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# **Minutes of the JCR Open Meeting**

15 March 2007, 7.00pm

Prepared by:

**Anna Marsland  
and Claire Willman**

*15<sup>th</sup> March 2007*

## **i. President's Report**

LB gave a report on her activities following the recent handover period. These included:

Weekly individual meetings with all officers and weekly JCR meetings during the hand over period to ensure that all committee members are aware of what is going on.

LB has been busy getting to know the new committee, the fellows and the various offices in Downing. She has been attending education committee, health and safety, buildings, general purposes and governing body meetings. LB held the second round elections for the JCR and now all senior positions and sub-committees are filled.

**Library Catalogue:** LB has been working with Claire (JCR Vice-President) and Will (JCR Academic Affairs Officer) to push for more frequent meetings.

**Ents:** LB has been working alongside Sarah Bailey-Munroe and Rachel Thomasen (JCR Ents Officers) in the running of a 'University Challenge' Ent, in order to form this year's team, but also raise £42.50 for S.A.F.E.

**Website:** LB has been working with Joe Rickerby (JCR Internet Officer) and Charles Cook (JCR Comms Officer) planning ways to update the website.

## **ii. Vice President's Report**

Claire Willman gave a brief speech on her activities this term.

**Superformal:** CW has been working alongside the Ents Officers to organise this term's superformal.

**Elections:** CW organised the ballot box in Downing for the CUSU elections. She was pleased with the turnout.

**Re-affiliation:** CW apologised for missing the election for re-affiliation, and explained that this was due to CUSU not getting back to her in time, due to being busy with the controversial CUSU Presidential election. The election will happen early next term instead. UGS will be informed of details shortly through email.

**Room Ballot:** CW organised the 4<sup>th</sup> year room ballot which was successful, she has been monitoring others finding rooms outside college since.

## **iii. Treasurer's Report**

Laura Hughes will report at the next DCAC meeting.

## **iv. Academic Affairs Officer's Report**

Will Crone reported on this term.

WC has been meeting regularly with the LB and the rest of the committee.

**Library:** WC has been attending meetings to discuss the new library catalogue. He is pushing this forward and says that it will definitely be up next year.

## **v. Communications Officer's Report**

Charles Cook reported on this term.

**Access:** CC has been working closely with Joe Rickerby (JCR Internet Officer) and Emily Wilsdon (JCR Access Officer) to update the website's access page, adding subject representatives and summaries. They are considering adding a photo tour.

**Website:** CC and JR have been working on minor layout changes to the website. They have also been moderating the news bulletins and forums.

**Superformal:** CC and JR organised online booking for the superformal successfully.

## **vi. Ents Officers' Report**

Sarah Bailey-Munroe and Rachel Thomassen reported on this term's ents.

**Committee:** The committee is now filled and totals seven members.

**Website:** S.B-M and R.T want to make use of the ents section to the JCR website and will work with comms and interent to do this.

**'University Challenge' Ent:** The Ents Committee were pleased with the success of this ent.

**Superformal:** S. B-M and R.T have been working to organise this term's superformal and end of term ent.

## **vii. Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officers' Report**

Steven King and Jiexin Zheng reported on this term.

**Equal Opportunities:** The committee has now filled the positions for International and LGBT representatives, but needs an Ethnic Minority representative.

**Drop-In Sessions:** There will be welfare drop-in sessions in the JCR office (basement of P staircase) on Tuesdays (5-6pm) and Sunday (3-4pm) during normal term time.

**Website:** S.K and J.Z are updating the welfare section.

**Exam Term:** S.K and J.Z appealed for 'de-stress' and relaxation ideas to be emailed to them, as they want to place more emphasis on these during this year's exam term.

## **viii. Services Officer's Report**

LB read Dan Chapman's report on his activities this term.

DC stated his availability as a representative and encouraged anyone with questions to get in touch.

**Maintenance:** DC is hoping to improve response rates.

**Catering:** DC has plans for an online seat-booking system for Formal Hall, which he hopes to be trialling by the end of next term.

**Housekeeping:** DC wants to look at student/bedder relations. He and LB are hoping that Housekeeping will reconsider the blu-tack rule.

**Sports:** Em Stevens is the new Sports Officer. She is working on the security and storage of sports equipment.

**Website:** DC plans to restructure the services section of the website over the summer.

## **x. Approval of the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

### **VOTE:**

42 in favour

0 against

1 abstention

43 votes cast therefore quorum was reached

**MINUTES APPROVED**

## **xi. JCR Ordinary Motions**

### **a) Establishment of an Alternative Prospectus**

Emily Wilsdon (JCR Access Officer) proposed the creation of an alternative prospectus. She quickly outlined that, although CUSU do one for every college, Downing only has one page. She thinks that student views often seem more genuine. Emmanuel and Newnham already have a published alternative prospectus.

She stated that she would research the project over the holiday. When questioned as to whether this would affect her exams, LB and EW states that this research would be done anyway as it goes online.

A booklet will be produced if funding is granted at the DCAC meeting. At the very least, the information will be in PDF format.

EW was asked how realistic the information would be and would it contain negatives as well as positives. She stated that it would contain a rounded picture, but the aim is to sell the college to prospective applicants. She was also asked how alternative the booklet would be. She stated that it would still be structured, but be more 'genuine' a perspective on college life, and unequivocally from a student perspective.

EW stated that she has both the Master's and Senior Tutor's approval.

#### **VOTE:**

40 in favour

0 against

2 abstentions

42 votes cast therefore quorum was reached

**MOTION PASSED**

**b) Request to Push for the Publication of Downing's Investments**

Rachel Boston gave a brief account of the Darfur genocide and the Sudanese government funding of the militia. RW states that the Sudan government are heavily funded by U.S. and British companies. She wishes to lobby Downing to change its policy on investment in companies who fund Sudan. LB and CW would have to push for the publication of all Downing's investments for the students' interest, under the freedom of information act.

RB was asked whether this would damage Downing's financial situation, but she stated that it wouldn't as the number of companies investing in Sudan is small. She just wants to put the barriers in place.

RB was asked whether investors would be unhappy, but LB stated that we have a right to see this information.

RB pointed out that this is not an automatic change and is a slow process, but this is the first step and shows that the student body is concerned. The information will be made available to anyone who wishes to view it.

LB emphasised that JCR and MCR representatives sit in on finance meetings as well as governing body and general purposes committee meetings where such matters are discussed.

CW added that the college has a very good record on ethical investments.

**VOTE:**

42 in favour

1 against

3 abstentions

46 votes cast therefore quorum was reached

**MOTION PASSED**

**xi. Next Meeting**

The next open meeting will be in Easter Term 2007.

## Appendix- Full text of motions

### **Alternative Prospectus**

#### **The JCR notes:**

That currently Downing College has no alternative prospectus.

That other colleges, such as Emmanuel and Newnham do so successfully.

That such a publication, on the website or in print would further the Access aims of the JCR.

The JCR proposes:

To produce an alternative prospectus.

To consider sources of funding for a prospectus.

Proposed: Emily Wilsdon (JCR Access Officer)

Seconded: Peter Johnson (Head Freshers' Rep)

### **Sudan Divestment**

#### **The JCR notes that:**

1. There is a humanitarian crisis occurring in the Darfur region in the Sudan, a humanitarian crisis that has killed over 400,000 civilians since February 2003 and 2.5 million people have been displaced.
2. Unlike any other humanitarian crisis in history, the situation in the Darfur region of Sudan has been described as genocide or tantamount to genocide by the US government and the European respectively while atrocities are still ongoing.
3. Foreign investment has been of great importance in enabling the heavily indebted Sudanese government to finance its military policy of genocide.
4. The guidelines for divestment have been implemented by a large number of organisations, including universities, throughout America and the UK all adopting restrictions on their investments..
5. Downing College's Statement of Investment Principles states explicitly in its section on Ethical Investment that companies may be excluded on the basis that their activities violate human rights.

#### **The JCR believes that:**

1. The ethical consequences of colleges' investments are an issue of mounting concern to Cambridge students.
2. Targeted divestment is a powerful method of influencing the Sudanese government.
3. Targeted Sudan Divestment is entirely consistent with a prudent investment policy designed to maximise returns. It is also consistent with Downing College's existing Ethical Investment policy.
4. It is incumbent upon the rest of the world and Downing College in particular, to do everything possible in order to facilitate the end of the genocidal killing of civilians and the restoration of security and the rule of law to the Darfur region.

#### **The JCR resolves:**

1. To exercise our right (provided by the Freedom of Information Act) to access information about Downing College's investments, in order that we may

- identify any holdings in companies which meet guidelines for targeted divestment set out by Sudan Divestment UK1.
2. To call for Downing College and all its affiliates to divest from any companies identified as meeting the Sudan Divestment UK guidelines on Sudanese divestment.
  3. To call for Downing College and its affiliates to make a statement of its intention not only to divest but to refrain from investing in any companies which meet the 'Sudan Divestment UK' guidelines until the situation in the Darfur has been resolved.
  4. For the executive committee of Downing College JCR to actively pursue the issue through meetings with Downing College's Bursar and/or Investment Committee.

Proposed by: Emma Jackson Stuart – elj27

Seconded by: Rachel Boston – rb439