

## Changes to the DCAC/JCR Constitution

*As passed at Open Meetings of the JCR and DCAC  
on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007  
Prepared by Claire Willman (JCR Vice-President)*

### **Summary:**

*The JCR and DCAC passed several changes to their Constitutions at quorate Open Meetings on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007.*

*The majority of these were aimed at bringing the Constitution up to date in a fairly general way, acknowledging the modernisation of technology and shifts in Committee practice in recent years.*

*In addition, the role descriptions of officers of the JCR Committee were changed considerably. This was in order to incorporate changes passed through Open Meetings under previous Committees regarding the composition of the Committee and the roles of various officers, which had not always or consistently been put into the Constitution.*

*A new JCR Committee Officer was also proposed, and passed, at the Open Meeting of the JCR: The Bar/Ents Liaison Officer. A description of this position has therefore been inserted into the JCR section of the Constitution.*

*The JCR commend these changes to the Governing Body.*

## **Introduction:**

Sixteen changes to the DCAC Constitution were proposed by the JCR Committee and passed at quorate Open Meetings of both the JCR and DCAC on Thursday 8th November 2007. Extensive consultation was undertaken before these were finalised and opinions and changes integrated from the JCR Committee, MCR Committee, Bar Committee and other DCAC members.

Three main aims existed to the constitutional changes:

- 1.) To modernise the Constitution to reflect current practices**
- 2.) To update the role descriptions of Officers of the JCR Committee**
- 3.) To introduce a new Senior Officer of the JCR Committee, the Bar/Ents Liaison Officer, which integrates the Bar President and clarifies accountability**

The changes proposed in Aims 1 and 2 passed with 47 votes for and 0 against, with 0 abstentions. The changes proposed in Aim 3 were put to a separate vote and discussion and passed with 49 votes for and 0 against, with 0 abstentions.

The details and explanations below are similar to those given to the student body.

Changes to the DCAC Constitution require the approval of the Governing Body, and the JCR fully supports these changes.

## **Aim 1.) Modernising the Constitution to reflect current practice**

### A. Constitutional change throughout the Constitution

*Constitution currently refers to 'the screens' as a means for the Committee to communicate with the student body.*

#### Requested change:

To replace all existing references to 'the screens' with 'the JCR website'.

#### Explanation:

The website has been established as the Committee's central means for communicating with the student body for some years, and is an effective and easily accessible mechanism for doing so.

### B. Constitutional change to G4 a&b

Constitution currently reads:

*G4 a: Entertainments Sub-Committee, responsible for JCR social events, one of whom shall be in their first year of residence on appointment*

And similarly:

*G4 b: Griffin Sub-Committee, responsible for the publication of the Griffin newsletter, one of whom shall be in their first year of residence on appointment*

#### Requested change:

To remove the second clause of both these sentences, thus removing the requirement for there to be a member of the Entertainments and Griffin Sub-Committees in their first year of residence on appointment

#### Explanation:

This requirement, whilst promoting diversity within the Sub-Committees, is fairly arbitrary and often impossible to meet. It also risks unsuitable candidates being appointed to positions within these Sub-Committees in place of more able ones, due to their year-group position.

### C. Constitutional change to K5

Constitution currently reads:

*K5 iii. No person may be proposed for office as an Officer of the JCR Committee or member of a JCR Sub-Committee without his or her written consent.*

*K5 iv. No person shall be proposed for more than one position of the JCR Committee or Sub-Committees.*

#### Requested change is a re-write to:

*K5 iii. Nominees for Officer roles of the JCR Committee, or membership of a JCR Sub-Committee, shall be proposed and seconded by current members of the JCR*

*K5 iv .No person may be proposed for office as an Officer of the JCR Committee or member of a JCR Sub-Committee without his or her written consent.*

*K5 v. Current Officers of the JCR Committee or members of a Sub-Committee shall not be eligible to propose or second the nomination or any candidate*

*K5 vi. No person shall be proposed for more than one position of the JCR Committee or Sub-Committees.*

Explanation:

These additional rules regarding the election procedure have already been put in place and adhered to for at least three years. Constitutional recognition of the second stipulation is especially important, as it is crucial for the current JCR Committee to remain neutral throughout the election process in order to prevent bias in any one candidate's favour.

D. Constitutional change to M4.ix

Constitution currently reads:

*M4.ix. Five members of the DCAC Committee shall constitute a quorum*

Requested change is a re-write to:

*M4.ix. Three members of the DCAC Committee shall constitute a quorum*

Explanation:

The total number of DCAC Committee members is five, it therefore seems unusual to set quorum at the same number. Three would constitute a majority without requiring every Committee member to be present to reach quorum.

E. Constitutional change to Appendix 1 Schedule B

Constitution currently lists the Babel English Society and Gentlemen XI's Football Club as DCAC affiliated societies. In addition, several recently affiliated societies are omitted from the list.

Requested change:

To remove the Babel English Society and the Gentlemen's XI Football Club from the list of affiliated societies. To add the following recently affiliated societies to the list; The Blake Society (2007), The Griffins (2007), The Southern African Fund for Education (2005), The Table Tennis Club (2005), The Ultimate Frisbee Club (2007).

Explanation:

The Babel English Society is no longer in existence, and the nature of the Gentlemen's XI Football Club makes it an inappropriate society for affiliation to the DCAC.

## **Aim 2.) Updating the role descriptions of Officers of the JCR Committee**

### A. Constitutional changes to Appendix 3

#### i. Change to Vice-President role description

Constitution currently reads:

*JCR VICE-PRESIDENT*

*Works with the President in liaising with College authorities and in formulating and implementing JCR policy*

*Sits on College General Purposes Committee and Governing Body (as well as other committees)*

*Organises JCR Open Meetings*

*Liaises with the rest of the JCR Committee to ensure efficient communication and co-operation*

Requested change would insert the addition:

*Acts as a substitute for other officers within the JCR Committee if, due to unforeseen or exceptional circumstances, an officer is temporarily unable to fulfil their responsibilities or act in an appropriate capacity within their role.*

*Oversees the running of the rooms ballot in Lent term in partnership with the Services Officer*

Explanation:

These two responsibilities have fallen to the Vice-President in recent years and deserve constitutional acknowledgement

#### ii. Merging of Welfare Officer and Equal Opportunities Officer, to 'Male Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officer' and 'Female Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officer'

Constitution currently reads:

*WELFARE OFFICER*

*Acts as intermediary between JCR members and the various welfare organisations of the College and the University*

*Is responsible for the implementation of CUSU welfare campaigns within College*

*Is responsible for informing JCR members of the welfare provisions available to them*

*Works with the Welfare & Equal Opportunities division of the JCR Committee to ensure that JCR members receive all relevant assistance and information about welfare issues*

*Ensures provision of free Pregnancy Test Kits to any female JCR member who requires one.*

*Maintains the key ring attack alarms for the JCR members by coordinating with the Porters.*

*Ensures effective lines of communication in the Welfare & Equal Opportunities division of the JCR Committee*

*And:*

*EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OFFICER*

*Ensures that the needs and views of all groups in the JCR are taken into account.*

*Helps to resolve any aspects of College life which may cause problems for students on the basis of their gender, disability, ethnicity, or sexuality.*

*Provides information and advice on issues of discrimination.*

*Reports to the Committee on issues that have arisen from the Equal Opportunities Sub-Committee.*

Requested Change is a re-write to:

*MALE AND FEMALE WELFARE/ EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OFFICERS*

*Ensure that the needs and views of all groups in the JCR are taken into account.*

*Help to resolve any aspects of College life which may cause problems for students on the basis of their gender, disability, ethnicity, or sexuality.*

*Provide information and advice on issues of discrimination.*

*Report to the Committee on issues that have arisen from the Welfare & Equal Opportunities Sub-Committee, and ensure effective lines of communication in the Welfare & Equal Opportunities division of the JCR Committee*

*Act as intermediaries between JCR members and the various welfare organisations of the College and the University*

*Are responsible for the implementation of CUSU welfare campaigns within College*

*Are responsible for informing JCR members of the welfare provisions available to them*

*Are each required to hold welfare drop-in sessions at least once a week open to any member of the JCR*

*Work with the Welfare & Equal Opportunities division of the JCR Committee to ensure that JCR members receive all relevant assistance and information about welfare issues*

*IN ADDITION THE FEMALE WELFARE/ EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OFFICER SHALL:*

*Be responsible for informing JCR members of any CUSU, college, or other welfare provisions which may be specifically aimed at or relevant to female members*

*Ensure provision of free Pregnancy Test Kits to any female JCR member who requires one.*

*Maintain the key ring attack alarms for the JCR members by coordinating with the Porters.*

Explanation:

These changes to the Committee composition and Officer roles were passed at the Open Meeting in Michaelmas 2006, and are acknowledged in G2. of the Constitution, but not fully described or even acknowledged in Appendix 3. The

proposed update would bring the Appendix in line with G2 and reflect current Committee composition.

iii. Changes to the Services Officer role description

Constitution currently reads:

*Is responsible for organising the allocation of College accommodation to undergraduate members*

Requested Change would re-write:

*Oversees the running of the rooms ballot in Lent term in partnership with the Vice-President*

Explanation:

Reflects current practice

iv. Changes to Officer Titles

*Constitution currently refers to Target Officer and Geema Officer*

Requested change:

To use the titles proposed and passed at the Michaelmas 2006 Open Meeting for these officers – ‘Access Officer’ and ‘Ethnic Minorities Officer’ respectively

Explanation:

These titles were changed in order that they are more descriptive of what the roles entail. This change is acknowledged in G2. of the Constitution but not in Appendix 3.

iv. Inclusion of the Les/Bi/Gay/Trans Officer in Appendix 3

*Constitution currently omits the Les/Bi/Gay/Trans Officer from the Officer role descriptions in Appendix 3.*

Requested Change would insert the following role description:

***LES/BI/GAY/TRANS OFFICER***

*Responsible for the welfare of all students at Downing who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender.*

*Provides support for those who may be questioning their sexuality; for those who have concerns or want support in coming out; for those who have religious questions regarding their sexuality.*

*Responsible for issues connected with the sexual health of LBGT members of the College.*

*Acts as a reference point to the wider CUSU LBGT Campaign providing information on events, activities, meetings, and to liaise with the Executive of the Campaign.*

*Responsible for maintaining Downing’s image as a LBGT friendly and supportive College.*

Explanation:

This very important Officer has been in existence for several years and its omission from Appendix 3 is an unusual oversight in need of rectification.

**Aim 3.) To introduce a new Senior Officer of the JCR Committee: the Bar/ Ents Liaison Officer**

A. Constitutional change to G4 and Appendix 3

Background:

Both the JCR and Bar Committee feel that the current arrangement between the Bar and Ents Committees is unclear and inefficient with regards to the organisation, staffing and supplying of alcohol to college Ents. It was decided in negotiation between both Committees (Chaired by Peter Bartlett) that this situation should be remedied as it is beneficial to neither committee financially or in general. To this end, the JCR and Bar Committees signed a contract on \*\*\*\*\* outlining a new arrangement regarding the organisation and running of Ents.

This contract includes the creation of a JCR Senior Committee position, the Bar/ Ents Liaison officer, which shall be held by the Bar President. The creation of this Officer role was brought to Open Meeting on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November and passed as a separate motion to the other proposed constitutional changes. It is described below in the requested change to the Constitution.

Requested Change:

G4. The insertion of the Bar/Ents Liaison Officer into the JCR Senior Committee list

Appendix 3. The insertion of a role description of the Bar/Ents Liaison Officer as follows:

***BAR/ENTS LIAISON OFFICER***

*A non-elected role, which shall be held by the Bar President as voted by the Bar Committee*

*Acts as an intermediary between the Bar and JCR Committees and specifically the Ents subdivision.*

*Sits in on JCR Committee and Senior-Committee meetings in a non-voting capacity (as it is an appointed rather than elected position), in order to ensure the Bar Committee is well-informed about the JCR Committee's actions, and vice versa.*

*Responsible for organising meetings between the Ents and Bar Committees at least every two weeks*

Explanation:

The insertion of the Bar President into the JCR Senior Committee would allow for relations between the two Committees to become closer and stronger, and facilitate the implementation of the new contract drawn up between them.