

OUSU

reports to council

3rd week michaelmas 2006

Alan Strickland

President

Campaigns

Fees

I've booked two coaches to transport Oxford students to the NUS national demonstration in London – if you want to book tickets, please e-mail president@ousu.org asap and pidge me a cheque to OUSU for £6.50 made payable to 'Oxford University Student Union.'

I've distributed promotional material for the NUS demo to JCR Presidents.

Thanks to all of the presidents who put a motion on fees to their JCR – this is a crucial issue; it's so important that it's properly debated across Oxford and that in moving forward on this we move together.

Supporting Common Rooms

JCR/MCR meetings

Attended a meeting of St. John's MCR with the Vice-President (Graduates), giving a short talk about OUSU's work and helping answer questions about the benefits of affiliation. St. John's JCR will no longer be paying the MCR's affiliation fee, so the MCR are having to consider for the first time whether they wish to affiliate themselves.

Spoke at a meeting of St. Hugh's JCR I support of a motion recommending the JCR support the OUSU Reform Strategy proposed at the last Council. It was nice to be asked so many questions about how we were reforming...and also good to enjoy the free JCR committee dinner!

With the Vice-President (Finance), met with representatives of Jesus JCR and GCR to answer questions about OUSU affiliation benefits and fees.

University Governance Reforms

Worked with the Public Affairs Office to organise a meeting between the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Lazarus (author of the Governance White Paper) and JCR Presidents. About fifteen presidents attended and many people had questions. Let me know if you missed the meeting and want information on what's being planned. Dr Lazarus has said she would be very happy to arrange another meeting if more students are interested.

Other

Attended Presidents' Committee. Something tells me PresCom is going to be rather fun this year...

Met with several JCR presidents individually to discuss problems and ideas.

University

JCC (Joint Committee of University Council with Student Members)

JCC is the committee of the University responsible for discharging the University's duties under the Education Act 1994 to ensure OUSU runs its elections, finances etc properly and in accordance with the law.

Submitted papers on constitutional changes, our financial reform programme and legal status change to the committee.

It has been agreed that when the committee meets in early Hilary, we will present an update on financial reforms made and an indication of where we see our future legal status. On the basis of this, a discussion of the block grant, to which the committee has agreed in principle, will take place. We intend to seek as a minimum a block grant beginning next academic year, and ideally hope to secure an interim payment during this academic year.

OUSU

Organisational

Had an evaluation meeting with the General Manager on organisational management.

Had a meeting with the University Personnel department to discuss improving OUSU's personnel procedures.

Legal status

Met with the Vice-President (Graduates)

Executive

Chaired a meeting of the Executive

General

Attended a speaker meeting organised by the Vice-President (Women), featuring the Zimbabwean activist Thabitha Khumalo. Immensely positive about a better future for the women of Zimbabwe, despite horrific experiences at the hands of the police, she, and the audience were in tears. Well done Jenny for an incredibly moving and informative event.

Have now met both of my mentors – both fascinating in quite different ways. I'm hoping they'll prove a very productive combination and strengthen my professional performance throughout the year.

Election

Have met several potential candidates for both sabbatical and part-time positions to explain what the various positions involve and answer questions about the organisation.

Met with the Returning Officer to discuss arrangements for the election.

Was invited to speak at Labour Club drinks about the election. As president, I'm completely impartial and am very happy to speak at other political organisations events. Drop me an e-mail.

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| Ed Mayne | V-P (Finance) |
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It's been another busy fortnight. A lot of my time has been spent on gathering and formatting OxStu advertising and standing on the door at Zoo nights. This is something that takes up a lot of my time every week. But aside from that this is what else I've been doing:

FRESHERS GUIDE

I've now pided a copy of the OUSU Freshers Guide to every undergrad fresher, including international students. Please email me if you know a fresher who has not received one. I will try to send out the remainder to visiting students. If your college has visiting students in it and you think they'd like a copy of the freshers guide please contact me. I've pided it to Mansfield visiting students. Mark Taylor, the editor of the guide, has sent me details of Hertford visiting students too so I'll be piding these to them in the coming week – it's going to be a busy weekend!

OCCH

The OCCH has been delivered and distribution has begun via willing helpers in colleges. This should go to every 2nd, 3rd and 4th yr undergrad. There was a bit of a mess up with the university on this. We initially thought the university would supply us with data to construct labels. However this data would not be able to reach us before the end of next week. This is too late and we have to get the guide out now. Therefore it'll be pided without labels. Most of the work should be done over the weekend.

NUS

I've ordered 10,000 Democracy cards which should arrive next week. NUS have sent me some publicity material which I will give to CR reps in Council.

In the affiliation battles, Christ Church, Mansfield and St Peters JCRs have voted to join whilst The Queen's JCR and Nuffield MCR have voted to stay out.

NUS Extra card sales are going ok, but to be honest I haven't had much time to do promotion with all the aforementioned projects occurring.

OXFORD HANDBOOK

I have the data ready to get this out to those who came on the first day of freshers fair. All I have to do is make labels. I'll get it done soon I promise.

ZOO

Zoo has been going ok this term. Our established nights, Wednesday at Park End and Zoo Na Na, have been drawing in large crowds every week. Our 2 new nights, Tuesday at Oceans and Collins and Legends at Filth on Thursday, have been more varied in their success – with big crowds some weeks and less in others. We will be putting energy into these in the coming week – especially as the Filth night is being run on a 4 week trial basis by the club and next week is the 4th week of the trial.

AFFILIATION FEES

It's that time of year again. Affiliation fees invoices were sent out on Thursday. Feel free to get in touch with me if you have any queries about this.

FINANCES / INVOICING

Invoicing is progressing slowly. I will soon be able to give a financial report to council based on this information. I still feel it is too early to give out detailed info though I will take questions on finances.

WEB

I've uploaded some more stuff from the old website onto the new one. But much remains to be done in this area.

I should have a financial report ready for 7th Week Council.

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| Jamie Frew V-P Opportunities) | (Welfare | and | Equal |
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Things have continued in much the same pattern as detailed in my previous report – the case work load has been high, a lot of time has been spent catching up from correspondence (including casework) from Fresher’s Week and the Survival Guide is slowly working it’s way towards completion.

Survival Guide

The Survival Guide has still not yet been published, although the text is pretty much ready for formatting within the next two weeks (other concerns permitting). This significant delay was the result casework concerns and necessary extensive time spent as a sabbatical team appraising the current state of OUSU. It is my belief that the Survival Guide is a fundamental aspect of my job as it provides the most direct means by which I can supply each student with reliable, accessible and student relevant welfare and equal opportunities information. However, by placing such a large task in the hands of someone who will not necessarily have any experience of formatting and preparing a publication for print the task becomes unnecessarily laborious and time consuming and it is to be preferred that in the future there be some to assist in the production of publications over the summer who does know how to do these things as there would certainly be enough work for them to do.

Casework

The casework burden of the VP (Welfare and Equal Opportunities) is intolerable – especially and the load has increased during term time. The extent and unpredictable nature of casework means that scheduling regular projects is utterly impossible and it is unworkable that incumbents should work such a role and be expected to supervise four committees and produce (or supervise the production of – a task that can often involve very close supervision) up to six publications or more a year. I am sorry to say that I do not have statistics of casework to present to Council, but the workload of the position has made it all together impossible to spend time keeping up with the paperwork necessary in order to do this.

Campaigns

All the campaigns under my remit should be having their first meetings soon due to current work loads – as such there is nothing much to report. New co-chairs are welcome to apply to any campaign as more help is always appreciated.

Aim Higher Mentoring

Essentially this is a programme that provide disabled students who will be applying to higher education with a disabled student mentor who can answer questions, give advise and allay fears about applying to university. I will be working as a mentor, but am also working with the Disabilities Office to promote this scheme both within the university and nationally. The programme is due to begin next week.

Jenny Hoogewerf-McComb

V-P (Women)

Attended Feminist Fightback conference. This was a great opportunity to meet lots of other Women's representatives from other Universities and organisations, as well as giving me lots of ideas for campaigning, lobbying and welfare support. As a result of this, I'm going to try and set up a national mailing list for Women's officers to chat and share information, tips and tactics. I was joined by many other women from OUSU WomCam- I'm proud to be involved in such a diverse and enthusiastic campaign this year. I hope they were as inspired as I was by the very fact such a conference had been organised at all, and the range of topics covered; from trans liberation, to the hijab debate, to pornography legislation.

Organised a WomCam introductory "Cake and Conversation" session. This was a great opportunity for new members to sit down and share ideas about how they want the committee to develop this year. Again, it is great to see so many people enthusiastic about campaigning.

Researching the gap in funding and facilities between men's and women's sports at the University. I've had a hard time getting some of the official people to get back to me- perhaps because some of the inequalities are quite shocking! I'll report to Council when I have written a proper report.

Thabitha Khumalo- a really well attended speaker event, with lots of ideas for how we can support the Dignity. Period! Campaign both in the University and beyond.

Reclaim the Night- I'm working on making sure we have a really well attended, exciting demonstration in seventh week, including a much higher involvement from the local community.

Women's Termcard- I've produced this, a planner which details all of the women's events I could find going on in the University- from political speakers to religious study groups. It will come out termly, and I'm on the look out for sponsorship for Hilary.

Meeting with the Vice Chancellor- This was a really exciting opportunity. We discussed many points; from integrating the existing networks of women which already exist in the University, to childcare, sexual harassment/attack support in colleges, to targeting female alumni, to the finals gap. I was impressed by some of the measures Dr Hood has already taken in reforming the administrative staff of the University to include more women, for example the Pro Vice Chancellors and Registrar. I hope to be able to follow up on some of the points I raised now they have been pointed out at the highest levels of the University.

**Andrea Miller
(Graduates)**

V-P

- I. Apologies for absence at last meeting of Council: Please let the record show my apologies for missing the last meeting of Student Council. I was instead present at a meeting of the Conference of Colleges' Graduate Committee, which was held at

the same time. Since this body meets much less frequently than council I thought the decision appropriate and hope that Council will agree.

- II. Committee Meetings: A large part of the time of the VP Graduates is necessarily devoted to sitting on various university and college committees. Below please find the list of meetings I have attended since the last Council
 - A. The Curators of the University Libraries, 16/10/06, 2pm
 - B. Educational Policy and Standards Committee, 20.10.06, 9.30am
- III. Business with the MCRs: A second function of the VP Graduates is to act as a communication liaison among the MCRs
 - A. On Tuesday, October 17 at 5pm I attended a meeting of St. John's College MCR Committee. The JCR is likely to soon cease paying the MCR's OUSU affiliation fee, so I was asked to come and speak about what OUSU provides for graduate students so that the MCR could make an informed decision regarding whether to continue OUSU affiliation in the future.
 - B. I have finally completed the master list of all current MCR Presidents and Social Secretaries, updated the mail lists, and sent the information around for all to have as reference. I plan to post the information on the website if I can ever manage to get a graduates page up and running
 - C. I have been making an effort to find a time and venue to hold our first MCR PresCom of the year, but so far without success. I remain optimistic that one of the MCR Presidents will soon step forward with an offer to host the meeting.
- IV. Continued Distribution of the Graduate Guide: Unfortunately, the Graduate Guide has not yet been delivered to all affiliated MCRs due to problems with transportation. Guides have reached all colleges with affiliated MCRs except: Corpus Christi, Exeter, Green, Keble, Magdalen, New, Nuffield, Queens, St. Anne's, St. Antony's, University, and Wadham. Hopefully deliveries will be complete by the next meeting of Council.
- V. Casework: Most of my time since the last meeting of Council has been occupied with casework in my capacity as a member of the Student Advice Service team. While I cannot discuss individual cases for reasons of confidentiality, suffice it to say that I see a general trend which concerns me greatly and that I hope to address in a more general way over the course of the year.

**Helen Bagshaw
Affairs)**

V-P (Access & Academic

A quick sum-up of my last two weeks:

Curators of University Libraries

Following the passing of the emergency motion in the last Council, I attended CUL with Andrea and we asked about the New Bodleian opening times. More on this in my verbal report, but there were a number of reasons stated for the closure. Various other things

were discussed, including library fines within different subjects. As a result, we have a meeting organised with the Acting Deputy Director of OULS and several of his colleagues to discuss a variety of student issues within the libraries. More on this after the meeting.

EPSC and the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)

Last Friday was my first Educational Policy and Standards Committee (EPSC), and on the Thursday, I had a pre-meeting with Elizabeth Fallaize, the Pro-VC (Education). Both of these meetings were great, as we are fully respected and not in any way made to feel like Junior Members. Some of the major issues were student number planning and the Oxford Student Course Experience Questionnaire (OSCEQ).

Study Skills

As I mentioned in the last Student Council, the University is about to advertise for its first Learning Development Advisor. I had a meeting with Prof. Graham Gibbs, the Director of the Learning Institute, and its now looking like each candidate for the position will have 1/2hr of questioning from a panel including myself, Andrea, and a couple of others about how they will work with students and OUSU. Aside from this, I will hopefully be holding some study skills sessions in the next week or two but you'll hear about this via maillists when they are sorted.

NSS meeting

Thursday (although I'm writing this on Tuesday!) I had a meeting with Prof. Michael Arthur (chair of the National Student Survey Steering Group) and the Presidents of Warwick and Cambridge Student Unions. I'll probably be bringing a motion to the next Council about our NSS policy in light of this, though more in my oral report.

Admission: Impossible – National Demo

Last point – everyone should come to London on Sunday for the National Demo on top-up fees,!

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| Imran Khan Community) | V-P | (Charities | and |
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Dear Council,

Apologies once again for the brevity of this report, but here's a really quick summary of what I've been upto in the past two weeks:

Charities:

The two RAG events which have been held so far, Speed Dating and Eclectic, have been extremely successful, both in terms of everyone enjoying themselves and the money raised. The Speed Dating resulted in 14 matches!

The new RAG Exec have now been elected, so you should see things beginning to pick up in terms of activity – look out for Battle of the Bands, Rhythms of Dance, pub crawls, and more speed-dating...

The Bungee jump is on for this Saturday – if you're interested, we may still have places, so let me know!

The cheques for last year's RAG activity have now been sent out – 15 charities will be receiving £1666 each.

I've also been liaising with student charities on various issues; for instance, Jacari have been consulting OUSU for help with their CRB disclosure checks and some of their policies, and KEEN are eager to work more closely with RAG for help with their fundraising efforts.

Community:

We're continuing to see interest in the E-mentoring scheme, and hopefully the first applicants will be making contact with their mentees soon.

On Tuesday (3rd week), there was a community outreach workshop run by the Oxford Philomusica, which a number of students attended, and some of whom will hopefully go on to assist the Philomusica in their residency program. There was also a talk by a representative from Helen & Douglas House, a respite care centre for terminally ill children, to which over 25 students came and hopefully a significant proportion of them will go on to volunteer there.

In fourth week, although at time of writing a date and location haven't been finalised, there will be a talk by Marie Wright, who runs the annual OxDox Film Festival, as they are looking for significant numbers of student volunteers to help with reviewing the documentaries, meeting directors, and helping to get the local community involved in the festival.

There's already been significant interest in volunteering with Science Oxford, particularly with their Science and Engineering Ambassadors scheme, even though the publicity for that isn't yet complete. I'm hoping to run the training and information sessions for that in fifth week.

There's also been some interest from people looking to get involved in the Future Outlook committee for the Alternative Careers Fair, so hopefully I'll have more to report on that by next council.

I'm also pleased to say that we've been working with a local charity, the Oxford Muse, to hold a Conversation Dinner for some MCRs as a way of introducing people to the Muse and what they do, which will be taking place on the 8th of November.