

JCR Extraordinary Meeting - Friday TT20/6, 5pm

Chair: Matt Carlton

Secretary: Augy Allain-Labon

Returning Officer: Rhiannon Percy

1. Report from the President

I've just signed a letter from ACS to the university. (Mandi: it's about how the uni is going to back up its statement on social media with action). Thank you Mandi for the crazy amount of time you've put into this. Thank you Beth, Hannah and Effie for working on the motions.

I'm raising a motion at PresCom about the ChCh issue.

Meeting with Helen, also with MCR, about what we can do in college to improve things. Will circulate an email to Equal Ops Reps etc. with a proposed agenda.

Beth: Judith is taking our concerns to Helen, a welfare-focused take on it.

2. Motions

Racism at Christ Church will not be tolerated

The JCR notes that:

- Racial inequality is a problem we all have a duty to fight
- College administrations, JCRs, MCRs and SCR's together are representative of Oxford University as a whole
- Any incident of potential discrimination, whether it be because of race, sex, gender, disability or other protected identity must be investigated in an open and transparent manner
- Christ Church JCR TT20 Cake hustings candidate (Redacted) made a crude, callous and insensitive analogy about George Floyd
- The JCR president of Christ Church sought to prevent other JCRs from debating these issues by appealing to the presidents of these JCRs to abuse their powers in his favour

The JCR believes that:

- When one college fails to uphold the principles of equality, other colleges have a duty to call it out

- In making their crude comment on George Floyd, the Christ church JCR candidate exhibited exceptionally poor judgement
- The Christ Church JCR President and committee failed to deal with this issue appropriately
- Calling out insensitive racist remarks made by office holders across the university is a duty for all of us
- Christ Church JCR committee and the Christ Church deans have sought inappropriate and wholly oppressive measures against a student who sought to challenge a racist and insensitive comment
- That the statement provided by Christ Church on this matter failed to adequately apologise for their efforts to other and shame Ms Onovo in to keeping quiet about the incident for fear of their own reputations.

The JCR resolves to:

- Condemn Christ Church JCR president and other committee members who were negligent in their duties
- Condemn the Christ Church deans for their handling of the situation.
- Affirm their support for Ms Melanie Onovo
- Request the public and wholehearted apology of the JCR committee and Christ Church deans for their actions
- Refuse to accept any collaboration project with Christ Church until these measures are carried out.

Proposed: Mandi Furaji

Seconded: Beth Jones

SFQs:

Gemma: what form will this take? letter, statement? What platforms?

Mandi: a statement from the Corpus JCR, and perhaps something similar to what ChCh did in putting it on their JCR website

Lil: usually it's best to mandate an officer - matt?

Ava: do we still work with Christ Church on individual-based stuff?

Mandi: Yes as long as they've signed individually

Debate:

Amendment (Gemma): to mandate Matt and Zaman and any other member of the JCR which the president wishes to help, to draft and release a public statement. To mandate them to publicise it as widely as possible.

- Taken as friendly

Roman: what do we want to do with people who make these sorts of statements in future? What's the ideal situation with the person who says this?

Mandi: an apology is the first thing, that's probably all they can do.

Roman: Is there any threat for a lack of apology?

Zaman: I had heard that the chch jcr president prevented the person from publicly apologising

Matt: This person was stupid, but it sounds like a lot of the fault is with the JCR and the college

Mandi: The JCR President tried to block the apology (the original person who said it wanted to apologise). The important thing is that there are measures in place so that in future it can be dealt with much better

Sneha: the dean also really responded awfully

Beth: it's also the ChCh management that's at fault, institutionally. It's also about supporting Melanie emotionally, and reprimanding the people who have tried to manipulate her emotionally.

Helen: There are so many more people than just the JCR president and committee members who are at fault. Also, does 'other committee members' mean everyone in the JCR committee?

Mandi: the other committee members didn't say anything, or support Melanie - so they're oking the behaviour in essence. As for the other people who have been commenting, the message behind the refusal to collaborate is that all are at fault unless they've taken action (e.g. supporting Melanie, signing petition)

Lil: it's about the structures that have failed Melanie, so it's fair to condemn the whole committee.

Mandi: agree, the structures must work against all forms of racism.

Ava: could we extend the condemnation to other members of ChCh who have spoken against Melanie?

Beth: not just ChCh

Sneha: there was a horrible OxHate, which was anonymous

Mandi: we could have this as one of the closing parts of the statement: we condemn any behaviour that is siding with the President or abusing Melanie.

Amendment (Phil):

Condemn the ChCh TT20 committee and those in our community who support such hateful actions and inactions, and those who failed to support Melanie.

- Taken as friendly

Zaman: do we want to include something to say we will work with individuals at ChCh who have signed the petition

Amendment (Zaman):

To add the clause to 'Refuse to accept any collaboration project with Christ Church until these measures are carried out' the exception of any individual at ChCh who has signed the petition in support of Melanie.

- Taken as friendly

Ava: should we write a personal letter to her expressing our support as well?

Mandi: she's very overwhelmed atm. I'm not sure if she needs that right now.

Beth: we sent her a message saying if you need any support, we are happy to extend Corpus' welfare provisions to you.

Hannah: just sign the petition that goes around, that's a good way to show personal support.

Matt: I will sign it as the JCR

Gemma: FYI, Senior Censor is academic, junior Censor is non-academic; Oxford in a nutshell grr

Amendment (Libby): to mandate Matt to bring to PresCom the condemnation of the Censor (Geraldine) and the Junior Censor

- taken as friendly

Amended motion

The JCR notes that:

- Racial inequality is a problem we all have a duty to fight
- College administrations, JCRs, MCRs and SCR's together are representative of Oxford University as a whole
- Any incident of potential discrimination, whether it be because of race, sex, gender, disability or other protected identity must be investigated in an open and transparent manner
- Christ Church JCR TT20 Cake hustings candidate (Redacted) made a crude, callous and insensitive analogy about George Floyd

- The JCR president of Christ Church sought to prevent other JCRs from debating these issues by appealing to the presidents of these JCRs to abuse their powers in his favour

The JCR believes that:

- When one college fails to uphold the principles of equality, other colleges have a duty to call it out
- In making their crude comment on George Floyd, the Christ church JCR candidate exhibited exceptionally poor judgement
- The Christ Church JCR President and committee failed to deal with this issue appropriately
- Calling out insensitive racist remarks made by office holders across the university is a duty for all of us
- Christ Church JCR committee and the Christ Church deans have sought inappropriate and wholly oppressive measures against a student who sought to challenge a racist and insensitive comment
- That the statement provided by Christ Church on this matter failed to adequately apologise for their efforts to other and shame Ms Onovo in to keeping quiet about the incident for fear of their own reputations.

The JCR resolves to:

- To mandate the President and/or Equal Ops President to:
 - Condemn Christ Church JCR president and other committee members who were negligent in their duties
 - Condemn the ChCh TT20 committee and those in our community who support such hateful actions and inactions, and those who failed to support Melanie.
 - Condemn the Christ Church deans for their handling of the situation.
 - Affirm their support for Ms Melanie Onovo
 - Request the public and wholehearted apology of the JCR committee and Christ Church deans for their actions
 - Refuse to accept any collaboration project with Christ Church until these measures are carried out, excepting any individual at ChCh who has signed the petition in support of Melanie.

- Along with any other member of the JCR whom the President wishes to help, to draft and release a public statement. To mandate them to publicise it as widely as possible.
- To bring to PresCom the condemnation of the Censor (Geraldine) and the Junior Censor

Proposed: Mandi Furaji

Seconded: Beth Jones

Vote:

Yes 30

Abstain 1

Call to release diversity data

This JCR Notes

- The University of Oxford has decided to delayed publishing diversity breakdowns of admissions data. The data, which is released each year after the admissions cycle, breaks down the diversity of student intake by ethnicity, age, gender, disability, economic background, school type, and geography. (<https://www.theoxfordblue.co.uk/2020/06/04/oxford-university-delays-publishing-diversity-data/?fbclid=IwAR27YBUz7wttZDaAwonRcL7SR1fLSsY12lUXHYkxfYILEvgJDhm2Cg8PQow>)
- This was justified because:
 - ‘As world events have escalated over the last ten days, it became obvious that now was not the time to share this content’
 - ‘The delay also allows us more time to work on announcing our commitment to outreach through our digital outreach programmes, which are being delivered despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and particularly the closure of schools since March 2020.’
 - ‘Cambridge will not be publishing its admissions data until late June’

This JCR Believes

- It is more important now than ever to be transparent about diversity within Oxford
- Delaying the release of admissions statistics appears to be an attempt to avoid the heightened scrutiny that the University believe they would subjected to as a result of current world events.

This undermines the aim of the **BLM** movement to create permanent systemic change in society.

This JCR Resolves

- To mandate the Access Officer and the President to work on a statement from the Corpus JCR to call for the immediate release of the diversity data.
- To mandate the President to circulate this statement to other JCR Presidents to encourage all Oxford colleges to take similar action

Proposed by: Hannah Taylor

Seconded by: Matthew Leech-Gerrard

SFQs:

Debate:

Ava: can we condemn Cambridge for doing the same?

Matt: did Cambridge choose to delay because of this specifically?

Lil: I think these are usually at the same time.

Hannah:

Matt: all JCRs need to message Presidents and Senior Tutors about this. It's on the agenda for PresCom tonight

Amendment (Ava): Add to TJR: To condemn any other academic institution which has similarly delayed it.

- Taken as friendly

Rhi: [read by Matt in proxy] "The diversity data pertains to so much more than race and actually focuses on the intersectionality of many of Oxford's shortcomings in respect of admissions. To phrase the demand for admissions data purely in the context of it undermining the **BLM** movement is highly passive of many of the other struggles faced by those trying to get into Oxford. I personally feel that to bring this motion on that "this JCR believes" point alone is exclusionary and makes the struggles of those who faced ableism, class struggles, gender and sexuality related oppression, those in caring capacities or from difficult home lives, those who overcame religious adversity, international students and so on seem secondary concerns of the motion. Just because these struggles aren't in the media at current it doesn't make them any less valid reasons for scrutinising the admissions data. In times such as this where many of the most vulnerable applicants are excluded from usual support and outreach channels we need to be mindful as a JCR to act in support of **ALL** of these people as a reason for demanding admissions data and ultimately calling

the university out for its shortcomings on all these fronts. For this reason I believe that the “ this JCR believes” part of the motion should be revised.”

[Rhi wrote more which she requested to be unminuted]

Matty: I disagree with changing the ‘TJB’ part, which is similar to the ‘All Lives Matter’ idea . The university’s decision to delay the release wasn’t to do with all the other issues which . If they’re tired, and that’s the reason, then they should’ve said that. I don’t think it should be not minuted.

Sampada: I agree, we shouldn’t move it away from race. Also I just think there's lots in the statement rhi’s made that doesn't seem relevant? like I get tutors are tired - but don't really see why we care wrt this particular motion?

Sneha: also along w sampada's point - im confused why this gets in the way of sorting out Michaelmas & making sure new freshers are safe

Ryan: I think rhi was saying that the university staff are currently focused on planning for michaelmas and on running remote exams rather than analysing the data and publishing things about it.

Matty: so why didn’t they use that as their justification?

Ava: it’s much more deterrent that the perception of the institution should be as one that covers up statistics

Matty: if they think admissions stats look bad, why are they bad in the first place?

Zaman; should we add to TJN to add the acknowledgment that this is not just race-based data? This data is used to analyse the progress of the university in reaching various equality goals. All the data is extremely important.

Hannah: I don’t mind putting this in TJB

Ava: This isn’t about us making a point about diversity, it’s about the delay. The delay is focused on BLM

Sneha: we are directly condemning the fact they delayed it due to BLM

Mandi: also it's implicit in it being called equality and diversity that the date encompasses all equality and diversity issues

Rhi: I want to clarify. I merely said the universities thing just as an insight into the kind of response you might get from the uni. Just say we acknowledge all that is going on, just please take into account these reasons why we want the data. I personally felt that a lot of the struggles I faced in coming to Oxford was understated in the motion. We shouldn’t be avoiding the issue of race, but we should do this from the perspective. I was upset today by this because it seems like my challenges were minimised.

Hannah: the reason why they delayed was because of BLM. I'm sorry for any offence caused, I didn't mean it to.

Matty: I know about privilege and I've experienced some of the same difficulties. We don't want to take away from BLM. It sounds like the 'All Lives Matter' argument. We'll keep working against all the other inequalities. It justified the delay based on the media backlash. Nothing in the motion contradicts our support for those who suffer different disadvantages to BME people.

Rhi: just a line in the motion saying that the admissions data represents everyone. It shouldn't come at the expense of wider issues of intersectionality. I just want an acknowledgment that there are other things that the university needs to change. From an intersectionality point of view, BLM does interplay with these other issues.

Sneha: we want the data for all those issues but they're holding it back because of BLM

Ava: the reason why is because we need to condemn the delay for this reason. Any mention of anything else undermines the overall point.

Florence: the statement I read said world events, which I also read as encompassing covid. I think we should recognise the difficulties for them as well. Immediate release is not necessarily possible.

Ava: understood but covid has been around for months

Hannah: no it's basically just linked to BLM.

Matty: they said the last 10 days.

Hannah: the exact wording as follows: 'The University of Oxford was scheduled to publish its annual Undergraduate Admissions Report this week. However, as world events have escalated over the last ten days, it became obvious that now was not the time to share this content. In fact, some headline admissions figures have already been published, in January this year, and revealed that the University is now attracting more ethnic minority students, including Black students, than ever. Having already shared this core information, it felt deeply inappropriate to publish content that could distract from the important challenges and debate facing our society at this time and try to draw attention to our own progress on the figures. The report will therefore appear later this month.'

Lil: they would've said covid explicitly if it was covid

Florence: fair enough. But I would like to acknowledge the difficulty: they're working from home, furloughed etc.

Sneha: is it a matter that they've got the data and they're withholding it? or that they just haven't gotten around to gathering it?

Ava: nobody's trying to attack uni staff personally. It's not up to us to start mincing our words just because someone might be tired at home.

Roman: the situation now doesn't warrant such a delay

Ben: if they have the data why is it more difficult to put into a word document at home than at work?

Gemma: they need to be held to account as an institution, isn't about individual staff at all

Hannah: it implies that they've already got it ready

Sneha: stop giving them the benefit of the doubt; also their statement implies that they have so much to hide because of how not diverse we are, so it's soooo important that we call it out

Matty: They'll have got it ready already.

Sampada: also their statement implies that they have so much to hide because of how not diverse we are, so it's soooo important that we call it out

Nicole: So diversity does not constitute part of "the important challenges and debate facing our society at this time"? I agree with Ava in that we are specifically addressing the use of BLM as a problematic excuse to delay releasing - not analysing/gathering, but releasing.

Helen: They haven't said that they're not doing it because they're tired etc. It says because this isn't the time

Matty: we need to put people's lives and equality first.

Ava: there's an assumption that the results would be inflammatory. This is problematic

Amendment (Zaman): to add to the JCR notes section: "This data is extremely important in holding the university to account on its diversity goals."

- Seconded: Florence

- taken as unfriendly

- Debate on Amendment:

- Zaman: I'm not asking for mention of any other intersectionality issues.

- David: the wording 'in the last ten days' definitely refers to BLM, though that's not necessarily 100% obvious

- Vote:

- 17 Yes

- 4 No

- 4 Abstain

- Amendment Passes

Amendment (David): to add the TJB, before the part that starts ‘delaying’: In reference to the situation of the last 10 days, the university justified their delaying of the stats on the grounds of the current global conversation around George Floyd and BLM.

- taken as friendly

Amended motion:

This JCR Notes

- The University of Oxford has decided to delayed publishing diversity breakdowns of admissions data. The data, which is released each year after the admissions cycle, breaks down the diversity of student intake by ethnicity, age, gender, disability, economic background, school type, and geography. (<https://www.theoxfordblue.co.uk/2020/06/04/oxford-university-delays-publishing-diversity-data/?fbclid=IwAR27YBUz7wttZDaAwonRcL7SR1fLSsY12lUXHYkxfYlLEvgJDhm2Cg8PQow>)
- This data is extremely important in holding the university to account on its diversity goals.
- This was justified because:
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This JCR Believes

- It is more important now than ever to be transparent about diversity within Oxford
- In reference to the situation of the last 10 days, the university justified their delaying of the stats on the grounds of the current global conversation around George Floyd and BLM.
- Delaying the release of admissions statistics appears to be an attempt to avoid the heightened scrutiny that the University believe they would subjected to as a result of current world events. This undermines the aim of the BLM movement to create permanent systemic change in society.

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- To mandate the President to circulate this statement to other JCR Presidents to encourage all Oxford colleges to take similar action
- To mandate the President to condemn any other academic institution which has similarly delayed it.

Proposed by: Hannah Taylor

Seconded by: Matthew Leech-Gerrard

Vote:

23 Yes

1 No

Notes on procedure

Matt: we should send a message to Rhi expressing our apologies if any personal offence was caused during that debate.

Zaman: we should be very careful about criticising people personally, as opposed to criticising their arguments.

Beth: it's really difficult because she brought her own personal experience into the argument. just to clarify I am very happy to message rhi on behalf of welfare, but equally don't think anyone has to feel bad about how the debate was held. just an unfortunate set of circumstances regarding the fact we were halfway through debating already when she got the chance to make her point (like gemma said). She is under a lot of pressure at the minute and a show of support is never a bad thing

Zaman: I think I heard some personal stuff being said.

Lil: welfare should definitely reach out to Rhi, but we shouldn't get into who said what about who.

Gemma: part of this comes from her coming in late, and this became a personal thing partly because of the way in which she entered late, we need to be more careful about procedure in general in the future.

Constitutional Amendment to rules on charities

This JCR notes -

- That in the extraordinary JCR meeting, we pledged to spend £2000 to be donated in accordance with the charities survey, taken from the charity levy when it was next raised
- That no further action is required

- However, we normally raise ~£3000 from the charity levy
- But for Michaelmas Term of 2020, we would only have ~£1000 to spend on charities
- That V. 38. I of the constitution states “The Charities Levy shall be set at the third JCR Meeting of every Trinity Term by the RAG and Charities Officer by means of a Special Resolution, and shall be valid for one year”
- That if we wanted to increase our charity levy total for Michaelmas Term 2020 so that we have more to donate (only if we want to), we would need a constitutional amendment, allowing us to change the charities levy outside that aforementioned framework
- That constitutional amendments require 2 meetings to ratify, meaning this would only be ratified at the Week 2 meeting of Michaelmas Term 2020
- That once ratified, a one-term increase in the Charities Levy (as detailed in the ‘resolves’ section) can be passed in that same meeting
- That that meeting will occur before battels are issued, so this change can be implemented in time
- People can still opt-out as usual, if they don’t wish to pay

This JCR believes –

- That more money for charity is good

This JCR resolves –

- To amend the constitution, to add a clause after V. 38. I stating “That the Treasurer and Charities Officer, by means of a special resolution, can together propose a one-term increase in the total of the charities levy, within the bounds of the levy cap”

Proposed: Tyron Surmon

Seconded: Lilya Tata

SFQ:

Lil: is this the first or second time?

Matt: It’s the first. This is to allow a larger charities levy next term to recoup the loss

Vote:

19 in favour, 1 against

3. Any other Business