

# Reports to Council

1<sup>st</sup> Week Council Michaelmas 2015

## **Sabbatical Officers**

### **Becky Howe – President**

Hey everyone,

For those of you who've never been to Council before, welcome! I'm Becky, and I'm the president of OUSU. I just finished my undergraduate degree in History at Pembroke. I really like *Orange Is the New Black* and Mini Cheddars.

I hope you've all had exciting/ restful/ interesting / mediocre/ dull/ restorative/ productive/ passable/ busy/calm summers (delete as appropriate).

It's been a busy few months in OUSU towers. Here's some of what I've been up to:

### **Freshers' week**

Was so much fun. Yay. Thank you, new friends.

- I had such a fab time last week, visiting common rooms to introduce myself and let Freshers' know what OUSU is and does. Thanks so much for being so welcoming! Also massive well done and thank you to Joe Reason (Common Room Support Officer) for being such a big part of coordinating these visits.
- Freshers' Fair was also really cool, I was on OUSU's stall for a lot of the three days, but also had some time to go round and meet a lot of student stallholders. You're great.

### **One-to-ones with JCR presidents**

I've been meeting individually with JCR presidents, and Nick (VP Graduates) has been meeting with MCR presidents, to hear about what they're up to and how we can work together. I've still got a few meetings to go, and it has been super exciting so far. Enthusiasm levels are through the roof and you're all really brilliant. I can't wait to see all the things you achieve for your common rooms.

### **Maintenance grants**

- In July's emergency budget, the government announced their proposal to abolish undergraduate maintenance grants. OUSU's full and part-time executive officers released a statement strongly opposing this.
- Cat (VP Access and Academic Affairs) spent a lot of the summer consulting students on the proposals, the results of which I then presented to our local MPs – Nicola Blackwood and Andrew Smith – as part of a national lobbying day against the proposed abolition. These meetings went really well – Andrew Smith agreed with us and wrote to the Minister for Universities asking him to reconsider, and Nicola Blackwood also agreed to raise our concerns with the Minister for Universities. See Cat's report for more info.

### **Putting my trustee hat on...**

- **Prevent:** at the last trustee board meeting of last year, the Board approved a Prevent Action Plan under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The legal position of

student unions under this legislation has since become clearer, so we proposed to withdraw the Prevent Action Plan with immediate effect. The Board unanimously agreed. For more info see Ali's report (VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities), and our statement, <http://ousu.org/news/article/6013/Statement-Concerning-the-Withdrawal-of-the-Prevent-Action-Plan/>

- **Student trustee vacancy:** we're currently in the process of co-opting a student trustee. Applications closed today so watch this space for the successful applicant!

I also sit on 25+ committees, most of which continued over the summer. These do take a lot of time but usually have some really important discussions. If you'd like to hear more, please do email me.

### **Progress report: MANIFESTO PLEDGES**

I've been *so*<sup>901813</sup> excited to start working on these. Here's my progress so far:

#### **1. Student support and welfare systems**

*Pledge: 'Investigate the efficacy of the current welfare systems in colleges, and establish best practices'*

- I've been designing a mega-survey on welfare support across the university and colleges, working closely with Ali (VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities). We've also had invaluable input from campaign chairs, part-time executive officers, Lucy (VP Women), Nick (VP Graduates), and OUSU's Student Advice Service. The survey is pretty much ready to go, and we've decided to launch it in Hilary term so that Freshers' (undergrad and postgrad) can take part.
- We've made a plan and timeline of how we'll analyse and what we'll do with the results of the survey, and how we'll work on the major issues it raises. Please look out for this nearer the time and get in touch if you have any questions!

#### **2. Rent and accommodation**

*Pledge: 'I will improve the rent negotiations pack'*

- Every year, OUSU gives common rooms a booklet full of useful information to help with rent negotiations. I've updated this, and changed the structure and added a few sections to create more of a focus on the importance of consulting and working with your common rooms to find out what they want and need from rent negotiations. Danny Waldman (Rent and Accommodation Officer) helped me with this and he is great.
- I'm also making a new booklet, which will have key info on how rent and accommodation works at each college, so that common room officers can make useful comparisons during their rent negotiations. I'm also hoping to include some case studies of successful rent negotiations in the booklet, so if you've been part of a rent negotiation that's gone well, please get in touch!

*Pledge: '...run negotiation and strategy workshops'*

- I've started to put together a programme for this, based on input from common room presidents on what they would find the most useful. This will be happening in early Hilary, so that a lot of the common room reps who will be doing 2016 rent negotiations will be in post.

#### **3. Oxford University Festival**

Pledge: *'Introduce a weekend-long Oxford University Festival to showcase all clubs, societies, teams, campaigns, and groups who want to participate'*

- We're confirming venues this week, then will be opening up applications for a committee to organise the event! **Look out for this in my third week all-student email if you want to be involved!**
- For this project I'll be working with Emily (VP Charities and Community), and Nick (VP Graduates), as we'll be combining this event with the International Festival to make it a super-mega-big festival. Yay.

#### **4. Common room support**

Pledge: *'make training sessions...available for (common room) presidents every term, to account for different handover schedules'*

- A programme has been put together for the Michaelmas training day, which will take place early in term (confirming details literally right now, and then will email all common room presidents!) The full time sabbatical officers and the Oxford Learning Institute will deliver the training day, with some input and materials from NUS.
- We'll evaluate how the Michaelmas one goes, by asking for feedback for participants, and make improvements for the Hilary and Trinity training days.

#### **5. Lad Culture**

Pledge: *'open up discussion on 'Lad Culture' and the impact it has on our university community'*

- OUSU has been selected to be one of nine pilot SUs on a new NUS Lad Culture Audit. We went to a really great strategy day as part of this, and Lucy (VP Women) and I will be working throughout the year on ways to make a tangible difference. I know I'm being Captain Vague on this right now but more info to follow soon, promise.

**So there you go, a summary of what I've been up to. Any questions or anything I can help with, pleaseeee get in touch – [president@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:president@ousu.ox.ac.uk).**

**Have a great fortnight!**

**Becky x**

Cat Jones – VP Access and Academic Affairs

Hi Council!

Here is my round up of important Access and Academic happenings from my first few months in the job. It is rather a long first report but I promise it will be shorter in future!

#### **Maintenance Grants**

During the summer, the government announced plans to replace maintenance grants with increased maintenance loans from September 2016. I issued a consultation via college access reps and received over 250 responses. Respondents were overwhelmingly in opposition to the change. I wrote to Oxford MPs Nicola Blackwood and Andrew Smith and secured meetings with both of them on September 18<sup>th</sup> to coincide with the NUS lobby day. If backed by an

OUSU council mandate, we will continue to actively campaign against these changes whilst also working with the University to mitigate any resulting financial concerns for future applicants.

### **Student Written Submission (SWS)**

This year, Oxford is undergoing a Higher Education Review by the Quality Assurance Agency. The process requires the University to submit a Self-Evaluation Document in December. This will be accompanied by our SWS, which we have drafted over the summer. The first draft is being released for consultation this week. It is really important that this document is representative so please take the time to read it and send me your comments.

### **Alternative Prospectus**

Over the summer I recruited a student editor and student designer to work on this year's Alternative Prospectus which will be distributed to potential applicants at state schools, open days and UNIQ summer school. Over 100 students have contributed so far and we are now at the exciting stage of editing content and laying the design. For the first time ever, the print version will also be accompanied by an Alternative Prospectus website which will include bonus content such as a college suggester and inspirational subject-specific recourses for applicants. A huge thanks to Jess, Natalie and Greg for their work on this.

### **Lecture Recording**

Campaigning to have lectures recorded will be a major focus of my year. I will be working with IT services, Oxford Disabled Students Campaign, Academic Reps and Course Reps to make sure we present the strongest and most united case that we possibly can. Watch this space!

### **Department Reviews**

In October I was part of the panel that reviewed the Graduate Entry Medicine course. Student engagement with the review was phenomenal – with almost 80% of on-course students responding to the OUSU survey. Student concerns will feature heavily in the report, which is due before the end of term.

### **Open Day**

September 18<sup>th</sup> was the final Oxford Open Day of the year. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to hundreds of potential applicants. A big thanks to all of the students that helped out in departments, colleges and the information centre on the day.

### **Committees**

A huge part of my job is representing you on numerous committees. Much of what is discussed is covered by confidentiality agreements but I will continue to list here, in each council report, the meetings I have attended on your behalf.

University Council; Education Committee; Admissions Executive; Contextual Data Working Group; Joint Fees and Student Support Advisory Group; Quality Assurance Subcommittee; Standing Committee of Senior Tutors Committee.

### Emily Silcock – VP Charities and Community

Hi Council,

I hope everyone has had a great summer and is feeling enthusiastic about the term ahead. Here's a really brief summary of what I've been working on over the summer

Emily

#### *Community*

I've carried out a thorough evaluation of the Community Warden scheme and, as a result of this, restructured how they work. I've recruited a new Community Wardens and a new Senior Warden and I've carried out training for them.

I've also planned a new project to match students up with local residents for Christmas day. I continue to meet regularly with the City and County councils, Thames Valley Police and various community and neighbourhood groups.

#### *Environment and Sustainability*

I have reached out to E&E reps in every common room, to deliver them a pack of resources. I have also arranged a E&E rep dinner and training session.

I've organised a meet up of all the different groups that work with students and the environment in Oxford to explore more how we can work together better, especially in the run up to the COP21 climate summit.

I have also been working on the NUS Green Impact award, which involves everything from developing an environmental strategy for OUSU to growing spider plants on my desk.

I've been working with Fairlie to run VeggiePledge again this year, to encourage vegetarianism and veganism within in student population.

Finally, I have put plans in place to continue running collections for the Food Bank at the end of this term.

#### *University Ethics*

I've been working with Cat and a fabulous group of students to lobby the university to provide scholarships for refugees. This campaign will be launching in 2<sup>nd</sup> week!

I've also been meeting with various people to develop a plan to lobby the university to make contracts with social enterprises that employ formerly homeless people (currently waiting on the results from a lottery grant bid).

Finally I've been working with Yoni to encourage students to give blood, with the aim of eventually having blood donation sessions in colleges and departments.

### *RAG*

I've spent a lot less time on RAG than my predecessor, as we now have a part-time RAG co-ordinator. We've been working on developing a longer-term strategy for RAG, as well as improving the training that they are given and have carried out a re-structure to allow them to expand. RAG are on-track to deliver the RAG ball and Lost this term – registration for both is open, so please sign up!

### *Bikes*

I've been working with security services to work out if we can add bike helmets to the bike items that we sell. Currently we are trying to find out if they have a use-by date.

### *Third Sector Careers*

After having talked to the careers service about problems with previous projects with third sector careers, I have set up a careers working group to develop more innovative ideas in this area.

### *Training*

I have started planning for an 8-week training on campaigning in Hilary. I have also developed training for campaign treasurers and people planning to run in elections.

### *Housing*

I have been working with Ali and Danny on the issues of affordability and quality of housing in Oxford. We will be running various projects on this throughout the term. You can leave a review of our house at [movem.co.uk](http://movem.co.uk)

### Nick Cooper – VP Graduates

Evening, Council! I hope you've all had a lovely summer, and are excited about Council season restarting. I sure am. I'm here to represent all of Oxford's graduate students – as well as issues affecting mature and international students (including undergraduates). Here's three fun facts:

- Oxford has over 10,000 postgraduates – making up over 45% of students here
- Students at Oxford come from 140 different countries
- The majority of "Freshers" at Oxford are actually graduate students

My job for the year is to represent graduate students, and to remind those of you who forget that we exist ☺ **I'm sorry this report is long but at least you can Ctrl+F bits you want to know.**

I have four main goals for the year; here's my plan for these:

### **REVIEW OF TAUGHT MASTERS COURSES**

- Gist: Lots of Masters courses are great; others don't provide enough feedback, are solely assessed by exams at the end, and don't offer enough contact time.
- Plan: conduct focus groups in Hilary Term with Masters students, and combined with survey data, produce a review of current Masters provision to lobby for changes.
- So far: collated survey data, and looked back at the process of a similar 2011 review.

### **SUPERVISION & WELFARE OF RESEARCH STUDENTS**

- Gist: push for co-supervision (that is, having a secondary supervisor as well as a main one) as the standard model, improve the College Advisor system & highlight welfare needs.
- Plan: lobby for better standard supervision model; show colleges that Advisor system is currently defunct; use data from Becky & Ali's welfare survey to find areas for change.
- So far: asked graduate Common Room Presidents how effectively College Advisor systems work in their college. Raised issues with Pro Vice Chancellor (Education) and others.

### **INCREASING GRADUATE ACCOMMODATION**

- Gist: Some graduate Freshers arrive to find no University or college accommodation for them. I would like a guarantee of first-year accommodation to be introduced.
- Plan: secure this guarantee in the near-future, and ensure current accommodation prices remain reasonable (including by helping Presidents with Rents & Charges).
- So far: discussed this with the Graduate Accommodation Manager and also the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Planning & Resources), and reviewed possible sites for new accommodation.

### **IMPROVING GRADUATE TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES**

- Gist: Many DPhil students across the University are dissatisfied with the opportunities available, and the transparency of the systems that allocate teaching.
- Plan: to work with the University & colleges to make these systems more transparent, and to highlight more graduate teaching opportunities (including with Continuing Education).
- So far: very promising discussions with Continuing Education **who need more DPhil tutors**. Have raised the issue with the University, who are about to review their policy (by happy coincidence).

Other than that, I have done the following things (among others):

#### **Freshers stuff**

- Met with 30 MCR Presidents, and attended 21 graduate Freshers events. If you're an MCR President or OUSU Rep and would like to meet to discuss what OUSU can do for your Common Room, **drop me an email!**

- Organised the OUSU stall at International Orientation, with a lot of help from my wonderful Sabbatical Officer colleagues. Had the opportunity to give talks to thousands of Freshers about life in Oxford and what OUSU does
- A

### University business

- This year I'm sitting on over 25 University committees, including University Council at the top. If you want to ask me about (for example) Graduate Admissions, checking Quality Assurance of your education, Graduate Accommodation, or, excitingly, IT, I'm your person.
- I represented YOU on IT Away Day, highlighting the importance of lecture capture, improving Weblearn and making sure there's bloody Wi-Fi everywhere.
- I took on the job started by Jack of encouraging international societies to write to offer-holders from their respective countries to say welcome. Over half of international offer-holders got these letters: thank you to the societies so much!
- I represented students on the review of the Departments of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences (as part of a rolling plan to review all Departments). We made some great recommendations to improve postgraduate students' experiences.

### OUSU Internal business

- **I've worked with Cat to write the first draft of the Student Written Submission.** Many many thanks to our Academic Representation Officer, Matt, who is awesome. Basically, the University gets reviewed by the Government; we write a submission saying positives and negatives of education here at Oxford. See our Any Other Business, but await consultation!
- I have been your Acting Returning Officer over the summer. (you're welcome). As part of this, I've been working with Ami (our Democratic Support Officer) and the other Sabbatical Officers to make our shiny Nomination Pack for elections in 6<sup>th</sup> week! **Please get involved, especially if you're a grad. Nominations open Thurs 3<sup>rd</sup> week, 12pm.** If you need encouragement or information, please ask ☺
- I've started to plan how we can review Council, in light of a Council mandate from Trinity Term 2015. I'll bring something to Council later this term, but thoughts very welcome.
- I've met with the Part Time Executive who either report to me or are in similar roles (Marina, Rita & Minerva) to plan our term, which will be great.
- Emails. Lots of emails, basically.

### Other

- I went to Hawaii on an all-expenses-paid trip to "a conference". It was great.
- I gave platelets twice, and if you're eligible to give blood, please do similarly ☺

That is, finally, all. Future ones won't be this long. If you have ANYTHING to say about what I should be doing to represent graduate, international, and/or mature students, please get in touch. Please.

Nick

## Ali Lennon – VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities

Dear Council Members,

Below is a very short summary on a number of projects and initiatives I've been working on over the summer. If you have any questions concerning the below or would like to get involved email me using [vpweo@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:vpweo@ousu.ox.ac.uk)

- Sexual Health Testing Events – I've been working with the NHS to provide two accessible testing events for students. These events will be advertised in advance and will be also attended by the Student Advice Service.
  - I've also been working on plans to advertise the new sexual health clinic on Rectory Road which stays open after 5PM which will allow those in labs or with commitments till late to get tested.
- Patient Primary Care Commissioning Group – I've been invited to sit on this health board to represent Oxford's students. So far I've managed to convince the NHS and County Council that they need to be doing more with their online resources for students. They've agreed to create student specific information and update their online resources accordingly.
- Patient Participation Groups – I've helped organise a feedback session in which students will be able to talk about their experiences with GP services. The event will be on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October.
- Welfare Officer Training- I've organised a brand new training course for welfare officers in common rooms that will be professionally lead. I've got counsellors, student advisers, and a mental health charity taking part in order to deliver high quality training. Training dates will begin in 4<sup>th</sup> Week MT.
- Liberation Officer Training –the Women's Vice-President and I are working to create a new liberation officer training course. This course will be launched in HT 2016. It comprise of a skills based session and a session lead by the liberation campaigns.
- Prevent – as OUSU's lead on Prevent I've been working with the university to ensure the implementation of the duty is transparent and proportionate as possible. I'm involved in around four new committees related to Prevent and I'll be writing a response to a government consultation on the subject. The President has also organised a meeting with senior government officials so that OUSU can explain the objections of Oxford students.
  - I'll also be running information sessions for students and CR presidents on this subject.
  - I've also said I'll come along to any campaign to talk about Prevent and how it may affect the interests of affected students.
- Automatic Signposting – I've put some recommendations forward to the standing committee of senior tutors' committee concerning signposting students to the Student Advice Service in the event of any academic/disciplinary panel. I'll report on the results when they come through.
- Freshers' Week Welfare– I issued guidance to common room officers concerning welfare during freshers' week; in this advice I also completed a policy mandate concerning inclusive and accessible BOP. The BOP guidance was put together with the assistance of the VP Women and the members of the LGBTQ Campaign.

- Recreational Drug Safety Project – I'm in the stages of launching a new recreational drug safety project with the assistance of a major charity, this project will launch in late MT 2015 or early HT 2016.
- Bad Landlords and Letting Agents – I'm compiling resources for students which can be used to vindicate their rights and compel landlords to improve the quality of their property. I've also been on TV and radio to discuss this issue.
- BeSmart – I've been assisting the Student Advice Service with the launch of their new smart drugs safety awareness programme, you'll be hearing more about this as term gets underway.
- Harassment Training – The Vice-President for Women and I are becoming trained as university harassment advisers this is so we can support students and evaluate the adviser training.
- Welfare Survey – the President and I have been working on the welfare survey. I've been speaking to a number of university officials about this project and the results of the survey will go to inform the policy priorities of the university's sub-committee for health and welfare.
- Campaigns – I've done quite a few odd jobs for my four campaigns including administrative and organisational support. I'm looking forward to being more involved with them as term starts. I was also very impressed by the campaigns representatives at Freshers' Fair.
- PTE – I've been meeting and consulting with some of my PTE over the summer, aiding with the odd project and request.
- Night Safety – with the assistance of the Vice President Charities and Communities we are looking into the viability of a new programme aimed to reassure students who live in the East Oxford area.
- Supporting Common Room Officers – I've been answering countless enquiries from common room officers on all manner of things.

I've also been working on lots of other little things and attending my assigned university committee meetings.

### Lucy Delaney – VP Women

Firstly, I would like to thank my predecessor Anna Bradshaw for her incredible hard work for women in the university over the past year. I am very excited to continue and build upon the work she has done, but also to launch new projects and campaigns.

### Consent Workshops

I have spent most of this summer planning and coordinating the Freshers week consent workshops. Last week sixteen facilitator training sessions took place – they were hugely successful - and the workshops themselves were also a success – they were run in almost every single JCR (the remaining ones are to run theirs presently) and over 3000 Freshers were reached. I am still collecting the data for MCR workshops but many took place throughout Freshers week and there has been an increase in the number of compulsory MCR workshops. I have started to collect in evaluation forms and so far the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

I am now starting work on coordinating and planning other workshops, such as Queer Consent Workshops (to be launched in the next few weeks) and am going to be piloting some Kinky Consent Workshops at the end of this term.

### First Responder Training

One of my pledges this year is to ensure that all SU Women's Officers, Gender Equality Officers and Welfare reps (and other officers with a welfare remit) receive adequate support and training. In -1<sup>st</sup> week I ran four First Responder training sessions. Many Women's Officers, Gender Equality Officers and Welfare reps were trained (approximately one third) and in 4<sup>th</sup> week I will be hosting another training day. All relevant officers will be trained by the end of term.

### Other Training

At the beginning of next term I will be offering Sexual Violence awareness training (in conjunction with OSARCC) to interested officers.

I have also decided to hold a full-time women's officer training day session. Women's officers need better support and guidance, and so, in addition to the training outlined above, this day will take place at the end of term, and it will cover a very comprehensive overview of what it means to be a women's officer. In particular, the day aims to highlight the political as well as welfare-related aspects of the role, and ensure that every space and campaign that a women's officer creates is considerate of women's different experiences and intersecting oppressions.

### Harassment Policy

I am very pleased to announce that the university has finally adopted the updated harassment policy, and a draft has been sent round to several colleges and approved. This will be sent out to all colleges, and if they have not updated their policy already they will be strongly encouraged to. I will also be consulting with and helping relevant SU Officers throughout the year who wish to update their college policy if their college does not do this automatically.

### Women's Leadership Development Programme

The Women's Leadership Development Programme is going ahead again this year in Hilary term – sign ups will occur at the end of Michaelmas Term.

### Free(r) Periods

Last year my predecessor piloted the Free(r) Periods scheme, which provides Common Rooms with sanitary products at cost or bulk price. I am in the process of re-launching this but on a college-by-college basis instead of a mass order for the university – this will be in place by second week.

### Campaigns

I am working closely with It Happens Here – yesterday was the launch of the First Responder app and there are many other events lined up for this term, such as an art exhibition on sexual violence and a vigil to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The Women’s Campaign has also hit the ground running, with a range of very promising events and working groups (See Stephanie’s report for more info).

### Prevent

I will be politically opposing PREVENT. My job is to represent all women in the university, and, given that students of colour and faith may be disproportionately affected by PREVENT, and in particular women of colour and women of faith, it is essential that these voices and concerns are listened to. I am committed to taking any concerns forward and will work with any anti-PREVENT campaigns to ensure the welfare and safety of students.

### **Part-Time Executive Officers**

#### Jenny Walker – LGBTQ Officer

Over the summer vacation my main project has been creating an LGBTQ Rep Guide for all the college reps, with the help of the LGBTQ Society and Campaign. This includes helpful resources, contacts and details about projects as well as a support and educational information, so should be helpful for both new and experienced reps. Later on this term I will hopefully organise a meet-up for college reps, so we can all get to know each other and share ideas. The college buddy scheme is ongoing, as are the various projects of the LGBTQ Campaign which I've been helping organise. Get in touch if you have any questions or want more information!

#### Minerva Lim – International Students’ Officer

Hi Council, I hope you have all had a good summer! Over the past three months I've been working on building up the international student support network that connects the international reps in the various colleges with the students they represent. We have organised events to welcome the international student freshers in the various colleges, from walking tours to International Formals and welcome meals. I will be hosting an international freshers' get-together on the Sunday of 2nd Week (24 October) so do spread the word! I am also looking to build up the International Students' Campaign, which advocates on issues such as immigration, visa regulations and refugee issues. If you are keen to get involved please drop me an email at [intstudents@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:intstudents@ousu.ox.ac.uk), I would love to hear from you.

#### Will Brown – Clubs and Societies Officer

In between the usual kerfuffle of moving back into college, I have primarily been catching up on emails this week.

This term, my main focus as Clubs and Societies Officer will be to develop a plan of action - for posterity - for tackling what I have found to be the foremost limitation to OUSU's engagement with clubs and societies; the lack of a coherent online platform, or even a respectable webpage.

Without such a platform, OUSU's relevance to and engagement with clubs and societies (beyond Fresher's Fair) will continue to be marginal and ultimately ineffective.

I doubt I will see any such platform launched before my term is up – not least of all due to the University's continued outdated use of a hard-copy based registration system for clubs and societies.

I came into the role with relatively little by way of any established resources to work with. I hope that by the end of my term, I can leave both the President and my successor with a good footing to push through the necessary reforms.

Rita Nissim – Graduate Welfare Officer

Hi OUSU Council!

Over the summer I have tried to get a head start with the different projects I am involved in as I will be submitting my D.Phil. thesis during the first half of Michaelmas and will hence have a lot to do on that front. With regards to projects carrying over from last term:

- Alcohol Awareness: I have gone through the results of the Alcohol Awareness Training and have given feedback to Turning Point, who are now working on actually developing at the session. Ali and I will be meeting again sometime later this term to finalise everything, aiming to provide sessions to Welfare Officers in Hilary and to both Welfare Officers and Social Secretaries in Trinity, as part of Freshers' Week Training.
- STI Testing: We are planning on holding one session in Michaelmas and one in Hilary; more details will follow. It is unfortunately difficult to hold more sessions due to various logistic restrictions on the NHS side.
- Suspended Status: There's a few people involved in this and at the end of last term we divided all the action points between us. Marina and I are working on transferring the University Policy into a version that would be appropriate at a College level.
- LGBTQ+ Science Society: It's happening! Get in touch if you would like to get involved!
- First Responders: Now that term is starting again and everyone is back, I am planning on coordinating with Lucy on how best to approach common rooms and help them formulate a policy that best suits their needs.
- Welfare Leaflet: Due to multiple people working towards a similar goal, I decided to take a step back from this in order to be able to focus on other exciting projects. Ali has updated a document that will be given to Welfare Officers; bits of that can definitely be useful to students though while other leaflets are being drafted, I'll see if I can make a short document that can be distributed to graduate students.

With regards to new projects that are starting/will start along with term, more details will be included in my next report but one thing that is happening is that Ali is working with the NHS on setting up a Patient Participation Group meeting as a one off feedback session on GP services in Oxford; the date is the 20<sup>th</sup> of October. I have been trying help with this and recruit graduate students to give positive or negative feedback.

Other than that, Freshers' Week has been quite busy; along with making sure everything is on track, I facilitated consent workshops at St. John's and Hertford, and also helped at St. Cross.

As always, don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions/issues! Email me at [gradwelfare@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:gradwelfare@ousu.ox.ac.uk)!

Rita

### Lindsay Lee – Disabled Students' Officer

Following the council motion passed in TT15, I have spent the summer planning Oxford's first ever Disability, Sex and Relationships workshop for October 24 at Wadham College! The day will have a session in the morning for staff and a session in the afternoon for students. Below is the announcement for students. Please get in touch with me at [disability@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:disability@ousu.ox.ac.uk) if you have any questions or comments, or would like me to send an invitation directly to a member of staff at your college who would benefit from training in this area! I'll be coming to council this week with a motion requesting more funding for the event, as the accessibility adjustments required have pushed us over budget. In order to have this event be as inclusive as possible, I ask for you to please vote for the motion! Thanks y'all!

Here's the announcement about the event:

Students with all kinds of disabilities face unique barriers when forming relationships with other people, and the difficulty in this area can have a severe impact on student welfare. Current support systems at colleges and in the wider university at Oxford generally do not specifically address disability. The Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) has hosted a variety of workshops related to consent and sexual health, but none to date have focused on the unique issues disabled students face. To address this serious and widespread need, OUSU is hosting the first ever Disability, Sex and Relationships Workshop for staff and students on **Saturday, October 24 at Wadham College**. The afternoon session, **2pm-6pm**, will be exclusively for any Oxford students interested in these issues. The program is aimed toward disabled students, but all are welcome. There will be multiple sessions on specific topics lead by local experts in the field and by OUSU. The goal of the training is to help students recognize and openly discuss the unique barriers disabled students face and to empower participants to take part in responsible, enjoyable sexual behavior and interpersonal relationships. **We hope you will join us for this groundbreaking event!**

Please find all information and registration information at [bit.ly/OUSUdsr](http://bit.ly/OUSUdsr). Space is limited, so please register as soon as possible. Please email the OUSU Disabled Students Officer Lindsay Lee at [disability@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:disability@ousu.ox.ac.uk) with any questions.

### David Parton – Health and Welfare Officer

I have been in contact with the Oxford College Nurses Association (OCNA) in relation to an issue arising about the advertisement of PEP treatment to students. This was an issue of importance to me last term, but as I failed to receive a satisfactory response then, I will be continuing to persist until I have a solid commitment from OCNA that the availability of such services will be made clear to all students in situations where they may need it.

I have met with Ali and Rita as a way of getting a clear idea of the work we want to achieve this term. In particular I have expressed an interest in finalising my mental health service signposting packs that were to be published last term but were delayed due to supposed legal concerns. These issues are now resolved and I hope to move forward with the packs. I have been in contact with the Student Advice Service and intend to finalise the information to be included this week.

### Nikhil Venkatesh – Black and Minority Ethnic Students Officer

Over the summer I have mainly been focussing on the preparations for the University's application for the Race Equality Charter Mark. Getting this award includes the University setting itself targets around racial equality, and I am in the process of drawing up our demands for what those targets should be. To this end I am in talks with the BME Staff Network, CRAE (the Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality), JCR and MCR BME Officers, the other members of OUSU exec and the Equality and Diversity Unit. I have written a first draft of what we should propose the targets to be but it will be revised over the term in consultation. If anyone has any suggestions please get in touch with me ([bme@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:bme@ousu.ox.ac.uk))!

I have also been involved with OUSU's approach to the Prevent agenda and Counter Terrorism Act. I am pleased that OUSU has now decided to withdraw the 'Prevent Action Plan' proposed by the trustees, after it was found that this proposal was predicated on flawed legal advice. Prevent is a dangerous, Islamophobic and counter-productive strategy and should, in my opinion, be opposed.

I also was among the members of exec who gave up time to work at Fresher's Fair, explaining how great OUSU is to all our new members.

### Sam Shearn – Student Parents and Carers Officer

Since the end of Trinity Term, I have been mainly working on the issue of parental leave. I wrote a briefing called Helping Pregnant Students which I sent to various key people in the university, surveying current support available at college, department and university level, identifying problems and recommending change. There have been positive responses and correspondence with Student Funding, the Equality and Diversity Unit, and Student Administration following the briefing, and I have met with the university's Equality and Diversity Advocate. Rhodes House now has a parental leave policy (which arose independently of my efforts), and Ertegun House are considering creating a policy. A second edition of the briefing is now being produced with more data from various surveys. I will present a paper at the University Hardship Committee Meeting in November where I hope my recommendations will

be implemented.

Just in time for freshers' fair, I produced a new Student Parent Handbook with information, advice and vox pop quotes from current parents. I have kept detailed information to a minimum, so that the handbook does not go out of date so quickly. Thanks to Marina for correcting my gender language. I have received very positive feedback on the handbook. So far I've distributed 80 paper copies and there have been 134 online reads. At freshers' fair I reached nearly 30 new student parents and raised awareness. The Facebook group now has 100 members and the mailing list over 180 (some of whom may be partners of student parents).

In early October we had a playground date for student parents in Botley. Otherwise I have been answering various student queries. I gave a short talk with Q&A at the Mature Students' Orientation on Saturday. A concerted effort to make first contact with student carers (those looking after ill or disabled relatives or friends) is now a priority for MT 2015, alongside the second edition of the briefing on parental leave.

#### Henna Shah – Access and Admissions Officer

Hi Council

Just a quick one from me. I've been focusing so far this term on a really exciting campaign on refugee scholarships, and will be devoting most of my time to that in my final term. I've taken this decision on the basis that it's a salient issue and is an area where I can make a big impact. We are hoping to launch in 2nd week and I will keep you updated on how it progresses. I've also spoken to Cat about our areas of focus for the term and over the next couple of weeks will be meeting to prioritise etc. - I really want to focus on the access database and the new website. I'm also in touch with ACS about organising another shadowing day with Target Schools, and if it is not viable this term I'll leave all the info about it with my successor so it can go ahead in Hilary.

As usual, please let me know if you have any questions/ideas or want to find out what access related stuff is happening.

Henna xx

#### Yoni Stone – Community Outreach and Charities Officer

Hi Council, I've been working on Oxford Donors, a society to promote blood donation to Oxford students. We enrolled 127 new donors over two days at Freshers' Fair which was awesome. We have a beautiful new logo and a Facebook page with 57 likes (as of 23:20 10/10/2015). On Sunday night I passed a motion through Pembroke JCR for a Pint for a Pint scheme, in which the JCR will buy a pint for any member who donates a pint of blood this term. I hope to encourage other JCRs to do the same.

Stephanie Kelley – Womens’ Campaign Officer

After a handover with Aliya Yule in July following election in June (it wasn’t sooner because I had exams and was flying back home to the US right after) I have worked with the WomCam committee to prepare a termcard (see graphic below). Venues and speakers have been booked and finalized through 4<sup>th</sup> week of term. This graphic was handed out at Freshers Fair and is also available on WomCam’s Facebook page and as a downloadable jpeg here: <http://tinyurl.com/nt4p77a>

If Women’s Officers and Gender Equality Reps could please share it, that would be great.

**WOMCAM ♥ TERM CARD**  
MICHAELMAS '15 @womcam on twitter & facebook

**① INTRO**  
Introductory event for all freshers and newcomers. Watch videos like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s “We Should All Be Feminists” & Dark Matter spoken word poetry, & discuss how you came to feminism.  
**WADHAM @ 7:30 PM, MONDAY**

**② PLEDGE DECRIM**  
Event to organise direct action and student activism concerning working toward the decriminalisation of sex work & protecting sex workers’ rights. Come for resources and discussion. All welcome.  
**VENUE TBC, MONDAY 7:00 PM**

**③ COALITION CAMPAIGNING**  
Liberation campaigns including WomCam, the Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality, the LGBTQ Campaign, and the Oxford Students Disability Community collaborate. This event will be a discussion and brainstorming session about how campaigns can best campaign and do activism together.  
**VENUE TBC, MONDAY 7:00 PM**

**④ HOMELESS AWARENESS WEEK**  
Collaboration for Homeless Awareness Week with On Your Doorstep concerning the plight of homeless women. Speakers include Miranda Miller, author of a book on the topic, and students who organised last year’s Oxford Dignity Drive.  
**ST. CATZ, MONDAY TIME TBC**

**⑤ DISABILITY**  
Come to learn about and discuss the intersection of ableism and misogyny. Disabled women experience oppression differently than abled women do: this event seeks to provide a safe space for discussion and education.  
**VENUE TBC, MONDAY 7:00 PM**

**⑥ TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE**  
In the week leading up to Trans Day of Remembrance on Friday, November 20th, we will be launching an awareness campaign highlighting the issues trans folk face.  
**VENUE TBC, MONDAY 7:00 PM**

**⑦ CLIMATE CHANGE**  
Leading up to the December Climate Change talks in Paris and the November 29th Climate Change March, this event will discuss how climate change is a feminist issue.  
**VENUE TBC, MONDAY 7:00 PM**

**⑧ SELF CARE**  
WomCam & It Happens Here collaborate on a night of self care and fun. Come for crafts, films, & discussion of how best to care for yourself during an Oxford degree. Undergrad & postgrads both welcome!  
**VENUE TBC, MONDAY 7:00 PM**

Of particular note this term are the many collaborations with other Oxford student-led campaigns – with On Your Doorstep in 4<sup>th</sup> week, It Happens Here in 8<sup>th</sup> week, Oxford's Fossil Free Campaign for 7<sup>th</sup> week, and the many liberation campaigns (CRAE, WomCam, OSDC, et. al) teaming up in 3<sup>rd</sup> week. Combining the power of multiple student-led causes, linking together in solidarity, and working toward shared goals is proving very important for discussion and implementation so far this year.

Additionally, outside of the Monday event termcard, I have been working with our discussion group chair to organize a full term of weekly discussion groups held on Friday evenings in the Oxford Hub. The first of these is an intro discussion group this Friday (two days from Council meeting) in the large meeting room with the topic "What is a feminist?" from 7-8 PM. The discussion group Friday evening of second week is set to discuss the experiences of women of colour in Oxford. If anyone is interested in these, please attend, and find more information on Facebook (/womcam) or Twitter (@womcam). Members of committee have also been working very hard in anticipation of the launch of the liberation library in 5<sup>th</sup> week.

Overall, action and organisation over the long vacation and at the beginning of term has been complicated by the fact that many of WomCam committee's members have had to step down due to graduation, year abroad, finals, or rustication. The majority of committee positions are currently open and up for election, scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> week of MT. I am also already organizing handovers of these roles to ensure transition is easy and smooth – this is of particular importance given the fact that I would like to encourage more freshers to run for committee positions and get involved earlier in their time at Oxford.

#### Danny Waldman – Rent ad Accommodation Officer

Hope you've all had a great vac, and hello to the new freshers! Over the summer I've been working with a few of the sabs to plan some upcoming projects. With Becky, we've put together a form to gather basic information about accommodation at all the colleges, working on putting on a strategy and planning workshops to aid presidents in their rent negotiations, and also trying to compile case studies of successful rent negotiations people have had in the past. Emily and I are planning to launch a new campaign to tackle the high cost of rent in Oxford generally (somewhere around 4th week), and Ali and I will be working to equip students with information to tackle exploitative landlords and help with the quality of housing and welfare issues surrounding that. All in all, excited to be back!

#### Fairlie Kirkpatrick Baird – Environments and Ethics Officer

This week, I have been building on my preparation from the summer for both the Veggie Pledge campaign I will be running this term and for the Divestment campaign. For the Veggie Pledge campaign, which is intended to encourage students to try giving up meat or dairy during the month of November, I have edited a draft motion in collaboration with Oxford VegSoc that will help E&E officers to get more vegetarian or vegan options offered in their colleges. I have

also begun to compile a document with “common objections” to increasing veggie options and potential counterarguments for students or officers who want to bring these motions to the JCR and to help them hust. In looking forward to running the campaign itself, I have fixed a loose timeline of advertising and implementation with Emily Silcock, and decided on several events we will be holding, including a celebratory vegan meal at the very end of Veggie Pledge.

I have also been working with the Divestment campaign. As the university reached a decision on divestment last term, we met on Monday to discuss our potential strategies. We are also holding a banner making session in conjunction with Emily’s JCR E&E officer meet-up, which will involve cooking a meal and creating a banner for the divestment campaign. This event will hopefully facilitate E&E officer collaboration and cooperation, as well as introducing interested students to OUSU E&E and the divestment campaign.

### **Divisional Board Representatives**

#### **Jacob Page – Graduate MPLS**

Hi Council,

Nothing much has happened yet as term is yet to start but I have been preparing for my first board meeting by reading past board papers, the MPLS strategic plan and the MPLS report to council 2014/2015.

#### **Greg Auger – Undergraduate MPLS**

It has been a relatively quiet start in DivRep land, just getting my head around some of the ways MPLS operates, but it's the calm before the storm... I have three divisional committees before the next council: particularly let me know if you have thoughts relating to libraries or to access and admissions. Will also have at least three other DivRep related meetings before next council, so there will be plenty to tell you about!

In not-quite-DivRep news, my summer focus has been on creating an online version of the Alternative Prospectus, which will be launching in Hilary alongside the new print prospectus.

#### **Raj Dattani – Undergraduate Medical Sciences**

Since the last meeting in TT15 (10/06/15), where I was re-elected to post, I have undertaken the following tasks:

1. Provided a written submission for the MSD Board which met on 23/06/2015, as I was out of the country.
2. Undertaken significant work relating to the Review of Graduate Entry Medicine which occurred on 01/10 and 02/10. This consisted of liaising with the Division on the terms of student

engagement, receiving over 46 pages of written submissions, constructing a 45 question survey for students, surveying students (which received a 78% response rate), analysing the results of the survey and writing a 3000 word report to the Review Panel synthesizing views gathered. All of this work was in conjunction with the VP AccAff and the ARO.

3. Continued to make representations to the Division on the undergraduate feedback matter which is out to consultation from EdC.

4. Advised on the roll out of BMJ BestPractice to students via the Bodliean.

#### Duncan Shepherd – Undergraduate Humanities

In -1st week I attended a consultative committee on the building of a new Humanities building in Oxford; it will largely affect PG students (and beyond) and is currently in the \*very\* early planning stages, and as such there was little of note.

In 1st week I attended the UG studies divisional meeting; the discussion largely focused on the results of the review of the Linguistics departments degrees, and I will be passing on the salient points of that discussion the JCC reps via email. Also discussed was the upcoming HE review; the student submission for this will be talked about more in the upcoming Divisional Board Meeting on Friday, and the student response will be collated in future, meaning little change of note was made.

I have more meetings to come and look forward to writing many more reports in future! -  
Duncan

#### Chris Jacobi – Graduate Social Sciences

I attended an introductory meeting with the Social Science Divisional Office administrators and had a chat with the Social Sciences Undergraduate Divisional Board rep. On Monday I attended the Social Sciences Divisional Board Graduate Studies Committee. I made a few comments on the concerning variation of the percentage of distinction grades at Masters level between departments.

#### OUSU Campaigns

##### Henry Procter - STUDENTSplus

STUDENTSplus started the new academic year by co-organising mature student orientation at Harris Manchester College. Designed to welcome mature students to Oxford, the event received around 200 RSVPs and included sections on study skills, welfare and tips from current mature students, ending with a drinks reception. This year was particularly nice because students brought their partners and families to orientation.

STUDENTSplus is an open group welcoming any Oxford mature student and their partner to join. Anyone interested in taking a place on the committee should email: [msc@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:msc@ousu.ox.ac.uk). Anyone interested in being on the mailing list should send a black email to: [mature-students-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mature-students-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk).