

OUSU

reports to council

1st week trinity term 2010

Stefan Baskerville

President

OUSU

I met with Jonny and Hannah to assist with the planning of the Teaching Review and the structure of the focus groups. I ran training in negotiation, which was attended by around eight common room presidents – more of these coming up this term if there is demand for them. I attended the practice run of the Teaching Review focus group – Jonny and Hannah have been putting a lot of time into this and I have an inkling its going to pay off. It's fantastic to see so much enthusiasm from common room reps for engaging with the Review.

University

I attended and spoke at General Purposes Committee, which agreed the governance side of the changes introduced by Urgent Challenges. I attended and spoke at Joint Teaching and Student Funding Review Group, where I spoke for our preferred policy option and argued against variability in fees at the point of entry into higher education. I attended the Joint Committee of Council with Student Members.

I attended a meeting of the OUSU Exec with the Proctors. I assisted Jonny and Malcolm in preparing for the meeting of Budget Sub-Committee at which the OUSU budget was scrutinised. I did not attend 9th week University Council as I was on leave. Jonny and Sarah did attend, and this was the final hurdle for Urgent Challenges.

Urgent Challenges

It is excellent news for students that the University agreed to fund OUSU through a block grant. This will allow us to concentrate on delivering for students, and to plan our development to better meet student need and represent student interests. This also paves the way to press ahead with incorporation and charitable registration this term and over the summer.

Governance

I worked on the Memorandum and Articles, liaising with the University and OUSU's lawyers. Thanks to those of you who read and commented on them – your concerns/comments were passed on to the lawyers, who have answered or acted on them. More information about the M&A, and a revised draft, will be circulated shortly.

Strategic Review Group

This took up significant amounts of time both at the end of Hilary term and throughout the vacation, into first week of Trinity. We met six times during that period for about three hours at a time, and then three of us spent most of a weekend writing the report. It is still a little rough around the edges, but I hope it is in sufficient shape for you to read and feedback on the ideas contained within it.

NUS

See the separate summary of Conference from the OUSU delegation. In short, Conference was three days long, covered a wide range of issues in debate, passed policy, and elected the new National Executive Committee including the new President Aaron Porter and five Vice-Presidents.

I think that attending Conference is very valuable experience, and it's a great shame that owing to the way we do things, I only attended for the first time just two months prior to handing over. I think it would be very useful for an incoming president-elect to attend, and this is a recommendation of the Strategic Review Group.

The sabbatical team also spent a day with our NUS regional organiser, who assisted us with planning handover – we now have a fairly detailed timetable covering all the bases.

Miscellaneous

I organised a training session for society presidents held by Procter and Gamble, in which I was ably assisted by Jack Matthews (who also went to the session, which I was unable to attend). Reports back said it was useful. I was on leave for a fortnight. I met with the sabbatical team to discuss how we can best make available information about our positions to students, so they can make an informed choice about whether they are interested in running in the elections in Michaelmas.

I was interviewed on the BBC news channel as part of their focus on Oxford East, in which I was asked what we wanted from the next government. I said we wanted a commitment to higher education and to investment in HE, and I pointed to the importance of higher education in building and then safeguarding our future economy. I was interviewed by a journalist from Le Temps (a Swiss national newspaper) – have yet to see the article though apparently it's in French, so at best I will get a basic picture of what he says!

Kat Wall

V-P (Women)

Springboard for Undergraduates

- The pilot for this Springboard programme took place in 0th Week
- I took a paper to Senior Tutors Committee to get support for continuing the programme in future years and the project received very warm support
- This week, Estates Bursars Committee are considering whether to give financial support to the programme.
- I'll let you know how it went in 3rd week!

Women in Politics Open Day

- On 20th March, I ran the second ever Women in Politics Open Day for 30 female sixth form students.
- We ran a workshop for them about All-Women Shortlists and organised a panel discussion about women in politics with female role models, as well as giving them a tour around the city.
- The feedback was incredibly positive: many of the students saying we had changed their perceptions of Oxford and that they now wanted to apply.

Women in Science Open Day

- On 12th March, I ran (with Lorna Stevenson) from the Physics Department) the first ever Women in Science Open Day for 50 female sixth form students.
- Different departments across the MPLS division ran workshops where the girls got the chance to experiment in the labs, try out theories and practice skills. We also organised a panel discussion of three current women in science who acted as role models for the girls. Someone from the Admissions Office also gave an access talk – a 'how to apply' guide to Oxford.
- Again, the feedback was really positive and the girls were really grateful for being given the opportunity to come to Oxford for this kind of event.

Finals Forums

- At the end of last term I organised and ran 11 female-only finals forums in subjects from Physics to Philosophy, Modern Languages to Maths.
- Turnout was variable from 0-over70 students attending. The time of day when you organise these seems to hugely affect turnout.
- The feedback was that they were generally incredibly useful.

Representation

- Gender Equality Scheme Steering Group
This committee looks at the Gender Equality Scheme which sets the Universities agenda for work to create greater equality here at Oxford both at the staff and student levels.

- Gender Panel
This committee looks at the Finals Gap. At this meeting we were reviewing the finals gap which exists at Oxford in 6 subjects and the gaps at other universities in the Russell Group.
- Athena Swann Working Group
The University is applying for the Athena Swann Bronze Award which is an award given to departments/institutions who are shown to meet certain criteria for gender equality. Zoology is applying for a Silver award and Physics is applying for a Project Juno Award.

Women's Campaign

- This term the Women's Campaign are focusing on Women and Politics. We are organising a hust for Monday of 2nd Week with the parliamentary candidates for Oxford East and will be asking what the candidates are willing to do to improve gender equality in our society.
- We will also be running hust training for women who want to run for positions in their Common Rooms or societies.
- We will be inviting women in politics to come and talk to us

Gender Equality Report

- My main project this term will be writing the Gender Equality Report
- The contents of this will be:
 - o Introduction
 - o Student Numbers
 - o Staff Numbers
 - o Admissions
 - o Academics
 - o Welfare
 - o Common Rooms
 - o OUSU
 - o Clubs and Societies
 - o Oxford City
 - o UK
 - o International
 - o What the University is doing
 - o What common rooms/colleges are doing
 - o What OUSU is doing
 - o References

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Dani Quinn Opportunities) | V-P | (Welfare | & | Equal |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|

Hello Council,

Welcome, or welcome back – I hope you had restful holidays.

If any of you are interested in being a VP (Welfare and Equal Opps) in the future, please do come speak to me! If you haven't thought about it...do! It's a wonderful, albeit challenging, job and I recommend it highly.

As always, get in touch with questions – welfare@ousu.org.

Love,
Dani x

Equal Opportunities Campaigns

Campaign for Student with Disabilities: I hope you've seen our campaign posters up in your College, library, department... If you haven't, please contact me on welfare@ousu.org so I can pidge a few to you. It's an

important message, as misconceptions about disabilities are a serious barrier. We had a really positive response to the most recent post in Stefan's weekly email, so we will be holding our first campaign meeting in the very near future. I will be disseminating details through all the usual channels. If you want to join the campaign mailing-list, just drop me an email: the campaign is for all students who experience disabilities, from mobility problems to dyslexia to mental health difficulties.

Campaign for Cultural and Racial Awareness and Equality: Held their awesome conference on Saturday of 0th Week. Big congratulations to Amy Duffuor and Sitara Thobani for organizing such an innovative and successful event. This term the focus is likely to be development of an Ethnic Diversity Handbook.

LGBTQ Campaign: Thrillingly, as the result of collaboration with LGBTsoc, there will be seven delegates going to NUS LGBT Conference. This is a first for student representation, and a very exciting opportunity. Elections will be held at LGBT drinks at St Hilda's, Tuesday of 1st Week.

Student Advice Service

The number of cases is more manageable right now than it has been for a while, although students are approaching us with increasingly complex problems.

I've written a draft of SAS policy for the team to use – it's been problematic not to have guidelines, with regard to treating students fairly, and also when it comes to making difficult decisions. Assuming the team can agree to a set of policies (it's a sensitive area!), I hope it will be helpful for the next team as well as this one.

I'm meeting with Stefan and Malcolm this week to discuss opportunities to marginally increase Lisa's hours (to 16 hours per week, as opposed to 15).

Training and workshops

I/we have many planned for this term:

- LGBTQ Sexual Health (training)
- Student Support (training)
- Supporting a Friend (workshop)
- Chaining Meetings (workshop)
- Freshers' Week (training)

Representation

We have representation on the Race Equality Steering Group – whaay! If anyone is interested in making a bid to be on the Working Group or Steering Group, contact me or Leyla Okhai (race.equality@ousu.org).

There was another meeting of the SpLD Working Group. This is still in the early stages, so no recommendations are being considered yet, other than to make it easier for students to be tested (at long last).

Ongoing Projects

These are all projects I'm working on at the moment – updates will be appearing through the term.

LGBT students and sport

Harassment booklet

Chinese Nightline

Buddying Scheme for students with Aspergers (for next Freshers' Week)

Campaign to encourage students to run for sabbatical positions

OUSU

The Strategic Review Report was very time-consuming Please do read it, and let us know what you think! strategicreview@ousu.org.

I will be leaving a week early, as my training with Teach First starts on the 27th of June (Sunday of 10th Week). This is obviously frustrating. I have started aspects of handover with Tom already, so hopefully it won't cause too many problems.

Sarah Hutchinson

V-P (Graduates)

Since the last council I've had a mixture of periods of losts of meetings, and some nice clear patches where I've been able to catch up on things and start preparing for handover. Below are a few of the highlights of the last couple of months

University Committees

University Council at the end of last term was obviously very exciting because we came out of it with the assurance of a block grant. But we also managed to secure an increase in university graduate accommodation from next academic year, and I am hopeful that the way this is allocated will be altered in line with our policy. It's worth noting that at one point it looked as if a decision on this would be delayed so that consultation could happen as there were concerns about staff transit accommodation – being able to point to OUSU's policy on graduate accommodation was incredibly helpful and I believed swayed the decision to pass the policy at that meeting. So, thanks!

On Monday I attended the Social Sciences Divisional Board's Graduate Studies Committee. This was the first time a student has been allowed to go and I went in my capacity as the Graduate Divisional Board rep. It was very useful to feed in concerns about DPhil Fee Liabilty (more of which later) and the need to consult with students in their project on Postgraduate Research student Progression – I would urge Divisional Board reps to use the opportunity to attend these or teaching committee meetings and Jonny and I will always be happy to go through the agenda with you if you want to know more about what's going on across the University.

I also attended Conference of Colleges' Quality Assurance Working Group, which was finalising the wording to be used on their guidance to colleges on a variety of issues relating to both undergraduate and postgraduate provision. Jonny had provided extensive feedback on the undergraduate recommendations, which were considered and included. The main changes I proposed (and were included) were that reports should be reviewed termly by the college and any concerns flagged should be followed up as appropriate. I hope this will help the colleges provide support earlier to students who may be struggling and I hope will strengthen trust in the online reporting system as colleges become more vigilant in demonstrating that they have paid attention to reports.

Education Committee – the main issue I want to raise from the last meeting is the Proctors' reports which highlighted a few graduate issues and made some recommendations. These included a tightening of transfer and confirmation deadlines so that students are better aware of the deadlines and problems are more directly addressed when students fail to meet these. They also raised their concerns about plagiarism, particularly where this arises from misunderstanding or differences in rules between Oxford and previous Universities. We recently sent around a link to the Univesrity's online plagiarism course and I'd recommend anyone who is concerned about this to have a look at the course,

Other committees I've attended include the Gender Equality Steering Group, the University Council away-day. Curators of the University Libraries.

Other meetings

I've had some very fruitful meetings with a number of new MCR Presidents and other reps over the last few weeks, and I'm very happy to meet with anyone else who wants to know more about what we do for graduate students – and I'd love to come along to more common room meetings this term. One thing that has emerged from some of these meetings is that there is interest in taking part in graduate access work – encouraging students to carry on into postgraduate education. Somerville MCR in particular have just elected

their first access officer and we are meeting the Graduate Admissions Team just before council so I'll provide an aural update.

Deeksha, Xiaowei and I met with Anne Jacobs from the Student Information and Advisory Service who are working on the University's response to their new duties under the Points Based Immigration System. We discussed how to communicate student and university responsibilities to students and have been consulted on this since the meeting. This is an issue that will increase in prominence as more students hold the new visas and we are working with the University to ensure that the appropriate information reaches them. In the meantime if you or any other student is having a problem with this do put them in touch with me at graduates@ousu.org.

I attended the Maths and Physical Life Sciences Division induction for graduate students which was a kind of information-speed-dating event – I gave the same 'what OUSU does' talk 5 times in an hour. It would be great to increase our involvement in this type of work and I'm also please to see DPhil students being given full inductions.

Last term I worked with the Race Equality Unit to hold an assertiveness training session for graduates, with a particular focus on managing their relationship with their supervisor. This was very successful and I am working with the Unit to hold more sessions over the summer and next term, including sessions for international undergraduates. I also spoke to the chair of the University Skills group, which is responsible for overseeing skills provision for research students about this issue and they will be recommending that information about managing the supervisor relationship and about sources of support for students struggling with this will be included in their pilot divisional inductions next term.

I've also met with the Head of International Strategy to discuss how best the university and colleges can support international students, and we will be meeting her again this week along with JCR Presidents and International Reps. We met with Student Information to discuss the best way to collect survey data on student experiences, and Dani, Dai and worked together to make some recommendations on grad welfare for a paper that is being worked on by the University at present.

Other activities

The main things I'm working on at the moment is the consultation submission on DPhil 4th year fee liability – around 70 students have responded to the consultation paper we sent around a couple of weeks ago and I will be working on a response over the next few days. Initial response to the proposal has been negative and I will be bringing policy to the next council about this, as well as hopefully meeting with graduate students to start discussing how supervision can be better supported by the university.

I have now closed the graduate survey: apologies for the mistake in the estimated time it would take to submit (I forgot to change the email) and for the problems students experienced with the question about service experiences. I will be collating the results over the next few weeks and these will be fed back to students.

I have also reworked the graduate information in the Freshers' Guide and I hope it will be useful for incoming students, and I have prepared some documents to go on the graduate section of the OUSU website which will be up as soon as I work out how to get it on there. I've also been working with mature students to advise the university on how to improve the information college and the university website provide to them. Finally Jonny and I met with the officer overseeing the Review of the Humanities Division to discuss ways in which student can be involved – it was a helpful meeting and I am confident that, unlike the Review of the Social Sciences Division, information about student experiences will be reported by students themselves rather than academic and administrative staff.

Jonny Medland

V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

Hi everyone,

Hope you all had a lovely vac. As we head into Trinity Term activity at OUSU continues unabated with lots of work coming up on the university's teaching review, the government's review of higher education funding and much more besides. Anyway - onto what I've been up to since the end of week 6 last term. It's been quite busy.

Access

The Alternative Prospectus has now been finished, proofread, corrected and been sent to the printers. It looks amazing and is definitely the most detailed and best Alternative Prospectus of any UK university. Massive thanks to everyone who contributed (and there a lot of you) but particularly to Imogen Richardson, our Publications & Media Co-Ordinator, who made it all happen and to Chris Baranuik who designed it. It will be on our website shortly and will be distributed to UK schools and given out at access events for the next 2 years.

I went to an aspiration day at Mulberry City Academy in Tower Hamlets with an academic from Pembroke and a representative from Cambridge and spoke to kids from local schools about Oxford. It went down very well even though I had to do a mock interview on 90 seconds notice. I just about survived.

With Xiaowei (our International Students' Officer), Martha MacKenzie and the now-former Assessor we spent 2 hours going through applications for the Reach Oxford scholarship scheme for international undergraduate applicants from economically developing countries. This was a really rewarding morning in week 8 which led to us identifying 3 truly incredibly applicants who have now been passed to colleges for consideration. Thanks to St. John's, St. Catz and Balliol for agreeing to take scholars.

I did a presentation to admissions staff in Little Clarendon Street on OUSU's work with access, how it is developing and how it might improve in future years.

I went to the London regional conference (which was amazing - 2,500 students at the Emirates stadium was an incredible experience). Sadly I was ill for the Cardiff regional conference but also went to a school in Worcestershire where I talked to about 25 kids about why they should think about applying to Oxford. All this access work was a very welcome break from the usual mad pace of term.

Common Room Support

A lot of this is included under 'teaching review' and I've spent a lot of time meeting with Common Room officers about this. I've also met new academic and access reps to continue introducing new officers to what we do and how I can work with them. The teaching review is going to be the main project for CR support this term although we ran training in running focus groups in the weekend of 0th week which will also be applicable to academic feedback sessions. This training will be repeated later this term for incoming reps. I also met the Corpus JCR President with Dani to discuss student welfare and structures in colleges which can improve it.

I produced and promoted a survey on student representation in colleges. The results of this survey have either been produced by the time you're reading this or will be in the next few days. A copy will go to Conference of Colleges for them to note and hopefully take action on as well. I've also consulted with numerous common room reps on the draft Memorandum & Articles of Association for OUSU.

General OUSU Stuff

The Strategic Review has been very big and the draft report has been circulated with the papers for this meeting of Council. Since the last Council we conducted an OUSU reps focus group, continued taking submissions to the group from individuals and met for several hours on multiple occasions to work on our recommendations and assess the survey, focus group data and written submissions which we received. Many thanks to everyone who participated in the Strategic Review in any way - it's a vital exercise to start the process of coming up with a Strategic Plan for OUSU through which the organisation can keep improving over a sustained period of years. **Please do keep emailing us your thoughts with what you think is good and less good about the report (strategicreview@ousu.org).** We want to hear your thoughts on the proposals before those which need to come to Council for approval do so - this is a consultative process on the future of your Student Union and hearing feedback on the proposals is very important to us. Thanks also to Dani & Stefan for a delightful weekend in Dani's conservatory where we wrote up the report.

I have been to 4 meetings of the OUSU Exec and 2 meetings of OSSL Board where we've been considering reducing costs associated with our publications and future arrangements for the Oxford and Cambridge Careers Handbook. Before the meeting of Council which approved 'Urgent Challenges' I did a lot of work preparing for this and have since continued working with Stefan on how the Conference of Colleges will interact with the new arrangements and on future governance arrangements. These have included multiple conversations with the lawyers we are using on what options are in terms of incorporation as a company prior to us registering as an independent charity. As a result of these I now have a working understanding of various incarnations of the Companies Act and 2006 Charities Act. Lucky lucky me.

With the rest of the sabb team I spent a day with Mel Lonsdale, regional organiser for the NUS planning handover. Mel is awesome, has helped us a lot this year and handover should be a lot better as a result.

Meetings with University Officials

- Outgoing Proctors and Assessor (week 7 last term). The whole Exec met with the Proctors and Assessor to talk to them about issues including exam provision for students with SpLDs and their time in office. Last year's Proctors and Assessor were all genuine allies of student interests in virtually all areas including equality and diversity, student welfare and reforming disciplinary procedures. They were very good to work with and this meeting was useful in terms of hearing their reflections after a year in post.
- Richard Hughes, Head of Education Policy Support, to go through the Education Committee agenda before the week 8 meeting.
- The Vice-Chancellor before 9th week Council to go through the agenda. The meeting focused primarily on the funding environment and the proposals for future funding of OUSU which were coming to this meeting. We lobbied quite effectively, I feel.
- Met an academic at Balliol who has extensive experience of welfare within the university. The meeting was mainly designed to help develop Dani Quinn's and my thinking on these issues and was very helpful.
- Met the Year Abroad staff in the Modern Languages faculty to discuss improving provision for students going on a year abroad.
- Stephen Goss, Director of the Learning Institute to talk about the structure of our response to the Teaching Review and the specific questions which we are asking in focus groups. He correctly described it as a 'very large social science project'.
- Met Gill Turner at the Learning Institute for similar reasons.
- Met Heather Bell, Director of International Strategy to talk about improving the experience of undergraduate international students. The workstream on this is kicking into gear in earnest soon with a meeting of JCR reps for Friday of week 1.

- Judith Finch, Planning and Resource Allocation Section to talk about the review of the Humanities Division. It'll now be looking at student representation in the Division, opportunities for graduates to teach and the coordination of joint honours undergraduate courses.
- Richard Hughes, Head of Education Policy Support to talk about what's coming up this term including the university's review of complaints & appeals and our response to the teaching review.
- Met with a range of university officials to discuss the future arrangements between an independent OUSU and the university.
- Met Jared Hutchings in Student Information to discuss a more co-ordinated framework for student surveys within the university.
- Met the Chair of Senior Tutors' Committee to discuss quality assurance arrangements in colleges. More important than it sounds and there are increased chances to improve feedback from students, tutor training and other key areas as a result.

Miscellaneous

- Back Yourself 2010 has been a phenomenal success with hundreds of finalists backing themselves at the 10 mixed gender finals forums which OUSU organised. These took place in Politics, Classics, Biochemistry, History, Theology, Modern Languages, Law, Economics, English and Geography. If you haven't had one yet then that's because no academic in your department has been willing to run one. Physics is coming later this term - so far we've averaged about 35 finalists per finals forum which is awesome.
- Dani Quinn and I did a presentation on what OUSU does to the MPLS Divisional Board. This was similar to the one we did for University Council and went down very well...we're embedding our work increasingly in the Divisions and we had a long discussion with the Board, particularly on issues of international student welfare.
- I met with Rebecca Williams, head of an Oxford Student consultancy group who had done a project on the Access Office with her team. This meeting was very interesting - the report her team had put together was in some places very critical of the Access Office (structurally, not in terms of personnel) and made me think about how best we could interact with them and how Target Schools could best be structured.
- I went to a presentation on the i-Graduate survey data which shows a lot of interesting news about how students experience Oxford. More on this later this term.
- Met Alex Bulfin a couple of times to discuss handover and what he wants out of it.
- We've finally got to 50% on the National Student Survey! Thanks for all your help in promoting it!

Student Advice Service

Still a lot happening, still confidential so not much I can say about it. One thing to note is that I was asked by the university to put together anonymised examples of students we have seen for issues around failing prelims/resits. I did this and submitted it but it's an example of the value which the university places on this Service and the extent to which they recognise that it should be asked to contribute to thinking around problems which students face.

Teaching Review

This gets its own heading as it is so big. As you all should know the university is reviewing its teaching model as a result of the worsening financial environment. This review so far consists of the university sifting a lot of data to see who teaches students, in what formats they are being taught (e.g tutorials, classes...) and what subjects they are doing. It seems to have little to do with student experiences of teaching. In week 7 last term we met 8 JCR Presidents to discuss the Teaching Review and work on plans for focus groups in each of the Academic Divisions (there are 4) in as many colleges as possible in weeks 1 and 2 of this term. These focus groups are looking at the student experience of teaching and in week 3 we're producing a report based on the focus groups and quantitative survey data which has already been collated by the university. This report will be going

to the university, Divisions and the Conference of Colleges later this term for initial consideration with a view towards shifting the review so that the teaching model reflects both what students are getting out of teaching and, more importantly, what they want from it. So far as I know the university has not reviewed its teaching model in this way before and this is definitely one of the biggest consultative exercise which OUSU has been involved in for several years. It's really quite exciting. Email me for more information - it's too late for more Common Rooms to get involved but there is definitely a lot of work to be done on this for the next year to 18 months so there's scope for a lot of students to get involved. This has taken Hannah & myself a huge amount of time between designing questions, training for Common Rooms, reporting templates for Common Rooms and organising the sessions themselves but it's definitely worth doing given its importance.

University Committees

- Joint Committee with Student Members: This was mainly looking at decisions made to this point on 'Urgent Challenges'. Last time we met PRAC had agreed the proposals with more details to follow later in this report (although Stefan may get there first). JCCSM basically discussed where we had got to in the process. We also looked at OUSU's quarter 2 financial year figures for the 09/10 year and had more discussions about OSSL.
- Curators of the University Libraries: Business for this meeting was fairly light and mainly focused on where cuts to the libraries would fall. Without going into too much detail the main point for students is that we successfully argued for preservation of existing opening hours for departmental and university libraries - the university recognises the importance of library provision so I'm hopeful that this argument will continue to be successful.
- PRAC: This met in week 8 where we were primarily looking at the university's capital projects (i.e plans for buildings). The commitment to move us out of Thomas Hull House was reiterated and the bulk of time was spent on what the priorities of each of the four Divisions are and how these can be accommodated given the lack of funding available.
- PRAC Budget Sub-Committee: I appeared before the committee with our General Manager, Chair of JCCSM and the Director of Student Administration & Services. Our appearance was to justify the 2010/11 Budget which you approved in week 3 last term and the discussion mainly centred on the structure of our costs. The committee appreciated the need to move us out of our building and also understood that the increase in our permanent staff costs largely reflected decisions by the university that we should have more staff to support OUSU's work. PRAC BSC has now agreed that we should receive the full £407k which we requested in our budget from the university.
- Education Committee: We looked at a range of issues in week 8 including the Review of the Social Sciences Division, proposed new ways of treating students accused of plagiarism and reports from the Proctors & Assessor as they left office.
- University Council: This met in week 9 and among other things agreed future funding of OUSU. Stefan will go into this in more detail but I presented the decision of 4 of the main committees of Council which had agreed the proposals. Council approved these without any dissent although the issue has also been referred to Conference of Colleges to determine whether colleges wish to contribute £90k towards OUSU's budget. If they do not the university will pay. This discussion will continue this term but it can't be overstated how important a development the awarding of a block grant to OUSU is. Rather than lurching from crisis to crisis we can now plan properly for a period of years without charging Common Rooms for services which they should be all getting anyway. Other items discussed at this meeting included a report from the Socially Responsible Investment Committee and a report on the Equality & Diversity Unit.
- Council Away-Day: This took place in week 9 as well. The focus of the meeting (over 5 hours at St. Hugh's) was on higher education funding and various options for the Browne Review to consider. I can't say much more than that but it was a fascinating and informative meeting which featured a lot of creative thinking by some very talented academics.

- AdEx Working Group on information provided by colleges: This was the second and final meeting of the group and agreed a new framework for colleges providing information including greater information on costs for first year students, storage space for international students, information targeted at mature students and the possibility of an exemption from the reallocation framework for students with physical difficulties. All in all very valuable stuff.
- PRAC (again): The 10th week meeting took an initial look at the university's draft response to phase II of the Browne Review and at the review of the Social Sciences Division where I reiterated the fact that if 4th year fees are charged to DPhil students then this must be done in conjunction with improving submission rates and DPhil completion levels.
- Standing Committee of Senior Tutors' Committee: To remind the committee about my paper on peer marking as a means of improving student understanding of marking criteria from last term. It was warmly received.
- PRAC (again): Largely considered proposals from SPRIG, including the Teaching Review, and the university's response to the Browne Review.
- College complaints & appeals working group: The last meeting of this group. We agreed new guidelines to colleges on handling student complaints & appeals and a template within which they can work. More on this later this term but this workstream should massively improve current arrangements and help colleges treat students better.
- Gender Equality Scheme Steering Group: Reviewed the new Gender Equality Scheme and received updates on promoting gender equality from various bits of the university.
- Admissions Executive: Considered a range of options including complaints arising from the 09/10 admissions round and policy changes in areas including contextual data, the admissions timetable and information provided to applicants.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Eorann Lean Community) | V-P | (Charities | & |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|

E & E Pledge

I've been working with the environment and ethics committee on their pledge for National and local election candidates. There was a survey to find out student policy priorities. Oxford East candidates will be asked to sign up to the pledge at the Oxhub husts on Thursday (Saskatchewan Room, Exeter college, 6:30-8pm). Others will be asked at another hust or through personal communication.

SRI

Can't tell you much but the committee is meeting again in 3rd week and if you have any comments springing from Oxstu and Cherwell articles they would like me to report to the committee just email me.

RAG Exec

We have now elected an awesome new exec and the term ahead is full of exciting events! Woo!

RAG Charities

The new exec and myself have decided to change the RAG voting so that charities are elected at the beginning of Trinity term so that the charities we are going to support are known over the summer so events such as the ball can be better organised. It has been decided to keep the charities we have on until a new vote in Trinity 2011. So look forward to some standing order change motions coming to a council soon!

E & E Exec

We have also elected a fabulous new E and E exec though our lovely chair Mae stays until she leaves us for here year abroad next year

E & E Fairtrade Stash Calendar

E&E and I are working on a naked calendar – I'd rather go naked than wear sweatshop stash! We are looking for teams, societies, committees who have stash to sign up saying they will always buy fairtrade stash and for 12 of them to become a month. So sign up and bear all!

PART TIME OFFICERS

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Hannah Cusworth | Academic Affairs Campaign Officer |
|------------------------|--|

Hello Council,

I hope you all had lovely vacs and that your collections weren't too rubbish. Since we last spoke it seems as though quite a lot has gone on. Most of what I've been up to fits into the categories of Teaching Review, Back Yourself 2010, Browne Review and planning.

Teaching Review

For a detailed summary of what's been going on see Jonny's report. I'll just quickly recount some of the highlights- met with around 8 JCR presidents to talk to them about getting involved with the Teaching Review and how they wanted it to be conducted. I took notes and baked cakes for the meetings. From that Jonny and I went away and revised the questions for the sessions and ran a practice session. We also visited the Oxford Learning Institute to get advice and books on how to go about conducting good focus groups.

By the time you're reading this we would have run two training sessions and the first sessions may have even taken place. The next time we see each other we will be in the middle of turning all of the notes from the 40ish sessions into a report we can take to the university; I might look a bit hysterical.

Back Yourself 2010

Did a lot of room booking for a lot of Finals Forums- I can't remember exactly how many there were but on average one a day for 2 weeks. There are more this term so keep letting your finalists know. The turnout was shocking, sometimes there weren't even enough chairs in the room. I introduced quite a few of the sessions letting the finalists know a bit about what OUSU can do for them during their finals and encouraging them to back themselves.

Browne Review

Read a lot of the submissions that are up on the website of the independent review. Tried to get to grips with various alternatives to the current system, to variable fees and to the catastrophic idea of charging the real rate of interest on student loans. Looking forward to focusing on this a bit more once Teaching Review has calmed down.

Planning

When I ran for this job I didn't really know what it entailed and so my manifesto was a bit vague. Over Hilary I got a better sense of what the priorities are and then Teaching Review came along so they all got put to one side. Over the vac I spent a bit of time with Jonny and Alex planning. Projects still to come include- working with JCRS to get study buddy systems in colleges, peer marking and a review of policy for students who miss work due to illness.

Hannah Cusworth

Academic Affairs
academicaffairs@ousu.org

Jack Matthews**Common Room Support Officer**

Hi Council

Hope you had a good Easter and that geological events didn't prevent you from getting back to Oxford.

Not much happening since last council, the main things are as follows:

- Met the Regional Business team from Santander to discuss creating a bespoke bank account for Oxford Student Societies. All seems to be going well
- Met with Marketing Director at Oxford Bus Company to discuss getting a student discount, meeting went well and we are working together to find a solution.

This term despite exams in 5th week I will be working on the following:

- Finally finishing of the Sky TV Campaign
- Expanding CRiS
- Writing a document for common rooms on compliance with Charities Act
- Arranging training for Common Room treasurers

If you have had any changes to your committee, please do let me know so I can update the maillist and as always, we would love to come and visit your common rooms to explain what OUSU is doing for your students.

Jack Matthews
commonrooms@ousu.org

Jasper Minton-Taylor**LGBTQ Officer**

At the beginning of this term I have been arranging elections for the NUS annual LGBT conference which takes place 7-9 May in Liverpool. Between them LGBTQ Campaign and LGBT soc have six spaces, for which people are running Tuesday 27 April. I am running and hope to attend the conference, and a feedback session will follow later in the term.

Due to the stresses of trinity term for both first and third years, we are limiting events to a sexual health training session provided by Terrence Higgins Trust, hopefully in 3rd week, and just one meeting with the Common Room LGBTQ Officers to discuss best practice (as opposed to two). Dani and I, as well as other reps, are keen on setting up a LGBTQ and Sports working group and we have yet to hear responses. Email me (lgbtqofficer@ousu.org) or Dani (welfare@ousu.org) for information.

I am also meeting with Imogen, OUSU's publicity officer, to design a poster containing details of all LGBTQ societies and support in Oxford ready for freshers to see on LGBTQ and welfare noticeboards in colleges in Michaelmas. The poster will resemble the one for Queer History Month which was generally thought of as effective.