

# OUSU

## reports to council

*1st week michaelmas 2007*

**Martin McCluskey**

**President**

Welcome back to another fun filled year!

It's been a fairly full summer with lots going on in OUSU and the University. If you want any more information on the topics discussed below, just email me on [president@ousu.org](mailto:president@ousu.org) <<mailto:president@ousu.org>> .

### **Freshers' Week**

...Was fun! Between all the sabs, we visited around 40 Common Rooms giving a combination of general OUSU talks and Welfare talks. We hope to continue such activities through the term and get around as many Common Rooms as possible before Christmas.

Freshers' Fair was immense...literally. It was the biggest fair in living memory, with more student societies than ever before. The shiny new OUSU area was a massive bonus in giving us a big space in which to talk to Freshers and tell them all about OUSU. Thanks to Sam McGeever (Hertford) who organised the Fair and his senior stewards: Rose Goddard (Somerville), Justine Ramsden (Worcester), Tom Rackham (Wadham) and Nick Edwards (Oriel).

### **OUSU Website**

After years of waiting for a fully functioning, easy to use website, OUSU now has a great website up and running. In the first month of operation we had over 10,000 unique visitors and over 20,000 page views. Our Freshers' Facebook Group also managed to get well over 1,000 members and was really useful for raising awareness of OUSU before Freshers arrived and allowing them to chat to each other and get questions answered by OUSU Sabs. Credit for the website has to go to Griff Rees (Hertford) who has made many long term OUSU goals a reality in just a couple of months.

### **Oxford Student Scholarship**

We've started work on the Oxford Student Scholarship Scheme earlier than normal this year in an attempt to raise awareness of the Scheme and increase potential for external fundraising. For those of you who don't know what the Oxford Student Scholarship is, take a look at the motion on this week's agenda. In a further attempt to relaunch the scheme, the motion this week also proposes changing the name of the scheme to "Reach Oxford".

### **University Council**

The meeting of University Council in 9th Week of Trinity discussed a number of issues that has been proposed by OUSU over the last academic year. University Council accepted JCC and GPC's recommendations to award £10,000 of funding for the Safety Bus and £30,000 for the appointment of a Head of General Office. Unfortunately, Council accepted GPC's recommendation not to award OUSU a block grant, against the recommendation of JCC. In light of this, Council requested a funding review of OUSU be carried out by JCC through this academic year. We hope that this will be a full and frank review, investigating how OUSU can be funded more sustainably for the long term, looking at opportunities of funding through both the University and Colleges.

### **Joint Committee of Council with Student Members**

Following the resignation of Dame Fiona Caldicott as chair of the Joint Committee of Council with Student members, Dr. Tim Softley (Merton) has been appointed as the new chair of the Committee. I met with Dr. Softley in July and discussed the priorities for JCC for the coming year. The first meeting of the Committee will be in third week and I'll give a complete report to Council after that meeting.

### **Meetings with University Officials**

The Vice Chancellor – I had two meetings with the VC over the summer period. On both occasions, we

discussed the papers for upcoming meetings of University Council.

The Registrar – I met with the Registrar in September and discussed OUSU's access to student information and email addresses, the possibility of employing a full time Student Adviser and the upcoming OUSU Funding Review. On the issue of student data, the University have agreed to give OUSU access to student email addresses for the first time in order that we can ensure that OUSU members are informed about our services. The issues of the full time Student Adviser and the funding review will be dealt with through JCC, but the Registrar expressed interest and asked to be informed of advances in each area.

The Director of International Strategy – the University recently appointed Dr. Heather Bell as Director of International Strategy. Her remit includes not only examining how Oxford University can continue to compete internationally, but also how individual courses can be "internationalised". Ingrid (VP Graduates) will be dealing more closely with Dr. Bell over the coming year in expanding OUSU's International Committee.

The Director of Public Affairs – I met with the Director of Public Affairs to discuss OUSU's publicity for the year and get some advice on the direction we should take.

## **NUS**

I attended - along with the Vice Presidents Women, Graduates and Access and Academic Affairs – the annual NUS Campaigns Convention, which met at Canary Wharf. It was an interesting day of workshops and speeches from NUS Officials, other Student Union Officers and sympathetic outsiders. The most interesting discussion of the day was on NUS's approach to the review of Top Up Fees which is scheduled for 2009. NUS have just published "An Economic Analysis of Free Education" which signals a shift away from the standard NUS policy of free education for all to a more nuanced approach, taking into consideration the impact on International and Postgraduate students. We will continue the debate throughout the year and will be looking for input from Common Rooms and OUSU members.

We're also promoting NUS Extra Cards and have had loads of freshers already sign up for one. They're £10 and you can get one by visiting OUSU or by going to [www.nusextra.com](http://www.nusextra.com) <<http://www.nusextra.com>> .

## **Aldwych**

I attended one meeting of the Aldwych Group – a meeting for Student Union Presidents and Education Officers of the Russell Group Universities. The group has, in the past, been prone to navel gazing and internal wrangling. However, with a new team of Officers in place I hope that the work of the group this year will be more constructive than in the past. Key issues up for debate this year are the 2009 review of Fees, the possibility of the introduction of a National Student Bursary Scheme and the student experience of International and Postgraduate students. We'll be consulting on all these issues over the year.

## **The Sports Fed**

OUSU's relationship with the Sports Federation has been almost non-existent over recent years. Given that they are another student-run organisation working full time to support students, I think it's important that we build up a more solid working relationship with them over the next year. I had two meetings with the President of the Sports Fed at the start of the Summer and we discussed ways in which we can work more closely together, as well as sharing some information regarding the funding of our organisations.

## **Facebook**

One of the biggest issues that came up over the Summer was regarding the Proctors' use of Facebook in disciplinary cases, particularly their use in "prosecuting" students for involvement in post-exam trashing. OUSU took a firm line against such unfair and unwarned use of Facebook profiles and, consequently, received a large amount of media coverage.

We worked closely with a number of students involved and continue to support students whose cases are ongoing. We hope to work with the Proctors to prohibit use of Facebook by the University in disciplinary cases and also with representatives from the Merton Street Colleges to come up with a mutually agreed code of conduct for the end of exams in Hilary and Trinity of this academic year.

## **Socially Responsible Investment**

Since last year, the OUSU President has sat on the Socially Responsible Investment Working Group which was

established by University Council after OUSU's campaign in 2005-06. The working group has almost concluded its work and the hope is that the report will reach University Council soon. More updates on this throughout the term!

## **CUSU**

We met up with the Tab Union (in Oxford, thankfully) and had a constructive day of meetings and sharing news and information.

## **Annual Plan**

I've been working on the Annual Plan, which will be presented to Council at its third week meeting.

## **CCTV**

We launched our latest student safety campaign at Freshers' Fair last Thursday, highlighting the rise in violent crime in East Oxford in the six months leading to June 2007. We're pushing for Oxford City Council East Area Parliament to follow Thames valley Police's recommendations and introduce CCTV on Cowley Road. We'll be in touch with JCR and MCR Presidents over the next week in order to get campaign materials distributed to your Common Rooms.

This campaign is also a really great opportunity to engage with the local community and work with local community groups, residents, and businesses.

## **JRAM**

I had two meetings with Sir Michael Scholar (ex Chair of Conference of Colleges) regarding the JRAM. The 9th Week meeting of Conference agreed to implement the JRAM from 2008/09 by a significant majority, agreeing in principle to the ideas of taxation and transfers that had been discussed throughout the consultation. Further work was considered over the Summer and Conference is expected to discuss JRAM further this term.

For those of you who have made it this far down...Lame Joke of the Week: How do you kill a circus? Go for the juggler.

<b>Rich Hardiman</b>	<b>V-P (Finance)</b>
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First, I must apologise for the late submission of my report – it's been a busy couple of weeks. I'm going to keep this as brief as possible, and try and cover the salient points of the summer.

### Summer Publications

Without exception these were all well produced, thanks to the hard work of the editors and their various assistants. There were significant issues with distribution, especially of the Freshers' Guide – for which we rely on the co-operation of college secretaries to get out – and these must be dealt with for future years. Business wise we did marginally better than in previous years, although we haven't seen the extent of bad debt, which will always be a problem on these kinds of projects. Not really a lot more to say on this – I'm writing a review of the summer business practices for third week, so there'll be more to see then. In the meantime thanks especially to the following for this summer's efforts: Mark Taylor, Imran Khan, Lorna Stevenson, Kate McMullan, Hannah Kuchler, Tom Foster, Cat Clark, TJ Hertz, Rose Goddard, Gav Abbs and Sarah Parlour.

### **Freshers' Fair**

This year's fair was superb. Sam McGeever and his team have done a thoroughly good job. Notwithstanding the issues highlighted in this week's papers the Fair passed off smoothly and really showed that OUSU is capable of conducting itself as a professional organisation. Again, thanks to all involved. The commercial tent, which provides an important revenue stream for the student union, performed well, although it is clear that our pricing structures need to be reviewed, especially with regard to local businesses, if we are to continue to succeed here. I intend to undertake this review during the Christmas vac with the help of the Business Manager

### **Caps and Gowns**

Sales of caps and gowns were poor, due to a number of reasons. Shepherd and Woodward, our main competitor, slashed their prices to such an extent that we could not viably compete. They also contrived to get their advertising material into many college freshers' packs, which meant that Freshers saw it before ours. We managed to get rid of most of our retained stock, and I recommend that we get out of the business before

next year as is no longer commercially viable. In getting Shepherd and Woodward to drop their prices over the last few years we have succeeded in getting a better deal for students, so we've got a moral victory, but also a pyrrhic one!

### **Term Planner**

The term planner is always touted as the solution to any financial problems OUSU could ever have. Sadly, it's not. With a bigger team and more time to devote to smaller projects like this I think we could push the hard sell and make a little cash out of it, but under the current climate it's simply not possible to optimise the revenue stream. I have adjusted the budget to reflect this fact.

### **OxStu**

The new team are settling down well, and I believe there was a significant increase in quality, as well as general professionalism on the part of the journalists, in this weeks' edition. There continue to be problems with late bookings of ads, and we're looking at ways to tidy up this end of the production, but all in all it's going well.

### **NUS**

Extra cards are selling at 3 times the rate they were last year – which means more money for common rooms and for OUSU. The cost of OUSU's affiliation is less this year than last, a saving which we will pass along to affiliated common rooms.

### **ZOO**

ZOO has been relaunched into a far more aggressive market than ever before. It's not quite the door wars of the early nineties, but we're going to have to be a lot more active in order to survive. With four nights this term we've got excellent coverage, everywhere from the Oxford Academy on the Cowley road to Bar Risa on Hythe Bridge Street, and we feel that we're taking the right steps to reinvigorate the brand. There are jobs available helping us to run the nights (email me for details), we held a party for entz reps this week to get them on side, and there is, of course, the much rumoured ZOO card to come in the next couple of weeks.

Just a final word on ZOO – it's a really important service, providing students with entz that are safe, fun, and cheap as well as providing revenue which we can spend on other essential, but non-profit making, services. We can only run it with the support of JCR committee members and other students – and it won't always be there if we don't have your support. If there's anything you want from us to make the service better get in touch and we'll see what we can do – just remember that every time you spend three quid to get into Park End you're doing your bit to help support students, rather than lining some guy's pockets.

### **General Budgetary things**

My predecessor, Ed Mayne, mentioned in his budget that he had no idea of our spending priorities and was thus producing a guideline document, rather than a cast iron spending plan. He actually did a very good job, and has given me a sound basis on which to build, but he was right to guess that we'd speedily deviate from his predictions. I'll be presenting an amended budget to third week council.

<b>Louise Randall</b>	<b>V-P (Welfare and Equal Opportunities)</b>
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After a brief post-finals recovery, and a packed period of handover, the last few months have been very busy. Much of this has been taken up with the day to day functioning of welfare services and the Student Advice Service, and we have dealt with a constant flow of casework throughout the summer period. What follows is a brief summary of some of the other projects I have been involved with over this time.

### **Guide for Students with Disabilities**

This has been my major project over the summer period. The previous Disabilities Guide was in desperate need of updating and making more accessible to students. As a result, I rewrote almost the entire document, which is now 80 glossy pages of information for students with disabilities and the friends and welfare officers who support them. The guide includes comprehensive information about disability legislation and students' rights, funding and practical support available within the university and nationwide, and a large section of profiles of specific disability information. I worked in close partnership with the Disabilities office on this project, and have instigated regular meetings which enable me to work in closer partnership with the team in many aspects of my work. The guide will go to print in the next few weeks.

## **Living Out Guide**

I oversaw the production of this publication, which is printed and a fantastic publication! All the credit should go to Rose Goddard, who was an amazing editor, so a huge thanks to her.

## **SAS**

We have been very busy with casework this summer, but have been enormously grateful for the fantastic SAS systems put in place by Jamie, my predecessor. We have expanded the case notes system to include specific forms for 'Information Requests' (rather than on-going casework). We have also implemented 'Pre-visit forms' which can be emailed or given to students wanting to use the SAS. This is to increase the efficiency of the system, enabling us to prioritise emergency cases and make sure people arrange to see the most appropriate member of the SAS from the start. To aid this we are encouraging people to email [advice@ousu.org](mailto:advice@ousu.org) about anything SAS related.

We have also been undergoing discussions throughout the summer as to the direction our SAS Review should take.

## **Chlamydia Screening Program**

I have been working closely with the Chlamydia screening program co-ordinator for Oxford, who is keen to work with both Brookes and Oxford Uni on a large scale Chlamydia screening program for students. Current research suggests that 1/5 men and 1/10 women of student age are infected with the disease which can lead to infertility, and 75% do not realise they're infected. We are currently working with college doctors and nurses to plan the best way to roll out this program to all students.

## **Walk Safe**

I have been working with the welfare reps at Teddy Hall who run a safety scheme for all those who work into the evening hours. 'Walk Safe' was organised in Trinity 2007 as a response to growing safety concerns for students walking home alone. Volunteers are on call in the college from the hours of 21.00 to 1.00 Tuesdays to Fridays. Students are encouraged to call Walk Safe and the volunteers will pick you up from your destination and ensure you arrive home safely. As this scheme is volunteer run, we would ask interested students to try and volunteer once or twice a term.

*Walk Safe Number: 07768371882*

## **World Mental Health Day**

I have been working with Oxfordshire MIND and the Disabilities office and on October 10<sup>th</sup> I ran a stall in Exam schools to distribute publicity and raise awareness of mental illness amongst students.

## **Common Room Officers**

I am holding a Welfare Training Day this Sunday for all JCR and MCR reps with welfare responsibilities.

All welfare officers have received resource packs, and receive weekly emails with welfare news, advice and events. I have also set up mailing lists for LGBTQ and Diversity reps, which had previously been sporadic.

## **Anti-Racism Campaign**

With help from the Association of Black Rhodes Scholars, the Anti-Racism campaign is being kick-started! We will be involved with promoting Black History Month in Oxford, organising speaker events (e.g. Ghanan president John Kufour who is speaking at the end of October). There was an enthusiastic take-up to get involved with the campaign at Freshers' Fair.

## **Students with Disabilities Campaign**

I have attended the local Disability Equality Day and have begun looking into the formation of a Disability Network within the university. I am hoping to find 2 co-chairs for this campaign in the next few weeks.

## **LGBTQ Campaign**

Largely in the hands of the fantastic co-chairs! We have been liaising with Stonewall, who produce an LGBTQ career recruitment guide, and are looking to promote their services within the university.

## Media

During my first few days in office I was interviewed for a BBC news story on students illegally using prescription drugs such as Ritalin to aid concentration during study. I was also interviewed by the BBC about the Proctor's use of Facebook to fine students for exam behaviour. I did a piece for the radio station Xfm about STIs, and was interviewed for local press about the Chlamydia screening program.

## Freshers' Week

After 3 months of hard work it was fantastic to have students back and remember what all the work was for! I did 17 welfare talks around the university, and met a great number of welfare officers personally. I attended a number of Zoo nights and at Freshers' Fair I manned the SAS and general OUSU stalls at the Freshers' Fair, and was privileged to welcome thousands of freshers during the course of the week.

Please feel free to ask any questions about the above, or any other aspect of the work I do to support students. Email me at [welfare@ousu.org](mailto:welfare@ousu.org) or phone me on (2)88261.

Thanks for reading this far!

**Hannah Roe**

**V-P (Women)**

This report is separated into three key areas of work – welfare, campaigning and representation.

### Welfare

#### The Safety Bus

This year sees the return of the Safety Bus, as we re-enter our joint partnership with Oxford Brookes. This is possible due to the University generously giving us £10,000 to cover our costs in the partnership. We now need to look for a longer term source of funding.

As the person responsible for the OUSU side of the partnership, I've been working on publicity within Oxford University. Information and relevant links can be found through the OUSU website, information about the Safety Bus was included in all OUSU talks to Freshers in Colleges and there was a Safety Bus information stall at Freshers Fair. I have sent information to MCR presidents for distribution.

#### Support for students with eating disorders

Enough!, is the support group set up for students affected by eating disorders set up by Sian Renwick and my predecessor, Jenny Hoogewerth-McComb. The feedback on the group has been positive. This summer we have been investigating how to put the group on a more permanent basis. We are currently working with BEAT (formerly known as the Eating Disorders Association) to become part of their network of support groups – we hope to have completed this relatively long process by the beginning of next term. I have also worked on improving publicity and information about the group.

The OUSU guide to Guide to Disordered Eating is currently being updated for republication. New sections and profiles are being added and I am working with the various parties to try to secure funding for a larger print run than has happened previously, so that it can be widely distributed, rather than only available on request. As new sections of the Guide are completed, they will be put on the new OUSU website.

### Issues to do with Sexual Harassment and Violence

A number of issues have arisen over the summer-

#### -Complaint re: Thirst Lodge

A complaint was made to me about the set-up of a window between the men's and women's toilets in Thirst Lodge. The licensing board was asked to investigate the situation – they reported that the window is not illegal. Since women students have expressed clear concern since then about the situation however, I am writing to Thirst Lodge about the matter.

- Supporting Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre This summer the Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre was forced to close down due to lack of volunteers. Claire Addison (VP Charities and Communities) and I made contact with OSARCC to see if they were facing similar problems – the upshot was that I booked a stall at

Freshers' Fair for people interested in volunteering to help OSSARC. Sarah Hutchinson arranged for volunteers to be on the stall – and on Wednesday I handed over a list of over 120 people interested in volunteering to support OSARCC to one of their co-ordinators. I am continuing to work with OSSARC to ensure that they can access any support I can offer- the Centre is such a valuable welfare provision to female and male students.

-Updating OUSU website information re: reporting to the Police

I worked with the Thames Valley Police to update the information on the OUSU website about reporting crimes to do with sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

- Drink Spiking

I'm currently working with the OUSU General Manager to see whether it would be feasible for OUSU to add tests for drink spiking and bottle caps to the welfare provisions that we supply to Colleges.

Supporting Student Parents

I've set up a Student Parents maillist, publicised via e-mail to all JCRs and MCRs. There was a stall at Freshers' Fair for student parents, where some people signed up to the maillist. I'll be organising an event for student parents later this term.

Campaigning

One of my responsibilities is oversight of Women's Campaign.

This summer I worked with Rachel Cummings, Mark Taylor, Louise Randall and Chris Fulton to produce new publicity for the Campaign. This involved a photoshoot and InDesign work! Rachel Cummings organised the Fresher's fair stall and I helped with some materials. I also worked with Rachel on inviting speakers – watch this space for updates!

In order to support Women's Campaign, as well as keeping myself aware of the issues faced by women students at the University, I am liaising with the committees or presidents of OxWip, FEST, Atalantas and Amnesty International, both via meetings and e-mail.

Representation

Committee Work

I am a member of the new EPSC sub-committee on the Finals Gender Gap. I will also be writing a proposal that the VP Women be added to the newly made Committee for the Gender Equality Scheme, as my counterpart in Cambridge is.

I was a member of two working parties over the Summer, the SAS reform working party and the OUSU transition to incorporated Charity status.

Women and Academia

At the request of Women's Campaign, I will be organising a number of Tutorial Workshops this year, since women's lack of confidence in dealing with the Tutorial system has been argued to be contributing factor to the Finals Gender Gap. I will be reporting on these to the Finals Gender Gap Committee.

I have also had preparatory meetings with the Head of Undergraduate Admissions and an Access Officer regarding the OUSU Women's Open Day which I have overall responsibility for running.

OUSU Publications

Agendered Magazine – as mandated by Council at the end of last term I worked with the VP Finance to investigate setting up a magazine looking at gender issues in the University. I took a proposal to OSSL board and was asked to re-submit it later in the financial year when OSSL would have a better ability to judge the financial viability of the project. In the meantime, the magazine will be online only – around 40 people are currently involved in working on the first edition.

I researched and wrote the Women's section of both the Fresher's Guide and the Oxford Handbook, sourced copy for the BME (Black, Minority, Ethnic) section of the Fresher's Guide and did research for the BME section of the Oxford Handbook.

**Ingrid Frater****V-P (Graduates)**

Welcome back everyone; hope you all had great summers. It's been a busy and productive few months in OUSU and hopefully here I'll outline some of the main things I've been doing over summer:

One of my main objectives has been to ensure that any vocabulary of talking only about "JCRs" in OUSU has gone! I think in the past, with the VP Graduates absent over the summer, it's been easy to fall into the trap of talking about undergraduates far more predominantly. But now we're all talking, as we should, about "Common Rooms" or about "JCRs and MCRs" – we need to work for both as effectively as possible and that's what we're all aiming for.

Martin and I produced, for the first time since 2000, a **Common Room Presidents' Guide**, which we sent to all affiliated CR Presidents in the hope that that would be a useful handbook of information and that it would highlight what OUSU can do for CRs and their committees. I have also been working closely with MCR Presidents over the summer and have organised and scheduled **MCR PresCom** until Trinity Term.

**Postgraduate Assembly** is booked at the University Club for the year, once a term on Tuesday of third week, and I have organised for the Student Funding Manager to come to our Michaelmas Term meeting. Motions are now welcome – to maria@ousu.org.

This year's **Freshers' Guide** went, for the first time, to undergrads and grads – in the hope that this would be a fairer treatment for all our students. The guide had general info for all and then specific undergrad, grad and international sections. Unfortunately, because college allocation for grads can take place very late, we were unable to obtain the data to send the grad ones to homes – but they were all delivered to colleges in –1<sup>st</sup> week.

I have been updating the **MCR committee lists** that we have, to ensure that all the grad reps and officers around Oxford are invited to OUSU meetings and training sessions, in the hope that we have really active participation in, for instance, E&E, RAG, welfare training, OUSU rep meetings etc.

As you will have all seen we now have a brand new **website**, and I have been working hard to make sure that all the relevant info on academic affairs, PGA, finance etc are on there for graduates.

I'm now on **OSSL board** to ensure graduate representation in our business ventures.

I have been determined to get the **International Student Campaign** on its feet and going. 14% of undergrads, 64% of graduate research, and 71% of postgraduate taught students are international. I have been in close contact with Kaushal, the part-time exec officer for international students, and with Xin Hui Chan and Kudrat Virk (the co-chairs from last year) to organise the campaign. I've sent out emails to most of the international societies and CR reps and collected names at the International Students Orientation Programme, and am happy to say that it looks like we have a lot of interested students – our first meeting will be on 18<sup>th</sup> October.

I have also met with the **International Office** in the hope of liaising with them regularly this year to share ideas and resources, and with Dr Heather Bell, the **Head of International Strategy** (a new University position), to see what Oxford is planning to do in terms of achieving in a global higher education market.

I have been dealing with quite a large amount of casework as part of the **Student Advice Service**, and have received training from Jamie, last year's VP Welfare. This casework has been shaping some of my main ideas of what I would like to achieve over the coming year.

I have been attending large numbers of **University meetings**, particularly with Student Administration. James and I in particular work with many members of central admin – we have met all the key people we will be working with this year and are also already involved in such projects as the new website [www.ox.ac.uk/students](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students), online registration, and I am working on a project looking at teaching and learning space for graduate students.

I have attended several national conferences and meetings, hoping to work with student union officers across the country – these include the **National Postgraduate Committee** annual conference, **Aldwych** meetings (we have focus groups for postgrads and international students this year), and **NUS** Campaigns Convention.

Finally, **Freshers' Week** was of course incredibly busy. I have talked at about sixteen colleges so far to graduate freshers, and also talked at both the undergrad and postgrad International Orientation Programmes and at the PGCE induction day (they start a couple of weeks before freshers' week), and was at **Freshers' Fair**.

**James Lamming**

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

Summer at OUSU is an unusual time. Without chance for a breather post-finals, you then have two weeks to learn your new role, and then three months to practice it without the most important people there: students. Despite the greater prevalence of tourists than undergraduates in Oxford over the past three months, life in the office has been busy. Here is a summary of the bigger projects on which I was working, and please feel free to ask me any questions about any of the activities.

### **Access**

**Alternative Prospectus** – thanks to TJ Hertz for his incredible design and editing work which allowed the new AP to be produced from scratch over the summer. Thank you also to all those who contributed (there are too many to mention). I was busy collecting copy, and writing what I couldn't get off volunteers. I am now working with the University on distributing the AP with the official prospectus next year to save costs on mailing, and will report back soon.

**Target Schools** – I helped out with a Target Schools open day in Oriel at the start of the summer, and have since then conducted the review that leads up to the motion today. Thank you to the members of the Student Funding and Access Office and the University Admissions Office who have been very helpful as I settled in. Target Schools will be working much more closely with the University this year to coordinate our activities and prevent us duplicating the good work that goes on elsewhere. We have created one volunteer mailing list with the University and we are contacting everyone who signed up in Freshers' Fair this week. There will be basic training sessions to improve the quality of support to these volunteers. If you would like to help out with any of the access work, please get in touch.

**Interview Website** – I am creating an interview website and am looking for profiles from students about their interview experiences to help demystify the process. With the Oxford University Film Foundation I am also hoping to produce videos of either mock interview or tutorials to provide support for potential applicants, especially in those schools that are unable or choose not to help with interview preparation.

**Access more generally** – I have attended an Access Conference, various access meetings, spoken to students on the Oxford Ambassadors Program and working with my opposite number at Cambridge, coordinated a response to the Sutton Trust Admissions report which saw our letter being published in the Saturday Telegraph. I also acted as a 'mystery applicant' on the summer open days to discover what goes on, and was incredibly impressed, especially by how welcoming everyone was.

### **Academic Affairs**

**Education Committee** – Ingrid and I are working with the University to improve the quality of JCC, GJCC and Divisional Board Rep representation. We will start hosting meetings of Divisional Board and JCC Reps to improve communication between everyone involved in academic representation and share good ideas.

**Study Skills** – I have started producing information for a study skills section on the OUSU website, and in third week I am running two 'Surviving Finals' sessions for students starting their third years, where recent graduates and tutors offer some of the hints and tips that will make this year more manageable.

**Guides** – the Academic Affairs Rep, JCC and Divisional Board Rep Guides have all been expanded, revised and updated ready for circulation.

**Student Gateway** – With Ingrid, I am on the Student Gateway steering group which is turning [www.ox.ac.uk/students](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students) into a useable portal to the University and Administration websites. This should help students answer their queries and find the information they are after much more quickly.

**Online Registration** – Oxford entered the 20<sup>th</sup> Century this summer, and had all its students register for the first time online. I helped with the final preparation and testing of this scheme. If you know of any problems with it, please get in touch.

**Facebook** – The Proctors decision to use Facebook over the summer to conduct a witch-hunt of misbehaving students created a media storm. I was interviewed live on Radio 2 by Jeremy Vines, and also on Fox FM, BBC Radio Oxford and BBC South Today. To help students, I prepared guidelines about what to expect from the different Proctors Courts and the pros and cons of the options from which students had to choose. We will be working with the Proctors this term on guidelines for using Facebook and a better system for policing the more enthusiastic trashings.

**Casework** – Despite it being the summer, there was a considerable casework load. If any of the students you represent do need any help, support or advice, please encourage them to get in touch with the Student Advice Service.

**Aldwych** – The Aldwych Group, which is the Student Unions of the Russell University Groups, has had a number of meetings, including a conference in Northern Ireland which I have attended. The focus for this year will be preparing for the 2009 review of student funding and the current bursary scheme. Motions will be brought to Council in due course to gauge the views of Oxford students on these issues.

## **OUSU**

**SAS Review** – During the summer, I attended the discussions and meetings on the SAS Review and how this is to be conducted.

**Governance** – I have been on the working party over the summer looking at Governance. Please see the motion for more information.

**Website** – The new OUSU website is increasing in content everyday. So far I have added as much information as I can about academic affair issues, and the guides for Common Room, JCC and Divisional Board officers. I have also started my blog, which I am doing my best to update daily. Please add comments and send in ideas about the topics you would like me to discuss.

**Freshers' Fair and Freshers' Talks** – During Freshers' Week I visited a number of Common Rooms to talk about OUSU and the Student Advice Service, spent Wednesday and Thursday welcoming as many people as I could to Freshers' Fair, and Friday helping with the clear up.

## **Targets for the Term**

The three key projects I hope to finish this term are:

- Creating the interview website ready for the upcoming admissions process, and provide training for student interview helpers.
- Set up the new OUSU Education Committee as part of the work to improve student academic policy representation.
- Complete the Study Skills section on the OUSU Website.

## **A Final Few Words**

Thank you firstly to everyone who has helped so far with the job; efforts and contributions are always appreciated. And absolutely finally, do feel free to get in touch with me if you have any welfare related, access related or academic affairs related queries as I am always happy to help.

Best of luck for the coming academic year!

**Claire Addison**

**V-P (Charities and Community)**

Welcome back to Oxford everyone, and thanks for coming along to OUSU Council once again. I'll keep this short and sweet if possible. The summer has been odd without students around but hopefully we've got lots prepared for you now. Enormous thanks to Imran, my predecessor, for leaving things in such good shape and being there to answer questions throughout the summer.

### Community

- Throughout the summer I've been meeting up with organisations whom OUSU has previously worked with, and making new contacts with local charitable organisations. Some of the people I've been liaising with to improve student access to volunteering opportunities include Oxford Children's Hospital, Aston Rowant Nature Park, The Gatehouse, The Bridging Project, Oxford Conservation Volunteers and OxDox Film Festival. In many cases I've gone along to meet with these people and then taken part in a volunteering event so I know how best to market it and whether we can tailor it better to student needs.
- I've been advertising volunteering opportunities to graduates who've been here over the summer through the MCR presidents' mail list and there's been a great take up. To reaffirm what I keep saying to Ingrid (VP Grads) graduate students are amazing! We've placed volunteers with The Gatehouse, Action for Children in Conflict (as web designers), The Bridging Project and The Museums Outreach Scheme.
- I'm in the process of setting up a Jericho Kids Football team with the local councillor Susanna Pressell, and we need a couple of people to help with coaching for 2 hours a week on Saturdays during term. If you're interested email [charities@ousu.org](mailto:charities@ousu.org)
- I've organised an information evening with Helen and Douglas House to recruit new volunteers for their Douglas House mentor scheme.
- I'm moving the Oxford Get Involved website over to [www.volunteeringinoxford.org](http://www.volunteeringinoxford.org). The new website is being updated with all of the volunteering opportunities available to students in Oxford
- I've met with Adam from OxHub to discuss student charities in Oxford and how we can most effectively advertise opportunities within Oxford as well as nationally and internationally.
- Martin and I have started up a campaign for CCTV on the Cowley Road. This has received coverage in the student papers, The Oxford Mail, on BBC South and Radio Oxford. I'll be continuing with this campaign throughout the term.
- I've gone to city council area meetings as well as the Oxford Inspires department of the city council, in order to represent students in local government. I also attended a Town Hall event for Oxford's charitable and voluntary organisations which went well. At the next meeting I'll be giving a presentation about how students can, and are, of benefit to the local community.
- Working with Leyla Okhai from the university, I've begun work on a publication which will catalogue all of the things that Oxford University students are doing in the local area. This will bring together all of the disparate elements (e.g. students charities, individual volunteers, centres like OxHub, OCVA, and OUSU) of the student voluntary scene in one booklet which will prove how much is being done.
- I've been working with Citigroup on a volunteering/recruitment day which was planned for early November, but has now been moved to May.
- I've organised an International Students' Conservation Day at Aston Rowant Nature Park, which has proved very popular.

### RAG

- The annual RAG bungee jump will take place on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> May (3<sup>rd</sup> week) in Port Meadow. There will be an information meeting at 5.30pm on Friday of 1<sup>st</sup> week. Over 80 people have signed up so far, so it should be a great event and raise lots of money for our 5 charities – Jacari, Moving Mountains, AIRD, Changing Faces and International Alert.
- I've organised for us to promote the RAG College pants once more. These are available through RAG reps or by emailing me – [rag@ousu.org](mailto:rag@ousu.org).
- Myself and Hannah (VP Women) have begun organising the annual 'In the Pink' event for Breast Cancer Research. I'm also starting to get together a Battle of the Bands event for the same cause.

- I made a new 'RAG Reps Handbook' and delivered it to every single JCR and MCR (Please use them/ tell me if for some reason you don't have one!).
- Last year's RAG charities have been sent £798 each, so well done to everyone who helped with the fundraising for that!
- I have spent a lot of time dealing with the RAG/Future for Nepal Everest Expedition. The event went well and raised lots of money for Nepali community projects but it was a lot of work at our end!
- The RAG club night, Eclectic, starts up at Love Bar this week!

#### Environment and Ethics

- I met up with Ian, the new president of the Environment and Ethics Committee, to talk about the coming year, which was useful. We're feeling really good about how everything's going.
- I have attempted to green the OUSU building – prominent recycling bins everywhere, Carbon Trust 'Turn it off' stickers on every computer and light switch, tea urn rather than boiling the kettle all of the time, and generally creating an atmosphere of fear when too much electricity is being used. But there's more to be done...
- We've switched to fair trade tea in the office (we were already using fair trade coffee).
- The Shirtworks and OUSU Oxford clothing, only available to students and not to any tourists, is using fair trade cotton. Thanks to Hannah and Liv for that.

Sorry this was longer than expected. I'll stop now. Ask me questions. Stop me for a chat. Email me. Go to [www.oxfordrag.org](http://www.oxfordrag.org) and [www.volunteeringinxford.org](http://www.volunteeringinxford.org)