



## reports to 3rd week council trinity 2005

**Nicky Ellis**  
**Opportunities**

**Vice-President (Welfare and Equal**

I have been looking into the University's decision to sell its graduate accommodation. This is a summary of the information I've managed to find out so far:

The university is in the process of selling all of its graduate accommodation to the colleges; this may be done via a consortium of colleges; 14 colleges as yet have registered interest. She anticipates this taking quite a while- as getting the colleges to work together takes time. It's not clear when the soonest selling date might be; existing tenants have been informed that their two years will be honoured, we need to make sure this is so!

The university will probably place a covenant on the accommodation purchased- this will limit the use accommodation, for students of the university only, not, say, language school students. This will also limit the colleges' ability to sell on the accommodation- if they were to, they would have to demonstrate that they were building/acquiring an equivalent amount- but I'm not quite sure how much force this provision would have.

There is a need to up the amount of graduate accommodation provided by colleges- there is an agreement with the council that limits share of the private market that students take up; this decision concerning the sale came 7 months ago, from the Vice-chancellor, we think. Whether non-students would still be allowed to co-habit with students, in families or partnerships, would become a college matter.

At current, administering this accommodation is a large part of the accommodation offices' remit; a possible expansion of their remit might follow with this gone.

There are some serious concerns with the scheme- it's not clear whether families and partners would still be allowed to live together- big deterrent potentially for families, mature students. Students with children- the argument used is that this is about upping the amount of grad accommodation and so better for people w/children; seems not engage with the fact that some colleges will not have this accommodation, and so it will not be available to all applicants. Occasionally undergrads (though a very small number) need to move to grad accommodation, sometimes for welfare reasons; might not continue.

I've raised these concerns with people within the university and will continue to do so; I've also sort clarification as to the role the 'consortium' would play- would it manage the accommodation on behalf of the colleges, or only exist for the purchase? This has significant implications for the problems noted above. I've made a freedom of information request to establish the documentation the university hold on this decision; hopefully that may throw some light on the reasoning behind all of this. Comments and suggestions for action are very welcome.

I also discussed various other issues with the accommodation officer, and hope this will pave the way for a successful year next year where our accommodation work is concerned- in summary- The Living out guide-We talked about the possibility of producing this in time for Michaelmas; Helen Bagshaw, the exec member with the accommodation portfolio, will look into what other student unions produce. Sue will look through and let us know if there is anything she would like added, and was broadly in favour of this change. Helen will also look into the legal implications of a housing bank scheme that allowed for properties to be rated over the summer, with a view to

resurrecting this idea next year. Living out talks these will be publicised in early Michaelmas; we decided that OUSU could help the accommodation office do this, and also could organise a talk for college reps if they felt this would be more helpful. the Accommodation committee This should be resurrected and run throughout Michaelmas and Hilary term. Legal Advice-I mentioned that one of the areas where the outgoing senior proctor and Frances Barnwell from legal services had been responsive to the idea of providing this for students was where accommodation problems were concerned; the accommodation officer thought this would be a good idea, and should be based in accommodation office. I will push for this over the term. She also filled us in on the efforts she makes to support students who run into problems; she cannot give legal advice, and can really only be of use to students who have taken houses from the university lists, but w/in this seems to do a lot of good work. We also talked about the possibility of giving the accommodation office a stall at freshers' fair, to raise awareness amongst students further to this, we decided to consider the same idea for the Disability office and the counselling service, and I will be contacting about this Condom machines and condom safety- I have been in communication with the JCR presidents and welfare reps about this- and also with the company that are going to supply Hilda's their machine. Hopefully we should have the details finalised by next week- there will be a general health and welfare meeting on Tuesday, and this will be one of the items up for discussion.

As usual, there's been a fair amount of casework; in particular this has highlighted the failings in the university's disability provision (though it must be noted that the disability office do a wonderful job).

I'm really pleased with the format the budget takes this year, and I think due credit must be given to John Blake for the time and effort he has put into this. It is now much more comprehensive, and will prove a useful tool both for students at large to understand what we do, and for next years executive team. We had a long but satisfying discussion of the budget in exec, and hope that the entire exec will continue to be involved in the budgeting process in future.

**Rebecca Wilkinson**

**V-P (Women)**

Well the highlight of the fortnight – other than the General Election Result! – was Women's Dinner at Pembroke. I would like to thank them for their invite and giving me the opportunity to speak to them all.

The OXWIP speaker panel was also a great success. Following much speculation in the run-up to the event, I thought it went off very well, and would like to congratulate Ellie for a well organised event. I hope that she will continue putting on such innovative projects when she is VP (women).

I have also had a lot of media dealings over Oxbridge escorts, which took up a considerable amount of time in the first part of last week. But happily now seems to have faded off the agenda.

I had a meeting with nightsafe, in which I presented to them our proposed initiative for Drink Safety. They have shown their support this project., and I hope we can work closely with them in future. Sadly this project has had to be delayed some what due to logistical problems – eg. The need for cheap straws – but I hope it will be run before the end of term.

I have been in contact with other women's officers in other SU's about the projects they have run, surrounding drink spiking. Glamorgan, proving to be the most useful.

This Monday saw the Reclaim the Night March – which turned out to be a reclaim the early evening, as the sun had not entirely gone down by 8pm! I'd like to thank everyone involved in that – the banners were a huge success, and I was particularly impressed by the Wadham stalwarts!!!.

Before the March, we had a speaker from the Oxford sexual abuse and rape crisis centre. A lot of people turned up to the talk, and we had some interesting discussion. I believe this is a very valuable service provided, which underfunded and I was proud to be able to handover a cheque for: £375.90 raised at last terms Women's Cabaret.

I'd like to thank everyone who showed their support for this fundraising venture and those who turned up to the meeting.

And a special thanks to Poppy and Naomi for their food and drink contributions!

Other than that life has been ticking over, with casework increasing as funding for next year begins to become a pressing issue. I have also been working on a report about the finals forums which should be finished soon, and concluding our dealings with Brookes re: the Safetybus.

I have become a convert to Oxide radio: [www.oxideradio.co.uk](http://www.oxideradio.co.uk), and listen to it compulsively!

Ask questions.....

**Linsey Cole**

**V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)**

Over the past two weeks, I've mainly been working on ensuring exam and study skills support is in place for the coming term. An exam skills session was held jointly with the Counselling Service and there are two more study skills sessions for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> week – Tuesday, 5pm, Balliol College, Lecture Room 23 – ALL WELCOME. I've also produced an information sheet with Nicky and the Proctors, which will be up on the [www.ousu.org](http://www.ousu.org) by the end of the week. Plus, lots of casework and Student Advice Service work too! If any of you are asked for advice/help, please don't hesitate to get in touch – we are often more able to help if we get involved earlier in the process. Just email [academic@ousu.org](mailto:academic@ousu.org)

Other than that, I've been working on OUSU's response to the proposed Libraries and Governance reforms. Academic Affairs committee created a summary document on library reforms, which has been distributed to all common rooms – any thoughts/feedback/ideas would be greatly appreciated. Similarly, any thoughts on governance matters would be gratefully received! I've been arranging attendance rights at Congregation for the discussions of these issues next week – we'll report back on how this all goes...

I've also been to lots of University Committees, sent 1000s of emails, number-crunched for the budget, experienced the joys of graduation (comes highly recommended!), been trying to find funding for the creation of a VP Access and VP Academic Affairs, photographed at various Zoo nights and Reclaim the Night marches - the list goes on...

Finally, I can't write this report without thanking John, Nicky, Bex, Ian, Dan, the p/t exec and all of the wonderful TS and Ac-aff co-chairs, plus those (you know who you are!) outside of OUSU Towers, for all their support over the past few weeks – thanks so much for keeping me going: for hugs, brie and text messages to occupy me on the West Coast Main Line...And, most of all, to A.W.F.C. – for lots.