a message to The Graduate Officer about this.

Business of The International Officer

The International Officer asks about the budget for each liberation officer's event.

The President responds that it would depend on what the particular even is as each even would come with a different cost code.

The International Officer points out that it is difficult for international students on Committee to fly back to work in the Union over the vacation as they have already booked flight tickets and have prior commitments.

The President says that it is hard to set a different standard for international students on elected committee but agrees that it is a situation that must be discussed going forward. He also agrees that it is fair for the international officer to not have to be in the Union office to work over the vacation.

Business of the Brookes Officer

The Brookes Officer asks for a box of term cards to distribute amongst Brookes students.

The Bursar asks how many term bards will be needed and mentions that the Fresher's Guide would be inappropriate for Brookes students as it is meant for those intending to purchase life membership.

The President points out that the Guide would still be relevant for Brookes students as it contains useful information about the Union regardless of whether or not one is intending to purchase life membership.

The Bursar says to get the guides from her in the General Office.

The Brookes Officer brings up lifetime membership for Brookes students and asks if the issue has been taken to Standing Committee.

The Bursar says that it has and that it is being discussed.

Business of The Standing Committee Delegates

The Standing Committee Delegates have no business.

Business of The Elected Member

The Elected Member has no business.

The Access Officer Brian Wong welcomes everyone on board and asks if there is any other business.

The Brookes Officer asks if the Union membership discount holds until the coming Thursday.

The Bursar replies that it does but that it doesn't apply to Brookes or to any other long-term memberships as such courses start at all times of the year.

The Brookes Officer points out that the majority of the students at Brookes are on 3-4 year courses.

The Bursar points out that such people can still pay by standing order.

The Brookes Officer states that it is unfair that Brookes students do not get a joining discount.

The Access Officer Brian Wong sets the date for the next meeting of the Access Committee at 13:00 on Friday 19th October 2018 in the President's Office.

The Access Officer Brian Wong closes the meeting at 13:55

Signed,

Sara Dube
Elected Member
St. Hugh's College