

Reports to Council

1st week council ht12

Martha Mackenzie

President

Evening Council,

Welcome back to another term at Oxford, I hope you've all had a lovely Christmas break. I'm looking forward to getting to know so many more new people and to working with a brand new executive.

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Overnight Guests/ Head Residents Scheme:

Working with Vice-President (Graduates) Jim O'Connell I have *finally* received confirmation that our bid to end the blanket ban on overnight guests in University Accommodation and implement a Head Residents Scheme has been accepted! The scheme is being trialled as of this term and graduates living in University Accommodation have been informed of the new rules regarding overnight guests. Thanks to the MCR President and Exec members who supported this initiative.

Student Led Teaching Awards:

As mentioned last term we applied to the NU and the Higher Education Academy for a grant of £1500 to start up a set of 'Student Led Teaching Awards'. Our plan has advanced really well and Hannah and I are in the process of working with the University to see how they can interact with the existing awards. This is going to be a very big project over next couple of terms and we'll be publicising the awards from the middle of this term.

Housing:

We have continued work on the campaign against 'Early Lease'. I have begun negotiating with the 'big five' (North Oxford Property Services (NOPS), Premier, College and County, Finders Keepers and, RMA) and have received some warm responses. I have also begun initial discussions with the Council about building an Oxford University/ Brookes Landlord accreditation scheme. Our petition has so far received over 1400 signatures.

Student Advisory Group:

The University is in the process of completely overhauling the current student systems programme. That is the means by which the various online functions (Student Self Services, Weblearn, OxCourt etc.) interact. This is a huge project and one that we need to ensure has significant student input. As part of this I have established a 'Student Advisory Group' to feed directly into the different work streams. I am now recruiting for this Group, it offers many exciting opportunities and voucher prizes, please talk to me at the end if you are interested.

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Since the start of term I have also represented you on University Council and the Degree Ceremonies Steering Group and begun to meet the new JCR and MCR Presidents. OUSU has also begun work on its 'Vision, Mission and Values' and will be reporting to council and the wider student body very soon. On 13th January we held the first Trustee Board meeting of term. The Clubs and Societies proposal is doing the rounds but everything is still looking positive and there is exciting information to come on the OUSU stash shop!

Have a great week! As ever, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or any of the other OUSU Officers.

Martha x

Happy New Year, and soon I will be wishing you **新年快乐!**

It's hard to sum up what happened since 7th Week of MT, so here is the vacation in numbers:

£2,000

Amount won from National Union of Students funding for a leadership development scheme, in partnership with Ruskin Student Union.

Our bid is to develop future leaders to sustain Common Rooms and OUSU, and to **develop leaders** with a firm understanding of how to reach their constituents. We are now developing training with a professional trainer in **equality-aware** leadership.

The first phase will consist of two streams: firstly, a series of classes and seminars delivered by specially invited trainers. This is to complement the main stream: a set of development groups (or "peer mentoring" groups), which will be facilitated, and meet over a series of occasions.

171

Number of miles each way I am travelling on Tues and Wed of this week to work on the Springboard for Undergraduates programme. This is a personal and **professional development** program for female undergraduates that the Careers Service has put a lot of financial backing into, and I am excited to be working on it now. Watch out for it to be promoted in Trinity!

60

The number of people at the last **Feminist Formal and Forum**, in 7th Week MT (remember when it was 7th week MT? Time flies). The energy in the room for the Forum was fantastic; we discussed, we debated, we set collective priority issues.

This is a consultative forum that the **University will be listening to**; we have a great opportunity this year to set objectives with the University on all aspects of equality, under the new legislation that asks Universities to **set achievable objectives for tackling inequality**.

This is why it is important for **your Common Room to be represented** in the process. We have a lot of ability to influence. Use it - come along yourself, with an equality officer if you can.

48

The number of places booked in the last two days for the next Feminist Formal and Forum, on Mon 3rd Week - so if you don't have a place yet, get booking! www.tinyurl.com/fffbooking/.

12

Number of personal submissions I've been compiling for the Student Parent Consultation: "Is Oxford Fit For Families?" Students with childcare responsibilities can be a very socially isolated group within the University, and it is important we actively seek to integrate them into the university community. There will be TWO Student Parent Socials this term: Sat 1st Week and Sat 6th Week, 10am-12pm, Bradmore Road Nursery (near LMH).

10

The number of one-to-one meetings I've had over the vacation with university and college staff to improve the response to high-risk forms of harassment. This has taken a great deal of time and strategising. I have now met with staff from Merton, Mansfield, New, Jesus, and St. Hilda's; in addition, Junior Deans from St. Anne's, Magdalen, Pembroke, and Hertford.

3

Training sessions planned this term with Gender Equality, Women's, and Equality Officers. Your CR officer should have an email!

2

Number of Varsity Events clubs with whom we are now in contact discussing the details of the Zero Tolerance to Assault campaign.

1 - the one and only Gender Gaps at Oxford 2010-12 Report, which I have been scoping over the vacation. This will be a statistical summary of all the different gender gaps we have yet to bridge at Oxford.

Am now rushing off on that train journey. See you Wed afternoon!

With best wishes, Yuan

Jim O'Connell

VP (Graduates)

Hi Council,

Happy New Year.

Since my last report, I have been doing a range of things.

First and foremost is the **PGR Provision Review**. This is running at the moment and will run until the end of 3rd Week. We'll be doing focus groups and an online questionnaire.

The aim of the Review is to gather the views of DPhil and MPhil students on the provision they receive from the University. It will form the basis of a report detailing the strengths and weaknesses of being a research student in Oxford.

In order for the report to be as strong as possible, we need to speak to as many students as possible. So, if you can help me set up a focus group in your college or department to talk to DPhil and MPhil students that would be great!

Aside from preparing this, last week we had a very successful graduate strategy meeting that identified goals for this term on the issues of Funding, Gender Equality, Wellbeing, PG Teaching, and Learning/Supervision. For more info please do get in touch. We will be discussing lots of these issues at forthcoming Prescoms and Councils, look out for more soon. The meeting also assessed the progress made against the targets we set last term, which was generally quite a bit. I've publicised the write up to MCR Prescom, Grad Exec and Divisional Board Reps, but do let me know if you'd like to have a look if you haven't been able to already.

Shortly before Christmas I went on a fact finding mission to Cambridge. As OUSU is quite poor, it wasn't the kind of fact finding mission that has lavish meals and expenses claims, but was actually quite useful. I am hoping to prepare a more in depth report, but here are some key points:

- Cambridge is disturbingly similar to Oxford in how it works.
- Their model of a separate Graduate Union is very interesting and has lots we can learn from - particularly in offering a distinct social and political space for graduates. I don't think it would work or be easy to implement here, but there's plenty of GU stuff we can copy!
- We can effectively use a lot of the work the GU has done on PGT and PGR Charters here.
- There's also a lot to learn from how colleges work for grads there (very similar) and the funding situation.
- Liv Watson, the GU President, has a frighteningly difficult job.

I'd definitely recommend closer links with CUSU and the GU in future.

Accommodation went well at the end of last term. The University has now reversed the 'no overnight guests' rule at the Accommodation Office, and more importantly is committed to moving to a culture (starting with trialling the head residents scheme) where it partners with students in taking decisions about accommodation.

The University has expressed support for taking over the Oxford Talks website and making it a permanent, official site that comprehensively lists all the various talks and seminars going on around Oxford. However, no one has yet figured out who should be responsible for taking it over and running it. This is frustrating as it is a very simple idea that should be easy to set up. I will continue working on it and give an update soon.

I have been working hard on the issue of the College Fee with the College Accounts Team. We will be presenting a paper to MCR Prescom and Council in the next couple of weeks with some options for what form we would ideally like the College Fee to take. The basic idea would be to make it clear what amount of money a student pays is going to the University and what amount is going to College.

On the wider issue of Graduate Funding, I am pleased with the steps the University is taking to close the 'graduate gap'. I am hopeful this term will see some positive developments, and I would like us if at all feasible to push the University to write in a target to close the gap into its next strategic plan.

The last big thing to report on is an event Martha and I attended at Leeds SU a bit before Christmas. The event showcased examples of ways students unions and other similar groups can engage with their members and take democratic decisions with a really wide involvement. This gave us plenty of ideas for how OUSU can get people thinking and contributing as we move forward with our more existential internal projects. Particularly interesting was hearing from a member of Iceland's constitutional council on how they managed to consult nearly every Icelander on the new constitution.

A short update on Student Advice Service Casework - do keep promoting the SAS to your constituents. We have quite a lot of graduate casework at the moment, much of which is very challenging. I'm hoping to write up some reflections and policy recommendations based on my SAS experience when I get the time. Seb and Hannah's work exploring mediation will be hugely useful I think in this regard - so often graduate casework concerns situations that could have been averted with early intervention.

'Sir, the people must have their voices/ neither will they bate one jot of ceremony'
Sicinius, from Coriolanus, Act 2 Scene 2

Much Council love xoxo

Sebastian Baird

VP (Welfare & Equal Opportunities)

Hi Council,

I hope you all had a restful break, and have settled happily back into Oxford! Here's a summary of all the things that I have been doing over the Christmas vacation and the beginning of this term.

- **Welfare Officers' Meetings:** I have organised bi-weekly meetings of welfare officers for the whole of this term, each with a theme and a guest speaker. Speakers for Hilary will include Alan Percy (head of the Counselling Service), Nicola Byrom (from Student Run Self Help), and Pete Quinn (head of the Disability Advisory Service).
- **One-to-one meetings:** I will be looking to meet all of the incoming sets of welfare officers over the next few weeks. I have already met 5 sets, and have loads more in the diary.
- **OIA Consultation:** I submitted OUSU's response to the Pathway 3 Consultation on the 16th December. If anyone would like a copy of the consultation response, please get in touch.
- **Prayer Space Campaign:** I attended the first meeting of the Prayer Space Working Group with the President and the Vice President of the Islamic Society on Monday. The group made a positive start: it would appear that the university has conceded the argument about whether a prayer space is necessary, and we are now looking at potential spaces to set up a prayer space in the short to medium term.

- **Disability Peer Mentoring Scheme:** I am working with the Disability Officer at Somerville and the Disability Advisory Service to set up a disability peer mentoring scheme, which would set up first-year students with a particular disability with a student from a higher year who would have had experience of the same disability.
- **Mind Your Head Campaign:** having registered with Mental Wealth UK and helped them complete their goal to get 25 by 2012, MYH is turning its attention back to Oxford. Our objective is to hold five events in common rooms this term, and to hold a launch event to raise awareness of the campaign and its objectives.
- **Student Advice Service:** I have started on 3 new cases and dealt with 5 information requests in the last week. If you need any advice, for yourself or for someone you are supporting, please get in touch.
- **Governance:** I attended a Trustee Board meeting and the OUSU session on Mission, Vision and Values. I enjoyed the session enormously and am excited to continue the process.

Hannah Cusworth

VP (Access & Academic Affairs)

Hiya council,

Hope that you had a great vac. Since we last spoke I've mostly been writing, between the Medical Sciences Student Written Submission for the upcoming Divisional Review, the Briefing Note on Foundation and Bridging Provision for JCR officers, a paper on Academic Representation for the Joint Committee of Education Committee with Student Members and summary note on student attitudes towards feedback for the Pro-Vice Chancellor Education I have been spending a lot of time at the computer.

Aside from that this is what else I've been up to:

Access

Access Fair

We selected the stall holders for the access fair which is taking place on 3rd February so Friday of 3rd week. We were impressed at the high quality of the proposals and how many colleges were doing quite detailed, in depth work with schools and colleges. The next steps are to make sure we're getting a good response rate to the invitations and have all the other fundamentals of the event pinned down. More information will be going out to Common Rooms in the next few days. But Presidents and Access Officers save the date.

Bridging and Foundation Provision

This has been a big focus of the past few weeks. In -1st I went down to London to meet with the ever lovely Teach First HEAPS team who have a lot of experience between them in teaching the kind of students we're trying to retain and mentoring these students. The meeting was helpful both in the short term in the sense that it helped me write the briefing but also in the longer term in that it confirmed my belief that Oxford needs to be bolder if it's to improve access. The next step is to support CR officers and focus on college discussion of the recommendations being more supportive and useful.

Target schools

The Shadowing Scheme is soon to be upon us, it'll be taking place in 4th and 6th week of this term. Before Christmas we had a meeting to match shadows and shadowees. It's now all go-go-go and supporting the Shadowing Committee as best I can. Tell your access reps to watch out for emails.

Aldwych

I went to this meeting of the Presidents and Education Officers etc of the Russell Group Student Unions, the "Aldwych Group". Lots of Students' Unions aren't as involved in access as we are, aside from Cambridge who are in fact do more student led access projects as they have a full-time Access sabbatical officer. It appears that other unions also have quite a crude understanding of access where there's little policy discussion but much thought put into the issue of bursaries vs fee waivers.

Academic Affairs

Medical Sciences Student Written Submission

This has had over 100 students feeding into it, both graduate and undergraduate. Jim and I also held focus groups with the student reps from the Division. The responses to the 3 questions we asked and there were some very expected and some quite surprising responses to the question *What is the biggest challenge facing graduate students in the Division*. As expected the most common answer was 'funding' but we also noticed some that a proportionately high number of female students mentioned isolation. In the next few days we're sending this off for the Review Panel for their consideration.

Feedback

With feedback I'm always the optimist. Jim and I had a meeting with Sally Mapstone, PVC Education to discuss a position paper I wrote and I'm now redrafting that to include Sally's comments. After that it will then go to committees I think. I'm holding a Feedback Strategy Meeting on Monday of 2nd Week at 12.15-13.30pm, the information has gone out to Presidents and Academic Affairs reps but anyone is welcome to attend. Here we'll decide what the priorities for this term's push on feedback and I'll adjust my paper in light of what comes out of the meeting.

Collections

The Deputy Chair of Senior Tutors' Committee and I are working on a paper with the aim of taking it to STC in 6th Week. What will go in it will depend a lot on the outcome of the Feedback Strategy meeting so come along on that on Monday of 2nd

Complaints and Appeals

After the Student Advice Service accompanied another student into a meeting with the Proctors as part of their appeal, I am more convinced than ever that the system has to change. The C&A working group met in 0th week and at the next meeting we're hearing two different ways forward. I'm working with the other Student Advice Service sabs and Nick Cooper, the new Academic Affairs Officer. If a student in your college is going through a complaint or appeal or wants advice on any other aspect of student life, feel free to get in touch advice@ousu.org

Training

Two sessions coming up, both focused on Academic Feedback Sessions. One on Saturday at 10am, in OUSU, and one next week. All the details are going on out Preslist and Academic Reps mailing list so come along or encourage your committee to.

Looking forward a big focus is going to be on committees and papers I need to write, which I have a whole lot of between now and when we next see each other, as well as prep for the access fair and training for CR reps. As ever any questions or queries feel free to email me on access@ousu.org

Daniel Stone	VP (Charities & Community)
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Dear Council,

Now that all of that distracting Christmas Cheer is out of the way we can get back down to business! As always if you'd like me to expand on anything written below please email me at charities@ousu.org

Community

Hopefully the colourful posters and emails would have alerted you to the fact that the Student Community Wardens project is now up and running. I've already had a number of enquiries but it'd be great if you could take time out to inform people in your Common Rooms who you think might be interested in applying for the position. The deadline for applications is Friday 2nd week.

- A date for your diary: the next City Centre Area Forum to take place at 7pm on Wednesday 6th Week (22nd February) - we'll be discussing 'Living in the City and Student Housing'
- In the coming weeks I'll be conducting a review of the Safety Bus. Oxford Brookes University should have the consultation materials finalised this week so I'll be able to arrange forums and consultations shortly.

- I've made progress producing a 'Moving in Guide' for students when they first move into the private rented market. A number of local businesses have asked to advertise student discounts in there and it has the full backing of the local community.

Charity

Nominations for the selected RAG charities will open this week, with further details on the election given in two motions to come...

- At the end of last term I held a very productive meeting with Graduate Charity Reps to discuss ways in which RAG and OUSU can better support them. Certain things have stalled but I've been able to make progress on other things suggested in the meeting...
- Such as developing a database of 'charity days'. I've been working at this with Karen, the OUSU Democratic Support Officer and should hopefully have things completed by next council

Environment and Ethics

Last term the Environment and Ethics Committee elected their three campaigns for the coming year, namely Green Events, Fair Trade and Double-sided Printing. They've also completed a report on the Recycling provision available in different colleges, which will shortly be available for public viewing.

Since last Council I have:

- Continued to organise an Ethical Careers Speaker Event with the Careers' Service and the Oxford Hub. We now have a date and time set as Saturday 3rd March from 11-3.30pm in the Examination Schools (another date for the diary)
- Continued to plan and formalise the city-wide End of Year Recycling Scheme
- Refashion: Tomorrow the City Council are holding a 'Refashion' event from 1-7pm to promote innovative textile recycling. I will be modelling an outfit from 5.30pm onwards, so you'll be promised comedy if nothing else!
- Began work with Environment and Ethics Reps to adopt College Sustainability policies. This is the very beginning of the process but you should hear a lot more on this in the coming weeks.

Living Wage

At the end of last term the Oxford Living Wage Campaign elected its first committee, with Carys Lawrie duly elected as Chair.

I along with members of Living Wage Campaign and City Council met with the University Pro Vice Chancellor (Personnel and Equality) and the Head of Personnel to discuss the Living Wage. It was an extremely positive meeting and we'll be able to use the relationships made in this meeting to provide access to those who actually set the outsourced cleaning contracts.

Over the vacation we have sent out a number of Freedom of Information requests to Oxford colleges and NHS trusts to get a complete picture of pay conditions in Oxford.

Living Wage Campaign meetings will continue to be held on Tuesday at 5pm in OUSU.

PART TIME OFFICERS

Emily Cousens

Access & Admissions Officer

Here is an outline of my priorities for the term.

1. Organise an meeting of all the college access officers in order to share ideas. Hopefully in 3rd week.
2. Encourage every college to start a student ambassador scheme.
3. Help Harriet and Hannah organise and implement the Access Fair. From this I hope there will be a lot of momentum for further projects that we can take forward or support.
4. Meet the appropriate people at a university level for example the Admissions officers, and UNIQ organisers in order to get a fuller understanding of what is involved in the admissions process.

I have two key goals that I would like to put work behind this term in order to peruse them effectively during my time as Access and Academic Affairs Officer.

Firstly, within Oxford, I would like to set up links that can ensure Access work across the university is less disparate. I hope to be able to understand what is going on so all the hard work and energies of many people can be channeled as effectively as possible.

Secondly I see Access to mean 'widening participation'. By this I mean that there should be a focus on opening people to the idea of higher Education and in particular top institutions such as Oxbridge and The Russell Group Universities and encouraging the academically gifted but perhaps less advantaged to apply. Therefore my second goal is more outward looking; focusing on the type of Access work Oxford is doing and making sure that resources are being used in the right areas. One of my main goals is to target schools that have a very poor Oxbridge record. I would like to make sure the flag system is understood and being used to its highest potential in particular with regards to UNIQ and specific widening participation schemes. I think that the student ambassador schemes is one of the most positive movements going on within Access work at the moment due to the scope and potential for growth and development that it has. I hope to harness this momentum by improving the dialogue between the target schools database, college regional links and individual student ambassadors to ensure that each individual student ambassador can have as great an impact in their home area as possible.

James Raynor

Common Room Support Officer

Hey Council,

My name is James Raynor and I'm the new Common Room Support Officer, taking over from Chris O'Connor.

This term I'll be focusing on three main things.

- I will be working to ensure well organized OUSU Reps meetings with increased turnout. I'll attend as many College Committee Meetings as possible, throughout term, and try to improve the role OUSU Reps can have in colleges.
- I will learn to properly use the Common Room Information System (CRIS). I'll continue to maintain and upgrade the system too.
- I'll be information gathering in preparation to negotiate fresh contracts for Sky in Common Rooms. At the moment the system is highly unfair and, if successful, negotiations could save common rooms a great deal of money.
- Hopefully I'll get a chance to meet most of you properly over the term.

All the best,

James

Beth Hanson-Jones

Environment & Ethics Officer

Hi, I'm Beth the new Environment and Ethics Officer. If you have any questions that you want to ask me then feel free to get in touch, my e-mail is eande@ousu.org.

Elisabeth van Lieshout

Health & Welfare Officer

Hi OUSU Council, I'm Elisabeth, I'm a second year PPEist at Univ and I'm the incoming Health & Welfare officer. I have two projects which I'm planning to work on this term, but I am very much looking for other things to take up, so if anyone has ideas and suggestions, they are very welcome.

The first thing I want to look into is welfare provision during exam time. This is of course primarily Finals in Trinity, although one of the points I hope to address is those who take exams during other terms. Since the vast majority of exams are next term, this term will mainly be about exploring ideas and making preparations. Currently practices are vastly different per college, and I hope to talk to various college welfare officers to find out what works well and what doesn't. I also hope to find a way to gather information from those who have already taken their Finals to get feedback on what worked and what didn't. Once again, any suggestions are appreciated.

My other project is something I've been working on outside OUSU for the last term, which I hope to be able to expand this term. I am very concerned with issues surrounding body image and perceptions of beauty, so I started an initiative in Oxford called 'Operation Beautiful Oxford' based on the body image blog of the same name. We ran fairly casually last term with weekly meet-ups and group activism, trying to spread the message around Oxford as widely as possible. I think concerns about self-perception are particularly intense in Oxford where the pressure is always on to be perfect. I hope to explore ways to assess the size of the problem, and look for ways to breach this topic in the public forum and make it less of a taboo.

Jess Pumphrey

LGBTQ Officer

Hi, I'm Jess, the new LGBTQ Officer. I'm settling into the role and starting to think about Queer History month, as well as how to make sure all the staff and students at the university are up to speed on LGBTQ issues. I'll soon be meeting with the college LGBTQ reps to help them fulfill their roles.

David Butler

Rent and Accommodation Officer

There are a number of projects I am working on this term. Firstly, there is the Early Lease campaign. The President will be leading on this project and I will be providing a supporting role. We had a successful breakfast with a number of Common Room Presidents before Christmas. There is a strategy in place and we will be implementing it over the coming term.

Secondly, in preparation for rent negotiations over the next two terms, I will be sending round a rent survey to Common Room Presidents in the next few days. The information the survey will collect will be important towards getting good rent outcomes for students, so I would encourage Presidents to fill in the survey as soon as possible.

Thirdly, I will be organizing, alongside the President, rent negotiation training to take place towards the end of this term for Common Room presidents. In preparation for this, I plan to meet with former Common Room presidents to help share best practice.

Finally, I will be attending a meeting of the Oxford Student Community Partnership in early February as part of the community based aspect of my role. I will expand on the work I intend to do in this area in due course. I am meeting with the Vice President for Charities and Communities to discuss this area further.

This week, WomCam has:

1) Ran a campaigns leadership workshop on Sunday of first week with Yuan, the VP (Women). It aimed at mobilising people to act effectively on their specific projects, which were not necessarily gender related. This fits with our broader perspective of encouraging leadership and action across all genders.

2) Had the first WomCam meeting of term, in which we developed some of our Zine ideas planned to develop work on a Love/Sex week with the Women's officer of St Anthony's planned our future fundraiser

Our future plans include,

The above love/sex week, as well as other work focusing on sexual justice,

A fundraiser for WISH,

The feminist formal and forum - again working with Yuan,

A feminist poetry evening,

A feminist comedy evening

Other work focusing on leadership, to be both gender specific and ungendered.