

St Catherine's College Middle Common Room

Open Meeting Minutes

Sunday 24 January 2021
7pm over Zoom

In attendance:

30 MCR Members in total

Executive Committee Members Present:

Isavella Vouza - Co-President (Meeting Chair)
Chloe Colson – Co-President
Lucy Bartel – Secretary



Minutes taken by MCR Secretary, Lucy Bartel

A. New Committee Member Approval

IV: We'll start with GO's confirmation as Catz House Rep

GO: I want to be rep since I've already got my foot in the door re: advocating for Catz House issues. (See statement of interest for more detailed information).

IV: I think you're perfect for that role. Any questions for GO? Any objections to his confirmation?

Gabriel was unopposed and there were no objections to his confirmation as Catz House Rep.

B. Motions

EH: recent National Health survey in UK estimates 16% of adults in UK have an ED, which has risen a huge amount in over a decade, but ED treatment still has few resources in health services, only very few very severe cases can access help; current waiting time for treatment is ~2 years, which can be fatal in some cases

Proposing a motion for the MCR to support 2 campaigns—

- One to MPs regarding changing things in gov to address this crisis
- One to Oxford University: currently, when you have a severe ED, you don't meet fitness to study guidelines and aren't allowed to study/ be here; campaign to the university to increase provisions for people who are struggling, fill gap of lack of health resources and generally increase provisions

IV: So to confirm, your motion is asking that we all sign the two letters. Have you reached out to the JCR? (Answer: yes); My first idea is that this should be a joint effort with them. Any suggestions/ questions?

EJ: When you say Oxford will not allow you to study, what do you mean? Where is this language/ provision in the rules?

EH: you can have an ED and be at Oxford, but provisions are that if you don't meet a certain fitness to study, you may be advised or forced to take an academic break

EJ: Are they just guidelines or rules?

EH: Guidelines formed by medical professionals; not sure how strictly they're being enforced; It does seem like something they are willing to enforce due to potential medical risk

EJ: Not sure that the guidelines are "cruel" to sufferers; would like to know to what extent they are enforced; what are the usual medical guidelines? What would medics say?

EH: Medics formed these guidelines jointly with universities

EJ: On what authority are you asking to change guidelines?

EH: in terms of this motion, the point is not to change the guidelines on fitness to study, but that someone coming to study should have access to more and better treatment/ services

EJ: if the guidelines are okay, what would the second letter be?

EH: with an eating disorder, the longer it's untreated, the worse it will get. What we're asking is that the university increase its provisions to support mild to moderate disorders to prevent it from getting worse. It is all outlined in the letter that you can read.

KN: I understand the importance of catching it early. Do you know if the university counselling services (they have workshops for different mental health stuff) have counselling workshops for EDs specifically? If not, can that request be added to the letter? Might be helpful!

EH: we have been in touch with university counselling services and they don't have many provisions in place. Survey conducted among people with EDs at Oxford—70% said they felt people supporting them didn't have enough experience in dealing with it. The letter also proposes increased training for staff

NW: The centre for ED at Oxford not currently accepting referrals; is there a funding proposal as well to stop this from happening?

EH: MPs letter: ask for increased funding for increasing provision. Increase study of it during medical degree, for example.

IV: Co-presidents can contact JCR president to make this a collective effort

AS: Have you spoken to our college counsellor; she deals with wide range of issues with undergrads. Try to see what she may be able to do—may know other counsellors at other colleges. College for undergrads is the first point of contact. Maybe getting her involved would be useful.

EH: Thanks that's a helpful suggestion.

Motion passes with a majority. All present in favour, 1 email response against passing the motion.

C. AOB

NW: Proposing a motion in line with a sustainability drive across colleges to get them to commit to carbon targets for the year. Doesn't specify targets, but the idea is to get them to agree to a strategy/ plan. Three colleges have passed motions, many others have tabled for discussion. Would be great to have the MCR on board with this to take to environmental committee at college to set targets and discuss

strategies. Last term, they were sceptical about “targets” and competition across colleges, so want to try to be college centric. [See motion on agenda for info]

IV: Question—at least a common target? Not a competition, but something university-wide?

NW: Colleges have prerogative to set guidelines, and university is trying to set university standard. This motion wants to get colleges to reach a university minimum. The friction lies in the idea of setting and meeting targets within the college. They want to keep their strategy open (building, retrofits, etc) to not incur additional cost. Acting Finance Bursar is cautious about setting targets and sustainability in general. Need to approach carefully, but I happy to do so if MCR gives me prerogative. Continuation of what I was trying to do before, but would great to be acting across college.

Motion passed, no objections

IV: Winners of holiday stash raffle announced.

EJ: question of MCR website being down.

(it was determined that the website was not down)

Meeting adjourned.

Proposer: Esthy Hung
Seconder: Orlaith Breen

This MCR notes:

1. The End the Eating Disorder Crisis Now campaign letters can be read at the links here:
 - [Letter to the Vice Chancellor:](#)
 - [Letter to Members of Parliament:](#)
2. A survey in 2016 by Oxford SU showed that 5% of students at Oxford University had an Eating Disorder. This suggests that a staggering 1,200 students at Oxford University could currently suffer from an Eating Disorder.
3. Eating Disorders are serious mental health conditions, with Anorexia Nervosa having the highest mortality rate of any mental illness.
4. Cotswold House, the local tertiary referral centre for adult Eating Disorder care covering three counties, has been forced, due to a lack of resources, to only accept referrals for severe or extreme Anorexia Nervosa (AN) or Bulimia Nervosa (BN) (classified by DSM-5 diagnostic criteria). Even those patients whose referrals are accepted are likely to face **long waiting times - increasing from 12 months to 25 months over the last year alone.** The physical criteria for an individual to be accepted for a referral to Cotswold House eating disorder treatment is the same criteria *below* which a student fails the Fitness to Study guidelines.
5. Medical education at Oxford University is insufficient at equipping doctors with the knowledge in Eating Disorders, according to the Eating Disorders Chair of the Royal College of Psychiatry.

This MCR believes

- The mental health of the student population must be prioritised
- Everyone with an Eating Disorder has the right to treatment regardless of how physically sick they are or their socio-economic status.
- The University should fill the gap between the counselling service and NHS provisions, to prevent students getting to the point they are no longer fit to study at Oxford.
- The University should lead the way as a world-leading institution to better education for our medical students on Eating Disorders and contribute to saving lives in the process.

This MCR resolves:

- For the MCR President to ask all MCR committee members to sign both our open letters to the University and Members of Parliament (MPs).

Sustainability Plan Motion

Proposed by Noah Wescombe and seconded by Lan Shi (Coco) and Ananya Sharma

The MCR notes that:

1. That according to the 2018 report from the International Panel on Climate Change global emissions must be cut by 45% globally by 2030 to avoid 1.5C of warming.
2. That such a rapid decrease in emissions will only be possible if institutions in developed nations completely decarbonise by 2030, enabling developing nations time to implement carbon-reducing measures.
3. That many of the top universities have now made ambitious carbon commitments with King's College London committing to be net zero by 2025, UCL, the University of Leeds and the University of Bristol committing to be net zero by 2030, the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University committing to absolute zero by 2038, and Cambridge University committing to be net zero by 2038.
4. That Oxford Sustainability Department is developing an Environmental Sustainability Strategy for the University with a target to achieve **net zero carbon and biodiversity net gain by 2035**. This strategy would replace the existing University target of reducing carbon emissions by 50% from their peak of 2009/10 by 2035.
5. That while this new target will bring the University closer into alignment with the Paris Agreement, **it does not formally apply to individual colleges which are independent**.
6. That Oxford University expects that colleges 'will implement similar measures and commitments to those' within the University wide Environmental Sustainability Plan.
7. That Brasenose JCR, Linacre MCR, Merton JCR and St Peter's JCR have all passed motions in support of developing a net zero plan at their college and lobbying for carbon and biodiversity targets which are at least as ambitious as those of the University.

The MCR believes that:

1. has a responsibility to their students, the wider University, and the public to rapidly decarbonise and protect biodiversity.
2. That should set net zero and biodiversity targets that are at least as ambitious as those of the University, as well as implementing a strategy to make the targets achievable.
3. That should demonstrate leadership and ambition by establishing itself as a leading College and institution in the fight against climate change.

The MCR resolves to:

1. Support the proposed Sustainability Plan and endorse all commitments as laid out.
2. Mandate the MCR Environment Representative, the president, and the proposers of this motion to lobby to ensure that the following measures are taken:
 - a. The college commits to carbon and biodiversity targets which are at least as ambitious as those in the new University strategy by the end of Trinity term 2021.
 - b. Development of a formal sustainable strategy which describes how the targets will be achieved, such as the Sustainability Plan endorsed in this motion.
 - c. Development of a system of transparent annual reporting of target progress and carbon emissions by the end of Trinity term 2021.
 - d. The college has a designated sustainability position reporting to the sustainability working group that takes responsibility for progress.