

## Reports to Council

3rd Week Council Michaelmas Term 2013

Tom Rutland

President

Evening Council,

Some of the things I've been working on in the last couple of weeks:

### Undergraduate Tuition Fees

As mandated by 1<sup>st</sup> Week Council, I've written to the Vice-Chancellor regarding his comments supporting a rise in undergraduate tuition fees. I've worked with JCR Presidents to get their Heads of House on board opposing further rises in fees. There's been lots of student media coverage of the action both JCRs and OUSU have taken, as well as some national coverage.

### OUSU Strategy

The 'Mission, Vision, Values' statement for OUSU, built over the last couple of years with student consultation, will be presented to Council this term for ratification. It sets out what OUSU is, what it seeks to achieve and the values that inform the way we work. The strategy papers are going forward to the next committee stage with the University, with a budget submission following in the next couple of weeks.

### Don't Rent Yet!

I've been working with Will Brown, the Rent & Accommodation Officer, to encourage students not to sign housing leases as soon as the housing lists are released by letting agents. There will be posters in all colleges discouraging students from doing so. I've encouraged JCR Presidents to spread the message that there's ample housing and no need to rush, and anyone reading this report should take the same message back to their JCR/MCR! Additionally, we'll be working together to plan improved rent negotiation training for JCR and MCR representatives next term.

### Illegible Exam Script Transcription

Some students have been in touch regarding the cost of transcribing examination papers that are deemed illegible, and I've been doing some research into the cost of this at Oxford and across the country, and what can be done to change it here. More to come on this as term goes on.

### Castle Mill Housing Update

The attempt by campaigners to seek a judicial review into housing at the Castle Mill site (on Roger Dudman Way) has been thrown out by a judge, which should mean that the students living there can rest easy! Council last term voted overwhelmingly against a motion that sought to express disapproval of the University's management of the Roger Dudman Way development and to lower the height of the buildings.

As ever, feel free to get in touch - [president@ousu.org](mailto:president@ousu.org)

Tom

**Grad Funding**

- Read Oxford Graduates Scholarship Matched Fund Annual Report: 21 scholarships for 2013-14; 10 endowed (forever, as the scholarship is generated from the interest of a donation) and 11 spend-down (limited period until money goes)
- Finished writing letter and sent to NUS to support the £3m Postgraduate Support Scheme bid

**Academic Reps**

- Researched academic rep structure at Sheffield University Students Union
- Passed on past OUSU research to Education department in the Social Sciences division

**Committees**

- Curators of University Libraries: Moving Humanities to the ROQ site
- PPH Supervisory: Review of Wycliffe Hall
- Grad Panel: 2<sup>nd</sup> supervisors
- Education: Passed new changes at the Siad Business School; Thanked EdCom for Matched Funding and brought up Phase 2

**Meeting with students**

- Course reps and P/T Execs
- Grad online newspapers
- Spouses and partners
- Brasenose common Room talk
- JCR Int Students Rep
- Meet with Exec; Henry Chong
- Burma delegation and Oxford Burma Alliance on how to go forward

**Meeting the University**

- Development Office; we'll be working together on promoting Ox Grad School Matched Fund scholars; suggested improvements for their Oxford Ambassadors programme
- Graduate Admissions and Funding: discussed creating an OUSU alternative grad funding handbook
- International Strategy department on Burma

**Living Wage**

Giving advice to students, supporting administratively, discussing strategy

**UCU**

Initial talk; agreed to monthly talks

**Homesickness:**

According to the National Union of Students, 50-70% of new UK students feel homesick in their first few weeks at University, and yet few people seem to talk about it. OUSU wants to reduce the number of people feeling this way, so I've produced some Top Tips for Tackling Homesickness on our website:

[www.ousu.org/advice/life-welfare/homesickness/](http://www.ousu.org/advice/life-welfare/homesickness/)

**Supporting Welfare Reps:**

A handbook is being produced, I've met many of the Reps at Meet and Greets, and will be organising a forum soon! I'm also working with the Turl Street colleges to help them organize a sexual health awareness weekend. I'm excited that there will be much more collaboration and support both from OUSU and between colleges.

**World Aids Day:**

Working with the LGBTQ Campaign, I'm looking into what OUSU can do- current ideas are a HIV testing drive, myth-busting campaign and RAG Raid. Do you have ideas? Let me know!

## **CRAE:**

Together we've developed the structure and format of their meetings this term, including the three small breakout groups which will focus on specific aspects of racial equality. If you'd like to get involved, email [crae@ousu.org](mailto:crae@ousu.org)

## **Communication:**

This year we're working on a communication strategy; I've been to some sessions put on by the University on flash video talks, social media and communication strategies to see how we can bring OUSU into the 21<sup>st</sup> century! ☺

What do you want me to do next? Email [welfare@ousu.org](mailto:welfare@ousu.org)!

<b>Rachel Pickering</b>	<b>Vice President (Access &amp; Academic Affairs)</b>
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Hello Council ☺

I hope you've had a great two weeks since last Council. Sorry that I can't be here today to present my report - as you read this I'll be on a train heading to Manchester where I'm attending an NUS Higher Education Zone Conference. I'll make sure to report back on this to you next time, but for now here are some of the things I've been working on in the last couple of weeks:

### **Back to School Week - Partnership with Future First**

Our partnership with Future First for Back to Schools week was a massive success - we had more sign ups than any other SU partner and accounted for 4.5% of the total national sign ups! :D Future First are going to use us as a case study for engaging students, staff and alumni in outreach which I am really really happy about. Thanks so much to everyone who signed up and if you didn't then you, of course, still can at: <https://networks.futurefirst.org.uk/former-student-search?t=ousu>

### **Student Status and Access to Facilities**

Quick update on this following my update at last Council - there has been another meeting about the issue of access to University facilities for students with suspended status. All is looking more positive and this issue will now be moving from the working group stage into formal committee level so hopefully I'll be able to give a very positive report on this soon!

### **Widening Participation**

Dan and I met with the widening participation team last week and had a really great conversation about getting more students involved in WP work. To find out more info then check out their website or email [wp@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:wp@admin.ox.ac.uk) and look out for more info on our website and via the student.

### **Target Schools**

I've been working with Target Schools as they plan for the MT shadowing - a new venture this year (normally shadowing just happens in HT. If you want to sign up and get involved then do email: [studentshadowing@ousu.org](mailto:studentshadowing@ousu.org))

If you have any questions for me about this report or anything else, you're always welcome to get in touch with me at [access@ousu.org](mailto:access@ousu.org). Also you can add me on twitter (@OUSU\_AcAff) and I'll make sure to keep tweeting about access and academic affairs issues and events that you might be interested in :D.

Rachel

<b>Dan Tomlinson</b>	<b>Vice President (Charities &amp; Community)</b>
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Hello Council, I hope you enjoy reading this report as much as I did writing it.

One number

281.

The number of students that have signed up to a voluntary, community or campaigning group as a result of the OUSU and OxHub partnership, 'One Hour A Week'. Visit the website [www.onehouraweek.co.uk](http://www.onehouraweek.co.uk) to sign up yourself. Let me know if you'd be willing for someone from 'OHAW' to come and chat about what we are up to in your Common Room.

### Community

I'm busy arranging the next meeting of the Student Community Partnership Group, a regular meeting organised by OUSU to bring all of the different parts of the community together to talk about issues that involve students.

The Community Wardens are now busy working for students in Jericho and East Oxford. I've supplied them with lovely waterproofs and business cards and have continued talking with the University about how we can make the funding situation for this scheme more stable.

### Environment and Ethics

The Environment and Ethics campaign is growing and I've enjoyed getting to know the students involved with it. Alongside 'Student Switch Off' the campaign is focusing on getting the University to divest from fossil fuels. As a result of the motion passed in OUSU Council last term the Environment and Ethics Campaign has now submitted a paper to the University committee that discusses socially responsible investment.

If you're interested in this why not come along to our campaign meetings at 5pm on Tuesdays in OUSU.

### Living Wage

The Living Wage Campaign is also growing and I've been meeting one-to-one with students that are interested in getting involved in it. We will be holding elections very soon for positions on the committee. We hope to have the information from the University on which departments are paying a Living Wage in time for national Living Wage Week, 4th week this term, in order to publicly praise them.

### RAG

This is a busy time in the world of Raise and Give. The RAG Bungee Jump is now happening on Gloucester Green on Saturday of 5th week and there are (probably) still spaces, if you want to jump let me know.

We have now sold three quarters of the RAG Ball tickets, so if you want to come make sure you get yours soon from [www.oxfordragball.co.uk](http://www.oxfordragball.co.uk)

<b>Sarah Pine</b>	<b>Vice President (Women)</b>
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Hello lovely council, I'm going to make this one a lot shorter than last time!

Over the past two weeks I have:

- Made the Sexual Assault Referral Centre process guide. This explains the process of referral and self-referral to a Sexual Assault Referral Centre, the only place where one can get medical help, advice and be directed to long-term support without reporting to the police.
- Wrote up the Queer Consent and Inter-university consent workshops with college LGBT Officers and the Brookes Feminist Society. This extends the reach of consent-focused work, so college Queer weeks and sexual health weeks can include them.
- Ran Pembroke Talks About Blurred Lines, a discursive forum for Pembroke students about myths and misinformation about sexual violence.
- Worked with It Happens Here for their zine launch, and spoke about the cultural and institutional problems affecting sexual violence in Oxford.

- Spoke at St Johns women's lunch to introduce the work that OUSU does for equality.
- Made a guide to which colleges have changing facilities for babies and put it online for student parents. This helps future student parents know about the college to which they are applying, and helps current parents find facilities when they're out and about.
- Met with Wadham MCR welfare officer and president with Garlen to support their project for better providing for spouses and partners. This will include material from OUSU regarding services for student parents.
- Helped to plan the student parent focus groups, which will help OUSU better push for those services, which will help student parents.
- Planned and ran campaigns training for The Women's Campaign in their 3rd week meeting, to introduce campaigning in the university context and empower WomCam members to take their projects forward.
- Started planning a HIV/AIDS testing drive information with Charlotte for World AIDS Day
- Started the trials of the new system for distributing contraception in three colleges. We have worked with the system to make it accessible to all students (for example, including over 25s) and simplified the system.
- Met with college women's officers, men's officers and equal opportunities reps to better support them in their common rooms and investigated how OUSU can better communicate with them.
- Met with St Anthony's college welfare team to assist in their implementation of their sexual harassment and assault policy.
- Worked with the Equality and Diversity Unit to push for training for Harassment Advisors. This will be starting in Hilary term. (This was an explicit point in my manifesto so I'm really chuffed!)

## PART TIME OFFICERS

<b>Katherine Stagg</b>	<b>LGBTQ Officer</b>
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The start of this academic year has so far been very successful. The LGBTQ Campaign has been relaunched and had a successful first meeting, after getting over 200 signups at freshers' fair. We discussed our plans for the year and are planning on focusing on issues surrounding LGBT asylum seekers and are also looking into what we can do for World Aids Day. If anyone is interested in getting involved please do email me at [lgbtqofficer@ousu.com](mailto:lgbtqofficer@ousu.com).

As well as the campaign I've also started work on compiling a list of the gender-neutral toilets available to students in different colleges and departments, which will eventually provide a valuable resource for many people.

<b>James Fisher</b>	<b>E&amp;E Officer</b>
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Hi all! This summer has been a busy one on the Environment and Ethics front. We have teamed up with RAG Ball this year to create the first Sustain-a-Ball certified ball in Oxford, a campaign that has taken years to come to fruition but is finally on the horizon. Meanwhile, the OUSU Environment and Ethics Committee, of which I am on the executive, are going college-by-college trying to gain support for the divestment campaign, which we hope could lead to the end of Oxford University's investment in corporations that extract and sell fossil fuels.

James

<b>Zain Iqbal</b>	<b>BME Officer</b>
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Since the last meeting I have been working to develop a closer relationship with CRAE and other race related/cultural societies. Together, we have worked/are working to arrange a number of events over the upcoming term including discussion sessions with senior BME figures in the UK. I have also developed a weekly newsletter that is sent out bringing together all of the race and diversity events that are going on in Oxford. Furthermore, we are looking to produce a more updated and interactive version of the 100 voices project.

A more long-term project has been working with Shakina (Equalities Advisor at the University), Katie and now Charlotte as well as with CRAE to arrange a Race Summit here at Oxford to discuss a wide range of issues including the 100 voices project undertaken a few years ago. This has faced various set backs as we are now struggling with some logistics issues but when successful it promises to attract a great deal of attention.

**Rebekka Hammelsbeck**

**Women's Campaign Officer**

WomCam had a great start into the new academic year! At Freshers' Fair, more than 700 people signed up to our mailing list and around 130 came along to our first meeting! Over the summer, we've also completely restructured the campaign to make it easier to get involved and take action. We therefore now have about 10 working groups that focus on specific issues ranging from an Everyday Sexism Project to a volunteering group working with homeless women in Oxford. We also have small groups for Black women, queer women and disabled women. These groups run alongside our big Monday meetings and will usually meet every 2 - 3 weeks. So far, the response to these groups has been very positive with loads of people signing up to the different groups and turning up to the first meetings. As WomCam Officer, my job has mainly been to make sure that this transition runs smoothly and to provide tips and advice to the committee members who are organising working groups.

**Michael Davies**

**Community Outreach and Charities Officer**

Hello Council! Over the past two weeks, I've been working with RAG to prepare for the launch of one of our biggest and most spectacular fundraisers - Jailbreak! Specifically, I've been working on a website ([oxfordjailbreak.tumblr.com](http://oxfordjailbreak.tumblr.com)), sponsorship for the event, a publicity plan and preparation for our information evenings. Keep an eye out for the launch of our sign-up period at the beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> week and tell everyone you know to sign up! Last year we raised over £20,000, this year we're hoping to beat that and there will be some reward for the college who raises the most money...

I'd also like to take the chance to plug OxHub's One Hour a Week campaign. It's being run in conjunction with OUSU and RAG, and the idea is to get students thinking more about social responsibility and asking them to spend one hour of every week involved in charitable fundraising, community outreach or some other form of volunteering. You can find out more here: <http://www.oxfordhub.org/ohaw>.

**William Brown**

**Rent and Accommodation Officer**

Dear Council,

In addition to advising and supporting individual students on housing issues, I have assisted the President on a publicity campaign to discourage students from rushing into the early signing of leases. I am also working with the President on advanced planning and preparation for this year's rent negotiation training, on the basis of an ongoing consultation with outgoing common room representatives, to ensure that OUSU provides the effective and relevant support necessary to empower common rooms in their upcoming negotiations.

Will.

**Jonathan Metzger**

**Common Room Support Officer**

This term I am continuing the ongoing effort to try and energise OUSU Reps and keep them well-informed about what is going on. There will be a discussion session at G & D's coming very soon and more such events later this term. Stay tuned!

**William Neaverson**

**Students and Disabilities Officer**

Hi Council!

Work continues on Disability Awareness Week. I've had a couple of really fantastic meetings this week which mean that the events are now all fully formed and we're moving into an organisational phase.

We're excited to be able to put on film screenings, seminars, speaker events and a number of food events all designed to reach as many students as possible and engage people on the topic of disability.

The campaign, too, will be kickstarted again over the next week. I'm still looking to get a chair separate from OUSU, so if you're interested please get in touch at [disability@ousu.org](mailto:disability@ousu.org).

In other news, I'd like to praise WomCam for connecting with the disabilities campaign! I hope the relationship between the two campaigns continues to grow over the next few weeks, and I'm certainly excited to be getting more involved with this aspect of my role.

As ever, I'm happy to talk disability with anyone who's interested, and you're always welcome to email me on [disability@ousu.org](mailto:disability@ousu.org) to ask whatever questions you may have!

All the best,  
Will

**Anya Metzger**

**Academic Affairs Campaigns Officer**

### **Library Hours**

I have secured a meeting with the Acting Head of the Bodleian in 5<sup>th</sup> week. He is contacting Faculty heads to invite them to join, to facilitate a larger conversation about extending faculty library hours, especially over the weekend since many have few or no weekend hours. Library hours consistently appear in student surveys as 'unsatisfactory' so I hope that meeting face-to-face rather than, as has been so far, communicating by email will advance this cause.

### **Publicity Drive**

Last term I spoke to the head of Oxford's IT department about the best way to get more lectures going online as revision aids and to help students such as those on Joint Schools who are unable to attend fundamental lectures. Since recording and distributing lectures is done on a case-by-case basis with students getting permission from their lecturer for a particular series, I think the best way to get more lecturers recorded is to make students aware of the simple process required. Together with Rachel and the OUSU publicity staff, I am hoping to organise a publicity drive informing students about how to get their lectures online, centring on posters, Twitter and Facebook.

**Nick Cooper**

**Grad Academic Affairs Officer**

Evening Council,

Hope term is treating you well. Not loads to report this week, as I've been away at a conference all week and most of my OUSU involvement has been in Returning Officer issues (which reminds me, nominations open Thursday - please consider running!)

That being said, I've been thinking about how best to progress with changes being made to Confirmation of Status for DPhil students, and will start looking this week at work on the quality and communication of taught Masters courses, which I was working on last term. I'm also eagerly awaiting a rearranged meeting about Exam Regulations Expert User Group, which I sit on, and will give full details when this happens.

Have a great week,  
Nick