

# OUSU

## reports to council

*3rd week michaelmas 2007*

<b>Martin McCluskey</b>	<b>President</b>
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Hi Everyone! Welcome to 3rd Week Council. It's just under 3 weeks until the OUSU elections. Make sure you check out our elections website at [www.ousu.org/elections-2007](http://www.ousu.org/elections-2007).

### **Greyfriars Closure**

Myself and Louise attended a briefing on Tuesday morning with Michael Sibly (Academic Registrar) and Alasdair MacDonald (the Vice Chancellor's Private Secretary) to discuss the closure of Greyfriars at the end of this academic year. We have arranged meetings with the Presidents of both Greyfriars and Regents Park (which should have happened by the time of this Council) and will be working closely with them and the University to ensure that the transition for Greyfriars students is as smooth as possible.

### **PPHs**

James and I have been working closely with all the PPH Presidents to help them in responding to the Review that was published a few weeks ago and ensuring implementation in areas that will improve the student experience at the Halls.

### **Elections**

I met twice with the Returning Officer, James Dray, to make arrangements for the annual elections in sixth week. We discussed possible liberalisation of the elections regulations, OUSU publicity for the elections and making the elections as accessible as possible for all candidates.

### **Common Room Meetings**

I attended JCR meetings at Pembroke and Jesus JCRs in 2nd Week and will attend Merton JCR on Sunday of 4th Week. It's been really interesting to sit in on meetings and have enjoyed the free food and drink at Jesus and Pembroke! Email me on [president@ousu.org](mailto:president@ousu.org) if you want me to come to your Common Room.

### **Joint Consultative Committee of Council with Student Members**

I attended a meeting of JCC in 2nd Week, along with a number of the other Sabs and exec members. The committee agreed to start a comprehensive funding review of OUSU in a working group with participation from JCC members, OUSU, representatives from Colleges, from the finance division and from the General Purpose Committee / Planning and Resource Allocation Committee of the University. The review will examine the current OUSU "funding mix" and look at possible new methods of funding the Student Union.

We also discussed the possibility of a full time OUSU Student Adviser. This matter was tabled to the 5th Week meeting of JCC where a more detailed proposal could be presented.

### **City Council East Area Parliament**

I attended, along with Claire Addison, a meeting of the Oxford City Council East Area Parliament to discuss the issue of CCTV on Cowley Road. The Councillors have agreed to student participation in the new Working Group on the issue, meeting on 29th October. Local residents at the meeting also raised issues surrounding student housing and, often, the mess caused by student residents in HMOs in gardens and on pavements. We have agreed to work with local residents and councillors to find solutions to these problems.

#### Assessment and Progression Steering Group

I attended a meeting of the Assessment and Progression Steering Group which is working through this year in order to establish a new online system for (among other things) the generation of transcripts, personalised exam timetables and exam results in an online system. The group has split into a number of working groups and will be meeting again at the end of November.

#### Media

I co-presented the drive time show on BBC Radio Oxford on Friday of 2nd Week. It was fun.

#### Prescom

Along with James Lamming, I attended Prescom on Friday of 2nd Week.

#### Postgraduate Assembly

I attended, along with Ingrid and James, a meeting of Postgraduate Assembly on Tuesday of 3rd Week. Despite a disappointing turnout, we received some useful feedback from MCR representatives, collected information for the upcoming Teaching and Learning Space Review and had a presentation from Susan Sweet, the director of Student Funding.

#### Reach Oxford

I have been liaising with the International Office on the next round of Reach Oxford applications. For more information about this, pick up the pack at Council.

#### Nick Griffin and David Irving

I have had two meetings with representatives from JSoc, ISoc and Mujews to discuss the invite of David Irving and Nick Griffin to the Oxford Union.

<b>Louise Randall</b>	<b>V-P (Welfare and Equal Opportunities)</b>
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This fortnight began with a Sunday spent training welfare officers. Skills covered included listening skills, how to keep casenotes, making referrals, coping with dependency. We also had a discussion forum on issues affecting welfare in different colleges, and shared ideas for welfare events and ways of raising awareness of welfare issues. I'm pleased to see that many (although not all) welfare officers are trained Peer Supporters, but these regular welfare training sessions aim to supplement those skills with specific skills required to be a confident college welfare provider.

After last council's mandate to approach the university for funding for a Student Advisor, I took an initial paper to JCC (Joint Consultative Committee). A productive discussion was had, and I will be supplementing the preliminary proposal with a full paper on the need for a Student Advisor to be brought to 6<sup>th</sup> week JCC. Any student input into this would be very welcome. Please email me at [welfare@ousu.org](mailto:welfare@ousu.org).

The first meeting of the rejuvenated 'Anti Racism Campaign' was had. It was an informal chance for anyone interested in issues of race, discrimination and equal opportunities to get together and share ideas. We are working in association with the Black Association of Rhodes Scholars, who are organising a series of speaker events to celebrate Black History Month. This series kicks off with the Ghanian president, His Excellency John Kufour who is speaking on 'Black Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' at 4:45pm on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October at Rhodes House – do come along!

Everyone is very welcome to the next meeting of the Anti Racism Campaign (5pm, Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December, OUSU) when we will be discussing the issues we wish to campaign on this term, and electing co-chairs.

I am regularly meeting with the University Disabilities Office. We are currently looking to address the needs of international students with disabilities who are not eligible for much of the funding available to home students. We are also really keen for common rooms to be continually readdressing their provision for students with disabilities. This can be as simple as making sure bops or JCR/MCR meetings are held in an accessible location. Get in touch with me for any advice!

The day to day running of the Student Advice Service continues to take up a large proportion of my time. We have been very busy with casework, which can involve lengthy sessions with students; many advocacy meetings with university and college officials, or helping students formulate complex appeals and complaints documents.

Please ask about anything detailed here in my report, or any other part of my role which I haven't covered this week!

<b>Hannah Roe</b> <b>P(Women)</b>	<b>V-</b>
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**Upcoming Events** that I'm responsible for -

WISP –Women in Student Politics

8-10pm Friday 3rd Week, Keble

Please tell your friends!

This has taken a good amount of work to get together – many thanks to John Maher for getting a room when the original booking went pear-shaped. I've invited women from a wide range of different areas of student politics, so it promises to be an informative, interesting and inspiring event. Thanks also to Suzanne McClelland whose original idea this event was – hopefully this is a first step towards getting a bit more gender equity in involvement in Oxford student politics. The numbers of female JCR presidents haven't ever managed to rise much above 10 and sadly that's pretty representative of women's general involvement in most areas of student politics it seems.

Public Speaking Workshop

8-9.30pm Tuesday 4th Week ( Venue TBC)

Following on from the first event, a look at skill areas for women students. Neill Harvey-Smith, Director of Debate Chamber will be running the event – he will be bringing his

professional experience of working with a variety of women's networks.

Other events I'm working on –

Wear It Pink – working with RAG and WomCam  
Reclaim the Night March – writing to Council etc!

## **Welfare**

Self-Defence Classes –

Lara Anderson will be running the OUSU classes again. We're just confirming room bookings and will shortly be ready to go! Watch this space, and the OUSU website!

Eating Disorders – Compilation of the OUSU Support Guide continues, I've been working with the Counselling Service on certain parts of it. These have been put on the OUSU website as well.

Enough! Group – Until the group becomes BEAT registered, we're working with the Counselling service to get support for the Co-ordinators. Very soon we'll be advertising for the BEAT training programme.

Safety Bus -I'm working with Brookes to organise an information event for people who want to find out more about volunteering as drivers and navigators.

## **Campaigning and Representation**

Meetings - I attended JCC last week.

Last Saturday I went with the WomCam group to the Feminist Fightback conference and met a number of interesting people at the stalls there – hopefully this will lead to some interesting speaker events in the near future.

I'm currently working on addressing issues specifically affecting women graduates due to their sex, ideally this will result in a survey with a high response rate.

## **Other work**

Over the last week and a half I have attended both WomCam and Enough! I've also gone to ask questions to do with women and democracy at the Democracy Now! Discussion as invited to by the organisers. I've spoken at the St John's Women's Lunch about current issues affecting women in the University.

<b>Ingrid Frater (Graduates)</b>	<b>V-P</b>
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This week has been very busy and much of what has happened I will update on verbally.

**Postgraduate Assembly** will have taken place on Tuesday – I will update Council verbally and bring motions passed for ratification.

The **International Students' Campaign** met for the first time and went through their constitution. Again, I will update verbally after their second meeting on Thursday evening.

**MCR PresCom** will have taken place on Thursday evening – I will update verbally.

**Casework** numbers have been very high in the last couple of weeks, and casework has been using much of my time, but good progress is being made and casework is proving to be very helpful in taking suggestions to University Committees – for instance about graduate admissions. Of course, no reference is ever made to specific cases, to ensure confidentiality.

**University Committees** have included Curators of the University Libraries, Teaching and Learning Space Review Group, Educational Policy and Standards Committee, EPSC Graduate Panel, JCC, Code of Practice Relationships at Work, and the Standing Committee of the Graduate Committee of the Conference of Colleges. Some of the key issues for graduate students being discussed are graduate admissions, the role of the college advisor, graduate schools, the teaching and learning spaces available to graduates, and numbers of graduate students at the University.

I am going to be working with Louise and the Disability Office on **funding** for international students with disabilities.

There will soon be a new website on **www.ox.ac.uk/students**, and I've been working on creating and user-testing this.

Next Wednesday I'll be hosting a scoping group for postgraduate student officers for the **Aldwych Group**.

<b>James Lamming</b> <b>Affairs)</b>	<b>V-P (Access &amp; Academic</b>
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Freshers' week may be over, but the pace is yet to slacken. The past couple of weeks have been busy with casework, meetings left, right and centre, and preparations for the Finalist Forum and the Prospective Student section on the OUSU website. Access seems to have shot up the University's agenda, so expect a motion on that at the next Council, while the next couple of weeks will hopefully see further progress on the Interview Profiles website and the SAS Reform Proposal from Ingrid and I. Any questions, then please get in touch and don't forget to read my blog.

## **Access**

**Target Schools** – I've secured £7000 funding for this years activities (not including the Alternative Prospectus) and will be signing a memorandum of understanding for a similar funding level, with the option of ad hoc project funding, for the next five years.

**Prospective Student Website** – I am building an extra part of the OUSU site with information for Prospective students. This will have information on applying, useful links, contact information, the Alternative Prospectus and host the Interview Profile website.

**Miscellaneous** – I wrote a comment piece for last weeks Cherwell and held a meeting for all the JCR Access Reps. This went well, and I will be producing a guide to being an Access Rep, have set up an AdmissionsReps mailing list and will be holding more regular informal meetings to improve communication between colleges.

## **Academic Affairs**

**Bodleian Library** – Yesterday I had a tour of the Bodleian Library with other Common Room Presidents. As I am writing this report before the tour happens, I don't know how it went, but suspect I will be writing a motion in support of the Osney Mead Depository to bring for discussion at the next OUSU Council.

**PPHs** – With Martin, I met with JCR Presidents from the PPHs to discuss the recent report and ways in which we can help them respond to it and improve their student members' experiences.

**University Meetings** – These last two weeks, I had JCC, Curators of the University Libraries, Education Policy and Standards Committee, Personal Relationships Code of Conduct discussion group, Student Gateway steering group and Student Gateway User Testing.

**Miscellaneous** – Lots of Casework, focusing mainly on students not enjoying their time at Oxford or ending up with penal collections, and I met with the Common Room Academic Affairs Reps, who appreciated the guide I'd produced, and I've also set up a mailing list for them, and will be having more regular meetings with them as well.

## **OUSU**

**Box Moving** – Shifted (literally) tonnes of OCCHs and left over Freshers Fair bags. Who needs a gym membership?

## **An Academic Joke**

Descartes walks into a bar, and the bar man asks if he'd like a drink. Descartes says: "I think not", and disappears.

<b>Claire Addison Community)</b>	<b>V-P</b>	<b>(Charities</b>	<b>and</b>
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## **Community**

- I had a useful meeting with Jack Butler from Future Foundations about possibilities for the Alternative Careers Fair (plug: Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January in Exam Schools) and engaging the wider student body in volunteer work
- I attended the OxHub event Cocktails with a Twist of Charity at the Oxford Union, which brought together many of Oxford's student charities. We're hoping to work together more closely this year.

- I had a really positive meeting with Leyla Okhai from the university admissions office and Adam from OxHub about the possibility of creating a pamphlet about the work of Oxford students in the community – something we haven't had until now because of the university's typically disparate approach to volunteering. We're also organising a presentation about the possibility of a combined volunteering website.
- The Volunteering in Oxford website is slowly moving along due to technical issues. It should be a great resource once it's up and running
- On Wednesday of 3<sup>rd</sup> I'm attending a meeting with Richard Jarman, the Head of Government and Community Relations for the university.
- I attended the city council's East Oxford Area Parliament meeting with Martin to discuss our CCTV for the Cowley Road campaign.
- I'm putting in the final preparations for the International Students' Volunteering Day on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October, at Aston Rowant Nature Park.
- I've had individual meetings with students who wish to get involved with a few of our projects, and I've also sent out details of dozens of local charities to the new mailing list.

## **Environment**

- Neil Bowerman (OUSU part time exec) and I attended the university's Environment Panel, who were very welcoming of the survey of colleges' environmental performance made by the OUSU Environment and Ethics committee. I have been invited to speak about students' environmental concerns at a Domestic Bursars' Panel next term.
- The OUSU E&E committee continues apace. There will be a college reps' seminar in 4<sup>th</sup> week, specifically aimed at college Environment/Green/Ethics reps so please encourage yours to come along!
- We're running a campaign, which started in Worcester, to take unsustainably caught fish off of hall menus which seems to be getting a lot of attention

## **RAG**

- We have elected a new RAG exec, chaired by president Riya Khilnani (Hertford).
- The Bungee Jump had a massive take up rate in Oxford, but was sadly cancelled a week beforehand by the Oxford Stunt Factory. It has now been moved to Hilary term.
- The RAG college pants sales are going well, and I've made up some publicity for society pants also (anyone for OUSU boxers?)
- We're just starting to organise a RAG Jailbreak, hopefully in association with Durham and Cambridge so look out for that.
- Hannah (VP Women) and I are ploughing on with the organisation of this year's In The Pink event for Breast Cancer Research. It will be held in Wadham next Friday.