

# Murray Edwards MCR constitution update

## How does this work?

- Any member of the MCR can ask questions during a two-week period from 14<sup>th</sup> Feb to 27<sup>th</sup> Feb.
- The motion to accept the whole constitution must pass by 2/3 vote of those present at the meeting.
- We can only pass motion if at least 1/8 of MCR members are present.
- Individual points do not need to be voted on.

# Murray Edwards MCR constitution update

## Process we must follow

- MCR sub-committee
- MCR committee
- College Senior Officers
- **MCR Open Meeting**
- College Council

# Guiding principles

## Why did we do this?

- ▶ Constitution cannot cover everything - it should outline the minimum and empower the MCR and committee
- ▶ Ensure compliance with College and University statutes, and National law (Education Act 1994)
- ▶ Devolve decision-making power back to the MCR and to reduce the work required to make decisions
- ▶ Provide flexibility to future MCRs, without losing structure and clarity
- ▶ Allow for remote participation where possible (online voting, proxies, committee meetings)
- ▶ Remove anachronisms (eg: New Hall name, lectrices and librarians!)

# Membership of the MCR

## Old clause

- ▶ Three levels of membership
- ▶ Included librarians, lecturers
- ▶ Used our own definitions
- ▶ Rights limited by constitutions
- ▶ Full members:
  - ▶ all grad students
  - ▶ affiliated students - ie: 2nd undergrad degree
  - ▶ mature age students
- ▶ Associates: n/a
- ▶ Affiliates:
  - ▶ 4<sup>th</sup> year undergrads

## New clause

- ▶ Two levels of membership
- ▶ Only includes students
- ▶ Uses Grad Union definitions for consistency
- ▶ Rights decided by MCR with college staff
- ▶ Full members:
  - ▶ GU full members (grad students)
  - ▶ Clinical students (4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> year)
  - ▶ Others as we decide
- ▶ Associates: GU 'non-graduate members'
  - ▶ including mature age students, (affiliated students), 4<sup>th</sup> year undergrads
  - ▶ Others as we decide

# Election procedure

## Old constitution

- ▶ Internally inconsistent procedure (eg: call an open meeting vs hold an election, nominations remain open indefinitely)
- ▶ Unclear in parts
- ▶ Encouraged tactical nomination
- ▶ In practice: uses CUSU online vote (ERS97-STV)

## New constitution

- ▶ Option A:
  - ▶ MCR to submit annual proposal for elections to college
  - ▶ Allows for flexibility (eg: choose between online voting or show of hands at meeting)
  - ▶ Returning Officer must not be anyone standing for election
- ▶ Option B:
  - ▶ Essentially the same as current procedure
  - ▶ Clarity around multiple nominations, casual vacancies

# Casual vacancies and resignations

## Current procedure

- ▶ When a member resigns, immediately hold an open meeting and an election
- ▶ But also: a second clause says usual election procedure to be followed
- ▶ In practice, causes extra stress for committee and resigning member for no real benefit

## New procedure

- ▶ When a member resigns, committee can decide to:
  - ▶ leave vacant
  - ▶ co-opt a new member
  - ▶ recount original ballot
  - ▶ hold an election
- ▶ Role must be open for election at next scheduled election
- ▶ Up to 3 positions can be filled by co-option before an election must be called

# Removing committee member

## Current procedure

- ▶ If certain conditions are met, member is removed, triggering casual vacancy procedure
- ▶ Only allows removal for lack of commitment, not for misconduct
- ▶ To remove a committee member for other reasons, an extraordinary open meeting must be called
- ▶ This is unclear for members, undignified for people involved and does not allow for new situations
- ▶ Currently this procedure is defined by council, not by students/college

## New procedure

- ▶ A committee code of conduct will lay out clear expectations
- ▶ A grievance policy and disciplinary procedure will clarify for committee members and whole MCR how disputes can be remedied
- ▶ These documents are yet to be drafted, but power will remain with MCR to implement these, rather than council
- ▶ Also allows for removal of a general MCR member

# Open meetings and committee meetings

- ▶ All members will now be able to assign a proxy to vote and speak on their behalf at open meetings (and potentially elections)
- ▶ Committee meetings can be held remotely (by Skype, Slack etc) and committee meeting procedure clarified
- ▶ Notifications to members: for open meetings and similar, reporting procedure is now consistent
  - ▶ 10 days notice of meeting
  - ▶ 3 days notice of agenda, motions, nominations etc
  - ▶ by email and on MCR noticeboard)
- ▶ NB: members retain the right to hold the committee accountable for any decisions by calling for an Extraordinary Open Meeting



# Other minor updates

- ▶ Name: New Hall to Murray Edwards College
- ▶ Membership opt-out procedure: to comply with law
- ▶ Officers: clarified roles and optional titles for social secs, general members
- ▶ Terms of office: clarified start of term and length of term for committee members
- ▶ Financial provisions: reporting procedures clarified and compliant with law