

## Reports to Council

*3<sup>rd</sup> week council tt12*

**Martha Mackenzie**

**President**

Evening Council,

I hope you are not feeling too blue in response to our black skies, I remain optimistic that summer is just around the corner... I've detailed below some of my core activities since 1<sup>st</sup> Week.

### NUS Conference

Apologies for being absent from OUSU Council in 1<sup>st</sup> Week, I was in attendance at NUS Conference along with our six delegates. The conference was on the whole fairly successful. OUSU's motions on exploring loan weighting beyond London and on supporting offender learning were both passed. The amendment to the condemnation of violent police tactics was narrowly defeated (one vote would have swung it), with delegate Sean Robinson taking conference to the closest count of the week. The motion on releasing members data was deferred to the National Executive Council as the time ran out during conference. Similarly the motion that equated Oxford Colleges with BPP, wrongly categorising them as private providers, was also deferred. Gerard Tully (CUSU President) and I will be writing a joint letter to the NEC Expressing our deep concern.

I voted to re-elect Liam Burns as National President, elect Vicki Spooner-Bars as Vice President (Union Development), elect Rachel Wenstone as Vice President (Higher Education), re-elect Pete Mercer as Vice President (Welfare), and I voted RON for Vice-President (Society and Citizenship). I will happily explain these decisions in Council, as will the other delegates.

### OUSU Funding

As I have mentioned to you before, last term OUSU made a request to the University for extra funding and this request was turned down. I am still writing a letter to the University in response to this decision, questioning their reasoning. I'll be releasing the details of this letter at some point in the next couple of weeks. OUSU remains rather dangerously underfunded and we will struggle to become the student union that you deserve without some extra investment that can be channelled straight into student support and services.

The final draft of the OUSU budget for 2012-2013 is being present to Council this week. This draft has been approved by the OUSU Finance Committee and worked on extensively by the Budget Committee, and it is now your chance to vote on the Budget.

### Miss Representation Screening

The screening of Miss Representation **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April went really well**. Over 300 people attended the screening with at least one hundred staying behind for the post-film discussion. The event was also used to officially launch the 'Lead for Equality' campaign, dedicated to achieving political equality in Oxford and beyond. More information on this campaign will follow shortly.

## Rent

As Rent Negotiations start to heat up the past two weeks have been very rent heavy. I have held a Graduate Negotiation Training Session and an Undergraduate Negotiation Training Session. I also conducted another Rent Breakfast and will be hosting a Rent Surgery in 4<sup>th</sup> Week. David Butler and I have also been providing common rooms with lots of one-to-one support, helping with their individual responses.

## Election Regulations

Jim and I have been working with one of our External Trustees, Richard Jackson, to draft the OUSU Election Regulations. These Regulations are being around the findings of the past two electoral review groups and the institution's experience of what works (and what seriously doesn't work) with the OUSU elections. We will be brining a first draft to council in 5<sup>th</sup> Week (that will be circulated beforehand) for consultation. These Election Regulations are intended to be a lot simpler than what currently exists in the Standing Orders.

## Teaching Awards

Nominations closed for the Teaching Awards on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May, we received over 330 nominations, beating our target by 10%. Shortlisting will take place next week with the winners announced towards the end of 5<sup>th</sup>.

I have also chaired an OUSU Trustee Board Meeting, spoken to St Catz JCR, attended JCR and MCR PresCom, attended the Graduate Issues Working Group, and conducted a Public Speaking Workshop with Sarah Pine for WomCam.

Have a great week, as ever please do not hesitate to get in touch, just drop me an email at [president@ousu.org](mailto:president@ousu.org).

Martha x

Jim O'Connell	VP (Graduates)
---------------	----------------

Hi Council,

Over the last couple of weeks I've met a number of the new MCR Presidents, which has been really useful in giving me some new perspectives on the work I've been doing. We also had MCR Prescom last week, which passed useful motions on the PGR Provision Review and on Graduate Funding after Mica Ertegun's gift of last term.

I've spent much of the last two weeks hawking the PGR Provision Review around the University. I'm playing a multi-gig tour, having done the big show at Education Committee last week after a warm up at MPLS GJCF, with a matinee on Friday at Social Sciences Divisional Board. Future dates include Humanities Graduate Studies Committee, Graduate Committee of Conference of Colleges, and University Graduate Panel; with my frankly much more engaging understudy Clara playing the Medical Sciences show in my place next week. What a Rock and Roll lifestyle I lead.

More seriously, the Report has been well received and is starting to shape how different bits of the University think about DPhil provision. It may well get discussed in your college - it will be the big thing about DPhil students with the OUSU logo on the front. Colleges will most likely want to talk about **supporting DPhils who have difficulties, providing a community and teaching opportunities for DPhils**. My suggested answers to these are, respectively, yes please, don't worry too much, and yes please with Tutors mentoring but clearly only when it fits in with needs of undergraduates. Do get in touch if you see it on a tutorial committee or governing body agenda and you have any questions or ideas - [graduates@ousu.org](mailto:graduates@ousu.org).

Last week also saw the start of the rewrite of Education Committee's Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees. This sounds very dull but is actually quite important. Following on from the PGR Provision Review plus a few other things, the University is going away to have a look at its policies for research students. I'm on the working group for this, and the group has been taking on board what I've suggested are the most pressing issues for DPhil students.

The HE Commission came to Oxford last week, to hear evidence from us about postgraduate matters. The HE Commission is a non-governmental group consisting of various big dogs (Tony Giddens, Martin Rees, some parliamentarians, Goldman's COO etc) chaired by Graham Spittle. As the government has ignored postgrad, it's preparing its own report into postgrads and any changes that need to be made and it's going to try to foist the conclusions on BIS. We had a great session talking about our key issues - funding, visas - and the Commission looks like it's going to recommend some form of loans scheme for PGT courses.

For the rest of this week I'm going to be at NUS International and Postgraduate Conference, justifying our affiliation fee by trying to lift as many freebies as possible. The big issue I want some traction on is visas and immigration, which the NUS is well placed to help us with at the national level. I'm planning on voting for Daniel Stevens for International Officer because he's the only one who's hacked me and he talked a good game on visas.

I've also been continuing on the rewrite of the Election Regulations, which is fun. Slashing red tape etc.

I am very late with my Council Report so I have no time to come up with a vaguely interesting quote like I usually do, so sorry about that. I'll shoot for two next time.

Jim

<b>Sebastian Baird</b>	<b>VP (Welfare &amp; Equal Opportunities)</b>
------------------------	---

Dear all,

I hope you're well, and that the gloom of Trinity Term 2012 hasn't excessively dampened your spirits. We've been busy at OUSU towers trying to finish up all the projects that we've been intending to carry out all year. Here's a summary of what I've been up to in the last couple of weeks.

#### Mind Your Head Campaign

- Mind Your Head Week was a success - apart from one no-show speaker, all the events ran smoothly and we had good attendance at each of them: Headspace meditation (60), Sleep Workshop (20), Mindfulness (25), Happy Movie (50), Dennis O'Donnell (30).
- I've also been working with Josh Chauvin, New student and amateur film-maker, on a short film project for the MYH Campaign. We'll be planning, filming and editing this term (hopefully) so watch this space.
- A number of colleges have been continuing to organise MYH events in common rooms: I attended events at Pembroke, Linacre and Queen's. We have one coming up at Merton, too.

#### Students With Disabilities Guide

- We have put out the proposal and have garnered interest from a number of firms who would like to sponsor the guide. I've also begun to plan and draft the content of the guide itself, so it looks as though, 10 months later, we might actually have a SWD guide for next year's intake of students.

#### Living Out Guide

- I have begun work with David Butler, Rent & Accommodation Officer, on rewriting the LO guide, as it is coming up to the end of its cycle. If any of you have any feedback about the utilities/flaws of the current iteration, please pass them on to either David or I.

### Supporting research students

- Jim and I have been working on a project with Ingrid Lunt from Education which aims to help research students cope with the stresses of the relationship with their supervisor. We're going to be holding our first pilot workshop on the supervisor relationship next week, and looking to build it into OUSU's activity over the next year.

### Student Advice Service

- I've been starting to plan and draft the Student Advice Service annual report, which is a chance for us to demonstrate the way the service has worked this year and the observations we have on particular policy concerns in the University and colleges.
- I have continued to work on the policy development internally within the Service - we are writing new procedures for complaints, confidentiality and equal opportunities with a view to affiliation with Advice UK.
- I've also been continuing with my normal duties with the student advice service, doing casework and chairing debriefs as the manager of the service.

### Training

- I will be delivering a training session with Leyla Okhai from the University's Equality and Diversity Unit on running a diverse and inclusive common room, so I have been planning and organising that training session. It will be on Thursday, in OUSU, from 3.30pm-5.30pm - let me know if you would like to come along.

### SWD Peer Mentoring Scheme

- I met with Anne Ford, manager of the Peer Support Scheme, and Pete Quinn from the DAS, to further develop the peer mentoring scheme so that it is in place early next year. It's coming along slowly...

It wasn't strictly related to my portfolio, but I ran my first 10km race a few days ago with Helen Robb, who is preparing to do the Great North Run later this year. We both finished in under an hour!

All the best,

Seb

"The only normal people are the ones you don't know very well."

- Alfred Adler.

Hannah Cusworth	VP (Access & Academic Affairs)
-----------------	--------------------------------

Dear Council,

Since we last met, I have mostly been feeling a bit rushed off my feet, which is good, but definitely not something I was expecting in Trinity term and it looks like it's just getting busier, until about 7<sup>th</sup> week, when I've got nothing on. I've also been working on submitting a nomination for the NUS Small and Specialist Union of the Year award, so keep your fingers crossed for OUSU. Apologies this report is on the short side, feel free to ask me any questions.

### Access

Clubs and Societies Workshops- I had a meeting with Amnesty, which was really positive and they agreed to get involved. I'm meeting a college rep on Thursday and the Union who are keen to get involved on Friday. Next step is making sure all the workshops are coming together and the colleges are coming on side.

Interview timetable for 2012- several meetings discussing this because half term falls late next academic year, squeezing the timeframe for admissions. There was discussion of moving everything back a week (ie into 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>) but looks like minimal change (quelle surprise)

Oxford's student support package- up for discussion in a major way in University committees from Michaelmas. I'm going to be getting a group that will bring together expertise and interested students to gather information, then David Messling will bring together students again in Michaelmas so we have a strong sense of what students feel is important coming into the debate.

Access guide- progress has slipped but I will be focusing on it much more next week.

### Academic Affairs

Teaching Awards- nominations have closed. We received 330 which is fantastic. Thanks to everyone who got involved. Since we last met we've been doing some last minute promoting as well as organising how to short list. I also attended an event yesterday with other SUs who were given grants. We were almost slap bang in the middle of about 15/20 unions in terms of the numbers of nominations we got, something I think we can definitely be proud of, bearing in mind the limited resources we have.

Casework- I've taken up a couple of new cases this term as well as a very long running case needing attention. We're currently down some members of the advice service but normal service is being maintained so feel free to get in touch anytime (access@ousu.org for me and advice@ousu.org for the Student Advisor) if you or anyone in your Common Room would like advice.

Divisional Reviews- this is likely to be a big part of my Academic Affairs life between now and the end of term. We are doing pilots. Jim and I are both doing Chemistry, which is going to be major because of how big the department is, and I'm doing Music later on in the term. We're also then submitting a response, based on our experiences to the Education Committee consultation on the principle of including students.

Student involvement in allocating the £9,000 fee- after the motion passed in last Council I drafted a letter, which was then considered at JCR Prescom and signed by the JCR Presidents there along with the sabbatical officers. I sent it to all the members of the panel and I was given assurances that it would be discussed at the meeting which occurred yesterday. I'm very interested to see what sort of response we get and I will of course keep you updated.

Academic Representation- I had a meeting with a University officer to discuss how to find out more information about how what's going on in the departments, before we can work on supporting departmental reps more and connect UG departmental reps and JCR officers more closely together. Progress I'm sure will be slow, but I'll keep trying to inject some momentum into it as I think this is becoming increasingly important, especially among the postgraduate student body.

### OUSU

Lots of internal OUSU stuff, mainly- Mission, Vision and Values work, Trustee Board and following up on some work about decision making within OUSU, especially between staff and the sabbs.

<b>Daniel Stone</b>
---------------------

<b>VP (Charities &amp; Community)</b>
---------------------------------------

Dear Council,

I've recently been appointed as the Head of the OUSU Garden Party Organising Committee. If you'd like to get in on the fun please find me after Council or drop an email to [charities@ousu.org](mailto:charities@ousu.org)

### Community

The Student Community Wardens have done their first rounds in Jericho and East Oxford, and are settling well into their new roles. Over the next few weeks they'll be involved in planning community events to mark the Diamond Jubilee and promoting an end of year recycling scheme.

- The Student Husts preceded 1<sup>st</sup> week council as instructed. The candidates have expressed their thanks and delight at being able to hust, although feedback from attendees has been mixed.
- I have written a paper to the University asking them to consider employing a full-time community liaison officer. So far the paper has been well received.

- The Oxford Student Community Partnership met literally before today's Council meeting. On the agenda are the Student Changeover Action Plan and an initiative by the police to reduce the number of thefts around moving out time.
- The Safety Bus review has returned to Council for your verdict. We've started looking into the feasibility of outsourcing.
- I've also drafted a long-term community relations strategy for OUSU to be passed onto future VP C&Cs.

## Charity

The Oxford RAG by-elections have successfully selected a new President and Vice President, both from Somerville! Florence Avery and Michael Davies have joined 4 other newly elected members of the RAG Exec.

- The first RAG Event of term is the Comedy Debate on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> week at 8.30pm in the Oxford Union. The Oxford Revue and Oxford Imps will be battling it out for your laughs and your votes, so its definitely one not to be missed.
- On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> week it is the Regent's Charity Football tournament and a Mega Raid to Bath; please send me an email if you'd like more details on either.

## Environment and Ethics

The campaign to colleges to adopt Environmental Sustainability Policies is working well, with a domestic bursars workshop planned for 6<sup>th</sup> week.

- The end of year recycling scheme booklet has now been produced and will be distributed around student properties in the coming weeks.
- I ran brief training session on Environmental Sustainability Policies for E&E Reps.

## Living Wage

Last Friday, Hannah O'Rourke and I had an extremely positive meeting with the Pro Vice Chancellor for Personnel and Equality who said that he will work with departments to move towards paying a living wage in time for the next round of negotiations.

- The Living Wage Committee has gone through a major upheaval in the last few weeks with a few committee members being unable to continue in their roles due to exams and other pressures. However we have a strategy for the coming term focused on supporting college campaigns and keeping the pressure on the University.

## PART TIME OFFICERS

**James Raynor**

**Common Room Support Officer**

Hi Council,

I've taken the decision after consultation with presidents, OUSU reps and discussions with sabbatical members of the OUSU executive that it is time to change from the Common Room Information System. I will now be storing soft copies of findings from emailed questions on MCR President and JCR President email chains on an external hard-drive. This will then be passed on to my successor. As a result of this decision I will be soending the next week or two taking information off the Google Docs account and codifying it on the hard-drive.

Attendance at the last Rep Com was very poor and I will be making efforts to increase turnout over the next few weeks.

Other than that I will be attending various meeting in my capacity as an advisor on rent negotiations and will remain available at [commonrooms@ousu.org](mailto:commonrooms@ousu.org) for any questions you may have.

Best,

James

**Oliver Gleeson**

**Community Outreach and Charities Officer**

Good evening Council,

RAG has been busy organising events and I have been helping to promote charity throughout the university.

If anyone wants a free trip to Bath this Saturday to collect money for British Heart Foundation then please email me asap!

There is also a football tournament happening this Saturday in association with Regent's Park College! Keep going to 'BAR FTSE' on Wednesdays (TONIGHT) at No.9! It is free entry and you'll be raising money for RAG by buying their really cheap drinks!

RAG also has a dodge ball tournament coming up; more details to follow.

For those interested in celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June, Dan and I will try to provide details of events going on in Oxford and publicise those to the student body.

As always, my email address is [communityandcharity@ousu.org](mailto:communityandcharity@ousu.org) and I urge anyone who wants to get involved to get in touch.

Oliver

**Beth Hanson-Jones**

**Environment & Ethics Officer**

Hi Everyone,

Last week we held our second E&E Rep Pamoja to discuss issues that Reps face in their colleges. We had a good turn out and made new links with colleges we previously weren't in contact with. As the previous two Pamojas have been so successful, we plan to hold one a term from now on (possibly 2 so that we can contact as many Reps as possible). As usual, any questions then drop me an e-mail on [eande@ousu.org](mailto:eande@ousu.org).

Beth H-J

Hi Council!

There's a few things I've been working on. Firstly, after a great response from college welfare officers, I compiled ideas and tips in providing welfare for those taking exams. After Finals are over, I'll be gathering more feedback and then create a document with recommendations to be taken forward for future years.

Secondly, I will be compiling a new guide for students who are in supportive roles (welfare officers, peer supporters) on how to deal with specific issues, setting out what the unique problems and considerations are of problems such as eating disorders, abuse, or drugs. Seb and I will be meeting with people over the next few weeks who will hopefully help writing the material.

Lastly Seb and I will be looking into what the Welfare section of the new OUSU website will look like.

As always, if anyone has any ideas or questions, please do email me at [healthandwelfare@ousu.org](mailto:healthandwelfare@ousu.org).

**Nick Cooper****Academic Affairs Campaign Officer**

Evening Council,

Hope everyone is doing well, and enjoying the joys that Trinity has to bring (rain and exams notwithstanding.) The last couple of weeks haven't been fantastically OUSU-heavy, but I have managed to fit in some time for my favourite students' union.

I have been finishing off my review of college complaints and appeals procedures. Whilst these are, on the whole, good, there are certainly improvements to be made in terms of a) finding these procedures on college websites, b) clarifying who to go to in the event of wishing to make a complaint or appeal, and c) offering informal channels in addition to the more formal complaints procedures. If anyone has had any particular problems (either personally or having been in contact with other members of your common room) with complaints and appeals procedures at your college, please contact me in confidence at [academicaffairs@ousu.org](mailto:academicaffairs@ousu.org). I am hoping that this information can be used to improve these guidelines in the future.

Other than this, I've been planning the next session on using feedback from Academic Feedback Sessions - and this should hopefully be going ahead next week. Have a great 3rd week!

Nick

**David Butler****Rent and Accommodation Officer**

As your Rent and Accommodation officer, I have been pursuing a number of tasks; firstly, I have been providing support to common room presidents in their rent negotiations. This has involved both group and individual meetings. I have also led a rent negotiation training session.

Secondly, I have been working on improving the Living Out Guide alongside the Vice President (Welfare & Equal Opportunities). This has involved going through the guide in detail to remove irrelevant parts and learning from guides produced by other SUs.

Finally, I have continued to work on building links between the student community and the wider Oxford community on housing (and other) issues. This has included representing students on at meetings of the Student Community Partnership.

Hi Council,

As per usual I have been working on the Athena Swan awards in the Medical Sciences. While MPLS departments have been having many successful applications (hurrah!), progress in the Medical Sciences departments is still slow.

In my department (DPAG), the Athena Swan process is going well. The survey for staff and students has been sent out, and the questions for graduate students have taken into account the consultations we (my department's graduate reps and I, the AS rep) held last term! More on the results of the survey and ways forward next time.

I have also been continuing my work of supporting and engaging departmental reps in other departments to make sure graduate input is taken into account and that graduate equality issues are addressed. My latest meeting was with the WIMM's graduate student rep, and I hope we will see progress in this department soon.

As ever, if you have any questions and/or would like guidance/help in making graduate's student voices heard in the Athena Swan process, get in touch with me at [gradwomen@ousu.org](mailto:gradwomen@ousu.org). This is a great opportunity to make your department a better department for everybody!

Over the past two weeks I have been focusing hard on major Women's Campaign projects. Firstly, I have been working with Martha to prepare public speaking workshops for WomCam members to tackle gender imbalances in student politics.

I have also been putting a substantial amount of work into organising Slutwalk Oxford with my committee. This has involved liaising with Reclaim The Night, organising speakers for the event, publicising and securing the logistic details for the day. It has been a pleasure to work with such an inspiring committee on this project.

The Love Your Body garden part is also underway: with my committee, I have begun organising activities and logistics for the event.

I have attended and stewarded at the Lead For Equality launch, in preparation to continue this work next term.