

OUSU

reports to council

3rd week hilary 2008

Martin McCluskey

President

University Meetings

Assessment and Progression

I attended a meeting of the Assessment and Progression Steering Group where we discussed the implementation of the system that will allow students to generate exam timetables, transcripts and other information online. The project is progressing and it is hoped that those taking exams this year will be able to take advantage of the system from next year. Transcripts, however, will not be available until an entire cohort has been processed using the system.

Groupware

I attended 5 hours worth of meetings for the Groupware project. As I've mentioned before, Groupware is looking at ways the University can introduce an integrated Email, Calendaring and collaboration suite for all students and staff. During the meetings in second week we had presentations from representatives from Sheffield University, Google and Microsoft. The Group will have its final meeting later this month and implementation of a new system is expected in 2009.

Joint Committee of Council with Student Members (JCC)

The first of this term's two JCC meetings saw us discuss a proposal from OUSU to recruit a Student Advisor (as Council mandated us to do in Michalemas). It was agreed that the paper would be redrafted with a view to putting it to University Council in 9th Week.

We also discussed the final terms of reference and composition of the OUSU Funding Working Group which will bring together OUSU Representatives with University Representatives to discuss a sustainable solution for OUSU's finances.

Meetings with University Officials

OUSU Executive meeting with Proctors and Assessor

Along with other members of the Executive, I attended a meeting with the Proctors and Assessor. They mentioned the start of the nominating process for the new Vice-Chancellor and noted that OUSU had been advertising the address – nomcomm@admin.ox.ac.uk - to which members of the University can express their views on the qualities needed in the new VC. We also discussed guidelines for plagiarism and how to reduce accidental or unintentional cases and also how to publicise more widely the availability of special arrangements for Examinations. Finally, we discussed the regulations for Sub-Fusc or transgendered students.

Academic Registrar

I met with Michael Sibly, the Academic Registrar, to discuss EQL and the university's new project in India.

Tenancy Agreements and Post-Exam Celebrations

With Dom, I met with Elizabeth Crawford, DB at University College, to discuss Tenancy and Licence agreements. We discussed ways that the agreements could be standardised across the University and possible ways forward over the coming term. We also discussed the possibility of representation on Domestic Bursar's Committee.

Finally, we ran through the Agreement for Post-Exam Celebrations and discussed the timetable for it being accepted by Conference.

Parliamentary Event

I attended a briefing for students attending the OUSU/University Parliamentary Reception that's happening next week. I also had a meeting with Richard Jarman and Carolyn Culver to discuss the event and other areas of interest.

OUSU Meetings

Autonomous Campaigns

I met with the co-chairs of the Autonomous campaigns to review the work of the committees so far and to answer their questions on the way forward for their campaigns.

Rent

I attended the meeting that Dom arranged for MCR and JCR Reps on the topic of rent. We had a really good turnout and some really good ideas from everyone who attended. Dom really needs more info from everyone on how much they're paying in rent and fixed charges by next week. We'll be sending out the rent pack in the first half of next week to all JCR and MCR Presidents; please share this with other members of your committee. We'll be having another meeting in 2 weeks to review the data and discuss ways forward.

SAS Review Group

I attended the first meeting of the SAS Review Group.

Postgraduate Assembly

I attended the first PGA meeting of the term. Motions that were passed are to be ratified by Council today.

OUSU Reps

We had another constructive OUSU Reps meeting. The next meeting will be in 5th Week.

Council Meetings

East Area Parliament

I attended a meeting of the East Area Parliament to follow up on the progress of CCTV on Cowley Road. Despite the fact that the group decided on October 29th to install four wireless cameras in crime hotspots on Cowley Road, no progress has been made since and the Road still remains without

CCTV. A report is expected at the February meeting of the Parliament (postponed since December) on the implementation.

The Parliament also discussed the availability of free disposal for household goods. Items such as fridges, cookers etc. can be collected for disposal by the City Council. More info from www.oxford.gov.uk/

Misc

Holocaust Memorial Day

I attended the JSoc/Aegis Holocaust Memorial Day events.

ProTest

I attended a ProTest committee meeting, ahead of their demonstration next month.

Prescoms

I attended JCR Prescom with Clare on Friday of Second Week and MCR Prescom on Thursday of 3rd Week.

Common Room Liaison

So far this term I've attended Teddy Hall JCR and Wadham SU meetings. I'll hopefully be going to Worcester JCR on Sunday. In the next two weeks, exec members will visit 11 Common Rooms and we hope to get round most by the end of this term.

Crap Joke of the Week

A neutron goes into a bar and asks the barman, "How much for a beer?"

"For you, no charge," the barman replies.

Rich Hardiman

V-P (Finance)

Council Report HT 3rd Week

God Damn it, feels like I just wrote one of these things, and now I have to do it again... I'll keep it brief.

ZOO

There's a cartoon by Du Maurier in *Punch* in which a particularly unctuous curate is breakfasting with his bishop. The caption is this:

"His Holiness: You don't seem to be enjoying your egg, Smith.
Curate: Oh no, your holiness, parts of it are excellent."

I promise, council, that I'm not going to introduce anything else with an anecdote. But that basically sums up the ZOO situation at the moment. ZOO Na Na continues to perform well, and there's a new manager coming in at the beginning of February, who seems to be pro-ZOO, so that's good. Meanwhile Fresh at Bar Risa is still going very well, I guess it's pretty much our flagship night now. There seems to be a lot of loyalty building to the night which is gratifying, especially considering the mountain we had to climb to get the thing going in the first place!

But... it wouldn't really be honest to say that the new Wednesday night at OFS has been a roaring success in its first two weeks. I continue to have high hopes for it, but eventual success will depend on increasing the numbers of pre-booked tickets for the next couple of weeks and building a groundswell of support that way. We've contacted entz reps, many of whom seem to be maintaining ties to RockOxford not because they prefer the promoter or the night, but because long standing agreements tie their hands. Basically we need all the support we can get to make this work and deliver a night that's good for students. I was really lucky to have the support of people with influence in their colleges in building Fresh, and I feel bad to be calling on you again, but if you can do anything at all towards encouraging people along and getting your entz reps to make a block booking with us I'd be really grateful to you all. If you have any ideas, or any requests for incentives, come and chat to me. I'll be the bad-tempered looking one outside with a fag in hand....

Oxford Student and insurance

At the end of last term I attended a meeting with various university bigwigs in which it was made clear to me that if the OxStu continued to be, shall we say, less than careful in checking facts and staying on the right side of the law OUSU would lose it's coverage by the central university insurance. This has been keeping me awake at night ever since – as you can probably imagine.

The good news is that we're still going to be covered by the insurance. The bad is that there's going to be a £10000 excess imposed, so for nearly all practical purposes we're not covered in the event of someone suing the OxStu or OUSU. Thankfully the editorial team have responded well to my panicked cries of 'we need to overhaul this system now' and I'm now far more confident that, as long as each successive team is reminded of the seriousness of the position, we're going to be ok.

On a related note, when OUSU completes the move to being a full-fledged charity, independent of the University, we'll have to get our own insurance anyhow. I'm going to start looking at that in the next vac, so as to have some sort of preliminary report to hand on to the next team.

Oxide

I haven't actually mentioned Oxide in a council report so far this year. How remiss of me.

Basically these guys have taken what was a fairly inoperative station with lots of potential (thanks to the efforts of the last committee) and turned it into a more operative station with even more potential. The committee are hugely enthusiastic and hard-working, and it's great to see their efforts beginning to pay off. Listener figures are up, the studio is much improved, and we're much further along the line to getting a radio station that's as much a part of University life as the OxStu. www.oxideradio.co.uk

The Oxford Forum

The latest edition of the Forum (current affairs magazine, for those who don't know) hit colleges this week. It's a really good production, one for which I can take no credit at all, so I encourage everyone to have a read when they get a chance.

That'll do me for this week. Hopefully see a lot of you for Risa later (and OFS on Wednesday!) Sorry this report's been rambling and shambolic – I'm writing it on not an awful lot of sleep. Next time I promise a dizzying display of rhetorical ability and charmingly understated eloquence. Principally because I know nobody's going to hold me to that....

Louise Randall

V-P (Welfare and Equal Opportunities)

I simply cannot believe it's third week already! As always, most of my time has been taken up with Student Advice Service work, and an enormous daily barrage of emails to be answered and acted upon. Aside from all of that, these are some of the notable events of the last 2 weeks in the life of this VP (Welfare & Equal Ops)...

SA paper to JCC

Since last report, a lot of time and effort has been put into writing second paper to the Joint Consultative Committee for Student Members on the subject of University funding for a part time Student Advisor, which was finally presented on the Thursday of 2nd week. The response by the committee was that the proposal was fairly sound, and that with some alterations to make it thoroughly watertight, they were prepared to take it to the University Council in 9th week. This is a positive step forward, and we shall be working hard on the final paper in the coming weeks in an attempt to persuade the University to part with precious funding for this much needed professional staff member for the Student Advice Service.

WelfCom

This is the thrice termly meeting of common room welfare officers from around the university, and it's going from strength to strength. Turn out has been really high, and we've been discussing issues from smoking policies in colleges, to ideas for college welfare events. It's a great opportunity for welfare officers to get to know and support one another, and it's also a space for them to ask me to do things to support the work they do. Excitingly, amongst other things, I've been asked to write a simple 'users guide' to dental dams. If 2 people email me (welfare@ousu.org) and ask me nicely, I'll include it in my next Council report...

Welf training day

I've spent a lot of time putting together welfare resource packs for common room officers, and preparing training sessions. Last Saturday's welfare training day for new welfare officers was very well attended, with 15 attending. Feedback has been really positive. We covered basic listening skills, 'best practice' for advice giving, making referrals, troubleshooting exercises, casenotes & confidentiality. And we also ate cake. Brilliant.

LBGTQ training day

On the evening of the 11th Feb (Monday of 5th week), I'm pleased to welcome members of the LBGTQ support network 'Oxford Friend' who'll be coming in to give LBGTQ reps and welfare reps some more specific training on supporting students through common LBGTQ issues, such as coming out. Please get in touch if you can see a need for other similarly specific training days for the welfare and diversity reps from your colleges, and I'll do my best to organise it!

Oxford engagement with BME students

I attended this university consultancy presentation on Oxford University's engagement with BME students, on behalf of OUSU's Racial, Ethnic & Religious Equality Campaign, which was a really useful time of thinking about how we can best engage with BME students, both through widening access and through cross cultural initiatives within the university itself.

Hannah Roe	V-P (Women)
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Meetings attended-
WomCam
Enough!
Gender Equality Steering Group
Women's Officers meeting
Autonomous Campaigns meeting
Oxfords Engagement with BME Applicants
JCC

Safety Bus - I've arranged 4 information sessions for people to find out more about volunteering for the Safety Bus. Already I'm receiving e-mail enquiries from people interested but unable to attend the meetings. Because OUSU wasn't part of the scheme last year, we don't have the volunteer pool that Brookes does and recruiting new volunteers is made more difficult by this as a 'Safety Bus Volunteer' culture doesn't exist. To help create this culture I've also set up a facebook group 'Team Safety Bus' and am working with Brookes on new posters. There will be three more information sessions this term, please see the OUSU website for more information.

Public Speaking Workshop - As with last term this was a highly popular event. We'll be working with the Neill Harvey Smith to organise a series of workshops which address different issue areas for women and public speaking.

Women's Open Day - There will be two Women's Open Days this year - an important targeted event to encourage applicants - figures show that some colleges are experiencing a serious short fall of women applicants and the overall trend for women undergraduate applications to the university is not promising. Louise Randall kindly was the photographer for a photoshoot earlier this week to add to the diversity of our photographs for the publicity materials for the advertising posters and leaflets, both of which are currently under production.

Women and Science - One of the areas where there is a serious lack of women students is in the sciences. The University has no access programmes which address this. A student contacted me with a specific project that they would like to run and I have facilitated a meeting with the relevant people in the access office which will be taking place next week.

Women's Officers - The first CR Women's Officers meeting of term took place with a good attendance. The meeting was partly an information and resource distribution occasion and partly for discussion and sharing of ideas and practices. Concerns raised included the lack this year of a Women's Handbook (the result of a policy change a couple of years ago) and the difficulty created thereby of effective information and support for all female students. Also raised were the different types of provision in different colleges, meaning some students have a much more supportive environment than others, purely based on the college they are in. I will be looking further into these issues and seeking further suggestions from women's officers.

University Gender Equality Steering Group

The GES are looking for positive projects for the University to engage to fulfill its now legal requirement to pro-actively promote gender equality. I have already submitted some suggestions, based on the issue areas I have been working this year to address (childcare, women in sport, women in student politics) and will report back later on progress.

Ingrid Frater

V-P (Graduates)

University Committees – Since 1st week Council I have been to Institutional Audit Management Board, Curators of the University Libraries, Graduate Panel of EPSC, JCC, Graduate Admissions Committee, and Conference of Colleges Graduate Committee Standing Committee. Key issues which have come up and I will be working on are graduate representation on Divisional Boards, student preparation for the Audit in 2009, supervision guides, JCC guides, College fees, the graduate admissions process, OUSU's Student Advisor, and online graduate student reports.

Autonomous Campaigns meeting – we held a meeting for OUSU Exec and the Autonomous Campaigns co-chairs to discuss projects, funding, the structure of the campaigns etc.

International Students' Campaign – the campaign is continuing to grow. We're holding an open meeting this week. The festival is coming along well.

Mature Students' Campaign – this is something which I am keen to set up this term – am still looking for interested students.

Junior Deans – I have now arranged for a meeting between them.

Postgraduate Assembly – I'll report on orally.

Graduate student event – I'll report on orally.

Aldwych – was at Warwick. We discussed fees and bursaries in particular.

SAS – as in 1st week: I've had a few bits of casework and am expecting more as the term gets properly

underway. We have been working on gaining feedback from SAS users and also on working with the Counselling Service to improve our service.

MCR PresCom – I'll report on orally.

Lincoln MCR – I went to Lincoln as part of our CR outreach.

Claire Addison

V-P (Charities and Community)

Hi everyone,

I will keep this ridiculously brief as almost all of my work in 2nd week can be summed up in three words: Alternative Careers Fair. The event went really well, with hundreds of students through the door, a successful seminar series running through the day, beautiful catering (when it arrived) and positive feedback from the stallholders. The accompanying Guide went down particularly well.

Aside from that, I've started up a new student volunteering executive, tentatively entitled Oxford Volunteers. We had a fantastic turnout to the first meeting (held from now on at 6pm on Thursdays) and the committee will be starting work properly this week.

Preparations for RAG week are ongoing and a full schedule will be released soon. We're also planning our non-romantic Valentine's offerings for 5th week. Extra help is always appreciated at this busy time.

Environment and Ethics are steaming ahead with their packaging campaign and I'm particularly pleased that we're working with the local community so closely on this issue. On a university wide level, Daniel and I attended a meeting for all college environment reps, domestic bursars and the city council, which was illuminating if somewhat disappointing.

As this is only Tuesday morning I won't say much about 3rd week but rest assured that, in James' words, "stuff will happen."

PART TIME OFFICERS

Sarah Hutchinson

Graduate Welfare Officer

Since the last Council I have attended Welfare Committee and Welfare training. These were both excellent and informative – it was helpful to receive welfare training, and great to hear about how many different ways college welfare officers provide support. I also met with the other graduate officers to discuss ideas for the term, in particular how to encourage students to attend PGA. At the time of writing this hasn't taken place, but I'm happy that we have motions to discuss. We are also hoping to organise a graduate discussion event, at which students can find out about OUSU, hear someone from the University give a talk, but also raise issues that they think are important that OUSU may be able to campaign on.

Jamie Li

International Students Officer

The International Students Committee is well underway with its Oxford International Festival. The Committee has secured a venue at Keble College for the Saturday of 7th Week of Hilary Term event. The event has been received with much interest by the international and ethnic clubs in Oxford, who have agreed to participate in the festival. The Committee is also working on promoting the role of an Overseas/Equal Opportunities Representative across all Common Rooms as well as editing the final drafts of the International Students Handbook. Its main goal at the moment is fundraising, and committee members will soon be contacting potential sponsors in the corporate sector.

Adam McIvor

Common Room Support Officer

The first OUSU Reps meeting in 1st week went well and all reps who attended were keen that the meetings continue so I hope this week's meeting will be just as successful. Thanks to the reps for being so enthusiastic about these!

Members of the Exec have been into JCR and MCR meetings over the last 2 weeks and hopefully we will be going into more meetings over the rest of the term. Any feedback would be welcome on these visits, particularly from common room presidents. As always you can email commonrooms@ousu.org.

Dominic Weinberg Officer

Rent and Accommodation

Hopefully by the time you read this we'll have had a useful meeting on Tuesday about rents and rent negotiation and will have started work on a Rent Committee. It's unfortunate that it couldn't happen last week (my tutor's fault) so I could have something more to say. Anyway, thanks to all those colleges who've sent me their rent information and for those who haven't, please could you do so. At the moment I'm compiling rent data and trying to work out what to do with it.