

# Reports to Council

1<sup>st</sup> Week Council HT 2017

|        |           |                                  |                 |
|--------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Jack   | Hampton   | President                        | <b>Received</b> |
| Sandy  | Downs     | VP Welfare & Equal Opportunities | <b>Received</b> |
| Orla   | White     | VP Women                         | <b>Received</b> |
| Marina | Lambrakis | VP Graduates                     | <b>Received</b> |
| Eden   | Bailey    | VP Access & Academic Affairs     | <b>Received</b> |
| Beth   | Currie    | VP Charities & Community         | <b>Received</b> |

## **Sabbatical Officers**

### **Jack Hampton – President**

Council report:

Hi council for ease of reading I have bullet pointed the key things I have been getting up too since last council bellow:

- Development funding for central student support services
- Working on the student unions strategy for the next 5 years
- Rolling out a pilot for a clubs and socs quality mark
- Planning the winter conference for student leaders
- Delivering training to new JCR committees on team strategy and accountability
- Planning rent negotiation workshops for common room rent negotiation teams
- Disseminating rent negotiation guides to common rooms
- Writing the academic structures enquiry survey
- Lobbying the university on developments affecting student social space in west oxford
- Lobbying the university on the outcomes of the December budgets and there potential and future impacts on the student academic experience
- Helping plan the entertainment for the ousu election results party

Hopefully the above gives you a quick guide to my work over the Christmas period – i will give further details in my verbal report and if you have any questions on any of this please send me a message 😊

### **Eden Bailey – Vice-President (Access & Academic Affairs)**

Hello Council!

It's been a while since last OUSU Council, so here are some headlines of things that have been happening since last time of particular note. As always I do a daily summary of what I've been up to on twitter, and that's a great place to get in touch to ask me about anything from the meetings I've been representing students on or particular campaigns.

#### **Higher Education Policy**

A lot has happened since the last council, including the second reading of the HE Bill in the House of Lords. In the build up to this, I worked with twenty students writing to over sixty members of the House expressing our serious concerns with the Bill. We had some very supportive responses, and the debate itself in the Lords lasted over seven hours. Since then over 500 amendments have been tabled for the Committee stage. This means the Bill is finally seeing the intense scrutiny and questioning it has long needed.

At OUSU, we've launched our NSS Boycott. At least 22 other SUs are now boycotting the NSS too, in order to disrupt the TEF, and prevent student feedback being used to justify and implement fee increases. The boycott was mandated by OUSU Council at the end of last academic year, and we've got lots of plans to spread the word. Numerous common rooms have also made it policy to promote the boycott themselves, and if anyone has any questions or wants to help support the campaign, please do get in touch.

#### **Access and Admissions**

Between now and the end of last term we've seen a new round of admissions interviews, which many amazing student helpers made possible. I provided training sessions and update booklets for student

helpers preceding the interview period, and since then I've conducted a survey about everything from the training support they were offered, payment given, and the kinds of situations that they had to deal with, and will be using this information to ensure that sufficient provision is put in place in future, and that both students and interview candidates are looked after and treated appropriately. I'm optimistic that this will yield some change where it is needed for future years!

My predecessor Cat and I had both been involved with an extensive piece of work as part of the Access Targets Working Group, which will be making recommendations on what the collegiate university could do differently in order to better meet the University's Access Targets. This has been a big project in every sense, and I'm feeling really excited about the things that could be changing as a result of it, and look forward to being able to report on these in more detail. The report is now being approved by various committees, and one thing that will be stemming from it is a working group looking specifically at unconscious bias training for admissions tutors, and those involved with the admissions process more broadly. At the moment the training that is offered is exceptionally poor, and not widely undertaken. I feel positive that we might make some significant headway on this in the following term through this group. With regards to race and admissions this week I'll also be meeting with the Director for Undergraduate Admissions and the Head of the Equality and Diversity Unit to discuss what we can be doing

### **Assorted Affairs**

There will be a **focus group** on **Thursday 26th January** discussing **financial support** for students – everything from how accessible the process of applying is, whether there is space to communicate effectively why financial support might be needed, and also whether the current vocabulary of 'hardship' impacts how able feel to apply for support. If you feel you could help contribute to this discussion which will inform how the university offers financial support to students who are struggling, please come along!

**SusCam** is holding their first committee meeting of the term this week, and I'm looking forward to making some serious headway with the information resources and support available for students with suspended status this term.

### **Finally**

As you may be aware, nominations for OUSU elections open this week! If you have any questions or interest in running at all, and specifically for VP Access & Academic Affairs, please get in touch! It's a fantastic job and a great opportunity to represent students, campaign to make important change happen, and improve the lives of students and applicants.

### **Beth Currie – Vice-President (Charities & Community)**

Hey Council,

Hope everyone had a super restful vac!

If you're interested in running a campaign/being on the OUSU executive board then get in touch because I am looking for someone to chair our Environment Campaign (to oversee the Climate Justice and Food Justice campaigns, the Edible Planting group, and VegSoc) and Community Campaign (to oversee OUSU's homelessness campaign On Your Doorstep and the Living Wage Campaign) – so if you're interested in either role to have questions about them, please do get in touch!

On some things that I was working on towards the end of last term and The end of term clear outs we organised were a great success – loads of stuff was donated to the BHF and CEF so thank you very much to everyone involved! I matched up 18 students who were staying in Oxford over Christmas with local families and community groups for Christmas day – the day went smoothly and we have had really positive feedback so far! I am looking at ways we can expand the scheme to accommodate more students next year.

Our East Oxford Community Warden team are finally back in action! Yin (Senior Community Warden) and I trained them up last weekend and they will be starting the #KnowYourNeighbour campaign in the Cowley area in the next couple of weeks. The Jericho team will be working on a bike safety campaign.

Over the next six months I will be mainly working on projects to do with housing (following the mandate from 7<sup>th</sup> week MT Council) and information on graduate employment along with Marina. I'm having preliminary meetings to get these underway.

It's a super busy term with RAG, with Jailbreak, the first ever RAG Fashion Show (!), RAG Blind Date, the Charity Ballot and RAG elections – so keep your eyes peeled for information on all of these and make sure you get involved!

As you can see from this report, my job is very varied, fun and exciting! And it could be yours! If you want to any information on running for my role the drop me a message on [vpcandc@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:vpcandc@ousu.ox.ac.uk)

Stay cool,

Beth

### **Marina Lambrakis – Vice-President (Graduates)**

Happy 2017 Council! I have a lot to cover in this report – it's been a whole eight weeks since the last Council report I wrote, and even though some of that was holiday time, a lot wasn't – so I shall launch straight into it:

#### ***Postgraduate Research Courses***

From the end of last term, I've done a fair bit of work on PGR degrees in lots of different ways, and going into Hilary this is going to be my big priority. I've been involved in various conversations within the University around personal and professional development of PGR students, their relationship to the University's research agenda, and how we fit in to the research environment here – all of these are ongoing, and are looking very promising and productive so far. Alongside that, at the end of term I drafted a response to the government's consultation on doctoral loans. I've also been finalising the PGR survey, which is being checked over and is due to go live in week 3 of this term. There will be focus groups in the latter half of term to accompany this, and then the plan is to spend the Easter vac writing up the results of the review before taking it to various University committees next term.

#### ***Employment of grads***

This project is kicking off this term – Beth and I have had a scoping meeting with one of our Advisers, Hanne, who used to work for the Citizens' Advice Bureau and has lots of relevant experience in this area. We've established that we will create a toolkit of resources and FAQs about employment while you're a student, which will include basic things about how to navigate invoices, payslips, tax returns and so on, as well as more specific information on working within the University. Our aim is to empower working students, and hopefully going forward there will also be equipping sessions that we will offer.

### ***Divisional Board Reps***

In 8<sup>th</sup> week last term we interviewed applicants for the 3 graduate Divisional Board Rep positions that were vacant, and I'm really pleased to say that we successfully filled all three! There's a motion today to ratify those appointments-it's great to have a full roster again, and I'm confident that everyone we've appointed will do a great job. On Tuesday this week, Olly, the Social Sciences grad Div Rep, has organised a forum for grad course reps in his division, which should be a great event – we're hoping to run these in the other divisions as well now that we have Div Reps in post.

### ***Internal OUSU Stuff/ Grad engagement***

I'm spending some of my time now sitting on the OUSU Strategy Steering Group, which is the group that is overseeing the new **Strategic Plan** for OUSU looking forward to 2020. This is very exciting work, and I'm really looking forward to seeing how it unfolds!

Now that the Part Time Exec has properly gone, I'm beginning a project to put together a **Postgrad Action Plan** for the organisation, to make sure that graduates are fully represented in our work going forward. This relates to some of the stuff I've been doing around the Teaching Awards and our upcoming elections as well.

Having planned my **Pitch-a-PhD** event for last Saturday, we made the decision to postpone it to the end of term and refocus. There was a huge amount of interest from people in Medical Sciences and MPLS, so we decided that it would be better to rearrange the event and expand it to include all divisions – more info to follow later in term on how this will look.

### ***Other things I have done:***

- Ran a focus group on **hardship** support
- Met with a representative of SusCam to talk about how **suspension** works for graduates. This is an area that requires considerably more work, and I'm hoping to do some of that in Trinity term
- Gave **talks** to prospective students at the DTP Open Day, and to new starters at the Hilary Term Orientation event
- Coordinated a meeting with Brookes SU to brainstorm possible actions to address the **high cost of living** in Oxford
- Set up a meeting between **PPH** Common Room Presidents and the Chair of PPH Supervisory Committee
- Worked with Beth and Jack on a response to the University's submission to the City Council **Local Plan** 2016-2036

- Met with the **International Students' Campaign** to come up with a plan for this term, including elections for a new committee
- Many committees and working groups

**Coming up:**

- Sandy and I are working with Exam Schools to organise **Exam Prep Sessions** for all undergraduates and Masters students sitting exams. The undergrad session is on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> Feb, and the postgrad session is on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Feb. More info to come!
- I'm doing a session on **'Who are OUSU and what do we do'** for anyone interested in running in the elections – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan!
- I'm running a **'Writing and Presenting Papers'** training session at the Winter Training Conference on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Jan
- Doing some targeted work on **Brexit** with the new Head of Brexit Strategy at the University
- Charing Council...

**Sandy Downs – Vice-President (Welfare & Equal Opportunities)**

Hi everyone!

It's been ages since the last report, but yay Christmas happened so thankfully I've been at home asleep for a lot of the time since last Council rather than busy with things to update you on.

A really big thing that happened is that the Director of Student Welfare & Support Services, Dr Catherine Paxton, has got an exciting new job, and I was on the interview panel for her successor. We've appointed Gillian Hamnett, the senior tutor at Wolfson, and so I'm excited for the handover and working with Gillian in the future.

As usual, since last council I've been busy in various committees and meetings, and am excited to chat to all my campaigns at the end of this week about their plans for the term.

The common room specific welfare reports are now out for any common room who achieved a response rate above 50%. I am eternally grateful to the OUSU staff who worked their socks off to make this happen.

We've released an OUSU statement on Anti Semitism, which is up on the website and well worth a read.

I've been working with the Pitt Rivers and other museums and libraries in Oxford on the 'Out in Oxford' celebrations for LGBTQ history months, which will include a launch event, film screenings, and a new permanent LGBTQ trail throughout the city.

We've been planning the NSS Boycott. Don't do it. Do something else instead. Anything else.

We're still working on a Preventing Prevent video – look out for it emerging in the near future!

We're also planning an exciting election period, including a fun (!) elections result night and after party. Get excited for that!!!

Thanks! Sandy ☺

### **Orla White – Vice-President (Women)**

#### Sexual Consent/Tackling Sexual Violence

- I'm still working on the data analysis of consent workshop feedback – we've recorded almost 1000 responses so far! By hand!
- Speaking of which, I'm working on my recommendations for next year's run of consent workshops. One of them is: don't collect responses in written form. Just don't. Some other recommendations are more interesting – for instance, I'm going to try to incorporate a bystander intervention scenario into the workshops, because a lot of people have expressed interest in learning how to defuse or tackle uncomfortable situations.
- By the time of Council, I will have attended specialised OSARCC training alongside a number of student campaigners from It Happens Here.

#### Supporting Student Sex Workers

- Over the vac and the beginning of this term I surveyed the welfare needs of student sex workers.
- I'm hoping to use this data to convince the University to pay for a sex worker-led organisation to deliver training to some members of student-facing staff.

#### Supporting Trans Students

- As per one of my manifesto pledges – we're changing how we run voting for the VP Women role! We found out that all the Uni will give us is 'legal gender', which a lot of trans people can't change and which only allows a binary choice between male and female, and the old system required people who had been categorised incorrectly to have to personally send an email to correct that. Now we're basing it solely off a much more fluid system of self-identification. All good.
- I'm going to bring up healthcare provision for trans students at the annual meeting of the Sub-Committee for Student Wellbeing and the College Doctors' Association.

#### Misc

- It's all hands on deck for elections; I've been meeting with candidates, shooting videos about my role and thinking about handover. It's incredible to think that I wasn't sure about doing this job – it's hard but it's absolutely amazing as well. If you're considering it, please come talk to me – if nothing else, coffee's on OUSU!
- I'm developing liberation training to deliver at our upcoming Winter Conference, which should be great; I'm also working on a brief session on self-care during elections which will be available to any of the candidates running.
- I've been supporting Iffley Open House, who may win the right to stay in their current location over the coldest months, which is amazing. More on that in the motion I've submitted for this Council.