

OUSU

reports to council

3rd week michaelmas term 2009

Stefan Baskerville

President

Common Rooms

Spoke and answered questions at St Anne's, Univ and Lincoln JCR meetings. Lincoln reaffiliated for the coming year and will re-debate the issue in Trinity term. Spoke and answered questions at Lincoln MCR.

Met four common room presidents (another two cancelled meetings owing to illness with the flu). Issues discussed include: student-community relations, charity act implications for common rooms, entz hustings, student representation, among others.

Attended Prescom. Issues discussed included JCR-SCR relations, student representation in colleges, charity act and implications for CRs, landlord accreditation scheme, and common room database.

University

Met Alice Perkins, external member of University Council, to discuss student representation and OUSU over the coming year. Attended University Council and discussed funding of teaching at Oxford, pandemic flu, and the strategic risk register.

HE Funding

Questioned Peter Mandelson (full title: Baron Mandelson of Foy in the county of Herefordshire and Hartlepool in the county of Durham, First Secretary of State, Lord President of the Council, President of the Board of Trade and Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills) on preserving the tutorial system when he came to Oxford. Didn't get much. He's pretty wily.

Attended the CBI Higher Education Summit on Tuesday. Questioned Mandelson again, this time on student representation on the review of HE funding. He is "committed to student voices being heard throughout the review", in his words, "There you go, you've got a half answer" (which was followed by a wink, and him taking the next question). Asked David Willetts (Conservative HE spokesman) the same question, he was similarly evasive, though I got a little bit more time with him to lobby him some more on the importance of including students in the process of review. Also raised concerns with Head of HEFCE, Sir Alan Langlands, about funding the tutorial system at Oxford.

Miscellaneous

Worked on charity act for common rooms, landlord accreditation scheme, common room database, and on OUSU's charity registration process, among other things.

Prepared a number of papers for JCCSM regarding finances. Met the Living Wage campaign twice to discuss their progress and speak to interested activists.

**Dani Quinn
Opportunities)**

V-P

(Welfare and Equal

I have -

- Met individually with 11 Common Room Officers / students involved in Welfare and Equal Opps issues (and distributed appropriate goody bags)
- Had Welfare Committee meeting, for Welfare Officers. The turnout was good, and we covered thefts, sexual health provision and disordered eating. There will be a training session later this term, with a representative from B-eat. Thank you to Kat Wall for setting this up this training.
- Had Equal Opportunities Committee Meeting. This was a really productive session, with many issues being raised for me to work on with the Equal Opps Officers. Amongst others, we discussed the mistaken yet prevalent opinion that positive discrimination is not only legal, but taking place, and how

diversity can be celebrated. It has also raised some concerns about how some Common Rooms are operating, with regard to Equal Opportunities. Presidents can look forward to hearing about that in the near future...

- Had LGBTQ reps' meeting. This was well attended and there were really productive discussions. There will be training with a representative from Oxford Friend in 5th Week. The next reps' meeting will be on Wednesday of 7th Week. Thank you (and well) done to Jasper Minton-Taylor for leading this meeting.
- Attended LGBTQ Council and CRAE (the Campaign for Cultural and Racial Awareness).
- Attended Mansfield MCR's Welfare Tea, Exeter MCR's Welfare Tea, Lincoln JCR Meeting, St Antony's GCR Meeting and New College JCR Meeting. It was really great to meet so many people – thank you to Kenneth Nodland, Nila Cimil, James Meredith, Calum Nicholson and Tom Scott respectively.
- Ran training on Listening Skills and Student Support. The group was small but perfectly formed and the feedback was positive. I shall look into finding a time that suits more Presidents. A huge thank you to Kat Wall for her help and feedback.
- With Jonny Medland, have been preparing training on Advocacy and Representation for Presidents and Academic Affairs Officers. We envision that this will take place on Saturday of 7th Week, but will confirm this in the near future.
- With Kat Wall, worked to improve sexual health provision in Colleges. Thus far, I have surveyed Welfare Officers on provision in their College, written a survey for assessing students' knowledge of Chlamydia and its symptoms, have ordered 7000 (!) 'blobs' for raising awareness of self-testing (this will make sense when you see them) and – Council's approval pending – will be submitting a proposal to the Committee for Student Health and Welfare.
- Attended the meeting of Academic Affairs Officers and OUSU reps.
- Met with the Assessor, the Rev Dr Muddiman. We had a productive discussion about childcare/student parents, disordered eating and harassment.
- Set up supplementary training for Student Advice Service, which has been really helpful for us in improving our policies for working with students. A massive thank-you to the Nightline Coordinators for running this.

Between writing this and Council itself, I will be –

- Attending a meeting of the Disability Equality Scheme on Monday – I will update Council on the outcomes, as it hasn't taken place yet.
- Attending Post-Graduate Assembly on Monday and MCR Prescom on Tuesday.
- Will be attending the Central NAG (Neighbourhood Action Group) just before Council.

If you have questions or suggestions, please get in touch on welfare@ousu.org.

Kat Wall

V-P (Women)

Hello Council,

The main things I have been working on over the last couple of weeks are:

Women's Officer Support and Training:

- Ran the women's officer welcome event
- Running weekly training on a range of different skills useful to the position:
 - o Listening skills
 - o Supporting Students
 - o How to run an event
 - o How to interact with college
 - o Assertiveness training
 - o Crisis management
- These meetings have not been as well attended as I would like – please encourage your officers to attend
- Distributing women's officer packs with the following publications:
 - o Student Parent's Handbook

- o Eating Disorders Handbook
- o Unplanned Pregnancy Handbook
- o Women's Officer Handbook
- o Women's Report
- o Love without chains – A Handbook on abuse, assault and harassment – local support services

Sexual Health Campaign:

- Working with Dani Quinn (VP Welfare and Equal Opps) to gather information about college provision of sexual health services
- Undertaken a local survey of students to gauge awareness of Chlamydia
- Spoken with GU services at the Churchill Hospital to get information for students about sexual health clinics
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Student Parents:

- Ran Student Parent Orientation, Friday 1st Week with Louise Edwards (Childcare officer), Gavin Barker from the Childcare Information Service and Lisa Stokes-King (OUSU Student Advisor).
- Working with the Childcare Support Service in the University to put together an accurate list of student parents currently at the University (something which hasn't been done since 1999)
- Running Tea and Toys for student parents – Sunday 3-5pm at the Bradmore Nursery.

Enough!:

- Ran the first Enough! of term.
- Organised training for Enough! co-ordinators with B-EAT
- Established a new contact address – enough@ousu.org - to remove stigma for male students who may wish to attend

Springboard:

- Met with Felicity Cook (Head of the Equality and Diversity Unit), Sian Renwick (Gender Equality Officer) and Hannah Boschen from the Oxford Learning Institute to discuss the possibility of rolling out springboard (personal and professional development programme for women) to undergrads. We decided to pilot the scheme in Trinity term and are now working to get funds asap

Women in politics:

- Organised a hust training workshop at St Hilda's for students from 'eastern colleges'
- Organised a hust training workshop at St Anne's for students from 'northern colleges'
- Written article for OxStu on discreet discrimination
- Attempting to raise awareness about the Hust Code of Conduct

Gender Equality Week:

- Helping to finalise the plans for Gender Equality Week
- Supporting Portia (part-time women's officer) to run these events
- Organising the publicity for the week

If you have any questions or queries email me at women@ousu.org

Sarah Hutchinson

V-P (Graduates)

I'd like to start by welcoming the new graduate part-time exec officers: David Bowe is the new Graduate Welfare officer, and Natasha Malpani is the Graduate International Students' officer. I'm really looking forward to working with them, and with the Graduate Women's officer if someone is elected in Council. I'd also like to welcome the new Mature Students' officer Rainbow Chang, with whom I'll be working closely.

Since my last report the bulk of my time has been spent in University Committee meetings.

Last Tuesday I attended Graduate Admissions Committee, where we discussed a number of issues relating to the Graduate Admissions process and received a report on how the last round of admissions went. There was

a marked reduction in the number of students being assigned a college very late in the day – this year all students were placed in a college by the end of -1st week. However, the small number of students who were accepted late should not have been, and I am working with the University to try to ensure students are accepted by a college earlier in the process.

I have also attended the Fees Policy Group, Curators of the University Libraries, and Education Committee where the main issue relating to Graduates was again the Graduate Admission Process, including the work the Graduate Admissions and Funding Office is doing to ensure that the cost of studying is set out in each students' University offer letter.

I also attended Graduate Panel, which is the Graduate sub-committee of Education Committee. Amongst the issues discussed were graduate admissions, the potential effects of Swine Flu on graduate admissions and study, feedback on academic progress and the provision of education, and continuation fees. I stressed that any introduction of fees beyond the current fee liability would need to be related to the costs of provision, and should not penalise students for delays beyond their control. We also discussed the difficulties many graduates find obtaining work teaching and agreed that a central register that colleges can access may improve the distribution of teaching work.

By OUSU Council I should also have attended the OUCS Management Committee – if anything interesting happens, and I understand sufficient to relay it, I'll let you know what happens at council!

As well as dealing with various email enquiries I've also been arranging the next Mature Students' social (Tuesday of 4th week at Harris Manchester) and Postgraduate Assembly. I've continued to meet with people across the University to discuss the graduate agenda and the work I'm doing, including Andrew Stockley, vice-chair of Graduate Committee of Conference of Colleges and Richard Jarman, Head of Government Relations, as well as new members of exec and the new divisional board reps.

Finally, Peter Mandelson recently announced the scope of the review of Postgraduate Education that will be taking place over the next few months. I'm hoping to put together a student submission, and would be interested in hearing any of your thoughts.

Jonny Medland

V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

It feels very strange to think that I wrote my last report in the midst of Freshers' Week – any expectation that the term would slow down has proven to be wildly misguided. Things are progressing at a similarly hectic pace and what follows is an overview of what I've been up to since the end of 0th week.

Common Room Support

Lots of stuff going on this front. I had my first meeting of academic affairs reps last week where we discussed academic feedback and academic problems facing students. The feedback forms which we got back at the end were very positive – it's my hope that these meetings will continue all year but they depend on reps coming. Please do encourage your academic affairs reps to come along so that we can share best practice and work together on issues which face students from across the university. By the time you've read this I will also have held the first meeting of Common Room access reps – this meeting is focusing on mapping out what stops people from applying to Oxford and what colleges do to try and reduce these problems. The meetings are very interactive and anyone is welcome to come along.

I've met another 6 Common Room officers individually since the last OUSU Council and have also attended JCR Prescom, MCR Prescom and 2 meetings of OUSU representatives. We've covered a lot of topics in these meetings ranging from the Charities Act 2006 to a landlord accreditation scheme to the role that OUSU can play supporting Common Rooms. I've also been to a couple of JCR meetings to explain what OUSU does and take questions from students.

General OUSU stuff

Again, there's a lot going on. Myself and Madeline Stanley continue to work a great many hours on developing OUSU's policy-making structure. We had an open meeting where we explained the proposals, with Standing Order changes being intended to come to 5th week OUSU Council. I've also done a lot of work preparing for the 3rd week meeting of the Joint Committee with Student Members. Since this doesn't really fit anywhere else I also had 2 meetings with all the newly elected Divisional Board reps to go over what their role involves, how we can work together and what sort of areas the Divisions are likely to be considering over the coming year. I also did quite a lot of preparation ahead of Lord Mandelson speaking in Oxford to work out what exactly the sabb team could ask him that he couldn't wriggle out of. We did a reasonable job although unsurprisingly he still more or less managed it.

Meetings with University officials

I had the pleasure of showing the Director of the Learning Institute, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Academic Registrar and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) around Freshers' Fair. All of them very much enjoyed the Fair and seeing the diversity and range of Oxford student life. It also gave me the valuable chance to talk to them in a less formal setting than is normally the case. I've had a meeting with the Head of Student Recruitment for the University where we talked about the university's admissions policy and the direction of Target Schools over the coming year. This conversation included securing the university's support in running our Shadowing Scheme next term which will be doubling in size. I've also attended two meetings on regionalisation where I expressed student support for the initiative and emphasised the importance of all colleges participating actively in the scheme. Myself and Sarah Hutchinson met the University Head of Government & Community Relations and discussed (among other things) coming visits from government ministers to Oxford, student engagement with local MPs ahead of the elections next year and how the university works with central government.

I talked to the Graduate Admissions Team earlier this week about setting up two events on applying for graduate study in Oxford (one later this term, one early next term). Details on that should be coming around soon – they should be really valuable as are the workshops on housing which we'll be running soon. Myself and Sarah met the Head of Education Policy Support for an hour earlier this week to talk about the educational agenda for the university this year. As with many of our discussions we touched on areas relating to funding and the likelihood of public spending cuts impacting the university and how these effects could be mitigated.

Student Advice Service

Although the summer was very busy for the Student Advice Service, our work has only got busier since term began. I have dealt with 14 individual students since I wrote my last Council report in 0th week, of which 7 have been new cases. As always these have ranged from comparatively brief queries to prolonged pieces of work. Dani Quinn and I will be running training on advocacy for Common Room officers later this term as many students from across the university will have disciplinary hearings at some point this year. Since we represent people in hearings to the college and university this will be a useful session which is currently scheduled to take place near the end of term.

University Committees

- Curators of the University Libraries – The main University body overseeing libraries, we discussed the proposed development of the New Bodleian, the ROQ Humanities library and other issues to do with risk management. In line with my Council mandate from 1st week I have a meeting with the Associate Director of the Bodleian to discuss the development of SOLO.
- Education Committee – The main University committee with responsibility for Education, this meets every other week. I'm writing this on the eve of the meeting but the agenda includes a review of the 2009 examinations process (e.g moving towards online results and how that worked), the university response to swine flu, the University Strategic Plan and the Report from the Committee to Review University Sport.
- Gender Equality Scheme Steering Group – The University committee which oversees the Gender Equality Scheme (unsurprisingly). It typically meets once per term. Items discussed include the launch of the Oxford Women's Network and Gender Equality Week (which we are currently midway through). This was the last meeting chaired by Dame Fiona Caldicott. Many of you will have seen that Sally Mapstone is the new

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Personnel & Equality). She has previously chaired the University Gender Panel and is Head of the English Faculty making her a massively qualified candidate for the role.

- Undergraduate Panel – This meets once per term and considers everything related to Undergraduate Education. I reported on this last time but briefly; we looked at the National Student Survey, articulating the links between research and teaching and how these benefit one another, recommendations arising from the 2009 Institutional Audit of Oxford and promotion of study skills and finals forums. Departments will be looking at the last of these issues over the next two terms.
- University Council – I attended Andy Hamilton's first meeting of University Council where items discussed included the funding of teaching of Oxford and planning in the event that the swine flu pandemic worsens.

As always, please do ask if you have any questions about this or anything else I've been doing – ask in Council or e-mail me on access@ousu.org

Eorann Lean Community)	V-P	(Charities	&
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Hello all, hope your all well. It's been a busy few weeks below are bullet points on the major things I have done. Any questions, as always, just ask.

- **350** – This was on Saturday; it went really really well with Andrew Smith Mp, Evan Harris Mp, Deborah Grayson from climate rush and Geoffrey Lean Environmental journalist all speaking and a statement of support from Caroline Lucas. There were about 140 people there – a big mix of students, community groups like friends of the earth Oxford and greenpeace Oxford and people we pulled in off the streets. It's had great coverage in the local press. Our event was just one of over 5200 around the world according to the website – which is just simply amazing. Lets hope decision makers sit up and listen!
- **RAG vote** – I've organised with the Rag exec the rag vote. The Exec decided to take the number of charities down to 4 this year in order to give more money to each charity. We had around 60 nominations for charities, which is really great. Next year we are hoping to have the vote open to all students.
- **Big Brother Big Sister** – A lot has happened over the last few weeks we have gone through application forms, done a round of interviews and have now selected successful applicants and sorted out the budget. The first committee meeting is going to be on Thursday.
- **Oxford Inspires** – I've had a meeting with Kathelene Weiss from Oxford Inspires to see how to involve students in local cultural groups and events. We have decided to create a sheet for groups about what time commitment students have and how best to approach them to send out to all the groups connected with Oxford Inspires. We are also going to reserve places at the next Cultural platform for students so that those interested in art and drama can network with groups in Oxford in order to set up partnerships and to encourage them to work together.

PART TIME OFFICERS

Jack Matthews

Common Room Support Officer

Council,

I hope you are all well and enjoying your Michaelmas so far. Since last we met I have been working on the following;

- SKY TV: I have begun discussion with the President of CUSU as common rooms in Cambridge are having similar issues with expensive rates. The issue was only recently raised by some of their CR presidents so they have not researched the issue as much. We hope to work together to find a solution.

- CRiS: (Common Room Information Service) - Its a snappy name for the database Stefan, Jonny and myself have been working on. We hope to have it up and running, collecting and displaying information in the next few weeks.

- Spotify: It was recently raised that certain colleges allow spotify, whereas others ban it. I will be contacting OUCS to work on a resolution to this issue.

- OUSU Reps Meeting: We met last on Friday, it all went very well and it was especially pleasing to see more MCR representatives coming along. The next meeting is on Friday of 6th Week at 5.15pm in OUSU. All are welcome to attend.

As always, you are more than welcome to contact me with any issues you may have in your common room.

Regards

Jack Matthews

commonrooms@ousu.org

Daniel Lowe

Environment & Ethics Officer

Hey Council

The past fortnight has been great for E&E. We co-hosted a 350 event where we had two MPs give speeches at our rally in Bonn Square before marching to the RadCam for a photo op. The aim of the event was to remind the Government that 350ppm is the safe maximum of atmospheric carbon and they should bear that in mind in Copenhagen this December.

We are now recruiting acts for Lights, Climate Action! our cabaret show that this year will be held at Magdalen Auditorium, Wednesday 5th week @ the cellar last year). It's an awesome show so do come along.

The E&E committee is deciding on its campaigns for this term and it looks like the main focus will be 10:10 (asking the university to cut its emissions by 10% in 2010) and college food sustainability, so expect to see some more tasty, seasonal and local food in your colleges soon.

Green Hugs,
Daniel

Interim Financial Report for Oxford University Students Union year ending July 2009

Overview

- 1) The Students Union will show a loss of £58,000 for the financial year just ended.
- 2) The Balance Sheet will now show Net Current Liabilities of around £39,000 demonstrating negative reserves.

Deficit

- 1) The largest single factor in the deficit is the surplus provided by OSSL, the commercial subsidiary. The budget surplus of £65k was not achieved, only £39k being actually produced.
- 2) The main reason for the OSSL deficit was an underperformance of advertising revenue of over £35k. This may have been caused by over optimistic budgeting expectations, changes in personnel selling the advertising, a change in the economic climate or a combination of all of these factors.
- 3) A further difficulty was the need to write off and provide for £12k in bad debts. These mainly occurred through poor control of previous social events.
- 4) Substantial changes in staff arrangements in OUSU during the year have led to an overspend in the area of staffing cost which will not be repeated in subsequent years. This will have amounted to £15k in the period under review.

Action needed by OUSU

- 1) **Better forecasting.** The forecasting arrangements in OUSU are too weak. Reports to officers of the SU and subsequently to the University, even as late as May in the year, indicated a small surplus rather than a substantial deficit. Monthly management accounts need a greater level of scrutiny than has previously existed. As forecasts indicated a breakeven position, no action was deemed to be necessary to correct an imbalance.

New forecasting arrangements need to recognise that at least 60% of OSSL's income is known by the end of November, and for some of OSSL's activities income cannot be increased after that date.

- 2) **Creation of an OUSU Budget committee.** This should be able to play a useful role in monitoring the budget throughout the year.
- 3) **Revisit and amend budgets.** The budgets for both OUSU and OSSL, for the current financial year, are now being revisited.