

## Reports to Council

Termly Council MT12

David Townsend

President

Over the summer I've been working on a few major projects (as well as the normal minor projects). Here is a selection of them:

### Student Support and Alumni Philanthropy

The Development Office has agreed that the pilot scheme of Student Development Ambassadors should be permanent, and should be expanded. There is a particular opportunity for more undergraduate students to be involved in this.

I am in talks with the University about how to advance the Ditchley Challenge Fund this year (a scheme that promises to match funds raised by final year students in their common room through a 'Class Pledge').

After successful lobbying and student participation in fundraising efforts, the University has agreed that student support (scholarships, bursaries, etc.) should be top priority in the next phase of the Oxford Thinking philanthropic campaign. In addition to the already announced £26m Ertegun Scholarships for graduate studies in the humanities and £300m Moritz-Heyman Scholarships for undergraduates from the lowest income backgrounds, to open Phase 2 of the campaign, the University has stumped up £40m as part of a matched funding challenge for graduate scholarships across the University. Student involvement in the philanthropic campaign is a big part of what drives donations of this kind, and I'd encourage you to get involved and help us all leave a great legacy for the generations of students who come after us.

### OUSU 'stash'

In response to student demand, OUSU has set up an online clothing ('stash') service which allows students to buy personalised College clothing, and common rooms and societies to *create* their own personalisable clothing, for the same price as (or less than) commercial competitors. It's all ethically produced, and (unlike some commercial competitors), it's all legally produced. We're also the only producer of the official freshers' matriculation hoodie - which you can even get backdated to your own year if you started before 2012.! Check out [www.ousustash.com](http://www.ousustash.com) for more.

### Decent treatment of student tenants

Working together with the University and Colleges, and with Brookes University, we have established a 'traffic light' rating scheme for landlords and letting agents in Oxford. The green ones will delay contract signing dates until February, and we will promote them through the Student Pad website. The amber ones will delay some properties until February, and we will encourage students to prefer green to amber, and amber to red. The red ones are those which are not partaking in our scheme and will be denied all publicity. The final details of the scheme are being rolled out in the next couple of weeks.

For more information, ask a question in OUSU Council or contact me at [president@ousu.org](mailto:president@ousu.org)

Hooroo,  
DJT

It's been a long and productive summer that has been used primarily to prepare for the year ahead in a number of different ways. I intend to keep my Council reports brief so that they are readable, but if anyone wants to follow any issues up please ask a question at Council or email me at [graduates@ousu.org](mailto:graduates@ousu.org). This is by no means a conclusive description of everything I have done over the summer but rather a few highlights.

### Academic Representation

David Messling will discuss this in more detail but I have been working in tandem with him on a new initiative to rejuvenate the systems of student engagement in Oxford University's departments. This is particularly important for graduate students who (on the whole) are not taught within colleges. We have the support of the University in this, and intend to begin this term with Division Reps to whom we will offer a full training programme and a large body of information to facilitate negotiations.

### Teaching Opportunities

I have begun collecting case studies of good practice in creating new teaching opportunities in the University. I have also begun discussions with the Careers Service to relaunch their central advertisement system and with colleges and a number of divisions about new initiatives to open up teaching for graduates.

### Graduate Websites

I intend to run a survey of PGT recruitment websites with the end goal of grading them and suggesting best practice for departments. This is based on an already used methodology which achieved impressive results last year in the area of information on admissions policy on websites.

### Graduate Fees

The University has agreed to use a new process to set the graduate fee 'uplift' this year which will allow for much more student input, at a central level and also in Divisions. Myself and David will take the lead centrally, while Division Reps will have the chance to work within their divisions to push the 'uplift' down.

I have also been working on a number of other things for the year ahead. Please feel free to ask for more detail on any of these. They are listed in random order.

- Filming a 'Managing My Supervisor' session, given by Ingrid Lunt of the Education Department so that it can be accessed by all graduate students at will online.
- Elections organization.
- PGT Quality Assurance.
- A new central PGR Policy and Guidance Document (The document that lays out key requirements) inc. dual supervision and teaching opportunities.
- Graduate Funding, including a new, improved, and bigger Graduate Ambassador scheme with the Development Office.
- A new MCR Comparison Spreadsheet, based on the information which MCR Presidents felt would be most useful.

Dear Council,

I hope you're still feeling rested from Summer, and that everyone survived Freshers' Week intact! Here's a quick summary of what I've been up to, and what I'll be doing in the near future.

### Things that have happened...

- Thanks to much hard work by OUSU's LGBTQ Officer, Jess Pumphrey, and the LGBTQ Campaign, you may have noticed the press reporting some changes to sub fusc at the end of last year. The rules for academic dress are no longer gender specific, which is a massive win for the University's trans\* students, and anyone else who values some flexibility.

- Yesterday (Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October) saw the grand opening of a Muslim Prayer Space in what used to be the Robert Hooke Lecture Theatre next to the Natural History Museum. This is great news as Muslim students should no longer struggle to find a place to pray during the day.
- On Friday of -1<sup>st</sup> week I delivered Freshers' Week Training to a mixed group of JCR and MCR Welfare Reps, covering topics ranging across committee organisation, dealing with homesickness, inclusivity and nights out.

#### **Right now I'm focusing on...**

- Disability Awareness Week: This will be in 6<sup>th</sup> week. We've got the inspirational Phil Packer MBE coming to talk about his experiences, comedy group Abnormally Funny People, who were a tremendous success last year and much more coming up...

#### **Coming up over the term...**

- Students With Disabilities Peer Mentoring Scheme: I'm working with Pete Quinn, the Head of the Disability Advisory Service, to organise a pilot scheme.
- Student Support Training: I'll be training common room Welfare Reps and anyone else who's interested in ways of supporting others in their college or department.
- Inclusivity and Diversity: I'll be working with the chair of CRAE and the other autonomous campaigns to develop training sessions focusing on supporting diversity within common rooms.
- Students with Disabilities Guide - I've secured funding from CitiGroup to produce a new guide. I'll be collecting the students' stories and examples of best practice so we can build up a picture of what it's like to live with a disability in Oxford.

That's it for now. All the best for the beginning of the year,  
Katie xxx

<b>David Messling</b>	<b>VP (Access &amp; Academic Affairs)</b>
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Hello Council!

Welcome to the new year! The summer months have been a combination of laying the foundations for the year ahead, reacting to new developments, and meeting with officers, academics and students across the collegiate University to push forward ongoing issues.

#### **Michaelmas 2012**

I'm going to be prioritising the following three areas this term and would welcome your suggestions, questions and comments!

#### Student Representation in Departments

During the summer all the University's departments have been surveyed to find out more about how they involve students. Over 60 responses were received, covering all divisions and both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The data have been worked into a paper which will be discussed by a new University working group next week, along with case study examples from other universities and departments in Oxford. We're also planning to use this year's cohort of Divisional Reps as a pilot for OUSU becoming much more involved in the training, networking and support of student representatives in their subject.

## Feedback from Mods and Prelims

I've been having preliminary discussions with the University and investigating the arrangements as other Russell Group universities, including Cambridge. I'll be consulting with JCRs before bringing a proposal to Council later this term.

## Student Access Volunteering

The new OUSU website is due later this term and one possible aspect is an Access Hub - a central point for students interested in volunteering in outreach work, and tied in with the extensive target schools database. Discussions over this have begun with aim of having a new system in place by Christmas, and I'll keep council updated.

## **New Developments**

### Moritz-Heyman Scholarship

In July Oxford launched the new Moritz-Heyman scholarships for undergraduate students with a household income of under £16,000. Initially 100 scholarships will be awarded, to students ranked by disadvantage flags (including care leavers) and with a preference for STEM subjects. Scholars will be expected to complete 25 hours per year of volunteering, ideally in outreach to prospective students. OUSU is represented on the scholarship's management committee, and I'm working to ensure that the scholarship is expanded in future, that no recipient is stigmatised and that outreach volunteering is a priority.

### A Level Reform

OFQUAL began its consultation at the start of the summer vacation, with a deadline of 11 September. I've been involved in raising concerns around the access impact of any multi-tiered system, which I am satisfied has been strongly emphasised in the University's response. We now await the next stage.

## **Ongoing issues**

### Fees, Fee Waivers and Bursaries

There's continued debate over the most effective package of undergrad financial support, particularly surrounding fee waivers. OUSU's position remains that there needs to be. One research on the existence and extent of debt aversion and its effect upon applications to Oxford. We have supported the University's efforts to commission research, and I'll be actively consulting with OUSU Council, JCR Prescom and the student body as a whole over any change to the support students receive.

### Student membership of Departmental Reviews

After two Departmental Reviews with student membership last year (Chemistry and Music), OUSU are being included on all Departmental reviews this year. I took part in the review of Psychology during September, and will be part of the review of statistics later this month.

## **Other bits and pieces**

In addition to the above, I've been handling case work with the student advice service, mostly relating to examinations. Invitations have gone out for the teaching awards ceremony on Friday 3rd Week. I've organised talks and stalls on student extracurricular life as part of the Open days at the Exam Schools, and Chris Gray and I gave a presentation on the importance of student partnership at the University's annual staff conference. The content of the new website's 'apply to Oxford' section is written, as well as content for the Freshers' Guides, Oxford Handbook, and other assorted publications!

Hi Council,

Welcome back to Oxford! A lot has progressed over the summer vacation and I've made progress on a number of projects I will be working on this year. Here is a brief outline, but don't hesitate to get in touch if you'd like more information or want to get involved with anything. I can be contacted on [charities@ousu.org](mailto:charities@ousu.org)

### Charity

RAG: I've worked closely with the RAG exec to plan events for the next two terms, in particular taking the lead on working with Oxfam to organise Oxford Jailbreak. I have also worked on the structure of RAG to make it more strategic and our events more inclusive. The RAG Conference at Loughborough was a good opportunity for networking with other RAGs and finding opportunities for collaboration. I've also been in contact with the RAG charities to include them in our activities this year.

RAG Ball: I provided oversight of the RAG Ball planning and ticket sales have started well. It will take place on Saturday of 7<sup>th</sup> week at the University Club.

### Community

City Council, Residents Associations and the Police: I have conducted a number of one-to-one meetings with Councilors and local stakeholders to ensure good working relations between students and the wider community this year.

Volunteering Showcase: This will take place next term and aims to showcase the voluntary activities by students and residents to foster good relations and identify deficiencies in existing volunteering projects. I am working in collaboration with the Careers Service and OxHub.

Community Wardens: Funding has been secured for this year from the University, so over the next few weeks I'll be advertising for and recruiting new Community Wardens to take over from January.

### Environment & Ethics

There have been many fruitful discussions with the University's Estates Directorate and the City Council's Waste and Recycling Team to monitor the success of the 'End of Year Recycling Scheme' and to find areas of common interest. The Environment and Ethics Campaign will also be working with Oxford Fashion Week in November for the Ethical Fashion Fair.

### Living Wage

Good progress was made over the summer through various meetings with Pro-Vice Chancellors and the University's Estates Directorate. I have also been conducting meetings with cleaners, analyzing data from Freedom of Information requests and working with Trade Unions.

### Other

I have put together a series of workshops on campaigning skills for seasoned activists and new students alike. These will be delivered by campaigners from different groups and will take place on Wednesdays of even weeks at 6pm in OUSU. Additionally I have had initial conversations with the Careers Service about the promotion of Third Sector Careers and have been in discussion with various Colleges about opening up their space to community groups.

Good Evening All,

Welcome back to Oxford. This has been a busy summer and I have been working and planning for this year. I am excited about and I hope you are as well.

A quick statistic for you...

7% of University age women experience rape or attempted rape while at University (NUS, Hidden Marks, 2010). This number is too high. Full Stop.

What I'm doing about it...

Over the summer I updated the Sexual Consent Workshop material and with the help of two amazing co-facilitators, I trained 51 students from 29 common rooms to be able to facilitate Sexual Consent Workshops in their common rooms and sports teams. The workshops aim to create healthy views, understanding, communication, and practise about consent.

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

- - Updated the Student Parent's Handbook and held a Student Parent and Family Social
- - Worked toward closing gender gaps through planning the International Gender Studies Michaelmas seminar series - 'Gender Gaps at Oxford: 800 years of ignoring women?'
- - Increased awareness of gender equality through organising Feminist Formal for Monday of 4<sup>th</sup> week

Shout Out...

This week's shout out goes to G.J. Melendez Torres, a Junior Dean at St. Hilda's, for his help in co-facilitating Sexual Consent Workshop Facilitator Trainings. Thank you!!!

## PART TIME OFFICERS

**Oliver Gleeson**

**Community Outreach and Charities Officer**

Dear Council,

Welcome back to another fun-filled and packed Michaelmas Term! As well as all the great events RAG will be putting on, we are also teaming up with Varsity Events to sell tickets for Thursdays @ Bridge. These will be £4 each, with a portion of the money going straight to RAG Charities!

Over the summer I have been helping the RAG Exec to organise and prepare a host of events this term, some of which are detailed below:

- Jailbreak, Hilary Term 2013 (with info evenings and signups this term)
- Choose a Challenge Fair, Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> Week

Feel free to get in touch on [communityandcharity@ousu.org](mailto:communityandcharity@ousu.org) if you have any questions or want to get involved with charity fundraising in Oxford!

Oliver

**Nick Cooper**

**Academic Affairs Campaign Officer**

Evening Council,

I hope everyone has had a wonderful summer and is looking forward to another exciting year ahead! My priorities for this term are to focus on college complaints and appeals procedures, and to ensure JCR Academic Affairs officers have all the information and resources they need to represent their students. If you have any suggestions or would like to discuss anything related to academic affairs, please email me at [academicaffairs@ousu.org](mailto:academicaffairs@ousu.org) - I would love to hear from you. Have a great first couple of weeks!

Nick

**Clara Ferriera**

**Graduate Women's Officer**

Hi Council,

Over the summer I've been working with Susan (Women's VP) on Athena Swan (a charter for women in Science recognizing commitment to advancing women's careers in academia) and feeding graduate input to Trudy Coe (Equality and Diversity Unit). We have been focusing on pushing for graduate representation at the University level (since many MPLS and Medical Sciences departments now have local graduate representatives on committees) and hopefully this will allow tackling more holistic issues concerning graduate women. Social Sciences and Humanities will in the near future have a similar auditing process, for which we will push for graduate representation. More to follow soon.

**David Butler**

**Rent & Accommodation Officer**

Over the summer, my main focus was upon completely the content of the Living Out Guide. Jennifer Allen, who worked on the project with me, is currently reviewing the content

- over the next term I am aiming to;

- 1) support the president in creating a cost-of-living index
- 2) to work toward the integration of housing and the Student Advice Service

**Betha Hanson-Jones**

**Rent & Accommodation Officer**

Over the vacation I have been putting together a database of information to aid reps with any questions they may have about issues in their college- so don't hesitate to get in contact with me with any queries. I will also be organising another E&E rep Pamoja this term so reps can get together and find out what's going on in other colleges. E&E meetings are being held at the new in the OUSU building, everyone is welcome so come along! If you have any questions or for more information about OUSU E&E e-mail me on [eande@ousu.org](mailto:eande@ousu.org). time of 5.30pm on Tuesday