



# *the* DURHAM UNION

STANDING COMMITTEE: TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2024

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**In Attendance:**

Jerry Li – President

Oliver Dawson – Treasurer

Oliver Lycett – Secretary

Ben Daunter – Custodian

Reece Short – Social Secretary

Anna Beskhmelnitskaya – Publicity Officer

Miles Weekes – Equalities Officer

**Apologies:**

Charles Aldous – President-elect

Severino Bonvini – Debating Treasurer

The Secretary is taking the minutes.



### **Item One: Update on Events**

The President gave a summary of progress made regarding the organising of events for Michaelmas Term. He commented on headway made towards the programme of debates, as well as the plans in place for the Intervarsity Debating Competition with Oxford and Cambridge.

The President noted the confirmation of speakers including Sir Anthony Seldon, Richard Tice and Chris Kamara, as well as progress for the careers workshops. He also commented that the target is to reach a handful more speakers for addresses. The Custodian noted that we should endeavour to confirm as many women as possible. The Treasurer concurred, and mentioned that invites have reflected an even split between men and women, just that confirmations have been greater in number for the former. Nevertheless, the committee agreed that plans for invites should continue to attract as many female speakers as possible.

### **Item Two: Freshers' Instagram**

The Treasurer inquired about the timetabling of posts for the Instagram page. The Publicity Officer commented that her handover is yet to occur, although the meeting suffered from technical difficulties at this point.

### **Item Three: Freshers' Week and Socials**

The President discussed plans for better incorporating international students into plans for the freshers' drive – nominally, leaflets in foreign languages. The committee noted that 24s would not be open during International Freshers' Week, although members agreed that a solution should be found – i.e. a different venue.



Plans for a freshers' social are underway – scheduled for the first week. There are also plans for a freshers' bar crawl in the first or second week, alongside an Oktoberfest event. The committee noted the importance of a structured publicity timeline regarding freshers' week and the Michaelmas Ball. The committee agreed upon an informal deadline of A-Level Results Day for publicity graphics. A similar deadline was agreed upon for the Secretary to have contacted College Principals regarding permission to advertise Term Cards in College.

#### **Item Four: Associate Membership Scheme**

The President updated the committee on a recent meeting with South College Principal Tim Luckhurst. The committee discussed how we could make Associate Memberships more appealing to university staff and the local community alike. The committee recorded an interest in making the scheme free. It was held in consensus that the primary aim of the scheme is to make allies within the university, and extend something of an olive branch to college principals.

#### **Item Five: Student Speaker System**

The President noted the importance of getting as many members involved as possible – citing a sign-up link on the website. The committee agreed that posting this on the weekly email would be helpful. Committee discussed society engagement could work parallel to this to bring fringe members into the fold. The committee noted historic inconsistencies regarding similar efforts last term. The Social Secretary raised the idea of greater transparency in the selection process to introduce increased consistency. The committee noted the idea of using polls in the standing group chat to approve student speakers.



### **Item Six: Intercollegiate Debate**

The President suggested running the Novice Cup as an open debating competition, stressing the idea of tapping into college competitiveness as a way of enhancing the freshers' drive. He advocated the introduction of the intercollegiate dimension. Whilst the committee was sceptical of the potential for membership boost, it concluded that such a plan would be worthwhile in promoting Hill engagement and enhancing the role of Secretary's Committee Members. To limit fatigue and retain interest, the committee agreed upon roughly three rounds to be held in Michaelmas. The details of this issue will be further discussed in future meetings.

### **Item Seven: Welfare Officer Selection**

The Equalities Officer stressed the need to setup the appointments process for the new Welfare Officer. The committee agreed, with the process lasting two weeks. It was agreed that the Secretary would advertise this to the membership via an email by Friday 28/06. The exact wording of the email will be confirmed by Standing Committee before this date.

The meeting was adjourned at 19:59.

The next meeting will take place in two weeks, subject to availability.