

Reports to Council

5th Week Council Hilary 2016

Becky	Howe	President	Received
Ali	Lennon	VP Welfare & Equal Opps	Received
Lucy	Delaney	VP Women	Received
Nick	Cooper	VP Graduates	Received
Cat	Jones	VP Access & Academic Affairs	Received
Emily	Silcock	VP Charities & Community	Received
Tom	Wadsworth	Academic Affairs Campaign Officer	Received
Adam	Kellett	Access & Admissions Officer	Received
Hilal	Yazan	Black & Minority Ethnic Students Officer	Received
Eric	LeGresley	Clubs and Societies Support Officer	
Luke	Cave	Common Room Support Officer	Received
Yoni	Stone	Community Outreach & Charities Officer	Received
Fairlie	Kirkpatrick Baird	Environment & Ethics Officer	Received
Bo	Zhang	Grad Academic Affairs Officer	Received
Gabe	Rusk	Grad International Students Officer	Received
Rebecca	Kuperberg	Grad Welfare Officer	Received
Kirthi	Bellamkonda	Grad Womens' Officer	Received
Katy	Haigh	Health & Welfare Officer	Received
Meera	Sachdeva	International Students Officer	Received
Catherine	Kelly	LGBTQ Officer	Received
Dorkina	Myrick	Mature Students' Officer	Received
Ronak	Patel	Disabled Students' Officer	Received
Holly	Roy	Student Parents and Carers' Officer	Received
Jessy	Parker Humphreys	Trans Officer	

Sabbatical Officers

Becky Howe – President

Hey everyone,

I hope you've had a fruitful fortnight. Here's some of what I've been up to:

Welfare Survey: this was the main reason I ran to be OUSU President. I wanted to find out a) the state of student welfare - particularly mental health - at Oxford, and b) how effective welfare support systems are across the collegiate University. I've been designing a comprehensive survey for a very long time. We decided to launch it this term so that we didn't lose the experiences of first-year students, who may not have replied had we done the survey in Michaelmas. **The pilot of the survey is complete:** Magdalen JCR and MCR are presenting their report of the data to their college this week. **The survey will launch university-wide THIS FRIDAY (19th February).**

Oxford Students' Festival: this is happening on Saturday of 6th week, 27th February. The line-up is being finalised, and I'm very excited. The nominations for **Student Awards** closed last Friday, and I'll be judging the winners with Emily (VP Charities and Community), the presidents of Sports Fed and OU Music Society, and the OU Drama Officer. Thanks all for helping out!

Common room presidents' training day: as per my pledge to do training for presidents every term, the Hilary training day was on Saturday of 3rd week. It went really well. 100% said it was 'very useful'. 5/6 of the sabbatical officers ran a session (Emily was busy doing Jailbreak!), so thanks to all of them for being great.

Rent negotiation workshops: this was another of my pledges, and it ran on Friday of 3rd week. It was a two-hour workshop about: how rent negotiations work, putting together a strategy, using stats effectively, writing a proposal, and negotiating. 21 people came, yay. We've got another one on Tuesday of 5th (yesterday). Thanks to Nick (VP Grads) and Emily (VP Charities and Community) for helping!

NUS National Conference: in April, OUSU's sending 6 students + me + my successor, Jack (as an observer) to the National Conference of NUS (National Union of Students). We met in 3rd week to look through proposals and also to discuss what motions we'd like to take. Two have come today, and we'll be bringing further motions to 7th week.

OUSU Trustee Board meeting: in 3rd week, we had our Hilary Term meeting of the Trustee Board. I chair this. We discussed: OUSU's complaints procedure, the executive review, and OUSU's strategy.

Phew, think that's it. Have a good few weeks and get in touch if you like, I'm quite friendly.

Love and hugs,

Becky x

Ali Lennon – VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities

Dear Council,

This past fortnight some of what I've been working on include:

- Talks – I've been providing talks and information sessions in several areas, across the university, on a number of different topics including Prevent, Welfare Priorities and Examination Preparation.
- Training -Running Two Welfare Officer Training sessions. These were my first two and we'll be looking to improve and enhance the course for next term.
- Prevent – I'm organising another briefing and a campaign pack for CR Presidents and other relevant CR Officers. We'll also be organising and formalising political opposition to the CSTA 2015 in the very near future.
- Sub-Committee for Student Health and Welfare – I've been recently discussing the changes to the Disabled Students Allowance in the Sub-Committee for Student Health and Welfare. We've decided to organise a briefing session on the DSA changes for CR Officers with the help of the Disability Advisory Service.
- Alcohol Awareness and Safety – We're looking to launch a new alcohol awareness and safety workshop for student bar staff, entz officers and welfare officers in TT16. This will be done in coordination with Substance Abuse Support Workers and will be building on the work by the previous Graduate Welfare Officer. I've also been meeting with a number of CR officers to discuss these issues.
- Campaigns – I've been assisting with all sorts of tasks and jobs from the campaigns including helping sort out venues, safety issues, and advertising issues.
- Security Sub-Committee – I followed up on the issues noted by the Cherwell about information security breaches with the university. I was satisfied that appropriate remedial action has been taken.

I've also been assisting the WEO's six PTE with all sorts of tasks and projects as well as answering an obscene amount of emails.

Any questions feel free to email using vpweo@ousu.ox.ac.uk

All the best,

Ali

Lucy Delaney – VP Women

This week I have been continuing the First Respondent training sessions and they have gone extremely well, and I've received some great feedback. I have two more sessions this week, by which time over half of common room welfare and women's officers will have been trained. I will be running more of these sessions next term.

I've been working on a women in leadership event scheduled for 23rd February. This even will be aimed at first and second years and will cover CV writing and leadership skills, with a small amount of time for networking.

I am developing the women's officer resource folder and am working with other liberation campaigns to establish a wider liberation folder.

I have also been working with WomCam and It Happens Here on their respective projects, and have trained up the It Happens Here committee to be able to deliver first respondent training sessions.

Nick Cooper – VP Graduates

Evening, Council! We've made it over halfway through our term of office if defining it in terms of Council meetings (and who defines their life in any other way?) Here's a summary of the last fortnight of my working life:

- **Masters focus groups** – one of my key manifesto pledges was to review the University's taught Masters provision via focus groups, and to report findings back to the University (both centrally and to departments). I have now set some of these focus groups up, and hope to run them in 6th and 7th weeks. I'll let Council know how these went in Trinity Term. Any Masters course reps who'd like to get involved, get in touch!
- **Graduate application fee** – I have received an email from the Registrar, recognising our concerns about this. He stated that he intends to respond in writing this week, and I will report back on any such reply in 7th week. I am also going to be forwarding my letter (signed by 40+ Common Room Presidents), originally sent to the Registrar, to the Vice-Chancellor. I'll let you know if she responds.
- **Graduate accommodation** – contrary to my usual report that I've been arguing with the University about this, a more positive report this week. I attended the City Council's West Area Planning Committee at their discussion of remedial measures for Castle Mill (for those who don't know – big ugly student accommodation block, some local residents want it pulled down, the University voted last year not to do this but to plant some trees, OUSU supports this to save hundreds of student homes – especially for student parents). Other than being berated by local residents for expressing Council's views, it was generally successful with the Council agreeing to the University's proposed plans.
- **International Festival** – we're up to 20 stalls, which is fairly good. I'm now going to sort out the logistics for what will hopefully be a great day on Sat 6th week.
- **Common Room Presidents** – I've met up with more graduate Common Room Presidents (with a view to meeting all new Presidents, and any existing ones I'm yet to meet), and am now ensuring I've emailed all Presidents one on one. I'm now analysing surveys I did last term, to provide Common Rooms with data that will help with rent negotiations and other discussions with their colleges. I also helped Becky out with rent training and Common Room Presidents' training.
- **Committees** – it's been a surprisingly quiet fortnight for these. We had a useful OUSU Trustee Board, and I continued my efforts to improve the graduate student experience by

expressing caution at increased graduate numbers in the Joint Student Number Planning Subcommittee. Luckily, 5th week is looking horrendous.

- **OUSU internal stuff** – As ever, I've been doing governance, met with the new Sabbatical Officers-elect, and ensured my Part Time Executive are well supported. We've also been thinking about the upcoming Higher Education Review, for which we'll need some students to discuss with the Quality Assurance Agency their experience here. More to follow.

See you all in 7th week,
Nick

Cat Jones – VP Access and Academic Affairs

Lecture Recording. Following the exciting announcement in week 3 of Education Committee's endorsement of the use of lecture recording, I have produced a two-page summary of the key arguments and counterarguments that we used. I will be distributing this to course reps and divisional board reps and supporting them to lobby their departments to opt in for the next academic year.

Alternative Prospectus. It is launch week! This week we have distributed 30,000 flyers to over 6,000 schools with little history of sending students to Oxford. It has now been fact checked by JCR Access Reps, and by University Access and Outreach staff. I will be sharing the URL at the next council.

Suspended Status. I have been working closely with the Suspended Status Campaign to conduct a survey of students with first-hand experience of suspension, so far it has received almost 300 responses. We have also sent Freedom Of Information requests to every college and will be comparing the student experience with the stated policies at different colleges. We will be making recommendations to Senior Tutors Committee towards the end of term. We are also in the process of finalising guidance for tutors on how to compassionately guide students through the process of suspension, which is endorsed by the Student Advice Service.

Supporting Common Room Reps. In the last 2 weeks I have hosted an Access Rep Forum and an Academic Rep Forum. I have also attended JCR PresCom and delivered a training session at the Common Room Presidents' Training Day. This is a part of my job that I really enjoy and would encourage any reps who want support with college-level projects that fall within my remit to get in touch ☺

Committees. A big part of my job is representing you on numerous committees. Much of what is discussed is covered by confidentiality agreements but I will continue to list here the meetings I have attended on your behalf since my last report: OUSU Trustee Board; Admissions Committee; Access Targets Working Group; University Council; Qualifications Working Group.

Emily Silcock - VP Charities and Community

Hi council,

It's been a slightly odd couple of weeks in terms of workflow. I took some days off last week and most of the week before was taken up with Jailbreak, so there's only a few things other than that to report. Hoping it's going to settle down a bit now (but that's probably wishful thinking!). Here's what I've been up to:

RAG

Last weekend was Jailbreak which was really successful – one team got the Ethiopia and we've raised over £25k. The nominations for the RAG Charity Ballot have just closed and we had 68 nominations, which is twice as many as last year. We're shortlisting over the next couple of days and then it will be open to voting. We've also interviewed and recruited a great team for next year's RAG ball.

Campaigns

I've started to put in place structure to develop my campaigns into bigger and better groups. We've had the first meeting of an Edible Planting group and I've also (very excitingly) worked out the governance of it's all going to work out.

Environment and sustainability

I'm continuing to support a couple of groups looking at food waste in Oxford. We now have a group leader, so it will be exciting to see where this goes. I've also been looking into piloting a scheme that matches people who are doing dissertations up with social organisations that need research doing. I've also been looking into how OUSU can be more involved in the Carbon Innovation Programme next year.

Training

We've just had the final workshop of Campaigning for Change – and I'm putting together the last details for the Create a Campaign challenge right now! I've also helped Becky deliver Rent Negotiation training, which I hope many of you found useful!

As always, please feel free to get in touch at vpcandc@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

Part-Time Executive Officers

Tom Wadsworth – Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

Over the past two weeks I have mainly worked with SusCam in order to further the goals we have set out. This has mainly been with the policy and social working groups, however I am also currently writing a press release for the campaign which falls under the awareness working group. With the socials side we have planned a social in 5th week which everyone should come to, and we also had a meet up in Wadham with the SAS where people could drop by and ask questions about suspension. The policy side of things has been the busiest and thanks to Cat who has done so much work to help with the SusCam survey which got a huge quantity of responses. We are currently working towards achieving a unified policy for colleges to implement that takes the best aspects of college policies and combines it all.

I have also had my first academic affairs rep meet up where all the CR officers were invited to come and talk about what they plan to do and what me and Cat can do to help them in the process.

Adam Kellett – Access and Admission Officer

This couple of weeks have mainly involved preparation for Wednesday's BME-specific shadowing day with the Afro-Caribbean Society. This will go forward and reported on in the next council. On Tuesday there will be a Target Schools Steering Group, which will evaluate the first shadowing day of term – I will also bring up how better to work with, or make known, other access initiatives.

Hilal Yazan – BME Students Officer

I met with Lucy Delaney, VP Women as well as Farheen Co-Chair of CRAE to discuss the possibilities of working together for the intersection of BME women. We also discussed creating a drive for the creation of more liberation officer roles in college, which I am going to be working on in the coming weeks. We are looking into how we might improve the Race Workshops which were delivered last year so that they are even more effective. I have also attended the CRAE meetings, which have been going well. I'm hoping to make quite a bit more progress in these areas having laid the groundwork, so my next report should be more informative.

Luke Cave – Common Room Support Officer

Hi council! These last two weeks have been on the quieter end for me because of academic work commitments. However, I have been putting together the OUSU Update which I aim to send out by this weekend - it has been written but needs a couple of tweaks before it gets distributed via common room OUSU Reps (or equivalent). My meeting with Becky Howe (OUSU President) and the common room OUSU Reps in third week was successful and proved useful to update the common rooms more informally on what OUSU are up to, and

equally to hear feedback from them. I plan to arrange a second meeting in the coming weeks. Looking forward towards the second half of this term, I am working towards creating and distributing an undergraduate common rooms survey to span several themes in the JCRs - this will hopefully be useful for lobbying and negotiations on the college level. As ever, get in touch if you want to know more about how OUSU can help support your common room.

Yoni Stone – Community Outreach and Charities Officer

Pint for a Pint has recently passed through Catz, Brasenose and Merton which is great. I am back in contact with NHSBT in the hope of doing a joint event. Posted some pics of literal Oxford Donors on the Facebook page so go check that out!

Fairlie Kirkpatrick Baird – Environment and Ethics Officer

Hi Council!

Last week was Go Green Week, in which lots of different environment groups across Oxford coordinated lots of different events. It went quite well, and I advertised the events on the Facebook group we made. We're now hoping to transform the group into a page for people to find out about/advertise general environment groups in Oxford, which I'll be working on this week. I've also been working on the Guide to Being a Sustainable Student, emailing students who are interested in being involved and setting up a meeting for 5th week. Finally, I'm still finalising the Veggie Pledge report, and have started to look into ways of getting bikes for JCRs to try to facilitate cycling for people who can't or don't want to buy a bike themselves.

Bo Zhang – Graduate Academic Affairs Officer

Hi Council, having been elected at the previous council meeting, I'm looking forward to work with the team in making progress on graduate academic life. I'm planning to devote my time to investigate the differences between DTC and non-DTC D.Phil students, in terms of resource availability, funding allocation, population diversity, etc. I will also work together with Nick to identify the status and means to improve current utilization of college advisors, as well as how to improve the quality of master-level courses that are being offered. Please get in touch if you think there are other pressing graduate academic affairs. Thanks.

Gabe Rusk – Graduate International Students' Officer

Dear Council,

First and foremost let me again thank Gregory Johnson, the Green Templeton College MCR, and Lauren McKarus for their support last week. All three were vital in the success of this term's International Drinks Event. We ended up having a full house at GTC. This was a wildly successful and diverse event. I am so very pleased with the feedback and response we received from the international students community.

Second, I will be distributing an informal appeal to MCR Presidents this week to gauge interest in developing more international grad reps and officers.

Third, one of my goals by the completion of term is to find a graduate member for the International Student Campaign committee. Please get in touch if you or your respective peers are interested in the position.

Fourth, a reminder that the Oxford Students Festival is quickly approaching. The International Festival is a vital portion of this event and will take place Saturday, February 27th.

Best regards, Gabe Rusk

Rebecca Kuperberg – Graduate Welfare Officer

Hi Council!

These past two weeks, I have been planning towards two events this term: Grad WelfCom and a workshop for grad students who do emotionally-distressing research and fieldwork. For the latter, I have been working with the Student Advice Service, with some consultation with Counseling, to provide necessary welfare information with students. Looking forward to passing on some firm dates and details in my next report! Feel free to get in touch with any questions.

Kirthi Bellamkonda – Graduates Womens' Officer

Having been recently elected to the position of Graduate Women's Officer, I first plan to gauge the concerns of female students regarding equality in their workplace/lab/classrooms, sorted by department. I hope to be able to send this out by the end of seventh week, after running it past some MCR women's officers and/or Welfare officers for a content check. I welcome any comments or concerns from graduate women or anyone else, and encourage you to send an email.

Katy Haigh – Health and Welfare Officer

Hi Council,

I met with Lucy to discuss encouraging more common rooms to lobby for free/reduced rate sanitary product schemes and will be creating a draft motion to send out to welfare/women's officers in the coming week.

I helped Ali with setting up two welfare officer training sessions; these were well attended and I will now be able to run a couple of the sessions in Trinity in place of Ali.

I also attended a meeting with Ali regarding creating and leading alcohol awareness and safety workshops for entertainment and welfare reps in common rooms. Ali and I will be creating this workshop and intend to host the first session at the end of Hilary term.

All the best, Katy

Meera Sachdeva – International Students’ Officer

This week I met up with the international reps of all the colleges so that we could share our goals and forge a working relationship. We discussed how we could access the contact details of international students to form an international community and concluded that the international reps were going to ask their JCRs to send out an email with a link to a Facebook group of international students (at that college) as well as a form to sign up for a mailing list of international students (at that college). We also discussed how we could increase access to international welfare and concluded that we would try to ensure that every college has at least one international Peer Supporter. I want to look into how we can liaise with Counselling to ensure this happens. We also discussed how we can bring international students to Oxford prior to freshers week and concluded that we would try to encourage colleges to invite them to come on the Saturday morning prior to Freshers week so that they can have two full days of international events and get to know each other before the other Freshers arrived.

Catherine Kelly – LGBTQ Officer

Over the past two weeks I have been working with the LGBTQ Campaign to elect new committee members, including trans rep, and to put together our zine ‘Missing’, which is a collection of writing about queer history in honour of LGBTQ History Month. I am also in the process of planning a launch event for this.

Our speaker event with Queer Strike went extremely well, it was wonderful to meet Freda and Awa, the two women who spoke. They were very happy with the donation that was given to us in OUSU council, and the campaign is hoping we can support Awa in particular with her ongoing fight for asylum.

Dorkina Myrick – Mature Students Officer

Activities Since Last Meeting

I met with Rizwana Rashid from StudentsPlus. We discussed plans for StudentsPlus activities for this term and ways that we can work together to increase cohesion among student groups and/or student representatives who are responsible for the care and welfare of mature students –particularly Colleges with large numbers of graduate students (e.g. MCR Presidents, Green Templeton, Linacre, Harris Manchester). Rizwana also updated me on plans for a brunch in March, along with one other social before the end of the term. I suggested an activity for St. Patrick’s Day, as well.

Rizwana expressed interest in StudentsPlus participation in the OUSU Student Festival at the end of February. This week, I meet with StudentsPlus to review preparations for the Student Festival and offer assistance to the group in planning the social events in March.

I expressed interest in broader engagement with MCRs to the social events chair at my MCR. I

also had an initial meeting with Joe from the Scrutiny Committee to review manifesto goals and initial progress.

My other meeting this last fortnight was that of the Executive Council last week.

Please feel free to e-mail me at maturestudents@ousu.ox.ac.uk with questions, concerns, or comments.

Best,
Dorkina Myrick

Ronak Patel – Disabled Students’ Officer

Over the last two weeks I’ve been working with Ali (VP welfare equal opps) on firstly, drafting a response to the university on the proposal to charge £100 for special learning difficulty diagnostic tests, pushing for clarification on hardship funds and the importance of having money set aside for it. We also are starting to plan a workshop for people in Oxford Student Disability Community and disability reps on the Disabled Students’ Allowance cuts and their possible effect on students.

I’ve also been reaching out to college reps and have started drafting a possible list of questions that could be used (with the help of work from the student advice service and Lucy, VP Women) to form an accessibility checklist for college reps to assess their colleges on as well as a guide college reps could use in setting up focus groups for feedback from students with disabilities, something I intend to push for this and next term.

Holly Roy – Student Parents and Carers’ Officer

Main points:

- Issues relating to maternity leave
- Babysitting
- Student parents social

Maternity leave

An important issue that we are aiming to raise with the University this year, carrying on from Sam’s work, is that not all PhD funding bodies offer maternity leave for pregnant students. This is an important inequality between students attending Oxford and also between men and women enrolled in graduate courses. I have discussed this with Nick Cooper and Ard Louis, and we are planning to take this forward in various ways, including via the hardship meeting coming up soon.

Babysitting

We are planning to make a list of students who would like to babysit and to make this available to the student parents mailing list. Similar systems currently operate at a college level

(e.g. Green Templeton College) but it is something that would be useful to have at a University level.

Student Parents Social

We had a student parents social on Saturday morning at the natural history museum. This was a lovely occasion which a few families attended. It was a great chance to get to know some student parents and their children and talk about how things are going.

OUSU Campaigns

Target Schools

This term has seen a period of change for Target Schools. Benjamin Peacock (St. Hugh's College) & Adam Kellett (Hertford College) have taken the reigns as Co-Chairs, with a Committee of 22 steadily settling into their roles.

The main programme news manifests itself in our Shadowing Days. The first went smoothly on the 9th of February (4th Week), with shadowing days on the 17th & 25th of February and 4th of March to come. The shadowing day on the 17th will see partnership with ACS (The African Caribbean Society) to host a BME shadowing day for 25 students.

Otherwise, work for the Target Schools Roadshow is ongoing. Funding has been received from St. Hugh's College JCR to run a Roadshow in Kent, while negotiations for the final parts of funding are ongoing. The second roadshow looks as if it will be taking place in South Yorkshire, in partnership with Magdalen College. Funding arrangements for this Roadshow are to be agreed, with contingency given from the Target Schools Budget.

The only other exciting news is that we should soon be launching our NEW WEBSITE, something that has been long overdue and will be a great progression.