

Reports to Council

5th Week Council HT13

David J. Townsend

President

Here are some of the things I've been doing. For more information ask a question in OUSU Council or e-mail me at president@ousu.org.

OUSU funding

As Chair of the Trustee Board, I wrote to the Vice-Chancellor last week expressing the Trustees' concerns about the prospect of a real-terms cut to OUSU's budget for next year. On the mandate of OUSU Council, I also wrote to the Vice-Chancellor earlier this week expressing OUSU Council's concerns in this regard (as embodied in the motion and discussion in 3rd Week), particularly how underfunding prevents OUSU officers from doing what you elect them to do each year and how cutbacks in OUSU services (such as the undergrad access programme Target Schools or the successful lobbying for the £100M postgrad scholarship scheme) would be likely to affect students across Oxford. It's been great to see the level of support from MCR and JCR Presidents, and that at least one common room has passed a similar motion in support of OUSU being funded properly. There's been student press coverage both in Oxford and, somewhat surprisingly (but happily so), Cambridge. We've been considering further actions from common rooms and students at large, but this will depend on the initial response from the University; by the time of OUSU Council I will have met with the Vice-Chancellor and may have an oral update in response to the letter sent from OUSU Council.

OUSU Information Drive

The Information Drive started in 3rd Week, with the first set in a series of simple, plain-speaking messages about what OUSU actually does for all Oxford students sent out in poster form to Colleges and Departments, on Facebook, on Twitter, live on Oxide radio and in a podcast of the radio show. The response has been very positive so far, and I hope you've seen one or two of the posters (www.facebook.com/OUSUnews?ref=hl) or maybe listened to the first of the podcasts (soundcloud.com/ousunews/ousu-information-drive-prelims-and-sky-tv).

We're moving forward with the new website, but some technical issues have slowed us down a little. While this is a bit disappointing, to some extent it's par for the course when you're building a website to be used by ten of thousands of people a month without the funding to hire dedicated experts to do so - see all the discussion about OUSU funding above!

Hooroo,
DJT

Chris Gray

VP (Graduates)

Highlights

Over the last 2 weeks I've produced a rent pack for MCR Presidents, run a rent breakfast, taken part in the University review of the Oxford Internet Institute, finalized the planning of the International Students Festival, drafted a guide for GJCC representatives, designed a new student survey with the University, and have begun pushing for, with MCR Presidents, a change in the operation of the financial guarantee for graduate students. I am also just beginning to negotiate rents for the University-owned graduate accommodation for next year. I haven't got a huge amount more detail to report on these but for more information on the International Festival, the Financial Guarantee, and the new 'experience' surveys see below.

Financial Guarantee

A small sub-group of MCR Presidents and myself have agreed a number of changes that we would like to see to the financial guarantee. Above all we would like the current living cost amount to be significantly reduced, and we would also like to see a more uniform approach to predicted income streams. As there is an ongoing court case which this overlaps with there is a limit to how much I can disclose, but we are now working with MCR Presidents to lobby their college officers and have a number of key meetings lined up in 5th week with the colleges to consider the issue.

New 'experience' surveys

Myself and David Messling have been working with the University to design two new student surveys which are going to be piloted in Merton, St Hugh's, Wadham, and St Anne's. Unlike existing surveys these 'experience' surveys will ask students how they spend their time at Oxford, how they are taught, how many hours they spend doing different types of work, how tutorials/classes/seminars are used, and what the most useful teaching they is. This move away from 'satisfaction' will allow us to get beneath Oxford's high scores.

I am particularly optimistic about its impact on PGT courses, as we often hear grumbles from students on these courses about teaching, feedback, and contact hours, but the current survey data does not always support this.

International Festival

The Exam Schools is now booked for Sunday 3rd March and we are now looking for National/Cultural societies to host stalls at the event. It will be free for all students to attend and will be a great opportunity to showcase all the different cultures of the massively diverse student body here at Oxford. If you are part of a national society please do get in touch with internationalstudents@ousu.org. If you know someone who is involved in a national society then please do pass the message on.

As always this is report records the news and highlights from my work. If anyone has any questions about any of this or my other work then please do ask them in Council or email me (graduates@ousu.org). Equally if anyone has an issue they would like me to work on drop me a line.

Katie Colliver	VP (Welfare & Equal Opportunities)
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Hey there Council,

As I mentioned in my verbal report in 3rd week, I have been focusing more of my time on the Race, Religion and Belief sides of my role recently. In particular, looking at these areas:

- **Islamic Finance and the new Student Loan:** The President of the Islamic Society contacted OUSU to express concern about recent changes to the student loan scheme, which might have an affect on some Muslim student's ability to come to University. We've been in talks with the Equality and Diversity Unit and we are going to do some research (starting with a survey coming out soon) to assess the extent of the problem for Oxford students, before looking at ways that we can help address any issues that people face.
- **Access and Experience of BME students:** Access is an area of interest for Modupe, OUSU's BME & Anti-Racism Officer, and we believe that it is related to the experience of black students whilst at Oxford. Together with CRAE, we want to get all of the organisations within and beyond the University in one place to present the work they are doing to improve BME access and to suggest strategies for making a difference in the future, so that we can give the University some direction on this.

Progress is ongoing with the **Student Advice Service Review** - we will be entering the consultation period very soon - and with the other projects I mentioned last Council. Will Neaverson, our Disability Officer, is doing great work leading on the **new Disabled Students Guide** and we will soon be recruiting volunteers for the **Peer Mentoring scheme** for disabled students.

Reminder of dates for your diary:

- Monday 5th week (11/02): 5-7pm Diversity and Inclusivity Training
- Monday 6th week (18/02): 5-7pm Welfare Meeting (Student-run Self Help Presentation)
- Monday 8th week (04/03): 5-7pm Student Support Training

If you would like to come to any of these events, or have any questions for me then please drop me a line on welfare@ousu.org.

Cheerio for now,

Katie

David Messling

VP (Access & Academic Affairs)

Hello Council,

Since we were last all together, some of the highlights have been:

Student Support

I'm working with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Planning and Resources on a questionnaire for first year students on their opinions of the University's financial support package, with the aim of providing the University and OUSU with an evidence base to inform future financial support.

Department Representation

There's been some good progress on this recently - we now have data for almost all the department reps across the University, and our Division Reps are spearheading the efforts to build networks of Department Reps, and find out more about how OUSU can equip them in their roles.

OFFA Agreement

The University is now in the process of redrafting its agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). OFFA is keen for Student Unions to be involved with the process and the content - my requests so far have been for the 2014/15 agreement to reflect an increased emphasis on BME access, a commitment to ensuring course costs are stated upfront (i.e. for department fieldtrips, or courses with long fourth years), and moves towards being able to provide data on performance of flagged candidates at Finals.

Target Schools Shadowing Scheme

... is happening now! 200 prospective applicants are shadowing current undergraduates in 4th week and again in 5th week. The Target Schools committee have been working hard, along with Karen, our Democratic Support Officer to ensure the scheme runs smoothly! Feedback from the 'shadows' has been very positive, and we'll be looking to see how best to extend and improve the scheme for next year.

Academic Feedback

For many JCRs Hilary is the Academic Feedback term, and there's also been a good number of JCRs looking to introduce AFS for the future. Hats off to Pembroke for getting their sessions up and running, with college subject reps working alongside the JCR AcAff to share the workload and engage more students.

Common Rooms

I've held meetings for both JCR Academic Affairs and JCR Access Officers, where the key topics of conversation included the University's OFFA agreement, Academic Feedback Sessions, and Department Reps.

Department Reviews

For the moment, OUSU's continuing to take part in Departmental Reviews, and during fourth week took part in the review of the Department of Statistics.

That's all for now - as ever, drop me a line if you've got any questions!

Thanks

Hi Council,

It's 5th week which means Go Green Week, National Student Volunteering Week and RAG Week (in some Colleges at least) are upon us! I hope you've had a chance to go to some of the many events taking place to mark these various weeks. Here's a quick overview of the many part of my role that I've been working on, but if you'd like more information, then send me an e-mail - charities@ousu.org

Living Wage

Success! - the University has agreed to abolish the pay scales which are currently below National Living Wage (£7.45), which means that all directly employed staff, at least, will be paid above the Living Wage. There's still a long way to go with contracted staff, so join the campaign if you want to see this happen!

Charity

Jailbreak was a huge success raising over £17,000! I spent the weekend monitoring all the teams to ensure their safety and am please to report that we didn't lose anyone.

RAG Ball - Most of last week was spent interviewing candidates for the 2013 committee. By the time you get this we will have appointed a new (and fantastic) team of students to lead next Michaelmas' event.

Roses - As Valentine's Day is coming up, we've got two themed fundraisers: Blind Date (100s of students have signed up) and Valentine's Day roses. I've been working with Charity Officers to get the best deal on flowers for common rooms, allowing the reps to make a large profit for their chosen charities.

Charity selection - Online voting for RAG's charities takes place next week. I and others have shortlisted all the nominations according to Council's criteria, so use your vote next week!

Community

Volunteering Showcase - the biggest event of the term to help the interaction between students and the community will take place this Saturday at the Town Hall. This is in partnership with the Oxford Hub and we've got speakers, workshops and fairs all day. Do come!

Community Wardens - the scheme is going well with community relations significantly less frosty since the scheme was launched. In the last week we've had a group meeting with the Brookes Wardens, which was productive and helped to spark up some ideas.

Environment and Ethics

Go Green Week - We've arranged events all of this week from trips to recycling plants to speakers events to a group trip to OxGrow.

Third Sector Craeers

Careers Beyond Profit - The series , delivered by the Careers Service, continues every Monday at 1-2pm in OUSU. In week 6 we'll be looking at how to make contacts and in week 7 we'll be looking at how to impress at interview. All welcome!

Hello All,

The weeks are flying by and I cannot believe it is 5th week! So much has been happening so keep reading for highlights and feel free to email me at women@ousu.org for more details or for how to get involved!

Suzanne

Some quick facts for you...

- According to the NUS's *Hidden Marks* report, 7% of university age women experience rape or attempted rape while at university. There are 9,919 women at the University of Oxford.
- With those estimates, around 694 women at the University of Oxford have been experienced rape or attempted rape.
- The Counselling Service and Harassment Advisors had 10 reported rape or attempted rape cases last year.
- IT HAPPENS HERE, why isn't it being reported?

What I'm doing about it...

- Working with the It Happens Here Campaign on raising awareness of sexual abuse, how to support survivors, and how to get policy in colleges to better support survivors.
- Got Pembroke to integrate sexual consent discussion into their college orientation for Michaelmas Term 2013!
- Planning to speak to more colleges about integrating discussion into their colleges and training students and staff on how to best support survivors and provide helpful resources for them.

What else I'm doing from 9 to 5(ish)...

- Spoke at the University of Northampton about the *I Am the Change* grant OUSU received from the NUS to fund the Leadership Development Programme.
- Held the Public Speaking Session of the Leadership Development Programme with Melanie Lonsdale! It was awesome!
- Held a Harassment Working group where we passed a Resource Guide for survivors of Harassment and Sexual Abuse. It will be coming to a college near you soon! If you want a sneak peek, shoot me an email.
- Planning the OxFem Festival for 7 March in celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March! Keep an eye open for more details.

Shout Out...

This week's shout out goes to all the members of Women's Campaign for their tremendous efforts on the Who Needs Feminism Campaign. Your organisation, passion, and belief in an equal society brought me hope when I needed it the most this week. Thank you!

PART TIME OFFICERS

Nick Cooper

Graduate Academic Affairs Officer

Evening Council,

Hope you've had a great week. I've been continuing my work with Chris looking at the quality of taught Masters courses - this has mostly involved scouring Department websites to investigate the amount of teaching provided in each course. (Sympathy openly welcomed.)

I'm now going to collate these into one document to take it forward. Will report more on this in 7th week. Enjoy the rest of your week - Hilary is halfway done now...

Nick

Rebekka Hammelsbeck

Womens Officer

The last two weeks have been absolutely AMAZING for the Women's Campaign! I'm sure most of you have seen the pictures from our "Who needs feminism?" Campaign where people hold up whiteboards saying "I need feminism because..." On Monday and Thursday we took almost 500 pictures and the response on facebook, twitter and tumblr is just overwhelming and really exciting (50,000 notes on tumblr! Caitlin Moran and Mary Beard tweeting about us!)

Over the next two weeks, the WomCam committee and I will work on maintaining some of this enthusiasm and also organise our normal Monday meetings: next week is going to be a feminist quiz night and the week after will be related to LGBTQ history month.

Henry Chong

Mature Students Officer

Dear All,

Any of the Undergraduate Mature Students in your colleges (those 21 and over) should have received an email asking if they would like to opt in to the Mature Students mailing list that I have set up. Any graduates who would like to opt in to the mailing list just need to send an email to: mature-students-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk

The Mature Students drinks this term will be Tuesday of 6th Week (19th Feb), at Harris Manchester College, in the Old Dining Room. Please pass the word on to anyone who would like to come!

Again, if anyone would like to be part of the Mature Students Campaign, please email me at maturestudents@ousu.org

Yours Sincerely,
Henry Chong

William Neaverson

Disability Officer

My first major piece of news is my officership's name change, that is to say that I am no longer the "Students with Disabilities Officer", but instead the "Disability Officer". This will change slowly on all the OUSU information, and I am trying to set up a new email. The Disabilities Campaign will be doing the same thing.

In more substantive news, for the past few weeks, working in conjunction with Dwight Kelly and the Disabilities Campaign, I have been pulling together various sources of information for my major project - the new Guide for Disabled Students. We are aiming to print it in time for the 2013/14 intake of students. The problems with the old guide - irrelevant and outdated information, overlong sections and a lack of student focus - will be rectified with a smaller guide focussed on students' own experiences and

how they overcame their issues. I am currently looking for contributions, and would love to hear from anyone if they would like to add to the guide!

Outside of this, I have been building relationships with the college equal opportunities, welfare and disability representatives, and will be working to build the Disabilities Campaign in the coming weeks.