

Reports to Council

3rd Week Council Hilary 2016

Sabbatical Officers

Becky Howe – President

Hey Council friends,

The last two weeks have flown by. Here's a potted history of what I've been up to:

- **Student Welfare Survey:** in my 1st week report, I updated you on my progress on this pledge. I said it would be launching in 2nd week. This changed last minute because the NSS (National Student Survey) response rate is down, so we need **final year undergraduates** to fill this in before we launch the Welfare Survey. NSS is really really important so PLEASE do it. Welfare Survey is now going to be launched in fifth week, and open until end of 9th.
- **Rent and accommodation pack:** going off to be printed this week yay
- **Rent and accommodation workshops:** one happening this Friday, the other on 16th Feb. Have had nearly 40 people signed up already. Poke your common room rent people (president/treasurer/domestic rep) to sign up if they haven't already.
- **Oxford Students' Festival:** we've got a great line up and I'm very excited!!!! We'll be announcing acts/activities/groups over the next couple of weeks.
- **Common room support:** in the last two weeks I've been working on the programme for this term's presidents' training day, which is this Saturday.
- **We also had a joint JCR and MCR Prescom** and it was great – really useful.
- **Have been meeting with new JCR presidents** to talk through priorities and pledges
- Last Tuesday, a few of us headed down to the **County Council** offices to join **On Your Doorstep** in protesting the devastating cuts the government are forcing the Council to make. Despite a big protest and incredible speeches from protesters within the Council meeting room, the cuts were passed; meaning horrendous cuts to vital services such as children's centres and homeless support organisations. We asked Andrew Smith MP to come out in support of the protest, which he did on Twitter.

With love and best wishes, as always,

Becky x

Cat Jones – VP Access and Academic Affairs

Lecture Recording. We did it!!!! Education Committee have endorsed the use of lecture recording and have agreed to provide a central IT service so that individual departments can opt-in for free. I will now be producing summary sheets to help all course reps to lobby their

own departments to opt in for the next academic year. A big thank you to Oxford Students' Disability Community and SusCam for co writing a letter used to lobby Education Committee members on the grounds of inclusivity.

Alternative Prospectus. We will be launching the Alternative Prospectus website on February 15th. This is a new venture for OUSU and we expect it to reach thousands of potential applicants. To raise awareness of the website we are sending 17,500 flyers to over 3,000 schools with little history of sending students to Oxford. Thanks to the 130 current students that contributed to it, and to the graduate students currently assisting with the proofreading and final edits.

Suspended Status. Our newly-established Suspended Status campaign successfully held their first meetings of each of the 4 working groups (policy, information, social, awareness). We are currently surveying all students with first-hand experience of suspension so that we can compare the experiences of suspension across different colleges. We will be recommending updated policies to Senior Tutors Committee towards the end of term.

Prelims Feedback. The long-standing campaign for prelims feedback was discussed at Education Committee in week 2. The committee did not endorse the provision of question-level marks but they agreed to continue more detailed work to understand what requirements the provision of marks would necessitate of administrator's and of IT systems in each department. We expect this to return to Education Committee where we will have another opportunity to push for endorsement. In the mean time, we will continue to encourage Subject Access Requests to build pressure on the university.

Project Feedback. Education Committee agreed that students should be given written feedback on submissions in early parts of their finals when the department considers the submission to be a building block for later work. This will not effect very many courses but it is a major improvement for some courses e.g. Earth Sciences which will now be allowed to provide written feedback on the third year mapping project.

Ali Lennon – VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities

Dear Council,

Apologies for my absence last council I was under the weather. Below is a quick summary of what I've been working on. As ever if you have any questions feel free to get in touch using vpweo@ousu.ox.ac.uk

- Proctors' Office Review Submission – as discussed at last council I've finished writing the review submission with the assistance of the manager of the Student Advice Service, Cat and Nick. I'll report back to council later on the review's progress.
- Welfare Officer Training – this is taking place on Thursday and Friday of this week. It should be a very exciting new course and I hope the officers find it useful.
- Campaigns – as stated in my last report I'm trying to go to as many campaign meetings as possible. I've attended several and have been assisting with various tasks linked to

their operation.

- Night Safety – following positive responses from University Security Services I'm organising a meeting with Thames Valley Police and the council about how we can pursue a new night safety project that may launch this term.
- Prevent – I'm rewriting the briefing note for common room officers so that it reflects developments in the university. However, this has been a somewhat tricky process due to not being involved in many of the meetings concerning Prevent.
- Exam Preparation Session – I've been assisting the Exam Schools with a new project focused on preparing students for exams.
- Committees – I've attended Security Sub-Committee, Steering Group for Sub-Committee for Student Health and Welfare, Annual Joint Meeting of the College Doctors' Association and Student Health and Welfare, Equality and Diversity Panel. Lucy (VP for Women) went in my place to the Race Equality Working Group, which I could not attend due to another committee, thank you Lucy.
- Pop Up Student Advice Service – I assisted the Student Advice Service with an event at Osler House. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of the Student Advice Service to 4th, 5th and 6th year medicine students. It was a great success thanks to all involved especially the Osler House Welfare Officers.
- Welfare Survey – following discussions with the university we've decided to postpone the survey and also utilise the expertise of several individuals that will improve the quality of the survey and the results.
- PTE Training – I gave the first section of the PTE training in the OUSU Executive Meeting last week. The Executive Officers thoroughly enjoyed the training and the quiz that followed.
- Alcohol Awareness Training – Building on the work of the last Graduate Welfare Officer Rita Nissim, we will be launching a new programme for Entz Officers and Welfare Officers. This programme will aim to equip officers with knowledge and skills required to run a safe event in which alcohol is served. Details of this programme will follow in the coming weeks.

Please note that there are a huge amount of other things I'm working on as well. I am also incredibly busy this week and will be working late every day this week in order to stay on top of everything. As such, I may be slow to respond to enquiries. Apologies.

All the best,

Ali

Lucy Delaney – VP Women

Over the past two weeks I have mainly been focusing on training. I have run several First Respondent Training sessions for Women's Officers and Welfare Officers and am due to deliver several more sessions this term.

Last week I held a Women's Officer training evening for women's officers, gender equality officers and female welfare officers. The session was extremely rewarding - women's officers from many different common rooms forged links, identified common problems, aims and goals, and set long-term plans. As a result of this session I have also created a drive of resources including template motions, guidelines, papers and policies so that important changes in

common rooms can be pushed through by women's officers quickly and easily, reducing the disparity of services, policies and schemes which benefit women students between colleges.

Following on from this, I am now able to start compiling a database of services, policies and schemes in each college so that I too can start to chase colleges up where I feel they do not do enough to support women students. I will then use this to ascertain which colleges have other liberation positions such as BME, Disabilities and LGBTQ Officers.

Best wishes,

Lucy

Nick Cooper – VP Graduates

Evening, Council! Another fortnight has passed, and more work has been done. Here is a summary of my efforts for the last two weeks but as always, get in touch if you want more info or if you want me to do something in particular:

- **Graduate application fee** – as discussed in 1st week, this issue arose at the University's Education Committee on Friday 2nd week. The Committee was broadly against the concept of raising the application fee, given the potential access and reputational risk. That said, the administration's financial position meant that a balance was needed to protect student services. I stressed the importance of ensuring the University's overall financial model is reviewed, and the Registrar gave a commitment not to raise the fee again for the next three years (except in exceptional circumstances). Remember this one, 2019 me. So, a little disappointed if not entirely unpredictable. I also wrote to the Registrar expressing our concerns, and the letter was signed by 40+ Common Room Presidents.
- **University rent negotiations** – These went ok – again, not perfect, but ok. We have agreed a rent rise that is reasonable, but that guarantees the sustainability of the university graduate accommodation for the medium to long term, allowing money for speedy repairs and, eventually, replacement. While not entirely happy, I came away with a 2.9% increase (2.8% including energy), down from the first discussed increase. We also agreed that rents would not rise significantly (that is, by more than the Retail Price Index of inflation + 2%) in the next few years, which protects future students from big rent hikes. This mild rise allows for money in the budget to build more accommodation, which is really needed – and I'll continue to work with the university on this.
- **International Festival** – we are close to closing applications for stalls at the International Festival in 6th week. We've had a reasonable number of applications, but still need more to fill the room! If you're part of an international society that hasn't signed up, email me!
- **Masters and supervision satisfaction** – I'm working on how my Masters focus groups, to come later this term, will work. I'm also constructing a survey for the end of the term

to see how research students feel about the quality and quantity of supervision they have received.

- **Graduate Common Room Presidents** – Have met up with several Presidents one-on-one, and with many more at our twice-termly Common Room Presidents' Committee (this time jointly with the undergraduates). A fun evening was had, you'll be disinterested to know.
- **Committees** – I sit on many. This fortnight's highlight was MPLS GJCF (in our commitment to reducing acronyms in Council, this is the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Divisional Graduate Joint Consultative Forum. Basically lots of science graduate course reps in a room). This was a really useful opportunity to see what's happening on the ground. Another fave was the Permanent Private Halls Supervisory Committee, where we discuss whether PPH life is similar to college life – and I'll be following this up with a meeting with PPH Common Room Presidents later in the term.
- **OUSU internal stuff** – I've done some governance stuff – see Any Other Business for details. We've also discussed how the Divisional Board Reps work, and how we can make this better.

Finally I'm glad to see how few of you read these in detail, because nobody commented that I accidentally copied and pasted a paragraph from my Michaelmas 7th week report into my Hilary 1st week one. I'm going to start running my reports through Turnitin to ensure such errors don't occur again.

With best wishes for a lovely couple of weeks,

Nick

Emily Silcock – VP Charities and Community

Hey council, I hope third week is treating you well. In no particular order, here's what I've been up to over the last two weeks:

RAG

The RAG charity ballot is now open. Please nominate any and all charities that you care about – they are in with a good chance of getting tens of thousands of pounds.

Environment and Sustainability

Last week I organised a dinner for all of the E&E reps to meet up and talk about what their plans are for the term and share best practice. This was really successful – and also really great to hear all of the stuff that's going on. I'm running training for them all later this week.

I've organised a joint effort between different student environmental groups in Oxford to run events for Go Green Week (4th week). There's going to be everything from a basil planting session to an event about green careers.

I've put plans in place to run collections of leftover food and other items at the end of term. And finally ... I've been working with the lovely Fairlie to put a team together to produce a sustainability guide.

Campaign Review

This might not sound the most exciting, but I've put a lot of work over the last couple of weeks into reviewing my campaigns. I'm planning on developing them so that we can hugely expand the campaigning work that we do by making them into bigger, broader campaigns.

Campaigning For Change

Woop! My baby of a training course is growing up – the second workshop is this week.

Grad charity reps

I've been contacting all of the Grad Common Rooms that don't currently have a charity rep to see if they would like one. Responses have been pretty positive!

Council protest

Thank you to all of you who came to protest against the County Council cuts last week. I'm devastated to say that the Council have passed the cuts. This is going to have a huge impact on the community over the next year

Voter Registration

I have sent Voter Registration party packs to every college ready for Voter Registration week (and also decked out the OUSU offices in Voter Reg bunting). Get excited.

Part-Time Executive Officers

Jessy Parker Humphreys – Trans Officer

This week I have been working on organising a student-staff meet up for trans students. We are having an informal meet up next week to discuss the best forum for this event to take place. I have also begun to follow up on some of Elliot's work from last term in the role such as lobbying for gender-neutral toilets. By the time council happens, I will have met with Ali to chat more about my plans in the role, which will hopefully include improving policies on trans students in colleges as well as supporting Action for Trans Health

Tom Wadsworth – Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

Hi everyone,

Hope your term has been good so far. I have done a number of things since last council, mainly focusing on SusCam, but also other activities. In the first proper meeting of SusCam (that

lasted a hefty 2 and a bit hours) we met with all the different working groups (policy, awareness, information, and socials) in order to decide the plans for the upcoming term. The focus from then was organising people in order to make sure these things were carried out. In terms of other activities, there was an Oxford Students Disabilities Community committee meeting where a number of plans were discussed and I have been tasked with organising an event surrounding the themes of disability and activism for disabilities awareness week. I have also done a number of other things but they are all more related to welfare, but in all honesty the roles are very linked (a conversation for another day :)).

Hilal Yazan – BME Students Officer

I attended the university Race Equality Working Group and the Equality and Diversity Panel - there seem to be many positive steps at the university administration level and the Vice Chancellor has announced that Oxford will apply for the Race Equality Charter Mark in 2017 which is great! I will continue to represent BME students' views on this. I've been attending CRAE meetings too, which have been going well and we had a meet up with a few BME reps on Saturday - working to collaborate and organise inter-college events together. Farheen, Co-chair of CRAE, and I will also be meeting Wadham's Tutor for Race on Monday so that we can better campaign for more colleges to introduce this role.

Ronak Patel – Disabled Students Officer

- Met with Disability Advisory Service and am liaising to find a way to create a nexus page which can give students with disabilities clearer information about what rights and entitlements they have legally, what the university has authority on, and what individuals have authority on. Also to provide links and summaries of resources that explain the policies on these issues, particularly to documents about individual college policy. Will also use the common framework being made by the disability advisory service, which outlines recommended policies for colleges which all colleges have in principal agreed to adopt.
- Will be working with the sabbatical officers on the disability aspect of the ongoing welfare research project including a survey to all students and focus groups for feedback on issues relating to disability and mental health.
- Also will be in the next few days reaching out to college disability reps (or welfare reps if there is none) to see how firstly we can get more tangible info on college policies relating to disability (as colleges are only bound by the law, not the university, giving them a lot of leeway) and if reps can help get create more feedback loops for student with disability or illness to voice concerns

Gabe Rusk – Graduate International Students' Officer

Dear Council,

I have three items to cover in my report this week. Firstly, the **International Drinks Event** will

be this Thursday at 8pm in Green Templeton College. Look for details on how to register and attend the event online. This event is intended to bring a host of international and domestic students together with drinks, food, and good company! I am eternally grateful to Greg Johnson at GTC for his support in hosting this event, GTC for their dual sponsorship, and my predecessor Lauren McKarus for her work on this event. Secondly, I attended the International Students Campaign Committee meeting this last Sunday. We are privileged to have this group of students working tirelessly to improve the lives of international students. The committee is in need of a tech officer, bloggers to write about their experiences at Oxford, and upon my further recommendation a **graduate officer** or member to sit on said committee. The International Students Campaign Committee has and would welcome any interested students in all three roles. If you are interested in any of these positions or know individuals who are please do reach out to me at my Officer email or to the committee Chair. Lastly this week, one of my long-term goals is the fruition of **MCR international grad reps**. In the next few weeks I hope to make more formal progress in terms of A) Gauging interest and B) Gauging feasibility.

Best regards,
Gabe Rusk

Catherine Kelly – LGBTQ Officer

Over the last two weeks I have been working with the LGBTQ Campaign, organising events such as the LGBTQ asylum in the UK speaker event with Queer Strike, which is happening this Thursday.

Last week Campaign held an open meeting and committee elections, in which we discussed our plans for the term and elected a new bi/pan rep, women's rep, working class rep and Good Night Out Campaign rep. We have some great new people on board and I'm very excited about what they'll get up to.

I've also been trying to connect college reps to each other and to the Campaign a bit more. I sent out an email to every college LGBTQ rep with some information about events for LGBTQ history month, and I organised a meet-up for reps, where they could share any concerns and ideas they had.

Yoni Stone – Community Outreach and Charities Officer

I have set up a Facebook group of those proposing Pint for a Pint motions and a spreadsheet in order to track our progress and success. If you would like to get involved with this then drop me an email.

Rebecca Kuperberg – Graduate Welfare Officer

Hi Council!

In the past two weeks I have been updating the MCR welfare mailing list (if you are an MCR welfare officer and are not receiving emails from OUSU, let me know and I will make sure you are on our list!) and planning for the next Grad WelfCom, which will hopefully be held in week 6

or 7. I have also been meeting with fellow students, and will be meeting with Student Advice Service, to put together a few workshops related to postgrad mental health. Please get in touch with any questions or suggestions!

Rebecca

Dorkina Myrick – Mature Students Officer

Activities Since Last Meeting

Executive Council Meeting

I attended the Executive Council Meeting on Friday, 29 January, where I received a Part-Time Executive briefing on support and resources available to me from the Sabbatical Officers in fulfilling my role as Mature Students Officer.

Meeting with Nick Cooper, VP of Graduates

I met with Nick Cooper, VP of Graduates, for an orientation to my duties as Mature Students Officer. We discussed the problem of a lack of cohesion among various University organizations. As such, I proposed joint meetings among StudentsPlus and Colleges with high numbers of graduate students (e.g. Harris Manchester, Green-Templeton, Linacre), MCR Presidents of other Colleges, Parents and Carers, international student representatives, and any other entities concerned with the needs of Mature students across Oxford.

We also discussed the problem of how a lack of graduate housing that is physically located in colleges perpetuates a graduate community that is disconnected with University life. It is unsure at this time how this can be resolved, as it is a complicated issue. However, I will be looking into ways to improve connectedness to college life for graduate and mature students who are unable to live in college.

Additionally, we discussed the need for support for students who have partners, families, and children who are in difficult Visa situations.

Finally, I am interested in hosting a Mature Students Tea sometime within the next few weeks.

StudentsPlus

I reached out to StudentsPlus and requested a meeting time to discuss coordination of activities.

Thank you, and I look forward to continued service to you.

Please feel free to e-mail me at maturestudents@ousu.ox.ac.uk with questions, concerns, or comments.

Best,
Dorkina Myrick,

Katy Haigh – Health and Welfare Officer

Hi council,

I have met with Ali regarding the drugs harm reduction leaflets he is currently working on: I will be lending a hand in this project in the upcoming weeks.

I will be undertaking organisation of alcohol awareness training for common room entertainment and welfare reps and have also preliminary begun arranging JCR welfare officer committee event.

That's all folks,

Katy

Luke Cave – Common Room Support Officer

Hi council! As a look back over what I've done the last two weeks, I've arranged the first OUSU Reps Committee meeting which took place yesterday. I'm writing this on Monday so I can't tell you how it went. However, as part of this, I've put together a short handout in conjunction with the OUSU Sabbatical officers (Pres and the VPs) which OUSU Reps can pass onto their committees and common rooms more widely. This contains info on what OUSU are currently working on. I attended the President's Committee last week. We were short for time so I couldn't elaborate on asking for input for a common rooms survey, but I will email out to the Presidents in the coming week and start putting together my survey. Please get in touch if you have any questions as to how OUSU can help support your common room!

Fairlie Kirkpatrick Baird – Environment and Ethics Officer

Hi Council!

This week, I've been working closely with Emily (Vice President Charities and Communities) and the Oxford Hub on a number of projects. Firstly, we've been coordinating Go Green Week, encouraging different environmental groups in Oxford to get together and hold a week of events, which we're producing a timetable for that will be publicised across the university. We've also been working with E&E reps in colleges to encourage them to hold events that week too. The week is developing nicely, with events each day culminating in a Divestment event for Global Divestment Day. I've also begun work on one of my campaign promises, the Guide to Being a Sustainable Student. I held a meeting for those interested on Thursday of 2nd week, and we've begun researching potential themes to put in the guide and discussing how to put it together. Also, I've been working on a report for Veggie Pledge, to help analyse the campaign's impact and how to do it better next year. It turns out that 75% of colleges participated, which is very exciting! I'll be working with Emily on ideas for how to make that better next year as well.

Adam Kellett – Access and Admission Officer

I've been in meetings with various parts of Target Schools as we train a new committee and begin to sort out the budget to give in to OUSU. I also spoke with Moritz-Heyman scholars about volunteering to be a shadow with Target Schools.

I was also contacted by the Cherwell for comment on a piece about summer schools, and will have assisted Cat Jones (VP Access and Academic Affairs) with the first Access Rep Forum of the term by the time of OUSU Council.

Divisional Board Representatives

Eden Bailey – Humanities Graduate Rep

Hello Council,

The main issue over the past fortnight has been the discussions coming from the Humanities Graduate Studies Committee. Most significantly, this included a 'fee-setting exercise', where faculties were offered the opportunity to change the costs of Masters courses. Quite quickly it emerged that no one really knew what the cost of running any of these courses are, and after further research from the Division, no information on this exists. Hopefully this discussion will have initiated further thought into the matter.

I have also been in communication with DPhil students and members of the Division (including at this meeting) about the newly introduced 'continuation charge' of £425 per term beyond three years of a DPhil students course. Currently most Humanities DPhil students don't have any funding beyond three years, and unlike other Divisions, Humanities are not absorbing this cost. This is causing real problems for students in the Humanities, and hopefully will be now be considered by the Division in further detail.