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Evian Politics

The Politics team fly to France, while News seek refreshment from Vanbrugh retail

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UNIVERSITY OF YORK STUDENT NEWSPAPER

No Questions Asked

SERVICES OFFICER, James Byron came under attack on Tuesday Week 7 when an anonymous question submitted to the UGM forced him to explain the circumstances surrounding the controversial recruitment of former Ents officer Adam Green to assist in the running of this year's Graduation Ball.

The so-called Gradball has caused headaches for Byron since the autumn term when it was revealed that a return to, last year's venue, Elvington Airfield would be impossible. These fresh criticisms come as 300 tickets remain unsold and the Gradball committee struggle to secure an after dinner speaker.

To many the employment of a Gradball manager might seem a prudent move to add professionalism to the project, however the underhand circumstances in which the appointment took place have led to accusations of 'cronyism' and 'cliquiness' from former members of SU exec.

Byron has been slammed for awarding the £600 a month salary with:

- No Job Title
- No Advertisement
- No Interviews

Byron admits to having considered employing Green before Christmas, yet the decision was never discussed by the Gradball Committee, nor was it raised at YUSU Exec.

A spokesperson for the Equal Opportunities

Commission commented that, though not illegal, Byron's actions may be "against the employment policy of the institution involved, and internal complaints may be appropriate".

A former member of YUSU exec blasted "this Union is supposed to be about equality and student development - I can't believe this appointment is constitutional". Although not explicitly covered in the YUSU constitution it is clear that such practice exploits a loophole in the system, as such favoritism would be unacceptable for deciding posts on exec, union committees and even within ratified societies.

"THIS IS A FAILURE ON MY PART, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN HOW DUBIOUS IT WOULD APPEAR"

JAMES BYRON, SERVICES OFFICER

Under the policy of the National Union of Students (NUS) the actions would have been condemned as entirely unfair, but another loophole became apparent when the NUS stated "Students' unions however are independent employers and it would be inappropriate for us to comment on any individual employment matters within a member union."

The University too is critical of such behaviour, clearly stating that "all vacancies must be advertised internally and externally, using local or national media

as appropriate". Simply by failing to do so could be seen "as prima facie evidence of a breach of equal opportunities legislation."

With such pressure from the NUS, the University and from within the Union itself it is unsurprising that Byron was cagey when interviewed by *nouse* stressing that "Gradball is an £80,000 event which needs to be treated professionally". He went on "Adam [Green] has worked on two previous Gradballs, and has vast Ents experience. I know I can work with him, and trust him".

He went on to state that, despite the Unions equal opportunities employment policy, appointments similar to this one have occurred in the past: "we've been doing this for years, its just no one's pulled us up on it until now"

Regardless of this, in the wake of claims of student apathy and recent Union elections which focussed on removing the clique-iness which infests YUSU Byrons actions, by his own admittance, "relect badly in terms of an open union".

Byron refutes the suggestion that hiring professionals is a reflection on the abilities of Gradball Committee, however the fact remains that no such paid "assistant" worked for last years gradball.

It remains to be seen if Gradball 2003 will succeed, but if it doesn't, then serious questions will be asked regarding the legitimacy of Adam Green's involvement.

As a "Gradball Assistant" is employed by the Students Union -*nouse* has to ask: isn't this what we pay James Byron for? And shouldn't he have let someone know before employing his best mate?

News Editor Ben Crawley holds interviews to find out why James didn't.



Mary Who?

Turn Inside to find out who's been nominated for University Chancellor, so secret the university press office doesn't know, but *nouse* does!

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