

Reports to Council

1st Week Council HT13

David J. Townsend

President

Here's an update on some of the things I've been doing since the end of last term. For more information, contact me at president@ousu.org or ask a question in OUSU Council.

Sky Subscription Success:

Working with the immediate past OUSU Common Room Support Officer, we managed to get Sky TV to agree that common rooms should only have to pay the concessional rate for Sky, rather than the full commercial rate, provided that the subscription isn't being used to make money (such as in a bar). The concessional rate is about 1/6 the commercial rate. These successful negotiations were backed up by a boycott in which 9 common rooms partook. Given Sky's previous policy of charging the commercial rate for any new subscription and migrating all old subscriptions to the commercial rate, this will result in savings of over £300 000 per year compared to what common rooms would have paid at the commercial rate.

Ending the Housing Stampede:

I've consulted with common room presidents and others, and it seems that everyone feels that the campaign has been successful so far in decreasing the stampede to sign contracts for next year's private accommodation so early in the present academic year. I've been liaising with Oxford Brookes Students' Union about their end of the campaign, and over our vacation (which is still term time for them), they have been running a social media campaign to spread the word amongst their students that they don't need to sign contracts early. The next stage of the campaign is for representatives of OBSU and me to meet again with letting agents, having shown the strength of student feeling and students' preparedness to exercise their collective market power, and to get those agents to start signing up as amber or green (i.e. not require students to sign up so early). I am hopeful that this early show of our collective resolve will put us in a strong position in this regard.

Rolling out the OUSU Information Drive:

Oxford students' level of understanding of what OUSU does is pretty low, and a big part of that is due to OUSU not adequately prioritising *basic* communication of its functions and successes. This term we're trying to change that by running an Information Drive over all our own communications channels, and working with common rooms presidents to get *simple* information about OUSU into every College. This will also coincide with the launch (at last!) of our new website. Watch out for more on this as the term progresses!

Hooroo,

DJT

Highlights

I do not have a huge amount of news to report as we are just coming out of the vacation so I thought I would use this report to highlight my three main priorities for the coming term.

Academic Representation

David Messling, our 8 new Division representatives, and myself made some headway last term on this issue, including a number of provisional guarantees from the University about representatives within departments. The next stage is to ensure that all departments are recruiting representatives and publicizing their names, and for us to begin contacting them directly, working to organize and train students. This is all particularly important for postgraduates who have little ability to improve their courses via their college or MCR.

A Masters Course 'Audit'

2 years ago OUSU produced a report on the student experience on Masters courses at Oxford. There were a number of key issues highlighted including a need for more feedback, expectations of contact hours and teaching, forms and timing of assessment, student engagement, and alumni contact and careers advice. My intention is to produce a report reviewing progress by the University on these issues, highlighting areas of best practice and pushing for more work where necessary. In this I have gained the support of the Education Policy Office and Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education.

International Student Campaign and the International Society Festival

After a failure to elect a new committee in Trinity last year the Campaign has unfortunately fallen dormant. I attempted to reinvigorate it in Michaelmas but failed, largely as I did not make it a priority. One of my core objectives for this term is to restart the campaign and ensure the festival takes place in Trinity. I am looking for volunteers to help and take up positions on the Committee so get in touch if you are interested. This is a particularly important area at this point as there is an appetite within the University for work to improve the international student experience.

As always this is report records the news and highlights from my work. If anyone has any questions about any of this or my other work then please do ask them in Council or email me (graduates@ousu.org). Equally if anyone has an issue they would like me to work on drop me a line.

Hi Council!

Welcome back. I hope everyone got a bit of rest over the Christmas break and that you're looking forward to everything going on this term. I haven't got much to report with regard to things I've done since we last saw each other (slept, ate too much, made some abortive attempts at exercise) but hopefully you can share my enthusiasm for the things I've started working on and everything else coming up this term.

Right now I'm focusing on...

- Writing a new Guide for disabled students. Over the Summer I secured funding from CitiGroup to update the old Disabilities Guide. It's from 2007 and ugly and hopelessly out of date. I also think the kind of content could focus more on the student experience. So I'm working with Will (our Disabilities Officer) as well as the Disabilities Campaign and folks from the Disability Advisory Service to create a shiny new version by next term, so we can send it out to students next academic year.
- Organising a review of the Student Advice Service. The Advice Service is one of OUSU's key services for students - we help hundreds out of tricky situations every year and that number is growing. I want to make sure that the Service develops to help students in the best possible way, so I'm commissioning a review to help us understand how to do that for you.

Coming up...

- Queer History Month is in February. I'll be working with the LGBTQ Campaign and elected Officers to create a month-long celebration of the contribution of LGBTQ people to the University and the wider community.
- Developing a Peer Mentoring scheme for disabled students. Similar to having a college parent who does the same subject as you, some disabled students have suggested it would be helpful to be put in touch with students who have faced similar challenges to them in coming to University. We'll be looking at setting that up ahead of the new academic year.
- Islamic Finance and the new UK Student Loans scheme: I've been speaking to the President of OU Islamic Society, who has raised concerns that changes to the Student Loans scheme could negatively impact Muslim students. We will be working with the Equality and Diversity Unit to research how big a worry this is, and what OUSU and the University can do about it.
- Welfare meetings & training: this is stuff that I run with Welfare and Equal Ops common room positions in mind, but anyone with an interest should feel free to turn up - particularly people considering running for one of these positions. Some dates for your diaries:
 - Monday 2nd week (21/01): 5-7pm Welfare Meeting (Counselling Service Presentation)
 - Monday 3rd week (28/01): 3-5pm Student Support Training
 - Wednesday 4th week (06/02): 5-7pm Advocacy Training
 - Monday 5th week (11/02): 5-7pm Diversity and Inclusivity Training
 - Monday 6th week (18/02): 5-7pm Welfare Meeting (Student-run Self Help Presentation)
 - Monday 8th week (04/03): 5-7pm Student Support Training

As ever, drop me a line on welfare@ousu.org or catch me after Council if you want some more info on this, or if there is anything else I can help you with.

All the best for the term,

Katie

David Messling	VP (Access & Academic Affairs)
----------------	--------------------------------

Hello Council,

Hope you've all had a refreshing break! Here's a taster of what I've been up to since Michaelmas, and what's coming up this term.

Teaching Awards 2013

Preparations are underway for the second annual OUSU student-led teaching awards. This year's ceremony will be held at the end of Trinity term, and nominations will open 3rd week Hilary.

Target Schools chair has just handed over, with the new committee starting their work next term. Outgoing chair Tom Helfer has been working hard over Christmas to produce an overview document of Target Schools, with the aim of setting the campaign's direction, and particular defining how Target Schools fits in with the University's access work.

Access Hub

I've been working with Sian Renwick, the Moritz-Heyman Scholarship administrator, on creating a section of the new OUSU website to advertise all the opportunities for students to volunteer in access work across Oxford. The content is ready to go, and the page will launch with the rest of the new website.

.... and coming up,

Undergraduate Student Support

I'll be leading OUSU's consultation this term on the future of undergraduate bursaries and fee waivers. If you're interested in being a part of shaping OUSU's input let me know - I'll be pulling together interested students to help out with consultation and acting on student responses.

Have a great start to Hilary 2013! As ever if you've got any questions just get in touch.

David

Sarah Santhosham	VP (Charities & Community)
------------------	----------------------------

Hi Council,

I hope you had a good break! The vacation proved to be a fruitful time for evaluating last term's activities and planning for the term ahead. Particular highlights to look out for this term include a Volunteering Showcase during Student Volunteering Week (5th week), more partnership events with the City Council and tons of charity events, ranging from hitchhikes to black tie fundraisers!

Here's a quick run down of some of the areas I've been working on and some priorities for the term ahead. As ever, feel free to get in touch with me: charities@ousu.org

Community

OUSU's Student Community Warden Scheme is now up and running, following a successful recruitment and training period. We have two sets of wardens working in Jericho and East Oxford and they'll be running a listening campaign around Oxford over this term.

I've been working with the Oxford Hub to hold a Volunteering Showcase (Saturday 5th week) to showcase all student run and community run volunteering projects taking place in Oxford. This is able to take place through the kind generosity and funding from the City and County Council.

Charity

This term RAG are running an unprecedented number of events, combining a range of perennial favourites such as Blind Date and Oxford's Got Talent, to new events such as Jailbreak. I will be taking a lead on recruiting for a new Ball committee, organizing the ballot for our charities for the new financial year and training students on our shadowing scheme.

I have also been supporting common room charity officers and ran a training session for common room officers on fundraising and events management.

Third Sector Careers

I have been working together with the Careers Service to put together a series of workshops for students interested in careers beyond profit. This will take place every Monday at 1-2pm in OUSU starting in 2nd week.

Living Wage and Environment & Ethics

On the Living Wage front, we made great progress at the end of last term, with the University agreeing to set up a working group on the Living Wage. We are meeting with the Procurement Team again to monitor activity since our last meeting.

On the Environment & Ethics front, we now have a new committee and are working towards events to take place in Green Week (5th week). Additionally, I am working with the City Council's Waste and Recycling Team to prepare for end of year waste reduction schemes, and other events they are working on, such as ReFashion.

Hello Friends,

Happy New Year! This term is busy, so hold on and expect great things from your student union because we have amazing things planned!

A quick fact for you...

3% of reported rape cases are false, this is no higher than any other falsely reported crime percentage.

POWER and exerting power over another is the only reason people rape. Sexual attraction, type of clothing, being out at night, or drinking are not reasons. These are red herrings deterring society from seeing how people misuse power or try to dominate others.

What I'm doing about it...

- I'm talking about it. A lot.
- I'm helping the End Sexual Abuse Campaign tackle myths about rape and survivors of rape through organising sexual consent discussion groups for sports teams and common rooms. Interested in getting involved, emails endabuse@ousu.org.
- I'm partnering with the Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre to run a sexual consent workshop for schools in our community.
- I'm marching in Reclaim the Night on 8 March.

What else I'm doing from 9-5(ish)...

- Rewrote the Proctor's Blue Book entry for Sexual Assault and Rape, so it is survivor centric and clearly states where to find support.
- Selected 25 participants and 10 facilitators from 96 applications for the second annual OUSU Women's Leadership Development Programme. We kick off this week with Jane C. Wood from Changing People speaking about Leadership.
- Organised the Leadership Development Programme, all the amazing speakers, and trained the facilitators
- Analysed and critiqued the current University Harassment Policy and Procedure to have a student friendly and survivor centric perspective. The Equality and Diversity Unit will use this information and OUSU's recommendations as they rewrite the policy this term.
- Held Hilary Term's first End Sexual Abuse Campaign meeting, looking to launch this term. Interested in helping out, find us on Facebook - OUSU End Sexual Abuse Campaign.
- Held the OUSU and OxFam Getting Together Planning Committee to begin planning for International Women's Day on 8 March.
- Met with Continuing Education Department about ways to strengthen ties between the department and OUSU.

Shout out...

This week's shout out goes to Katie Colliver, OUSU's VP (WEO). I have been very thankful for your perspective, wisdom, help, and humour this past week. We have accomplished much. Thank you.

PART TIME OFFICERS

Michael Davies

Community Outreach & Charities Officer

Hello!

I'm Michael and I'm a 2nd-year PPEist at Somerville. I ran for this position because I've really enjoyed my experiences in charity fundraising (as RAG VP) and in community work (through a consultancy project with a community association), so I wanted to get more involved. In the coming term I will be talking to more organisations which work with homeless people in Oxford to get a better grasp of the problem, with the ultimate aim of launching an information campaign about how Oxford students can better help the homeless later on this year. I will also be looking into how we can further support students who want to go into the Third Sector, how students may be able to help the Dean Court Community Association with its goal of setting up a community centre and, of course, I will be working with RAG to help run and promote the many events it has on for this Hilary.

Looking forward to working with you all!

Anya Metzger

Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

Hi I'm Anya Metzger, I'm a first-year English student at Wadham and now the Academic Affairs Campaigns Officer. I am currently working on extending the faculty library hours and have been in touch with the Bodleian library staff about this. There is also some progress being made on looking into having more lectures put online and the IT staff have been approached about this. This term we're also looking to extending academic feedback sessions to colleges that don't offer them yet.

Nick Cooper

Graduate Academic Affairs Officer

Evening Council,

Thank you for electing me as your Graduate Academic Affairs Officer - glad to beat that pesky RON again! It's great to have another year involved with OUSU, hopefully improving academic issues for graduates.

My main priorities for the term are looking at academic feedback for graduate students, in particular those on taught Masters courses, and looking at complaints and appeals procedures for graduates. I'll also be working with Chris on his priorities, but am very open to hearing what people would like from the position: if you have any suggestions, do drop me an email.

Thanks again!

Nick

James Fisher

Environment & Ethics Officer

Hello, my name, for those of you who do not already know me, is James Fisher. I have just taken over from Beth as the new Environment and Ethics Officer. Beth has done a great job over her past tenure and I really want to follow and build on her work.

I have three main goals for this coming year; to widen awareness among college JCR committee's about OUSU Environment and Ethics, to push for greater energy efficiency in college buildings and to fight to make Oxford University a more sustainable campus.

So how am I going to achieve this? Well, I think the major problem OUSU E&E face at the moment is the lack of awareness in the wider community that we actually exist. So I plan to meet college E&E reps in small groups to discuss how we can help them, and what they want to achieve. Another issue is Oxford

University's below par ranking in People and Planet's Green League (a ranking of all universities based on their environmental credentials). I want to change this by pushing for colleges to implement stricter environmental controls when building or retrofitting their accommodation and communal spaces. Furthermore, in many aspects of the 'green league' we score nothing at all, this has to change. Oxford University has a great opportunity to make this change happen, with the large amount of building work currently occurring around the University and it's holding of land in and around Oxford there is certainly scope for progress.

I look forward to working with you and making a positive difference in our student community.

James Fisher