

# OUSU

## reports to council

*1st week hilary term 2009*

**Lewis Iwu**

**President**

Dear Students

I hope you've just enjoyed the Christmas break and are looking forward to this term.

### **Staffing**

On behalf of the Student Union I would like to thank Maria Burgess for her dedicated work to the Student Union over the past decade and beyond. She has been a real asset to the Student Union and will now leave in order to pursue new projects. I would also like to welcome Karen Irving who will act as democratic support for the next three months. The Student Union will be reviewing its staffing over the next week or so

### **Rent and Student Finance**

I will mention more about this in my oral summary but just to mention that the rent committee met on Thursday under the chairmanship of Jamie Susskind. The economic circumstances that we now face will in my opinion have a considerable effect on students. Family budgets will tighten affecting the income of students, the number of part time jobs will shrink and graduate jobs will be hit. These factors and others should push rent and student hardship to the top of the agenda for those within the student political movement and as ever OUSU will do all it can to ensure that no student gets left behind. More than ever a Student Union is crucial in ensuring that the University and Colleges do not use students to pass off their deficits.

### **NUS Conference**

On Tuesday I attended the second extraordinary conference to ratify the new constitution. Last term I brought a motion supporting the new NUS reforms and on Tuesday those reforms were passed.

**Rosanna McBeath**  
**Opportunities)**

**V-P**

**(Welfare**

**and**

**Equal**

Hello all!

I hope you had fantastic holidays and have come back well rested and ready for term!! I was unfortunately a little held up returning from my holidays, so managed to miss all of 0<sup>th</sup> week! But I'm back now and really looking forward to the term ahead!

As I've been back in the office for about 5 hours before writing this report its going to be fairly short, sorry! I promise I'll have an extra long one to make up for it next week!

Our first welfare officer meeting will be at 5.30 on Thursday in the OUSU offices, If you could please remind your college welfare officers that would be fantastic! I am also starting up this term fortnightly meetings for college Equal Opps officers. Our first meeting will be at 5.30 on Thursday of 3rd week. Please let you college officers who have a remit in any area of equal opportunities know. The meeting will take place in the OUSU offices. I hope to see lots of people there.

Also on the topic of common room officers, I am trialling a new form of training sessions this term. Instead of holding training sessions for welfare officers on the weekend, I'm going to break the training

up into topic specific workshops running through out the term. It'll be broken into three main topics, listening skills, how to be a caseworker, and then resources. There will also be other workshops looking at specific areas, such as equal opportunities. Since many members of Common Room committees will find themselves in situations where listening skills are important, not just welfare officers, and I hope we can provide some basic training. The first meeting will be on Tuesday of 2<sup>nd</sup> week at 5.30 in the OUSU office. It shouldn't last more than an hour. I hope to see as many of you there as possible!

I will be meeting the Auditors for the QAA this week, as well as Keith Zimmerman, the head of Student Services. On Wednesday we had a talk about accommodation in Oxford in conjunction with the Accommodation office. On Monday next week we will be having a Breast Cancer Awareness event at 5.15 in St. Peter's College. It will include information topics such as how to check your own breasts. I will also be continuing working on preparations for Mental health week.

If you have any questions, comments, please ask me, or drop me an email!

Hope you all have a fantastic 2<sup>nd</sup> week!

Welfare love!

Rosanna xx

**Rachel Cummings**

**V-P (Women)**

Over the last few weeks I've been updating my information on **college women's officers/female welfare officers** and contacting newly elected ones to let them know about OUSU's resources. I created a **welcome-back-to-Hilary pack** for each one including a copy of the eating disorders handbook, unplanned pregnancy guide, student parent handbook, women's officers guide as well as posters and leaflets for common rooms. If your women's officer did not receive a pack and would like one, let me know ([women@ousu.org](mailto:women@ousu.org)).

I met with Leyla Okhai, the University's Race Equality Officer and Felicity Cooke, head of the Equality and Diversity Unit to discuss the issue of **forced marriage**. As a result OUSU's welfare pages have been updated to include information about the issue and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Forced Marriage Unit have sent me booklets, posters and even a DVD (let me know if you'd like some of these resources for your common room). As a further result of the meeting the Equality and Diversity Unit are liaising with the Council to ensure the University has a fully 'joined up' response if this issue is to arise to staff or students, and are updating their own website accordingly.

The **domestic abuse section of the OUSU website** has also been updated so as to be a useful resource for both welfare/women's officers and those suffering. To ensure we have fully trained welfare providers to deal with such issues I have also organised **a training session on sexual violence**. This is being run by the County Council's Co-ordinator for Sexual Violence, the City Council's Co-ordinator for Domestic Abuse and two specially trained police officers. The event, taking place on Friday 2nd week, has been advertised to welfare officers, women's officers, college nurses, doctors, chaplains, junior deans, Nightline volunteers, peer supporters and staff from the counselling service. It is however open to anyone, so spread the word and email me if you want to come. Thanks very much to Alex Bulfin for helping me get a room in Univ.

I've been assisting the Union with it's new **Women's Initiative**. In 9th week last term I sat on the interview panel for the new Women's Officer, where Kirini Kopcke was appointed. The

Women's Initiative was launched on Wednesday this week with great success and I will be attending the Union's 'where are all the women' forum this evening.

Another project which I will be working on this term, is the **Women Report 2009** (prizes for anyone who can think of a less ridiculous name). It'll be research into all aspects of University life where information can be broken down by gender. This position needs more coherent, researched information to understand where best to work in the future so the report is intended to help focus both my own campaigns and those of the coming years. Currently sections on student numbers and admissions statistics have been completed. If anyone would like more information on the project or has any thoughts, that'd be great, just contact me.

In addition to these projects two **Tea and Toys**, the student parent event, have taken place over the holidays. **Enough!** (the support group for people with disordered eating) had it's first meeting back on Tuesday and WomCam is it's usual vibrant, active self. If anyone wants to take part in **WomCam's Skydive** for Refuge, the domestic violence charity, as always get in touch.

**Kaushal Vidyarthee**

**V-P (Graduates)**

Welcome back everyone, and Happy New Year!

University Committees: - Even though I was off to India for three weeks during this break, I've been to many university committees since the last OUSU council. Those are Graduate Admission Committee, ICT Committee meeting, MPLS Divisional Board, OUCS Management Committee and the University Council. I also attended meetings with proctors, the officials at the careers services and the University Officials for QAA-Pre-visit. At the MPLS Divisional board meeting, we discussed a proposal to develop a Divisional induction course for incoming DPhil students. Moreover, I am happy to tell that after many discussions the Careers Services is organising the International Careers Event for the first time.

I will be joining the Quality Assurance Working Group of the Conference of Colleges, which considers the returns colleges make to the annual exercise of collecting reports of academic provision and reviews the accompanying Notes for Guidance.

Last Friday I gave presentation on 'student life at Oxford' and 'what OUSU does for students' to new international students (mostly visiting and PGR students) joining us in this term.

International Students' Campaign- I will be meeting co-chairs, international students' officer and chair of the festival committee this week to discuss the term plans. The campaign committee will be meeting on Sunday for their first meeting.

Mature Students' Campaign – I am looking forward to meet their working group to discuss about constitutional issues and plans for the term.

Student Advice Service: I've had few case-works and am getting back to them.

MCRs, OUSU Reps & Junior Deans- I will look into ways of communications with MCR committee members and OUSU reps to improve our engagements with them. During this break I worked on updating MCR officials database on googledoc. This term I am planning to compile an up-to-date list of graduate students who work as Junior/ Assistant Deans, and would love to set-up a mailing list for them to support them and to allow them to meet each other.

Postgraduate Assembly: I am still setting up a PGA review group. I hope to get this sorted asap.

**Paul Dwyer**

**V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)**

Here we are, a new year and a new term to go along with it! (And what better way to start it than with a cliché!).

Over the holidays I finally managed to submit the Student Written Submission for the QAA institutional audit that is being carried out over the course of this term. The document in its final draft ran to 56 pages, and if anyone would like to see a copy of what we submitted then please let me know ([access@ousu.org](mailto:access@ousu.org)) and I will email you a pdf version.

While on the subject of the QAA, the involvement of the Student Union does not end with the written submission. By the time you have read this (or at least pretended to!), a number of representative from the OUSU executive, alongside JCR and MCR representatives will have met with the university auditors on their briefing visit, and will have hopefully impressed them with our dazzling wit and irresistible charms. I will make sure to fill you all in on how the visit went during my pre-council update.

In other news, this term will see the debut of the Target Schools Shadowing scheme, which will hopefully prove to be a large step forward in the continuing expansion of the Target Schools programme. Over 300 undergraduates applied to be shadowed by students, and we are only sorry that we could have them all involved, as it is truly fantastic to see such a dedication to access projects on the part of the Oxford Students. There will be 100 students coming from year 12; 50 in 3<sup>rd</sup> week, and 50 in 6<sup>th</sup> week, and I will make sure to update you as they happen.

I have a few things up my sleeve to make sure that the term ahead allows OUSU to move forward when it comes campaigning to the university. As VP Boring, I will be working hard on a number of issues, ranging from access to examination scripts, through to feedback provided to undergraduates, in order to make sure that Oxford students have the fairest possible deal when it comes to their academic affairs.

If anyone has any questions about my work this term, or about the work I have done so far, or just wants to drop me an email, then please feel free! I have much planned this term, and I hope that by the end of it I will be able to look to Trinity and look forward to the prospect of finishing what I started. (Said in my best Sylvester Stallone voice). I hope you all have a good Hilary term, and a very happy new year to you all! As always, if you have any problems, then get in contact, or just blame Jack.

**Jack Wellby  
Community)**

**V-P**

**(Charities**

**&**

Happy New Year everyone. Over the Christmas Holiday I've been primarily focussed on preparing RAG events for the term and organising the Beyond Profit: Ethical and Community Careers Fair.

On the RAG side of things we have a really packed term ahead but with a fantastic set of college charity/RAG reps and a tip-top exec I'm confident we can pull it off. It all begins on Saturday with the first RAID of the term – we'll be collecting in Oxford for Diabetes UK – if you have a few hours to spare come on down and join the raid. Speed dating and an Eclectic club night can be looked forward to over weeks 2,3 and 4 and then comes RAG week (5th week). I'll keep you updated about how everything is going.

At the first RAG meeting of term we were lucky enough to have representatives from two of our 10 chosen charities for this year – SightSavers and Oaktree UK – who talked a bit about the work they do and where the money raised will go.

The Beyond Profit Careers Fair will be on the 14th February and I've been working closely with the careers service to produce a good set of exhibitors and a guide for the event. I'll be looking to publicise this event nearer the time.

I've also been attending meetings about the Oxford Annual (formerly known as the Oxford Yearbook) with the universities Alumni department. This is a student run publication with goes to all leavers but as it is funded by the Alumni Department they, with me, oversee its production.

Daniel Lowe and I attended the Domestic Bursars Environment meeting which was really encouraging and a paper will be brought to the next Environmental Panel meeting regarding the Examination Guidelines book. I'll report back in 3rd week.

'Every day do something that will inch you closer to a better tomorrow.' Doug Firebaugh

## **PART TIME OFFICERS**

**Jack Matthews**

**Common Room Support Officer**

Hello Council, just a quick update on my work so far.

I have been visiting as many OUSU reps as possible, and will continue to do so over the next few weeks. This is providing an excellent opportunity to get to know everyone a little better, and to understand more about how OUSU is perceived; I will use the information received to help direct some action points over the next term.

I am also trying to meet with representatives of disaffiliated colleges to hear their concerns. I feel strongly that if we do not engage with students and ask the hard questions about what OUSU is doing wrong and what OUSU needs to do better on, then OUSU will make no progress in the future.

I also intend to start common room visits after 3rd Week. If you would like me, or a member of the executive to attend your common room meeting to explain a little more about what we do and to hear the concerns of your students, then please let me know. Also, if you are and OUSU rep, or anyone else, and would like to meet to discuss OUSU, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sorry I can't be there today, but it's that old problem of the timing of council!

Regards

Jack Matthews  
Common Room Support Officer  
[commonrooms@ousu.org](mailto:commonrooms@ousu.org)

**Ian Lyons**

**Grad Access and Admissions Officer**

I've just taken over in this role and for the coming term, I've got two main focuses – College Advisors and Academic Representation in the university. If anyone has any comments they'd like to contribute or has any questions, e-mail me ([gradacaff@ousu.org](mailto:gradacaff@ousu.org))

### **COLLEGE ADVISORS**

Every graduate student is allocated a college advisor when they start at the university, yet many meet them only once a year and are not what their role is. I'm spending part of this term finding out how the role of the college advisor differs in between the colleges are their so that we can share best practice on this and ensure that all students are aware of the role of the college advisor and that they do get to meet them! To that end, I'm in the process of meeting with MCR presidents to find out about college academic provision and hope to report back later in the term about this. If you have anything you'd like to share either let you president know for them to pass onto me, or e-mail me directly.

### **ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION**

I'm hoping to ensure that every department provides sufficient academic representation for graduate students. The picture is quite muddy and many positions appear to be unfilled or unclear. Currently trying to unravel what the structure of academic representation is - every division is different! Again, will report back later this term.