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Minutes of the
JCR Open Meeting
Tuesday 28th April 2009 - 8pm

Prepared for:
Downing JCR committee 2008/09

Prepared by:
James McGinnigle
JCR communications officer

I. Present

Katie Marshall (President), Katie Brown (Vice President), Matt Halford (Treasurer), James McGinnigle (Communications), Kat Warmington (Services), Matthew Sinclair-Thomson (Academic Affairs), Laurence Feeney (Men's Welfare), Anthony Hitchin (Access), Jason Mann (Internet), Timur Kary-Niyazov (International), Ameera Patel (Ethnic Minorities), Tom Leather (LBGT), Helen Picot (Green), Rhemayo Brooks (Ents), Dan Barker (Ents), Aditi Rao (Griffin), Francesca Bonner-Evans (Head Freshers' Rep), Harry Thomson (Head Freshers' Rep), Craig Sawyer (Bar Senior Treasurer)

II. Apologies

Orlando Delange (Griffin), Lauren Juster (Women's Welfare), Andy Corley (Sport)

III. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

- Minutes approved by unanimous vote.

IV. Officer Reports and questions to the JCR Committee

a) President

- Mentioned how the Freshers' Reps are getting on well, with Wedding Formal going well and plans for Freshers' Week coming on nicely.
- Introduced James and Ameera as the new Communications Officer and Ethnic Minorities Officer respectively, for those unaware.
- Told everyone how the Griffin was also getting on well, working hard and on target.

b) Vice-President

- Swine Flu - Everyone was told that if they feel sick, to visit the nurse just as a precaution, the College has a policy in place if there is an outbreak.
- Burglaries - There have been burglars in some of the Lensfield Road hostels in the past week. Everyone was reminded to keep an eye out, ask people who they do not recognise who they are, and tell the Porters if they are suspicious.
- Safety at night - A female student was attacked on Kings Parade the other night, luckily she managed to get away, but everyone was told to be aware of trouble at night and try not to walk around by themselves.

c) Treasurer

- Matt has a chequebook and is now a signatory on the account, so transactions should now be a lot quicker.

d) Welfare

- Everyone was reminded that through Easter term there will be welfare sessions outside the library twice weekly, with biscuits, doughnuts and drinks.
- Drop-in sessions have not been well attended so now there will be tea in the butterfield instead.

- College may not be allowing international storage in P cellar over the summer, and the party room is less than ideal so a new space is being looked for.

e) Services

- Kat is pestering catering for menus all the time, formal menus are currently up on the website and servery dinner and brunch menus are also being asked for.
- Also the issues with labeling wheat free products and giving more variety for vegetarians are being pressed upon catering.
- Sport - some of our sports inventory needs replacing, which will be done soon.
- Green - College are trying hard to save carbon and money, with a variety of schemes underway which should not impact students too much.
- There is the possibility of buying more free range and fair trade products in the servery, a poll should be conducted at some points to see students' views on this.
- Helen is working with the May Ball committee to make sure the ball is eco-friendly and that as much as possible is to be recycled.
- People are reminded to put things in the correct bins and to look at their recycling posters to remind them what goes where.
- An issue of cleaning stuff putting paper from recycling bins in with the main rubbish was brought up, Helen will investigate.

f) Communications

- The message board has to be manually switched on every day at the moment, but there does not seem to be an easy solution short of buying a new screen. Anyone who wants slides on the board, just email James.
- James and Jason are constantly updating the website with bits and bobs, if anyone wants anything on there, just email them.
- There have been issues with copyright infringement on the network, people were reminded not to do it.

g) Academic Affairs

- The incoming freshers are 62% male and 61% from state schools, but this does just seem to be a fair representation of the people that applied this year.
- Access is very important and if you want to get involved let Ant or the school college liaison Jim know.
- With the new A* grade at A-level, college are waiting to see what the results are like but for now will have a default offer in-line with the rest of the university, at A*AA.
- There have been lots of issues with the new lighting in the library (and removed desk lamps). The whole problem will hopefully be resolved very soon.
- There is no study space open early morning for those that like to get up early! Matthew promised to look into opening some of the extra study rooms early.
- An issue was raised about the selection of the Downing University Challenge team, but nothing can be done about changing it now, a fairer system will be in place next year.

- The full academic report is viewable in the appendix.

h) Ents

- The Hat Party went well, looking forward to doing more ents.
- The ents committee is being formed to help Dan and Rhemayo with organizing future events.
- Preparation for the garden party is already underway, and yes there will be an ice cream van again this year!

V. Motions

- No motions were submitted.

VI. Any other business

- Katie M reminded everyone to come and vote on CUSU reaffiliation and the university council elections on Tuesday 5th May in the Porter's Lodge and in the servery.

Appendix

A1. Academic Affairs Report

Matthew Sinclair-Thomson
JCR Academic Affairs Officer
28/04/09

JCR Academic Division Report

JCR ACADEMIC DIVISION REPORT – 28TH APRIL 2009

Academic Affairs Officer

College Education Committee

The first and, so far, only Education Committee meeting that the current Academic Affairs officer has had the opportunity to attend was held on 18th February 2009. Of principle importance to the JCR in this meeting was a discussion of the application and offer statistics for the 2009 Matriculation Year. It was noted that there is a significant imbalance of male and female students, with males accounting for around 60% of offers. This was partially due to lower numbers of female applicants, but it is something the Education Committee will monitor in the future. In this meeting, however, the matters discussed fully were graduate targets for entry in October 2009 and reports from the School and College Liaison Officer, which showed the value of target visits and the Liaison Officer's role. It was also decided that it would be unnecessary to impose any subject restrictions for choral scholarships (in line with certain other colleges) once the awards are fully available from next year.

However, there was not a discussion of the admissions requirements for the 2010 Matriculation Year and whether the new A* A-Level grade will form part of offers. It should be noted that the standard offer across Cambridge University will be A*AA. However, a decision has not been made for Downing and it will be discussed next week. The report of the Access Officer will address this issue.

College Library Committee

Although there has yet to be a College Library Committee meeting since the Academic Affairs Officer has taken up the position, two key issues have arisen.

Lighting conditions:

As many have noticed, over the Easter vacation changes were made to the lighting arrangements in the College Library, resulting in a far darker working environment. These measures were taken to increase the energy efficiency of the library, however the general view is that the current level of lighting is insufficient for working during evening hours.

The changes to the lighting were taken whilst the Fellow Librarian, Dr Marcus Tomalin, was away from Downing at Easter. He was therefore unable to be consulted on the changes and upon his return requested that something is done to rectify the lack of sufficient lighting. The request to have the fluorescent ceiling lighting returned has been partially accepted and performed, with the proviso that desk lamps, using energy saving bulbs, should be used in conjunction with the ceiling lights.

Opening hours of additional study space:

The additional study space provided by College, comprised of the teaching rooms in T staircase (T9, T10 and T11) and the Wilkins Room, have been viewed favourably. They are available as Library overspill space every evening from 21 April to 12 June, from 9pm to midnight (and from 8:30pm to midnight for the Wilkins Room) but these opening hours have been questioned, as there is no opportunity to use quiet working space outside of the Library's opening hours. Although there has not been demand for later opening hours, earlier opening hours have been requested and this will be raised to Dr Tomalin at the next opportunity.

Access Officer

Report forthcoming.

Ethnic Minorities Officer

Nothing to report.