

OUSU

reports to council

5th week hilary term 2009

Lewis Iwu

President

Rent protocol

Below is the basic framework of best practice that has been developed by the Rent Committee. This is aimed at guaranteeing a set of standards that ensure procedural fairness. This document is currently undergoing consultation.

A Statement of Best Practice

It is intended that this document will help to foster an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect between the different parties involved in rent decisions in the Colleges of Oxford University.

In previous years, procedure across colleges has varied widely, to the advantage of some, and to the disadvantage of others. The principles outlined below are intended to denote a minimum standard, across all colleges, for procedural fairness and cooperation in the decision making process.

- I. In the belief that both common rooms and colleges wish to settle rent rates in a fair and reasonable way, all parties resolve that:
 - a. Even if disagreement exists, both sides should recognise that a fair decision making procedure is a prerequisite of fair results.
 - b. Every Oxford student, current and prospective, deserves at least a basic standard of treatment when discussing issues of serious financial importance, such as rent.
- II. It is, therefore, in the interest of all parties that:
 - a. Adequate notice is given to common room officers in advance of college rent meetings.
 - b. Student representatives are given presence at meetings where rent rates are discussed, and that consultation between parties is extensive, open, and meaningful.
 - c. Subject to restraint with what might be considered highly sensitive material, all parties yield all relevant data affecting any proposed change in rent rates.
- III. In addition, it is in the interest of all parties that:
 - a. Rent negotiations are conducted in an honest and open fashion
 - b. All parties respect requests for confidentiality where highly sensitive material is being handled.

We acknowledge the importance of procedural fairness in setting rent rates, and accept these basic principles of mutual trust and respect. We desire to see rent set at an acceptable level for all parties.

UCU Pay dispute

OUSU maintaining regular contact with UCU and the NUS over potential industrial action due to a pay dispute. Industrial Action as well as pay for academic staff are both issues that have an impact on the student

experience so we will keep council informed.

Rules committee

After consultation with the Presidents of various societies and after lobbying rules committee for a change the rule restricting the number of Oxford Brookes members to 20% has been changed to allow Oxford Brookes students to make up a maximum of 40%.

Posters

Posters outlining what OUSU has achieved over the past are now available at Council and in the OUSU. Please pick some up!

Rosanna McBeath

V-P (Welfare and Equal Opportunities)

Dear all,

I hope you're all having a great term. It has been a very busy couple of weeks here!

The SAS is going strong. We are currently working on putting together statistics and writing a report about how fantastic it has been having a Student Advisor this year, and what a great job Lisa is doing. We've also been working on redesigning our SAS posters. If anyone has any ideas on what we can do, please let me know!

Last Tuesday I attended the Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality where they discussed and passed their new Constitution.

That evening was a welfare officer training session. We covered resources in the University, and places to contact for more information. The next training session will be on Tuesday of 6th week, where we will be covering academic discipline.

Last Wednesday was the first meeting of Students with Disabilities Campaign. Thanks so much for everyone who came, it was a really great session. If anyone is interested in joining the campaign, or wants to be added to the mailing list, please send me an email: welfare@ousu.org

I attended a welfare tea at Exeter MCR with Rachel. It was great to get to meet the welfare support network there.

On Thursday I sat on the Consultative Committee for Health and Safety. We were looking at the annual reports from Occupational Health.

We also held our Welfare officer meeting. Thank you to everyone who attended. We discussed holding more workshops, and are continuing to plan a drink safe awareness event.

Following that we held a workshop for common room officers on listening skills, which had a good turn out. We discussed what listening skills were and how to incorporate them into their role as an officer.

I've also met with Pete Quinn and discussed raising awareness on bikes and pavement etiquette. The university is discussing hiring its own educational psychologist, so that assessments can be made quickly in Oxford.

I am meeting Keith Zimmerman on Wednesday, the Director of Student Services, to talk about what the university is doing in terms of welfare support.

I am also meeting this week with Leyla Okhai, the university's part-time race equality officer to discuss University complaints procedures.

On Thursday is our Equal Opportunities Officers meeting. I will report back on it at next council.

There has been a lot of discussion about condom safety this week. I am adding the Safex safety guarantee and some tips for condom storage for you to pass on. If you have any concerns, please feel free to come and see me!

Safex quality & safety guarantee:

The production facility for Safex condoms is estimated to be the third largest in the world. Running under the stringent conditions imposed by its registration under the British Standards Institute, all packs of Safex condoms carry the British Standards Kitemark (BS ISO:4074: 2002) and the quality system conforms to BS EN/ISO9001. So you can be completely confident of maximum security when you use a Safex product.

During the course of manufacture, Safex condoms have to satisfy 22 test procedures, before they can be released for sale, carrying the British Standards Kitemark. The checks include 6 on the raw material, 6 during processing and 10 on the finished products. Among the operations carried out are tensile strength tests, water tests to detect seepage and an airburst test. Electronic testing is completed on every single condom manufactured. The British Standards Institute make regular checks to see that the required quality is maintained.

Condom Safety advice for students:

- Store condoms in a dry and cool place. Condoms need to be stored out of direct sunlight. Condoms can degrade and become damaged very easily if they are not stored in this manner. It takes very, very little time for condoms to degrade when kept in conditions such as those described.
- Condom transportation: While it is commendable to work to have condoms readily available, try to avoid storing condoms in wallets or handbags. The friction caused by opening and closing a wallet and from walking may cause tiny holes to develop in the condom. Moreover, storing condoms in this manner also weakens condoms rendering them more likely to break during use. It could be worth buying a specifically designed condom carrying case (or a mint tin, film canister or pill box will also do the job!). It is important to make sure that the interim storage is appropriate to ensure that the condoms actually will be effective when it comes time to use them.
- Do not use condoms that are in packages that look damaged. A damaged package is an indication that the condom itself has been damaged.
- Do not use condoms that have past their expiration date.
- Do not use condoms that:
 - show obvious signs of deterioration
 - appear brittle
 - are sticky
 - are discoloured
- You should also examine the condom before opening to check for air pockets, which means it has not already been accidentally punctured or opened.
- Consider using a water-based lubricant with the condom to increase pleasure and sensitivity for both partners. (oil-based lubricants like baby oil or hand cream can break down the integrity of the condom – don't use!).

Effectiveness? Condoms are 85-98% effective. This means that with typical use, about 15 out of every 100 women whose partners use condoms will become pregnant during the first year. With perfect use, 2 will become pregnant. For advice on contraception to protect against STIs and unplanned pregnancies, contact your doctor.

As always, if you've any questions or concerns, please email me: welfare@ousu.org

Hope all have a great weekend!

Welfare love!
Rosanna xx

Rachel Cummings

V-P (Women)

- **Women's Finals Forums:** these are all women revision and study skills sessions held at the end of Hilary and beginning of Trinity. Over the past two weeks a lot of my time has gone to finding tutors, rooms and available dates for the various sessions. So far I am in different stages of planning for events in the following subjects:

English
 Philosophy
 Economics
 History
 Chemistry
 Law
 Physics
 Classics
 Politics

If your subject is not on this list and you know a good female tutor who might be willing please do email (women@ousu.org), would love to get more sorted, especially on the science side.

- St Peter's are having a Women's Week in 6th, to celebrate women being accepted into the college. The Women's Welfare Officer asked me to organise an event and myself and Melanie Bunce, a Union debater, will be holding a **Public Speaking and Debating Workshop** on Friday 6th week. I've recruited other female debaters to help-out; we've been working on a plan for the session. If anyone wants to do anything similar in their college, get in touch (women@ousu.org).

- Another **Women's Officers/Female Welfare Officers meeting** was held on Thursday. These reports are submitted on Tuesday so I can't tell you how it was, but I believe the same thing happened a fortnight ago and can tell you now that that meeting was very productive. We discussed the Univ session about getting more women involved in CR politics, about taking it to other colleges (Pembroke and Hildas both have versions in the planning, or some variation). We also talked about varying levels of welfare provision and celebrated another college passing a motion to reimburse the morning after pill.

- On this note I've also spent time planning an OUSU **manifestos and hust training** session, which should be taking place on Tuesday 6th week, 3-4:30pm. There'll be example manifestos, hust speeches and conversation about how to deal with questions, campaign, getting the vote out etc and the session is open to any women whether interested in common room, society, OUSU, Union etc elections. I'm currently looking for a room in a college where we can have food, but planning has probably developed since I wrote this so please get in touch for more details.

- **Publicity Committee** (PubCom) are pleased to see our posters around colleges and departments. If you want to put some up, please do, come and find me or Jack Matthews and we'll be able to give you lots of copies. In this week's meeting we discussed the possibility of an **OUSU 'Open Day'** which would be far better than that sounds. Also, potentially a **question time event** where current exec members could be held to account, asked questions and made effectively, to hust again. This is hoped to raise OUSU's profile and make sure we are held responsible to YOU.

- I attended the **NUS Student Parent Project Launch** on Thursday 4th week, an all day conference in Birmingham. This was the release of two years worth of research into student parents. The day was great to enable officers from different student unions to share ideas and the report is incredibly useful. Its foremost recommendation is for Universities to be required to collect information on students with children. This is something I have been working: currently the University do not collect the data in a way which would enable them to collate and have any statistics or contacts. With the added clout of the NUS report I will be going

back to the University to ask for the information to be collected differently and will keep council posted on progress.

- I've been working with St John's access rep on the **Women in Politics access day**, trying to get a speaker. After our first set of letters came to no avail, we sent off around 150 letters including one to every woman in parliament, and are currently talking to Jo Swinson, Lib Dem MP, youngest woman in the Commons. A professional graphic designer has also agreed to design a general poster encouraging women to go to Oxford which will be sent out along with the invites.

- I've been assisting St Anthony's Women's Committee to run an **academic mentoring session** for women looking to go into graduate study. This will be on Thursday 5th March (7th week) at St Hilda's college, as always email me for more details if you're interested.

- **WomCam events** over the past two weeks: Clothes Swap, Tamsin Omond speaking from Climate Rush, Open meeting (with men) where we discussed parental rights, Feminist book group (Girl with a One Track Mind), LadyFest organising meeting, working on a film showing about violence against women with OxHub and the International Rescue Committee for International Women's Day.

- Other events I attended: Tea and Toys, Enough, JCR PresCom, the OUSU Ethical Careers Fair, as a panelist on an Oxide show about women in Oxford, the Fees Working group, Exeter's MCR Tea and Cakes session to meet their welfare officer and Junior Dean, a meeting with the women's welfare officer of Green Templeton and an OUSU reps meeting.

Kaushal Vidyarthee	V-P (Graduates)
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University Committees: - Since the last OUSU council I've been to many university committees- University Council, Graduate Skills Advisory Group, Graduate Committee of the Conference of colleges. Medical Science Divisional JCC, Proctors' meeting with presidents, Education Committee and the Committee for Language Centre among others. I raised various issues including the use of Turnitin software by students, student representation on the divisional review panel and opening hours of college libraries.

International Students' Campaign- The core members of the campaign committee met Dr. Heather Bell, Director of International Strategy to discuss issues relating to the publication of handbook, international festival and other social/welfare events for international students. The committee is meeting this week on Thursday. Moreover, I am planning to set-up a Cultural Societies' Presidents' Committee (CulSocs PresCom) to discuss various international students' issues.

Mature Students' Campaign – An evening event is being planned for the mature students.

Student Advice Service: I've had few case-works relating to graduate academic life-some complicated ones.

Common Rooms- The MCR president's committee had decided to compile a comparison chart for colleges- fees and charges and various facilities. This work is coordinated by me. The issue relating to opening hours of college libraries was discussed at the graduate committee of conference of college.

University Club: I had a meeting with marketing manager of the University club. I raised the issue of membership of 2nd BA students, mature students and 4th year undergraduate students.

Postgraduate Assembly: The PGA in this term will be held on Tuesday of 7th week.

Paul Dwyer	V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)
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No report supplied due to sickness

Jack Wellby	V-P (Charities & Community)
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This time two weeks ago I was on an aeroplane travelling towards Tel Aviv – I gather that due to the length of the council meeting I was in Jerusalem before the meeting finished! My trip to Israel was fantastic – truly an opportunity too good to miss out on. I will complete a full report on the trip for termly council.

This week is RAG week and I've been very busy. At the time of writing we are preparing for Mr and Miss Oxford – where we have a record 15 colleges taking part. Hopefully at time of reading the event will have been a huge success. Wednesday is/was RAG blind date and we've been pairing up couples looking for love. Looks like it'll be a great event with over 100 people taking part across Oxford.

E&E is going well with Daniel, as always, being a star. You'll all have seen the Valentines heart which was delivered to the VC on Valentines day. We are also helping to send out books by Oliver Tickell about Kyoto 2 to all the delegates who will be attending the summit in Copenhagen in December this year.

The Beyond Profit Careers Fair happened last Saturday and was a success. Numbers were down on last year but the feedback we've received so far has been far more positive. I think the quality of the companies invited (we stipulated that they must have jobs on offer – not just volunteering posts) meant that more people got something out of the fair.

We also helped run a street collection on Saturday for Oxford Poverty Action Trust (OxPAT).

On Saturday of 6th week we're running an event called LOST – sign-ups close this weekend. Email LOST@ousu.org for more details.

Sorry this is a little rushed. Please email charities@ousu.org with any questions.

PART TIME OFFICERS

Daniel Lowe

Environment and Ethics Officer

Hello council,

Environment

Its been a busy fortnight for E&E with a last minute campaign launched by a coalition of E&E committee and People and Planet taking the VC to task about the university's environmental policy. Over 1000 valentines cards (woven into a giant heart) were presented to the VC (well, the doors to his office in his absence) after a speech by Caroline Lucas (Oxford's MEP) asking him to go green for Valentine's Day.

Our 3 asks were for a comprehensive waste management policy, a full time university environmental officer and for the university to sign up to an external environmental standard. Since then the VC's office has released a press release stating that the university is seeking to employ a sustainable development officer and that it will implement a comprehensive waste management policy by the end of 2009. Watch this space for how we get him to agree to no. 3!

Ethics

What with recent events around the world we've turned back to the university's socially responsible investment policy. After finding out *who* to talk to (the larger part of my quest) it transpires that the university does in fact have an SRI policy, but this only provides for a committee structure, and does not address any actual SRI issues. They've had trouble recruiting the right people to be on the committee, but I have been assured that the first meeting should take place in March, only one year after the committee was set up and seven years after an SRI policy was agreed to. At this point I'll raise the students' concerns on unethical investment. Until then, see you in bureaucratic limbo.

Jack Matthews

Common Room Support Officer

Hello Council!

5th week is here, and that can only mean one thing - the start of common room visits! If you would like me or another member of the executive to come along to your common room meeting to talk a little bit about what OUSU does, what its achieved, and also to hear the concerns that any of your common room members may have about OUSU, please send me an email (commonrooms@ousu.org) and let me know what time your meeting is.

I have been trying to meet all the OUSU reps 1 by 1; if anyone has not met me to have a chat and would like to, please let me know.

As always, OUSU Reps meeting on Wednesdays of odd weeks at 5pm at St. Peter's, open to anyone who is interested, not just OUSU reps.

Sorry I cant be there to be scrutinised today - its that same old timing of council problem. If you do have any questions, please feel free to email me.

Regards
Jack Matthews