



reports to 1st week council hilary 2006

Emma Norris

President

Finances

As you all will have heard, the Vice President (Finance) conducted a financial review over the Christmas vacation that revealed serious miscalculations in the budgets produced last year. The VP (F) and I have proposed a motion to Council which will be part of a preliminary 'recovery plan'. It is important to stress that any cuts voted through in Council are an indication of the measures Council is willing to take in the 'worst case scenario'. The VP (F) and I will bring another motion to Council indicating exactly how much we will need to save once discussions with the University are completed. It is then that Council will be asked to vote binding changes through.

In terms of University help, I am happy to report that after a meeting with the University's Director of Finance, it has been agreed that the OUSU salary bill (which the University pays then invoices us for), will be suspended until next November. This leaves us enough cash to avoid short-term problems, and hopefully to replenish our reserves by the end of the year.

NUS affiliation

The Vice President (Access and Academic Affairs), the VP (F) and I had a meeting with the Treasurer of the NUS just before Christmas. He has indicated that the NUS will offer Oxford central affiliation to the NUS, for around £10,000 in total. This is a saving of tens of thousands of pounds on our current total affiliation charges, and will cut down NUS affiliation fees to around £250-400 per college.

Central affiliation has drawbacks too though, including a decrease in the number of delegates we can send to the NUS annual conference, and the legal requirement to elect those delegates in the OUSU statutory elections, rather than in-college.

I expect formal confirmation of this central offer in the next 10 days, which will be circulated to all common rooms for discussion in JCR meetings. There will then be an open meeting for students to voice any concerns they have with the offer we have been made. There will be another discussion with the NUS if there are changes to the offer suggested at the open meeting. Then (finally).. We will hold a referendum on the question of central affiliation. This will most likely be Thursday of 6th week.

Socially Responsible Investment

The paper on Socially Responsible Investment will hopefully be finished by Friday evening (after Council). There are then plans to take it to University Council in 5th week, with the support of Joint Committee of Council with student members. The paper will be brought to OUSU Council in 3rd week. This is an important step in the SRI campaign – it finally forces the University to engage with the debate. There are plans for a two week focused campaign leading up to University Council, starting with a speaker event in 3rd week, a petition in 4th week, and a demo outside Council in 5th week.

Sub fusc

OUSU has had policy on making sub fusc optional (for exams) for years, but nothing seems to have been done about it. After talking about it with the proctors, and common room presidents, we thought it was best to try and gauge student opinion. You'll see from the Council agenda that there will (hopefully) be an indicative poll on whether to make it optional. If students decide no, then our policy can be changed to reflect this, and if students decide yes, then the proctors have indicated that they will be happy to work on this.

Living Wage

The Living Wage campaign (created in Council last term) has so far asked every college for information about the working conditions of low paid workers, under the Freedom of Information Act. We have received a few helpful replies, but by and large a blanket email refusing to answer our enquiries. We are attempting to re-word our request to achieve better results.

Alongside this we have contacted UNISON, who are currently involved in pay negotiations, and they seem keen to work with us on Living Wage, should opportunities for collaboration arise.

Finally, we decided that to raise the profile of this campaign, we would produce a 'booklet of testimony'; aimed at highlighting the individual situations of some of the lowest-paid University staff. I

have contacted Oxford Muse, the foundation working to improve alternative forms of communication, who may provide a training workshop for anyone interested in helping produce the 'booklet of testimony'.

OSS

Tim Bennet and I read through over one hundred applications to the Oxford Student Scholarship, and managed to shortlist about 15. These were submitted to the colleges that indicated interest in taking a scholar. I have now heard back from the International Students' Office, who report that 2 of the shortlisted applicants have been offered places at Oxford (an improvement on last year's 0...).

OUSU cards

At last! OUSU cards arrived in the offices on Tuesday, and are being dropped off with college OUSU reps on Thursday. They have names and colleges on them, so all you need to do is attach a passport photo. We ordered quite a few spares, so if you have any problems with the cards, or lose one, please get in contact with me and we can arrange a new one.

Aidan Randle-Conde	V-P	(Welfare	and	Equal
Opportunities)				

Hello again! This is a rather rushed account of what has happened since 7th Week of last term:

Accommodation

The Accommodation Office are being wonderful. They have been in to the OUSU offices 4 times to run the housing advice surgery and will be back 3 more times. So far they have seen about 95 students and given them the free housing list, Living Out Guide, City Council Guide for Private Tenants and much more. The Accommodation Office really is the one-stop shop for all housing enquiries and unlike every other service out there, they can and will help impartially with disputes too.

The Accommodation Office are also on tour, visiting colleges. If you would like a visit from them at a CR meeting, or similar then contact them direct on 2(80803) or contact me at (2)88461. As ever, it's all free and it's a great service. So far they have been to Balliol, they're currently at New and they're more than willing to see others too.

More publicity for the housing surgery will follow. Many thanks for all the publicising that has already taken place- it's made a difference already!

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day is going along well. Publicity has gone out to all the colleges. Rather than a single day, there are actually 6 events taking place, so spread the word!

Condom machines

All the condom machines have arrived (3 days late) at OUSU. Most of them are now with Common Rooms, but Queens, Brasenose, Teddy Hall and every south of High Street will have wait a little longer I'm afraid. We were delivering until 11pm last night and at the point we called it a night, as most lodges close around that time. We'll pick it up again as soon as possible.

Welfare Handbook, LGBT Handbook, Living Out Guide, Disabilities Action Guide, OUSU cards

Along with the condom machines, I've been delivering welfare publications and the OUSU cards. They should all be in lodges in JCRs in the next few days. Again, if you're south of High Street I'm sorry that we didn't get to you last night.

Condom machine condoms

We'll have a stock of condom machine condoms in shortly. Apologies for the delay- again this is due to the financial situation requiring attention right now and taking priority.

Close Campsfield

There have been a few Close Campsfield meetings since last Council when it became a Priority Project. All the meetings have been outside office hours, as promised and so far have not conflicted with any welfare meetings. Close Campsfield now has an Executive Officer (Rob Robinson) so we're going to be pursuing student society status, although obviously other events in OUSU have sort of taken over since then and the finances come first.

Publications review

I've started undertaking the publications review with Alice Wilby. The first set of motions are there today. Please ask questions in debate, not in reports!

Other stuff

Much of the rest of the work has been Student Advice Service work and day-to-day running of OUSU. In summary, since the end of 8th week I have worked 226 hours 45 minutes and according to my contract I'm expected to have worked 167 hours and 30 minutes.

Thanks

Thanks go out to everyone really. To the old and new Exec, to the Sabs, to the Office Staff, to the Accommodation Office and to everyone who helped with the delivery yesterday.

Ellie Cumbo	V-P (Women)
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This week: gobbets.

End of last term:

Reclaim the Night March – Over a hundred people turned out to participate; I'm told we could be heard several streets away. Excellent speakers at rally afterwards, including volunteers from the Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre (who will be receiving the bulk of the profits from VDay), Jo Salmon, NUS Women's Officer, and Dawn Hodson, County Domestic Violence Co-ordinator for the Safer Communities Unit.

Women's Officer Dinner – The bit where I lost my wallet and phone aside, this was a great evening in a gorgeous setting. I was able to meet more Women's Officers than I had before, to talk informally about the kinds of issues WomCam tackles, and in one case to introduce the JCR Women's Officer to the MCR Women's Officer of the same college! Yes, bring on the sponsors – I want to do this more often.

Ongoing projects:

Finals Gap – The University is keeping OUSU updated on their own research into this, so I'm able to back up ideas or suggest new ones based on what students who completed the survey have said. The focus now is on changing the focus from a few progressive departments to the University as a whole; I will be attending Senior Tutors' Committee in a few weeks to monitor the situation.

VDay – Chugging along nicely; we have a director, a Production Manager, an army of volunteers, a venue and dates, funding from RAG and will have a cast by Monday. We just need a fabulous poster design, if anyone out there is feeling creative...

Student Parents

The alumni magazine Oxford Today has been following my efforts to highlight the disadvantaged position of student families as compared to staff families in the University. They originally planned to feature a small article on it in their December issue; now they are planning a full page feature, with first-hand accounts from student parents. This will be in April, following the outcome of the University's Childcare Review, in which I am participating, and following OUSU's attempts to lobby JCC on the subject too. As ever, our primary aim is to get the University to provide a central list of student parents so that resources can be provided to them specifically, and early enough to be of some use.

New Initiatives:

Sex Trafficking Forum – We hope to hold a panel discussion to tie in with Amnesty's Sale Must End campaign, which will also touch on the overall issue of prostitution, on which even feminists tend to take very different views. We hope the event will pick up the thread of last term's very successful Reclaim The Night March, and continue OUSU's active opposition to violence against women.

Women's Open Day – This will hopefully be in 4th Week. The plan is that this should be held jointly by Merton and Corpus Christi; I just have to pin them down to the same date now! The event is likely not be advertised in the University Prospectus, but via a Target Schools mailing, as it is an access initiative which happens to be aimed specifically at women.

Finals Forums – My plan is to provide seven sessions in Maths, Engineering, Biology, English, Classics, Economics and Modern History. The response from tutors has been highly encouraging, even

from those who are too busy to participate themselves. If you feel a specific female tutor would be particularly good (knows her stuff, not too scary), please let me know.
Next week: an acrostic. Maybe.

Oliver Russell

V-P (Graduates)

Today I have had meetings with Executive colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this Council I shall have other such meetings later today...

OSSL Board

To report that I was elected to the OSSL Board in the first Exec meeting of the new team and will henceforth, along with Emma, Marco, Dave, Chris, Rob, Hannah and Ellie, be accountable to you (within the law) for its actions.

International Students Committee

The ISC lobby of the House of Lords over Visa Appeal Rights for international students is going well. I have had positive replies from a number of former Oxford peers who will be speaking and voting on our behalf and the tenure of the debate so far has been very positive in getting the government to back down on this issue.

Sau Wai and I have completed the structural changes to the ISC itself with working groups established for Cohesion, Cultural Welfare, Social Welfare and Academic

Most importantly we will be holding our first major event on Thursday of 3rd Week. Recognising that many international (and home) students wish to work in the US or UK after finishing studying we will be holding a seminar with some top London lawyers to explain the issues and guide people through Green Card application and the HSMP (Highly Skilled Migrant Programme). Please inform your Common Rooms. It will be in the Keble O'Reilly Lecture Theatre at 8pm on Thursday 2nd February (3rd Week)

Libraries

Along with the VP (AccAcAf) I had a fun field trip with a minibus full of librarians to a Levi Straus factory in Northampton (the glamour never stops in this job) to inspect their Automated Stack Recovery System to see whether we would want to use a similar one in the proposed Oxford Depository on Osney Mead.

More seriously is the issue for which I must beg pardon for introducing as an Emergency Motion on such an important Council as this; but I was only sent the University's intended decision on library opening hours on Wednesday.

MCR Presidents' Committee

I met with the MCR Presidents in 9th Week to discuss mutually beneficial strategies for running graduate common rooms. We shall be having dinner again next week (possibly in Lincoln) so watch this space.

Charlynn Pullen

V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

Things I have done since last council:

Target Schools has been a major thing through the beginning of this term, as I am currently organising our flights and accommodation for the trip to Belfast, Derry, Enniskillen and Norwich. We are planning to do the mailing on Wednesday from 2pm; any help would be greatly appreciated. The Alternative Prospectus is back, thanks especially to Chris, Rob and Rich who have done a great job, and this means we can get our mailing out early and start getting bookings for our events.

The Admissions Working Party Report was released into the public on Wednesday of 10th week and much of the press coverage showed a genuine lack of research. I was in contact with the press officer over most of this time, and University letters and articles were sent off to the papers in droves. I sent a letter to the Telegraph stating the Student Union's position in terms of our current policy. Target Schools had a fruitful discussion about the report this week and I hope to bring a motion for 3rd week council outlining our ideas about the report.

The NSS has also taken up quite a bit of my time. I attended a conference in London run by HEFCE and Ipsos on the NSS and was fortunate enough to see my colleagues from Warwick and Cambridge

there as well. The policy we passed was disseminated throughout other Aldwych Student Unions and some have passed policy that largely resembles ours. Warwick and Cambridge will continue their boycott, and CUSU are even producing posters this year against the NSS.

Libraries is a constant source of work, last week in the form of a champagne reception (at 10.30am) for the official opening of Isis, a new flexible e-learning space that some of you may experience as part of your study. Also, as Curators of the University Libraries, myself and Ollie went to visit a Levi's factory in order to see what the proposed University automated book stack will look like, which was actually far more interesting than it sounds.

I have been looking into the possibility of running **exam technique/revision** sessions to complement the finals forums we already run. There will be more on this at a later date. I have also attended many university and executive meetings.