

## Reports to Council

3<sup>rd</sup> Week Council HT13

David J. Townsend

President

Much of the business I have been dealing with in the past week and a half has been the result of having to take on many of the duties of the Chief Executive Officer. This impinges considerably on my ability to deliver other projects which you elected me to do, and will be discussed later in the course of one of the Emergency Motions.

Here are some of the things I've been doing. For more information ask a question in OUSU Council or e-mail me at [president@ousu.org](mailto:president@ousu.org).

### **OUSU Information Drive**

A great many students would struggle to tell you one thing which OUSU has done over the last couple of years, and we're trying to change that. A poster campaign will begin this week or next, backed up by Oxide radio interviews of OUSU sabbatical officers on key points of OUSU's success, Facebook and Twitter promotion. I am looking into scheduling common room visits to deliver some of these messages live, especially involving the Part-Time Executive Officers who have recently assumed office. We are considering commissioning a video from interested and talented students as it would be useful to add another medium to the Information Drive. The construction of the new website continues apace - almost there!

### **Campaign to end early release by Landlords and Letting Agents**

Brookes has been running a successful social media campaign at their end of town. It is hoped that February will see an upswing in the number of students looking for accommodation for the next year (as the campaign intended to move this from November to February), and this will then enable OUSU and Brookes to prove the initial success of the campaign to the letting agents and encourage them to sign up to amber or green for the following year. If you (or your friends) are living out next year, it's now (as of Friday) fine to start looking for properties! Don't forget to ask the OUSU Student Advice Service ([advice@osuu.org](mailto:advice@osuu.org)) to read over your contract before you sign anything.

### **Oxford-Burma Student Exchange**

Off the back of the discussion and approval of the motion in 1st Week OUSU Council, I spoke with the British Ambassador to Burma later that week. He was very keen on the proposal and undertook to have his office (and other relevant cultural and development agencies) provide advice and support, including suggesting Burmese young people to form the other side of the delegation and sites to visit. The University has offered to take up much of the logistical side of planning (organising flights, accommodation and visas in particular). I am awaiting confirmation of some details with the Embassy this week, and at that point OUSU, Oxford Hub and the University will formally decide whether the visit is going ahead in the Easter Vacation (as distinct from a later time). As soon as that is done, I will call for applications for Oxford students interested in forming the Oxford side of the delegation.

Hooroo, DJT

### Highlights

In the last 2 weeks I have focused a lot of my time on the International Students' Campaign and now have a committee in place and will be running the International Festival later in term. We have been gearing up for rent negotiations in MCRs and I have been updating the information and data that we provide and planning training events. Myself, David Messling, and our Division Representatives have continued collecting course and department rep names and we have made a breakthrough there. Finally, I have been discussing the Damien Shannon case and the financial guarantee with MCR Presidents and have been involved in responding to the recent, and regrettable, OUSU funding news.

### International Students' Campaign

After a successful first meeting of term with over 20 attendees we now have a committee in place who are already hard at work organizing the International Festival which will take place in Exam Schools on Sunday at the beginning of 8<sup>th</sup> week (3<sup>rd</sup> March). While the committee are now firmly in control of this project I spent a large amount of time sourcing funding for the event, and through kind donations from the International Strategy Office and the Vice-Chancellor I managed to raise £2,000 towards the cost.

### Academic Representation

After struggling throughout last term to even get the names of JCC and GJCC representatives we have had a major breakthrough in the last week. Departments have been pushed from above to provide use with the details and we now have an online database system to make this process as easy possible. We have arranged a meeting of JCC and GJCC reps in MPLS and intend to use it as a focus group to find out what OUSU and the University can do to better support representatives and also to begin sharing ideas and concerns between departments. Only once this happens will OUSU be able to support local student engagement and pick up the specific issues that are affecting students on the ground.

### Rent

We are rolling out our rent support for MCRs this term and I have updated all of the information we give out. The Research Councils have finally ended their freeze of stipends, but are only going to give postgraduates a 1% rise still leaving them with a real terms cut. We have arranged a number of training events for the term and have begun supporting Common Rooms individually. Sarah Santosham and myself are also organizing a 'Getting Things Done' session specifically for MCRs in 6<sup>th</sup> week. If any MCR Presidents or Officers are interested in attending then please get in touch.

### Masters Course 'Audit'

I am still working on this with our Graduate Academic Affairs Officer, Nicholas Cooper, although it is likely it will be delayed in its completion until Trinity term as there are a number of projects being launched by the University in PGT teaching that will be relevant to the results.

As always this is report records the news and highlights from my work. If anyone has any questions about any of this or my other work then please do ask them in Council or email me ([graduates@ousu.org](mailto:graduates@ousu.org)). Equally if anyone has an issue they would like me to work on drop me a line.

Hey there Council,

I'm afraid I've been a bit pressed for time this week, so here's a really quick update on what I've been up to...

- **Disability Guide:** We've begun to iron out which sections we want in the guide to make sure that it has the right focus on student experience, and we're making contact with the relevant bodies in the University and the Council to provide their expertise. We've also started recruiting students to give their perspectives on living and studying in Oxford with disability and we've had some good responses - keep them coming!

- **Student Advice Service review:** I'm in contact with the NUS who are going to help me with the review. We are currently identifying key stakeholders and drafting the consultation questions. We are hoping to consult in the second half of term, with a report and recommendations ready for you by Trinity.
- **LGBTQ History Month:** Starts on Friday! The poster of events is being distributed across the University this week.
- **Peer Mentoring scheme:** I've been talking to Peter Quinn (Head of the Disability Advisory Service) and the Disabled Students Campaign about this. I'm getting the sense that a lot of students are interested in becoming mentors, so I'm writing up a proposal at the moment, so we can get the ball rolling on this as soon as possible.

I've also been talking to CRAE about some exciting projects that might start up this term. More on that next time!

All the best,

Katie

David Messling	VP (Access & Academic Affairs)
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Hello Council,

Firstly, thanks to all who volunteered to provide a profile for the new interview guide - I look forward to seeing you as the faces of Oxford interviews 2013.

Since last Council:

#### Teaching Awards

The second annual OUSU student-led teaching awards are launched this week! Nominations will open on Wednesday in two categories: Most Acclaimed Lecturer and Innovation in Teaching. Last year's awards were a great success - this year we're hoping to get more students nominating, and use the case studies from both years to publicise what great teaching looks like from a student perspective.

#### Long Course Loans

Ellie Milnes-Smith, MPLS Undergraduate Division Rep, has been looking into the question of financial support for long course fourth year undergrads (Chemistry, Biochem, Materials), with Student Finance England and the University. If you've got any thoughts from current fourth years on 'long courses' as to whether they finding finance tricky (with a fourth year almost double the length), let me or Ellie know ([ug-mpls@ousu.org](mailto:ug-mpls@ousu.org)).

#### Academic Feedback Sessions

It's that term again! If you're running AFS, this year we'll be taking steps to share the feedback for the whole University with OUSU and JCRs, so that the results can inform education policy across the collegiate University.

#### Humanities Libraries

Following Council's mandate, I've been in contact with Bodley's librarian about loan periods and opening hours in the Humanities Division Libraries. Anya Metzger, OUSU's new Academic Affairs Campaigns Officer is leading on following up with the librarians. Watch this space.

Thanks for reading - any questions, get in touch on [access@ousu.org](mailto:access@ousu.org)

David

Hi Council,

I hope you've had a great start to term! There's been lots of activity of the charity and community front especially in the run up to one of our biggest fundraisers this year - Jailbreak - and in the run up to Student Volunteering Week and Go Green Week in 5<sup>th</sup> week. Here's a summary of what I've been working on, and if you'd like to know more, send me an e-mail: [charities@ousu.org](mailto:charities@ousu.org)

### Community

Last week I brought together the Oxford Student Community Partnership Group, a group composed of various people from the University, Colleges and the Council, to strengthen relationships and discuss matters that are of joint strategic interest. We discussed the impact on students of the Government's proposed changes to voter registration and came up with an action plan for lobbying against the measures.

Work on the Volunteering Showcase is going well and we've been engaging with lots of student and community groups to prepare for the exhibition at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> week. To register for your free place e-mail [volunteeringshowcase@ousu.org](mailto:volunteeringshowcase@ousu.org)

I'm working on a project to form partnerships between primary schools and Colleges through sport and have had productive meetings with the Sports Fed and the Council to lobby for improved community access to sports sites.

### Charity

This weekend over 150 students will be taking place in Oxford Jailbreak, with the sponsorship they raise being split between the RAG charities and Oxfam. We're projecting to raise around £20,000 from the event.

I've had around 50 applications from students to join the RAG Ball 2013 committee and will be engaged in shortlisting and interviewing them over the next couple of weeks.

Michael Davies and I have secured a large deal for roses to be sold for charity on Valentine's Day and we're working with 15 Colleges to sell them.

### Other

E&E: we're working on organizing a number of events (speaker events, socials, trips) to celebrate Green Week. I'm also inputting into the formation of the University's new Sustainability Policy.

The Careers Beyond Profit Series with the Careers Service has started really well. These take place every Monday at 1-2pm in OUSU.

The Community Wardens Scheme has also started off well!

Hello All,

It has been a busy two weeks with a lot of time devoted to the Leadership Development Programme and the Assange protest. Thinking about the latter, I want to explore a sexual consent myth.

### **A myth about sexual consent...**

Agreeing to do one sexualized act means you have agreed to do other sexual acts as well.

## The reality to the myth...

Consent to do one sexual act is not consent to do all sexual things. Consent to 'go back for a drink' is not consent for sex. Don't assume. If you are unclear about expectations, ask.

## Why are you telling me this Suzanne?

Because we need to talk about sexual consent, what it means, how we define it, and what we expect of others. Consent is:

1. Informed - both individuals agreeing to act
2. Mutual - clear understanding of both individuals about what is being asked for and consented to
3. Given - freely and actively
4. Communicated - in words and/or actions that are mutually understandable
5. Retractable - one sexual act does not mean all sexual acts

## What else I am doing from 9-5(ish)...

- Trained the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual OUSU Women's Leadership Development Programme facilitators and distributed the first Family Group session material.
- Held and lead the first Community Group Session for the Leadership Development Programme.
- Applied for the Brook UK Sexual Health Award for OUSU's work on sexual consent. OUSU is officially a nominee!
- Brought two officers from the Specially Trained Officer Unit of the Thames Valley Police to speak to WomCam.
- Wrote a letter to the Oxford Union society asking for them to redraw their invitation to Juliann Assange.
- Answered a lot of questions and gave a lot of quotes about OUSU's stance on Assange coming to the Oxford Union Society.
- Helped organised the protest in front of the Oxford Union Society.
- Worked with WomCam on flyers to distribute during the protest.
- Protested Assange's invitation at the Oxford Union Society.



## Shout Out...

This week's shout out goes to Abigail Burman, Equal Opportunities President at Corpus Christi, for taking a lead with denouncing the Union's invitation to Assange. She sent letters to common room officers, brought motions to her JCR, hosted a speaker event, and worked on policy in her college to support sexual abuse survivors. Thank you!

## PART TIME OFFICERS

**Michael Davies**

**Community Outreach & Charities Officer**

Over the past two weeks I've been working with college RAG reps, especially the newly elected ones, supporting them in their college fundraising plans. On Tuesday 2nd week I chaired RAG's first meeting for Charities Officers and RAG reps this term, where we talked about the events they had planned for their colleges and how RAG can help them out. We also discussed how to run a [College]'s Got Talent event as a preliminary round for the Oxford's Got Talent Grand Finale in Saturday 6th week; a lot of colleges are keen on taking part so the programme for the final should be an interesting one.

Other than this, I've been talking to the President of the Oxford Hub and Anna Pearson from the Dean Court Community Association about whether there's scope for student involvement in the DCCA's plans to establish a community centre in the Dean Court area of West Oxford. Progress has slowed recently in the community centre's development and we think that students might be able to provide the momentum needed to get things up and running again.

**Nick Cooper**

**Graduate Academic Affairs Officer**

Evening Council,

Hope everyone's having a great 3rd week and has survived the wonder that is Britain in the snow. Despite the adverse weather, I've been working with Chris on the issue of taught postgraduate courses, and ensuring that students are satisfied with the quality of these courses. We met with the University this week, and hope to take this forward with a full review of the courses offered.

Any thoughts, questions, general comments on graduate academic issues- do please email me! Otherwise have a great week.

Nick

**James Fisher**

**Environment & Ethics Officer**

Having just started my role as Environment and Ethics Officer I have been very busy acquainting myself with likeminded university staff and students concerned about environmental and ethical issues. Hopefully, along with these people, we can make a progressive step forward in university policy.

The major event I have attended so far is the Environment Panel (Building and Estates Sub-committee). The meeting was really positive and insightful. There are many university-lead initiatives such as midnight oil, electricity benchmarking and waste stream management aimed at reducing the environmental impact of college and university buildings. By working closely with these on going schemes I am confident that this year we can raise the bar for building efficiency and conservation (which is one of my main aims).

**Jiming Zhu**

**Health & Welfare Officer**

My name is Jiming Zhu, a first-year DPhil in Public Health. I also got my master at Oxford. Thank you all for the trust with which I become the health and welfare officer. On 22 January I had my first formal meeting with the vice president in charge of welfare, and we talked about the plan for this term. With respect to mental health, we will start by communicating with the counselling service. For the benefit of student parents, we are planning to conduct a short survey first. I will keep you posted on the progress. If you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Once again, I really appreciate your support, and I believe we can contribute to a healthier and warmer Oxford together.

Dear All,

Thank you for appointing me as Mature Students Officer in the last Council. I will endeavour to fulfil my office to the best of my abilities.

I will be arranging a social event at Harris Manchester College for all Mature Students within the university in a few weeks time: look out for a notice in your inboxes, and be sure to let all the mature students in your respective colleges know!

I will also be re-initiating the Mature Students Campaign: if anyone in your colleges is interested in joining the Committee, please pass on my email address.

Most importantly, I will be compiling an opt-in email list of all mature students in the university who wish to be informed of events that are happening.

Yours Sincerely,  
Henry Chong