



Sunday 4 May 2008

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence or lateness
2. Announcement of the presence and purpose of guests
3. Approval of the order of the agenda
4. Reading by the secretary on request by any Member, amendment if necessary and approval of the Minutes of any previous Open Meeting not yet accepted by an Open Meeting.
5. Matters Arising from the minutes
6. Reports from the Committee
7. Questions to Committee
8. Extraordinary Motions
9. Ordinary Motions
 - a) Fair Trade Bar
 - b) Tennis Budget Adjustment
 - c) Fourth Year Rents (Returnees)
 - d) Publication of Rent Levels
 - e) Politics Society
 - f) HE Funding/Tuition Fees
 - g) CCTV Cameras
 - h) Croquet Financial Request
 - i) RCSA Punt
 - j) Rollover Open Meeting Funds
10. Any other RCSA business
 - CUSU Policy: No Platform & MML Fees
 - RCSA Website Ideas

Ordinary Motions

a) Fair Trade Bar

This motion requires two-thirds assent to pass. This motion brought under article 11f, exempt from Open Meeting budget

RCSA Notes:

1. The social and environmental benefits of fair trade principles previously discussed in open meetings.
2. The RCSA's policy commitment to support increased choice of Fair trade goods in college.
3. The large desire for fair trade products in the college (see attached proposal).
4. The bar has offered to sell fair trade wine at a negligible mark up, without reduction in other choices, if the student body provides and stores it.
5. The required report in the addendum

RCSA Believes:

1. That to best take advantage of this offer money from the RCSA is required (see proposal).

RCSA Resolves:

1. To award the Fair trade society £200 to run the scheme, a one off payment which should allow the scheme to continue in perpetuity.

Proposed: Peter Wood (Secretary, Fair Trade Soc)

Seconded: Emma Irving (President, Fair Trade Soc)

b) Tennis Budget Adjustment

RCSA Notes:

1. That the College Tennis Club has an unused £150 budget allocation for "equipment".

RCSA Believes:

1. That the entire £150 budget allocation is not necessary for this.
2. That this money would be much better spent on recently created Cuppers' fees that are necessary for the participation of both college teams in the 2008 competition.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To allow College Tennis to shift £16 of their budget allocation from "equipment" to "Cuppers' fees"

Proposed: Stewart Walker

Seconded: Richard Thompson

c) Fourth Year Rents (Returnees)

RCSA Notes:

1. That before joining the college, each student receives a letter stating that they will pay "only one charge, the Residence Charge, which is fixed for three years."
2. There has been a previous understanding between the RCSA and College authorities that in the first year students slightly over-pay, pay about right in the second year, and under-pay in the third year.
3. That fourth year linguists returning in October 2009 are to be charged the same

rents as freshers matriculating in that academic year

4. That current third years moving into the fourth year will pay the same rent as current first years, so that they will be paying the same as second years in their fourth year
5. That as The Year Abroad already involves many costs, this added cost will seriously affect returning linguists' finances, possibly deterring potential linguists from applying to this College - that Year Abroadees are already charged £1500 a year (half of tuition fees) to remain members of the University
6. That second year linguists will be the first batch of people to be affected by these charges

RCSA Believes:

1. That this unexplained hike in rents should be explained and revoked
2. That as returning linguists have not had the opportunity to 'under-pay' in their third year rent, despite 'overpaying' in their first year, they should pay less rent than either first and second years upon their return.
3. That applicant linguists ought not be deterred by this unfair situation

RCSA Resolves:

1. To state its support for Year Abroadees in this matter
2. To mandate the RCSA Executive to investigate the logic and injustice behind this increase in rents, and do everything within its power to revoke them

Proposed: Michael Albert Brown

Seconded: Charlie Crook, Charlotte Brennan and other Robinson Linguists.

d) Publication of Rent Levels

RCSA Notes:

1. Prospective students have no idea how much rent charges are before they accept their offer
2. Prices of accommodation have an impact on accessibility of coming to this college.

RCSA Believes:

1. This is an unfair situation, as most other universities have comprehensive information on rent charges and available accommodation options
2. That details of current rents should be available to prospective students, so they can make an informed choice.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To mandate Computing Officer to put rent charges for the last three year matriculation years available on the RCSA website

2. To also put projected rent charges for the next matriculation year

Proposed: Luke Snell

Seconded: Shiama Balendra

e) Politics Society

This motion requires two-thirds assent to pass

RCSA Notes:

1. That there are significant numbers of students at Robinson who have an interest in politics, and that these students currently have no society dedicated to the purpose of furthering and fostering this interest

RCSA Believes:

1. That a college politics society would benefit members of the college educationally, as well as heighten the prestige of Robinson college.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To create a society named "Robinson College Politics Society"
2. That this society will agree to be bound by the constitution of the RCSA

Proposed: Lucas Fear-Segal

Seconded: Sam Oxley

f) HE Funding/Tuition Fees

RCSA Notes:

1. The current £3,000 (index linked) cap on tuition fees will be reviewed by Parliament in 2009.
2. CUSU will determine its policy on this matter this Wednesday at CUSU council.
3. The proposed motion for CUSU council in the addendum
4. The full terms of this debate, particularly the amendments to motions are not fully known
5. RCSA has two voting members of CUSU council, who have agreed to be bound by the policy of the RCSA
6. The briefing document on this matter previously circulated by email

RCSA Believes:

1. The level of fees for tuition that students pay is one of the most important issues facing RCSA members, both now and in the future.
2. Given the circumstances, the use of indicative votes may be an appropriate way of establishing the views of this meeting on this matter

RCSA Resolves:

1. To discuss higher education funding

2. To mandate the RCSA President & RCSA Chair to vote according to any formal policy agreed and to take full account of the views of this meeting at CUSU council this Wednesday.
3. That should, given the circumstances being fully known at CUSU council, the RCSA President or RCSA Chair not vote in accordance with RCSA resolves 2, they are mandated to publicise this to RCSA members, so that their votes may be changed retrospectively.

Proposed: Tom Kelly, RCSA Chair
Seconded: Iain Barr, RCSA President

g) CCTV Cameras

RCSA Notes:

1. That 16 new CCTV cameras are to be installed this week around the College site
2. That there is a very real need for this surveillance, particularly from a security viewpoint, at the Hostels and in the car park at 5 Adams Road
3. That the main College site is already covered by a considerable number of CCTV cameras
4. That we, the residents of the College, are yet to be fully informed of the imminent installations
5. That it is not currently known to the RCSA exactly who has access to the camera feeds nor how they are used

RCSA Believes:

1. That whilst it is important to do everything possible to ensure the safety of the College, it is equally important to maintain the privacy of College members to the greatest degree possible
2. That all College members have the right to know when more cameras are to be installed, how they will be used, and why the particular installation sites have been chosen

RCSA Resolves:

1. To mandate the RCSA Vice President to investigate the matter and report back to the next Open Meeting on the College's intentions with regards to the prevalence of CCTV surveillance
2. To endeavour to monitor the College's monitoring of students

Proposed: Michael Albert Brown
Seconded: Pete Wood

h) Croquet Financial Request

This motion requires two-thirds assent to pass

RCSA Notes:

1. That croquet is an essential element of college society
2. That the croquet lawn represents a substantial asset of the RCSA
3. That the RCSA should use the croquet lawn to its full extent

RCSA Believes:

1. That the current croquet equipment is substandard and does not meet the full potential of the croquet lawn
2. That the croquet team has planned away games against other colleges
3. That the croquet equipment is not of acceptable standard to use in inter-collegiate matches

RCSA Resolves:

1. That the croquet team should be given £100 to purchase new croquet mallets
2. That the mallet purchase shall be viewed as a long-term asset of the RCSA

Proposed: Brandon Green (Croquet Captain)
Seconded: Geoffrey Thornton (Loves Mallets)

i) RCSA Punt

RCSA Notes:

1. That many other students of this university have access to punts for significantly reduced prices through their colleges, and that Robinson students are unfairly forced to pay tourist prices when they want to go punting.

RCSA Believes:

1. That Robinson students should also enjoy cheap punts, and that the easiest way for this to be achieved would be for the college to purchase a punt.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To mandate an appropriate RCSA officer to look into the purchase of a punt for the use of Robinson junior members.

Proposed: Lucas Fear-Segal
Seconded: Sam Oxley

j) Rollover Open Meeting Funds

This motion requires two-thirds assent to pass

RCSA Notes:

1. The uneven demand for funds throughout the year.
2. Unallocated Open Meeting funds go into reserves.
3. It has excess reserves.
4. The purpose of the Open Meeting funds is to provide financial assistance for current events and needs.

RCSA Believes:

1. The usefulness of Open Meeting funds should be maximised.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To allocate any remaining unallocated funds from this Open Meeting to the next Open Meeting.

Proposed: David Bewicke,

Seconded: Rebecca Yeoh, RCSA Secretary

(The above motion was adjourned from the previous open meeting.)

Addendum (Motion a)

Fair trade bar start-up needs

Amount requested: £200

The Robinson fair trade society and the college bar have agreed a system to increase the choice of Fairtrade goods on sale behind the bar, without decreasing choice in other areas.

The bar have agreed to sell Fairtrade wine for a minimal mark-up, providing that the stock is provided by the students. This wine would be sold by bar staff, and the cost of the wine returned to the society. The bar are happy to provide this service, but are unwilling to purchase the wine themselves as the projected low sales would be take up space in the cellars and complicate stock checks. This set-up would be extended to other items as and when the need arrived.

With RCSA funding this set up would be vastly simplified to the long lasting benefit of all interested college members. If the society is granted the money, the system can continue perpetually as when goods are sold the money can be used to re-order stock. If the costs were borne by society members this would require all stock to be sold before the end of Easter Term to return money to graduating members, and raising new funds the following Michaelmas. The problems would, in all likelihood, decrease the amount of time that these items were on offer every year.

This request was not submitted at the budget meeting as the society did not then exist.

It is our belief that this expenditure fully appreciates the spirit of the RCSA constitution:

2.i “to provide facilities which are of recreational, intellectual or social value to its Members and/or increase their quality of life”

129 college members answered the 2008 fair trade survey, 97% felt that fair trade was important, 67% said that they would buy fair trade goods whenever possible, providing they were similarly priced to normal goods.

This system means we can now provide fair trade wine at a similar price to the college wine of the week.

Costs:

Many wines are available, but best priced “Traidcraft Chilean 12 bottle mixed case” contains

- 6 bottles of Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot
- 6 bottles of Chilean Chardonnay
- Suitable for vegetarians and vegans

This costs £57.54 including delivery (£4.80 each). 24 bottles would cost £115.08

This deal is currently on offer from Traidcraft’s online store, 24 bottles would ensure that the college bar is well stocked during May week.

The request is for £200 as the price of wine may increase, and future purchases may be larger. Whilst 24 bottles may seem a high number, this is conceivably less than what could be drunk in one weekend, and individual orders lose economies of scale.

Addendum (Motion f)

CUSU HE Funding Motion

CUSU notes:

- 1) That nearly all English and Northern Irish universities will charge undergraduate tuition fees of £3,175 per year in 2008-9.
- 2) That a government review of variable tuition fees will be commissioned in 2009, and that such review could lead to the lifting of the cap on fees.
- 3) That NUS policy states that “while NUS should retain a principled commitment to the notion of free education, the focus for the 2009 review must be to secure a fairer funding system for all students, to defeat any attempts to lift the cap and further the destructive marketisation of HE”.
- 4) That the Vice Chancellors of the Russell Group have publicly expressed their desire to see an increase in the cap to around £6000 per year.

CUSU believes:

- 1) That any funding system should be free at point of entry, allowing students to take low interest loans, repayable once earning, to cover any costs of tuition.
- 2) That CUSU should retain support for the abolition of fees, but that it should focus resources on working to keep the £3,000 cap and increase bursary provision.
- 3) That Cambridge would struggle to attract their target widening participation audience should cost become a legitimate, real factor in a prospective student’s decision making process.
- 4) That the promise of a comprehensive bursary system cannot always offset the risk associated with paying higher fees.
- 5) That access to education should not be based on ability to pay and that financial incentives should not be a factor in a student’s educational choices.

CUSU resolves:

- 1) To mandate the CUSU Access and Funding Team to take an active role in the formation of the NUS campaign against the lifting of the cap.
- 2) To mandate the CUSU HE Funding Officer to organise and publicise a high-profile meeting to discuss tuition fees and their implications at the beginning of Michaelmas Term.
- 3) To liaise with the Aldwych Group (Russell Group student unions) and local student unions to lobby the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and our institutions to keep fees in line with universities nationally.
- 4) To coordinate efforts with sympathetic groups, such as the University and College Union (UCU) and Association for Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), to create a solid platform from which to campaign within the University.
- 5) To fight the fear of debt amongst prospective students by publicising bursaries and promoting the economic benefits of a degree, and to give this information equal prominence to negative campaigning against an increase in tuition fees.
- 6) To use CUSU’s presence on University committees to highlight this policy, where relevant.
- 7) To replace previous CUSU Higher Education funding policy with the contents of this motion.

(Proposed: Mark Fletcher (CUSU President) and Charlotte Richer (CUSU Access & Funding Officer))

The above motion is for CUSU Council on 7th May and is subject to amendment.