

OUSU

reports to council

1st week michaelmas term 2009

Stefan Baskerville

President

Summary: I've been working this summer on a host of different areas including student representation, OUSU's legal changes, developing a stronger set of working practices for OUSU, and common room issues including housing, academic feedback, legal status of CRs, among others. A short summary of my own meetings: 16 meetings with Common Room Presidents, 20+ meetings with the University and Conference of Colleges, 5 meetings with the City Council, 5 meetings with other student unions, amongst many more!

Common Rooms: Met 16 CR Presidents, and topics discussed included: access initiatives, bar refurbishments, academic feedback sessions, room ballots, student representation, legal status of CRs with regard to the Charity Act, experience of rent negotiations, among others.

University: Attended **University Council** (three times), and requested a review of student representation on the Development Committee, a sub-committee of Council looking at strategic development issues, fundraising and alumni relations. We have a minuted commitment that the Committee will review the issue once it is set up this term. Also supported the conclusions of the Review of University Sport, which are to increase the resources for sport and improve governance. However, I spoke against the fallback proposal to levy a £150 charge on every student for the next thirty years to fund borrowing. I indicated that there would likely be significant student opposition to such a move, and Jonny urged consideration of alternative means of funding borrowing to increase the resources allocated to University sport.

Met **Vice-Chancellor John Hood** (twice) to discuss our agenda, student representation, higher education funding, and the lessons he learned from his time in office, among other things. Have now met **Vice Chancellor Andy Hamilton** twice, to discuss the business of University Council in addition to our agenda for the coming year. In particular, I raised with him our concern to be represented on Planning and Resources Allocation Committee (PRAC) and General Purposes Committee (GPC).

Met the **Proctors And Assessor** with the rest of the sabbatical team, and discussed the following issues. Reviewing disciplinary procedures, which is something we hope to start work on together in Hilary term. Plagiarism, its disproportionate concentration among international students, and related difficulties with English as a language and lack of familiarity with academic practice. Review of the proctors office. The decision of the Proctors to remove the right of the Conservative Association to use the University's name. Reviewing complaints procedures.

Met with Pamela Flood and Joanna Paul from **Student Financial Support**, and discussed University funding schemes (such as Access to Learning Fund, the University Hardship Fund) as well as the difficulties facing students who come from households where total income is £35k upto around £50k (who don't qualify for much, or any, support from the state and the University, but are unlikely to receive sufficient financial support from parents and guardians).

Met Emma Rampton, **Head of Council Secretariat**, to discuss the governance of the University, the issue of the reserved/unreserved agenda, student representation, and OUSU funding, among other things.

Other meetings include Keith Zimmerman (Director of Student Administration and Services), Michael Sibly (Academic Registrar), Julie Maxton (Registrar), Tony Monaco (Pro-Vice Chancellor for Planning and Resources), Tim Softley (Chair of JCC), Gary Crocker (Secretary to JCC), among many others.

The sab team took part in a Team Management Profile session run by the Learning Institute. Really helpful in assisting us with thinking about teamwork, and individual working preferences. Will be ensuring next year's team has this as part of their handover.

Conference of Colleges: I have met with Frances Lannon (Chair of Conference), Nancy Braithwaite (Principal Administrator of Conference), Christopher Lewis (Deputy Chair of Conference), Roger Boden (Chair of Estates Bursars Committee), Elizabeth Crawford (Chair of Domestic Bursars Committee). Our discussions covered: student representation at Conference, the funding of OUSU, our upcoming legal changes, review of disciplinary and complaints procedures, the legal status of common rooms, environmental and sustainability issues, among other things.

Other Student Unions: Attended **NUS regional introduction**, where I agreed training for sabbatical officers and common room presidents from our regional organiser, Mel Lonsdale. Sessions should be taking place for CR Presidents at the end of Michaelmas/start of Hilary term. Sabbaticals have undergone two days of training, which we found very useful.

Met **Cambridge University Student Union (CUSU)** for a day, during which we exchanged valuable best practice and began cooperating on a number of fronts including higher education funding.

Met with two officers from **Ruskin Student Union**. Ruskin is a college associated with the University that focuses on labour history and social studies. It was good to meet other SU officers in Oxford, but the student union is small and having difficulties in organizing, so there wasn't much scope for cooperation. Also met **Oxford Brookes SU** and discussed issues for cooperation including housing and student safety.

Attended a two day meeting of the **Aldwych Group**, the Student Unions of Russell Group Universities (20 most research intensive Universities in the UK). Really useful meeting which covered, inter alia, higher education funding, widening participation, and academic affairs issues such as the involvement of undergraduates in research projects.

Attended a day of **NUS campaigning training** at Queen Mary University London, along with some of the sab team. Picked up some useful tools and ideas around higher education funding. Also helped me to develop my thinking on what we should be doing around the General Election.

City Council: Met with City Cllr Bob Price (Leader of the Council) to discuss our working relationship. Agreed to have a regular bi-monthly meeting between OUSU and the City Council Executive Board, to facilitate ongoing cooperation on several different areas. Subsequently met the CCEB, at which we discussed: student safety, recycling, domestic and sexual abuse, housing issues, voter registration, bicycle theft and environmental issues in the run-up to Copenhagen.

Met City Cllr Ed Turner, Lead on Housing, to discuss a variety of housing issues, including cooperation on the landlord accreditation scheme and licensing for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

Also met Lib Dem opposition group on the City Council, discussed housing, recycling and student engagement.

MPs: Met both Met Andrew Smith MP and Evan Harris MP, and discussed student-community relations, visas for international students, housing issues, higher education funding and the General Election. We received a letter from Andrew Smith two days after our meeting thanking us for a productive session, and informing us that he had written to Peter Mandelson on our behalf to enquire about the remit of the review of higher education funding.

Governance and the Charity Act: A fair amount of my time has been spent on the issues arising from the Charity Act 2006 and its impact on the legal status of OUSU. We will be incorporating as a company under law, and then registering with the Charity Commission. This will take place within the next 12 months or so.

Financial Transparency: As is clear from the interview with the Cherwell this week, I took the decision during the summer vacation that we would be much more transparent with the activities of Oxford Student Services Limited (OSSL) than has been the case in the past. We are a democratic membership organisation, and there is nothing to hide. There are a few things that are commercially confidential, such as the headline value of particular contracts OSSL has with external partners (the negotiation of which took place during the vacation). The value of those contracts will appear in the figures that are released, but not as one 'headline' figure: it will appear in different income streams within the OSSL reports. It would clearly be detrimental to the

interests of our members to reveal the value of those contracts, as when we renegotiate in future years, competitors to our current partners would be put at an advantage by knowing the value of the deals negotiated in the past. We would lose out on higher revenues in the future by revealing headline figures now.

Media: Represented Oxford students on BBC Radio Oxford's Louise Hannan show, where I argued against tuition fees and for a graduate contribution scheme, and also argued that arts degrees were as valuable as science degrees and universities should be charging the same for both. Also, news pieces in the Financial Times and the Guardian, on students and the job market, and the racist Conservatives fiasco, respectively.

Dani Quinn Opportunities)	V-P	(Welfare	and	Equal
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Hello Council,

I hope you've all had relaxing vacations and a happy start to the term. Over the vac, I've discovered that the role of VP (WEO) is a very 'reactive' one; projects have to be delayed continuously, due to the constant stream of casework and other surprises and emergencies. As a result, although I am happy with the work I have done so far (outlined below), I have made only a modest start on my manifesto promises – they will be a priority for this term and the Christmas vacation.

Before getting into the list, I would like to thank all of the sabbatical team and office staff for making it such a pleasure to work with them for the past few months – they are all inspiring and highly capable. Equally, I'd like to thank the many Common Room officers with whom I've had contact over the summer – working with you truly is a highlight of the job.

Get in touch if you have any questions about the report below, or have feedback.

Dani x

Common Room Officer Support:

Training

- Prepared and ran workshop on Student Safety and Support: 31 CR Presidents and Welfare Officers attended (plus 4 cancellations); in the feedback, 100% thought that it should be offered again. Thank you to Lisa Stokes-King and the Student Advice Service for their feedback on the preparations. Thank you to Stefan for participating in the second half of the training and relieving attendees from having to listen to my voice!
- I will be running training on Student Support and Listening Skills on Saturday afternoons in 1st and 4th Week – please get in touch if you wish to book a spot
- I have organised LGBTQ Officer training, with representatives from Oxford Friend, for 11th November (Wed, 5th Week)

Upcoming meetings for officers – there will be:

- 4 meetings this term for Welfare Officers
- 4 meetings this term for Equal Opportunities/Diversity Officers
- 2 meetings this term for LGBTQ Officers, in conjunction with Jasper Minton-Taylor, the LGBTQ Officer
- I have confirmed 3 speakers and trainers so far, in addition to training that I have prepared

Individual meetings

- So far, I have had individual meetings with 4 Common Room Officers
- I will be meeting 8 more officers in 1st week, and there are several more awaiting confirmation of dates/times

Handbooks and resources

- I have completely rewritten The Rough Guide to Welfare, which has not been published since 2005
- I have completely rewritten The Rough Guide to Equal Opportunities, which has not been published since 2006. Thank you to Jasper Minton-Taylor for contributions and feedback

- I have prepared Officers' Packs for all Welfare Officers, Equal Opportunities/Diversity Officers and LGBTQ Officers, which include resources for their Common Rooms. These are being distributed at one-to-one meetings. Thank you to Kat Wall for organising the bags and to Jasper Minton-Taylor for ordering so much LGBTQ material. Thank you to Lisa Stokes-King for amassing a mind-boggling array of resources for Welfare Officers.
- The ordering system for welfare resources has been made simpler for officers, thus far, there have been no problems
- The price of Durex condoms has been reduced from £15.50 to £11 per 144. Thank you to Karen Irving for her negotiation skills and tenacity!

Throughout the summer, I have been sending regular Welfare e-Mailings and Equal Opportunities e-Mailings to Officers, and have also been offering support through individual contact.

Common Room visits:

- Visited 9 common room welfare talks in FW
- Attended/attending 2 common room talks (i.e. general OUSU talks)
- Have attended/will be attending 3 MCR welfare teas

Skills/training:

- Attended 2-day NUS LGBT Residential Training
- Will be attending the NUS's 2-day Welfare Zone Conference in late October
- Attended a British Sign Language course
- Will be attending a management course with the Oxford Learning Institute. Thank you to Stefan for organising this.
- Attended 2-day NUS training for sabs, held in OUSU
- Attended Team Profile Training with Oxford Learning Institute.
- Attended a 'Train the Trainers: Cultural Awareness' workshops
- Attended the University's Student Support Seminar
- Have arranged additional peer support training for sabbatical officers on Student Advice Service. Thank you to Nightline for their support in this.

Survival Guide:

To my frustration, it has transpired that the Survival Guide needs to be completely rewritten and re-formatted, as opposed to simply reprinted. It is expected to be published and pigged to all Freshers by 4th Week (we have chosen this timing on the advice of the Counselling Service). There will be a launch for this, with the aim of raising students' awareness of the different support services available to them.

Student Advice Service - Management:

- A new publicity strategy has been employed, with consistent branding and much more pleasing image. Thank you to Kat Wall for her outstanding work on this and Imogen Richardson for her beautiful designs.
- As mentioned above, there will be OUSU 'welfare teas' to promote the Student Advice Service. I have confirmed the Counselling Service, The Mill, Student Information and Advisory Service and Nightline to join us at these. Venues are not yet confirmed.
- The security of case-notes has been reviewed and the arrangements have been changed, to ensure that we are in keeping with the Data Protection Act. Essentially, they are much, much safer than they were.
- Again, in keeping with our obligations under the law, a substantial proportion of old case-notes have been shredded. Thank you to Lisa Stokes-King for her assistance with this.
- The style and format of case-notes has been changed. A pretty stem regime of note-keeping has been employed, with pleasing results. Thank you to all of the Student Advice Service team for ensuring that this is a success (and never complaining).
- As part of our 'explorations' of potential new premises, I have prioritised the privacy and security needs of the Student Advice Service. Thank you to Lisa Stokes-King for her assistance with this.
- We will be piloting a feedback system this term – preliminary results are not expected until Hilary term. Thank you to Lisa and Kat for their help with the design and content.
- Regular debriefs and reviews are now being held. This year's Student Advice Service has made an explicit commitment to maintaining high, professional standards. Thus far, we have been very

successful, and hope that the pressures of term-time won't lead to a drop in standards. Thank you to all of the team for their stellar work.

Student Advice Service – Casework:

- I have had 28 requests for information (i.e. straightforward cases)
- I have had over 25 pieces of complex casework, some of which have taken several days each (the number is always in flux, hence not being able to give an accurate statistic)
- The capacity of the Service is a cause of serious concern for the team, especially as we have begun a bold (and already successful) publicity campaign. We are keeping detailed records of the amount of casework we do, with a view to using this information to propose that we be given more substantial support from the University. I anticipate that I will be seeking Council's support for this in the near future.

AS Scheme:

In conjunction with Nicola Calao from the Disability Advisory Service, I set up a 'settling-in scheme' for students who have Aspergers Syndrome (AS). This was very successful, with all students who sought a 'buddy' being paired up with a student from their College, including those who opted in at the end of –1st Week. I received very positive feedback from the participants and have prepared a report on it to ensure that the pilot is developed into a permanent scheme. Please get in touch if you would like to see a copy. Massive thanks must go to Nicola Calao for her amazing work and wonderful sense of humour. Thank you, also, to Pete Quinn for his support and advice.

Peer Support Sessions

I arranged four peer support sessions, with external peer supporters, in response to an emergency at a college whereby their own peer supporters were unable to fulfil their usual role.

Autonomous Campaigns

- Students With Disabilities: I reached my target for signatures at the Freshers' Fair (whaaay!) and have advertised the campaign through Preslist and the Disability Service. Aims for this term are to complete the Constitution and to start one campaign (the topic of which will be at the discretion of the members)
- Campaign for Cultural and Racial Awareness and Equality: We had a successful sign-up at the Freshers' Fair and have organised meetings for the first half of the term. There will be an elections workshop specifically for BME students, to support the development of CRAE (and support BME participation in student politics). Thank you to Kat Wall for her help with this.
- LGBTQ Council [undefined]: A successful Freshers' brunch was held jointly with LGBTsoc, with a turnout well in excess of 70 students. There will be four open meetings this term.

Meetings/External Relations:

I have had one or more meetings with: Leyla Okhai (Race Equality Officer), Peter Quinn (Senior Disability Advisor), Nicola Calao (Disability Advisor), Keith Zimmerman (two with the other sabs, one individually), Elsa Bell (Head of Student Welfare and Support), Alda Porter at The Mill (one with Kat and Sarah, one with Brookes sabs), Vice-Chancellors (A Hamilton and J Hood; both with sab team), Felicity Cooke (Head of Equality and Diversity Unit), Michael Sibly (Academic Registrar; with sab team); Proctors and Assessor (with sab team), Dr Gasser (individually, with sab team and with Student Advice team); Undergraduate Prospectus Advisory group (raised the issues of inadequate information for LGBT students and students with disabilities), Cllr Ed Turner (with Sarah and Stefan, regarding the landlord accreditation scheme), Andrew Smith MP (with the sab team), NUS (for advice and precedent for campaigns and projects, and for advice for precedent/case law with casework), Oxford Race Equality Council AGM, staff at Genito-Urinary Clinic (with Kat), Inner Space (with Kat), Brookes Sabs (with sab team), Jared Hutchings and Anne Jacobs (with Lisa), Students with Disabilities Presentation at the Pitt Rivers, Ruth Collier (with sab team), Sarah Carson (Equality and Diversity Unit), Manager of Student Lettings website/company, Amiya Bhatia (Welfare Officer at CUSU), Eddy Pinky (Coordinator, Mental Wealth), Nightline Coordinators. Please get in touch for details/outcomes of these meetings.

OSSL Board

I'm on it.

Macmillan Tea

Organised 'afternoon tea' in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. Had approximately 35 attendees and raised £110+.

Well-Being Week

- This is an ambitious series of events being planned for Hilary term, with Kat Wall. The aim is to enable students to look after their well-being and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.
- Grant application: submitted an application to Comic Relief for funding, but did not secure it (boo). We are exploring other sources of funding, but have also developed an alternative programme that does not require funding.
- Please get in contact if you would like to see the details of the events we have planned.

Kat Wall

V-P (Women)

Hello Council – I hope you all had a good vac and are looking forward to a good term to come. I am Kat Wall your new VP (Women). This is just to update you of what I have been up to over the summer – do give me feedback and ask any questions if you would like further details.

Welfare:

- Developing the Student Safety Campaign
 - Organising Reclaim the Night March (Friday 4th Week, 6.30pm)
 - Working with Brookes Student Union to get the Safety Bus back up and running, including developing a new strategy to get more volunteers
 - Working with the City Council and local police to get a new CCTV Camera on Magdalene Bridge
- Wrote the 'Love Without Chains' handbook with the Sexual Abuse Supporter from the City Council, which concerns domestic violence, sexual abuse and harassment and stalking, the sources of support in the community to survivors and information to welfare providers on how best to support students who have suffered.
- Organised Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence workshops with the City Council (7th Week)
- Began plans for Well-Being Week with VP (Welfare) which concerns the removal of stigma from mental health illness as well as looking at ways to increase well-being whilst being a student at Oxford.
- Worked with the Enough! Co-ordinators to ensure this student run support group for students with disordered eating can continue to get support.
- Working with the local GUM clinic to develop ways of improving access to sexual health provision across the colleges of Oxford.

Academic:

- Wrote a paper for Undergraduate Panel concerning the departmental provision of study skills and finals forums – to encourage them to run them
- Attended and contributed to the Stereotype Threat Working Group concerning the finals gap.
- Working with the Oxford Learning Institute to develop an Assertiveness Training program
- Working with the OLI and the Equality and Diversity Unit to extend the provision of Springboard personal and professional development program to female undergraduate
- Have begun to work on developing a strategy to increase the profile and number of female academics at Oxford
- Organised a series of Women in Postgraduate Study events with the Careers Service (5th Week)

Access:

- Working with the Access officer at St John's College to re-run the Women in Politics Open Day in March
- Working with MPLS Division to run a Women in Science Open Day at Keble in March during the National Science Week
- Working with the Access Officer at Univ College to run an aspiration day for students interested in studying a humanities subject at Oxford

Politics:

- Working to develop regional hust training for women who want to stand for office (2nd, 3rd and 4th Week)
- Working with the President of the Oxford Union and World Debating Champion to develop a public speaking course
- Organised a speed networking event for women in 5th Week with the Careers Service and FEST
- Working with OxWip to support their mentorship scheme

Women's Officers:

- Met with several common room women's officers and have established communication with others
- Organised a Women's Officer social – Tuesday 1st Week
- Organised and developed an 8 week training plan for women's officers to support them in doing their jobs
- Re-wrote the Women's Officer Handbook with the part-time women's officer
- Developed Women's Officer hand over packs

A Seat at the table:

- Met with the old Vice-Chancellor, the new VC, the Proctors, the Head of Student Support, the Head of the Councelling Service, the Head of the Careers Service, the Labour Group on the City Council, the Lib Dem Group on the City Council, Evan Harris MP, Andrew Smith MP

Student Parents:

- Organised the Student Parent Orientation – Friday 1st Week, 11.00am-12.30pm at the University Club
- Working with the University Childcare officer to get more nursery places across the University.
- Trying to get colleges to publish the facilities they have for families so prospective students can be aware of which colleges have better facilities than others.

Discreet Discrimination:

- Raising awareness of this issue – wrote an article for Tone Magazine
- Working with the student press to ensure this doesn't occur

Beyond the Bubble:

- Working with the part-time Women's Officer to organise Gender Equality Week – 3rd Week, 15 events on a variety of topics relating to gender equality from modern masculinity and paternal leave to women in the criminal justice system and the gendered effects of the recession.
- Developing the 'women in.....' series with the University Alumni Office to be launched in Hilary Term, to provide role models for women in a variety of different professions.

Sarah Hutchinson	V-P (Graduates)
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I've really enjoyed the first few months at OUSU, and wanted to start by thanking everyone in the office for being so supportive as well as fun to work with!

This really isn't a comprehensive list of what I've been doing, just a taster, as I know much of what I've done will be covered by the others. I've been meeting with people across the University to discuss graduate, international and mature students' issues throughout the summer, and will continue to do so during MT. There have been relatively few committee meetings held over the summer, though there have been a couple, such as Education Committee, Groupware (!) and Curators of the University Libraries. Feel free to ask me any questions now, or contact me later if you've any questions or want more detail.

Over the summer I have:

- Raised MCR Presidents' concerns regarding the impact of continuation fees on DPhil completion rates at Graduate Fees and Funding committee

- Met with the Graduate Accommodation Office to discuss finding a way to advertise and search for accommodation, including single rooms. It looks hopeful I'll be able to work with them on this for next year
- Met with both the accommodation office and city councillors to discuss supporting the City's new Landlord accreditation scheme, being introduced next year. It looks like the University will give priority in some way to accredited landlords using their lists to advertise.
- Met with the Student Information Advisory Service on several occasions to discuss a range of subjects including the new Points Based Visa programme, monitoring the effect of this on students. Sinni and I will be working with them to ensure that the visa monitoring requirements are not intrusive and protect students.
- Attended the GSS User working group, which is looking at how the online reporting system can be maximised for students. We're looking at ways to give students more time to complete it, more guidance about what they should be reporting, etc, and I'll be putting together a focus group to examine these issues.
- Attended the second Aldwych meeting of the year – this is the lobbying group consisting of the students' unions of the Russell Group Universities. We set our campaigning priorities for the year, which include widening participation in higher education. Had an interesting meeting with other postgrad reps on the issues affecting grad students, particularly financial issues.
- Spoke at the postgrad International Students' Orientation programme using an excellent presentation prepared by the International Students Campaign, and helped the University with their preparations for this.
- Organised postgraduate assembly and mature students' events for this term. I know it can be a sensitive subject but if you have older students in your common room, do let them know about the mature students' events – they can email me if they want to join the mailing list.

Finally, some of my priorities for the next term will be: working with Stefan to hold a graduate consultation to find out the issues graduates want us to be working on, looking at ways to improve methods for feedback on PGT courses, strengthening the mature students' campaign, getting more graduates involved with OUSU, and ensuring graduate students are fully aware of the support services we offer.

Jonny Medland

V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

The summer has been an incredibly busy period for the entire team at OUSU. I'd like to start my report by drawing everyone's attention to the incredibly hard work of the permanent staff at the office over the vacation – last year saw the departure of much of our staff support meaning that only the OUSU Accounts team have been working at OUSU for more than a year. In spite of this we have gelled very well as a team, with key work on the Freshers' Fair, summer publications and the smooth running of our Student Advice Service being invaluable supported by the permanent team. I'd also likely to briefly thank Elena Lynch who was Target Schools Chair and Exec Officer for Access & Admissions until she went on her year abroad and did more for access to Oxford last year than entire campaigns have managed in the past.

What follows is a brief overview of what I've been doing.

Alternative Prospectus

This is essentially finished and looks exceptionally good thanks largely to the work of Chris Baranuik, the AP Design Editor. The publication has been put together over the summer with contributions from over 100 students. Although it won't be printed until March so it can be distributed to every school in the country with the university prospectus a pdf should be on the website within a few weeks. We are also working on an online version of the AP which can be updated more regularly than is currently the case. Crucially this will involve content targeted specifically at graduate students as this currently does not exist meaning that information about graduate study at Oxford is not as available as it should be.

Common Room Support

Supporting Common Room Officers was a big part of my manifesto. I will be holding meetings of Academic Affairs and Access reps regularly during termtimes while also working with Common Room Presidents and

OUSU reps. I've invited every JCR Access and Academic Affairs rep to meet me individually and have so far met 22 of them individually with more to come once we can set up times. I'm really keen to work individually with CR officers as well as in groups so please do get in touch if you want to set up a time. This term we will be working together on improving academic feedback in colleges, expanding e-mentoring and developing study skills provision in colleges. I'm also very happy to work on whatever issues you want me to work on please do let me know if there's anything you want me to look at! I've also written handbooks for academic affairs reps and access reps, contributed to one for Common Room Presidents and substantially revised guides for JCC reps and Divisional Board reps. Please do get in touch if you want a meeting about anything – I'm aiming to work with as many CR Officers as possible so just drop me an e-mail with any issues or timings when you can meet: access@ousu.org.

External Partners

The sabbatical team had a meeting with the Oxford Brookes sabbs earlier in the summer and we'll be working together on areas including student safety and community relations. We also met with the Cambridge sabbatical team for a day – I found this meeting very useful and picked up a lot of ideas from the Access sabbatical at CUSU to do with how best to develop outreach work at the university.

General Office

In addition to the other sabbaticals I have done a lot of work around the office this summer, including meetings to work on a move to a new office space on George Street, to plan our publicity for the next year (which Kat Wall is taking the lead on), to develop a strategic plan for OUSU, and to plan how we will work together for the next year. These meetings have been very productive and will prove invaluable. We've also had a half day of training at the Oxford Learning Institute and 2 days of training with the NUS which gave us some very useful skills and made us reflect on how we could work as a team. We work very well as a team and decisions made about the day to day running of OUSU are done with input from us all.

Meetings with University officials

A big advantage of not having students about over the summer is that it gives us time to work out who in the University does what and how we can work with them. Over the summer myself and the sabbatical team have met with the Vice-Chancellor (both old and new), both local MPs, numerous permutations of city councilors, the Proctors & Assessor, and various other senior figures in the University including the Director of Student Administration and Head of the Press Office. I've also had individual meetings with people in the Undergraduate Admissions Office from the Director downwards, several Senior Tutors, people in the Student Funding Office, people in the Student Administration & Services team, various members of the Oxford Learning Institute to talk about learning development, feedback and study skills, the Director of the Bodleian, several members of University Council and many college outreach officers. A big part of the work that OUSU does is in maintaining these relationships so that we're included in decision-making and are seen as credible partners by the University. I have learned a great deal from these discussions which will inform my work over the next year.

Student Advice Service

The summer has been more busy than people may suspect for the Student Advice Service. We have publicised the work that we do and will continue to do so over the next year. I have dealt with 27 separate cases over the summer ranging from the brief to the very prolonged and complex. The Student Advice Service is a crucial part of OUSU's work and it would be great if you could publicise it to your Common Rooms. We provide free, confidential advice on a host of issues which are of serious importance to your students. We can also represent students in disciplinary hearings to the university or their colleges which is a very important part of our work.

Target Schools

This is gearing up now the committee is back – we had a successful Freshers' Fair and I'll be working with Common Room officers to try and embed the program into Common Rooms. I'm working with the university at the moment on how best to maximize the number of school visits we do...we have a huge pool of talented, dedicated volunteers and I'm keen to maximize the output that we get from this resource. We're also thinking about the shadowing scheme which will bring at least 250 students to Oxford in Hilary to spend a day with Oxford students. We'll need student volunteers for this so get in touch if you're willing to help.

University Committees

I sit on huge numbers of university committees and will aim to report back to you all on what's going on at the them as well as what items are coming up for discussion. Here's a brief overview of what's been going on.

- Admissions Executive – this is the top Admissions policy-making body in the University. I have been to one meeting of it so far where we discussed regionalisation, reviewed the latest admissions statistics and set the direction of the committee which will include work on pre-interview testing and language aptitude tests for international students.
- Prospectus Advisory Group - this Group provided input into the production of the University Prospectus – I argued for more information for ethnic and cultural minority groups in Oxford as well as international students with these ideas having been largely accepted by the group.
- Senior Tutors' Committee – I attended a subgroup of this body to discuss a paper on feedback which came out of a group that I sat on over this summer. I cowrote the paper with the Univ Senior Tutor which suggests Academic Feedback Sessions which are being introduced at many colleges. It will be discussed in 6th week and I will be campaigning with Common Room reps to roll this model of feedback out in Common Rooms across Oxford.
- University Council – Stefan's going into this in his report but major items have been us securing a review of a new Development Committee on whether it will include students, receiving annual reports from the Registrar and Heads of Division as well as the initial receipt of a major review of University Sport which will be discussed over the coming year. Over the next 12 months we will be working with the University to attempt to improve our levels of representation on major subcommittees of Council and on the Conference of Colleges.
- Undergraduate Panel – By the time you've read this Undergraduate Panel (which deals with undergraduate educational issues) will have met for the first time this year and considered a paper from OUSU about provision of study skills sessions and finals forums in departments and faculties. It will also have looked at the National Student Survey (of which more in 3rd week) and the Institutional Audit.

That pretty much summarises what I've been doing – please **do ask me** if you want to know more about any bits of it or want to know if I've done anything in any specific area. You can either ask me in Council or e-mail me on access@ousu.org.

Eorann Lean Community)	V-P	(Charities	&
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Hi all!

Hope you had a great fresher week. Below is just a brief summary of some of the things I've been doing this summer. If you have any questions please ask me after council or send me an email!

- **Environment and Ethics guide** – I've written a handbook for environment and Ethics reps, to help them understand what resources there are, give them some idea about what to do this year, what's expected of them and what the E&E committee do.
- **Big Brother/Big Sister** – Jonny and I have recruited two student presidents for this scheme so that it can run effectively and efficiently this term – Amanda and Mirelle are really competent and enthusiastic – we're lucky to have them on board. We have also had meetings with Debbie to form a closer bond with the county's social workers so that the scheme can run better this year with even more young people in care signing up.
- **Beyond Profit fair** – I've confirmed with the careers service to have it in the careers service building on Wednesday the 3rd of February. I have decided on the themes for the talks and articles to be written. I have planned who to ask to speak and write articles.
- **350-** I have brought together student and community environmental groups to work on an event for the 350.org international climate action. There is going to be music and entertainment in Bonn square and then a march to the Radcam.
- **Volunteer fair** – I have organised to hold a volunteer fair in the Town hall on the 23rd February.
- **RAG Ball** – This has been organised by a great RAG ball committee through the summer and is to be held on Thursday 7th week at the Town hall. The theme is RAG to riches and tickets are £45 if you buy it in the next two weeks.

- **Website** – I have been updating the website, adding a freshers resources part to the front page, a get involved section for campaigns and elections and I am chairing a committee to discuss further improvement.
- **Worked with Oxhub** – I have worked on a joint funding proposal with Oxhub for my salary and to work out our new relationship and how we can work effectively best together.
- **City council executive** – I set up a meeting with the City council executive board which we will continue to have throughout the year.
- **I have met** – Keith Zimmerman, the Proctors, The Vice Chancellor, The Careers Service, the Council Community Safety Partnership, Belinda Hopkins the police and city council crime reduction officer, Macmillan Cancer Research, Oxford Community and Voluntary action, Richard Jarman, Tara Payrag from Access office, Charity college reps, Andrew Smith and Evan Harris
- **I have attended** – the Central Neighbourhood Action group, the Domestic Bursars environment sub-committee, Oxford climate alliance meeting, Action for Children presentation evening, Oxford Open Doors and the OCVA Funding Workshop.

PART TIME OFFICERS

Jack Matthews

Common Room Support Officer

I hope you all had enjoyable summers this year. Welcome to the Freshers, I hope you have an enjoyable time at Oxford, and welcome back to everyone else!

Lots has happened since last we met – but I'll keep it brief;

- OUSU Reps meeting last Tuesday went well, we discussed how OUSU Council will work this term, and discussed how people would like it to work in the future. We also discussed the roles of OUSU Reps and how we at OUSU can do more to support OUSU Reps. All feedback is welcome

- Stefan and myself are working to get training for Common Room Treasurers set up by the end of term. We would like input from as many people as possible on what people want the training to achieve, and also if there are any other common room officers that could be supported by some training. Let us know!

- Common Room TV Subscription; I have sent a form out to presidents requesting them to fill it in on what TV they have at the moment and if they would be interested in SKY if we could negotiate a cheaper rate. If you haven't filled this in, I would be most grateful if you could as soon as possible. I have also started discussion with Virgin Media on their services with Oxford and the possibility of providing these to common rooms.

- The Sabs and myself have been attending lots of Common Rooms over Freshers week, and will continue to do so. If you would like someone from OUSU to come to your common room to talk about what we do, and/or answer and questions you may have, contact me.

- Freshers Fair; Setting up and manning the stall; generally spreading the good word that is OUSU to the masses. Have you got your NUS Extra Card yet?

If you are new to council, and want to have a chat about how it works – come and speak to me or drop me an email. If you have any feedback on the points above, or any other issues, please don't hesitate to contact me,

Jack Matthews
Common Room Support Officer
commonrooms@ousu.org

Jamie Susskind

Rent & Accommodation Officer

I am continuing to gather and collect data from across Oxford for use in rent negotiations and for general interest. Any information - quantitative and/or qualitative - is much welcomed. I am always available to help troubleshoot individual problems regarding housing, landlords, college accommodation, or anything else of that nature. Contact me at rentandaccom@ousu.org."

Look forward to seeing you soon!

Jamie

Daniel Lowe

Environment & Ethics Officer

Hi Council,

The tail end of summer has been a very active time for green and ethical issues, especially in Oxford. I attended a meeting of the environmental working group of the Domestic Bursars' Committee and had a meeting via

skype with my opposite numbers in Cambridge.

Activism A large contingent of Oxford students made their way to Climate camp at the end of August, which received far better police treatment than previous incarnations. Three Oxford students even took the time to go to French Climate camp, and cycled halfway home. We are also beginning to see tangible results from these actions as E.on indefinitely postponed Kingsnorth Power Station and BAA halted plans for the third Heathrow runway this week. Furthermore, an Oxford-centric campaign calling for a full time sustainability officer reached fruition over the summer

Recycling etc. The council have promised to upgrade their plastic recycling to include more than just bottles AND to collect food waste by autumn 2010. Its my feeling that this isn't good enough and will continue to lobby, with the help of E and E committee and a choice few domestic bursars for better facilities asap. OUSU has now switched to 100% FSC sourced paper.

Fairtrade The lower committees of the university have approved a paper calling for the university to gain Fairtrade status. It will be interesting to see how this continues up the scale, but so far there have been limited objections, largely owing to a very convincing paper compiled by the University Waste Management and Sustainability Officer, Kate Aydin, calling on research from some of the University's leading academics in the fields of business, enterprise and the environment.

The first meeting of E and E committee will be on THURSDAY (its moved since last year) at 5.30pm, OUSU towers.