

# OUSU

## reports to council

3<sup>rd</sup> week trinity term 2010

**Stefan Baskerville**

**President**

### **Common Rooms**

I have begun meeting CR Presidents mainly to discuss negotiations over rent and charges, but also to meet new (and not new) presidents to discuss a range of other issues including how to get more involved in OUSU, disciplinary procedures and arrangements about food in hall. There is at least one training session on rent negotiation coming up early next week.

I attended Prescom, participating in discussion and answering questions from Junior Common Room presidents.

### **University**

Attended University Council, discussion at which included university governance, Browne review of higher education funding, establishment of school of government, socially responsible investment, among other things.

Met with the Vice-Chancellor prior to Council, and discussed HE cuts and the ongoing discussion around the establishment of the school of government at Oxford. Two other specific items of discussion. First, the Socially Responsible Investment Committee (arising as result of Oxford Student coverage earlier this term). University Council has not yet taken a final position on this. I will keep you updated on outcomes. The second issue was the motion passed by Council in 5<sup>th</sup> week of Hilary term on the issue of Iran and the Neda-Agha Soltan scholarship. I raised this with the VC (having already written to him about the issue last term) and requested a response on the matter, drawing his attention to the motion passed by Council and that I wished to be able to report back to students with an answer from him. The VC declined to respond there and then, and will be making a written reply to our request that he take an active position in support of the creation of the Neda-Agha Soltan scholarship at The Queen's College.

Attended Joint Teaching and Student Funding Review Group, and spoke to the University's draft submission to phase two of the Browne review. This will be submitted by Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May, though may not be in the public domain for a while yet. Don't think many students will like what it says!

### **Memorandum and Articles**

I have spent a fairly significant amount of time working on the M&A, which will be our new governing documents from the end of the financial year. These have been circulated a number of times and we have received a fair amount of feedback, which has been taken into account as we have been drafting them. Decisions to be taken later in the term.

### **Strategic Review**

With Dani, I redrafted the Strategic Review Group report taking account of the feedback received from students, which is now on the agenda for this week's Council as an item of discussion.

### **Executive**

We have had two fairly lengthy and productive meetings of the Executive, discussing how we might make it a more effective body in the future. The expansion of the number of people on the executive, and the introduction of portfolio roles, has changed the dynamic of how it operates so there are a number of debates to be had about how it can be most effective – these are ongoing and also partly addressed in the Strategic Review Report.

### **NUS**

The short (and sweet) report from NUS conference (which took place over Easter) is written and complete and I hoped it would be with you for 3<sup>rd</sup> week Council, but owing to internal miscommunication it will be coming to Council later in the term.

*reports to 3<sup>rd</sup> week council trinity term 2010*

## General Election

I advertised and assisted the running of the OxHub/OUSU Oxford East hust for the General Election, to which all candidates came and answered a range of questions including HE funding, climate change, nuclear power, the car industry, the detention of children of refugees, among other things.

## Citizens UK

As mandated by Council in 1<sup>st</sup> week, I attended the Citizens UK General Election Assembly at Methodist Central Hall. I was timekeeper for the event, which was fun and meant OUSU got recognition. Our relationship with Citizens UK is stronger as a result. The assembly itself was the deepest and most focused engagement of the party leaders with real people during the election campaign.

All three party leaders attended the Assembly, made ten minute speeches in which they were asked to address the Citizens UK manifesto, and were then questioned for five minutes to clarify their positions on Citizens UK manifesto issues. On the key issue of the Living Wage, on which OUSU now has strengthened policy, there was big buy-in from Gordon Brown (who said he would pay all Whitehall cleaners a Living Wage and champion it across the country) and from David Cameron, who described it as 'an idea whose time has come' and committed, subject to the figures, to working with Citizens UK to introduce it in Whitehall. Nick Clegg made no commitment to the Living Wage. You can see a summary of the positions taken by the leaders on all of Citizens UK manifesto items here: <http://www.citizensukblog.org/the-leaders-agreements/>. A summary of the press coverage here: <http://www.citizensukblog.org/citizens-uk-blog-press-reactions>.

There has been a significant development over the last few days as a key demand of the Citizens UK manifesto, the end of child detention in the asylum system, appears to be an item of agreement between the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition partners and will be implemented during the course of this parliament. More detail on how that happened here: <http://sanctuarypledge.blogspot.com/2010/05/we-just-made-history-new-coalition.html>.

<b>Kat Wall</b>	<b>V-P (Women)</b>
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Hi council,

### 1. Springboard for Undergraduates

We completed the Springboard for undergraduates pilot on Monday and the evaluation so far has been incredibly positive. I am now working to get the financial support of colleges to ensure that this program runs every year. Springboard is a personal and professional development program for women and it is thought by many in the University including the head of Equality and Diversity to be highly beneficial to women at the Undergraduate level.

### 2. Representation

#### Athena Swann Working Group

- This group is working towards achieving the Bronze Award for Oxford University in terms of women and gender equality in STEM and SET. This group is also supporting the work of the Zoology Department which is working towards its Silver Award and the Physics Department which is looking to achieve the Project Juno award.

#### Equality Act Working Group

- This group is looking into the implications of the Equality Act, passed this year, to the University and Colleges. My role on this committee is to ensure that the voices of women students are heard and that the full reach of the Act is realised to ensure greater gender equality here at Oxford.

### 3. Women in Politics

- Assisted in running hust training for prospective common room officers
- Spoke on a panel at an OxWIP event looking at the implications of the 2010 election for women

#### 4. Night Safety Campaign

- Working with Oxford Brookes to improve the Safety Bus service
- Meeting with City Councillors and local police to discuss possibilities to improve Night Safety in Oxford
- Running Campaign meetings for Women's Officers

#### 5. Women's Campaign

- Working to raise awareness about harassment and abuse
- Organising Love Your Body Garden Party
- Assisted in running the Parliamentary Candidate Hustings

#### 6. Gender Equality Report

- My main focus this term is writing the Gender Equality Report and I have been steadily gathering information and evidence over the past couple of weeks for this report.

**Dani Quinn  
Opportunities)**

**V-P**

**(Welfare**

**&**

**Equal**

Hello Council,

I've had a lot of casework in the past two weeks so, to my frustration, I have achieved little else and I'm quite far behind with my non-casework plans. I am, of course, delighted that students get in touch and that we have the opportunity to help them, but it does mean other things must slip. I hope this short report isn't too dismaying or so brief as to be unhelpful!

Dani x

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#### **Representation**

Attended the first meeting of the **Race Equality** Steering Group. The first meeting was more of an introduction, so it will be next term before we see what it can really do. Please please get in touch if there issues related to Race Equality that you think should be tackled by the University, or of which it should be aware. I will also be attending the Race Equality Working Group (which is more student-focused). I will also be attending a meeting of the **Disability Equality** Scheme just before Council. Ask me if you have questions (obviously I can't report on it yet).

#### **Strategic Review Report**

I worked with Jonny and Stefan to update it. We had much more positive feedback on this draft, so hopefully it's ready to be debated. Please read it!

#### **Common Room Support**

You would have seen from the last all-student mailing that I'm running a few different **training** sessions this term (Chairing meetings, Freshers' Week, student support). Please pass them on, encourage others to attend, and attend!

I've been distributing **posters** and new **publications** (specifically the mental health handbook). We also had a useful **meeting** for the welfare officers, which gave some helpful 'steers' for what else I should be working on, and was good for sharing ideas. I've also met with several new Common Room Officers.

#### **Miscellaneous**

Produced and distributed the '**Winning for Students**' booklet, to better explain sabbatical roles and encourage people to run for them.

Secured Standing Committee's approval for Lisa (the **Student Advisor**) to work an additional hour a week. Hopefully this will lead to a slightly higher level of output from the other Student Advice Service officers....Or at least that we'll be less manic!

Attended meeting with Heather Bell (Director of International Strategy) about how we can best identify and work on **international students' concerns**. It highlighted the importance of having a strong voice for international students. If your Common Room doesn't have an **international students' rep**, and you want to know a little more about the utility of such a position, please get in touch.

Had meetings for the **Equal Opps** and **Welfare** members of **Exec**. Although this doesn't directly lead to 'outcomes,' it was really helpful for sharing information and coordinating what we're doing.

Met with Elsa Bell, the Head of Student Welfare. Alerted to some serious concerns about services that are designed to support students (having be brought to my attention due to casework), along with other issues.

Attended JCR **Prescom** on Friday of 2<sup>nd</sup>, will be attending MCR Prescom on Tuesday of 3<sup>rd</sup>. Followed up on requests made about Night Safety.

Will be meeting with Anne Ford, who coordinates peer support training, about **Chinese Nightline**. This project has been slowed down because Anne was stranded on the other side of the world: hopefully we can get going now!

**Sarah Hutchinson**

**V-P (Graduates)**

The last couple of weeks have been relatively quiet, and a lot of my time has been spent putting together the submission for the University's consultation of DPhil liability, working on graduate and mature student material for the Freshers' Guide and finishing off material for the website. The DPhil liability paper is now pretty much written and I will be submitting it following any changes that are required after the vote on the issue at Council. My technological skills have proved a bit of a barrier to getting Graduate-specific content up on the website but it's ready to go and will hopefully be online by the end of the week. If there's anything else that you think should be one there, please let me know ([graduates@ousu.org](mailto:graduates@ousu.org))

As well as working on the above, I have also attended a meetings that I should update you on.

On Friday of 3<sup>rd</sup> Jonny, Dani and I met with a number of International Reps and CR Presidents to discuss undergraduate international students issues with Heather Bell, the University's Director of International Strategy. This was an incredibly helpful meeting, and I hope the CR reps who attended found it useful too. I am in the process of updating the International Reps maillist and will be sending out a brief questionnaire- as agreed at the meeting – regarding the University's International Students' Orientation Programmes. I will send it to Presidents and IS Reps, but let me know if you are not on that list but would like to complete it.

Graduate Panel was held on Tuesday of 2<sup>nd</sup> week. This included discussion of the Dphil liability – I reported that student opinion was generally strongly against the proposal and emphasised that there is a need to look urgently at improving supervision and support to students before imposing financial penalties for slow progress. We also discussed a proposal to reduce the number of terms PRS students can take before they attempt to transfer to DPhil status. This will be being discussed by the divisions before coming back for discussion ext term, so let me know if you have any thoughts. I expressed concern that this is a very tight timetable for those who's research may shift a lot during the first year as a research student.

At Education we discussed the University's response to the report of the Smith review on Postgraduate Education ('One step beyond' on the [BIS.gov.uk](http://BIS.gov.uk) website if you're interested). We discussed the ability of the University to provide information about students that cannot take up a place at Oxford because of lack of funding. This information is available, but I suggested that the problem of access to postgraduate education is that inability to afford it will also put people who would excel at even applying, and this sort of research should not be left to individual institutions to carry out. There was also a presentation on the new reporting requirements for international students with visas under the new Points-based immigration system. We clarified that for students who are ill and need to suspend, or who are sent down but are appealing, the Student Advice and Advisory Service can liaise with the UK Borders Agency and would be able to advise students in these situations.

Between writing this and Council, I will be attending both Fees Policy Group and MCR PresCom and I will give an oral report on these.

**Jonny Medland**

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

Comrades,

3rd week Council. Only two Councils and 6 weeks to go in our term of office. Weird and more than a little saddening. But such is life. Here's an update on what I've been up to in weeks 1-3.

### **Teaching Review**

This should probably go up front as it's pretty much eaten my life for the last couple of weeks. At some point last term, when we realised that the university wasn't putting too much thought into how to consult students as part of its review of Oxford's teaching model we decided to start consulting students ourselves. We came up with a methodology which would involve student-led focus groups in as many colleges as possible. This would both engage students and lead to good comparable information. Then we decided to run 4 focus groups in all the colleges where we were running them. From then on it was an easy task to persuade JCR Presidents to set aside hours of their time in weeks 1 and 2 to run these focus groups, recruit volunteers and attending training which Hannah and myself ran in the weekend of 0th to 1st week. About 40 people came to that, which was lovely and somewhat surprising (ever tried running training at 5:30pm on Saturday of 0th week? You'd be stunned at how many people want to come along).

To cut a long story short the last couple of weeks have seen one of the most successful consultative exercises which OUSU has ever run. We've spoken to literally hundreds of undergraduates about their experience with teaching here including what they want from the teaching system. Hannah and myself have attended as many sessions as possible (we've both averaged about 3 75-90 minute focus groups per day) but innumerable thanks need to go not only to all the students who attended the sessions but particularly the JCR Presidents, committee members and friends who ran the sessions and made notes on them for us. The students at Univ, St. Hilda's, St. John's, Trinity, Queen's, Magdalen, New, Corpus, St. Catherine's and St. Peter's all participated and we'll be giving a presentation to 5th week Council on the report which we've produced (or will have by then).

### **Student Advice Service**

This has been ticking over. Dani Quinn has put together the first ever internal policy book for the Student Advice Service which will work to codify some of our existing procedures and made us think about what other procedures would be useful. The Student Advice Service is one of the most valuable things which OUSU does and this sort of work is incredibly important in ensuring that it as high quality a service as possible.

### **Meetings with University Officials**

- \* With the rest of the Student Advice Service met the Director of Student Administration Services and Head of the Counselling Service to talk about student welfare, particularly models of best practice for how colleges can help students suffering from academic and welfare problems.
- \* With Sarah and 2 representatives from Somerville MCR met the Director of Graduate Admissions to discuss graduate access and how graduate students can be involved in demystifying graduate study for current undergraduates.
- \* Met the Director of International Strategy to prepare for a very successful meeting with JCR and MCR representatives on issues faced by international students at Oxford and how the university can do more to support them.
- \* Met the Director of Student Administration & Services to talk about a range of issues including our teaching review project, improving harassment procedures and the various reviews of complaints & appeals procedures which are ongoing. Those of you who both read these and have good memories will remember that Council voted last term to campaign on improving the fees and student support arrangements provided to asylum seekers studying at Oxford and I am now working on a paper for Fees Policy Group on this issue.

- \* Met the PVC Education and Head of Education Policy Support for our usual pre-Education Committee briefing.

## **Representation & University Committees**

There have been 2 big things which have taken up a lot of time on this in the last fortnight. The first of these is the Browne Review. You'll all know what this is - it's the government review of Higher Education Funding which is currently taking place. We made a submission to phase 1 and will be making a submission to phase 2 in a few days. This has been circulated for comment after I finally finished writing it (thanks to those of you who have got back with either substantive or stylistic comments - as always Dani Quinn's ability to know more about rules associated with grammar will never cease to amaze me). Our submission is currently 20 pages and 10,000 words long and offers our view on the future of higher education funding.

The second thing was the story around the Russell Group. In line with my mandate from 1st week Council I have written to the university asking them to put pressure on the Russell Group and am waiting to hear back from them. This story was a great example of how OUSU can use our profile to win media coverage (we made it into the BBC, Daily Telegraph and Times Higher Education Supplement). It's also enabled me to build some relationships with journalists which could come in very handy as the battle over the future of HE funding continues to develop. Committees I've been to in weeks 1 and 2 are:

- \* University Council: An epic 4.5 hour unreserved agenda in week 1 left me reeling somewhat but among the items we discussed were the university's response to the Browne Review (which is now effectively finalised), capital projects and plans to build a school of Public Policy.
- \* I sent apologies to the Working Group on the Admissions Timetable as I was pushing the story about the Russell Group to the national press. I think this was an effective use of my time (although the work of this group is important) but thought I would let you know.
- \* Curators of the University Libraries: Met on Monday of week 2 and had quite a light agenda focussing mainly on the library materials budget which is being protected in the face of funding pressures.
- \* Education Committee: Is meeting on Friday of week 2 and has a packed and important agenda including the report of a working group on university disciplinary procedures, Smith Review of postgraduate education and learning through IT in the university.

## **Common Room Support**

Bit of an odd heading this. I've met various individual student representatives, went to Trinity JCR to talk to them about re-affiliation and ran an access reps meeting with Nathan Jones which looked at teacher conferences and how to get them up and running in colleges. The main thing has been helping JCRs run teaching review focus groups, however, which is covered at the top of the report.

## **Miscellaneous/General OUSU Stuff**

In no real order:

- \* Back Yourself 2010 was back (the puns will only continue as we get further into Trinity) with a Politics Finals Forum on Monday of Week 1. The Physics one is Friday of week 3 at which point the students are likely to all have backed themselves as much as can be expected.
- \* I went to 2 meetings of the OUSU Exec where the main items for discussion were matters arising from the Strategic Review Group.
- \* With Dani & Stefan I worked on revising the report of this Group in light of comments received.
- \* I organised a meeting with Heather Bell, Director of International Strategy for about 20 Common Room reps and OUSU Exec members. This meeting was really useful and is the sort of thing which we should organise more - loads of valuable points came out of it which will help us in working with the university.

\* I went to a meeting of Standing Committee to discuss contractual arrangements for OUSU staff including maternity cover.

As always ask any questions - either in Council or to [access@ousu.org](mailto:access@ousu.org).

<b>Eorann Lean Community)</b>	<b>V-P</b>	<b>(Charities</b>	<b>&amp;</b>
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### **10:10**

The university has signed up for 10:10! YAY!

Now we need to make sure that the university actually does cut its emissions. So myself and Ben and Mae are starting to plan alongside Jenny Ekelund (head of Sustainability) the campaign to get students cutting emissions and pushing their colleges and departments do the same. Anyone interested please email it would be great to have the university working together on this!

### **Sweatshop Stash**

Just a little update. The ethical policy for Oxford Limited has now been seen and is actually pretty good! So the campaign is going to focus on getting the same policy put into clubs and society rules, the naked calendar and pledges from societies and getting the uni to sign up to the workers rights consortium.

### **Exam Regulations**

A little update from Environmental panel: At the moment the Education policy support team distribute Exam regs with the help of the Press and info office. In 2009 a total of 10, 419 exam regs were distributed – this is reduced by 465 copies for 2008 because members of congregation where given the option to opt out. They do not want to move to an opt in system until the online version becomes the authoritative edition – this is planned by the press and info office for when they take over the distribution in 2011 (but when the online version will become authoritative doesn't seem to be known!)

So what can be done.... Well in May/June your college office is going to get an email from the press and information office asking for the number of copies they want for student use. Linacre have managed to stop receiving one for every student. So I'm waiting to hear back from Linacre re what they do. When I know, I'll let you know and most likely write a motion to be past in common rooms suggesting a similar system. For now I suggest you go to your office and ask about the email and who in the office receives it/makes the decision about how many to receive and see what they need to persuade them to reduce the number and get back to me with info!

### **Beyond Profit careers fair**

So I've been in conversation with the Careers service and the Beyond profit careers fair has been discontinued ☹ However this is actually good news – because now charities are going to have a higher profile and other "beyond profit" careers are also going to have space at the Oxford Careers Fair in Michaelmas ☺

### **Safety Bus**

Safety Bus is going to stop running in 2 weeks because it's the end of the Brookes term and there are only 3 OU volunteers (one of them is me!) This is crap because after balls, exams etc is when OU students actually need to be taken home. Now its too late to sort it for this term but if we can get more student interested in colleges such as Hughs, Anne's etc. who would use the service (not only for welfare but Zodiac to Hughs for a £1 is awesome!) as once using it, they're more likely to volunteer for it. So basically I'd like to ask presidents to have a safety bus volunteer come round to chat about the service using it and volunteering early next term and for the number be given and service explained to freshers – especially as they are the most vulnerable and need it. If your interested please contact me otherwise I'm going to start hounding you to book someone in in freshers...

### **Night Safety and SRI**

I have meetings on both of these on Thurs if you have thoughts and opinions please let me know - email me or chat to me after council

### **E&E Pledge**

Andrew Smith Signed up to all of the pledges which were:

- Push for an annual 10% cut in UK carbon emission in line with the 10:10 campaign.
- Encourage the secretary of state for Transport to introduce half-price rail and bus fares for students.
- Work with Oxford city council to guarantee all employess and contractors a fair wage that reflects the cost of living.
- Support the proposed wind turbines in Horspath and Cuttleslowe Park
- Introduce a 'Good Samaritans law' reducing the liability risk for companies donating leftover food to charity groups.

We'll be pushing especially for the Oxford related ones to be seen through  
Nicola Blackwood will be approached soon to sign up too....

## PART TIME OFFICERS

**Nathan Jones**

**Access & Admissions Officer**

This week- I met with JCR Access Reps to discuss running Teacher Conferences to take place in Colleges, ran by students and tutors so as to allow teachers from schools across the country to watch a mock interview, see Oxford and ask questions about how to support applicants throughout the whole process. We also discussed Regionalisation's impact on JCR access work, greater co-operation between Common Rooms on access, and availability of paid, part-time Outreach officers.

I am working on Teacher Conference packs to be distributed to interested Colleges to allow for swift replication, and to provide a simple format for Access officers to model according to desired focus.

I am working with the Head of Sixth Form at Canon Slade School in Bolton to discuss commemorating the story of Fred Walker, a railway worker's son from Bolton who won a place at Magdalen and became a contemporary of Edward VIII, before dying at Ypres in 1917. I have arranged a meeting for later this term, and will keep you posted! We hope to use this as an opportunity for innovative outreach work in the North-East.

I'm arranging an 'Access Freshers' Fair' which will travel around Common Rooms during Michaelmas next year. I will be contacting JCR Access Reps and student committees from Oxford's rich array of access initiatives over the next week or two to discuss taking part. If you don't hear from me and know of a project that could entice Fresher-involvement, please drop me an email.

**Yuan Yang**

**Women's Officer**

HELLO COUNCIL!

If you want to know what I've been up to or want to get involved in the gender equality movement in Oxford, say hello back: [womensofficer@ousu.org](mailto:womensofficer@ousu.org). Everyone is welcome to the party.

But in brief, the past:

- \* Organised and held **Students' Question Time** (hustings) for local **parliamentary candidates**. Over 60 students attended. It was a chance for difficult and controversial topics such as decriminalising **prostitution**, better **sex education**, and the gender **pay gap**, to be put to local politicians. (Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> Week)
- \* Held 2 **New Pie Group** sessions on **Propagender in Magazines**. "Propagender" is what you could call the material in our society through which we receive our **perceptions of gender** – they have to come from somewhere, right? - in brief, we chat about magazines and how they present men, women, body image, attraction, sex, relationship advice...The New Pie Group is a **new mixed-gender discussion group** which I launched in Hilary. Why not try it out? Our next meeting is **Thu 3<sup>rd</sup> Week, 5.30-6.30pm, in Balliol.**

The future:

- \* Organisation for the annual WomCam **Love Your Body** Garden Party is ongoing, and we've secured funding and goodies from several businesses, and are booking up entertainment. The crucial core details of this event is that it is an open-to-all **FREE PARTY** in a college **GARDEN**, in which we love our bodies. Put Sun 13<sup>th</sup> June (**Sun 8<sup>th</sup> Week**) in your diary – more to be announced soon!
- \* I hope the New Pie Group will be on tour to a CR near you sometime soon, and engage the

members of your CR community in thought-provoking, open discussions on **gender norms in our own lives**; specifically, we'd like to show you the displays we've made of **gender in magazines**. If you would like us to come to your JCR/MCR, drop me a line!

If you ever want to come to a WomCam discussion (every Mon, 5.45-7pm in the OUSU Buildings), or a New Pie Group discussion (usually Thu, 5.30-6.30pm, Balliol) but don't know anyone there already/don't know where to go, feel free to call me: 07875535948.

And as usual, any innovative ideas for the future, recommendations for feminist literature to improve me, requests for speakers or events – you know where to send them.

In sisterhood,

Yuan Yang  
Balliol College  
Women's Officer, Oxford University Student Union  
[womensofficer@ousu.org](mailto:womensofficer@ousu.org)  
07875535948  
...and the only Yuan Yang on the Oxford Facebook Network.

<b>Jack Matthews</b>
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<b>Common Room Support Officer</b>
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Hi Council

I'll keep it short this week;

- 1) I have been running training courses for using Mi-voice in Common Room elections. If you are interested in using the system please let me know.
- 2) Society support continues, helping several societies to get off the ground. I will also talk in Council about the funding that is available from the University for Clubs and Societies and send something around the maillists about it.
- 3) At the time I write this OUSU Reps meeting hasn't happened yet, but I'm sure it went well!
- 4) I've been scrutinised, which was actually quite fun!

That's all folks,

Jack Matthews  
Common Room Support Officer, OUSU

<b>Ben West</b>
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<b>Environments &amp; Ethics Officer</b>
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Hi Council,

Term has got off to a great start with a new campaign on sweatshop-free university clothing, with several tie-in events planned over the course of this term including a naked calendar and campaign guide so that the campaign concept can be rolled out at individual colleges too.

This Thursday we'll be electing a new Environment & Ethics Committee Co-Chair. Huge, huge thanks to Mae Penner for all of the work she's put into E&E during her time in office- she'll be a hard act to follow!

Looking towards the longer-term, we've been surveying Common Room E&E reps to look at how they can be better supported, as well as getting their input into the sorts of areas they'd appreciate extra training or information.

Have a great week,

**Matthew Tye**

**BME & Anti Racism Officer**

I am overseeing the final completion of an access DVD aimed at potential BME undergraduate admissions. Filming took place during last MT and HT terms and involved a cross-section of current BME undergraduates being interviewed. Also as part of the filming process, senior politicians were filmed in Westminster. The final production will be ready towards the end of TT. The filming and editing work is being done pro-bono by students from the Ravensbourne Digital Media College, London.

I have also recently attended a *BME Community Champions* all-day event in Oxford. The aim of this was to celebrate the work of the BME community within Oxford as well as forge links between different service actors. Representatives from Brookes, the Police, political parties and voluntary organisations were present. There also exists a number of ways in which students can become involved or support the Oxfordshire Race Equality Council. See [www.oxrec.org](http://www.oxrec.org)

**Deeksha Sharma**

**Grad International Students Officer**

The present report is subdivided into two paragraphs. Whereas the first outlines the objectives with which I entered into office at the beginning of the Hilary term, the second paragraph details the steps/ projects undertaken in implementation and furtherance of those objectives besides other opportunities that have come up during my term in office up till now. The conclusion outlines my plans and projects for the present term.

**Objectives at start of my term**

My first objective at the start of my tenure was to focus at targeted information dissemination amongst graduate international students and presenting OUSU to them as an accessible forum for their support and welfare. The rationale behind this was that being a graduate International student can be a tough task in terms of both being aware of and accessing various support systems and welfare services available and also achieving an enriching social integration into the stressful Oxford life. The reason being that most graduates being on very short courses often are unaware of welfare services, Student Union activities and various forums for social integration etc. to help them make the most of their stay in Oxford. As an unfortunate result they often end up having an isolated existence, which in itself can be very stressful. Therefore I took it as an objective to organise a Graduate specific International Students events in order to facilitate informal voicing of opinion by international graduates and thus facilitate opportunities for their greater integration and involvement with OUSU and larger University life.

The other areas of focus have included co-ordinating with national interest societies on issues of information dissemination about the International Student Campaign and various OUSU services in general as well as qua international students specifically and to work on greater welfare access for international graduates, overcoming the issue of language impediment in a large number of cases.

**Activities/ Steps taken/ Involvement**

In furtherance of the objective of attaining graduate targeted information; specific information to be sent out on graduate mailing list was proposed. I also pursued discussions with Oxford Indian Society and Oxford SAARC Society to be able to send information updates about the International Student Campaign activities on their mailing lists so that the campaign can work towards targeting a pool of people larger than only those who signed up at the fresher's fair. Both have agreed to the same. I was also a part of discussions on idea of welfare services such as Nightline in foreign language- Mandarin as a Pilot project.

As for graduate specific events, I organised International Graduate evening – an informal discussion oriented event in Week 4 of Hilary term to precede Post Graduate Assembly in Week 5. I was also a part of the

University's Review Group on graduate prospectus and consultation with OUSU on monitoring framework under the new VISA system for international students.

**Conclusion- Proposals for this term**

The focus of the past terms has been threefold- effective information dissemination about OUSU and its welfare services, response gathering from International graduates about major issues faced by them and making attempts to facilitate social involvement for them.

For many International Graduates one of the main beckoning factors to come to a place like Oxford is also an 'International experience', which I believe remains incomplete if they cannot identify and involve themselves with the University life at a greater level or remain unaware of what all is for them on offer and my participation in discussion group on international students early this term focussed on voicing the above ideas and also understanding what other JCR's, MCR's in specific and colleges in general are doing to facilitate a comfortable settling in Oxford for graduate students.

Keeping focus on facilitating better social integration of international graduates we have included sections like cultural shock etc. in international students section of the Fresher's guide in order to focus on socio-emotional challenges of being an international graduate. The focus remains the same for the International Students Handbook currently under work. Also a target initiative for international students has been proposed to be undertaken for this term in co-ordination with the international students' officer.

Deeksha Sharma  
Graduate International Students Officer

**David Bowe**

**Grad Welfare Officer**

Dear Council,

This term I have been working with Dani on problems with the behaviour of outside contractors to the University and with Sarah and Dani on a submission on graduate welfare issues.

Any questions or concerns feel free to email me at [gradwelfare@ousu.org](mailto:gradwelfare@ousu.org).

David Bowe