

OUSU

reports to council

3rd week hilary term 2010

Stefan Baskerville

President

University

Met with the Vice-Chancellor to discuss the agenda for University Council and our presentation to University Council.

Made a presentation to University Council, covering OUSU's history and structure (very briefly!), focusing on our activities in a range of areas including representation (disciplinary procedures, sexual health provision, graduate provision, among other things), student support, common room support, representing graduates, and widening participation. I concluded by pointing to the challenges we face in terms of registration, incorporation, and funding.

Represented students on University Council, which was discussing a wide range of issues.

Met with the Chancellor to discuss representation on the V-C Nominating Committee. Our predecessors in 2007-8 successfully lobbied for some input into the VC nominating process; I was meeting the Chancellor to discuss the possibility of formalising that representation now, so that it is assured in 7 years time! I will be following this up with the Registrar this term.

Joint Teaching and Student Funding Review Group. This is the group looking at issues of teaching and student funding and is responsible for drafting the University's responses to the Browne review of undergraduate fees. The group met ten days ago to discuss the University's response to phase I of the Review. I spoke on a number of points and made small but successful amendments to the draft.

OUSU

I have spent considerable time writing, and meeting people to discuss, the paper I presented at 1st week Council and on which we will be voting today. It took a long time to get everything clearly written out.

I have met with Charlotte Carnegie, Rent and Accommodation Officer, to discuss and plan support for Common Rooms in their rent negotiations.

I have spent a long time with the strategic review group, planning the running of our focus groups and setting out the process of strategic planning. This was run by our NUS Regional Organiser, who is assisting us with the process of the review. We have now closed the survey and are moving on to holding focus groups with a variety of students in 3rd week. We have concluded that we will not be able to report in 5th week, as we will only just have finished collecting the data and evidence from students. In order to complete the process properly and ensure our report and recommendations are comprehensive, we would like to delay reporting until 1st week Council of Trinity term.

Common Rooms

I attended Trinity JCR to talk about OUSU's activities and answer questions. I met with a few JCR Presidents to discuss activities in their common rooms. I also met with an MCR President to discuss their concerns with the new proposed funding model.

I ran, with the Strategic Review Group, a focus group for JCR Presidents to discuss OUSU's activities and what the priorities should be.

I attended JCR Prescom.

Miscellaneous

Met with the NUS delegates to have an initial discussion of arrangements for NUS conference.

Visited the school council of St Gregory the Great, a local comprehensive, to discuss student representation and university in general.

Kat Wall

V-P (Women)

Verbal report will be given

**Dani Quinn
Opportunities)**

V-P (Welfare & Equal

Hello Council,

I'm afraid this is terribly short, as this week has been really manic! Please do get in touch if you would like more detail - I'm sure I've left out loads.

Dani x
welfare@ousu.org

Well-Being Week:

...is happening. Come to the events! Tell your friends!

Common Room Support:

Advocacy Catch-Up - 2 hours is definitely not enough!

Training in 'student support' for 3 Common Room Committees. Really positive feedback. Many still to go.

Training on 'Dealing with Tragedies.' Poor turnout but good feedback. It was very good, so it's a shame more people didn't have time to come along.

Met with lots of Welfare Officers and Equal Opps Officers

Attended the LGBTQ reps meeting (Jasper led this)

Organised Welfare Committee and Equal Opps Committee. Both were productive and interesting

Student Support:

Student Advice Service: we've seen more than 270 people this year (either face-to-face, by email, or by phone), which already outstrips previous years by a long, long way. Get in touch with any queries or problems - advice@ousu.org

Living Out Drop-In: piloted this, with positive responses from the students who attended. Next one is in 5th Week.

Disordered Eating Supporters' Session: held our second session in the pilot. Very positive feedback, and a suggestion that we extend it to other aspects of student support (e.g. self-harm).

Strategic Review Working Group:

We had a meeting. It was very long. I think it was 7 hours. But we did get stuff done.

Equal Opps:

CRAE had their first meeting of the year, it was brilliant.

Disabilities Focus Group - is on Tuesday. I'm really looking forward to the feedback and suggestions.

Mind Matters - this is moving along nicely, mostly because Rachel is brilliant.

...lots of other stuff.

Sarah Hutchinson

V-P (Graduates)

The last two weeks have been very hectic with a combination of committee meetings, meetings with MCR Presidents and OUSU reps, casework and events.

It has been great meeting with MCR reps and finding out what is going on in your common rooms and discussing how we can work together to represent our common members. I am happy to meet with any MCR reps, so do get in touch if you want to meet.

There has been an upturn in the number of graduates contacting the student advice service, as people seem to be trying to deal with problems they didn't have time to in Michaelmas. Do let your students know they can contact us if they are having problems.

Looking back over the last couple of weeks, we had an excellent informal MCR PresCom, which gave us a chance to meet and discuss issues outside of a formal setting. There was a very good turn out and I'm looking forward to working with the newer Presidents.

Jonny and I attended Curators of the University libraries last Monday, where we discussed the Bodleian's strategic plan and highlighted concerns of students regarding access to libraries and workspace.

Fees policy group was held last Tuesday. Amongst other things we discussed changing the way that bursaries are distributed as existing technology is not sufficient to ensure this goes smoothly.

That night we held our first Mature Students' event of term, and around 15 people attended for drinks or dinner at Harris Manchester College. These are really friendly, laid back events, so do let any students you think would be interested in coming know about them.

On Wednesday, as well as meeting with Common Room Reps, I also spoke at two MCR meetings about what OUSU does for graduates, highlighting the Student Advice Service in particular, and answering questions about our work. Again, let us know if you'd like us to come and speak to your common room: this is the best way we can engage directly with your students.

On Thursday I met with the Continuing Education team, who told me about the range of their work (15,000 students on their books) and we discussed the status of their students, what services they're entitled to etc. It was very interesting, and hopefully will help us reach those students we are often unable to contact.

Friday was a mammoth day for committees, with Education Committee in the morning, during which we discussed changes to Degree Ceremonies, and noted the number of recommendations made through our consultation with students have been adopted. Later came Social Sciences Divisional board, which I attended as Divisional Board rep. It is looking increasingly likely that some form of fee will be introduced for DPhil students in their fourth year or beyond, and that there will be an increase in the graduate application fee. I intend to bring both of these to the next OUSU council and will keep you updated. On a more positive note, they accepted fully our proposals for allowing Divisional Board reps to attend teaching Policy Committee, where decisions about teaching are made, and to introduce a Joint Consultative Committee structure bringing JCC reps from each department together on a termly basis to discuss what's happening in the department. I will be working with the divisional secretary on this.

On top of these, I have also been working on a graduate survey – time constraints have meant this has been delayed but I hope to make some progress on this this week, a paper for Graduate Committee of Conference of Colleges outlining the work we do for graduates, so colleges have a better idea of what they can refer students to us for, and organising a postgraduate forum for Tuesday of 5th week and a postgraduate international students' event on Thursday of 4th week.

Jonny Medland

V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

Hello Council! You'll be pleased to hear that there's nothing on the agenda from me today. But to give you an idea of my mandates arising from the last Council:

- I have written to the Chair of Admissions Committee of Conference and the Director of Undergraduate Admissions requesting student representation on the Committee. As of the time of writing (22:37, Thursday of 2nd week) I haven't heard back but will update you at the meeting if that changes.
- I have written to all Divisional Secretaries to ask for student representation to be improved in the way outlined in my motion to the last OUSU Council. The Social Sciences Division has signed on to them, the others I have not yet heard back from. Again, updates to follow if there's anything to update.

One point arising from this is a lot of people have asked me why I bring motions to Council which are very likely to pass. The simple answer is because the University takes far more notice of them this way so if you want OUSU to do things then please do bring policy to Council! Now onto the usual format...

Common Room Support

This has gone well. I've attended some JCR & MCR meetings and met with individual Presidents, access reps and academic affairs officers. I've also gone to two OUSU reps meetings to go through the Council agenda, taken access reps (9 of them) to a meeting to help them bring e-mentoring into their colleges, had a reps meeting with the Univ outreach officer (17 people turned out) to look at getting colleges to do more outreach work, and had a really good academic reps meeting to look at the lack of student understanding of marking criteria which we considered in the last OUSU Council. I've also emailed every JCR President with information about the National Student Survey encouraging them to get their students to fill it in – we currently have a 23% response rate which is comfortably ahead of this point last year so keep plugging it! I've also attended JCR Prescom and the MCR Social Prescom. Myself, Dani & Hannah also ran a catch-up session for advocacy training – this was very rushed as we compressed 7 hours into 2 but the feedback indicates that it was still valuable.

General OUSU stuff

This has been very time-consuming, including participating in a consultation meeting on Stefan's 'Urgent Challenges' paper, taking part in focus groups for the Strategic Review Group, going through all the data from the cross-campus survey and analyzing it and participating in what was effectively an away-day for the Strategic Review Group where we went through the conclusions which can be drawn from the data to this point. As Stefan notes this will now be reporting back in 1st week of Trinity – given the abundance of consultation which we're doing going through the data simply take time. This has been the main focus of my activity although I've also been drawing up papers for the JCCSM meeting in week 3.

Meetings with University Officials

- Met with Sir Martin Harris as part of his review into access to elite universities. The meeting was frankly fairly dispiriting – I think that his conclusions have largely been written to impact the Browne Review in a preconceived direction and as he's on record in favour of higher fees it doesn't take a genius to work out what this is.
- Kat Spicksley – Kat works on the UNIQ Summer Schools and I met her about student involvement in new media and putting videos demystifying the interview process online. We're moving forward on this.
- Richard Hughes, Head of Education Policy Support – we meet every 2 weeks before Education Committee to go through the agenda and this week was no exception
- Stephen Goss, Director of the Oxford Learning Institute – we're meeting to rework my paper on student understanding of marking criteria to include more on getting departments to incorporate students marking each others work into their courses. This should be a very good project going forward.

Student Advice Service

To give you an idea of how busy this is I thought that Dani had made a typo in the number of new cases we've got since 8th week of last term. She hadn't and we really are that busy with casework. A lot of this is highly complex and referred to us by other sources (e.g CR welfare reps) making it truly one of the most important things which OUSU does.

University Committees

- University Council. Met on Monday of Week 1, preceded by a presentation from Stefan, Sarah and I. This was on OUSU's work and what we spend our days doing and went down very well – it was a great way of getting our message across and conveyed what we do in terms of improving the student experience. Topics discussed at the meeting include student number planning, a report from the University's Strategic Plan Review Implementation Group and the University's Quarter 1 financial outcomes.
- Undergraduate Panel. Spent the bulk of its time considering improvements to prelim resits (including timing, whether colleges can set pass marks higher than the university and how difficult they should be). Further work will be done this term, hopefully for implementation before Trinity. We also considered my paper on marking criteria, further work on which is currently being done before it comes to Education Committee in either week 4 or week 6.
- Fitness to Study Working Group. Now that Dani and myself are on it I wrote a further (brief!) overview of questions/issues which the working group should consider going forward. This policy area is very complex and of crucial importance for a lot of students – being part of the process since midway through Michaelmas is really giving us a chance to make a difference here.
- OUSU Complaints Process Working Group. We had two meetings on Fridays of week 0 and week 1 and have now concluded our work with some recommendations which should strengthen our complaints procedure. Subject to the JCCSM approving the recommendations in week 3 I will aim to bring Standing Order changes to 5th week Council.
- Curators of the University Libraries. Discussed a range of issues including opening hours, the 2008/09 report on the libraries and made the case as to why students want 24 hour libraries. More on this will come round in the next 10 days or so.
- Education Committee. Is meeting tomorrow and will look at issues including reform of degree ceremonies, the 'Urgent Challenges' paper which Stefan has presented, the report on future arrangements for visiting students and a report from the University Strategic Plan Review Implementation Group.

As always please do ask questions – either in Council or via access@ousu.org.

Eorann Lean Community)	V-P	(Charities	&
-----------------------------------	------------	-------------------	--------------

Charity Reps

- Have contacted all charity reps and met with 11 charity reps (new and old) to discuss the term ahead, how I can support them, how involved with RAG they wish to be, resources they need etc.
- Have updated list of charity reps and given handbooks to new reps (I haven't had replies about successors from some- so if your charity rep hasn't been contacted please let me know)

Cancer Research:

- Have recruited 18 volunteers for the cancer research student action team. Have organised an information evening and sent round role profiles – so hopefully soon the team will be up and running.

Publicity Committee:

- Have recruited 2 student members for OUSU publicity committee

Environment Workshop:

- Went to the AECOM consultation environment workshop to see the bottom line for total CO₂ emissions calculated for the university and to discuss what can be done to deal with this. In brief the University has signed up to the Government target of cutting emissions to 34% of its 1990 total by 2020. This means the university has to cut its emission total now by 66%!! If you'd like more info I have the slides from the workshop and Jennifer Ekelund has agreed to come and present it to the Environment and ethics committee – I'll keep you posted

10:10:

- Just to say that Sustainable Steering Committee has agreed that the university should sign up to the 10:10 committee – now it only has to go through BESC, PRAC and Council – hopefully we'll know by 15th February!

Website:

- We have started reviewing the website – I've met with a designer, talked to Matthew Wilkes and started the process of deciding what we want compared current website – if you have any ideas – please let me know!

Society Events:

- On a related note I have started putting society events up on the website, with help from Jack 'I love common rooms' Matthews – if you've got an event that you would like to publicise please send me – a title, date and time (start and end) and a summary of the event!

Community Engagement:

- I've met up with Richard Jarman (Head of Government and Community relations) and we've discussed where to go now with the community consultation. The strategies for engagement are more important than ever with City councillors concerned about so-called studentification in Oxford - i.e. the negative impact of student numbers on available housing and anti-social behaviour associated with students living in the community (e.g. rubbish collection/ recycling, noise and nuisance, and parking concerns) especially in the lead up to elections... The City Council have a limit on the number of students who can live out and can refuse planning permission to buildings with a teaching aim that it believes will effect the amount of students meaning its limit will be exceeded. The University is in discussion with the city council to rectify this situation. I believe that it is very important that the Vp C&C and students are the driving factors behind dealing with this idea of 'studentification.' One of the projects being discussed is student wardens who can be a contact point for a particular neighbourhood. I'll keep you updated with projects but just wanted you to know that the consultation is going somewhere and I plan to be right behind it pushing it!

Haiti Tea:

- Thank you to all that attended we raised £40

Beyond Profit:

- I'm late to Council because I'm at Beyond Profit – Hopefully you have come and seen how fabulous it is and that it was worth my time! If you missed it but would still like to find out about ethical and charitable careers – I have booklets with articles and then summaries of the companies that were at the fair and how to find out about their opportunities.

Swapshop:

- This is on Sunday 4th week at the union – please come! You can bring and take, you can just bring or you can just take!

Sustainable Steering Group:

- We're being allowed a student rep at their meeting which is the highest on environmental decisions! I'm taking it to OUSU Exec to decide who should go – most likely it will be VP C&C or the Environment and Ethics Officer.

PART TIME OFFICERS

Jack Matthews

Common Room Support Officer

Since last we met I have done the following:

- Organised OUSU Reps meeting
- Organised Common Room visits
- Attended a Common Room general meeting
- Met with Common Room Officers regarding issues such as Mi-voice and OUSU in general
- Attended MPLS Divisional Board
- Worked on improving and expanding the Common Room Information Service (CRiS)

Over the next few weeks I will be holding training sessions for the Mi-voice voting system as well as a session on how to set up, run and register a university wide society. Details on these will follow.

We are very keen to visit as many common rooms as possible this term - if you havent already had one this term, please do email me.

Jack Matthews
Common Room Support Officer
commonrooms@ousu.org

Hannah Cusworth

Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

Dear Council,

Since we last spoke much has been going on in the world of academic affairs.

The first meeting in Hilary of common room academic affairs reps happened last Tuesday. There were jam tarts, we talked about student understanding of marking criteria; I think everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Lots of the stuff that was said surrounding peer marking will be really helpful for the paper that Jonny is preparing, so that's good.

In other news preparations for Finals Forums are going well. Much more to follow on that next time...
The advocacy catch-up training was really well attended and again I think everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. I certainly did.

And finally, the library guide is close to competition and will be sent out shortly.

If you have any questions etc send me an email at academicaffairs@ousu.org.

Hannah

Charlotte Carnegie

Rent and Accommodation Officer

Hi Council,

Living Out Accommodation: This has been a big week in accommodation, with the government introducing new regulations for landlords. I attended a meeting with the Minister for Housing and Planning directly after these proposals were announced and I just wanted to give you a brief run down. Firstly, from April a National Landlord Register will be established. Secondly, local Governments will be given the power to set up a landlord licensing scheme. This means that in Oxford the city council can set up a compulsory scheme, requiring all landlords to register and each house has to meet up to universal quality standards to qualify for

registration. Thirdly, from now on when landlords want to turn a house from a 'family home' into a house of multiple occupancy (HMO) they will have to apply for planning permission to the local council.

In order to make sure students get the best out of these proposals I will: Find out who will be in charge of this on a local council level, and start a dialogue with them, to ensure that students views are heard from the outset. I will also work to ensure that the proposals and recommendations which OUSU put forward earlier this year regarding landlord accreditation are recognised. I will continue to gather information regarding when the proposed scheme will come into effect and how students can benefit from it.

College Rent: This week I have been rewriting the rent negotiation pack with Stefan, this will include proposed ways in which rent negotiations can be conducted and information which common rooms have found useful when dealing with college authorities regarding rent. I have also contacted the Estate Bursar's Committee in order to acquire the Oxford Colleges cost Index (Van Noorden Index) for this year.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me at rentandacom@ousu.org.

Charlotte

Jasper Minton-Taylor

LGBTQ Officer

February is Queer History Month (3rd-6th week), and Dani and I at OUSU as well as many other societies in Oxford have planned a range of events to celebrate the lives and achievements of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans community. Events include Queer Poetry Evening with Poetry Soc, an LGBT Oxford University lecture by Paul Gambaccini called 'Out on Monday', an Oxford Pride Queer History Walk, Same Sex Hand Holding (shhh!) round the Radcliffe Camera with RAG, two amnesty LGBTQ events, and interesting discussions organised by LGBTQ Council and Queer Studies Circle. Colour posters have gone up around colleges and libraries in Oxford and there is a facebook group, 'Queer History Month', where the most up-to-date information will be posted.

In 7th week we look 'Beyond Queer History Month' with *Bent*, a play about homosexual persecution in Nazi Germany, *Queers and Careers*, an event with the Careers service and an Oxford production of *The Vagina Monologues*.

If you'd like to get involved in any of the events (especially the Queer Poetry Evening and Shhh!) email QHM@ousu.org.

Jasper

Danielle Fraser-Solomon

Students With Disabilities Officer

Hi council,

I have a lot of plans for the coming year, the first of which is a focus group for students with disabilities which will be happening on Tuesday of 3rd week (as part of the absolutely amazing Well Being week). I hope to get a lot of information about what needs to be done for students with disabilities through the focus group, and hopefully I'll be able to pass things on to the relevant people over the next few weeks.

Danni