

Reports to Council

1st week council tt12

Martha Mackenzie

President

Evening Council,

I hope you had a lovely Easter break and are looking forward to, what will soon be, a sunny Trinity Term!

NUS Conference

Apologies for being absent from OUSU Council today, I am attending NUS Conference along with our six delegates. We have done a significant amount of preparation and will be speaking to the motions that you passed through Conference in 7th Week. I will also be speaking against a motion that equates Oxford Colleges with BPP, wrongly categorising them as private providers.

I will give a report to Council in Third Week about the main events of Conference and how the delegates voted.

NUS ‘Come Clean’ Lobby

On **Wednesday 18th April** I took ten students down to Parliament to lobby Andrew Smith (MP for Oxford East) and Nicola Blackwood (MP for Oxford West) as part of the NUS ‘Come Clean’ lobby, which Council voted to support last term. Oscar Lee, Basil Vincent, Sophia Nayak, Lois Sage, Tom Rutland, Ben Anher, Louie Dane, Tallulah Andrews, Abdossalam Madkhali, and I lobbied both MPs on the government’s plans to plug the gap left by the scrapping of Aim Higher; frustrating changes to the visa restrictions; the lack of postgraduate funding and postgraduate policy; and the effect of core and margin restrictions. Both Andrew and Nicola were extremely responsive and have agreed to follow up on the topics we discussed. Andrew has already asked the House of Commons library to start a research project into national postgraduate funding opportunities.

Early Release Campaign

The Letting Agents’ ‘summit’ took place in 9th Week of Trinity Term. The Agents discussed our proposals and sent back their thoughts, the idea of a later release was not dismissed and we will hopefully be meeting with the Agents in May to finalise the remaining proposals.

OUSU Funding

In 9th Week of Trinity Term I gave a presentation on OUSU’s activities. to Conference of Colleges, a body comprised of all the different Heads of House in Oxford. This presentation was accompanied by our second annual request for funding from the Colleges. The presentation went down well and the request for funding was happily received.

As I have mentioned to you before, last term OUSU made a request to the University for extra funding and this request was turned down. I am writing a letter to the University in response to this decision, questioning their reasoning. I’ll be releasing the details of this letter at some point in the next couple of weeks.

The first draft of the OUSU budget for 2012-2013 is being present to Council this week. This draft has been approved by the OUSU Finance Committee and worked on extensively by the Budget Committee, it will be presented for a formal vote next week. Rob Noble, Budget Committee's representative on Finance Committee will be introducing the budget along with OUSU's Chief Executive, Brona O'Toole.

Graduate Rent and Committee Representation

Towards the end of last term Jim and I began negotiations over the rent charged by the University Accommodation Office (centralised graduate accommodation). We argued successfully for a below inflation rent increase, necessary to correct the large and unexpected rent increase in 2011 and the increasing financial pressures facing graduate students. Jim and I also managed to secure representation on the Property Management Sub-Committee, that Committee that the Accommodation Office reports to and where the graduate rents are set. This is the first time students have been represented on this committee and will significantly increase the OUSU's support and provision for graduate students.

Careers Guide- Design Work

We have started the design work on the Oxford Guide to Careers and have just appointed a new designer who is currently putting together some design concepts. We are hosting a Focus Group to explore these concepts on **Friday (27th April)** at 3pm in OUSU. There will be a lot of free pizza (and exciting designs) so if you're interested in coming just drop me an email.

Miss Representation Screening

Finally, I have been helping to organise the Miss Representation screening, taking place **this Saturday (28th April) at 2pm**. The screening should be a really great event and it is running in conjunction with the 'Lead for Equality' launch, a campaign to take steps towards political equality. Tickets are £4 and the screening starts at 2pm, email misrepresentation@ousu.org for more information. There will be stalls from a number of different campaigns on show so come along and have a browse after the screening.

I have also attended two General Purposes Committees, the University Council Away Day, the first University Council of term, and the Springboard for Undergraduates Launch. We are also doing some work on OUSU's Mission, Vision, and Values statement that will be coming to Council in 5th Week.

Have a great week, as ever please do not hesitate to get in touch, just drop me an email at president@ousu.org.

Martha x

Yuan Yang

VP (Women)

Jim O'Connell

VP (Graduates)

Hi Council,

Since we last met a number of good things have happened. In particular, I spent 3 weeks of the vac in New Zealand, which was great. I'll go through progress on the major issues you'll hopefully be familiar with by now:

Funding

You'll remember last Council coincided with the announcement of the Ertegun Scholarships, a gift in excess of US\$50m to endow graduate scholarships in the Humanities. Off the back of this, I encouraged grads to email me with their expressions of thanks and exhortations to the University to do more - I got 600 responses over the course of a few hours.

The PGR Provision Review Report, like the UG and PGT Reports before it, will prove I hope to be a useful tool in OUSU's lobbying and University policy-making.

University Accommodation

The Accommodation Office continues to be a source of much work for both Martha and I. We were however successful last term in convincing the University to only raise rents in University Accommodation by an average of 3.85% (a figure representing the mean of current and expected inflation). The Accommodation Office had prepared two other scenarios where rent went up by roughly 5% and 6%, so we got the best deal available. As part of the settlement, the VP (Graduates) will now sit on the University's Property Management sub-Committee, which has oversight of the Accommodation Office.

Other Stuff

Martha and I have been working with Richard Jackson, OUSU's Legal Trustee, on the next phase of the by-laws/governing documents clean up - which is a rewrite of the Election Regulations. Those of you contemplating running for office next term (you know who you are and it's nothing to be ashamed of) may want to pay attention. Whilst it seems like we are forever rewriting the Election Regulations, we're aiming for a thorough tidy up to get one user-friendly document. Unless there Council has recently expressed a clear opinion on a particular issue the other way, I feel we should try to liberalise and simplify as much as possible - the general idea should be that no-one is afraid to try anything because it might break the rules.

I also had the great pleasure of perhaps the most interesting Common Room visit I've done at the end of last term. Martha and I went out to Rippon College Cuddesdon, which is an Anglican Theological College that is not technically part of the University but does admit matriculated students to read for Theology degrees of different kinds. It is a really interesting community, and we had a great time as a guest of Joshua Rey, the Common Room President.

An ANZAC Day-inspired something to close -

Ka hinga atu he tete-kura ka hara mai he tete-kura

As one fern frond dies, one is born to take its place.

Sebastian Baird

VP (Welfare & Equal Opportunities)

Hi Council,

I hope you're all well. The sabbatical officers at OUSU towers are gearing up for a climactic final term in office. The offices are frantic with the buzz of inspiration and change.

I had a lovely holiday in the USA, but otherwise I have been busy winning for students over the vacation and the start of term. Here's a summary of the work that I've been doing over the last couple of months.

Mind Your Head Campaign

- MYH Week is now substantively organised. We've split the week roughly in half: the first half is more practical workshops addressing subjects like mindfulness and sleep/insomnia; the second half is looking at raising awareness of mental wellbeing and mental illness, with films and talks including Nic Marks (from TED!) and author/psychiatric nurse Dennis O'Donnell
- There will also be mental health awareness events going on in a number of colleges, which we are helping to co-ordinate - including at Linacre, St Anne's MCR, Kellogg and Pembroke JCR.
- I have been writing a paper about the foundation of the campaign so far, which I'm hoping to submit to the Association of University and College Counsellors Journal, and which can be adapted into an annual report.

DPhil supervision project

- Jim and I have been working on a project with the Director of the Department of Education, Prof. Ingrid Lunt. Prof. Lunt runs sessions within the department that are designed to give students the skillset needed to manage their relationship with their supervisor. Jim and I are working to develop these sessions to a broader audience, and will be running a trial later this term, with a view to making it a major part of our provision to graduate students in the future.

Student Advice Service

- I have continued to work with users of the service directly in my role as a caseworker on the Student Advice Service.
- There's also been a decent amount of organisational work going on - we're continuing the Service's policy project, and should have refurbished confidentiality, complaints and equal opportunities policies by the end of the year.
- We're also still looking at developing our internal information resources so that there is more continuity in terms of year-on-year knowledge than there was before.

Training

- I have organised Mental Health First Aid Training for a group of JCR and MCR Welfare Officers and Junior Deans, which was well received. I am looking to organise another session towards the end of this term.
- I am planning an Equality & Diversity Training with Leyla Okhai, the Race, Religion and Belief Advisor at the Equality and Diversity Unit - it will take place in 4th week.

SWD Guide

- I am close to securing funding for the SWD Guide, which means that the project will finally be under way! I'll be spending a significant amount of time this term planning and writing the guide.

Hannah Cusworth	VP (Access & Academic Affairs)
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Hiya Council,

Since we last met I've mostly been here and there. I've been to New York to meet alumni and talk to them about what current undergraduate life is like, spent a week in a school in Peckham observing lessons in preparation for starting Teach First and met the Queen with Yuan and Oliver Gleeson. As well as getting up to that over the vac, I've been focusing on a few things:

Access

Smarter Access Work

- **Access Guide-** Emily Cousens, OUSU's fantastic part-time Access Officer, and I have been working on a guide to Access for JCR officers. After a meeting last term where we spoke to several incoming JCR officers, and building on Emily's experience as Wadham's Access officer, we realised handover and starting the role was often a challenging time. Taylor, the OUSU publisher, is going to be designing it for us and we're just tidying up the text so it should be out around the middle of term. I'll keep you updated.
- **Bridging Provision-** at the last Education Committee meeting of last term we discussed Bridging Provision. It was decided that there wasn't enough consensus across the collegiate university to fully accept the all the recommendations. There were worries about the effectiveness of the residential aspect as well as concern about who would do the mentoring. OUSU pushed for the momentum not to be lost. So the recommendations, with all the feedback, are now being taken up to be worked on further by the university committees. Will keep you updated and potentially organise a meeting between interested JCR officers and the university.
- **Clubs and Socs-** this is an exciting new initiative for this term. Emily and I are putting together a pilot to get clubs and societies more involved in access work. The idea is. If you are involved in a society that has a general focus- i.e isn't a subject specific society or a national society- and you're interested in the pilot, contact access@ousu.org
- **Target Schools Shadowing Scheme-** I met with the new Head of Student Recruitment, Kat Murdoch, to see what her priorities are and how OUSU and Student Recruitment can work together. I also spoke to her about getting an updated list of target schools for next year's

Shadowing Scheme. This term I'll also be working with the Target School's committee to start planning for next year's scheme.

Taking the Access Fair forward

- Emily and I had meeting with Sinead Gallagher who is Oxford's Head of Widening Access to consider the options. One of Harriet's original intentions with the Access Fair was to engage an external audience with Oxford's access work. In planning a future event this is top of the 'what we want this event to achieve' list.

Lastly the new 2012-2014 Alternative Prospectus was delivered and is now up on the website for all to see. A big thank you to everyone who helped out, especially the people who provided student profiles and JCR presidents who wrote college profiles.

Academic Affairs

Funding, Feedback and Complaints and Appeals have been the on the top of the academic affairs agenda since we last met.

Funding- this falls under two categories- financial stability and allocating the new £9,000 undergraduate fee. Starting with the first, the University, led by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Planning and Resources is seeking to improve the financial stability of the university in light of the cuts to capital (buildings etc) funding from the government. In essence the aim is to make a yearly cash surplus that can then be used as a capital fund so that the university replace/replenish capital that has deteriorated or to create something new. So far discussions have centred around getting consensus that the University should be doing this; the inevitably more contentious aspect is how this cash surplus will be achieved...

Tied into this is that the University is developing it's 2013-2018 strategic plan. The University have been keen for me, Martha and Jim to be strongly involved in the development of the plan. We spent a day last week at an 'away-day' and pushed hard for things that students really care about to appear in the plan: funding, teaching quality, access and teaching opportunities.

The second is the subject of a motion that I'm bringing to today's Council so here I'll just mention that this has taken up a significant amount of my time, in terms of conversations and thinking about what strategy to pursue, and that I'm happy to answer any questions about it. In the near future I'll also be organising a group of undergraduates to be 'consulted' by the group.

Feedback- Alongside all the individual wins that I'm sure JCR presidents along with your Academic Affairs officers are achieving, the Conference of Colleges should soon be approving a requirement for colleges to take collections more seriously, especially how quickly they are returned and whether students know the criteria against which they are being assessed.

Complaints and Appeals- this piece of work is ongoing, as it has been for the last 2 years. Seb and I have been working on writing a paper from the Student Advice Service to take to the next meeting of the working group. One case we've been working on since September, especially Jim, has concluded and the student has got a positive outcome. They've also let us use their case to show why the system needs a radical overhaul because it's constantly letting students down.

Daniel Stone

VP (Charities & Community)

Dear Council,

As I'm responsible for taking up Council's time with the Student Hustings and a series of motions, I'll crack straight on with things... If you'd like to expand on anything written below or elsewhere please send me an email at charities@ousu.org

Community

The Student Community Wardens are now fully trained and begin work this week! I'll keep Council posted with their progress throughout term. A paper on the scheme is also set to go to the first Senior Tutor's Committee of term.

- The Student Husts preceded 1st week council as instructed. Hopefully everything went to plan... Please remember to vote next week and to encourage students in your Common Room to do the same.
- The Oxford Student Community Partnership met again at the end of last term and have drafted a Student Changeover Plan detailing projects and initiatives to better inform students around the time when they move out/into a rented house.
- As promised I have presented Council with a full review of the Safety Bus Service. The vote on the motion will be tabled on 3rd week to allow further comments to be submitted. If you would like to comment or discuss anything in the review please let me know.

Charity

This term Oxford RAG will begin collecting for Crisis Skylight Oxford, Helen and Douglas House, Jacari and the Against Malaria Foundation.

- As promised I have brought a report on the RAG Charity Elections to Council in order to make the cross-campus ballot a permanent fixture in our calendar.
- RAG have a number of exciting events lined up for this term including an outdoor film screening, a football tournament and a student bar night at No.9 on Wednesdays. Please do support these events if you can.

Environment and Ethics

The 'Ethical Careers Speaker Event' held at the end of last term, attracted around 200 students. I'm in talks with the Oxford Hub and Careers Service about making it bigger and better for next year. There's also an online resource on 'ethical' careers available at:

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/alumni/occupations/ethical-careers

- The end of year recycling scheme is in its final stages with a booklet in production and ready to go out in time for the end of the Oxford Brookes academic year.
- I've continued work with Environment and Ethics Reps and the University Sustainability Team to adopt College Sustainability policies. The draft policy will be circulated to Domestic Bursars this term.
- At the end of last term I organised an Environmental Forum to discuss ways to better engage students with sustainability issues. The forum brought up some really interesting ideas that we are going to try to implement in coming terms.

Living Wage

This term we will be hoping to build on the success of the Living Wage Forum to work with College Campaigns as they seek to convince bursars of the virtues of paying staff a Living Wage.

We also have another meeting confirmed with the Pro Vice Chancellor for Personnel and Equality who will provide us with an update of progress made in working with departments.

PART TIME OFFICERS

Emily Cousens

Access & Admissions Officer

Over the vac and last week, i have been working with Hannah on creating an OUSU handover guide.

This is a small booklet that contains useful info about the role of an Access officer, contact details and importantly facts about Oxford Access and Ideas for how to make the most of the role.

As Wadham Access Officer it is something that I feel would have been very useful; as the scope of the role can, for many colleges, be huge and understanding how to make the most of support and existing Access work both at the college level and across the university was something that was not clear to me. Hopefully this will go to print in the next week or so in time for trinity term handovers.

A second exciting project that Hannah and myself hope will be underway by the end of this term is involving the clubs and societies across Oxford in access by encouraging them to give workshops to visiting school students. We think that this will be a great way to give visitors a real idea of life at Oxford; beyond simply the buildings and Academic side. we have already had a positive response with a few societies keen to get involved and so hope to be meeting with them at the end of this week to get the ball rolling!

James Raynor

Common Room Support Officer

Good Afternoon Council,

On top of continuing involvement in the rent negotiations process I have just yesterday had a meeting with Conference of Colleges Legal Panel. The discussion was focused around the Charity Commissions decision to lower the threshold for becoming a charity from £100,000.00 turnover to £5,000.00. The implications for colleges will be noteable, and will need to be discussed. I intend to have those discussions with Exec, OUSU reps and Common Room Presidents over the coming term.

On top of these two projects I will be attempting to increase turnout at OUSU Reps meetings by making them based on formal hall; a good time to become an OUSU Rep!

Finally I will be assessing the Common Room Information System, and making a decision by the end of term as to its viability and how to improve it if the decision to keep it is made.

My best,

James

Oliver Gleeson

Community Outreach and Charities Officer

Good evening Council,

It is great to be back in Oxford and getting stuck in with activities for this term. I would like to quickly summarise my progress over the holidays before outlining some of the things I hope to achieve this term.

Over the Vac, I have been working on a Charity Reps Guide for Oxford RAG. The idea of this guide is to help college reps to understand exactly how RAG, OUSU and fundraising works so that they can work best as a team but also be most effective in their college. I had one session on Monday getting preliminary feedback from Reps and hope to get the guide printed and distributed by next week.

I have also been looking at how colleges elect their reps and also how much the charity levies are on college battels. If there are any JCR or MCR Presidents that would like to supply information about their college then please get in touch. I hope to assemble a comprehensive list so that we can have a better understanding of how much money is raised and what charities it supports.

A REMINDER - RAG Exec elections are being held on Monday of 2nd Week at 5pm in OUSU. There are still spaces on the committee and we are keen to find people with fresh ideas. It would be great if anyone interested drops me an email and I can give you more information!

Also, TONIGHT is the launch of 'BAR FTSE' which is a new night at No.9 in conjunction with RAG and Varsity Events. Best of all, it's FREE ENTRY! Please go along and support charity (as well as get ridiculously cheap drinks).

As always, my email address is communityandcharity@ousu.org and I urge anyone who wants to get involved to get in touch.

Oliver

Beth Hanson-Jones

Environment & Ethics Officer

Hi Everyone,

Hope you all had a good vacation. This week I attended Environment Panel along with Dan Stone, and I have also been working to organise an E&E Rep Pamoja, where all the E&E reps can get together to discuss their issues. This will be happening Friday of 2nd Week at Brasenose and will be followed by Formal.

As usual, any question then drop me an e-mail.

Beth H-J

Nick Cooper

Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

Evening Council,

I hope everyone is well-rested after the Easter vacation, and raring to go for the most exciting term of the three (exams notwithstanding.) But before Pimm's, punting and other various Ps, here is what I've been up to over Easter, and my plans for Trinity.

Before term ended, I sat on the University's Rules Committee, which deals with rules concerning foreign travel during term time, clubs and "trashing." While trashing after exams is never encouraged, I'm pleased to say that the rules remain unchanged from last year, with no attempts to increase the powers of the Proctors' Office with respect to stop and search powers, something attempted last year.

I spent Easter tearing through every College's complaints and appeals documents, to look for differences, similarities and possible improvements in both the procedures and how these are communicated to students. It's safe to say that things are on the whole pretty good - but there is still room for improvement, and I'm now going to work with Hannah to develop these findings and issue a short paper with some recommendations. People making complaints and appeals are usually in a really stressful or difficult time of their degree, if not even their life, and having a clear, fair and universal complaints and appeals procedure can really make this easier.

Other than this, I'm excited about running the second session for Common Room officers on what to do with Academic Feedback Session findings, and hope to spend the term looking into how AFS is proceeding around the university. If you have anything to offer on either complaints and appeals, or academic feedback sessions, please drop me an email - would love to hear from you! Till then, enjoy Trinity and its many delights.

Nick

David Butler

Rent and Accommodation Officer

As your Rent and Accommodation Officer, I have a number of priorities for the next term; firstly, my main focus will be on providing support to Common Room presidents in their rent negotiations this term.

Alongside the President and the Common Room Support Officer, I will be hosting a series of rent surgeries for Common Room presidents.

Secondly, I will be working with the VP Welfare & Equal Opportunities to update the Living Out Guide. The guide is over 2 years old and contains lots of out-of-date information. We are hoping to also draw upon the examples offer by Kent Union on content.

Finally, along with the President and our colleagues at Brookes SU, I will be continuing to fight for changes to the release date of student housing and to improve the City Council's accreditation scheme. In 0th week, I represented OUSU at the 11th Annual Accreditation Conference. This was a good opportunity to learn about best practice from across SU and Local Authorities.

Sarah Pine

Women's Campaign Officer

Over the vacation Li (the current chair of WomCam) and I attended the NUS women's conference (we gave our committee a full report on that so there's one about if anyone else wants to see it), which involved creating NUS Women's policy, workshops and discussions on feminist issues, an action planning for more effective campaigns. It gave us a lot of direction for the term.

I have been developing resources for the Love Your Body garden party as a result of the work at the conference.

Apart from that WomCam has written and approved three motions for to take to OUSU council (which will now be submitted for third week).

We have also begun planning for the term: we have a women's poetry event, the garden party and a Slutwalk planned.