

Ruth Hunt

President

The last two weeks have been largely administrative. It began with the first meeting of term of OUSU reps committee under the wonderful care of Sarah Livermore (New), Julia Buckley (Ch Ch) and now Josh from Balliol who are there to attend to your every OUSU/Common Room need. I hope the guide is useful. Apologies to Mr Anderson for some of the blatant plagiarism but there is a lot of new stuff in there about how I view the relationship between OUSU reps and the sabs. I want you to be sceptical and questioning of what we do. In college, you will be regarded as the one who knows a lot about it, so ask as many questions as you want. Challenge us and tell us off if we are doing something wrong. I hope the posters are also useful as I have been to many common rooms and blank OUSU boards are quite depressing. If you want more/different posters, or ones that are more specific to campaigns and projects let me know.

I have also spent quite a bit of time on Diversity Week planning the march, the party and generally worrying in the vague hope that it will stop James worrying quite as much. No chance but still, its worth a try. Diversity week should be excellent and please, please, please come along to the events and stunts planned. Volunteers are always needed but it is going to be a great time. Much thanks to Rachel Logan for being cool and reminding me that certain plans and ideas are not cool.

Finance and Funding is also storming at the moment but there is still a lot of confusion about exactly what the changes will entail. If we pay graduate tax, we will pay approximately seven thousand pounds over twenty five years. If student loans are abolished and commercial loans are introduced, this means eight percent interest and immediate repayment. You will have to borrow enough to cover repayments. The tenuous grant to those with a joint parental income of less than nine thousand will not cover the interest rates. Helena, Daniel, Laura, Andrew and Julia are all putting in a lot of hours in order to disseminate this information. Let us know if you want us to explain this new system to your college. The poster should help, but not enough people read posters. The current plan is a wall of debt on Broad street, where we will try and encourage people to chalk up their debt so we can try and knock down the bullshit that suggests it is only around four thousand when we leave. Try fourteen thousand and we get a bit closer.

This is about all really, but I do just want to say thank you. I generally don't do this at the bottom of sab reports. No-one reads the reports anyway and the thanks are really for archive benefit but I want to thank St Hilda's. Its such a nice college and I miss being a full part of the community. The first years must think I'm a bit odd. OUSU president who only rocks up when she needs to run away. Sits in the JCR, drinks too much, smokes too much and can't co-ordinate a sentence. Add my supposed reputation (hm) and approach if you dare. It's quite tough and it is harder to establish an OUSU/common room relationship with you because you see a very different Ruth. But trust me, I work and care about you lot too, and I'm sorry that I'm not around more often. For those who know all this, and you know who you are, thank you. And trust me.

Eleanor Fletcher

V-P (Finance)

Another busy two weeks have seen quite a few developments to OUSU. The new website project is going ahead well. The launch is scheduled for Monday 5th Wk (11th February). This week Alex from Oncampusuk came down to Oxford to do training for Sabs and Exec: this went very well and everyone seems to be happy and excited by the project. I am currently very busy working of the design and the map of what the OUSU site will hold. I hope that a lot of the up-to-date info from the current site will be successfully transferred across and will be added to in time for the launch. The site at the launch however, will be nowhere near it's full potential and there is a great deal of OUSU information that can be added over time as well as the plans for further phases which will see us offering autonomous webpages to JCCs, Clubs & Socs and JCR/MCRs.

I have also been busy investigating student radio, as I was mandated to do by 3rd Wk Council. Unfortunately, I am not yet in a position to bring a report to Council so I withdrew the motion that was intended to introduce that. I have been in discussions with many people including the Junior Proctor, the Director of the University's Legal Services Department, Councillor Bob Hoyle as well as the students involved in now what they call Oxford Student Radio (OSR). It has become clear that some fairly major capital expenditure will be necessary. There has been some indication that the Oxford Student Radio

Trust may be able to cover some or all of that expense but I need to get full costings sorted before I formally approach them for funds.

All other areas of my job are much as ever. I hope to make some capital investment into new computers later this term. Along with the other sabs, a lot of my time has been taken up with the preparations for Diversity Week. The Business Manager secured some sponsorship which has meant that we could afford more posters as well as t-shirts for all our volunteers.

James Rowlands	V-P (Welfare)
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The last two weeks have been hugely hectic, with organisation for Diversity Week taking up most of my time, Thank you to all those who have been helping with various bits of the week, even if its not there job to do so, and I hope it all pays of. If anyone wants more information about the events please check out the website at www.ousu.org or get in touch by email on diversity@ousu.org. Events will be taking place all week and it would be good to see as many people at them as possible. A lot of work has been put into individual committee events, thanks to co-chairs and their Execs. Speaker on the Saturday to open the Diversity Fair include Kumar Murshid, the chair of the National Assembly Against Racism, Ally Harris from Stonewall, Anne Begg MP and someone from the local Council (tbc). If you know any organisations who want a stall to show of their wares please get in touch.

I have also been working on the sexual health strategy, including the submission of a bid to the local NHS via the Health Oxfordshire College and University Scheme for a comprehensive sexual health awareness event over coming terms. OUSU will now become the central distributor for free condoms to Oxford Colleges, making it easier for common room officers by sparing them the trek to Headington.

Holocaust Memorial Day was a success, and having two events (the vigil and service) ensured that while remembrance was a key theme, the importance of addressing issues or discrimination and prejudice was stressed. Given that Diversity Week is also focusing on theses themes, this should be an important term for putting equal opportunities on the agenda. On that note, the University is preparing to meet the implementation of the Race Relations Amendment Act and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act. This will have fairly huge repercussions, from admissions, to educational policy, access and services. Feedback on any of these issues would be welcomed and no doubt a motion will be brought to Council at some point.

University Committees continue to meet, talk and occasionally they prove to be useful. I am, as ever, devoted to a number of University and other officials who prove to be both nice and effective. Plans continue to be hatched on the format of the welfare training system, and I hope to link these up to a more holistic approach to welfare provision university wide. Casework just is.

The new web site will be great, and should allow us to have a comprehensive and easily update Student Advice Service section.

Antonia Bance	V-P (Women)
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I've been really busy, as anyone that has tried to arrange a meeting with me knows! This term I'm trying to meet as many CR Women's Officers (etc) as possible individually, and have found this a really productive means of communicating with them and giving OUSU a human face.

Women's Campaign is fabulous as usual – we've just elected some new co-chairs, Ros and Lesley-Anne, who are going to be great. The Women's Cabaret is finally shaping up with the help of the fantastic directors, Pippa and Francoise, who are supplying the artistic sense that I definitely lack. It'll be next THURSDAY in the JdP at Hilda's, and all proceeds will go to the Oxford Asian Women's Helpline, a local charity which does a really essential job, and deserves our support. The Cabaret has taken up lots of my time, as has general Diversity Week admin and organisation. I hope everyone likes the posters and the banner that will be on show at the Diversity March and Fair. This is an opportunity to show the world that Oxford University students are a diverse bunch of people – not all of an age, an ethnicity, a particular background or outlook – and to prove that we are part of our local community, however cut off from the real world this bubble sometimes seems. Everyone can identify with the themes of the week, and I expect a huge turnout for the Saturday Diversity Parade/March, Fair, and Fireworks at Merton Pavilion. Apathy is no excuse – in a world where religion, sexuality, nationality, race, disability status and gender are still grounds for persecution, we cannot afford to be complacent.

Finals Forums are coming along nicely: publicity for forums on Theology, History, Archaeology and Anthropology, Philosophy, Politics, Biology, Biochemistry, Psychology, French, Engineering, Maths and

Classics will be going out soon. I'm not going to list the dates and venues here – but email me for more information on women@ousu.org.

OUSU (Goldman Sachs) Nightbus - the service is expanding exponentially, and clubs and societies are beginning to hire the bus for matches and trips, which is bringing in a constant stream of very welcome extra revenue, as well as being a valuable service in itself that OUSU can provide. Admin for the service takes up as much of my time as ever. Remember – 07754 516172, Thurs, Fri, Sat nights 11-2am, £1 from and to anywhere within the ring road, open to male and female students.

Ethics Committee has a really exciting programme of events for the term. The main ones will be the presentation of the petition calling for ethical investment of the university's pension funds in 5th week, and the conference for bursars, CR/SU officers and activists about ethical fund management in 7th week. We need another co-chair, so please email me if you want to get involved or would like copies of the petition to pass around in your college.

I'm doing lots of work on safety in Oxford, which has involved liaising with the City Council about nightclub licensing hours, late night transport and city centre safety: this is absolutely fascinating and very relevant to students as major nightclub users and residents of the city centre, so I'll keep you posted with developments. I'm also looking into getting OUSU's own self defence classes up and running.

Another exciting project centres on the new Eating Distress support group mentioned in my emergency motion. I'd really like to get some co-ordinators involved, so if you're interested, please get in touch.

Other than that, I've been doing general OUSU stuff, casework, university committees, learning how to update our fabulous new website-to-be, and taking sabbatical responsibility for the Elections Review. Everyone always complains about the complexity of our regulations, so here's your chance to raise your opinion about them. All OUSU members are encouraged to attend - meetings are Fridays of even weeks, at 3.30pm in Corpus Christi Room 9.1. Next week we will be weeding the specific regulations, before moving on to look at stakeholder submissions, other student unions' and membership organisations' procedures and electronic polling in subsequent weeks. The draft report will be written over the Easter Vacation and submitted to Council in first week of next term.

My job is diffuse but very rewarding, and wouldn't be possible without the support of all the Nightbus volunteers, my co-chairs, executive officers, and the staff. Particular thanks to Eleanor Thompson, who is resigning as Women's Committee Co-Chair: Ellie is a superwoman without whom OUSU would not function half as well as it does. My sanity is due in no small part to my colleagues, to V&H, to Carli and to the divine Ms M.

Most of you know that I am a strong supporter both of effective national representation for students, and of NUS. When I started this job, I promised that my work in NUS would not interfere with what I do for OUSU, and that my priority would always be Oxford students. Getting a better deal for my students here at this university, and by extension all students, was the reason that I got involved in NUS in the first place. I was a fresher in '98, when fees were first introduced: NUS had abandoned me and abandoned its constituency by dropping its grants not fees policy. In 2002, NUS pays lip service to a financial support system that meets the needs of students, whilst ignoring the needs of JCRs, MCRs and SUs in Oxford and around the country. I think that it is time that we took back our national union, and made it serve the needs of our students. That is why I hope to be a candidate in the elections for the National Executive Committee of NUS for the academic year 2002-03, commencing after my sabbatical year has ended. As I have done all year, I will use my evenings, weekends and four days of annual leave during the Easter Vac rather than using OUSU time for national work. I hope I can count on your support.

Catherine Sangster

V-P (Graduates)

Since last Council, at which I reported verbally on my 1st week activities, things have been busy. As well as the usual meetings with exec, my graduate executive officers, and the sabs, I've been representing graduates at EPSC, the Committee on Diversity and Equal Opportunity, and the steering committee of the Graduate Committee (Conference of Colleges). I have had a private meeting with the acting chair of the Graduate Committee to discuss proposals for written agreements for graduates who teach. I've also met the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) to discuss various matters, and - along with Heidi Kurtz (graduate accommodation rep) and James - the University Accommodation Officer to talk about setting rent in graduate accommodation.

International Students Committee's plans for Tuesday of Diversity Week are gathering pace - they will hold a round table discussion, with pizza, on whether Oxford is truly an international university at 1 pm

in Wadham Old Refectory, and they also plan an elegant soiree, with international costumes, cocktails and comestibles on the same evening. My main contribution to OUSU's preparations for Diversity Week, apart from helping events and details of the participating groups can be viewed: visit www.ousu.org/diversity/. The remainder of my time has been taken up with casework, visiting MCRs, and - the undisputed highlight of my fortnight - taking the OUSU Goldman Sachs Nightbus up to the big Tesco on the ring road with Antonia one afternoon, so we could fill it with diesel and treat it to a much-needed soapy jetwash.

John Craig

V-P (AcAff)

I have spent considerable time working with the Target Schools co-chairs planning our events this term. In addition to the Open Day in 9th week and the regional events in 9th and 10th, there will now be a Target Schools party in 6th week, to publicise the Visiting Scheme. There'll even be a laptop there, so you can sign up on the web site with a drink in your hand. I can't think of anything better!

We have already begun meeting requests for free OUSU Alternative Prospectuses, and I am very pleased with how this is going. An update to the Target Schools web site is in the pipeline, and ought to be uploaded today. By the time you read this, thousands of Target Schools Handbooks will hopefully have begun their journeys to state schools and FE colleges throughout the UK.

I received web training from OnCampusUK, and am extremely positive about the implications that our involvement with them has for the ability of the student union, in terms of both campaigns and services. In particular, I feel that there is at last a viable way to facilitate meaningful dialogue between Academic Affairs reps, JCC reps and Divisional Board reps. I am already talking to a number of JCC chairs about getting their web pages to be ready by the 11th February launch.

Academic Affairs Committee has been given a new lease of life this term, with the appointment and re-appointment of co-chairs. The Academic Affairs Handbook is about to go to the printers, and will form part of the forthcoming resource pack, to help with work of Academic Affairs reps in colleges. If there is anything that you would like to see included, please do let me know. Academic Affairs committee discussed this week the provision made for those who fail Prelims, both in terms of their welfare and the information they receive. If you have any thoughts on this issue, or any examples of good/bad practice, it would be great if you could email them to me (access@ousu.org).

I have also spent a lot of time on the mentoring scheme, which for the uninitiated is part of the DfES National Mentoring Pilot Project. I have twice been into Peers School since the last Council, and feel that real improvements have now been made to the way the scheme operates there. I have also agreed with the national co-ordinator a timetable for recruiting new mentors - an opportunity which, given that new mentors will not begin until October, is especially worth promoting to the current first year. As part of the recruitment process, I will make sure that JCR Presidents have all the information.

Don't forget the 4 steps to heaven

- 1) go to www.targetschools.com
- 2) click on "volunteers"
- 3) click on "volunteer online"
- 4) enter your details