



reports to council 3rd week Hilary term 2003

Will Straw

President

Like most of the year, the last two weeks have been dominated by the Finance & Funding Campaign. The Campaign is looking at ways both to respond to the Government's White Paper and to educate students on its implications. Last Monday I attended an NUS-organised 72-hour response meeting in London. This was a useful occasion with a briefing on the nitty-gritty of the Paper, as well as a panel discussion and an opportunity for student leaders to express their favoured form of response. There is an increasing movement that a second national demo would be less effective than co-ordinated regional events, something the F&F Campaign has been planning for. Later that evening I spoke at a *Guardian* organised debate in front of about 450 people at the Institute of Education. I was up against Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP as well as Sally Hunt of the AUT and Terence Kealey, Vice Chancellor of England's only private University in Buckinghamshire. The evening was very interesting and I thought that Clarke, although wrong, was very impressive. The Vice President (Access & Academic Affairs) asked easily the best question of the evening, to which Clarke had no answer. The event was covered in this Tuesday's *Education Guardian*. Other media work has included an article in the *Sunday Express* and an article in the *Sunday Mirror*.

Over the last 10 days, the F&F team have been working tirelessly to produce posters, draft letters to MPs, an Idiot's Guide to the White Paper, and has launched a new campaign: "...take the shirt of my back Tony." These resources have been distributed to Common Rooms and it is hoped that College reps will organise a day of action in their colleges. Plans to further involve tutors are under way with Mike Woodin (Balliol) helping us draft a motion for congregation and many tutors willing to assist JCRs on passing joint statements.

The Environment Committee have also had a major breakthrough over the past fortnight with the City Council finally taking seriously the University's will to take on the Recycling Scheme. As I write I am looking forward to a meeting between Peter Dobson (City Council Recycling Scheme Officer), Susan Marshall (Domestic Bursar of Exeter College and Chair of the Domestic Bursar's Committee), Cllr Mary Clarkson (Exec Board with responsibility for the environment) Cllr Jean Fooks (Chair, Council Overview Scrutiny Committee), Elizabeth Crawford (Domestic Bursar of Univ and Secretary of the Domestic Bursar's Committee), Maureen Doherty (Domestic Bursar of St. Cross), Cllr Fiyaz Mughal (Chair, Council Social Well-being Committee), Edward Wigzell (incoming University Environment Officer) and the co-chairs and exec member for the Environment Committee. I hope that the outcome will be a clearer idea of how to go about utilising the City Council's commitment to introducing recycling into colleges.

Laura West has been busy collating OUSU's Entz data and organised the first Entz Forum in years. I think it will prove especially useful for ball committees, to whom we hope to be able to extend our support.

Matthew Richardson organised one of the most laid back OUSU Committee meetings ever last week for college NUS Reps who are likely to travel up to the National Conference together over Easter. I have also been in contact with the NUS following the successful passage of Edd Southerden's report at the last Council. Matthew and I will sit down together soon to discuss how best to go about persuading the NUS to change the way Oxford colleges can affiliate.

Four days later an equally relaxed (and boozy) OUSU Reps meeting took place in New College with discussions about Diversity Week, Graduate representation and College Inequality amongst others. Co-Chair, Oliver Kempton, and Exec member, Laura West, had the chance to collect answers for the questionnaire on OUSU. I look forward to seeing the results.

I have continued my tour of colleges with a Q&A session at a Christ Church JCR meeting, which I enjoyed tremendously. Last week myself and three other sabbaticals held an introduction session with the new Hertford JCR Committee to talk about how OUSU can help in JCRs. I hope the session was as useful for them as it was for us.

Developments at Thomas Hull House are coming along nicely and there seems to be no reason why it should not be ready to move in to in 9th Week. I visited the site last week and am really looking forward to moving (although not to the move itself!)

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Finally arrangements for the election of Vice President (Charities & Community) and the by-election for Vice President (Graduates) are underway with nominations open until Thursday 13th February (4th Week).

Sean Sullivan **V-P (Finance)**

It has been a rather bitty two weeks. I spoke to a St Hugh's JCR meeting and to the committee of Hertford JCR. I have meet with numerous printers and done quite a bit of work on publishing Target Schools materials and the Disabilities Guide. I have chaired a meeting of publications board and that of the OSSL trustees. Inroads have been made into the preparation of the amended budget and I have organised a web training session for the new members of the executive and other interested parties. Two late nights working on the Oxford Student have been endured and I have been seen driving around Oxford delivering to the students of Oxford such delights as the OxStu and the Oxford Directory. I have assisted in the recovery of the mini-bus and continued the general work of financial authorisation, computer maintenance and box carrying.

Andy Garlick **V-P (Graduates)**

In the past two weeks, Mature Students' Committee work has expanded with the mass production of the mature students' survey and plans for an event in Diversity Week. One of the first things that came out of the Mature Students' Committee meeting was the problem of isolation of mature students. The Diversity Week event is to be a social meeting of mature undergrads and grads, with a talk on what the Committee plans to do over the next couple of terms and to discuss issues that are specific to mature students.

I have continued to contribute towards Oxford Pride as mandated in the previous council, by attending full committee meetings, finance and fundraising meetings and co-ordinating concessions for the event.

I have attended meetings of the Standing Committee of the Tutor for Graduates Committee, which I feel is a very good forum in which to raise graduate issues. The questions of total graduate numbers and the graduate admissions procedure remain major items of discussion. Progress is being made, and I hope to make a report to Postgraduate Assembly in 6th week. I also attended EPSC and contributed to discussions on developing complaints procedures for graduate students.

I have been giving some consideration to the structure of the job of VP (Graduates) and am trying to organise a consultative process to gather more information on graduate perceptions of my role. This shall be an ongoing project during the next few weeks.

I have been collating the data from the MCR Survey 2003, however, the findings will not be as concrete as I had hoped as only 12 out of 39 MCRs returned the survey and hence the data is not very complete. I shall aim to circulate the information I have, by the start of 5th week however, so it can be used in SCR negotiations.

Otherwise, my time has been spent on the general day to day graduate administration and case work, and in seeking both my successor and replacement for Trinity term. If anyone is interested in either position please feel free to contact me to discuss what the job currently entails.

Sonia Sodha **V-P (AcAff)**

The last two weeks have been very busy, especially since I have had to take four days off for personal reasons, which means that things haven't been as productive as I would have liked.

General Access

The last couple of weeks have provided great exposure for the access work we do as a student union. On the day of the White Paper announcement, I was interviewed on BBC2's Working Lunch and on Radio 4's PM about the work of Target Schools and the effects on the government's announcement on access in general. I attended the Guardian conference on HE funding which Will spoke at last week in London, and as a result of that wrote an article for Tuesday's Education Guardian on the outreach work we do. This should get Target Schools brilliant exposure.

The first meeting of the OUSU Admissions Working Party happened in second week, and this was successful – please do come along to future meetings if you're interested in what happened.

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It's been a busy couple of weeks for Target Schools. At the moment, we are mainly concerned with planning our events which is very time consuming. The TS handbook has come back from the printers, which I'm very pleased with. We will be mailing four copies to every state school and FE college in the country on Thursday of 3rd week, along with details of our events. Visiting Scheme publicity will be going out in 4th week, and every undergraduate in the university will be pigged with a letter asking them to take part.

Academic Affairs

The first meeting of Academic Affairs committee of term has now happened. This went very well, with lots of new ideas for AcAff campaigns this term. I have drafted an Academic Affairs Survey for those JCRs not taking part in the IAUL survey (which incidentally has now gone out), and this will be going out in 6th week in a campaign resource pack for JCR Academic Affairs Officers.

I have been continuing to work on the Writing Workshop service that OUSU is providing, spending time contacting Senior Tutors for their support and meeting with the workshop coordinator to discuss how we can better promote the service.