

First Liaison Committee Meeting, Easter Term

May 3rd, 2017

Minutes

Present

Prof. Barnard, Senior Tutor (Chair)

Mr Bourne, Junior Bursar

M. Burrell, BA Liaison and Welfare Officer

Dr Curran

Dr Fairbrother, Senior Treasurer of TCSU

L.D. Gaviano, TCSU Vice President (Minutes)

T. Henley Smith, TCSU President

Prof. Kusakawa, Dean of College

Dr Larsen

Dr Spagnolo

F. Szczypinski, BA President

R. Vofely, BA Secretary

1. BA dinners' seating arrangement – survey and report

The BA Liaison and Welfare officer outlines how the issue was first raised in one of the Michaelmas meetings of the Committee, and how the rather long queues have prompted the need for a trial period to explore policy adjustments.

He notes that both the group booking system and 'High Table' systems have advantages and disadvantages, with 'no system at all' emerging during the trial period as by far the least popular scenario. He further suggests that a possible solution would be to implement some form of hybrid system, with space allocated to both systems.

While the Dean reminds the Committee that the concept of Hall is fundamentally different from that of a restaurant, and that she would not want to institutionalise group bookings, she proposes a maximum of one table to be dedicated to bookings for groups, with the requirement that the BA Committee work with the Catering Manager to ensure that the system runs smoothly and without it being a burden for the catering staff. Furthermore, the Dean clarifies that she would not want to see the cafeteria schedule altered solely to allow for the logistical burdens caused by the excessive bookings of groups in Formal Halls.

The BA President and Liaison and Welfare officer summarise the discussion by stating that a maximum of one table will be reserved for groups, with the placing of name tags

undertaken by the BA Committee, so as to render the process as frictionless as possible for the catering staff. The frequency with which this arrangement will be implemented will be set by the BA Committee, depending on their availability.

2. The need for increased communal working areas and for better working environments

The TCSU President notes that there is currently a scarcity of suitable places where students can study. While spending an excessive amount of time in one's room may be detrimental in terms of general welfare and mental health, the College Library is perceived as not comfortable enough, whereas the College Bar is also where students socialise during the evenings, and this use is very much incompatible with the aforementioned one. Hence, having a greater number of well-lit and airy spaces in which to study would be extremely beneficial.

Dr Curran suggests that the College Library may be made more welcoming and comfortable, in that it often does have plenty of unused room that could be used more fruitfully. It is thus advisable to collaborate with the Librarian on this matter.

The TCSU President suggests that placing desks under the Wren Library would provide students with a pleasant environment in which to study, especially in Easter Term. Both the Senior Tutor and Junior Bursar note the desirability and practical feasibility of this suggestion. Other locations mentioned as possible study spaces and considered by the Committee are the Wolfson seminar rooms, which are however often heavily booked, the Burrell's Field common room, the Wolfson party room and the space in front of the Law reading room.

The BA President emphasises that having study spaces where holding conversations and collaborating is possible would be needed, rather than study spaces for silent use only.

Longer term it is hoped that the Brewhouse site could offer a space for communal working and possibly a space under the Wren.

3. Designating a room to be the permanent TCSU President's Room, and history of the TCSU Committee

The TCSU President describes the existing cultural problem in TCSU, which stems from the little continuity that exists between Committees, and from the common lack of awareness of the Committee's history. He argues that having a room as the permanent one for the TCSU President would be therefore beneficial, with Committee photos being kept there, for instance.

Dr Spagnolo emphasises that keeping said photos in the President's room rather than in a public space would make them significantly less accessible. The BA President then proposes that TCSU keep two sets of photos, one in the President's room and the other in the JCR, so as to guarantee their accessibility.

Furthermore, it is noted that there is a timing issue with regard to the room, in that TCSU Committee elections are traditionally held in Lent Term rather than at the start of Michaelmas, when students' residential occupation periods begin.

Dr Curran points out that the need for archival space for the TCSU Committee, and potentially for the BA Society too, should be separated from that for a room for the President. The former should be easy to access and could potentially be in the College Library – on this issue too cooperation with the Librarian is encouraged.

The Senior Tutor notes that it is indeed important to recognise the importance of the job of the TCSU President, seeing also as the Captains of the Boat and Field Clubs and the Organ Scholar all have rooms associated with the office they hold. There is broad consensus on this matter within the Committee.

4. Heffers proposal

The Senior Tutor reminds the Committee of the key features of the deal offered to College by the Heffers bookshop regarding advantageous purchases of books for students. The TCSU President and the rest of the Committee are very much in favour of this proposed deal.

5. College policy on dignity and respect

The Dean notes that this policy is an essential means of simplifying the existing set of documents. It includes both sections based on the relevant university-wide documentation, and college-specific elements pertaining to precautionary and disciplinary matters. It is also emphasised that this policy will be raised again at the next meeting for additional comments from Committee members.

The Senior Tutor stresses that this policy explicitly addresses disciplinary sanctions and procedures in its concluding paragraphs. The TCSU President adds that students should be especially made aware of said sections of the policy document.

The Dean further remarks that the 'bringing the College into public disrepute' clause is a revision of the Code of Discipline of the College that is currently passing through College Council, after being removed from the statutes of the College in 2004. For some of the

3/5/17

most serious cases of misconduct with a public dimension and that would also cause reputational damage to the College, this clause would be an aggravating factor. In this sense, breaching the Code of Discipline is a necessary condition for being deemed as bringing the College into public disrepute.

In response to the concerns raised by Dr Fairbrother regarding possible procedural complaints, the Dean clarifies that the White Book states the procedure to be followed with respect to misconducts – namely, that they will be dealt with, as they increase in gravity, by the student's Tutor, by the Dean and by a Disciplinary Committee appointed by the College Council.

The TCSU President notes that he wishes to further clarify the implications of the 'bringing the College into public disrepute' clause in the near future in conjunction with the Dean.

6. Administrative notices

It is noted that this was the last Liaison Committee meeting for Dr Larsen and for the outgoing BA Society representatives – all of the attendees are grateful to them for their commitment and contributions.

Lastly, the TCSU Vice President confirms that the last meeting of the Committee for the year will take place on June 7th at 2pm, once again in the Senior Tutor's office.