

Reports to Council

5th Week Council Hilary 2015

Sabbatical Officers

Louis Trup – President

These past few weeks I have been:

- Finishing up the student innovation award. We have had some great nominations and we will be selecting the people who will get up to £20,000 for their innovative project.
- Entered the final stage of negotiations with the uni on the quinquennial review of OUSU's articles of association. We have been dealing with lawyers to ensure that our proposals are legal.
- I've been working on the castle mill campaign, writing articles, going on bbc radio oxford twice, jack fm and on ITV news, all to defend graduate accommodation. James Blythe and I also spoke in congregation which I think swung much opinion on the issue. I will continue to campaign on this through the postal ballot.
- As part of the work Will, our clubs and societies officer, and I have been doing, we have been trying to get the university to agree to a simpler method for registering clubs. The university has now agreed to move to an online registration system. The data will be shared with us so that we can support clubs better.
- I've been helping prepare our NUS delegates for NUS conference which is coming up soon. At next OUSU council, I hope to bring motions alongside delegates about issues to be discussed at conference.
- Working on finalising the bye-law changes which are at this week's council.
- Working out how the new 10% bus discount will operate in practice. We now have a system whereby students can purchase passes on the uni's website, and then pick up their bus cards from OUSU.
- Spent quite a lot of time helping Ruth Meredith and the RAG committee with jailbreak.
- Replying to a lot of emails from angry people.

James Blythe – VP Access and Academic Affairs

Hi Council,

It's been another really busy couple of weeks. Here are the headlines:

- Castle Mill: most of Tuesday of 4th week was spent in the Sheldonian, and my speech seemed to go down well. The fight isn't over and we're going to a postal vote – there will definitely be more of an update on this at Council.
- Access Showcase: this happened on Friday of 3rd week. The content was fantastic and the student feedback very positive but we only had about 30 people out of the 100 I had hoped for, which was disappointing. I'll be reviewing this, particularly with respect to timings, in preparation for potentially running it again or suggesting to Cat that we run it again. N.B Hosting this = a manifesto commitment ticked off!
- Education Vision: we've finished preparing the survey and are continuing to hold focus groups which are proving fascinating.
- BME Access: we're pressing on with the plan to launch the first ever African-Caribbean specific version of the Target Schools Shadowing Scheme in partnership with the

African-Caribbean Society – it'll be in 7th week and has the potential to be something new, important and very helpful in improving BME access to Oxford.

- Reviews: I'm reading the documentation for the review of History at the moment – get in touch if you have any views on the History Faculty. We're also continuing to plough through the difficult aftermath of the review of Wycliffe Hall.
- Libraries: I'm currently working on a paper for the Curators of the University Libraries on student representation in library committees. Dry stuff, but given the kerfuffle over incidents like the changes to the History Library, it's an area where student representation can be really important.
- Suspended Status: met with many people on student status and am working on getting a clearer articulation of University policy available to students as well as training common room reps to campaign on this in colleges with Chris Pike.

Committees

Congregation; University Council; PRAC; PPH Supervisory; JS(EC)SM; Education IT Board; Admissions Committee; Plagiarism Working Group; Committee for the Language Centre. I also sent my apologies to the Joint Student Number Planning Sub Committee.

As ever - @ousu_acaff for a running commentary on the #committeelyf.

Anna Bradshaw – VP Women

Hi Council –

Halfway through the (term) year I think I'm getting to a point where lots of planning and preparation is starting to turn into real things that happen, which is great. See below for lots of those things. If you have any questions about anything below or even not below, please do get in touch with me at women@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

X Anna

Sexual Health & Sexual Violence

Consent Workshops

Having trained the facilitators for Queer Consent Workshops, these are now a bit on the slow burner for me as they run in different colleges.

The main thing is the ongoing evaluation, and I've started meetings with different liberation groups to get feedback on the workshops to make them even better for next year.

I'm also meeting with the Thames Valley Police and Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre (OSARCC) on Wednesday morning to talk about our upcoming work together around introducing OUSU-model consent workshops in schools, colleges and Universities in the area.

Manifesto pledge: 'I will ... expand and develop the programme ... [and] introduce compulsory freshers' workshops in 1/3 colleges by the beginning for next year.'

Other Training

I have run a number of First Respondent Training sessions, and the response has been really positive. I will be running more throughout term – so if you'd like one in your college get in touch! I'm also developing a version of our 'First Response' leaflet that is specifically geared towards Junior Deans, with a Junior Dean from Corpus.

Related to manifesto pledges to do with 'actual first responders' and my focus on 'Sexual Health & Sexual Violence'.

Harassment Policies

Alice (chair of the Harassment Policy Working Group) and I have started out consultations with different liberation groups to recommend improvements to the University's Harassment Policy. We're getting good feedback, and should be ready to provide a full template for colleges by the end of term.

We're also continuing to support students who are working on this in their own colleges. We're making good progress in lots of places, and student-led campaigns for an update are going to decision-making college committees in eight colleges

Related to manifesto pledges to do with 'actual first responders' and my focus on 'Sexual Health & Sexual Violence'.

Academic Attrition

I ran a meeting with all of the OUSU officers who do things relating to women and academics, where we talking through lots of things coming up and worked out ways to work together. Coming up we have Ask-a-Grad panels and Finals Forums, and then also the launch of the academic stream of the OUSU Women's Mentoring Scheme. I'm meeting with OxFEST to talk about how we coordinate with their existing mentoring scheme on Wednesday.

Manifesto pledge: 'I will work closely with the Graduate Women's Officer to hold events that encourage undergraduate women to consider further study, including open nights in STEM departments, and Ask a Grad events in colleges.'

Women in Leadership

The OUSU Women's Leadership Development Programme is halfway through, and the first two sessions have gone really well. Feedback is positive, and the group has continued to be really vibrant and engaged.

The St John's micro-programme are almost finished, and hopefully by next Council I will be able to report that it was a successful pilot and we will be rolling out similar programmes in other colleges next year.

The OUSU Women's Mentoring Scheme is also getting a bit more concrete, and we will be launching it officially in 8th Week of this term – on International Women's Day. Look out for ways to become a mentor and/or mentee.

Manifesto pledge: 'I will make the continuation and expansion of OUSU's Women's Leadership Development Programme a priority. I want to enable facilitators to run parallel events in colleges and departments...'

Campaigns

WomCam

Last week WomCam ran a zine-making session that went really well. This Monday we're holding a Bystander Intervention Workshop. The workshop is based on materials from Hollaback! and UCLU, and I devised it with three members of the WomCam committee. This not only produced the workshop, which would be really good and helpful, but I also used the session to give these committee members some idea of one way to devise a workshop

It Happens Here

It Happens Here's largest event of the term was on Saturday – Anti-Violence Valentines. With the two chairs of the campaign, this was a major project for me. We had a panel of speakers from OSARCC, the TVP, the White Ribbon Campaign, NUS and Women Against Rape. Then a whole range of workshops including art, consent, and a session mapping the new It Happens Here & Code 4 Rights 'First Response App' collaboration (more to come on this!). Then a keynote from Staceyann Chin, who is a phenomenal performance poet and activist. The day went well, and I'm really proud of the co-chairs and everyone who helped out on the day.

Castle Mill

The other main thing I've been doing over the last couple of weeks has been Castle Mill. I ran the craft session and demonstration that Council gave £50 to last fortnight, as well as supporting the team more generally. We were extremely successful, and I think that everything went really well. Unfortunately, the 'Save Port Meadow' campaign has now called for a postal vote, but I am confident that we can win again.

International Students

In the absence of a VP (Graduates), I have taken on the work supporting the International Students Campaign and International Students Officer. We met up last week to talk through their plans for the term, and for securing the campaign. The main things that we will be doing are creating links between and resources for International Student Reps in common rooms, and preparing for the OUSU International Festival in Trinity.

Events and Committees

- Athena SWAN and Gender Advisory Group (5th February)
- Women's Leadership Development Programme: Public Speaking (5th February)
- Save Castle Mill Craft Session and Demonstration (9th, 10th February)
- JCR PresCom (10th February)
- Anti-Violence Valentine's (14th February)
- WomCam Bystander Intervention Workshop (16th February)

Ruth Meredith – VP Charities and Community

Hey Council, I've been sick a bit over the past fortnight so a slightly short report from me this time.

1. RAG Elections, Big Give Week, Boat Race Raid, Jailbreak

Jailbreak raised over £26,000 and had 200 students get involved with two teams making it to Dubai! Jailbreak is a massive logistical project which has been 6 months in the planning. I want to say a massive thank-you to the RAG team, and to all the sabs who helped out with Jailbreak 2015.

We've shortlisted the charities for RAG elections 2015, and voting will be opening next week.

There are many many ongoing projects with RAG, including our gift-aid struggles, Kili climb, RAG Ball 2015, the Boat Race Raid, the Double Your Donation week, committee trainings and general admin work.

2. Community Wardens and Castle Mill

Congratulations to Louis, James, Anna and our amazing community wardens for having persuaded Congregation to save Castle Mill!

This is such a massive win for OUSU members, and would never have been possible without the hundreds of people who wrote to tutors, made banners and stood outside the Sheldonian. Thank you!

3. Living Wage, E&E and On Your Doorstep

Living Wage has hosted the first of it's equipping sessions for colleges after the incredible past month for the campaign. Attendance was good, and we'll be holding another one toward the end of term for people who couldn't make the first.

E&E celebrated Global Divestment Day on Saturday, with a 15 foot home-crafted dinosaur! The divestment recommendations will be going forward to another committee next week, and progress seems positive.

On Your Doorstep have created college best-practice guides, which will be distributed at the end of this week to support college reps know how to most effectively contribute money and time to homeless charities around Oxford. We're also organizing a panel event for the end of term!

4. Upcoming Projects

I've assembled a crack-team of our executive to organize General Election hustings for 8th week of this term to give you a chance to scrutinize the people who want to represent you!

I'm also going to be working with Lindsay (our brilliant Disabled Students' Officer) to organize a Disability Hust for the start of next term.

(As ever, if you want to get involved with either project, get in touch – vpcandc@ousu.ox.ac.uk)

Part-Time Executive Officers

Marina Lambrakis – Graduate Academic Affairs Officer

Hi Council,

I've been super busy since last we met on the Castle Mill affair - at the time of writing all looks good, fingers crossed nothing has changed by the time you're reading this! Since 3rd week I've met with Nick (VP Grads elect) to go through a few action points from Research Committee earlier this term, and will be cementing these with Nick and James Blythe over the next week or so. In my own college I'm currently working on a pilot paper on college advisors, and I'm hoping that, if it's successful, I can roll it out to other graduate common rooms and support presidents to revamp the college advisor system across the board (which is one of my aims for the year). Please get in touch if you have any issues whatsoever - gradacaff@ousu.ox.ac.uk :) happy 5th week, & keep those blues at bay!

Will Brown – Clubs and Societies Support Officer

- Presented award for 'Society of the Year' at the Student Awards
- Met with President and Common Room Support Officer to discuss:
 - amalgamation and digitisation of OUSU's data and records

- intercollegiate and inter-society events
- Advised various societies about registration and funding

Jenny Walker – LGBTQ Officer

This week I sent out an email telling college reps about the buddy system I'm setting up; when I've got enough replies I will start matching up colleges and giving out guidance. I went to the LGBT Advisory board meeting of staff which was useful for me to see how we can work together in the future. I also made sure the mailing list was up to date. I am looking at the possibility of proposing that the position of Graduate LGBTQ Rep be created. I'm also looking at getting a stock of rainbow flags at OUSU so that colleges can borrow them if they don't have the funds to get them or if their college won't allow them. I trained as a facilitator for the Queer Consent Workshops and should be helping Anna set up some sessions soon.

Aliya Yule – Womens' Campaign Officer

WomCam has had a great couple of weeks and been very busy with Reproductive Justice Week, creating and editing our Zine, finalising events for the rest of this term and next term and more!

Reproductive Justice Week was a huge success. We had events about abortion, sex education, women of colour and the reproductive justice movement, healthcare for trans people and getting trans healthcare into medical curriculums, and a discussion about the stigma of having children whilst dealing with disabilities. Thank you to everyone who came, helped, organised, and contributed to discussions.

We also had a self-care cut and stick creative session to contribute to our zine, which this term is looking at the theme of IRRATIONALITY. We have had lots of submissions, including artwork, poems, personal pieces and essays, and are currently in the process of editing and putting together the zine.

This weekend was It Happens Here's Anti-Violence Valentine's Day, which we were delighted to contribute to with our art and crafts anti-violence Valentine's Day card making session. It was a huge joy to see StaceyAnn Chin in Oxford, and we hope that more incredible women of colour are invited to speak and perform in Oxford!

On Monday, we ran the first Bystander Intervention Workshops as part of Oriel and Somerville's EqualiWeek. The workshop aims to teach students how to be active bystanders and deal with cases of harassment that happen around us. These were created by myself, Flora (the WomCam Secretary), Alice Vac (the Harassment Policy Working Group Chair) and Anna (VP Women). Please get in touch with womensofficer@ousu.ox.ac.uk if you'd be interested running the workshops in your colleges!

WomCam has also chosen to support the student-led campaign 'Whose University', and we look forward to supporting them in their aim to give a platform to students who have had negative experiences of the university putting profit or exam results before the welfare of students.

I would also like to thank everyone who came to the Marine le Pen protest, and helped support it. It is so important that we continue to fight against racism when it is invited into our community.

I also successfully migrated from Gmail to Nexus (yay technology), and finally have full access to the WomCam mail list! If anyone would like to be signed up to the mail list, please email womensofficer@ousu.ox.ac.uk

To stay up to date with WomCam, follow us on Twitter - @womcam , or Facebook at Facebook.com/WomCam!

A xxx

David Parton – Health and Welfare Officer

Over the last two weeks, I have attended a 'Time for Representation' meeting organised and run by Chris about encouraging greater representation for liberation groups at Common Room level, whilst also meeting with Chris and discussing the progress myself and Anna are making in relation to ensuring Mooncups and sanitary towels/tampons are distributed at a reduced price from Common Rooms. I attended the OUSU Student Awards and submitted two OUSU General Election manifesto motions for today's Council. I also staffed a 'Register to Vote' stall outside the Rad Cam with Ruth and Henna.

David

Nikhil Venkatesh – Black and Minority Ethnic Students Officer

Over the past fortnight I have been very busy with work for OUSU, including: attending the demonstration against Marine le Pen; running a voter registration street stall, and participating in the (postal ballot pending) successful campaign to save Castle Mill. I have submitted two motions to this week's council for the General Election Manifesto.

The campaign to install more BME Officers in common rooms continues apace. I am happy to report that I know of four common rooms that have introduced the position so far this term. The progress is due in large part to committed members of the common rooms themselves, and the Vice-President for Welfare and Equal Opportunities, whose 'Time for Representation' seminar I helped out with. I hope, though, that students trying to introduce these positions have felt support from me, and I offer my energies to anyone else considering following suit. From now on I will also be focussing on helping the BME Officers that common rooms do have, by answering their questions, keeping them informed, putting them in touch with each other and hopefully organising an event at which they can share ideas.

Julien Coyne – Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

I have been working with the Matt Tennant, the Academic Representation Officer, on the Sharepoint site for academic reps. I am hopeful that this will become a useful resource to everyone, and have been thinking about what kind of information should be on the site, and how to make it navigable. It seems like it could be a good way to link up anything academic-related that is a bit sprawling; representation in colleges & departments are the obvious things, but also things like mentoring schemes in various departments. I have spoken with Anna (VP Women) about this briefly. It could also be a good place to collate various reports from OUSU's academic officers, and am thinking about whether there is a painless way to do this.

Zuleyka Shahin – Graduate Womens' Officer

- Providing one-on-one support to two transgender students through what is an exceptionally difficult time for them both. This has included meeting face-to-face to hear concerns and providing ongoing support. Trying to establish current university procedures when dealing with transgender students who come out to tutors/advisors/supervisors and difficulties and challenges being faced.
- Meeting at St Cross College, February 11 2015, with several committee members as we work towards restructuring the SCR and introducing a Woman's Officer. As a result, the proposal is being taken forward to the entire SCR for approval. Failing that it will be going to the Students Association for a vote. The proposal currently favoured is to potentially implement two gender non-specific Welfare Officers and one Women's Officer. I am confident the college will, by Michelmas 2015, have realised these changes as they remain at a disadvantage without such a person holding this position in office. In my capacity, I supported officers taking this motion to their President as well as women students in St Cross who wish to see a Women's Officer established.
- Continuing to work and support Women's Officers at the college level and the Facebook group is now being somewhat utilized.
- Listening and supporting testimonials from graduate women regarding Marine Le Pen at The Oxford Union, in particular concerns from student of colour, those from Jewish and Muslim backgrounds and gender and sexuality minority groups. Looking at ways to bridge communication between the Union and the wider student body and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students, especially graduate women from minority and under-represented backgrounds.
- I have also attended several social events in my capacity as Graduate Women's Officer, present to hear concerns and meet graduate women at large.
- Planning a future talk at Mansfield College in Week 7. Currently booking in more drop-in clinics. Already secured is St Cross College and hopefully Kellogg College and Brasenose College too as I await confirmation. Information being gathered from these will hopefully form part of my feedback to OUSU in the near future.

Henna Shah – Access and Admissions Officer

Hi Council!

Things are moving here at access and admissions towers. The lovely James hosted a really successful Access Showcase last week which was fantastic. I now have a date for the Reach scholars' reception in 8th week and I'm helping to organise the Education Vision focus groups which are going really well. I also hope to have a drop in with JCR access officers before the end of term to talk about what they want in terms of a more responsive OUSU so hopefully more fun plans and things from me after that. As always, feel more than free to get in touch if you have any great/crazy access and admissions related ideas at accessadmissions@ousu.org

Henna

Joe Reason – Common Room Support Officer

Hey council,

Happy 5th week. In the past two weeks I have held a meeting with OUSU reps and am heading towards our second meeting of the term. After our discussions at this meeting, we have decided to hold more regular meetings and have set up easier forms of communication so that we can collaborate with one another more easily. Another discussion point that we will be working on is voting systems so if you would like to get involved then please send me an email (commonrooms@ousu.ox.ac.uk).

I have been working on the confusions of disaffiliated colleges and following on from 1st week council, I would like to welcome Mansfield MCR who voted to reaffiliate and to Somerville MCR, who had mistakenly been put down as disaffiliated (and I mentioned were disaffiliated) and have mentioned that they are also affiliated.

I have been attending PresCom (President's Committee) meetings (due to a clash of Undergrad and Grad PresCom meetings I have thus far only attended the undergrad PresCom) and will be working with them to complete the work that my predecessor did with a "Common Room Information System".

As always, if you have any queries or comments, send me an email to let me know J.

Lindsay Lee – Disabled Students' Officer

Several things are happening on the disability front:

- Proposal for increased university funding for disability initiatives: The survey I created about students' disability experience closed at the end of 3rd week, and we received a respectable 65 responses. With all the input students gave, the results make up an almost 50 page document, so I'll be spending a bit of time making sense of all of this information. I've also been in contact with 10 top universities asking about how their disability services are structured so as to make comparisons between other systems and

Oxford's. I met with director of Student Services Catherine Paxton and head of DAS Anwen Jones, and they suggested the most effective proposal would focus on increased funding for all the non-academic portions of university life, e.g., sports, extra lectures, field trips, etc.

- Disability hust: We'll be hosting a disability-specific husting for the UK General Election in 1st week of Trinity! We'll be asking candidates/party representatives to answer questions about the Disabled Students Allowance, the Disability Living Allowance, austerity measures, mental health, etc. If you're interested in helping, let me know!
- Disability SRE: I'm working with Anna (VP Women) on a training event for both staff and students about the intersection of disability and sexuality, which we are planning on hosting in Trinity term. Planned topics of discussion include body acceptance, communication, and assistive devices. If you're interested in helping with this, let me know!

Danny Waldman – Rent and Accommodation Officer

Hi Council!

I've spent a horrible week in bed with tonsillitis, but the light that shone through was Castle Mill! Yes, after OUSU's super-brilliant protest (supported by yours truly in the form of coughs and splutters from his bed across the internet) Congregation voted overwhelmingly against the £30m option. It has now gone to postal vote, which means there is still work to be done and we should keep sending letters to our tutors, but with the result from Congregation we should be feeling confident. I'm still waiting on handover for the Tenants Union, but in the meantime I've decided that the larger project I want to complete this term is build up a picture of the actual issues facing our students specifically - I don't think it's helpful to just import the most-faced issues NUS has because Oxford/collegiate universities are so different. I'm recovering from the tonsillitis now (penicillin is utterly nuking it), so I hope to get my accommodation database-building on track (hopefully colleges will be cooperative). R&A love x

Isaac Kang – Community Outreach and Charities Officer

Having assumed the position on Thursday/Friday last week, I've had meeting this Tuesday with my predecessor and the sabbatical officer to discuss my duties and in what direction we should move on. It was decided during the meeting that my main focus would be on enhancing the communication and cooperation between the OUSU and the JCR charities reps, as mentioned in my election promises. I hope to get in touch with the concerned parties in the following days.

Divisional Board Representatives

Emma Alexander – Social Sciences – Undergraduate

Hi Council! I've had a busy couple of weeks. I went to a really great meeting with Anna Bradshaw and other interested parties to talk about the gender gap, which is a very important issue in the Social Sciences, and I am currently organising a forum event to discuss this - will keep you posted. The gender gap is an issue that also came up at the termly Social Sciences Division student discussion forum which I attended last week; we also talked there about provisions for the Higher Education Review, and my favourite issue - marking criteria! I organised a survey amongst Social Sciences students to see how detailed their marking criteria documents are, and it turns out the answer is 'not very'! I'm in contact with DPIR to see if they might be able to introduce more detailed schemes, will keep you posted. This coming week I'm attending the NUS Course Rep conference on Wednesday and Social Sciences Library Committee on Friday so things will stay busy. As always if you have any questions or want my help then please do get in touch!

Hilary Chow – Social Science – Postgraduate

Achievements:

After the motion on application fee was passed, I presented it to the divisional board, and the board agreed to look into options for waivers and to make applicants aware of the possibility, with one director specifically stated that her department would pay for the fees from financially less able applicants should the University is to provide general support for that.

Reports:

There were a handful of important issues discussed at the divisional board meeting –

1. Castle Mill

- Letter from MBA students was circulated
- It's noted that if University is to remove the top floor, the £30 million would likely to come from graduate match funding but may not be the sole contributor
- An implication would be that colleges may need to drop the plan to expand on graduate studies
- It's noted that the development was done in a correct process and was voted the correct way with a 71% majority
- It's also noted that it's important for the University to keep a good relationship with the city
- Congregation met on 10 February 14:00 with 71% voted no to removing the top floor

2. Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill

- Bill already passed the Commons and passed the Lords
- Universities want to be excluded from the bill as the bill would require universities to not host 'non-violent extremists', to monitor and report students, and to have all events' materials and content submitted for scrutiny and approval; the last one entirely undermining academic freedom and potentially making it impossible to host any outside

speaker at all

- After further debates, the following has been added as an amendment:

Freedom of expression in universities etc:

(1) This section applies to a specified authority if it is the proprietor or governing body of—
(a) an institution that provides further education (within the meaning given by section 2(3) of the Education Act 1996), or
(b) an institution that provides courses of a description mentioned in Schedule 6 to the Education Reform Act 1988 (higher education courses).

(2) When carrying out the duty imposed by section 21(1), a specified authority to which this section applies—

- (a) must have particular regard to the duty to ensure freedom of speech, if it is subject to that duty;
- (b) must have particular regard to the importance of academic freedom, if it is the proprietor or governing body of a qualifying Institution.

3. Information security to be upgraded in the light of recent incidents

4. MSt in music with MBA 1+1 programme approved

5. Additional route for MSc Teaching and Learning with fewer but longer residences approved

6. On the divisional board meeting, I have sent out a more detailed report to all student representatives.

7. On the Castle Mill controversy, I have further communicated with the Community Warden on my knowledge and views on the issue.

8. On the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill issue, I have notified OUSU and the three major political societies on it, and wrote also to the Chancellor who's a peer.

9. New email account! The account is now changed to pg-socsci@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

Julien Coyne – MPLS - Undergraduate

I attended my first CLIPS (that's a committee about libraries) for MPLS on Tuesday of 3rd. It was good to connect with people there, because on Thursday of 3rd I went to the first meeting of the Working Group for the Future of the Radcliffe Science Library, which a number of the same people went to. In Thursday's meeting, we took a tour of the RSL, and it was interesting to look around with a view to improve the way the space is used; there is a fairly significant amount of ill-used space, so I am confident that this working group will be able to find ways to re-purpose a lot of the space (into informal areas, and group meeting-rooms) while still maintaining the amount of space currently available for quiet work. The future of the RSL looks to be a very exciting project, going forward.

Kristina Carney – Humanities – Postgraduate

Hello Council,

Last week I successfully chaired the first GJCC of this term. The turnout was lower than expected, mostly due to short notice. We discussed the potential for open-office hours, better graduate study space and ways to improve graduate networks. We hope to have another one in 8th week. During that meeting I hope to make solid goals for Trinity term.

Eden Bailey – Humanities - Undergraduate

- **Humanities Workload/Welfare survey:** the results have been collected and together with Matt Tennant, James Blythe and Chris Pike we are looking at what can be done following the issues raised by this research.
- **One-to-one meeting with Shearer West, Head of Humanities Division:** discussed issues of workload and impact on welfare as highlighted by the survey, and ways forward.
- **Divisional JCC has been organised:** will meet with reps from each faculty in Humanities in week 4.
- **Humanities Divisional Board Meeting:** in addition to general representation, gave speech encouraging members of the board to oppose the Castle Mill action, and encourage colleagues to do so.

ERRG: Election Review Recommendations

Concerning: Statutory Elections

Nominations / Candidates

The ERRG spent considerable time thinking about how to encourage and publicise nominations, so that more candidates will nominate and contest positions in future. Specific ideas suggested were:

- Start publicising at the end of the preceding Trinity term, possibly targeting those attending the Leadership training courses.
- The publication of the nomination form (and, subsequently, a list of candidates) in the Oxford Student should return.
- We should explore a “prospective candidates drinks” event in Michaelmas, to allow slates to recruit, and current office-holders to encourage students to run for their positions.
- We should encourage Common Room Presidents, OUSU reps, other Common Room positions and departmental academic reps to run, or ask them to encourage people in their college or department to run.

Concerning the actual nomination form, ERRG recommends that we ought to bring back disclosures of motions of censure (because of the new policy to bring such motions if the Executive do not do their Council duties), and that we publish the full nomination forms online. We ought to maintain the requirement for Graduates to get departmental approval, and encourage any prospective candidates to speak with their supervisor before nominating (including candidates for elections in Council). Moreover, nomination forms should give individuals an opportunity to identify themselves, so that they are not misgendered.

Slates

ERRG acknowledged that slates are a positive factor in our elections if they encourage PTE to run, and provide friendly welfare support. However, it ought to be pointed out in the nomination pack that independent candidates have done really well in recent years, and OUSU should be available to support these candidates. Partly for this reason, and also to reduce the advantage for ‘OUSU insiders’, we ought to maintain the possibility that candidates are also their own Agents, but in the interest of candidate welfare they should be strongly encouraged to find someone willing.

In terms of the actual requirements, we should ensure that candidates are aware of the £50 deposit, and especially the possibility of paying this by cheque (which will not be cashed unless a fine requires it), so that candidates can get a cheque book for this purpose. The wording of slate limitations currently does not reflect the spirit that slates should be allowed 5 PTE candidates, but 6 if one of them is a graduate officer: this should be changed.

Timing of the Election

ERRG extensively considered submissions to change the timing of (any part of) the elections. We consulted Council, who indicated little demand to separate the Student Trustee elections in order to hold them in Hilary Term. However, there appeared to be no decisive consensus in Council or ERRG concerning the issue of whether or not to hold all Statutory Elections in Hilary Term. Therefore, a motion will be taken to Council to discuss whether to hold a Referendum on this issue. It will be made clear that if Council decides not to hold a Referendum, they are free to amend the motion to make a decision on the issue itself, or a new motion will be brought in a subsequent meeting of Council to make a decisive decision on this point.

Hustings

Attendance at hustings was often low, and ERRG has received a few suggestions for ways of improving it: ensuring that hustings coincide with other college events, are held in accessible venues and asking colleges to try and get a certain minimum number of people there so that candidates may avoid making the trip to that particular venue.

The recording of Central Hustings should be an absolute priority. Central Hustings should be organised around themes, with set starting times for different sections so that outsiders can join when they are interested. Having separate, themed hustings was suggested as an alternative for a large number of small hustings. Hustings in general, and Graduate hustings in particular, should be more informal and debate-oriented, to allow for more candidate-to-candidate challenging.

ERRG recommends organising a true Liberation husting, where it ought to be ensured that people of all liberation groups have equal opportunities to question the candidates, and where the chair ought to be instructed to prioritise people in those liberation groups where possible.

Manifestos

ERRG recommends that candidates are encouraged to meet with the relevant sabbatical officers, part-time officers or staff members to ensure that any manifesto pledges made are attainable and do not contradict any Policy. In terms of making engagement with manifesto pledges easier, social media should continue to be used. If the videos from Central Hustings are not or cannot be made available, candidates should have the opportunity to make individual videos in addition to the position-specific short videos to introduce all candidates for a particular office.

Campaigning

ERRG believes that the campaigning method of “doorknocking” should not be discouraged, although attention should be drawn to college policies prohibiting it. Elections Committee should look into creating a “How to be a good doorknocker” document for candidates, including notes on privacy and potentially distressing acts for vulnerable students.

In terms of election expenditure, ERRG recommends that some sample budgets are made available online along with all nomination material, for transparency and to emphasise the lack of correlation between expenditure and electoral success, so students in relative financial hardship are not put off

nominating. Moreover, ERRG recommends to remove the clause prohibiting the use of free campaign materials, since it causes problems with materials that are free for all students to access (such as Facebook pages).

ERRG encourages the next Michaelmas Returning Officer to introduce a system where OUSU contributes financially to candidates if they apply. However, we believe that there is no fair way of means-testing for such contributions, and that therefore the budget set aside for this purpose should be spread equally across all candidates who apply (with a proportional difference between Sabbatical and PTE candidates). However, we believe that such a provision ought to be treated as an experiment for now, and the exact method of distribution should be reviewed after.

Voting

This year was the first time we used a new voting system, provided by MSL Ltd. ERRG suggested a few alterations to the voting pages: the candidate order should be reversed on the voting page compared to the manifesto page; the log-in and voting page should link straight onto the log-on page, rather than to an intermediate page; and the voting links should be the most prominent item on the OUSU homepage for the duration of the election. ERRG agreed that it was a positive thing that voters were led through voting for all positions, since it drove up turnout for Part-Time positions which generally see much fewer votes cast. Re-Open Nominations should be introduced for Student Trustees and NUS Delegate positions, since it represents a vital option in our democracy.

ERRG reviewed the efficiency of our limited-franchise groups, and noted complaints from the Women's Campaign that some transgender students found it difficult to approach the correct people to be included in the correct franchise and vote for their representatives. We recommend that those or are misgendered in the University data should be able to identify themselves through the Sabbatical team, if they are more comfortable approaching them than the Democratic Support Officer.

The new voting systems offers an option to allow voters to self-define, and limit the positions they are eligible to vote for accordingly. For example, there could be a self-defining tickbox-list at the start of the voting process, in which you can indicate if you identify as LGBTQ, BME or even an International Student, allowing us to potentially have an effective way of limiting the franchises for the positions that represent these groups. ERRG recommends that the relevant OUSU Campaigns are contacted about this option, and suggest that they decide themselves whether to bring a motion to OUSU Council to introduce such a self-defining option.

RO's conduct

ERRG noted that the RO's conduct in this election may have been unclear to some candidates, and suggests that the RO sends out a daily summary e-mail to all agents and candidates detailing which campaign-related things they have advised against when asked. However, it should not detail any requests for clarification if the RO believed it concerned something that is clearly allowed under the Regulations, so as to not discourage students from innovating in their campaign methods. The efforts to find accessible venues for hustings was much appreciated, and should be continued. Moreover, ERRG

noted that a lack of complaints has a positive impact on the atmosphere of the election, but may be more symptomatic of a lack of contest rather than anything inherent to the election itself.

ERRG consulted Council on the question of whether or not to maintain a Student RO, and believes that there is little demand from students to change the status quo on this point.

Concerning: Referenda

ERRG made four recommendations concerning the Regulations-based issues that arose over the past Referendum. Firstly, the current Regulations make it beneficial for Campaign Leaders to not include Supporters on their Campaign List, because they are only responsible for individuals on the Campaign List. We resolved to lift the wording from the Regulations for Direct Elections which gives the Returning Officer the power to rule that an individual is indeed a supporter of a particular candidate or slate and make it applicable to Campaigns.

Secondly, ERRG noted that there is no explicit provision to complain about the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officers, so resolved to include that in the next draft of the Regulations.

Thirdly, ERRG considered the possibility that no one nominates themselves to be Campaign Leader. We decided that the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officers should write the information about such a Campaign in the place of a Campaign Statement, but leave the Campaign without a Campaign Leader for all other purposes of the Referendum.

Finally, ERRG resolved to remove the clause concerning the prohibition of the use of free material, as in the Regulations for Direct Elections.