

# Reports to Council

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

## **Sabbatical Officers**

### Louis Trup – President

Since the last OUSU council, there are things I have been doing:

- Doing governance things – going between lawyers, the university and others to get a draft of the new articles of association together. Please check out the AOB item about it and look through the articles if you get a chance.
- World peace – went with Anna to Myanmar (Burma) to speak to the government and student unions there.
- Voter registration – been working with Ruth and the University to find ways of integrating voter registration with annual student registration.
- Went to NUS conference. I wrote a whole report about it. Have a read.
- Working with the Head of Sport at the University regarding the big work that is going to be taking place at the Iffley Road Sports Centre. We want to reduce disruption but also make the new sports facilities awesome.
- Made a video for the upcoming sub fusc referenda.
- Went to the NUS to meet with people in their faith and belief department, the international students officer, their sustainability team (RE fossil fuel divestment support) and the president.
- Went to visit friends in Maidenhead.
- Met with the Chancellor who has pledged to ensure that in the next round of the nominating committee for the VC, there will be students on the panel.
- Helping Watford FC get promoted.
- Secured data on clubs and socs that I will be working on with Will, the clubs and socs officer.
- Pulling together responses from people standing in Oxford's wards for a kind of online hustings which respond to the OUSU general election manifesto.
- Trying to help the Oxford hub.
- Working on divestment.

### James Blythe – VP Access and Academic Affairs

Hi Council – it's been a while!

I'm going to do this report in three sections: stuff that I've been up to since seventh week; what's coming up this term; and a review of my manifesto.

### Vacation Happenings

I had two delightful weeks off in the vac, but when I was here, lots of stuff did happen, despite lots of students being away. The most interesting things were:

- Committees: University Council discussed divestment (to return on 18<sup>th</sup> May – be there or be square); PRAC is warming up to fund the remaining bit of the Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Fund (this should mean by the time I leave office OUSU's campaigning will have created a brand new, perpetual £200m fund for graduate scholarships!!).

- Up at the JR: I spent two fascinating days reviewing Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Surgery & Orthopaedics up at the hospital. They are all amazing departments doing incredibly important work, but I was very struck by how cut off the staff and students feel from the rest of the University. In a meeting with about 50 grad students up there, less than half visited their college more than once a term. Jack & I are planning to spend some time up at the JR next term to be more accessible to them, but it's going to be difficult to breach the communication gap of Headington Hill, I think!

### Trinity Happenings

- General Election: by far the most significant thing this term. The potential impact of policy changes in higher education could be very significant, and I'll need to gather student views fairly rapidly, depending on what happens and when.
- Reviews: more reviews this term: of the PPE course; of Blackfriars Hall and of Earth Sciences. Please tell me your thoughts: if there are any PPEists at Council (!) I'd really be grateful for your comments in particular as that review is going to be especially wide-ranging.
- Education Vision: this is on our agenda, but getting it noticed in the University is going to be a big thing this term.
- Teaching Awards: 28<sup>th</sup> May, the Weston Library, 6pm – be there.
- Target Schools: this term we'll be launching the Target Schools constitution, reviewing the list of schools we work with and connecting with a new evaluation tool called HEAT (the Higher Education Access Tracker). I'm going to prioritise supporting Target Schools this term and hope that they will be in a really strong position by the time I leave.

### My Manifesto

*These are the main points of my manifesto & where we are with them*

#### **Stronger academic representation**

This has gone really well. We have trained 149 reps and seen a huge improvement across the University in awareness of departmental reps. While this is an ongoing battle, this year has seen a vast step forward of which I am really proud, though of course Matt Tennant, the OUSU staff member who has supported this work, deserves 90% of the credit, and Tom Rutland the remaining 10% for securing the budget to hire Matt in the first place! But I get the political credit, which is nice.

#### **Access Summit**

This happened in Hilary rebranded as the Access Showcase. It didn't go that well but I have lots of ideas for how to improve it and I think my successor, Cat, is planning to run it again next year.

#### **Targeted plan for BME access**

We held the first ever BME shadowing day in Hilary, which was fantastic, we had about 25 kids here in partnership with the African Caribbean Society. This was a wonderful step forward and we need to keep up the effort in this area.

### **End the gender gap**

Er well I regret to say I haven't ended the gender gap. In fact, Anna Bradshaw has worked on this far more than I have this year, but I have raised gender gaps in senior appointments frequently in University committees and we are seeing some great progress in that particular area, for which I take no credit at all.

### **Increase the percentage of fee income spent on bursaries & access**

Tick: previous year's package represented 42.1%, this year's was 44.3%. I have, however, realized since I took office that the percentage is a bit of a red herring as the definition of access work has been broadened over time by OFFA, allowing the University to count more activity towards the percentage. So that increase doesn't really reflect a major increase in expenditure.

### **Additional support for Target Schools**

As I said above, the area I haven't done enough on and a major priority for Trinity.

Anna Bradshaw – VP Women

*Hi Council –*

*Lots going on these past few weeks as we get ready for the last term. Look out particularly for some great collaborative work I'm doing, including on the First Response App and Women's Garden Party. You can also see lots of the work I've been doing with Lindsay Lee (Disabled Students' Officer) in our funding motion.*

*As always please do feel free to ask me any questions you have. You can also get in touch with me by emailing [women@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:women@ousu.ox.ac.uk).*

*xAnna*

### **Sexual Health & Sexual Violence**

#### Free Periods (Pilot Scheme)

This is launching this week – yay! At the time of writing 25 common rooms (a mixture of JCRs and MCRs) have ordered sanitary products through the scheme.

The scheme provides pads, tampons, pantyliners and mooncups to common rooms at or below cost price (in the same way that we provide condoms and other welfare supplies now). For all pads, tampons and pantyliners OUSU is absorbing the 5% "luxury" tax that the government puts on these products. This will enable common rooms to cheaply source sustainable sanitary

products for their students, hopefully ensuring that that all students who menstruate have access to sanitary products that are affordable, and ideally free.

We are also providing a Period Match option where common rooms can match their order with a box of pads, pantyliners and tampons that OUSU will provide to homelessness services in Oxford.

The pilot scheme has had a couple of small hiccoughs (e.g. once we had most of the orders in it became clear that we would not be able to find a wholesaler that could provide enough non-applicator tampons...), but that's the point of a pilot.

*Supporting David's manifesto pledge and a motion that OUSU submitted to NUS Women's Conference*

### Consent Workshops

The evaluation and report on the workshops is going well. By Council time I should be done with the big documents of notes and data, ready to turn it into a student-facing report and a paper for University committees. The biggest piece of this recently has been inputting and analysing all of the data from the feedback forms that participants filled in at the end of the workshops. A few highlights from the data:

- Involved over 400 facilitators and over 3000 participants
- Ran in some form in every college which admits undergraduates, plus Regent's Park and St Benet's; Compulsory in two thirds
- Ran in 10 graduate common rooms, compulsory in four
- How helpful did you find the session?
  - 99% Slightly helpful / Helpful / Very helpful
  - 80% Helpful / Very Helpful
- I felt comfortable engaging with the session
  - 96% neutral / agree / strongly agree
  - 81% agree / strongly agree
- I can explain why sexual consent matters to a friend
  - 99.6% neutral / agree / strongly agree
  - 98% agree / strongly agree
- I feel it is important for people in my community to have a good understanding of sexual consent:
  - 99% neutral / agree / strongly agree
  - 98% agree / strongly agree

I've also started planning for Freshers' Week 2016, which is really exciting, and will be spending quite a lot of this term helping common rooms to move from optional to compulsory workshops, or introducing them at all. My aim is to help Lucy (my successor) to hit her aim of compulsory workshops in all JCRs, while also building towards a personal aim of having a workshop available to every graduate fresher. I am currently putting together a pack of materials to help common room officers, using lots of the data already collected.

The work that I've been doing with Lindsay for 'Sex, Relationships and Disability' is going well, though it was a little stalled due to illness and vacation time, and you can read lots more about it in our funding motion to this Council.

The work that I'm doing with the Thames Valley Police and Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre is continuing, with the main portion of my contribution coming up this term as I provide materials and help to other universities and colleges in the region.

*Manifesto pledge: 'I will ... expand and develop the programme ... [and] introduce compulsory freshers' workshops in 1/3 colleges by the beginning for next year.'*

#### Other Training

I have a couple of First Responder sessions booked in already, as well as a training session for Junior Deans on dealing with cases of sexual violence.

The Sexual Violence Incident and Resource leaflets are all done and beautiful, and will be pigged to common rooms this week. The Junior Dean flash card is also ready, and will be going out ahead of the training event in a couple of weeks.

*Related to manifesto pledges to do with 'actual first responders' and my focus on 'Sexual Health & Sexual Violence',*

#### Harassment Policies

I have spent a good amount of time over the vacation working on a template of the University Harassment Policy that is ready for adaptation by colleges. I'm currently waiting on sign-off from the University's Equality and Diversity Unit and then this will be available to common rooms.

*Related to manifesto pledges to do with 'actual first responders' and my focus on 'Sexual Health & Sexual Violence'.*

#### **Academic Attrition & Women in Leadership**

Most of the finals forums have taken place now, and this Monday is the first Masters Forum, which I'm running with Marina (Graduate Academic Affairs Officer). I'm also working with Emma (Social Sciences Divisional Board Rep) to host a forum for academic reps this Friday looking at the Gender Gap. The forum will include presentations from the EDU and OUSU on research and campaigning that is already being doing, and then give reps the chance to talk about actions that they might take to alleviate the gap.

The pilot Women's Mentoring Scheme received 64 applications, and we have accepted 44 women into the initial cohort. Slightly more of these are in the Community Stream than the Academic Stream, but this should even out because some of the Academic Stream undergraduates will be grouped with existing mentoring pairs in the OxFEST mentoring

scheme. I am working on guiding materials and training at the moment, as well as confirming the last of the mentors.

The Women's Leadership Development Programme is largely over, and preliminary reports have been sent off to the sponsors. A few highlights:

- Involved 38 women from 26 different colleges and PPHs, 18 Graduates and 20 Undergraduates
- 'Overall, I have found the training sessions interesting and helpful.' – 4.1 (average, where 1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree)
- 'Overall, I have found the family group sessions interesting and helpful.' – 4.3
- 'I am a more confident leader now than I was in January' – 3.9
- 'I expect to use things I learnt during the programme' – 4.5

The micro-programme run by Eden Tanner and Flora Kennedy (2000 Women Ambassadors at St John's College) is also over, and has been fully evaluated. A few highlights:

- 13 participants
- 'I feel more equipped to lead after completing the programme' – 100% agree or strongly agree
- 'I am more likely to volunteer for leadership opportunities after completing the programme' – 92% agree or strongly agree
- 'I have developed my understanding of the relationship between gender and leadership – 92% agree or strongly agree

Next week me, Ruth and James will be running two more of the Negotiation Training sessions that we ran last term. There are still some places on these. Ruth and I are also running a Public Speaking training session specifically for women, which sold out really quickly – we're looking at adding another date (or two!) at the moment.

*Manifesto pledge: 'I will work closely with the Graduate Women's Officer to hold events that encourage undergraduate women to consider further study, including open nights in STEM departments, and Ask a Grad events in colleges.'*

*Manifesto pledge: 'I will make the continuation and expansion of OUSU's Women's Leadership Development Programme a priority. I want to enable facilitators to run parallel events in colleges and departments...'*

## **Campaigns**

### WomCam

WomCam is gearing up to run some really great things this term, and because I have a slightly lighter event-load this term I'm hoping to be able to be at more of them, which will be great. Especially nice as this is the first thing that I got involved with in OUSU way back in Trinity of my 1<sup>st</sup> year <3

### It Happens Here

Some really great stuff there – especially with the biggest project, the First Response App. This project is a collaboration between It Happens Here and Code4Rights, and seeks to get women involved in coding an app that will really help women. We have been working with OSARCC to finalise all of the materials for this, and are working towards the first open feedback session, in a few weeks.

We're also starting to plan for sub fusc white ribbons, so keep an eye out for that ☺

### **Women's Garden Party**

This year I am conglomerating a couple of events that have happened in the past – the WomCam Love Your Body Garden Party and the Women's Societies Garden Party – into one bug lovely Women's Garden Party. I'm working with WomCam, It Happens Here, Women's Societies including OxFEST and Oxford Women in Business, as well as college Feminist Societies and Women's Officers. The event should be a really lovely family-friendly afternoon. See the motion to this Council for more information.

### **NUS Women's Conference**

In late March we sent three delegates (Lucy Delaney, Vice-President (Women)-elect, Aliya Yule (Women's Campaign Officer) and Rowan Davis (WomCam Trans Officer)) to NUS Women's Conference. You can ask them (and in particular Aliya) about how they voted, if you like, but the most important thing to say is that all three of the motions that we proposed passed. They were:

- Creating and Defending Closed Intersectional Spaces
- I Heart Intersectional Consent
- I Will... Lead in STEM

We also seconded a motion mandating the NUS Women's Campaign to lobby against the 5% 'luxury' tax on sanitary products.

### **Events and Committees**

- Finals Forum – St John's (23<sup>rd</sup> April)
- WomCam: Alternative Social Networking (27<sup>th</sup> April)
- + Myanmar (1<sup>st</sup> April – 10<sup>th</sup> April), speaking to politicians and student union leaders about education law, student unions and campaigning.

Jack Matthews – VP Graduates

Dear Council,

It's great to be back and making reports to you once more! Here's a round-up of what I've been working on since I was elected in 7<sup>th</sup> Week Hilary Term, and some of the issues on the horizon.

With all good wishes,

Jack J. Matthews  
Vice-President Graduates  
[vpgraduates@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:vpgraduates@ousu.ox.ac.uk)

### **Castle Mill and Student Accommodation**

Following the excellent work of the other Officers last term, I have continued work on this project. The Castle Mill development still has a number of regulatory hurdles to cross within the City Council, and I am liaising with the University on this. I am also fighting hard to ensure that any remediation work at Castle Mill is kept as inexpensive as possible, and that the cost of this work does not affect Graduate rents. Students should not bear the burden of resolving an issue they had no part in creating. Aside from Castle Mill, I have been having initial discussions with the University on future graduate accommodation developments, which have been most promising. Providing more graduate accommodation remains a top priority.

### **Student Consultation Benchmark**

Working with the VP Access and Academic Affairs, I have completed a piece of work on how the University, Departments, Colleges, and indeed OUSU, should consult students. This hopes to entrench best practice and ensure that student opinion is not only heard, but also acted upon. This will begin to go through the University Committee structures soon, and will also come to Council later this term.

### **Consultation on Sabbatical Officer Remits**

Working with other Sabbatical Officers I have been working on a Consultation throughout the Easter vacation to gauge student opinion on what the Sabbatical Team should look like. An initial proposal was then put to the Executive in 0<sup>th</sup> Week. Feedback from this meeting will go into a redrafted version before it is presented to 3<sup>rd</sup> Week Council, where we will be looking for guidance from Council and where you wish to proceed. I hope to have the draft proposal with Council members by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> Week, so they can fully consider the options.

### **Government Consultation on Postgraduate Taught Loans**

I am considering making an OUSU specific response to the Department for Business Innovation and Skills consultation on Postgraduate Taught Loans. If anyone has any initial thoughts, please do contact me.

### **International Students Festival**

I have been working closely with our Staff Team, the International Student Campaign, and the International Student Officer on our awesome International Students Festival, which we will be hosting later this term. It will be a grand celebration of everything International Students bring to our University and the wider community – and you're all invited. Final details to follow, but get excited!

### **Review of Graduate and International Data on Student Barometer**

The student barometer data set for 2014 has now been made available and I am working to review the results, and provide some initial analysis. My hope is to produce specific reports for course reps, Div Reps, and Common Rooms that will assist them in their campaigns. I am also working with a group of students to conduct a research project on the International Students data.

### **Common Rooms and the Law**

Following a few issues in a number of Common Rooms, I have been revising my knowledge of the law that affects Common Rooms. I shall be giving a briefing on this to all Common Room Presidents at the Joint Pres Com in 2<sup>nd</sup> Week. Should further resources be required, I am happy to put something together.

#### **Declaration of Interests and Gifts**

- I received a small gift bag, including a rather snazzy laser pointer, from the National University of Singapore Graduate Student Society, having addressed that group whilst in Oxford
- In my personal time, and in a personal capacity, I have been campaigning for the Conservative Party in the run up to the General Election. This includes campaigning in Oxford West and Abingdon.

#### Ruth Meredith – VP Charities and Community

Welcome back, Council!

Since I've last seen you, these have been the headlines:

> Ran the last session of *Make Change Happen*, and thoroughly evaluated it. Every participant said they found the course either useful or very useful, and **80%** of participants said it had made them a **better campaigner**.

> **St Hilda's college became an accredited Living Wage employer!** In the past year, the Living Wage campaign has supported students in 5 colleges accredit.

> A Fossil Fuel divestment decision from the University was **deferred**. After almost 2 years of campaigning, we thought we were there, but unfortunately not. This term, I'll be working with E&E to lobby harder than ever, and to organize a rally to make it clear to the University that they can't wait us out, and that we won't go away.

> RAG went to the boat race, and raised over £2,500 for SportsAid. We also confirmed all of our projects for this term, and inducted all of the committee. Maybe most excitingly, we offered someone the part-time job of RAG Co-ordinator, meaning from next year, **RAG will have dedicated staff support!**

> Louis and I have been talking frequently with the **Oxford Hub** after news of their funding shortfall. We've been working together to see how we can all best meet the needs of students, and ensure that no provision is lost.

> On Your Doorstep launched a petition addressed to Oxford City Council, over concerns about how new **Public Spaces Protection Order proposals** will affect vulnerably housed people in Oxford. The petition has nearly 69,000 signatures, and by the time you're reading this, we'll be in the process of meeting with every City Councillor.

> Ran **#pledgetoreg** to encourage students to register to vote. 783 students pledged to register to vote during the five days.

> I've been working with **Leonie** (E&E PTE) on a whole host of events around waste this term which I'm sure she'll fill you in on, and have provided (really) low-level support to a range of different projects including collections of **sanitary products** for homeless people with periods, for students interested in arranging **blood drives**, for **food bank** collections, British Heart Foundation **property collections** and various **general election hustings** and enquiries.

Please let me know if you have any questions, or if you want me to support you on a project!

Chris Pike – VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities

Hi Council, I hope you had a good Easter break, and best of luck to those of you taking exams this term. Here are some of the things I've been working on since we last met, in between going to Iceland (which everyone should go to it's amazing).

**Suspended status:** At the end of last term I held a Suspended Students Open Evening. This was with the aim of bringing more students who have experience of suspension themselves (or through their close friends) into the campaign.

The event was a success, a mailing list has been set up (which I encourage you to sign up to, just contact me!), and we hope this term to begin to work as an informal campaign on the issue.

**Sexual health:** The day before Council (which may be before or after you see this report!) is the STI Testing being run in conjunction with the NHS at St John's College. There will be free and accessible chlamydia and HIV tests as well as advice and information from the NHS and the Student Advice Service. And free condoms, lube, and refreshments!!

**NUS elections:** I have been preparing for both the OSDC and CRAE to hold elections to send delegates to the NUS Black and Disabled Students Conferences.

For the first time during my involvement in OUSU these will be full elections, open to all students in the respective liberation group to both vote and run in the election, ensuring more democracy in our delegates to liberation conferences.

**Alcohol awareness:** Working with Rita, the Graduate Welfare Officer, we will be organising a training on alcohol awareness for welfare reps and social secs so that they can better support students and look out for warning signs, particularly at socials and bops, but also generally in college life.

*And the most exciting announcement:*

**Mental Health Charter:** The Mental Health Charter was submitted to the Standing Committee of Senior Tutors Committee. I will be meeting with them to discuss any suggested changes and

it should be going to STC this term, beginning the process of instigating minimum standards on mental health support within colleges.

I have also met with the St John's MCR welfare reps, and I extend an offer to any welfare or equal opps common room rep, society leader, or anyone else to get in touch for any advice or support in your projects. I'm here to help.

In solidarity,

Chris

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

#### **Lindsay Lee – Disabled Students' Officer**

This term I'll be working on planning the disability and sexuality workshop planned for Michaelmas. I'm also working on a plan to encourage Oxford businesses to become more inclusive to disabled customers. The Oxford Students' Disability Community has a lot of great things planned for this term as well, so keep a look out for their term card!

#### **Marina Lambrakis – Graduate Academic Affairs Officer**

Hi Council!

Over the vac I've been doing a few bits & bobs - I ran a session for departmental & divisional reps in 8th week of Hilary on teaching opportunities for grads and I attended a follow-up committee meeting about graduate admissions. In terms of my pledge to address gender at postgrad level, I've been working with Anna to get Masters Forums off the ground - we hosted one at St John's on Monday of 1st week, and there will be another one later in the term (watch this space!). I've got a few other things cooking for the rest of the term - more to come next time!

Marina - [gradacaff@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:gradacaff@ousu.ox.ac.uk) :)

#### **Jenny Walker – LGBTQ Officer**

Over the vacation my main focus has been on planning elections and projects for the LGBTQ Campaign to focus on this term. We will hopefully elect a chair in the first meeting back. As part of this I have put together a working group which will focus on implementing the Good Night Out campaign in Oxford, working with Brookes and Ruskin and local venues; it met first in 8<sup>th</sup> week last term. There will also be a working group for trans policy and campaigning, and potentially working groups focusing on LGBTQ mental health and sexual health issues. Along these lines I am working with Emma Lewis and VP Women on a survey to gauge LGBTQ experiences of sexual healthcare in Oxford.

I am currently drafting a motion to propose OUSU create the position of Graduate LGBTQ

Officer, which I will hopefully bring to 3rd week council. Soon I'll be ordering some pride flags which can be lent out to colleges who do not have their own. I am also continuing to match colleges up in the LGBTQ Buddy scheme and helping reps out when they need it.

#### Aliya Yule – Womens' Campaign Officer

Over the vacation, the WomCam committee have been working hard to prepare Trinity's term card, which will be finalised at the end of 0<sup>th</sup> week. We have many different events lined up this term which remain committed to the principle that our campaigning must be intersectional.

In first week, we look forward to having elections for new members of the committee, and also hosting the first event of term which will revisit what feminism means to us as activists, as well as playing feminist games and meeting other activists.

We are looking forward to working with It Happens Here in 2<sup>nd</sup> week to develop the app which was first created on Anti-Violence Valentine's Day. We are also looking forward to inviting Lady Phyll Opuko, director of UK Black Pride, in 4<sup>th</sup> week, and we will hopefully be collaborating with Unity Week, which is being put on by 5 colleges to celebrate and interrogate equality and diversity in Oxford. I will also be working alongside the LGBTQ Officer and Campaign and CRAE to make this possible. We have lots of other events lined up throughout term, some of which will be led by our Working Groups.

Over the holiday, I attended NUS Women's Conference, alongside Rowan Davis, our Trans Officer, and Lucy Delaney, VP (Women)- elect. Conference was exhausting, but we learned a lot and met many amazing activists from all over the country. We successfully passed the three motions that we had submitted, which were about Women in Leadership in STEM, creating and defending closed intersectional spaces, and developing the I <3 consent workshops for people with disabilities and LGBTQ people. I met the NUS Women's Officer, Susuana, and was delighted to re-elect her. Rowan, Lucy and I took part in a number of workshops and interactive panels, and we look forward to bringing what we learned back to Oxford, and to the Women's Campaign (we also enjoyed the swimming pool / Jacuzzi – we are very committed to the principle of self-care).

In 0<sup>th</sup> week, I have also been to meetings to begin organising this term's Women's Garden Party, and looking into organising a Young Feminist Symposium. I look forward to collaborating with a number of different women's groups this term, both within the university and from the local community.

#### Minerva Lim – International Students' Officer

Hi Council! Since last term I've been busy trying to set up a network of International Student reps across the various colleges. In 7th week of Hilary I met with reps from 14 colleges across Oxford, and we now have a support group and communication channels through which we can better address the needs of international students. I have also been working on international student policy for the OUSU Policy Book, and have been expressing solidarity with the

challenges international students face by giving my comments to reporters from The Guardian Student and Oxford's very own Cherwell. Planning for the International Students' Festival is also underway so be sure to mark the date in your calendar - Saturday of 7th Week, venue is Bonn Square opposite Westgate Shopping Centre.

Rita Nissim – Graduate Welfare Officer

Hi OUSU Council!

Since I took up the role of Graduate Welfare Officer at the end of last term, I have got myself organised and prepared for a busy term ahead. This is where I am up to with the different projects I am involved in. There are a few more that are starting to shape up so I will update you once I have something more concrete.

- **Welfare Survey:** I have now gone over the results of the survey your previous Graduate Welfare Officer ran and I am in the process of summarising them into a report; I have started addressing one of the issues (see below).
- **Welfare Leaflet:** Given that one of the things that the survey showed was that information on the different welfare systems is not always as accessible to graduates as it could be, I have started compiling a welfare leaflet that will include all the different support mechanisms that are available.
- **First Responders:** This is the project I'll be working on with Anna (Bradshaw). So far, I have contacted the MCR Social Secs and Welfare Officers to find out which MCRs hold events such as bops, for which the OUSU First Responders Policy could be appropriate. Once I have responses from more colleges, we can start organising training sessions where needed.
- **Alcohol Awareness Training:** There has been a demand by common room Welfare Officers for alcohol awareness training (e.g. for people serving alcohol at bops). Chris (Pike) and I will both be meeting with representatives from Turning Point, a national health and social care provider, in first week to discuss the structure of the sessions we're aiming to develop.
- **HIV & Chlamydia testing:** There will be an OUSU HIV and Chlamydia testing at St. John's on Tuesday of first week. This has been mainly organised by Chris (Pike) and the St. John's Welfare Officers, whom I helped finalise details on the St. John's end.
- **LGBTQ+ Science Society:** Along with some MPLS students, we are going to be setting up a LGBTQ+ Science Society. We are having our first meeting in first week!

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

Rita

Nikhil Venkatesh – Black and Minority Ethnic Students Officer

Since the end of last term, I have:

- Drafted and publicised OUSU's response to the English Defence League's march in Oxford.
- Helped edit drafts of the OUSU General Election Manifesto.
- Continued to push voter registration.
- Arranged meetings with the Director of Undergraduate Admissions, the BME Staff Network and the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Diversity.
- Arranged to meet with Islamic Students Society to discuss how we can best combat Islamophobia on Oxford.

Henna Shah – Access and Admissions Officer

Hi Council,

I've had a busy and exciting start to term. After our great Target Schools on Tour session last term, I'm starting to extend it to colleges - our first session is in 2nd week. If any other colleges think it would be useful to have Target schools/me present about talking to young people about applications to Oxford, please get in touch. We are also doing some exciting BME based things - Nikhil and I are meeting Samina Khan, Director of Undergraduate Admissions about possible bias-training and other ways we can encourage applications from minority communities. As per usual, other things are happening in the background - alternative prospectuses are an area I really want to focus on this term, as is how we communicate in a social-media savvy way with potential applicants. If anyone would like to work on this/has any ideas please get in touch!

Henna  
xx

Julien Coyne – Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

This term I will assist the various other officers with the myriad academic-affairs-related projects happening in OUSU and elsewhere, as they need me. I'll continue to think about what I (or the person in this role generally) could do to make this mutual support and communication better facilitated (relatedly, I will be working more on the SharePoint site that I was helping the academic representation officer with last term). I'll also be looking for and having discussions with anyone interested in standing for this role after this term, as I will be graduating over the summer - and I would love for someone dedicated to take over from me.

Will Brown – Clubs and Societies Officer

The role has been relatively quiet out of term time.

Over the vacation, I received from the Clubs Committee an up-to-date record of all registered clubs and societies – something which we were previously lacking. This will provide a strong basis to move forward with establishing a comprehensive and lasting OUSU clubs and societies register/record. In the future, this will hopefully become available to students online –

as part of an overall drive to improve OUSU's online situation in the clubs and societies department.

Over this term, I'll be aiming to work with the Common Room Support Officer, Joe Reason, to extend this register to include college clubs and societies, especially those interested in getting involved with other clubs and societies from across the university. Alongside this, I hope to see a number of inter-society events hosted by a range of colleges.

#### David Parton – Health and Welfare Officer

I spent a large amount of time over the vac bringing together all the resources I had compiled on mental health services in Oxford, whilst sifting vast quantities of information into two documents: one on service provision, another smaller one on common mental health concerns and their symptoms. I will be meeting with the VP for Welfare and Equal Opportunities this week to further condense this information and to transform it into a leaflet format, with complimenting posters and an extended web page on issues not included in the leaflet or poster. I hope to have the leaflets/posters/web page ready and completed for 5th Week. I will also be meeting with Chris to discuss future plans for my position for the rest of term.

#### Zuleyka Shahin – Graduate Womens' Officer

I am excited for the new term ahead of us. This term I will be continuing my MCR tours, as well as my duties alongside VP Women and Women's Campaign Officer.

I am hoping to bring together a meeting of MCR reps once more this term, but decided against Week 0 because I am still liaising with colleges. The original spreadsheet I created that is to be filled by colleges is still looking a little empty so I may look into a different way of working. Feedback and general communication between the colleges and I is significantly better than when I started this role, but still not where I want it to be. I obviously get more feedback and work closely with some colleges more than others. The Facebook page is finally getting more posts and acts as a valuable space for communication.

I have recently been continuing to counsel several trans graduate women, especially on issues of housing and access to healthcare and am hoping that for the new incoming students in Michaelmas, we can lay solid groundwork this term to ensure trans students in the future will have a welcoming and comfortable arrival and initial experience at Oxford. I want to be sure the University is better equipped to deal with trans students who are admitted and be able to better understand their needs.

I continue to support queer women graduates and women of colour graduates. I have started to expand and develop links for graduate women going into the work place. During the vacation I started to make links with several firms and companies as well contacting several potential speakers. This will hopefully lead to a 'Graduate Women in Business and the Workplace' event later this term.

I am currently planning events, and am on a small board of students organizing for a group of queer spoken word artists who will be joining us from the U.S in June. As students themselves who successfully set up an arts company touring the U.S and the world with their work, and speaking on issues that affect a significant portion of graduate women, I am excited for this event to be taking place in Trinity. I had previously received several requests for graduate women for more queer arts.

As always, I remain open and willing to speak to any Graduate Women and continue my work as a point of contact to discuss issues.

#### Joe Reason – Common Room Support Officer

Hey council,

Hope that you have had a good start to term. Over the break, I have been working on collecting data on the officers in Common Rooms which OUSU and Common Room Officers can use to get in contact with people in relevant positions when needed. I will also be working with Grad PresCom more closely this term as the structure in which it works changes to what the Grad Presidents feel is most appropriate.

In second week, I will be attending Undergraduate and Graduate Joint PresCom and hosting the first meeting of term with the OUSU reps (expect more information soon if it hasn't already been out - date, time and location are still up in the air).

As always, any questions on this report, or how I can better support you, just send me an email ([commonrooms@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:commonrooms@ousu.ox.ac.uk))

Joe

#### **Divisional Board Representatives**

##### Hilary Chow – Social Sciences Graduate Rep

I will be leaving Oxford after this academic year, so current graduates who will be here for another year please consider running for my position in Trinity Term for the next academic year! Talk to me if you want to know more about what's involved in this role and everything else.

1. I have met with the Vice-President (access) to discuss what I have done and what I have been doing.
2. The last Divisional Board Meeting in Hilary has been cancelled by the Chair due to an insufficient amount of items to be discussed.
3. I have consulted course representatives, the LGBTQ Society and OUSU LGBTQ Campaign on the aforementioned Social Sciences Library lavatories issue.
4. I have responded to a request on a motion vote.
5. I have responded to a correspondence from Oxford Hub on their funding issue.
6. I have received some feedback from course representatives on libraries, to be

submitted to the Library Committee:

- Extending opening hours during the weekends
  - Extending opening hours during the holidays
  - More cafeterias and/or vending machines
7. The Teaching Audit and Graduate Studies Committees have recommended the introduction of the merit classification for master's courses.
  8. I have submitted a paper to the relevant committee on the lavatories in the Social Sciences Library.
  9. The Graduate Studies Committee has met on 27 April and discussed the following issues:
    - Presentation of new Academic Office WebLearn site.
    - Education Committee consultation – Transfer and Confirmation of Status assessments.
    - Consultation on an MPLS proposal to alter their fee waiver practices, with implications for Social Science departments with CDT students.
    - Consultation on revised procedure for dealing with cases of plagiarism.
    - Consultation on changing the fee liability for PGT programmes.
    - Common framework on support for disabled students – handbook.
    - Social Sciences Division PGT Quality Assurance Survey 2014 summary.
    - Teaching opportunities for graduate students.
    - Policy and guidance updates.
    - Postgraduate Taught Courses: on-course monitoring in the light of earlier concerns raised about a number of taught master's course.
    - Lowering workload for admission staff.

#### Julien Coyne – MPLS Undergraduate Rep

This term I'll be continuing to go to the requisite divisional meetings and keeping note of what's going on in the division. I will try to do this especially diligently, so that I can give a good summary of current issues in the division and potential projects to the person elected to be my successor, and help them well when handing over. I will also do what I can (have discussions with department reps, etc.) to make sure there is someone (and hopefully more than one person) running for this position for next year, and that they understand the role and its various commitments.

## **Returning Officer's Report on the VP Graduates By-Election**

### Date and time of the election:

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 at 08:00 until Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at 18:00

### Turnout:

139 votes were cast, which was a turnout of 1.4%

### Results:

Jack Matthews: 108

Re-Open Nominations: 30

Abstentions: 1

Jack Matthews (University College) was elected

### Voter Demographics:

Only graduates were eligible to vote

52 First Years (40%), 37 Second Years (28.5%), 18 Third Years (13.9%), 17 Fourth Years (13.1%), 6 Unknowns (4.6%)

79 Men (60.8%), 46 Women (35.4%), 5 Unknowns (3.8%)

### Report on the voting system:

I was pleased that the MSL system worked well, ensuring fairness and integrity in the election. There were no reports of voting difficulties and the fact that the vote required single sign-on was required did not seem to trouble voters, probably in part due to the advertising of the Communications Team. Although the turnout was disappointing, this was due in part to its nature as a by-election and the fact we only had one candidate, so that democracy was kept through the voting system is commendable.

### Report on hustings:

Four hustings took place, which were arranged a few weeks in advance, at St Antony's College, Kellogg College, St Cross College (Grad PresCom) and St John's College, the latter of which played host to the by-election's Central Hustings. The turnout at the first two was disappointing, with only one or two turning up, although they often asked a few questions so Jack was adequately held to account. For the hustings at Grad PresCom and St John's, the turnout was somewhat better with around a dozen and two dozen turning out respectively. Again, the lack of candidates made it difficult to engage enough voters into turning out, although those that did seemed to have plenty of questions, which was good. Additionally, the hustings ran smoothly and it was good to see that the Central Hustings were videoed and made available online.

### General Comments:

Whilst the headline figure at first glance appears extremely disappointing for a cross-campus election in which all graduates were able to vote, the lack of candidates and its nature as a by-

election meant that it was not as reported in the student press and there was not the usual hype one might find for well-contested Statutory Elections. It is no secret that graduate turnout in OUSU elections is low, some would say woefully low, so a low turnout in an uncontested by-election is not a large surprise. Therefore, I would of course encourage the new VP Graduates to engage with graduate students across Oxford with OUSU and look at ways of how we might mitigate the low turnout, and I am more than happy to work with him on this. I would commend the hard work of the Communications Team to publicise the election with the email that was sent out contributing to an increase in turnout. Therefore, the power of the email cannot be underestimated as although we should be careful not to spam voters, they are often the best tool of getting graduates who are 'out of the loop' with OUSU to vote. Moreover, I would strongly recommend the use of internet campaigning as a means of publicising the election with the use of Facebook and twitter seemingly having worked well, and would strongly recommend that a standard hashtag is used in the Michaelmas Statutory Elections and to include these within the directions that are used in the Nominations Packs. It is also notable that first year graduate engagement with OUSU is marginally higher than in other years, although I would advise caution at reading too far into this given the low sample size. I also found it difficult to properly engage graduates with the election given that I am not one myself and indeed only know a handful, most of whom are actively involved in OUSU. Whilst this is something that is difficult to rectify and I would certainly not therefore recommend that all future Returning Officers are graduates, the Returning Officer should perhaps have a better understanding themselves of what graduate life at Oxford entails, though this is in part what being a candidate in the by-election for Vice President (Graduates) meant. However, I believe that the administrative side of the election ran smoothly and the fact that the election was complaint-free is extremely pleasing. As ever, I am indebted to Ami (Democratic Support Officer) and would like to thank the Sabbatical Officers, OUSU's Communications Team, the Graduate Common Room Presidents who kindly offered to hold hustings in their colleges and everyone else who helped out in this election. I wish Jack, the new Vice President (Graduates), all the best in his four months in office.

Joseph Smith  
Somerville College  
OUSU Returning Officer  
Hilary Term 2015

## Report from OUSU's Delegates to the National Union of Students Conference

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This report seeks to give an impression of the way in which OUSU's delegates to NUS conference represented students and their thoughts from conference. It does not give information about every single decision made by delegates, but delegates will be happy to respond to specific questions about conference.

The OUSU delegation consisted of:

- Louis Trup (delegation leader, ex-officio)
- Rob Walmsley (delegate, elected MT 14)
- Annie Teriba (delegate, elected MT 14)
- Ella Richards (delegate, elected MT 14)
- Shana Caro (delegate, elected MT 14)
- Barnaby Raine (delegate, elected MT 14)
- Sarah Firestone (delegate, elected in council HT 15)
- Becky Howe (observer<sup>1</sup>, ex-officio)

### Motions

Prior to the conference, the OUSU delegation went through the OUSU policy book and marked which motions OUSU has policy on. Therefore, with motions such as 'Boycotting the National Student Survey' and 'Free Education', OUSU delegates all voted in line with OUSU's policy (against and for, respectively).

Other motions which have since attracted attention are motions 'Students not Suspects' and 'Trans\* officer'. The voting breakdown for OUSU's delegation was as follows:

'Students not Suspects':

- For – 6
- Against - 0
- Abstain – 1

This motion was not debated. It went straight to a vote due to a procedural motion to that effect.

'Trans\* Officer':

- For – 5
- Against – 0
- Abstain – 1
- Unable to vote – 1

This motion was voted on by secret ballot. There were concerns from many that the procedural motion to force the vote on this to be in the form of a secret ballot was an attempt to stop the leadership and others being accountable on their decision.

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<sup>1</sup> Observers can attend all parts of conference, but cannot vote on motions or in elections.

OUSU submitted one motion and two amendments to NUS conference. The motion entitled 'Unlock knowledge to free our education' was not debated at conference, but will be debated by the National Executive Committee of the NUS. Amendments to the Union Development zone priority motion 401a and 401b ('democratic student unions' and 'changing the Education Act'), which were submitted by OUSU, passed.

## **Elections**

Although elections for the President and Vice-Presidents are conducted by secret ballot, OUSU's delegation believed it best to share the breakdown of first preference votes from our delegation (the candidates in bold were elected):

### ***President***

**Megan Dunn** – 1  
Beth Redmond – 4  
RON – 1

### ***Vice President Higher Education***

Poppy Wilkinson – 2  
Hattie Craig – 3  
**Sorana Vieru** – 2  
RON - 0

### ***Vice President Welfare***

**Shelly Asquith** – 7  
Cat Turhan – 0  
RON – 0

### ***Vice President Union Development***

**Richard Brookes** – 2  
Abdi-aziz Suleiman – 5  
RON – 0

### ***Vice President Society and Citizenship***

Dario Celaschi – 3  
**Piers Telemaque** – 3  
RON – 1

There were also elections for Vice President Further Education, which OUSU's delegates could not vote in, as OUSU is a Higher Education affiliate to the NUS. Despite the lack of input from OUSU, Shakira Martin was elected. Although our view is irrelevant, all of OUSU's delegates were pleased by the result of this election.

Elections for the NUS's National Executive Committee took place as did elections for Democratic Procedures Committee and the NUS's Trustee Board. We do not yet know the results of these elections.

### **Recommendations**

OUSU's delegation felt that there was some notable issues with the conference and so have written these recommendations. These recommendations will be sent to NUS's Democratic Procedures Committee (DPC) who organise the conference so as to hopefully ensure improvements are made.

#### ***The Chair***

The chair could not stop delegates whooping or yelling into the microphone, which had implications on many people at the conference who have access requirements and also made for an unwelcoming atmosphere during debates. The chair should have greater power to sanction those who make the conference inaccessible in this way which would hopefully alleviate this problem.

#### ***Running of the conference***

The time-plan for the conference had only a limited number of access breaks, and breaks that were scheduled did not match up with meal times or prayer times for Muslim delegates. More careful consideration of the conference schedule, especially with regards to these concerns would make conference better.

The time allocated to certain zones of policy was not enough. This is why one of our motions was not discussed and why very important debates such as the debate around the Counter Terrorism Bill were prevented. Using the three days of conference more effectively or increasing the duration of conference could improve this.

#### ***Voting***

The ballot papers used were incorrect, difficult to use and there was not enough guidance about them such as the fact that they are needed throughout conference, not just for elections (for example in the case of a secret ballot).

#### ***Venue***

The gender neutral toilets at the venue were the disabled toilets which is bad practice in our opinion and should be changed. The cost of food at the venue was also too great and work should be done to find ways of providing cheaper food.

### **Recommendations for OUSU**

These are thoughts from delegates about the way OUSU engages in the conference.

#### ***Money***

Given the extortionate cost of food at the venue and the lack of cooking facilities, it is recommended that delegates and observers get given £10 a day for food (paid for by collecting receipts and claiming it back as expenses). This will make it easier for delegates and observers in the future and is currently done by a number of other student unions. This could be written into OUSU's budget for next year or could come from council's budget following a motion.

#### ***Motions***

OUSU should consider submitting motions to NUS conference throughout the year so that national issues relevant at any given time are not forgotten in the weeks just before conference when motions normally come to OUSU council.

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Louis Trup  
OUSU President (on behalf of OUSU's NUS delegation 2015)  
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