

CUSU Affiliation: A Fitz JCR Report

Scope:

This report is an update of the one published by the Robinson College Student's Association. It sets out the services that Fitzwilliam College's JCR currently receives from the Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU). NOTE: By 'JCR', it refers to the vast majority of Fitzwilliam's undergraduate student population, not the committee that represents them. It specifies the services which would be lost upon disaffiliation from CUSU and any general consequences. In the interests of impartiality, no opinions are offered, only facts.

Contents:

- I) **The Current Situation**
- II) **Services the JCR receives due to its CUSU Affiliation**
- III) **Services individual JCR Members receive as individual CUSU members**
- IV) **Consequences of Disaffiliation**
- V) **Consequences of Affiliation**
- VI) **Specific Issues:**
 - a. The Societies Fair
 - b. NUS Affiliation
 - c. JCR Constitutional Issues Surrounding Disaffiliation

Appendix: CUSU Funding

I: The Current Situation:

- The JCR is affiliated to CUSU.
- Affiliation costs £2,881 (430 undergraduates costing £6.70 each) this year, almost three times the JCR budget for 2014 (the JCR budget for 2015 has not yet been confirmed).
- Each member of the JCR is a member of CUSU individually. JCR disaffiliation from CUSU would not affect the individual membership of CUSU by JCR members.

II: Services the JCR receives due to its CUSU Affiliation:

*These services would be **LOST** upon disaffiliation.*

- All voting seats for JCR representatives on CUSU Council (CUSU's decision-making body which determines CUSU policy and budget priorities).
- Access to training for committee members to "improve effectiveness in their roles". This includes ongoing training for access and welfare officers.
- Membership of the various CUSU committees which allow easy liaison with other colleges, including:
 - CUSU Presidents' and External Officers (Fortnightly meetings and a Facebook group allowing JCR Presidents/Vice Presidents to connect with each other, ask questions etc.)
 - CUSU Welfare Officers' Meeting.
 - CUSU Women's Council.
 - CUSU Access Officers' Network Meetings.
 - CUSU Academic Affairs Officers' Meetings.
- Potential CUSU support for the JCR in the event of confrontation with our College Authorities (e.g. over rents).

Alex Cicale

- Access to college-specific survey data from the Big Cambridge Survey and other sources.
- Guidance in designing, analysing and presenting results from surveys to college committees.
- Support in planning college-level campaigns from professional staff and experienced sabbatical officers.
- Use of CUSU electronic voting software.
- Free pregnancy tests for distribution to students **by the JCR Welfare Officers**. Students will still be able to individually receive free pregnancy tests by ordering them from <http://www.studentadvice.cam.ac.uk/welfare/pregnancy/test/> and they will still be delivered to their pigeon holes.

III: Services individual JCR Members receive as individual CUSU members:

These services would be **RETAINED** upon disaffiliation.

- Free sexual health supplies and the necessary sexual health training for JCR officers (that which is required to operate the sexual health scheme).
- Membership and full involvement in CUSU's Shadowing Scheme.
- The ability to individually receive free pregnancy tests.
- The right to stand for/hold CUSU positions.
- The right to attend CUSU Open Meetings.
- Use of:
 - The CUSU Mail Service.
- Access to:
 - the Student Advice service,
 - the Societies Fair,
 - the Autonomous CUSU Campaigns (BME, Women, LBGT, International and Disabled).
 - The support of CUSU Welfare Officers.
- CUSU Publications:
 - The Cambridge Student,
 - CUSU Freshers' Guide,
 - the "Cambridge Guide",
 - Oxford and Cambridge Careers Handbook
- CUSU representation on the University Council.
- CUSU liaison with Cambridge City Council (on cycle safety, street lighting, etc.).
- Use of the University Counselling Service.
- CUSU representation on the following University Committees: (*list is exhaustive*)
 - 800th Anniversary Steering Committee
 - Access to Learning Fund, Committee on
 - Accommodation Syndicate
 - Admissions Forum
 - Advisory Group on Communicable Diseases
 - Aldwych Group
 - Board of Examinations
 - Bursars' Sub-Committee on Rents and Charges
 - Careers Syndicate

Alex Cicale

- Childcare for Students, Joint Committee
- Committee on Community Activities
- Council, University
- Council Business Committee
- Counselling Service Executive Committee
- Disability Forum
- Disability, Joint Committee on
- Disability Resource Centre, Management Committee of
- General Board
- General Board Education Committee
- Health Services, Committee of the Management of
- HIV and Sexual Health Working Group
- Language Centre, Committee of the Management of
- Levies, Joint Working Party on
- Library Syndicate
- Learning Landscape Project
- Mature Students Working Party
- Outreach Steering Group
- Peer Support Advisory Group
- Planning and Resources Committee
- Plagiarism Steering Group
- Resource Management Committee
- Standing Advisory Committee on Student Matters (SACSM)
- Safety, Consultative Committee On
- Senior Tutors' Committee
- Senior Tutors' Committee, Welfare and Finance
- Senior Tutors' Committee, Education
- Societies Syndicate
- Societies Syndicate Technical Committee
- Theatre Syndicate
- Undergraduates Admissions Committee

Consequences of Disaffiliation:

JCR members would cease to receive the services and representation rights listed in **Section II**.

JCR members would continue to receive the services and representation listed in **Section III**.

If the JCR were to disaffiliate, CUSU would lose 0.33% of its budget. If the JCR disaffiliates then CUSU might possibly have to reduce the services it provides as a result. Affiliation fees from colleges currently make up £101,600 (11.7%) of CUSU's £867k annual budget. This has been declining in recent years as the majority of its income continues to be raised through charitable trading. CUSU has also frozen its JCR

Alex Cicale

affiliation fee at £6.70 per student for several years, so in real terms the income it receives from JCR committees has fallen.

It is likely the JCR would be subject to the criticism of being a ‘free-rider’ were it to disaffiliate. This is because Fitzwilliam’s undergraduate students will go on being individual members of CUSU and having representation at a University level through the organisation, but the JCR will not as a corporate body continue to contribute to any services that they use. JCR disaffiliation, though it’s unlikely, could also encourage other college student bodies to follow and such a mass disaffiliation would impact on CUSU services that JCR members receive.

The money saved from disaffiliating would **NOT** automatically revert to the JCR Committee. Instead, it would go to its student focused holding organisation – the Junior Members’ Association – where its Executive Trustees will decide how this money is best spent. It could go to the JCR Committee or the numerous other student-run societies/sports teams in Fitzwilliam amongst other uses. The final use of this money will depend on arguments of merit. Further consultation with College authorities is necessary to clarify this. What is guaranteed is that the money will go directly towards student use, not ‘the College’.

V: Consequences of Affiliation:

Very few. The JMA will pay the £2,881 annual fee on the JCR’s behalf and everything continues as before i.e. all services in **Section II** and **Section III** will continue to be available. These services would only be placed in jeopardy by mass disaffiliations by other Colleges’ student bodies.

VI: Specific Issues:

a) The Societies Fair:

- CUSU has previously claimed that they would be unable to run the societies fair if too many colleges disaffiliate. The Societies Fair made a profit of £55,829 last year with a large chunk (a £66,640 turnover) coming from sponsorship.
- It is argued by CUSU that the Sabbatical Officers and other staff spend time preparing the fair which is not accounted for in the budget figures. It could however be argued that this work is accounted for as part of their salaries (£17,657 pre-tax), however CUSU consistently asserts that Sabbatical Officers work longer hours than they are contracted for.
- It therefore seems unlikely that the Societies Fair would be affected by JCR disaffiliation.

b) National Union Of Students (NUS) Affiliation

- All JCR members would still be affiliated to the NUS through their individual membership of CUSU.

c) JCR Constitutional Issues Surrounding Disaffiliation:

- Various JCR Officers (Vice President and Welfare Executives) are currently obliged in the JCR committee’s ‘Standing Orders’ to attend various CUSU meetings.
- If the JCR were to disaffiliate from CUSU it would be difficult, perhaps impossible for these officers to undertake these duties.
- This could be resolved by removing the obligation to attend these meetings if the JCR were to disaffiliate, by amending the relevant clauses of the standing orders to read “when affiliated, attend”. This amendment will have to be made by a resolution approved by a two thirds majority of Officers of the JCR Executive Committee and if not contested by the JMA Executive Trustees. The proposed change to the Standing Orders must be presented to the JMA Executive Trustees at least seven days

Alex Cicale

prior to their next meeting. This **must** be done soon as the next meeting after February 10th will be on the 5th of May 2015.

- If the JCR voted to disaffiliate these amendments would need to be passed prior to disaffiliation.

Appendix: CUSU Funding

- All figures have been taken from CUSU's latest budget at: <http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/nusdigital/document/documents/9113/bc50a1ce628bc49ff0b0bcbd7bab7b79/CUSU%20Budget%202014-15.pdf>
- CUSU claims that it doesn't want to charge affiliation fees and is actively working to have them abolished and replaced with a new income stream to support its work. It argues that Cambridge, as the richest university in Europe, spends less on its central students' union than any other Russell Group university, meaning that affiliation fees remain a vital financial source. The average block grant for a university-wide students' union (the money provided by the University which they can freely choose how to spend) is £1.5 million. CUSU's is a little over £2000.