## Reports to Council

### 1st Week Council Michaelmas 2016

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Dear council,

My work this summer divides into three major areas: up-skilling, key stakeholder building, and project development. I will cover each of these in turn, if anyone has questions arising from the report please get in contact at president@ousu.ox.ac.uk or on 01865 288459.

## Up-skilling

Since beginning the role at the end of June I have undergone an extensive training program put together by OUSU. I have undertaken training in:

- Time management
- Project planning
- Conflict resolution
- Handling difficult conversations
- Giving and receiving feedback

These particular training programs compliment a general introductory 3 weeks which consisted of a thorough handover, and shadowing for 2 weeks with my predecessor followed by a training residential for the whole team with an educational consultant. This training residential consisted of work on team project identification and team dynamics workshops.

In addition to the pre-arranged general training provided by OUSU I also attended training from the NUS in the forms of the SU’s 16 training conference and the education sabbatical officers training conference. Furthermore I have sought additional support and training for my role as President, completing the Oxford Learning Institutes ‘managing upwards and across’ training program for middle managers.

## Key stakeholder building

An important part of my summer work has been building relationships with my key university, college, OUSU and student contacts. This has involved many meetings and I have worked hard to be in a good position going into this academic year. In order to do this I have taken on additional work from JCR presidents and key committee allies in order to cultivate a positive relationship. This approach seems to have been largely successful and I am confident going forward.
Project development

One of the largest areas of my work this summer has been to prep and plan my projects for the year. Here I will give a quick overview of each of my more major projects going forward.

Expanding the Student Advice Service (SAS)

In my manifesto I promised to work to form a new advocacy service so as to provide direct advocacy for students in need of support in difficult meetings such as appeals proceedings, disciplinary hearings and suspension meetings. Following conversations with the SAS it became apparent that it would be possible to branch out into offering advocacy in house. In partnership with the SAS I have developed a project to expand the offerings of the service. This project has three elements:

• Securing funding from the Access to Justice fund to form a partnership with a supportive local law firm, enabling us to offer students pro bono legal support.
• Producing a paper to Senior Tutors Committee (STC) informed by SusCam to improve the situation of students facing suspension meetings, and to improve the ability and opportunity of the SAS to support those students.
• Re communicating the offerings of the SAS to better highlight the range of services they offer (from meeting preparation to coaching in presentation and meeting skills) via a new communications strategy.

Progress on this project is good. Access to Justice funding has been secured and the hunt is on for a partner law firm. Discussions are underway as to the content of a paper to STC and more data gathering via a suspended students focus group later this term is planned.

Academic structures enquiry

In my manifesto I promised to run an inquiry into the impact of term lengths on student welfare and mental health. Secondly, I promised to campaign for reading weeks. An enquiry into the impact of academic structures on student welfare and mental health goes further than both of these separate promises to look at academic structures more broadly. The intention is to build on the work of the OUSU welfare survey of last year. The welfare survey identified unequivocally that significant welfare issues exist within oxford, however it did not identify the causal relations underlying a lot of these findings. This piece of research aims to look for those causal relations with the aim of equipping my successor with robust research and data to pursue change in the areas identified.

The enquiry will have three parts.

• An initial review of existing data
• A subsequent data gathering exercise, targeted and directed by the results of the review
• The production of a final report.

Preparation is well underway and a researcher has been contracted for 100 hours to assist me in this project, among other things. Initial conversations with the university education policy units have
yielded positive results, as have conversations with key stakeholder groups among the university and colleges who are keen for and supportive of this project.

Clubs and societies

Though not a manifesto promise, I have become the sabbatical lead on working to support our university clubs and socs. At present, responsibility for clubs and socs has been split between the proctor’s office, sports fed and to a lesser extent OUSU. Compared to the rest of the student union sector our work with clubs and societies is incredibly limited. Furthermore the active support that clubs and socs are provided with in Oxford is minimal.

This project aims to fill the gap in training and support. It has two parts:

- Providing training to clubs and socs executives via a comprehensive training conference including support for managing a budget, securing sponsorship, meeting health and safety requirements, running effective communications and social media presences, chairing committees and personal leadership skills.
- Running a pilot clubs and socs accreditation scheme. This will put clubs and societies through an assessment process to grade clubs (and support them in attaining a higher grade) on areas like: whether officers are trained, handovers provided, consent / good lad workshops run, outreach activities engaged with and accessible events.

These two approaches will hopefully provide clubs and societies with improved support, training and oversight. The hope is that if the SU can successfully engage with these areas, engagement with the SU will increase and so allow OUSU to have a better positive impact on the student experience.

Student weekly workloads

In my manifesto I made a promise to work to institute weekly workload caps for students. To pursue this project I am working jointly with the OUSU AccAff officer. This project again has two strains:

- Lobbying the central university to institute weekly working hours guidelines for students.
- Working with course reps to determine within departments, faculties and subjects what those weekly working hour guidelines mean for each subject to produce a subject specific set of guidelines to guide tutors and students in combating excessive work.

Hopefully this joint approach will produce a system that affects all students while also being specific enough to be useful in each student’s actual academic experience.

JCR president support and training

Responsibility for JCR presidents falls to me and this year I have aimed to expand the offerings of support from the president of OUSU. This additional support breaks down into four different areas:
• Facilitating good handovers and institutional memory in common rooms by providing template documents.
• Providing an expanded common room executive training program in the form of a conference.
• Providing project planning support for individual presidents.
• Providing the materials for, and when required facilitating, team building and team accountability workshops for common room committees.

Together these changes come together to form a much more comprehensive support package for jcr presidents and their committees.

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

I’ve split this report into two broad sections ‘what I’ve done’ and ‘what I will be doing’. Since that’s quite a lot of things, I’ve done parts in a bullet point format to make it easier to go through. If you have any questions about any of these things, I am happy to go into much more detail with you, please just ask me!

**What I’ve been doing**

• Training and induction
• Meeting all of the senior staff and departments I’ll be working with this year to discuss upcoming work
• Representing you and prospective applicants on:
  o Hardship Review Group
  o Digital Outreach Portal Steering Group
  o Regionalisation Working Group
  o Access Target Working Group
  o Foundation Years Work Stream
  o Working Group on Feedback
  o Oxford and Colonial Legacies Group
  o Joint Fee-Setting and Student Support Advisory Group
  o Admissions Executive
  o University Council
  o Quality Assurance Subcommittee
• Planning training for students for the year ahead
• Fresher’s week

**Some Positive Little Updates**

• Careers Service offering some very helpful support for suspended status students and SusCam
• The application process for central university financial support is going to be much more easily accessible
What I will be doing

- Representation on all the above committees/groups and also:
  - Education Committee
  - Student Attainment Gap Working Group
  - Admissions Committee
  - Senior Tutors’ Committee
  - Exams Panel
  - Quality Assurance Working Group
  - Undergraduate Panel
  - Contextual Data Working Group
  - Qualifications Subgroup
  - Committee of College Librarians
  - Curators of the Bodleian Libraries
  - Course Choice Working Group

- English Departmental Review (get in touch, English students!)
- National Demo (19th November)

Particular Plans

- One of my key manifesto pledges surrounded race and admissions. A number senior figures in the University’s department for outreach and admissions are also committed to improve the current (really bad) situation. Many feel that introducing a simple ‘target’ for ‘BME admissions’ would be quite reductive, and easy to find ways of addressing that wouldn’t deal with the specific areas in which the University is failing – eg British Afro-Caribbean students. This term we want to work with students of colour to identify what the best, most fruitful policies, recommendations and/or targets to introduce might be.
  - As part of this, I plan to work with students and the admissions office to develop unconscious bias training that is specifically designed for admissions tutors, and to ensure it is undertaken across the board. Through the committees and working groups I sit on, it may be possible to introduce this as formal recommendation/policy across the University.
- Academics, staff, and students in various areas of the University have been lobbying for curricular diversification and decolonisation now for some time. Concerted efforts have diminished, despite ever heightening demand. I’m hoping to set up a working group between academics, students, and staff to push for some concrete change.
- Working with Jack on introducing guidelines/policy on workload and welfare that are approved by faculties, that students can draw upon if/when they are being overburdened with unreasonable amounts of work expected of them.
- Equipping course reps to ensure that lecture capture is happening for as many lectures as possible in their own faculties.

If you are interested in getting involved with any of these pieces of work please get in touch!
A Very Important Note on Unpredictability and Higher Education

You may be aware that the Higher Education (HE) Bill is currently making its way through various stages of the parliamentary process. The proposals for changes to HE within it are enormous, and could severely impact access to education in a huge range of ways. Not only this, but the government have been adding and altering proposals quite frequently and in quite substantial ways.

A lot of my time this summer has been spent working on the HE Bill, what it will mean for Oxford, and how we should prepare to mitigate the consequences of potential implementation. I anticipate that this work will continue throughout the year, and definitely over the course of Michaelmas term. What exactly the government decide or attempt to do will shape what I do in this role.

For the moment, I’d encourage you to watch our videos online explaining some of what has happened so far, sign our petition against fee increases for on-course students, and sign up to come to the National Demo on the 19th November.

We’ll be keeping you updated on all matters relating to the Bill as soon as we are able to, and please be assured that behind the scenes there is a ton of work going on to make sure that students are not completely screwed over by the government.

For more info…

- Ask me questions in Council/send them to the Chair in advance
- Follow/tweet me: @OUSU_AcAff
- Email: vpaccaff@ousu.ox.ac.uk
- If you’d like to chat about a specific project and how you can get involved, email so we can arrange getting together!

Beth Currie – Vice-President (Charities & Community)

Hi Council,

I hope everyone had a really great summer and is super excited about the term ahead. Here’s a brief summary of what I’ve been working on over the summer

Beth

Community

Our Community Warden team in Jericho is full and fully trained ready to start the #KnowYourNeighbour campaign and door-knocking this week. I am currently drawing up our new community warden
contracts and redoing the employment pack for recruitment in East Oxford to make it more accessible and hopefully increase application rate. We hope to have the East Oxford team up and running by 5th week (applications will be on the OUSU website by mid-2nd week if you want to apply).

I have met with stakeholders in local businesses and a representative from Bitten Oxford to develop a plan to increase student engagement with and use of local businesses.

I have begun planning a year long review into the social impact of university students in the city, with the aim of developing a student based community engagement strategy by the end of the year.

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 arranged an E&E rep dinner this Thursday and will offer a training session later in the term.

I have just started working on the NUS Green Impact award, which involved

I’ve been looking at ways to expand the great work Emily did last year in helping us attain our first Gold award, so we definitely meet our achievements again.

I’ve been planning VeggiePledge, to encourage vegetarianism and veganism within in student population. We have started putting together the vegetarian starter packs, which will go out to every participant.

I am looking into the ways that we can expand edible planting in the student population. Our edible vegetable patch outside of Earth Sciences is still going strong, I gave out Grow Your Own Chive Sets to 600 students at Freshers’ Fair and have met with the leader of Incredible Edible Oxford to discuss ways to possible get more patches.

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

RAG

Plans for RAG Ball and Lost are progressing really well! Make sure you sign up to both while there are still tickets!

Training

I have started planning for an 8-week training programme on political campaigning to be run in Hilary for beginner campaigners (primarily 1st and 2nd years). I have also developed some training for common room execs on managing expectations and self-care.
Housing

I have been in contact with Move’m to plan a term-long campaign to get Oxford students reviewing their houses on their site, hopefully including a Starbucks coffee promotion through November. You can leave a review of our house at movem.co.uk.

I have also met with representatives from Age UK Oxfordshire’s Homeshare and am working on a promotion timeline with them to encourage postgraduate students to use their service.

Marina Lambrakis – Vice-President (Graduates)

Hello Council & happy 1st week!

I’m Marina, and as Vice-President (Graduates) I’m here to work on behalf of all graduate students at Oxford. I also have responsibility for all international, mature, and part-time students, as well as student parents and carers. I’m always more than happy to hear from any of you, and particularly if you fall into any of these groupings – you can reach me on vpgraduates@ousu.ox.ac.uk, or search ‘OUSU VP Graduates’ on Facebook or Twitter. I see it as my job to ensure that OUSU and the University work for all students equally, no matter your background or stage of life, and I’m committed to not just representing your interests, but shouting about them from the rooftops. (That means that you’ll often hearing me yelling “and the grads!” from the corner.)

I’m going to (try to) keep this report fairly brief for the time being, but am more than happy to answer questions if you have any! Here are some of my planned projects and priorities for the year:

REVIEW OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COURSES

Nick did a review of taught Masters courses last year; I’m doing a review of research courses to complement that. I’ll be doing a survey and lots of focus groups, and will use the results to lobby the University for change. They were super keen on the taught Masters review and really took notice of Nick’s work, so I’m reasonably confident they will be receptive to this too.

GRADUATE WELFARE

Last year OUSU conducted a big Welfare Survey, which produced lots of interesting data. However, graduates didn’t submit anywhere near as many responses as undergrads (we had c.900 graduate respondents), and I don’t think that’s good enough, so I’m going to continue to take this forward and conduct some more qualitative data collection. I intend to keep pushing on the issue of the College Advisor system. We’ve already made headway with co-supervision, so fingers crossed!
ACCESS TO POSTGRADUATE STUDY // COLLEGES

Postgraduate access is something that is rarely discussed within this University or OUSU. I’m hoping to make some progress on this later on in the year, and that work will largely focus on the role colleges play for grads. There’s a dire need to improve what information people get before they arrive in Oxford, particularly on the college front. I also want to bring undergrads and Masters students into contact with research students more, to open a dialogue on the progression to research as a student. Part of this will also include more work on skills training in how to conduct research, longer-term project planning, and preparing yourself emotionally for the very particular challenges of research and fieldwork.

GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT & TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

Lastly, I’ve been meeting with various people to make a move on producing resources for graduates who are employed during their studies. Most of this work previously has focused on teaching within departments and colleges, but grads are employed across the University and in Oxford in a range of different ways (Junior Deans, librarians, research assistants, etc). I’m looking to produce an employment rights toolkit, and will also continue to lobby the University to ensure that employment opportunities are fairly and transparently advertised and allocated.

NATIONAL ISSUES

Finally, I expect to spend a considerable part of my time dealing with national issues that affect Higher Education in general. This includes the Higher Education Bill and all the policy changes arising from that, as well as the fallout from the EU Referendum. On the latter, if you have any concerns and want to talk, then just drop me a line. I’m taking the lead on this within OUSU, so do get in touch with your thoughts/questions!

THINGS I HAVE DONE ALREADY (HIGHLIGHTS)

- Sat on many committees. Many.
- Began meeting MCR Presidents
- Attended as many graduate Freshers events as I’ve been able to fit in
- Helped organise and given talks at all the International Orientation events, several departmental inductions, as well as Mature Students Orientation
- Presented to new graduate supervisors on a student’s perspective on the supervisory relationship, and academic and welfare issues that affect graduates
- Sat on the review panel for the Department of Primary Care Health Sciences (3 more reviews to do this year, yay! Keep your eyes peeled for those)

That is it for now! We are now closer to the end of the week than the start. Yay! See you in a fortnight for more exciting updates!

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

Hi Council,

I hope you’ve all had wonderful summers and are excited for the next term!

Here’s what I’ve been doing since 10th week:

- Been trained in lots of things, including NUS training and team building.
- Am working with other SUs to get the welfare report filled in by other Unis, which will give us comparative data!
- Freshers Fair (obviously)
- Regularly liaised with the Counselling Service about Peer Support and Mental Health Policy
- Met with the careers service to organise an event for undergrads going on a year abroad, which will happen before the end of MT
- Planned an iCalendar for use by campaigns and liberation groups to make events more accessible, hopefully launching next week!
- Organised a sexual health testing day for MT, with various sexual health charities in Oxford coming along and specific slots for LGBTQ students and Grads.
- Sitting on the Prevent working group to discuss training, and working on the set up of a monitoring forum for misuse of Prevent. This has included highlighting the risks of Prevent and working to move away from Prevent training and towards right and equality training.
- Co-ran a session at the UAS conference on the new Code of Practice on Meetings and Events, with a focus on the risk of discrimination in operating the University code of practice.
- Working with JSOC and UJS on a policy regarding anti-Semitism in Oxford
- Begun planning welfare officer training for Common Rooms.
- Attended the OXFED and Colleges Nurses Service afternoon to discuss how best to work with college nurses and doctors
- Worked with Good Night Out to get them positioned to apply to be an official OUSU campaign

If you have any questions, drop me a message at Sandy Downs on Facebook, or an email on vpweo@ousu.ox.ac.uk!

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

Hi Council! It’s been a really busy few months, but it’s also been an amazing start to the year, and I’m really pleased with how it’s going so far. Thanks to everyone who has helped out, advised and collaborated.

At the beginning of the summer I demarcated three main areas of work to be done across the year. They are: tackling sexual violence on campus, supporting trans students and supporting student sex workers.
**Tackling Sexual Violence on Campus**

*Consent Workshops*
I am thrilled to report that the bulk of consent workshops have happened, that feedback is being returned, and that we’re in the process of setting a date to go through the evaluation forms and come up with information. The impression I’m getting is that it went well—so a huge, huge thank you to everybody who was involved.

We reached thousands of people this year, and I also got confirmation from all undergraduate common rooms that workshops were compulsory, which is incredible! I also really focused on grad engagement and we got a few more grad common rooms onboard—as well as getting more mature students involved (shout out to Harris Manchester!) That said, though for the first time this year we included a budget line for printing, it didn’t stretch as far as we’d hoped—so we had to hand-fold a *lot* of leaflets. I want to say a massive thank you to the OUSU staff, my fellow sabbs and all the students who gave up their time to help me with this. In the review/debrief of consent workshops this year, we’ll be trying to make sure the budget for next year will cover what we need it to.

Finally, I’ve been working with the LGBTQ Campaign and Cat Kelly (LGBTQ Officer) to rework the Queer Consent Workshops, and we’re hoping to pilot the new versions in Wadham’s Queer Week this term!

*Harassment Policies*
I haven’t yet moved much on this, but now that term’s begun I’ll be working alongside WomCam to mobilise student support for more cohesive policies across colleges, as well as better implementation. I have also compiled a database of which colleges have confirmed via their websites that they use the University’s Harassment Policy & Procedure.

The University’s Harassment Policy & Procedure are currently under review, and I’m working with the university on this. A lot of this is pending the UUK taskforce recommendations—hopefully there are going to be some really good changes happening in universities across the UK.

*Supporting Trans Students*
In my manifesto, I pledged to work on reviewing election processes to make voting for women’s roles more inclusive—I did some work on collecting thoughts on how feasible this was prior to starting the job, but it has been somewhat stalled by the fact that we don’t currently have a full-time Democratic
Support Officer. However, I’ll be bringing it up in Election Committee and working out what things we can change and how to do that. I also pledged to work on better provision of gender neutral toilets—Sandy Downs and I will be working on that together in the coming term.

In light of these pledges, and because the University Trans Policy and Guidance is currently under review, I’ve widened my focus to include general work towards improving welfare and support structures for trans students. Over the summer I have;

- Compiled a list of which colleges have formally stated their adherence to the University’s Trans Policy
- Written a guide to using the current Trans Policy, which is in the LGBTQCampaign’s Survival Guide, made available at Freshers’ Fair and soon online
- Got input from trans students on the revisions necessary to the Trans Policy & Guidance -- this is still on-going if you want to get in contact with concerns, thoughts or experiences to share!
- Collaborated with Catherine Moughton on rewriting and adding to the Trans Policy & Guidance

**Supporting Student Sex Workers**
While not in my manifesto, due to the publication of the NUS Student Sex Worker survey a few months ago, and because the VP (Women) is mandated to support student sex workers, I have now made this a priority. Over this term I will be looking for input and recommendations as to the content of a training session designed to make student-facing staff more aware of the issues which may effect student sex workers, and more able to support students who do sex work in a non-stigmatising and informed way. I’m hoping to pilot this with the counselling service.

**Misc**
- We are taking the sad decision to stop the Free(r) Periods service, which offers common rooms sanitary products at cost—it was logistically difficult and had a relatively low uptake. I’m really sorry! What I will be doing is drafting motions for common room officers to use to encourage their colleges to consider this when creating a common room budgets. Look out for that, and I’m sorry for any inconvenience!
- I am about to start pencilling in regular meet-ups for Women’s Officers in common rooms, so that we can share best practice and discuss issues that might arise.
**Part Time Executive Officers**

**Tom Wadsworth - Academic Affairs Campaigns Officer**

Freshers fair went well at the SusCam and Mind Your Head stands. The first SusCam social will be tonight and hopefully will have a number of people turn up. I will organise a meeting with Eden soon to discuss what to do this term that could be useful.

**Adam Kellett – Access and Admissions Officer**

Hey all! It's the last term that this role exists, so while i continue my efforts in assisting all JCR access reps should they need it, I will also be working on the handover of the co-chairship for Target Schools and the additional responsibilities of theirs once this position dissolves.

**Meera Sachdeva – International Students’ Officer**

I have two main plans for this term:

1. The first is to hold an international week in 5th week of Michaelmas (we still need to confirm the date but it will most likely be 5th week). The plan is to have different colleges/societies/campaigns hold a different event cultural event for international students on each day of the week. The aim is to allow international students to meet each other and to celebrate internationalism at Oxford. We are currently in the process of contacting national societies, campaigns and the international reps of colleges to see who is interesting in hosting an event.

2. My second plan is to increase the membership of the International Student's Campaign and to ensure a smooth turnover to a new, permanent committee for the rest of the year so that the campaign can take over my role when my term is over.

**Catherine Kelly – LGBTQ Officer**

Freshers week has been busy for the LGBTQ Campaign- we put together an LGBTQ+ Survival Guide that we’re very proud of, we had lots of sign-ups and interest at Freshers Fair and we have plenty of great events planned for this term.

Our first event is the zine launch and social in first week, and we’ll be holding an open meeting and elections in second week so that we can fill the vacant committee roles. We also have a Queer Cabaret planned, as well as various workshops, the queer women’s discussion group and bi/pan events.
As well as LGBTQ Campaign events, I spent most of the run up to Freshers Week finishing up the facilitator and participant handbooks for the LGBTQ 101 workshops, and running facilitator training sessions. The workshops in St Hugh’s went really well, and I received a lot of helpful feedback. I’ll be seeking more feedback from reps about how the workshops could be improved.

Holly Roy – Student Parents and Carers Officer

I have been responding to student parent enquiries via the email list.

I am based out of Oxford for a large chunk of this term and have been discussing with Marina the possibility of finding a successor asap as I am probably not going to be able to support student parents and carers as well as I would like this term.

Tuesday Doherty – Women’s Campaign Officer/Women’s Campaign

WomCam has started the term proactively! We proved successful at the Freshers fair where we handed out term cards and our newly published zine. We managed to get over 500 people signing up for our mailing list and many more liking our Facebook page. We were also able to reveal our new logo and committee jumpers at the fair which meant we feel like we are more of a clear and cohesive campaign. We have lots of exciting events coming up this term from a club night at Cellar to raise money for OSARCC, a puppy room in 8th week, arts and crafts events and a film screening of Girlhood. We have also started a subcommittee to campaign for updating college harassment policies which we hope to work on with OUSU to pass through JCRs, take to the conference of colleges and eventually train staff in each college to help best support students’ welfare. We are looking forward to raising WomCam’s profile and continuing to support women to the best of our ability.

Campaigns (see also Women’s Campaign above)

Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality (CRAE)

This has been a good start to the year for CRAE, with hundreds of sign-ups to our mailing list and a great deal of interest shown; what we’ve realised is that holding the Race 101 Workshops in colleges before the students reach the Freshers Fair heightens awareness of CRAE and the desire to get involved, and as feedback about the Race Workshops has been positive, we are even more keen to hold them at more colleges next year. We are looking forward to our weekly meetings and are already working on a collaboration with It Happens Here on a panel event, promotion of a screening of the documentary ‘Generation Revolution’ at the Phoenix alongside Q&A and developing a workshop with the people behind it, promoting and aiding the ACS with their Black History Month events, and raising the profile of Preventing Prevent. We will be also attending an informal talk with Baroness Lawrence before her lecture on the 20th October in Oxford, as heads of CRAE, and elections for several roles on CRAE’s committee will be held later this term.