



AUT

Last term this Council unanimously voted to support the University teachers' union, AUT, in their strike actions aimed at getting a salary increase. As you may have read, some student unions have spoken against the AUT because one of the 'actions' they are undertaking is a boycott of examination marking. This boycott could result in delays of results being published, but the University is doing what it can to minimise disruption. Whilst it is imperative that strike action is resolved as quickly as possible to prevent students being affected, it is important that students support their tutors in this argument. If Oxford, and other universities like us, wish to remain centres of academic excellence, we must be able to attract the best teaching staff. Tutors are hugely underpaid at the moment, especially when compared to the six figure salaries of some university administrative staff.

Rent

At the beginning of every Trinity term most common rooms are given provisional rent increase figures by college bursars or equivalents. Rent increases in Oxford are notoriously high, so this year some research has uncovered the appalling statistics behind Oxford rent prices. In the past five years our rents have, on average, risen 35%. That is compared to 8% in London and 3.5% regionally. Oxford students pay more than University College London, Kings College London and London School of Economics, despite the weighted loan London students receive.

OUSU and common room representatives have launched a petition, to be signed by students and heads of house, that will be presented to the House of Commons on Wednesday of 4th week by Andrew Smith MP. The petition asks for the Department for Education and Skills to look into why rises are so high, and how to counter them. Considerations will include a potential "Oxford weighted" loan. The petition will be handed in at the same time as actions in Oxford, hopefully including silent halls and protests.

SRI

The student union and SRI campaign's paper on Socially Responsible Investment finally reached University Council, after various delays, on Monday of this week. Or so it seemed. However, it soon became apparent that yet again, our paper was not being presented in its pure form, but rather as an "annexe" to a counter paper by a working party we had no knowledge of or representation to. Nonetheless, our arguments in favour of our paper were made to Council. Whilst no-one was able to counter our claims that the University currently has no genuine SRI policy, or mechanisms for implementation, Council was still not willing to endorse our potential solutions. Instead roughly half of University Council abstained in a vote, apparently unable to openly support our proposals.

The treatment of what has been a well researched and concerted campaign to have the University engage with 4000 students who believe the University should investment ethically has been a disturbing insight into how little the administration responds to students. Our requests were merely that the administration get independent advice on how the University can implement SRI without losing money, and the creation of a joint committee to consider the results.

The SRI campaign has made plans about how to take this argument further, that will be underway by next Council, when I will be able to report back with more information.

Student Contract

The student contract has been put back on the college agenda for the beginning of term. The student union now has advice on which parts of the contract should be changed to protect students. College Heads of House have received correspondence from OUSU on this, and are aware of our arguments. Common room representatives are similarly familiar with the correspondence, and are in a position to continue discussions with governing bodies in light of this, or request college-specific advice from OUSU.

In terms of the student charter, a document that affirms students' (mostly academic) rights, that OUSU recommended common rooms have inserted into college handbooks: the VP Access and Academic Affairs will be taking a charter to EPSC to attempt to have it inserted at a University-wide level. However, this version of the charter can only refer to academic rights, so common rooms are encouraged to pursue a wider charter at a college level. Common room representatives have been given all current versions of charters available.

NUS

Aside from the matter of central affiliation, which will be discussed later this afternoon, NUS annual

conference was held over the Easter vacation. Kate Ferguson, one of OUSU executive with responsibility for NUS, and I, went as observers to conference with voting reps from Balliol, Wadham, Univ, St Hilda's, Teddy Hall, Somerville, Wolfson, Brasenose, Corpus and Mansfield. A report on the conference will be presented to 3rd week council.

Aidan Randle-Conde

V-P (Welfare and Equal Opportunities)

Since last Council many things have happened...

Disabilities Advisory Panel

I was asked to determine what had happened to the now defunct Disabilities Advisory Panel. After about two months of searching we're now in a position where we can representation for a disabled access advisory panel again. I'll keep Council updated on future developments.

Barnes Unit

This is one of the most important things that has been going on. With the help of Gina Hadley I've been working on the opposition to the closure of the Barnes Unit. There's a petition- please sign it. There's a motion for Council- please vote for it. There's a draft motion for Common Rooms- please present it.

Mind and Stress Awareness Day

Mind have been in touch with me to discuss the Stress Awareness Day which is Friday of next week. I'll advertise it all over the place. Please pass on the details to stressed finalists/first years. It's going to be fun and very good.

Condoms and condom machines

My thoughts are never very far away from condoms. I'm going to get training for myself and the Office Staff for condom machine maintenance, just in case things go wrong. Intelligent Vending are great like that. There have been some concerns about the Safex condoms being too small. If you have any concerns then please get in touch and I'll my best to sort it out. As ever, condom orders go to Gill Viner, OUSU.

Student Advice Service

I'm supposed to review the service each year. I thought it wouldn't take too long. It takes longer than I thought. I'll bring a review to Council later this term, but rest assured that the review is in progress. Casework continues as ever and the workload is about to increase as finals approach.

Rough Guide to Equal Opportunities

It is finally finished. It took about 6 months on and off but it is now finished and proof-read. I'll be sending them out to all those who ordered them and at least one copy to each affiliated Common Room. Apologies for the delay.

LGBSoc

LGBSoc continue their good work and I continue to store their booze. Tuesdays are always fun (but can lead to a slightly blurry-eyed Wednesday morning!)

Office space again...

It looks like we're getting recycling facilities and marking out the accessible areas of the office so that there are no obstructions. This is a very good thing. We've tried different things over the year, and it looks like we've found the solution now.

Filing and re-filing

I'm sure nobody in Council is that interested in my filing, but I am. It took a couple of days but now every meeting that my predecessors have ever been to in the past 20 years has been filed chronologically in 20 lever arch folders. It really needed doing and now it is done. If you're interested in the history of the Committee for Student Health and Welfare then knock on my door and you can read to your heart's content.

Peer Support

As is one of my manifesto pledges I've been helping to get Peer Support in other colleges. Hopefully we'll see Peer Support in Queen's by the end of term.

MSN Welfare Officer support

Another manifesto pledge was to arrange MSN support for Welfare Officers. Unfortunately my computer keeps crashing, so if I disappear for 10 minutes then that's why. So far nobody has used to the service, but I'm sure they will in future. Remember folks, it's technical questions only- it's not a listening service!

Close Campsfield website

The Close Campsfield group have convinced me to write a website for them. If anyone is good at graphic design and wants to help out then please do, as I'm good at code but not very good at aesthetics.

Ellie Cumbo**V-P (Women)**

Since the end of last term, my work has been divided into the following sections:

Women's Finals Forums

These were a great success: the rooms were packed out in all but one case, and the tutors were inundated with positive comments from the women who attended. I have since been contacted by several students praising the idea, and others requesting a Law Forum, which I hope to arrange for Second or Third Week.

I did also receive some questions on why all-female sessions were necessary, and whether or not they were sexist. I have pointed out that, with 80% of tutors being male, there is no guarantee that female students have any pastoral or academic contact with a tutor of their own sex at present; the Women's Finals Forums are a way of overcoming this. In future years, as the gender disparity evens out, this sort of service will become less necessary, but their popularity this year, and the gratitude expressed by the students who attended, is in itself compelling proof of their current necessity.

Pro-Choice Campaign

The co-chairs, Women's Officers and Women's Campaign Co-Chairs have been working with me to prepare our strategy for defending the time limit this term. Our focus will be on dispelling the myths surrounding late abortion, confronting the poor reality of NHS provision and calling for more balanced media coverage of the issue. Council will hear more on this subject this term.

No Diet Day

Although founded in Oxfordshire, this international event has never been marked by Oxford University. Bex was saddened to learn of its existence after the date had passed last year, having done so much to highlight the problem of eating distress in Oxford. This year, we will be marking the day with a university-wide picnic, at which we hope to offer free champagne, fruit and ice cream; this is similar to the way in which the event is celebrated in Cambridge. A No Diet Day Calendar, featuring women from different University societies and communities, will be produced and sold to students so that the message about healthy, normal bodies will last all year.

Women's Network

During the last few years, Oxford has gained several new voices on women's issues and interests, in the form of OxWiP, the F-Word, FEST and the re-launch of the Wadham magazine Dorothy's Lip. I feel it is appropriate for the VP (Women), as elected representative of all female students, to create and manage a one-stop shop for students who may be interested in the work of all these societies. I am in discussion with representatives from all of them to create a Women's Network in order to do this, and to connect Women's Campaign more directly to its potential members too.

Ongoing projects

I am still waiting to hear from the University on the subject of the Student Parent list and the Finals Gap. I hope to work with Women's Officers to get better harassment codes implemented in more colleges, as has already happened through the MCR Women's Officer at Lincoln. I will keep Council informed of developments.

Oliver Russell**V-P (Graduates)**

Over the vacation I have continued to deal with graduate related case-work and have attended a very exciting meeting to change the job title of the head of the library services! On a more serious note the issue of Lexis Nexis subscription came up and was dealt with as described in the motion today. I have also been working on the International Students's Handbook and helping MCR Presidents' with their handover. MCR Pres Com are shortly to announce their Captain to lead them to victory over the evil JCR Pres Com in our sporting fixture and BBQ later this term.

The Post Graduate Assembly is due to meet on Wednesday of 3rd Week (tbc) and we will be discussing such issues as our affiliation to the National Postraduate Committee, the shape of our student contracts for graduate students, the introduction of merit awards for MSt and any other issues members would like to raise.

My apologies again for the complexity of my constitutional motion on the table today but it seemed the only way to fulfil my mandate from the last Council.

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

The main events of the Easter holiday have been the Target Schools Regional Conference. Belfast this year had a fairly low attendance due to a postal strike in Belfast when the mailing was sent out. These kind of problems are difficult to predict and more difficult to remedy, but it may be that co-chairs start to ring schools half way through Hilary to secure more bookings. The schools that did attend were happy with the conference, and it was notable that most of the schools attending came from schools outside of Belfast, so hopefully we were reaching those students who would not have otherwise thought of Oxford. A big thanks to Rob for organising the Belfast conference.

Derry and Enniskillen were both a great success. The host schools were happy with the days, despite some communication problems with Thornhill College in Derry. These are the events which I feel Target Schools is best placed to organise, as they reach those students outside of the obvious areas that Oxford would seek to recruit. The students in Derry very much enjoyed their day, as did those in Enniskillen and hope these two venues will continue to be visited by Target Schools in the future. A big thanks to Amy for organising the conference in Enniskillen and to David for organising the conference in Derry.

Norwich was also a success. There were some communication issues with certain schools, but we had a good group of students. The school we held the event in were helpful, but we would hope to hold the event in a more closed hall next year. The success of this event in Norwich I hope will mean that we continue to visit Norwich s Target Schools. It was significantly better attended than most regional conferences in England that Target Schools has held in the past and I hope this will make an impact on those deciding the venues for next year. A big thanks to Jess for organising the conference in Norwich.

Other work has focused around casework, the student contract, and admissions reform. All of these areas are ongoing, and will be best placed to report on in the next fortnightly report, although feel free to ask me any questions on any of these issues.

Hannah Stoddart

V-P (Charities and Community)

HEACF Funding

HEFCE has announced that HEACF funding will continue at current levels, subject to approval by the University's Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC), which met on 18th April. I am still awaiting a report of the outcome of the meeting, though I'm confident that funding for the post of VP CnC will be continued.

Community and Volunteering

I have been continuing efforts to create links between the University and local groups. A number of new volunteering opportunities were created over the holidays, as documented on www.oxfordgetinvolved.org. I have also managed to establish a network of Community reps in colleges who will meet at least 4 times a term to share ideas about expanding volunteering opportunities and community involvement.

I have contacted local Councillors about increasing student involvement, and about establishing surgeries, or termly meetings between Councillors and students held at OUSU. There has been a relatively positive response.

Charities/RAG

RAG week will be taking place this term, with a number of events planned, such as International Beats at Po Na Na, a Uni wide game of Assassin, Mr and Miss Oxford, Open Mic sessions and more.

We also have Oxovision planned for this term, as well as a Bungee Jump and Jailbreak.

Environment

I have managed to get recycling in place in OUSU, and have been in touch with the Carbon Trust about how to initiate energy efficiency measures.

Re. Green Electricity: a paper was written to submit to University Council when the contract comes up for renewal again. They have renewed the contract for 4 months, but the paper makes the case for renewing it for much longer.

Environment Committee will be hosting World Environment Day as part of Oxford Get Involved week.

Oxford Get Involved week.

This week will take place in 7th week this term. It aims to get students involved in community and volunteering, as well as generally engaging in groups and campaigns and taking action. We will produce flyers which people can fill in to pledge a certain number of volunteering/action hours, and we aim to reach 1000 pledged hours by the end of the week.

