

OUSU

reports to council

3rd week trinity 2008

Martin McCluskey

President

The last couple of weeks have been a lot lighter on the meetings and I've been spending much of my time starting to put together the reports of the Policy, Elections and SAS Working Groups which will report in 5th Week.

Rent

With Dom, I hosted a rent meeting in OUSU which wasn't particularly well attended. The rent picture across Oxford is a bit more reasonable this year than normally. Most colleges seem to be being offered rises in the region of 3-5%, which is considerably lower than where colleges normally start their discussions. Hopefully we'll see more JCRs and MCRs put forward strong cases for further reductions in the next few weeks. Oriel have the most reasonable deal so far with 3.2%.

From the OUSU side, we're continuing to provide support to CR officers as well as meeting with members of Conference of Colleges to discuss the OCCI and other issues around rent. More on this at next Council!

Proctors

We met with the Proctors to discuss a number of issues.

(a) Bottled water - a number of students have been asking for bottled water in exams. We questioned the Proctors on this and they said they would look into it in the coming weeks.

(b) By now, most of you will have received the email from the Proctors regarding post-exam celebrations. As you'll see, the tone is far more understanding this year and I hope that people will choose to celebrate responsibly at the end of exams.

(c) We discussed a possible redesign of the Proctors' and Assessor's Memorandum in order to make it more accessible. We'll be having more discussions on this in the coming weeks.

(d) We discussed the use of Facebook in disciplinary hearings as well as the possibility of introducing a schedule of charges, as stipulated in the motion passed in 1st Week Council TT08. The Senior Proctor said he would not exclude Facebook from the Proctorial toolkit, but did not rule out a schedule or guide of fines. We'll be taking this idea forward.

JCC

We had a meeting of the Joint Committee of Council with Student Members. We discussed OUSU's constitutional changes and the progress of changes to our legal status. We also discussed the charitable status issue with regards to Common Rooms. Those present agreed that the issue merited further consideration at a College level. I also suggested that Conference of Colleges should commission more research on the issue, as has happened at other Universities.

Vice-Chancellor

Along with the Executive, I met with the Vice Chancellor, The Academic Registrar and the Director of Finance. This was the first ever meeting between the VC and the whole exec. We had a wide-ranging discussion covering a variety of issues and hope to continue this format in the future.

Student Representation

I've continued our work on increasing student representation with further meeting with Elizabeth Fallaize and Tony Monaco. I'm also due to meet with the Head of Conference of Colleges next week to discuss GB representation.

Prescom

I attended a meeting of Prescom at New College.

Working Groups

I chaired meetings of the SAS Review Group, the Policy Working Group and the Elections Working Group. All three have progressed well, as you'll see in my presentation today. This is purely down to the hard work of all those involved, without whom this process would never have got off the ground!

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| Rich Hardiman | V-P (Finance) |
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Another fortnight, another council report. Do any of you actually have any interest in what I have to say at this stage? Did you ever? Can I stop yet?

ZOO

Same old, same old. I've now taken over both of our nights, and am complaining about it incessantly despite the fact that I really quite enjoy it... Last week's ZOO Na Na was a startling return to form. A good time had by all methinks – despite the fact that I got on the decks for the last three quarters of an hour and made a total fool of myself. Many thanks to the St Hugh's exec, especially Michael Graham, and John Maher of Keble for doing a load of promotion for me.

This week we've got a fairly significant amount of interest, but obviously I have no idea how much of that is going to convert into attendees. As a general rule of thumb, if I'm sitting looking pained in the corner during council and have dark glasses on it probably went well.

As for Risa, the numbers keep on improving, which is hugely gratifying – thanks so much to the many people in this room who've supported me and backed the night from its (very) humble beginnings. I have no idea how we've been successful, but it sure as hell isn't down to me!

Anyway, tonight I'm going to see Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds (whoop!), so I'm leaving the night in the hands of some reprobate from the Part Time Exec. Nonetheless, I hope to be back about half midnight to claim the glory if the night's a success...

OxStu

Again, this is rumbling on nicely, the current team are sensible, courteous and efficient. Which makes me pine for the days when I was on the paper and we raised hell just as a point of principle. Not really, I'm very please by the team and the product, which is generating some significant advertising interest once again after a fallow period.

Planning for next year

We've had a number of applications for various summer jobs with OUSU, which I will be dealing with in the next week. We've also got to get a booking system online for the Freshers' Fair, which is also something I'm looking into (since the one we have at the moment is not really fit for purpose any longer).

Other stuff

It really is business as usual down here. I'm spending roughly the same amount of my time on the OxStu, entz and other business as I always have. I've begun writing a handover report and also the budget for next year, which I'm going to go through with the company accountant before submitting to council. This week, in a

breathhtaking attack of karma, I've been victimised by my fellow exec members. All because of one silly, insignificant slip up – they're so bloody cruel to me, what did I do to deserve this?

If you have any further questions about my cripplingly boring working life, please do just let me know and I'll do my best to get back to you.

Louise Randall

V-P (Welfare and Equal Opportunities)

Hannah Roe

V-P (Women)

Attended:

JCC

Meeting with Proctors

Meeting with VC

Harassment Advisers Conference

WomCam

Enough!

Eating Disorders

The OUSU Eating Disorders Handbook is now online (I put it all up on International No Diet Day). I'm seeking funding for a large print run for next term. Enough! had a meeting with the Counselling Service on Monday, and we have worked out a supervision role for the Counselling Service which will hopefully work to keep the group existing in the long run, as well as provide support for the co-ordinators. The Eating Disorders paper will be going to the SHW Committee this term, after last terms meeting was cancelled/suspended.

OUSU's Promoting Choice Policy

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill which is about to be discussed in Parliament is highly likely to have amendments brought to it during the debate which would alter the current legal situation for abortion provision. I have contacted Andrew Smith (MP for Oxford East) to inform him of OUSU's policy and to ask him to tell us what his position will be. Our other Oxford MP has already made his position clear and it is in line with OUSU policy.

Childcare

The next Student Parents Meeting will be Wednesday of 4th week at 12 noon in OUSU. We now have a room booked for the Tea and Toys event of the term. I have asked the University to send me a copy of the 2005 Childcare Review which apparently made a number of useful recommendations, all of which, I assume, have yet to be implemented. In the OUSU Executive meeting with the Vice-Chancellor I asked about the University Childcare Committee and when that would be meeting again - they will be looking into the matter. OUSU now has policy that this Committee should meet, so I will be pursuing the matter.

Women's Officers

Since my last report we have had 1. a Women's Officer meeting where safety issues and freshers week support were discussed 2. a Women's Officers dinner where plans were made to organise a women's graduate studies event where women graduates would talk about going into graduate studies and their experiences (considering the drop off rate in Oxford of women going onto graduate studies from undergrad, this could be really useful) 3. A training event with the DEOU on the harassment advisors network- what it is, how it works etc. It would be a very useful thing if the

Finals Gap

The paper I took to the EPSC Gender Panel was sympathetically received, but requires further pursuing. Part of will be referred to the Senior Tutors Committee and the other part requires funding to be sought.

The Tutorial Workshop which I organised at Balliol was very useful for research. Joy is kindly writing up the event to be presented to the next Gender Panel.

Audit

This is about to completely take over my working life and I have scheduled a meeting with the Pro VC for (Personnel and Equal Opportunities) to discuss the equal opportunities section of the Audit. The research I've done so far indicates that since the last Audit four years ago, the University has re-arranged the way in which it deals with Equal Opportunities issues in such a way that OUSU has significantly less representation on these issues than previously. I've requested a lot of information from the University and will be working closely with the Autonomous Campaigns, the Student Parents Committee and the CR Women's Officers on this.

SAS Review

I submitted a written set of answers to the list of questions the Review Panel asked.

WomCam

Has held a number of successful events. Ladyfest is on the horizon.

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| Ingrid Frater | V-P (Graduates) |
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Woo hoo – sunshine! Hope you're all enjoying the lovely weather.

International Students' Campaign

Continues to grow amazingly well. They held by-elections for two positions this week, and there were well-contested elections. They held a Careers Event for international students wanting to stay in the UK, which attracted over 70 students. They've also started work proper on a handbook for new international students.

Mature Students & Second BA students

I met with one second BA student and a University staff member about what can be done for second BA students. We're particularly keen to have an orientation at the beginning of the year, and I've been in touch with many students about this.

I also met with two mature students (one undergrad and one grad) to start up the OUSU Mature Students' Campaign and kick that off with an evening in sixth week.

University Meetings

Have included: Graduate Admissions Committee, Curators of the University Libraries, Graduate Panel of EPSC, EPSC, JCC, OUCS Management Committee, Centre for Excellence in Preparing for Academic Practice.

Meeting with the Vice Chancellor

The VC came to OUSU for some interesting discussion on current topics.

Meeting with new Proctors & Assessor

They came to OUSU and we talked about some of our main concerns and hopes for the future.

Institutional Audit

Am running a bit behind with my sections for the student submission, but we're meeting weekly, and progress will be made!

OSSL

The board met last week.

Casework

Casework has been rising in numbers in recent weeks but has been going ok.

EPSC Paper – Students with Specific Learning Difficulties

We've written and will be taking to EPSC a paper on educational provision for students with SpLDs.

Heads of House Presentation

Martin, James and I presented some of OUSU's current work to a group of College Heads.

Graduate Funding

I met with the Head of Student Access and Funding to discuss future funding for graduate students.

Elections Working Group

You'll hear about this from Martin's presentation at Council.

MCR PresCom and CR outreach

MCR PresCom is on Thursday. I've also met with the LMH MCR President and went to a General Meeting at St Peter's MCR.

Graduate Alternative Prospectus

I have been keen for a long time to sort a Grad Alternative Prospectus, to appear online on our website. This is something I intend to work on this term – writing and collecting copy.

Student Bus Discounts

Still waiting for a reply from Oxford Bus Company....

University Accommodation Tenancy Agreements

We're hoping to get new ones for University accommodation.

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| James Lamming | V-P (Access & Academic Affairs) |
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The outburst in sunshine has meant that wearing shorts to work becomes a possibility, though this doesn't quite compensate for staying in doors all day getting our radiation dosage from our computer screens. The sunshine must also mean that Trinity term is continuing forwards, though I'll keep this report short as much of what has occurred in past two weeks resolves around attending meetings and the student written submission (both of which are time consuming and neither of which provide riveting reads, despite the quality of my prose). Other than to report that I am doing work, do please remind people about the existence of the SAS and if anyone is wanting to talk confidentially about exam pressure, or anything else, we're here to help.

Target Schools – Target Schools committee held their launch night that was very successful, and ran a couple of information sessions complete with doughnuts. I had little to do with either of these (perhaps explaining their success), but have been advising on training, future projects and other matters when they've felt it was necessary (and sometimes when they didn't). If you haven't done so already, sign up to the mailing list via www.targetschoolsoxford.com.

Disability Paper – With Ingrid produced a paper on disability provision in teaching and learning which we are taking to EPSC.

Student Written Submission – Downloaded and sorted all the data relating to undergraduate education and have started trying to analyse it. Initial papers for Senior Tutors committee and MPLS JCC will hopefully have been produced by the time that you read this report.

P.S. OUSU Constitutional watchers amongst you may have noticed that the opportunity to remove the sabbatical officers from our posts has passed. It takes two no-confidence motions in ordinary council, and a referendum. There are three meetings left at the time of writing, but, as no confidence motions can't be emergency motions, the deadline for submission has long past and there isn't time to work through the process before we pack up and leave the reigns of power to our successors. Despite being free from the shackles of electoral accountability, I will still be turning up to work due to some strange notion of civic responsibility, something I am sure you'll be pleased to hear.

P.P.S. The P.S. hides a serious point, where sabbatical officers tend to be free of accountability for most of their time in office. This is not a good situation, and wise heads, including those in the policy making working group, should give some thought about how to ensure proper scrutiny of our work year round.

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| Claire Addison | V-P (Charities & Community) |
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PART TIME OFFICERS

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| Adam McIvor | Common Room Support Officer |
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| Joy Wong | Academic Affairs Officer |
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| Herman Tam Officer | Graduate Academic Affairs |
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| Sian Renwick, | Graduate Women's Officer |
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| Sarah Hutchinson | Graduate Welfare Officer |
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Not a huge amount to report, but I put together a post-grad survey on alcohol use and social events in colleges which will be going out to grads hopefully in the next week. I also attended the first MCR Welfare meeting at OUSU, which was great. As well as introducing new MCR welfare reps to the welfare resources available to them and students through the University and OUSU, it was a great opportunity to share ideas and experiences, and I'm looking forward to the next one

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| Katherine Wall | Women's Officer |
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| Hannah Smith | Equal Opportunities Officer |
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| Joseph Ammoun | Community Outreach and Charities Officer |
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| Dominic Weinberg Officer | Rent and Accommodation |
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I've mainly been going through all the comments on accommodation that people entered into the survey OUSU did over Easter. Clearly there are a number of colleges with vacation residence and self-catering issues which I aim to look into more for the rest of term. I'm still finding out more about rents and had another good meeting last week with presidents, even though it was poorly attended. It would be really helpful if all presidents involved in negotiations could come to the next meeting, even if only briefly to let us know how things are progressing and what kind of discussions are taking place.

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| Becci Burton Officer | Health and Welfare |
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| Daniel Lowe | Environment and Ethics Officer |
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Happy 3rd week everybody, fourth week looks set to be a corker with GREEN WEEK coming up. The week looks to be amazing, kicking off on Sunday

PICNIC LAUNCH Sunday 11th May

Get out in the sun and enjoy poi and juggling, guitar-playing, henna painting, good food, good company. Bring a dish (try something organic!), share a dish (try vegetarian!), and spread the greenie planetary love.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS STALL Wed 14th May 4-6pm

Come meet the environment and ethics committee at OU at our stand outside Sainsbury's. We're continuing a big campaign against plastic bags, gathering signatures for our petition, and up for discussions on anything green and lovely.

CRITICAL MASS CYCLING Thursday 15th May 11:00 am

A cycling flashmob pouring down the streets of Oxford, wearing green and looking scary!! Or friendly. Or green. Together we'll hold up the gas-guzzling traffic and let show how fun cycling around Oxford is!

GREEN CLUBNIGHT Thursday 15th, 10 pm

A great chance to check out Po Na Na, a well-loved, small club frequented by the northern colleges mostly. We will make this extra green somehow.. Think very cool decorations and low lighting!

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION DAY Friday May 16th

Burst out of the Oxford bubble and go get down and dirty planting plants, clearing rubbish, and learning about the local ecosystem with a bunch of like-minded students.

Be there or be.. non-green. Cause good planets are hard to come by.