

## Women's Campaign forum 25/1/18

Minutes from the second Women's Campaign forum of Lent term, hosted by Lola Olufemi, the Women's Officer, at 7pm in the Grad Union Lounge.

Committee present: Alex Rowe (Open Portfolio Campaigner), Miriam Gauntlett (Secretary), Claire Sosienski Smith (Zine Officer), Ellie Byrne (Non-binary Rep), Emrys Travis (Disabilities Rep), Sian Creely (Grad Rep), Cora Chalaby (Open Portfolio Campaigner), Arenike Adebajo (BME Rep).

### Agenda points:

#### 1. Committee Updates

Claire: Submit to Gender Agenda, theme Survival! Submission deadline 21<sup>st</sup> Feb

Em: Launching decolonising MML stuff tomorrow – survey, event, photos. Share it please!

#### 2. Decision on Open Letter

Lola: Agreed amongst committee + forum that 1 of priorities working on reform of disciplinary procedure. Reason why important – once you get to the end of new centralised sexual assault procedure OSCA can only make informal suggestions on ways to move forward. Complainant + respondent both have to accept terms. If both don't agree, referred onto disciplinary procedure. Takes a long time, relies on criminal burden of proof. People's engagement with institution stops there – less than 5 people use it per year. Most people don't know about it, v archaic, resembles a court. Asking for criminal burden of proof to change to balance of probability. People in the university have also been wanting this to change. Even if letter itself doesn't make a big impact, important to show what Women's Campaign opinion is. WomCam critiques of university led to establishment of Breaking the Silence. Run letter by OSCA – closest institutional ally we have. Also show it to receptive faculty members.

Lola: Any ideas, feedback, ways to follow up?

Arenike: Points raised by Emmanuel Women's Officer RE a recent case college had to deal with:

- Anonymous testimonials cannot be given so a student had to identify themselves within disciplinary procedure.
- Disciplinary procedure have memory of past cases, if a perpetrator has case made against them will there be
- Can't do college procedure at same time as uni procedure, can you do one after the other?

Lola: Depends on the outcome.

- Can't start procedure at the same time as a police case.
- Policy outlining rules for carrying out university procedure at the same time as police case?
- University follows requests from the police to do things.

Lola: can incorporate those into demands in the letter. We also want to make it clearer what the university can and can't do

Cora: People need to know about the exact policy change. People aren't aware how to act within the new procedure so we need greater distribution to students via pigeon holes, wider circulation of information.

Alex: Does the university claim to have the same resources / scope as the police do?

Lola: No, they don't.

Alex: Maybe make this a bit clearer in the letter.

Em: Yes exactly, how can we rely on criminal burden of proof that requires deep investigation that they just don't do?

Lola: Is everybody happy with the letter and for me to pass it by some members of the law faculty?

Yes.

Lola: Cambridge statistics from anonymous reporting come out on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb so could include those if we wait until then.

Ellie/Cora: Yes that would be good

Lola: Then plan is: share as widely as possible, get a copy to Women's Officers, make sure people can access it and sign it. Get student press coverage too!

### 3. CUSU Elections

Lola: CUSU elections happening this term – week 4/5 onwards. When they're happening: consider all options carefully. Enabling/supporting work that liberation campaigns do relies on people voting in elections especially for Women's Officer / President!

Lola: Please get in touch with me if they'd like to be WO. I personally think WO is best job! Student-facing role, your membership just women + nb people. Facilitate campaigning work of WOs within colleges, get invited to cool events etc. Would love to talk it through with anyone who is considering running!

### 4. Anti-heteronormativity party? Themed forums?

Lola: anti-valentines/anti-heteronormativity party day before Valentine's Day? Had this in my first year hosted by WomCam, was really fun!  
Yes!

Claire: was thinking of doing a zine launch for Zodiac Zine so I can do that then as well!

Lola: Will let people know what day we can do that!

Lola: If there are any specific topics that people would like to cover at forum, please let me know!!

### 5. Posters & Exhibition Chat

Lola: WomCam putting on exhibition 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> March at Churchill, theme is feminist survival and persistence. Any women / non-binary people are welcome to submit. Would be great to have as many as possible.

Lola: Have posters to put up around colleges

Claire: Is there poetry reading on opening night?

Lola: Yes! If anyone wants to do that please get in touch, email address is on the FB event or on the posters so just email that.

### 6. Forbes Petition

Lola: Student at Christ's was in abusive relationship with ex-partner, whom Christ's has nominated to be on the Forbes 30 under 30 list. Because of charges against him regarding criminal damages + the written/physical abuse, we are circulating a petition asking for his removal from the list. His supervisor was on the panel of people who chose

who got to be on the list. Next to no repercussions for someone who is an abuser is unbelievable. She's written a really extensive blog on intimate partner violence and her experiences. Women 18 – 24 are most likely recipients of that kind of violence so important to share the blog and sign petition.

## 7. Oxford Feminist Conference

Lola: Speaking to welfare officer at oxford, who is putting on feminist conference with workshops, speeches from activists and academics, what it means to bridge gap between theory and practice. She's helpfully offered to book a coach to go to Oxford on a Saturday in February. Will start Google Doc for people that are interested. All seats will be free! Event – will add everybody to it – that lays out in more detail what is happening.

## 8. Supporting Strike Action

Lola: UCU planned a strike for university staff members over fact that pay is precarious at the moment. Would be great if women's campaign could show solidarity with that strike. At CUSU council somebody brought a motion on the strike – as officers we are all mandated now to support strike, but would be great to support the strike separately as a campaign. Banner making.

- Statement of solidarity to go alongside it too

Lola: CUSU were going to do a solidarity rally, would be great if everybody could come.

- Organising meeting for postgrads via CDE to discuss solidarity action with the strike. Keep an eye out for that!
- WomCam making an infographic, what is a strike, what does it mean, etc. Could be useful information for people.
- Is it teaching staff?

Lola: I wasn't at CUSU council, but to my knowledge what was passed is that the union is showing solidarity / supporting. Not going to lectures on the day the strike was happening was discussed – maybe for a week, not sure how organised that is going to be. Completely depends on when it's happening, which members are striking etc.

- Could do reading group / alternative teaching on that day!

## 9. Decolonise Zine

Lola: Waithera, previous women's officer, wanted me to announce that a zine on decolonisation / decolonising. Will be a call for submissions of essays, artwork, etc, to educate people and to get information about what decolonising is out to lots of people to keep up morale and momentum. Lots of people being met by unreceptive departments, no time deadline for demands. Important to have a record and way to disseminate information. WomCam website / fb page will publicise them!