

THE OXFORD UNION SOCIETY RETURNING OFFICER'S REPORT – RYAN NG (MT12 – HT13)

1. Introduction

In accordance with Standing Order D1(f), the Returning Officer shall present a short report on the conduct of his duties to the Standing Committee, and make such a report open to Members, before the end of his term of office. This document constitutes such a report. Of particular importance is the change in the organisation of the poll (2.11 to 2.14) relative to the immediate past terms (from MT11 to TT12, in my knowledge).

2. Election of Junior Officers and Committees MT12

2.1. The Election of Junior Officers and Committees Michaelmas Term 2012 (from here on referred to as 'the election') was successfully held on 23rd November 2012, Friday of 7th Week, Michaelmas Term 2012.

2.2. Electoral expenditure and the electoral outcome are included in the Appendix.

2.3. All procedures related to the election were completed in a timely fashion.

2.4. In the last two hours of the nomination period, nominations were received in the Morris Room, as per Rule 34(b)(i). Unfortunately, the Morris Room was rented out to an external party during the said period. It was still possible in this case to use the Morris Room for purposes of receiving nominations, but future Union officials should take care not to rent out the Morris Room on Friday 6th Week. As a senior DRO pointed out, if flexibility of venue in this particular scenario is allowed, it will be possible for individuals, such as incompetent ROs, to impede nomination procedures.

2.5. A Member nominated him/herself for two incompatible positions, and in accordance with Rule 34(b)(v) only the nomination for the more junior position was valid.

2.6. Verification of candidates' claim (commonly known as 'Scrutiny') took place on Sunday 7th Week, as per Rule 35(b)(xvii).

2.7. While the Rules do not provide strict standards for the quality of proof required of claims, and that Scrutiny can be trusted to be as rigorous as possible, it is nonetheless advisable for future ROs to tighten their standards, even for weaker claims. For instance, some proofs, while not robust enough to justify strong claims, may nonetheless be sufficient for weaker claims; but that does not make all proofs which are insufficient for strong claims adequate for weaker claims.

2.8. For the purpose of typesetting, the computer in one of the Junior Officer's Office and one of the Officers' Offices were required. In both instances certain Junior Officers were initially reluctant to cooperate. It must be noted that the computer, as well as the Offices, are properties of the Union, and are acquired to fulfill practical needs of the Union. Different officials have priority over their usage at different times, and none should treat them as private assets.

2.9. Two errors were made in the electoral literature. One consisted of two typos in the manifesto booklets, and the other consisted of a mistake in the list of candidates on the Notice of Poll. The latter was rectified before the materials were made public, whereas the responsibility of electoral officials for the first was brought to the attention of Members in the Poll Room on the day of election.

2.10. Although neither errors in the electoral literature can be thought to have pivotally altered the electoral outcome, future ROs would be well-advised to take extra care in the typesetting, for he/she is solely responsible for any errors made.

2.11. Poll clerk identification numbers were added to the serial number on ballot papers in the election. These have proved extremely useful when accounting for poll-clerking log sheet errors during the count.

2.12. For the election, the Goodman Library is divided into two separate areas, one for registration and one for casting ballots. In addition, individual booths were set up in the area for casting ballots, using bulletin boards as dividers, for voters to complete their ballots. Those without a ballot paper are not allowed to enter the area for casting ballots. Those who have cast their ballots are not allowed to return to the Goodman Library.

2.13. As a result of the measures outlined above, poll-room hacking drastically diminished. Members also seemed to pay more attention to the manifesto booklets displayed in each booth. Lastly, congestion in the poll room appeared to have lessened.

2.14. The new arrangement has disoriented some Members, and also requires more manpower than before. Clearer directions and the appointment of more ROAs are recommended for smoother organisation of the poll.

2.15. Two allegations were received on Sunday 8th Week, with one being an allegation of innocent interference. Both were eventually withdrawn.

3. Election of CCC and Other Committees

3.1 As a rather special case, there have been two Chairman of Consultative Committee ('CCC') elections during my term of office. The first of the two was needed due to the resignation of the original CCC.

3.2 The first CCC election was successfully held at the Consultative Committee Meeting on Monday 6th Week, MT12, with the CCC elected unopposed.

3.3 It should be noted that the first CCC of MT12 resigned well before 6th Week, and his replacement was delayed due to forgetfulness of a certain Junior Officer. This is highly inadvisable, since having an official CCC is vital to the smooth running of Union events.

3.4 The second CCC election was successfully held at the Consultative Committee Meeting on Monday 8th Week, MT12, with the CCC elected unopposed.

3.5 A member of Finance Committee was elected unopposed in MT12, but the vacancy in HT13 has not yet been filled by the time this report is prepared. Treasurers are advised to encourage more applications from Members, so as to promote Members' involvement in the Union and preserve transparency of Union accounts.

4. Appointment of Deputy Returning Officers

4.1 The initial DRO shortlist was drawn and presented to the Standing Committee on Monday 2nd Week, HT13.

4.2 One nomination was declared invalid, on the grounds that it had been submitted well before the application period began.

4.3 One objection against a certain DRO was received. The Scrutiny Committee convened on Sunday 3rd Week, HT13, and dismissed the objection after careful consideration of the evidence and response submitted by the DRO in question.

5. Disciplinary Matters

5.1. Two Junior Disciplinary Committees were summoned during my term of office.

5.2. The first, held in 8th Week, MT12, concerned an alleged misuse of Union membership cards by two Members. The JDC decided in the subsequent hearing process, by way of a secret ballot, that the incident was a genuine accident, and hence found the defendants innocent. As such, there was no penalty, although a note of reminder was sent by the Returning Officers to the defendants afterwards.

5.3. The second, held in 3rd Week, HT13, concerned an alleged act of violence and misconduct on Union premises by a Member. Note that if the alleged acts were true, they would have been liable to criminal prosecution, and hence lie outside the scope of Rule 71(a)(i)(1). It was because of the plaintiff's decision to seek internal disciplinary measures, instead of prosecution, that a JDC is summoned. The defendant was

subsequently found in breach of Rule 71(a)(i)(1) by the JDC, and correspondingly an appropriate penalty was levied.

5.4. Only two OPBM reports were submitted punctually by the MT12 Committee. This is absolutely unacceptable since accountability of Union officials depend greatly on the availability of information to Members; it is in spirit of this that Rule 41 and Standing Order D1 require OPBM reports to be published before termly elections.

6. Concluding Remarks

6.1. The sections above present a complete and accurate picture of my term as Returning Officer. I hope that they will be useful references for future torchbearers of this office, at the service of the Union.

6.2. Finally, I must give my sincerest thanks to the following people for their support, patience, and invaluable assistance:

Deputy Returning Officers: Mr. Ronald Collinson (ex-RO, ex-Standing, ex-CCC), Mr. Cameron Willard (ex-RO), Mr. Jack Moore (CCC), Ms. Rebecca Scott (ex-Standing), Mr. Emmanuel Efunbote, Mr. David Bagg, Mr. Thomas Reynolds, Mr. Alexander Graham, Mr. Kyle Bonnell, and Ms. Katherine Connolly

Returning Officer's Assistants: Mr. Wesley Kong, Mr. Gerald Sowah, and Mr. Michael Flagg

The Senior Treasurer

The Bursar

The Union Staff: Bridget, Fran, Natacha, Melissa, Kata, Ceri, and Mark

A special mention must go to Mr. Ronnie Collinson, great mentor and friend, for his unwavering dedication to this Office and the Union.

Humbly submitted,

Ryan Ng
Coll. Mertonensis
Returning Officer

APPENDIX**ELECTORAL EXPENDITURE FOR MICHAELMAS 2012**

	Budget	Actual Exc VAT	Actual Inc VAT
Food expenses	£350.00	£208.82	£245.83
Staff	£120.00	£194.18	£194.18
Stationery	£100.00	£44.79	£63.34
Poll Room Setup - Dividers	£100.00	£0.00	£0.00
Manifestos (6,750) (excluding VAT)	£374.00	£374.00	£374.00
Ballots (1,800) (excluding VAT)	£287.00	£287.00	£344.40
A2 Posters (50) (excluding VAT)	£420.00	£289.00	£346.80
TOTAL	£1,751.00	£1,397.79	£1,568.55

Election of Junior Officers and Committees Michaelmas Term 2012

Total turnout: 1270

Secretary's Committee for Hilary Term 2013

Eliminated first, with 6 first preferences, Diwakar
Eliminated second, with 18 first preferences, Merchante Gonzalez
Eliminated third, with 20 first preferences, Park
Eliminated fourth, with 22 first preferences, Hammar
Eliminated fifth, with 24 first preferences, Heywood
Eliminated sixth, with 28 first preferences, Hayre
Eliminated seventh, with 33 first preferences, Dickson
Eliminated eighth, with 39 first preferences, Cooban
Eliminated ninth, with 41 first preferences, Nutting
Eliminated tenth, with 44 first preferences, Hart
Eliminated eleventh, with 45 first preferences, Whalen
Eliminated twelfth, with 46 first preferences, Schneider
Eliminated thirteenth, with 51 first preferences, Dinh
Runner-up, with 47 first preferences, Thomas
Elected eleventh, with 48 first preferences, Seagull
Elected tenth, with 51 first preferences, Dorrell
Elected ninth, with 54 first preferences, Wauben
Elected eighth, with 58 first preferences, Nadeem
Elected seventh, with 63 first preferences, Banerjee
Elected sixth, with 65 first preferences, Bird
Elected fifth, with 66 first preferences, Hamer
Elected fourth, with 68 first preferences, Bushell
Elected third, with 69 first preferences, Malton
Elected second, with 73 first preferences, Jamieson
Elected first, with 90 first preferences, Wilshaw
SBVs: 101

Standing Committee for Hilary Term 2013

Eliminated first, with 78 first preferences, Nadesan
Eliminated second, with 90 first preferences, Aggarwal
Eliminated third, with 105 first preferences, Evans Harding
Runner-up, with 118 first preferences, Ward
Elected fifth, with 109 first preferences, Chan
Elected fourth, with 121 first preferences, Trafford
Elected third, with 132 first preferences, Perkins
Elected second, with 137 first preferences, Srivastava
Elected first, with 174 first preferences, Sullivan
SBVs: 206

Secretary for Hilary Term 2013

Elected unopposed, Culliford

Treasurer for Trinity Term 2013

Elected unopposed, Frost

Librarian for Trinity Term 2013

Elected unopposed, Ivanova

President for Trinity Term 2013

Runner-up, with 578 first preferences, Dattani
Elected, with 614 first preferences, D'Urso
SBVs: 78