**5th Week Hilary Term 2023 Student Council**

**TIME: 17:30**

**DATE: Tuesday 14th February 2023**

**LOCATION: Hybrid Student Council Meeting**

Student council this term will be moving to a hybrid-model, with in person meetings planned for the duration of term. Members are encouraged to attend at the SU at **75 Hayes House on George Street** and there will be pizza provided during the meeting. There will also be an option to attend virtually.

If you have any questions about Student Council, please feel free to contact the
Chair of Student Council on **chair@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk**or the Student Engagement Team on[**studentengagement@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk**](https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/OUSU-StudentUnion/Shared%20Documents/.Oxford%20SU/Student%20Engagement/Student%20Council/Student%20Council%20Meeting%20Archive/Student%20Council%202020-21/Student%20Council%20MT20/1st%20Week%20MT20/studentengagement%40oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)**.**

**Please Note:** Student Council will be recorded to increase the transparency of the meeting. If you are not happy to be recorded or would like to remain out of the footage please contact Student Engagement Team: [**studentengagement@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk**](file:///C%3A/Users/ousu0041/Nexus365/Oxford%20SU%20-%20Student%20Engagement%20and%20Communications/Student%20Council/Student%20Council%20Meeting%20Archive/Student%20Council%202020-21/Student%20Council%20MT20/1st%20Week%20MT20/studentengagement%40oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)

**Trigger Warning:**

Item H1: Sexual harassment, Bullying, assault, violence

**Contents:**

**A.** Minutes of the previous meeting

**B**. Matters arising from the minutes

**C.** Elections

**D.** Questions to Sabbatical Trustees

**E.** Questions to It Happens Here, International Students' Campaign

**F.** Questions to PG and UG Medical Sciences Report

**G.** Report from the Returning officer

**H.** Item for resolution

1. Student Council mandates VP Liberation and Equality and VP Welfare to continue preventative work on college using NDAs and express its displeasure with the VP for Women.

**I.** Item for Discussion

1. Campaign to improve awareness of student voting rights and rules in elections

**I.** Any other business

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**
2. **Matters arising from the minutes**
3. **Elections**

**Steering Committee (x1):** Steering Committee is comprised of two elected student steering members, the Chair, the President, and the Returning Officer. Steering is the committee tasked with deciding the agenda for the coming Council. They meet the week before to discuss whether submissions should make it to the agenda, whether they need to be amended, or whether they require ‘steering’ to another committee first. Steering are also the group responsible for ensuring that an All Student Consultation is held, if called for

**D. Questions to Sabbatical Trustees**

**E. Questions to It Happens Here, International Students' Campaign**

**F. Questions to PG and UG Medical Sciences**

**G. Report from the Returning officer**

**H. Item for resolution**

**Title:** Student Council mandates VP Liberation and Equality and VP Welfare to continue preventative work on college using NDAs and express its displeasure with the VP for Women.

**Council notes**

1. On January 18 2022, Michele Donelan, Minister for Further and Higher Education in England, announced that universities must stop using NDAs for complaints about sexual harassment, bullying and other forms of misconduct. In her words, “I am determined to see this shabby practice stamped out on our campuses.”
2. From this, in collaboration with Can’t Buy My Silence, a voluntary pledge was constructed for universities to sign: “Backed by the Minister for Higher and Further Education, former Equalities Select Committee Chair Maria Miller MP and campaign group #CantBuyMySilence, we [our vice-chancellor and higher education provider] commit to not using Non-Disclosure Agreements to silence people who come forward to raise complaints of sexual harassment, abuse or misconduct, or other forms of harassment and bullying.”
3. 72 universities have currently signed up to the pledge. As a result of Oxford’s collegiate system, this requires each individual college to sign the pledge, rather than being covered by the university as a whole. The university has not signed the pledge
4. MP Layla Moran worked with Ffi Samuels of It Happens Here to help bring the matter of NDAs being used at the University of Oxford to the House of Commons and to national attention. Ffi also personally supported survivors who had NDAs used against them.
5. The statement made by the University of Oxford was: 'Oxford University cares very deeply about the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. We condemn all forms of sexual harassment and violence, and supporting victims is a high priority for both the University and Colleges.'We urge anyone affected by sexual harassment, assault, or violence to contact their college or the central University where they will be offered help and support, including advice on their options if they wish to make a complaint. 'The University of Oxford does not and will not use Non-Disclosure Agreements to prevent the investigation of complaints of sexual misconduct or other inappropriate behaviour, or to prevent responsible whistleblowing.'
6. Several colleges have passed an anti-NDA motion through their common rooms (JCR/MCR) but no change has been seen
7. Lady Margaret Hall, Keble and Linacre College have all signed the pledge
8. The work done by SU Campaign It Happens Here has been instrumental in achieving this result
9. A motion of this sort was proposed by the VP for Women without adequate consultation with the student volunteers that tirelessly worked on this issue and raised to the VP for Women

**Council believes**

1. NDAs should never be used in cases of misconduct, sexual harassment or bullying, especially by the university/colleges
2. NDAs fundamentally silence victims and are harmful, at times serving to retraumatise them.
3. NDAs prevent victims from accessing avenues of support, including that which family and friends provide, as well as more professional services.
4. Every college should commit to not using NDAs in cases of bullying, harassment and misconduct, either through the signing of the pledge or otherwise stated in their harassment policy.
5. Paid Sabbatical officers should respect the time volunteered by student campaigns.

**Council Resolves**

1. To mandate the outgoing VP Women and VP Equal Opportunities and Welfare, as well as future VP Liberation and Equality and VP Welfare to work with students and their representatives to ensure every college puts in place measures to prevent the use of NDAs
2. To mandate the outgoing VP Women and VP Equal Opportunities and Welfare, as well as future VP Liberation and Equality and VP Welfare to work alongside It Happens Here to organise and attend meetings with college heads specifically on this issue
3. To mandate the outgoing VP Women and VP Equal Opportunities and Welfare, as well as future VP Liberation and Equality and VP Welfare to report on the progress of this work each term at 7th week Council.
4. To hold sabbatical officers to a higher degree of professionalism in their engagement with students and members of campaigns who volunteer their time.

Proposer: Jeea Chadha

Seconder: Ffi Samuels

**I. Item for Discussion**

**Title:** Campaign to improve awareness of student voting rights and rules in elections

**Council Notes:**

Students are among the groups with the lowest turnout in local and general elections in the UK, with the recent passage of Voter ID Regulations, students are likely to be disenfranchised, driving turnout even further down. Furthermore, many international, commonwealth, and EU students are not informed about their voting rights during their degree. How can the SU seek to address these issues?

Proposer: Niall Pearson-Shaul Merton College

**J. Any other business**