

OUSU

reports to council

5th week hilary term 2010

Stefan Baskerville

President

Common Rooms

Spoke and answered questions at Lady Margaret Hall JCR meeting.

Met with 6 JCR Presidents, issues discussed included student representation, academic feedback, rent, vacation residence grants, JCR-SCR relations, and building institutional relationships, decanal fines and disciplinary procedures.

There was no JCR Prescom owing to lots of Presidents celebrating Halfway Hall!

Attended MCR Prescom.

University

Attended GPC, a main committee of University Council, and discussed a number of things including graduate accommodation, student-City relations, and provision of prayer space for Muslim students.

Attended JCCSM, which endorsed the principles contained in the Urgent Challenges paper that OUSU Council passed in 3rd week, and decided to send the paper to Planning and Resource Allocation Committee. The paper therefore now has the backing of Education Committee and JCC, and has not yet been discussed at PRAC.

Attended University Council and spoke in the debate on the funding climate and the Browne Review of undergraduate fees.

Met with Keith Zimmerman, Director of Student Administration and Services, along with Jonny, to discuss the motion on asylum seekers and fees that passed in 3rd week. It was a positive discussion and the initial outcome is to do further research into the mechanics of how it happened at other universities, for example Liverpool and Manchester, so as to identify the process and mechanisms which could be proposed to get the outcome we want.

Urgent Challenges

This continues to take up my time, both in preparing papers for committees and following up on discussions, for example in talking to officers and committee members. Crucial meeting of PRAC hasn't happened yet; we will know more about progress once it has.

Miscellaneous

Attended a day of training with some JCR Presidents on personal power and impact.

Conducted another focus group as part of the Strategic Review process.

Kat Wall

V-P (Women)

Hello Council,

Well-Being Week

In 3rd Week we had the first ever OUSU Well-Being Week and it was a huge success. With events from sensual well-being at Angels cocktail bar with the Belles, to the stress-free study workshop at Inner Space and yoga every day at New College we managed to engage a wide variety of students across the city. Dani Quinn (VP Welfare) and I will be writing a report about this event to enable next years sabs to run a similar week in 2010/11.

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Springboard for Undergraduates

Springboard is a personal and professional development programme for women and this year we are launching a pilot of this programme for undergraduates.

With the funding granted from the University, Careers Service and Equality and Diversity Unit, the trainers confirmed and the 60 available places nearly all taken we are looking set to start this pilot at the beginning of Trinity Term 2010.

Assertiveness Training Pilot

Dr Peggy Frith ran this pilot in 3rd week for over 20 students. It was a great success receiving really positive feedback as well as making the national press. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/feb/07/women>
Integrating the feedback we received, we are hoping to develop this model into a termly training session.

Finals Forums

During 5th and 6th week there will be nine female only finals forums in which academics will provide advice to undergraduates about managing finals, planning revision and coping with stress and anxiety. The subjects we are covering are:

- History
- English
- Modern Languages
- Philosophy
- Classics
- Politics
- Economics
- Maths
- Physics

Thirst Lodge Campaign

At the end of last year, Thirst Lodge applied for and were granted a lapdancing licence. Last Council we passed a motion stating that OUSU opposed this. Other elements of the campaign include a protest rally on Saturday 20th February between 2-3pm on Bonn Square, sending letters to the Magistrates Court to urge them to grant the repeal of the licence which is being sought by a plethora of community groups. For more information or to get involved in the campaign email women@ousu.org.

Student Support Training

During this term, Dani Quinn and I have been running student support training for common room committees. This training covers basic listening skills training, deals with concerns students often face such as depression, anxiety and so forth. If you would like training for your committee then contact welfare@ousu.org or women@ousu.org.

Disordered Eating Training

Last week, Nicola Byrom from Student Run Self Help (SRSB) ran a workshop on Disordered Eating and how to support those who suffer from it. This workshop was incredibly well attended and was received well. We will try and run this workshop again in Trinity Term.

OUSU Publicity

If you are a president or OUSU rep you should have received a parcel in pidge post full of OUSU posters and leaflets. Please put these up in your common rooms. We really want students to know what we can do for them!

Dani Quinn Opportunities)

V-P (Welfare & Equal

Hello Council,

Once again I don't have time to properly let you know what I've been up to. So here as some 'headline' things to report:

- Well-Being Week was a big success. We were overwhelmed with the number of people at some events (especially Sensual Well-Being). Kat and I will be writing a report on it so that Tom and Katharine can learn from our successes/mistakes. That was pretty much my entire 3rd Week, so not much else was achieved.

- Much of 4th Week has been spent 'catching up' with things that fell by the wayside in the build-up to Well-Being Week. It was also a slow week because I became ill.
 - Lots of casework. There's always lots of casework. Not in a bad way.
 - Trained some more Committees in listening skills. Graduate committees...get involved!
 - Following discussion at Equal Opps Committee, have developed an Equal Opps Survey for Common Rooms. This has been sent out to all Equal Opps reps to discuss with their committee. Please let me know if you're interested, so I can make an appropriate online version for you to send out.
 - Open Minds (the new name for Mind Matters) is going really well (thanks to the brilliant Rachel Burns). It has a team of 10 working on the first issue now. However, only female students applied to be on the team, and we can't figure out why this is! If you have any feedback or suggestions on how we can reach out to male students, please get in touch.
 - Went to the Consultative Committee on Health and Safety. They love health and safety. They had 3 hours of material to cover on health and safety.
 - I'll be attending a 'mental wealth' seminar on Monday of 5th Week - it's a forum for students and sabs who are involved in mental health issues (both provision and policy). I'll let you know what happens...
 - Coming up: Living Out Drop In (Thurs, 5th Week), Supporters' Session (Friday, 5th Week)
- This is very brief and much has been missed - get in touch on welfare@ousu.org for more details.

Sarah Hutchinson	V-P (Graduates)
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To follow

Jonny Medland	V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)
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Hi Council,

Apologies that I'm going to be late to Council this week – I've got a meeting of a university working group on complaints and appeals starting at 4pm. This was set up in week 4 of last term and the fact that this is the 1st meeting indicates to me that it's really rather important that I prioritise it...no knowing how long it might take to get another one scheduled for a time that people can make. Update of what I've been doing.

- Council mandates – Admissions Committee of Conference are discussing student representation next week and we will hopefully know in time for next term.
- Student representation in Divisions – Humanities are considering the policy passed in week 1 and I will find out shortly what decisions have been made.

Common Room Support

Still busy. Meeting individual Presidents, Access & Academic Affairs officers – both new ones to introduce myself but also continuing ones to discuss projects (including academic feedback sessions, Reach Oxford and getting outreach officers in colleges). Had an academic affairs reps meeting and I am also developing a sideline in visiting Common Rooms and talking about what OUSU does, why it's important and fielding questions. We all like visiting Common Rooms and meeting students so please email commonrooms@ousu.org to book a visit. I also attended an MCR Prescom, an OUSU reps Meeting and a JCR Prescom since Council last met. A lot of these involved discussing and explaining the 'Urgent Challenges' paper on which more later. I also finished and distributed the access reps handbook which has gone in hard copy to every access officer in Oxford. We've also started the process of supporting CR reps produce their own Alternative Prospectuses...a big advantage of having a full-time Media & Publications Co-Ordinator is that she can help with these arrangements and we had an initial meeting to work out how to take this forward.

General OUSU Staff

Along with committee work this is taking up the bulk of my time. I've been to Exec Meetings, Steering Committee, Internal Affairs Committee (which I now chair) and Standing Committee to consider the process of appointing a new Advertising Co-Ordinator. I've also been to three Focus Groups for the Strategic Review Group since we last met – these have been very valuable and shed some light on what sort of thing people want OUSU to be doing. More on this early next term. Other things have included attending a Focus Group for Students with Disabilities, attending a meeting of OSSL Board (which approved a range of cost-cutting measures on our publications) and helping with arrangements for the Target Schools Shadowing Scheme, including providing logistical support for our awesome but overstretched Shadowing Subcommittee. I also helped out at TeachFirst presentation in Oxford by answering questions from prospective applicants to the University.

Meetings with University Officials

- Vice-Chancellor. Stefan can't make the usual pre-Council briefing with the VC so Sarah and I are doing it – we'll be raising (among many other things) the Council mandate about bursaries for asylum seekers.
- Tara Prayag. Tara is Head of Widening Participation – I saw her to talk about what sort of projects her team are going to be running, where we overlap and possible areas of mutual interest in terms of working together.
- Emefa Amoako. Emefa is a student at the Department of Education but goes into this category because of her work around promoting access in the University. We met up to consider how we can work together.

Student Advice Service

The only question seems to be whether we help 400 or 500 students this year. And no I'm really not kidding – we're heading towards 300 at the moment in what can only be described as both a great success for OUSU's publicity and a tragic indictment of the gaps in university provision for supporting students.

University Committees

- Education Committee. Met on Friday of week 2 – items for discussion included a university review of degree ceremonies (which we consulted on last term... a lot of our ideas are being incorporated into planned new arrangements), 'Urgent Challenges' (which was supported by the committee) and a range of other issues.
- Disability Equality Scheme. Went to the termly meeting of this in place of Dani Quinn (who was running Well-Being Week). Items on the agenda included the work that our Students with Disabilities campaign is doing, how Fitness to Study policies and issues around disability intersect and particularly unpicking the results for students with disabilities from the National Student Survey.
- Fitness to Study Working Group. Went to my first meeting of this – there was some useful discussion of how binding the group will be and who will be on the proposed new Fitness to Study Panel. Very importantly we also considered what guidelines could be given to colleges and departments to better handle cases involving students at the early stages of a 'fitness to study procedure'.
- Student Number Planning Sub-Committee. Some very interesting discussion here around student numbers, the national funding environment and the City Council cap on students living out – the federated nature of Oxford and how many bodies are involved in admissions can lead to real problems in the student number planning process and at some point we're going to need to get a handle on how best student numbers can be planned. This is particularly relevant for graduates – there's a school of thought within the University that we can charge graduates more to get them to complete DPhils earlier. While possibly true I feel that this may miss some useful nuances somewhere along the line.
- Joint Committee of Council with Student Members. The main item of business here was 'Urgent Challenges' and our Budget – JCCSM passed the grant request onto the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee of Council with a strong recommendation in favour of it. PRAC meets on Tuesday of week 6 and we should know a lot more about future funding of OUSU after that.

- Working Group on the Admissions Timetable. To try and bring down costs and the experience for applicants, the university is reviewing its undergraduate admissions timetable (e.g at interview) and how it can be shortened. Discussion centred on how long students should have to stay in Oxford for (ideally no more than 2 nights), when was reasonable to kick undergraduates out of their rooms (I said not Saturday morning. People agreed) and a few other issues.

Other committee-related work I've done has dominated the last two weeks – I've written two papers for Senior Tutors' Committee (on study skills in colleges and the possibility of 'peer marking' as a source of improving student understanding of marking criteria), one for Education Committee (on improving student understanding of marking criteria), one for the University Working Group on Disciplinary procedures which is considering the university response to a decision from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and one for the University Working Group on Complaints & Appeals, which is what's happening for the first hour or so of Council today...

This has come to a combined total of about 10,000 words + research which has been fairly strenuous. Massive thanks to anyone who helped out with the research and writing for these but particularly to Lisa Stokes-King, Dani Quinn and Hannah Cusworth all of whom made them a lot better than they would otherwise have been.

That's just about all – I probably won't be at Council to take questions but do email me with any on access@ousu.org or grab me at the end.

Eorann Lean Community)	V-P	(Charities	&
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Sorry I wasn't at council at last week! Heres what I've been doing....

Beyond profit:

350 people came and about 160 people attended the talks. There were 20 exhibitors. All in all a great day. I have booklets from the day with articles and information about the exhibitors – if anyone would like one. Thanks to the great Careers service for all their help

Swapshop:

Went really well people brought loads of stuff and took loads of stuff – and I have three new pieces to my wardrobe. Thinking of doing another in Trinity – possibly at the end to take stuff before people leave... Thanks very much to the Union for the use of the debating chamber!

Mr and Miss Oxford

Made over £400 – was a great night – thanks very much to Po na nas for venue!

Env Panel

The wonderful Ed Wigzell has done a travel survey which is trying to give statistics to the university to prove to them that we need more bike racks... AMAZING! If you'd like a look and to give me any opinions on it please let me know

EP Chair met with the V-C in MT09 to discuss University sustainability-related issues. The V-C mentioned he was responsible for setting up the Yale Sustainability Committee and is keen for Oxford to address sustainability at the highest level.

www.yale.edu/sustainability

The panel asked SSG to **consider** approaching the V-C to discuss sustainability and how Oxford might lead on this at the highest level (with buy-in from Council and Divisions).

Socially Responsible investment

Last terms minutes are up online – will let you know when last weeks meetings minutes are up <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/srirc/>

City Council Scrutiny Committee

Have set up meeting with Jim Campbell to discuss OUSU's contribution and combating "studentification"

Student Volunteering Week

Working with Oxhub to out on a great Volunteering week – with the Volunteering fair, taster sessions and social. Its 6th week and it'll be awesome....

VC civic awards

Oxhub's great VC awards are going to be launched as part for student volunteering week and the VP C&C will be on the judging panel.

Oxford Open Doors

Oxford Preservation trust are starting to organise their Open Doors event where the university opens itself up to the community. This year they would really like students to get involved and to give tours of their college or small articles about what its like to be a student at their college – rather than just having the college open up to show its paintings etc. If your interested – let me know!

RAG Blind Date

After council I will be going on a Blind date (sorry Dai) for Rag's blind date event and then I'll be going to Pos for the after party – come along after council and find out how it went - £1 entry with all door money going to RAG !

PART TIME OFFICERS

Jack Matthews

Common Room Support Officer

Hi Council,

Here's what I've been up to over the last two weeks.

Common Room Visits

I visited a number of common rooms over the past two weeks. We would like to visit as many common rooms as possible this term, please email me the best time for us to come and speak to your common room, we would really like to explain what OUSU is doing and answer any questions students may have.

CRiS

I have been updating CRiS (Common Room Information Service) and hope to expand it over the next few weeks. CRiS log ins will go out to those who have sent information in over the next few days.

ATMs in College

I met with a representative of a company who are interested in providing ATM services within colleges at Oxford. I will be talking to common room Presidents about this in the coming weeks, but if you have any questions please email me.

Rent

I will be working with Charlotte to collect comparative data on rent from the colleges across Oxford. If you have any thoughts on any particular piece of information that would be helpful please let me know.

Societies Workshop

On Monday of 7th Week at 5.15pm I will be holding another Societies Workshop to help those wishing to set up a University wide club or society. It will cover issues such as registration with the Proctors and how to write a constitution. All are welcome to attend please advertise it to your Common Rooms.

Jack Matthews
Common Room Support Officer
commonrooms@ousu.org

Hannah Cusworth

Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

Dear Council,

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there have been a few things academic affairs related going on in the University since we last met, and a couple of other things OUSU too. The University has recently announced that it will be reviewing their teaching model. It was the focus of the second academic affairs meeting of the term which happened last Thursday and what came out of that meeting will inform what we do next, and how we respond. It's probably going to be quite epic and it's going to need all of us to get involved. We'll be talking with you about it quite a bit over the coming weeks. So, if you like tutorials, now might be a good time to say.

For some reason the vast majority of the papers that Jonny is taking to the collegiate university had to be in all at once, at the end of last week. The papers included one on 'Peer Marking' that was discussed in the 1st academic reps meeting and is the continuation of our effort to work with the university on improving our understanding of marking criteria. Fingers crossed it'll go down well. We'll let you know next time. Aside from all the Ac Aff stuff quite a bit of my time has been spent working on some challenges which we all agree are urgent.

The Sunday before last Dani Quinn and I were welcomed to Hilda's JCR by Jesse and Sarah for their reaffiliation debate. We had a chat with the JCR about the Urgent Challenges paper and the work that is

done for you by OUSU. Thank you very much for having us. I also went to JCCSM where there was much talk about the challenges we face. JCCSM agreed that they were urgent. It was quite a long meeting but I think we got what we wanted so, onwards and upwards.

If you've got any questions or comments on any of that email academicaffairs@ousu.org, it'd be lovely to hear from you.

Hannah

David Bowe	Graduate Welfare Officer
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Met with other Graduate Executive Members and VP Grads to discuss and organise PGA and discuss ways forward on graduate accommodation issues.

Highlighted issues surrounding Graduate re-admission system change over to Embark in January, resulting in action being taken by Graduate Admissions office to clarify the situation and ensure students and departments were up to date on the process.

Helped VP Welfare & Equal Opportunities and VP Women to organise and run the Sensual Wellbeing event at Angels.

Met with I MCR welfare and I MCR entz rep to begin addressing the issue of Student Parent friendly events at a common room level.

Ben West	Environments & Ethics Officer
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Good evening Council!

This is my first report to council as Environment & Ethics Officer- apologies for keeping you in the dark.

Last week was Green Week organised by People & Planet in conjunction with the Environment & Ethics committee. Great success- I hope lots of you managed to get down to one or two of the events over the course of the week!

As this goes to print, I and I'm sure a few others are gearing up for the Oxford Climate Forum. Should be a great opportunity to meet E&E Officers from other universities and share ideas and to hear the latest from the 10:10 campaign HQ. I'll let you know in person how it went.

In general business, this term I've been working hard to get an email dialogue going with common room E&E reps, particularly the ones which tend to keep a lower profile. Common room presidents especially, it'd be great if you could double check that they're on the email list, and if not, get them to contact me.

Fair Trade fortnight is during 7th and 8th week, working on a social event involving lots of Fairtrade wine and chocolate. Hopefully a great opportunity for people who aren't currently involved in E&E stuff to find out more about what we do. I'll keep you and E&E Reps posted about specifics via the normal channels.

Have a great week :)

Nathan Jones	Access & Admissions Officer
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Hi Council,

Just to keep you posted- I want to really focus access work on teachers this term and so have recently spoken to the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) about working more closely with them on innovative access initiatives, and will be running a series of fringe meetings at their annual Conference in Manchester in March.

I'm also about to start talking to JCR Access Reps about running teacher conferences in Colleges, allowing teachers to see the University, observe mock interviews and discuss Oxford's array of aptitude tests. If anyone has any ideas about this, I'd be delighted to hear from you on accessandadmissions@ousu.org

Thanks!