



reports to council 5th week michaelmas term 2002

Will Straw President

Common Rooms: I have visited St. Hilda's, St. Catz, Jesus, Brasenose and Keble since the last Council. It has been striking to see the differences in opinion and approach between Common Rooms. Questioning has focused on international motions almost everywhere. However, the women of St. Hilda's were keen to talk about the motion on the review of the structures of female representation within the Student Union and on *ultra vires* charities law. Since concerns were raised over the low level of campaigning on UV I have sent letters to Dr Evan Harris MP, Rt Hon Andrew Smith MP and Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP reiterating OUSU's policy.

Other Student Leaders: I have met with a delegation from the Indian Youth Congress including its leader. We spent an hour discussing Oxford and OUSU's structures. The delegation also attended a meeting of the Presidents' Committee.

CSV: Following a meeting with the University Surveyor and Ian Bridges of Frankham Consultancy Ltd, I am satisfied that the move to Thomas Hull House will take place on budget and, if disaster free, on time.

F&F: The Finance and Funding Campaign has taken up the vast majority of my time. The latest reports indicate that fees of £3,000 to £4,000 are most likely. This may seem like a reduction from the £10,500 that was being quoted a month ago, but is still £3,000 to £4,000 too much. It is imperative that we keep up our campaign and everybody in the University has a responsibility to work on this.

I have been impressed with the energy of the co-chairs. Together we have sent a resource pack to JCR Presidents containing a draft JCR motion, a draft letter to MPs, and a copy of the Wadham Governing Body and SU joint statement. OUSU Reps have received a mail-out with posters, sign up sheets and details about the NUS National March on Wednesday, 4th December (8th Week) for which OUSU will provide cheap coaches. We are also undertaking a mail-shot to every senior member of Oxford University outlining our opposition to top-up fees and asking them to sign a statement in opposition to top-up fees. Further copies of these resources are available to all students on request. Following a decision by the Finance and Funding Campaign on Tuesday, Oxford will be undertaking a similar alumni campaign to that in Cambridge which has resulted in a total rethink of Cambridge University's policy on top-up fees. I hope the same can be achieved in Oxford.

Oxford Union: I gave a paper speech at the Oxford Union for the first time. This was against a motion entitled: "This House would accept Higher Fees as the price for safeguarding Oxford's international future." The opposition won by 199 to 129. The experience was rewarding and I was pleased to have been given the opportunity.

Environment: I am continuing my attempts to find a cheap and reliable recycler for OUSU's waste. I hope that Materials Recovery Ltd will begin collection in the next fortnight.

College Inequality: I have been working closely with Ryan McGhee (JCR President, Pembroke) and the Vice President (Welfare) to compile a questionnaire on facilities, rents and charges in colleges to update that section of the report.

NUS: I have been working closely with Exec member, Edd Southerden (Somerville), who is producing a report on Oxford's relationship with the NUS specifically the NUS's service provision. We have met with Ruth Moor, the NUS Regional Officer for our region, and hope to help affiliated colleges receive better value for money from the National Union.

Entz: OUSU's night at The Bridge on Thursdays continues to be popular and is still raising OUSU's reputation as a credible entz provider in Oxford. The Zodiac night on Friday of 8th Week will be from 10.30pm to 2am. Tickets will initially be sold through entz reps.

Mandates: I have written to the Vice-Chancellor twice. First, to outline our policy on sub fusc passed at the last Council meeting. Second, to demand that he makes his position on top-up fees explicit. I await his reply on both matters.

Website: I have continued to update the website and am please to report that we are nearing 100,000 visits.

Election: I have been involved in the statutory annual elections in my capacity as a member of Elections Committee. This work includes chairing hustings, observing the interviews of candidates with the student press, and helping out the RO.

Melanie Marshall

V-P (Women)

Apart from the usual general duties, elections have inevitably diverted some of my attention during the past fortnight, with close of nominations and the hustings schedule being particular calls on my time.

Childcare

I have had lots of childcare queries which is very positive because it means that word about OUSU and what it can offer is getting around. I also attended a very successful meeting of the university's Advisory Panel on Childcare, at which plans for the new university nursery were discussed (due to open MT03), though the provision is still seriously inadequate. The Panel also gladly approved funds for me to hold a student parent social event on a termly rather than yearly basis. Hurrah.

Harassment

I attended the second half of my training as a university harassment adviser last week. This extremely valuable session was led by a barrister specialising in employment law and helped clarify a great many issues. It would obviously have been preferable to have had this training prior to taking up office, however, and perhaps this possibility could be looked into for next year.

Nightbus

Continues an administrative menace, as a further expensive repair was needed last week. The collation of data is now complete, however, and the BM and I are in discussion about how the funding situation (which, by way of reassurance, is by no means parlous) can best be taken forward. Many thanks to Katherine for her help on this.

Women's Campaign

Wom Cam is holding an event on the Friday 6th week (22nd Nov) in St John's, exploring our attitudes to pornography, an issue which sharply divides the women's movement. There will be a viewing, some academic readings and a discussion. All women welcome. We are also planning an Introduction to Women's Campaign lunch for 7th week (somewhat late!), to which all women with questions about what we are and what we do, especially freshers, are encouraged to come. I was delighted by the attendance at Wom Cam this week and the enthusiasm of attendees for bringing new matters from their colleges to the campaign's attention. Long may it continue.

I attended two excellent women's lunches last week, at Balliol and St John's. The JCR Women's officer at St John's kindly invited me to speak to the lunch which was a valuable opportunity. I am always pleased to be offered opportunities to meet women students and hear about any issues of concern to them, so please do ask me along to things; thanks to Georgia and Hardip for doing so. I am greatly looking forward to the St John's women's dinner tonight.

Ethics

The report on Esso/ExxonMobil will come to 7th week council. It has been an extremely interesting exercise, which will be finalised at an extraordinary meeting on Wed of 6th at 2pm. All welcome.

Women's Open Day

This will probably be held at St Hilda's as in the last two years. My bid for University money has been submitted, and I expect it to be successful. Additionally, I bid for funding for a new

Graduate Women's Open Day which I hope my successor will be able to hold next autumn. I am eager to push this initiative through, and in the event of this bid being turned down will investigate different avenues of funding to address what I believe to be an extremely important, and neglected, access issue. The university Committee for Diversity and Equal Opportunity assure me that gender-based graduate admissions data will be forthcoming for the first time next year, and not before time.

Promoting Choice

The *Unplanned Pregnancy: Your Options* booklet is now available from me and I will be sending copies to CR women's officers as well.

I am looking for co-chairs to relaunch this campaign, which promotes education and discussion on all issues surrounding unplanned pregnancy, a major welfare issue in the university. Email women@ousu.org for more information.

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| Andy Garlick | V-P (Graduates) |
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In terms of representation the past two weeks have been particularly busy. I have attended the termly meeting for Common Room Presidents with the Proctors and Assessor where the issue of the graduate student-supervisor relationship questionnaire was discussed. I later presented this to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and am awaiting comments from the Senior Proctor and the Pro VC before the questionnaire is circulated. I am very grateful to the Common Rooms who have agreed to distribute the survey to their members and should still like to hear from any further colleges wishing to take part. I have also sat on the Advisory Panel for Childcare, the Tutor for Graduates Committee, from which I will make an oral report to Postgraduate Assembly next week. I am pleased to report that I will be sitting on the newly formed Graduate Panel of the Education Policy and Standards Committee which will be a major steering force on graduate issues over the coming year. The overwhelming priority is currently graduate admissions, which is somewhat chaotic at present and in serious need of review. Hopefully the planned student records system will in part contribute to resolving this issue and the sabbaticals have been consulted for input into this system. I attended University Council, a focus group of enhancement of the student learning experience, and the Committee for Management of the Language Centre, the majority uptake of which is from graduate students. I have also attended the Committee for Diversity and Equal Opportunities and sat on the Divisional Board for Life and Environmental Sciences in addition to my regular meetings of Exec etc. Thus a large portion of my time has been devoted to Committee meetings.

I am pleased to report that all of the divisional board representative posts have now been filled except for the Medical Sciences Board and I am still seeking a graduate reading either an MSc or DPhil in medicine to fill that post. It was disappointing that no candidates have stood for the post of VP (Graduates) or for either of the Graduate Executive Officers for next year. I must remain hopeful that candidates will come forward for Grad Exec at Postgraduate Assembly and that someone will run in the by-election for VP (Graduates) next term.

The mature students survey has not advanced significantly since last Council and I am awaiting input from mature student representatives. I am also still waiting for the production of a definitive list of mature students in Oxford from the University Records Dept but this is proving a longer process than anticipated.

The international students committee has expanded its number, and is working towards the production of an international students handbook. It has also hosted a drinks party this week. I was unable to attend the last meeting however due to a clash with Elections Committee of which I am member.

The Graduate Guide 2003 is still in the production line, but I now have the final lists for distribution and remain confident that this will be distributed within this term, and am liaising with the VP (Finance) on this matter. OUSU has had a very heavy workload this year in terms of publications and the order of publication will inevitably vary from year to year.

The Graduate Night at Mood has been growing in popularity and finally made a small profit this week, and congratulations should be conveyed to the Night Promoter, David Wahl of St Catherine's College for the hours he has invested in producing the night.

The remainder of my time over the past two weeks has as ever been consumed by general administration and casework. May I take this opportunity to remind all graduates that Postgraduate Assembly is next 8pm Tuesday of 6th week in the Nissan Lecture Theatre of St Antony's College and all graduates are encouraged to attend.

It's been a busy couple of weeks. In terms of Academic Affairs, I attended Education Policy and Standards Committee last Friday, in which it was decided that the new Undergraduate Panel which I'll be sitting on will be discussing stint reform. I have also got the approval of EPSC for the Undergraduate Panel to discuss study skills provision and the Student Charter in Hilary and Trinity next year, so that's very positive. I have also attended the Committee for the Management of the Language Centre.

I've now started to get the names of UJCC chairs and have created a new e-mail list for JCC Reps. If you are a JCC rep and would like to subscribe, you can do so by sending an e-mail to majordomo@maillist.ox.ac.uk, with 'subscribe jccreps' in the body text. AcAff Committee is hoping to hold a forum for JCC Reps, either later this term or early next term. This e-mail list should also provide very useful in monitoring the extent of stint reform and in supporting JCCs if they are opposed to any changes, and also in lobbying faculties to include charters and minimum teaching provisions in subject handbooks. Academic Affairs Committee had its second meeting of term on Tuesday – this was again well attended. I have also written to Dr David Robertson, chair of Senior Tutors' Committee to ask for undergraduate representation on the various academic committees in Conference of Colleges, but I'm yet to hear back from him. Good news regarding the student charter – a model motion has been sent out to JCRs, and quite a few are taking it up – Wadham, Pembroke and Hilda's already had policy in favour of it, but now St Anne's and Christ Church JCRs have passed it and are taking it to their governing bodies. If a motion hasn't been put to your JCR, and you would like a model motion, please get in touch. The Writing Workshops are increasingly well attended – many thanks to those of you who've helped to publicise them in colleges.

I have written to Charles Clarke, firstly condemning cuts in higher education funding, but also criticising the inappropriate comments he made in the Observer last weekend criticising teachers in the maintained sector for not encouraging enough applicants – I also wrote a letter to the paper. Target Schools had a social in 4th week, which was well attended. Colleges and venues for next year's open days and regional conferences are currently being confirmed. Representatives from Disability Action came along to the last TS meeting, and hopefully there will be more collaboration over the next year in attracting applicants with disabilities. I have spent time preparing the bid for next year's TS funding from the university – I'll also be putting in a bid for additional money from the HEFCE Widening Participation fund in the next couple of weeks. I've also spent time with the Admissions Office working on the details of our joint scheme to have interviewees met at the rail station when they come up to Oxford by undergraduates – this will definitely be going ahead now. The Target Schools handbook is now in the process of being rewritten for 2002-2003.