

ST. CATHERINE'S COLLEGE MIDDLE COMMON ROOM OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Sunday October 22nd, 7 pm, Ainsworth Graduate Center Top Floor

Committee Members Present:

Co-President: Felice Wallner

Co-President: Jeremy Sontchi

Secretary: Laurence Peinturier

Social Secretary: Kat Degtiareva

LGBTQIA+ Welfare Rep: Sunny Pydugadu

Minutes taken by Laurence Peinturier

A. MINUTES

1. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Meeting of June 4th: <https://mcr.stCatz.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Open-Meeting-Minutes-04-06-2023.pdf>

Minutes approved.

2. St Catherine's Academic Review (SCAR) Announcement

Discussion:

- Felice: Abelardo and Carl will talk to you about SCAR.
- Abelardo: I was a member of Catz while doing my MPhil here. I was a planning member of SCAR. SCAR is an academic journal, created by a student at Catz. She felt like she put so much efforts into her assignments, papers etc, but these would be forgotten. So she thought it would be great to have a way to keep these works, peer-reviewed, and shared to the community. SCAR is multidisciplinary journal. Catz is one of the most open colleges at Uni. Catz accepts students from all degrees, and SCAR accepts papers from all fields as well. We (the students) design everything, it is made by students, for students. The journal is also available on SCAR's

website. Many positions are available (social media, events, president etc). We have section chiefs and editors positions as well. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. We need people who feel comfortable working in teams, who are motivated, and who are academically committed.

- Carl: My job was editor for the maths paper. My responsibility was to talk to the author and ensuring the papers fit within multi-disciplinary requirements.

3. Approval of Associate and Ordinary Memberships

The MCR has the option of giving MCR memberships to Alumni, Visiting students, and mature JCR students. Applicants must contact the Secretary for this. Associate Members must be approved by the MCR in an Open Meeting. Applications for Michaelmas term were processed before this meeting, so the vote will be held retrospectively. The following applications require approval:

- Kira Kohlgrüber – associate
- Alexander (Sasha) Stead – ordinary
- Julia Smits – ordinary
- Jenny Li – ordinary
- Kas Winters – ordinary

All memberships were approved unanimously.

4. Motion: Creating Two Roles of Tea and Biscuit Co-Officers.

Discussion:

Kean: If this were to pass and you were both elected; who is tea, who is biscuit?

Kate: rock paper scissors!

Motion called to vote: passed with a majority (52 for, 4 against, 4 abstain)

5. MCR Committee Elections

Executive Committee:

i. Co-Presidents (x2)

Kat Degtiareva - Seconders: Vivian van Dooren and Mary Ludwig

Bobby Gould - Seconders: Anjun Hu and Vivek Kothari

Candidates introductions:

- Kat: I am a 2nd year MPhil in geography. It is my 2nd year here at Catz. I remember myself one year ago, nominating for Catz house rep, I was freaking about. I felt overwhelmed but I really wanted to be involved. There is a lot of stuff we can do/implement at Catz. We have 2 options: we complain about things, or we do something about it. I was debating

the co-president role the whole summer. I wasn't sure about this position. But you guys changed my life. And I really want to do something for you all. In terms of skills, I did a journal about wellbeing for covid, I raised funds for Ukraine, I do podcasts. Many of you know I am not able to go home. But I am so happy to have found home here.

- Bobby: I am 2nd year grad medic. Grad medic are sort of JCR/MCR, but I definitely feel more at home with the MCR. I have made amazing connections with people at Catz and Catz House, starting with Kat and many others. I want to do what I can to make it feel like your home to you as well. We've been talking a lot about new events with Kat, salsa classes, yoga classes etc. In terms of skills, I worked as a society sec and then president in my undergrad. I took a lot of initiatives in undergrad and also in my course. Now I want to do more with College.

Questions/discussion:

- Felice: In your opinion, what are the 3 most important qualities for Co-Presidents?
- Kat: Time management, empathy, and communication.
- Bobby: Communication with respect to both the MCR but also College.
- Kat: And we are both trained peer supporters! So please feel free to come talk to us anytime!
- Ilia: One of the major challenges is dealing with staff members with College. How would you feel you would you best represent Catz students with respect to College and staff (rent, housing etc)?
- Bobby: Rephrasing, talking to them and not letting go. And going back to the students, ask for their feedback.
- Kat: Also make sure College does not forget about requests we have made, making sure to follow up with them. Second thing is finding options, if they say no to guest dinners, what can we do etc.

ii. Secretary

Lorenza Wolska De La Torre - Seconders: Vivian van Dooren and Kate Hodgson

Candidate introduction:

- Lorenza: I am doing a MSt in English literature. I did undergrad in NY. It is the first time I am outside of home. This is the first time I am fully independent and couldn't imagine how comfortable I would feel in a new community. I really want to get involved in the MCR. In terms of Secretary, I am an English student, I can take notes 😊 In undergrad, I had a lot of experiences with committees.

Questions/discussion:

- Felice: One of the jobs of the Secretary is to deal with the weekly bulletin to keep Catz students updated on what is going on in college.

How would you ensure that the bulletins are always an interesting read so that students don't start ignoring them?

- Lorenza: Use fun graphic design! Also, we could highlight some student stories in the bulletin to make it more entertaining (mini interviews etc)!

iii. Treasurer

Rosario Grima Algora - Seconders: Juan Sandoval Valencia and Pranav Vaidhyanathan

Candidate introduction:

- Rosario: I am a 2nd year DPhil student in law. Last year, I worked behind the bar, and participated to the MCR events. This year I want to get involved in the MCR. I thought treasurer was a good way of doing that. I am also treasurer of the Spanish society. During undergrad, I was responsible for budget for law student committee. I also worked for 4 years; part of my job was to deal with budgets.

Questions/discussion:

- Felice: Being treasurer requires managing the large budget of the MCR, how would you manage your friends spending too much money on events that you like attending as well? How would you go about managing their expectations?
- Rosario: These decisions will be made collectively. I will make sure everyone is aware of the budget at the beginning of the term.
- Ilia: Can you tell us more about charity and how it works within the MCR?
- Felice: The MCR is a charity. We have a limit on how much we can give to other charities. Max we can give is 50 pounds.
- Adam: Can we get money for a chocolate fountain 😊 ?

iv. Social Secretaries (x3)

Anthony Bell - Seconders: Emily Hagens and Sunny Pydugadu

Sunny Pydugadu - Seconders: Taylon Owens and Anthony Bell

Ronald Cvek - Seconders: Vivek Kothari and Owen Haaga

Candidates introductions:

- Tony: I want to make sure everyone has a good time. Last year I was really active in other clubs and now I want to try something different and get involved with the MCR.

- Sunny: I am 2nd year DPhil student, I was a welfare rep last year, organizing brunches, organizing karaoke as well! Most important thing as social sec is making sure we get feedback from people to make sure we organize the right events that people will enjoy the most.
- Ronald: I am a first year DPhil student in chemistry. I had a great fresher's week; I think Catz is a great community. I was tour secretary last year, planning travels and social events. My ideas: keeping traditional events, and taking full advantage of what we have, and also building a community through smaller events as well. E.g: Mario kart! Wine and drawing night!

Questions/discussion:

- Felice: Normally we have MCR guest dinners, and with this comes the responsibility of writing names on cards. We'll decide who has the nicest handwriting.
- *All 3 social secs proceed to write their name on a piece of paper.*
- Felice: Speaking of guest dinners; we'll try to ask hall to serve canapés etc in the MCR every Friday until situation is resolved.
- Ilia: There is always the risk of people living in Catz house/outside of college feeling neglected etc. What would you suggest to ensure everyone well included?
- Tony: Priority is to form connection between these 2 sites. Especially for masters students, it should be a priority to make sure everyone is included.
- Ron: Organize events at Catz house as well.
- Tomajin: How will you ensure noise nuisances are limited after hours in the MCR?
- Sunny: As welfare rep we had to ensure we were making sure we were mindful of everyone.
- Felice: What is the next themed party idea that you have?
- Tony: I would do something silly and fun
- Sunny: Speed friend dating. In collaboration with other colleges
- Ron: Boppenheimer 😊

v. Bar Manager

Juan Sandoval Valencia - Seconders: Rosario Grima Algora and Sive Gaudy

Candidate introduction:

- Juan: I am doing a DPhil in structural biology. Last year I was welfare rep. At some point, I had to leave because of personal reasons. I realized during the summer that the moments where I could hang out with people was at the bar. Because of that, I decided to do bar manager for freshers week and

want to do it this year as well. I started learning about mixology. Worked on it during the summer. I also tried to introduce mocktails during fresher's week. Also tried to make more themed cocktails. It would be good for bar officers to also get involved in creating stuff. Bar managers requires management and managing people for events, keeping the bar clean etc. I started creating a new inventory for everything that we have.

Questions/discussion:

- Laurence: How will you deal with bar orders if you are not on site?
- Juan: I live nearby and also I hope bar officers will help out as well for bar orders.
- Felice: What is your favorite drink ot make for students? Is it the same you'd make for yourself? Which drink should be the next MCR signature cocktail?
- Juan: Everyone loves the litchi passionfruit cocktail. I hate it. Signature cocktail: Pornstar martini or some of the margaritas we created this year.
- Bobby: In terms of non-alcoholic drinks, will you implement more mocktails?
- Juan: My goal is to find better nonalcoholic spirits that taste better.
- Ilia: What is one thing you would change about how the bar is structured, how the bar is run?
- Juan: Get a spoon to get the ice. And making sure stuff is under watch and keeping track. Also, will make sure people are NOT on the balcony after hours.

vi. IT Officer

Toma-Jin Morikawa-Fouquet - Seconders: Enes Şamil Kiraz and Hiroyoshi Sato

Candidate introduction:

- Toma-Jin: I have covid, I wish I could be there but wanted to make sure I don't contaminate anyone. I was the academic officer 2 years ago for the MCR. I am happy to be back and want to take on an exec role. I have basic knowledge in computer science. I manage my own website.

Questions/discussion:

- Felice: We updated the website 2 years ago, since then we have not changed much, what do you think the website could use to make it better? More accessibility an up-to-date calendar? Etc
- Toma-Jin: Idea of adding a comment form where people could leave feedback? Or put mailing list on website if we can do that? Also, I can't wait to add everyone's profile from new committee on website!

Regular Committee:

i. Sports Rep

Svenja Kuchenhoff - Seconders: Oliver Kohl and Clarissa Schaefer

Candidate introduction:

- Svenja: I am doing a DPhil in neuroscience. I just joined Catz in my second year. I would really love to become active in the committee. Thought it would be a good way to combine with my love for sports with getting involved. Ideas: Punts and pints! Sporty events, combined with parties and other? And spikeball tournament!

Questions/discussion:

- Tony: Could you guarantee any safe bike storage on main site? My bike was stolen last year in the cycle storage.
- Svenja: I am also cycling everywhere, I wasn't aware of that issue, but yes I can find out what the issue is here, and see with College if we can do something about it.

ii. Men's* Welfare Officer and LGBTQIA+ Welfare Officer

Men's*: Enes Şamil Kiraz - Seconders: Toma-Jin Morikawa-Fouquet and Juan Sandoval Valencia

LGBTQIA+: Sive Gaudy - Seconders: Aiswarya Udayakumar and Juan Sandoval Valencia

Candidates introductions:

- Enes: I am a 1st year DPhil student in history. Before arriving here, I was told that DPhil was a stressful lonely dark experience. I want to offer responsibility, transparency and of course welfare!
- Sive: I am a 2nd year student in development studies. I have really enjoyed life at Catz so far. I love the freedom and flexibility of College. All the LGBTQIA+ events we had last year were great. Being someone who loves exploring outside of College, I come back with a lot of ideas. The idea is for LGBTQIA+ community to have more visibility and inclusivity, but also for everyone else as well. Ideas: drawing events, and movie nights! Movies centered on queer icons would be great.

Questions/discussion:

- Felice: How do you feel about waffles?
- Sive: I'm always up for a challenge.
- Felice: Last year it was decided that waffles was too much work. What is your new spin on brunch?

- Sive: Sunny's smoothies were a really good idea. Obviously, communication is key, we can ask around and see what people like.
- Enes: From where I come from in Turkey, breakfast is very important. I will try to bring a Mediterranean touch to the brunches.

iii. Academic Officer

Alexandra Quaas - Seconders: Anthony Bell and Enoch Lim

Candidate introduction:

- Alexandra: I am a 1st year MPhil student in politics. Right when I arrived at Catz, I was surrounded by amazing people. You feel so quickly at home even so far away from home. Catz brings so many different students from so many perspectives, backgrounds, and fields. As academic officer, we can try to connect all those people together with various academic events, inviting speakers etc.

Questions/discussion:

- Felice: College was interested in having a Catz-based humanities DPhil group. How do you feel about organizing that?
- Alexandra: We can do cross-disciplinary groups. We can set up different divisions to have a space at college.

iv. Tea and Biscuits Co-Officers (x2)

Kate Hodgson - Seconders: Vivian van Dooren and Lorenza Wolska De La Torre

Adam Gumieniczek- Seconders: Sinclaire Schuetze and Sneha Kotecha

Candidates introduction:

- Kate: I am a MSt student in history of art. Three reasons for tea and biscuit officer. 1- I am connoisseur of snacks. 2- dependability, and adaptability, and I take in new ideas. 3- food and drinks are the great equalizer. Want to share my love and passion for snacks and tea.
- Adam: I am doing a MSc in social data science, I already feel at home here. Great community here at the MCR. I want to contribute in a meaningful way. I love tea, I love biscuits. I dealt with food provision for events before.

Questions/discussion:

- Bobby: Will you make sure there are dairy alternatives available?
- Kate: Always.
- Kean; How hard will you work to fix the coffee machine?
- Kate: Priority number one.

- Enes: Which tea brand?
- Adam: I am involved with the tea association at uni. I'll make sure it's good.
- Juan: Coffee machine for Catz house?
- Kate: Yes.

v. Merchandise Officer

Vivian van Dooren - Seconders: Lorenza Wolska De La Torre and Kate Hodgson

Candidate introduction:

- Vivian: I'm from the Netherlands and am doing an MSc in biodiversity and conservation. I feel so at home here. I want to rep our amazing college, and what better way to rep than with merch!

Questions/discussion:

- Felice: We have our stash, what else do you think Catz MCR needs?
- Vivian: I think we need scarves! And then whatever input people have!

vi. 4th Year Rep

Joseph Foster - Seconders: Aik Wen Tan and Harry Melling

Candidate introduction:

- Joseph: I am doing an MSc in history of science. 4th year rep is a good excuse to always be in the MCR. I am looking for new friends, new supporters, here in the MCR. There has been issues with BOD cards for 4th year and I believe this could be improved.

Questions/discussion:

- Bobby: Could you rep the grad medic year 1?
- Joseph: I will say yes.

vii. BME Officer

Yuhang Yang - Seconders: Kaixin Yao and Yongyueheng Xiong

Candidate introduction:

- Yuhang: I am an economics student. From the first day, I have received great support from Catz. I want to give back. There are around 1/3 students who are from BME background. It is a large community, and it is important to have someone rep them. I want to create a warm and inclusive community for all, so that everyone feels heard and supported.

Questions/discussion:

- Felice: Unfortunately, BME officer has been a position seldom filled in the past, what things are you planning as the newest officer?
- Yuhang: Idea: we can hold events for black history month for starters.

viii. Environmental Rep

Kean Nembhard - Seconders: Phoebe Laslett and Gia-Han Le

Candidate introduction:

- Kean: I am a MSc student in environmental change. Apparently, Catz has one of the worst carbon footprints. I understand we have a large college but there's gotta be stuff we can do. Would be nice to host events, team up with school of environmental studies etc.

Questions/discussion:

- Felice: What is your one pitch event idea for a Saturday afternoon?
- Kean: I considered the idea of community garden?
- Adam: How will you teach people on how to properly recycle?
- Kean: It is an issue about accessibility and visibility.

6. MCR Committee Elections Voting

The votes were counted virtually by secret ballot by Felice Wallner and Laurence Peinturier.

All candidates have been elected with a majority.