

## **Forum 10/10/2017**

Minutes of the first forum of Michaelmas term, hosted in the Grad Union lounge at 7pm on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017 by Lola Olufemi, the Women's Officer.

**Committee present:** Alex Rowe (Open Portfolio Campaigner), Christie Costello (Open Portfolio Campaigner), Christine Pungong (Open Portfolio Campaigner), Anna Pick (Media & Outreach officer), Miriam Gauntlett (Secretary), Flic Kersting (LGBT+ rep), Ellie Byrne (non-binary rep), Claire Smith (Zine officer), Cora Chalaby (Open Portfolio Campaigner)

### **Agenda points:**

#### **1. General Welcome and Explanation of Forum**

Lola: Forum is the policy making body of women's campaign. Every woman / non-binary person automatically a member, can submit a motion that they think WomCam should be working on. At forum we come to consensus on whether that's a good idea – work by general consensus. Motions to discuss / discussion items that we make decisions about. Items that I'd like everybody's input on. Figure out direction of WomCam.

Lola: Safe space policy for forum: accept people's experiences, try not to interrogate/question each other's experiences. Use hand signals (BSL) to indicate agreement, disagreement etc. Raise your hand if you'd like to speak. Feel free to leave at any point. Toilets nearby. Can ask at any point for the discussion to stop.

#### **2. Committee Member Updates**

Anna: Supporting Lola in publicising events, updating people on what events going on, manage social media websites, helping with new website. Creating resources section on website. New Instagram.

Ellie: Running discussion groups with Flic.

Flic: Running discussion groups joint with Ellie and LGBT+ campaign. Campaigns on sexual health for queer women.

Mira: General plan for year = organise forums on international feminism. In contact with a South African filmmaker – series produced in Cape Town about intersectional feminism, want to organise screening of it.

Christine: Podcast on experiences of women + non-binary people in university, first one with Audrey, former women's officer. Want to share with ppl both inside and outside uni who find it difficult to access feminism.

Claire: I organise the Gender Agenda zine which is WomCam's creative outlet!  
Submit anything to [womens@cusu.ac.uk](mailto:womens@cusu.ac.uk)

### **3. Upcoming Events**

Lola: 13<sup>th</sup> October: panel on feminist work & justice work with Sisters Uncut, Feminist Fightback, SWARM and Action For Trans Health. Asking organisations what they do, discussing what feminist work entails, bridge the gap between theory + practice.

Lola: 26<sup>th</sup> October event about new university sexual assault procedure. Will cover history of activism against sexual violence in Cambridge + demystify new procedure.

### **4. Update on Breaking the Silence and explanation of new policy**

Lola: Breaking the silence = new initiative started by the university. It includes: updating the dignity at work policy, new sexual assault procedure, creation of OSCA. Launch date = 24<sup>th</sup> October. Release a video, campaign materials, give to colleges. University finally thinking about misconduct and campaigning about it. Good to be aware of.

Lola: Rundown of new sexual assault procedure, developed by OSCA. Submit form to OSCA, assign an independent investigator to the case. Carries out investigation, make a report with suggestions eg perpetrator moving to another college. Failure is that suggestions taken on board only with agreement of perpetrator + complainant. If no agreement reached, move to university disciplinary procedure. Works on criminal burden of proof. Want to push university to change from criminal burden of proof to balance of probability. Basing justice on legal framework will fail survivors and has failed

### **5. Trans admission working group announcement**

Lola: Use momentum of Medwards accepting trans women to push Newnham. 14<sup>th</sup> October, meeting of the working group. One of women's campaign's priority campaigns.

### **6. Cambridge Rape Crisis Fire Walk**

Lola: CRC fundraising for one-to-one counselling sessions. Fire Walk to raise money.

### **Discussion points:**

### **7. Gender Agenda**

Lola: Theme this term is New Beginnings. In past GA opened to everyone to submit. GA came about from women feeling isolated from main bodies in the university that people could submit writing to. Some committees made submissions open to everyone, some issues open only to women + non-binary people e.g. the three last year. Want to vote on whether it should stay that way or open up to everyone.

### **Points raised:**

Claire: Our forums are women + non-binary people. Want a vote on it because non-binary friends who are more masculine want to submit... But don't want someone who can easily write for Varsity/the Tab etc to just submit all their stuff.

Christie: Keep it women + non-binary, it's an outlet for us. I would want it to be filtered if men could submit.

- If the point of GA is to showcase the women's campaign + the people the campaign's for, makes more sense for it to be women & non-binary only.

- Trans people could relate to GA as a whole. Have experienced oppression.

CS: Anonymous submissions, so if people don't want their name on it. Not opening it to all genders but with anonymous submissions trans people etc can still submit I hope.

- Is there an LGBT+ zine?

Claire: Yes, Get Real is run by LGBT+ campaign.

Christie: Some non-binary people might feel not comfortable submitting stuff which is part of wider problem of non-binary people not feeling comfortable with WomCam in general.

- LGBT+ zine: queer male voices too loud in queer scene, so would be great if a queer-focused zine from WomCam would amplify voices of women + non-binary people.

**Vote:** Should submissions to Gender Agenda be from women and non-binary people only?

**All in favour. No abstentions.**

### **8. Campaigns: Burden of Proof/Balance of Probability**

Lola: Want thoughts on burden of proof vs balance of probability.

- What process do you have to go through to change it? Is there a legal reason why burden of proof is used?

Lola: Institutions consider the law as most credible thing but OSCA uses balance of probability, other university policies use it as well.

- It would be helpful to go for using practices from other universities, getting reviews / surveys from them.

Lola: Do we trust the institution to provide justice to people who need it?

Martha: Anonymous reporting tool has had over 100 reports of harassment – good way to prove that things are happening but not being reported officially. People don't believe that they going to get justice from current system.

Christie: Has anyone asked the university why they use it?

Lola: In contact with head of OSCA – they said that there was desire from other university bodies to get criminal burden of proof. So need evidence form students. Want to make an open letter / petition and circulate it to show uni that balance of probability is a better way to go about getting justice. Difficult for survivors to get/keep medical evidence particularly during undergrad years.

- Can we draft it together in a WomCam forum? Further develop it into how balance of probability can be applied to other forms of harassment e.g. stalking, domestic abuse. Accepting narrative evidence rather than concrete evidence.

Lola: Show that domestic abuse connects to sexual misconduct.

Martha: It's important to move away from a legalistic framework but does anybody know someone in the law faculty / an academic that could help out?

Alex: Law fellow at Jesus that helped draft the college sexual harassment policy that could help out.

Anna: Get stats about how few false accusations there are to combat point that there will be loads of false accusations.

## **9. Committee Elections**

Lola: Grad Rep, Trans Rep, Disabilities Rep not filled. By-election happening next forum. If you identify with any of those roles please apply. Relaxed elections, people talking about themselves for a minute, then in-person voting.

## **10. Organisations to Support this Year**

Lola: WomCam supports 2 organisations. Any ideas for organisations that do good, inclusive political work?

Sisters Uncut

Women's Aid – support a lot of students in Cambridge particularly.

Women's Centre in Cambridge

Cambridge Rape Crisis

FLY

Any organisation working to get abortion rights esp an Irish group/org

Lola: Traditionally WomCam has always supported Abortion Rights UK, but can look into supporting Repeal the 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **11. Statement about WomCam accessibility**

Lola: I want to include people who can't physically make it to forum. Release statement that way meetings are structured is that people can submit motions, proposals or anything they want to discuss, and then they can read minutes and see what discussion points raised. Clarify what we do. Make minutes publicly available through the bulletin. People usually setting agenda are those in the room so hopefully this can help expand the Women's Campaign.

**End of agenda points / discussion.**