

# OUSU

## reports to council

*1st week Michaelmas 2008*

**Lewis Iwu**

**President**

Its election week and I'm sure you're all as excited as we are here on the executive. Please encourage as many people to vote as possible. I would like to thank the RO, the DRO's and the elections committee for their hard work so far.

### **Central Student Centre Working Group**

I plan to hold the first meeting of this committee in 7<sup>th</sup> week and will write to those who expressed an interest in getting involved. If anyone is still interested in joining this please get in touch with me at [president@ousu.org](mailto:president@ousu.org).

### **NUS Extraordinary Conference**

I was part of a delegation that attended this conference that was held in Wolverhampton. This Student Union supported the proposed changes which included the creation of a board of trustees and the requirement of cross campus ballots for main conference. The proposals went through overwhelmingly, passing the 2/3 requirements. The NUS is the body that negotiates with the government on behalf of the University as well as providing student unions with important resources it therefore in OUSU's direct interests to ensure that

**Rosanna McBeath**

**V-P(Welfare and Equal Opportunities)**

Summer has been crazy. Handover was absolutely packed! And then after two weeks we were left alone to try and find our feet! I think we are getting there, and I'm looking forward to the term ahead.

### **Survival Guide**

This was my large summer project. The old edition was out of date, and in need of a redo to make it more user-friendly. The final result is now A4 instead of the previous A5, which will hopefully mean that more students pick it up and read it! It is full with information on a wide range of topics, from welfare provisions within the University and ones outside of the University, to accommodation, and academics. It is hoped that it will provide as a starting point for students who are looking for support on various topics as well as a guide to where to find further information. The guide was published and one was handed out to every student that attended Freshers' Fair. There are plenty more copies available, so please let me know if you would like copies of the new edition for either yourself or your common rooms.

### **SAS and Student Advisor**

We have been very busy with casework this summer. We have been continuing on with the great system left in place by my amazing predecessor Louise. We have also gained a new member on the SAS, Lisa our new Student Advisor. Lisa joined at the end of August and will hopefully provide continuity among sab teams. She is in the office three days a week and will be providing information and support to Students. All information requests are being diverted to Lisa. She will also be acting as a primary point of contact to the SAS, making sure cases are going to the correct member of the team. As well as information and advice, she will also be acting in an administrative manner to make sure the members of the team are keeping up to date case notes as well as looking at our systems as a whole. The email address [advice@ousu.org](mailto:advice@ousu.org) has been transferred to Lisa and we are encouraging people to email [advice@ousu.org](mailto:advice@ousu.org) about anything SAS related.

I have also been looking at implementing the recommendations of the SAS review, and speaking with people to sit on the SAS management board. This has been more complicated than we originally thought, but we will hopefully have all of the problems sorted out soon and a management board set up.

### **Common Room Officers**

I am holding a Welfare Training Day next Saturday for all JCR and MCR reps with welfare responsibilities. I am looking to expand these training days to include ones for equal opportunity common room officer as well as listening skills training for presidents as I think it is important that they are able to support a student who may come to them for help.

Welfare officer meetings will take place every Wednesday, alternating weeks between JCR and MCR reps in recognition of the differing aspects relating to the roles.

All welfare officers receive weekly emails with welfare news, advice and events. I have also been continuing to use the mailing lists for other equal opportunity officers set up by Louise.

### **Students with Disabilities Campaign**

I am trying to restart the Students with Disabilities campaign, as it has been dormant for some time now. We had a sign up sheet at Freshers' Fair, where we got quite a lot of interest. I am going to be emailing everyone on it in the hopes of finding two co-chairs.

### **New Services**

Over the summer I have been meeting with a number of people in the community to talk about new services being offered to students. The Mill, which is part of Oxfordshire Mind, is offering a new students night on Tuesdays, called Headspace. This is open for anyone, it is looking to provide a space for students where they can relax away from the sometimes stressful university environment. If you would like more information on it, please send me an email.

I also met with members of the Oxfordshire PCT about a new sexual health clinic that has opened up in Oxford in conjunction with the Terrence Higgins Trust. The Young and Free clinic is open on Saturdays, from 12.30-2.30pm, for people under the age of 25.

I also met with the new coordinators of OSS (Oxford Student Safety). OSS is a student run programme, which provides a safe alternative to walking home alone after dark for members of the university. They provide a volunteer service to accompany students who feel unsafe walking home at night. They are currently looking for volunteers. If you are interested, please email [ossoxu@gmail.com](mailto:ossoxu@gmail.com)

### **Freshers' Week**

After 3 months of hard work it was fantastic to have students back and remember what all the work was for! I did many welfare talks around the university, and met a great number of welfare officers personally. At Freshers' Fair I manned the general OUSU stall at the Freshers' Fair, and was privileged to welcome thousands of freshers during the course of the week.

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Please feel free to ask any questions about the above, or any other aspect of the work I do to support students. Email me at [welfare@ousu.org](mailto:welfare@ousu.org) or phone me on (2)88261.

Thanks for reading this!

Welfare love!

**Paul Dwyer**

**V-P (Access and Academic Affairs)**

It's funny that summer as a student always disappeared in blur of lie-ins and catching up with friends (with the odd bit of money making in between), while summer as a sab was spent waiting for term to kick off again, each hour ticking by far too slowly, while we wait in anticipation for term to come around once more.

That being said, after the last two weeks, I'm just about ready for another holiday I think!

Despite my protestations at how boring the summer vacation was, it actually offered me long enough to settle (/work out what it is I'm supposed to be doing!) into my role as Vice-President (Access and Academic Affairs), as well as to plan for the months ahead.

The past few months have been spent working in preparation for the term ahead, and here are just some of the things that I am hoping to get off the ground in the term ahead...

- Central study skills workshops open for all first year students.

Basically, the study skills provision within the colleges is a little patchy at the minute, with some colleges offering a comprehensive programme aimed at helping first year students ease their way into university life. There will be a session in 2nd week, and another in 3rd week, aimed at humanities and scientists respectively. The idea is that a few tutors will come and talk to students about certain facets of university life, before current students offer up their own experiences.

- Helping to formalise the Target Schools campaign.

Last year James did a fantastic job in getting the Target Schools campaign up and running again, and the volunteers have been busy all summer visiting schools and 'busting myths'. This term we will be working to cement the relationship of the campaign with OUSU, as well as to expand into new schemes, such as shadowing and interview training.

- Tuition Fees working group

Pending the passage of the motion I have put forward to council, I hope to be working on formulating a clear policy regarding tuition fees, which will be able to guide us through the upcoming review.

- Preparing for the Institutional Audit

Next year, Oxford is being 'inspected' by the Quality Assurance Alliance (QAA), who will be looking into a number of areas. Part of the process will involve meeting with students, and OUSU submitting a written document that outlines our take on the university. James did much of the groundwork last year, but I have been working on the document for most of the summer, making sure that it is ready for submission at the beginning of December.

- Revitalising the OUSU Academic and Access committees.

I will also be working this term to make sure that colleges can feed properly into the mechanisms at OUSU. To this end I will be holding meetings with college access reps and academic affairs reps to offer them support from OUSU, as well as to provide a forum for them to share worries/instances of best practice.

Committee meetings with the university are beginning to get off the ground now that term is underway, and I shall make sure to include any important issues that will be affecting students in future reports. The only thing that is worth mentioning now is that the university lost their appeal concerning planning permission for the Osney Mead depository, and so will be looking at alternative proposals in the upcoming weeks. I have tried to keep my report as brief and concise as possible, so as not to bore people too much!

I would also like to take the opportunity that this free forum offers me to thank my predecessor, James Lamming. Not only did he give me a comprehensive handover (and a willing ear over the summer when I broke things!), but he has set an extremely high standard for me to match when it comes to this role. I will have to work hard to match his achievements of the past year, but it is something that I hope will be within my capabilities! (And if not, then blame Jack, as it'll probably be his fault somehow)

<b>Rachel Cummings</b>	<b>V-P (Women)</b>
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Welcome back to Oxford! And more importantly, to OUSU Council. Feel free to email me if you want any more info about the things below: [women@ousu.org](mailto:women@ousu.org).

#### Guides

The summer was mostly taken up with rewriting the Student Parent Handbook and the Unplanned Pregnancy Guide. These are now available on the website, and I can provide copies to individuals who want one, or common room officers who'd like a bundle (just email me). Both are fully updated and expanded with lots of useful information about funding, nurseries, new sexual health clinics etc. Thanks very much to Jenny Huxley and Helen Bagshaw for their help.

#### Enough

The co-ordinators of Enough met during the summer and we decided to put together some materials to use during sessions. We now have extracts from books dealing with different aspects of disordered eating, group guidelines and information about Beat, the eating disorders charity. We've been trying to push the publicity of Enough, circulating messages to common rooms, college nurses and doctors, welfare and women's officers. Please publicise it in your colleges. Our first meeting on Tuesday was successful; it should be a really good term for the group.

#### Student Parents

With the NUS running a big campaign on student parents this academic year, it's an area I'm also focussing on. Following council's Trinity mandate a Student Parent Orientation has been organised for Friday 24th October at Somerville College, with the help of the University Equalities and Diversity Unit. Speakers will include someone from the County Council, an Oxfordshire Children's Information Service representative, the University Childcare Officer and myself. The event will run from 10:30am-12:30pm, please tell any student parents you know about the event, their partners and children are very welcome.

Bi-weekly socials for student parents are also starting this term. 'Tea and Toys' is going to be held on Sundays at the beginning of odd weeks (starting Oct 26th) from 3-5pm. One of the University Nurseries- Bradmore Road- have kindly agreed to let us use their premises for the meeting. Again, please tell any student parents you know, meet, vaguely hear of...

I also held a student parent picnic over the summer, which had 23 confirmed attendees. Despite the rain, it was a great event; provoked by a suggestion from the student parent maillist that there should be meetings which provided for the vast age-range of children.

#### Women's Access

The women's open day in June went well. I had a follow-up meeting with Lucy Hawkins, the Merton/St Johns access officer who helped Hannah Roe to organise the day. We agreed to go down a slightly different path for the next women's access event, inviting year 12s as well as year 13s and running separate events for each age group. Sadly, Lucy Hawkins has now left her job, but instead I'm meeting with Anne-Marie Canning, Univ's access officer, so the plans should soon be in place.

#### Audit

Rosanna and I are working on the equal opportunities section of the OUSU report for the Quality Assurance Audit of the University. We sent out a questionnaire to all students over the summer and got around 500 responses. Questions were asked about LGBTQ provision, gender and race sensitivity and mature students, so we'll be compiling the corresponding sections over the coming term.

#### Study Skills

I wanted to start addressing the gender finals gap earlier in courses so am extending the very helpful program of pre-Finals forums to run similar sessions at the beginning of one's time at Oxford. I'm organising two women-only study skills sessions this term, to complement Paul's mixed sessions in 2nd and 3rd week. Sixth week will see a humanities session on Tuesday 18th Nov (3:15-4:30pm) and a science one on Wednesday 19th (2:30-3:30pm), both to be held in exam schools. I have ten confirmed female tutors between the two sessions, so they should be good.

#### The Oxford Union and Debating

Working with us on Gender Equality Week, I've had a couple of meetings with the Union and we're cooperating this term to get more women involved in the society. On Sunday at the beginning 4th week, the Union will be holding a women-only workshop on getting involved. I'm also discussing a women's only debating competition with the chair of the Debate Select Committee, all of whom are very enthusiastic to work on the issue. Myself and a female Union debater are also running a workshop for women about running in all different types of elections on Tuesday 4th week.

#### Women's Officer Dinner

Shell sponsored a dinner for 28 women's officers on Thursday 16th. Held at the Vaults and Gardens, it was a great success.

#### WomCam and Gender Equality Week

WomCam had a fantastic start to the term with a great turnout to our Cake and Wine freshers' event. We have lots planned for this term including a feminist reading group, a Reclaim the Night March, women in film events and talks for example on 'Gender, Race and Class'. Gender Equality Week is happening in 3rd week, it's going to be \*wonderful\* and is being very ably organised by Kat Wall. We have about 3 events every day, working with groups such as Oxfam, Amnesty, OxWip, the political societies and the Union.

#### External links- FEST, OxWIP, NUS, CUSU, Brookes

I met up with committee members of FEST, other national women's officers, the NUS Women's Officer and Cambridge's women's officer. We've added FEST, OxWIP and Atalantas events to the Women's Calendar, available on the OUSU website. If you want any events added, contact me. I've also met up with the Brookes sab who runs the Safety Bus and we're doing a big push to get more Ox Uni volunteers and users. We had a really good response to our stall at Freshers' Fair and now have our first volunteers training at Brookes. Please promote this to your common rooms: the number's 07714445050, email me if you want any more info.

**Kaushal Vidyarthee**

**V-P (Graduates)**

Welcome back to Michaelmas Term- I hope you all had a great summers! Here is an outline of some of the main things I have been doing over the summer.

#### University Committees

During handover I met all the key people I will be working with this year. I also went through various committee reports and papers on projects under implementation. I have been attending large numbers of University committee meetings, particularly –Education committee, Graduation Admission Committee, Graduate Fees and Funding Committee, Health and welfare committee, not to forget the University Council. As the graduate admission process for the academic year 2009 has become online and the student funding service system is being modelled as the centralised funding database, I worked with these committees to support the smooth implementation of these projects from the perspective of prospective as well as current graduate and international students. I also met Prof. Nick Brown, the chair of the graduate committee of

the conference of colleges, to discuss the issues related to college advisor and quality of services provided by the colleges to students and Dr Heather Bell, the head of the International Strategy, to see what Oxford is planning to improve the international students' experience. I attended the annual administration divisional conference to understand the current projects by the University and was consulted at many points by the student administration office for projects such as the online registration, new graduate prospectus and graduate finance guide. Lewis, Paul and I also attended the annual oration by the Vice-Chancellor to the congregation.

#### Institutional Audit and Student Written Submission (SWS)

As this year the University is being audited by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), OUSU is expected to submit the Student Written Submission (SWS). I have been working on the graduate, international and mature students' sections of the SWS from the point Ingrid Frater(my predecessor) had left. Paul, Lewis and I have been attending many meeting with the Institutional Audit Management Board members over the summer.

#### External Organisations (Aldwych Group, NPC, CUSU and Brookes Student Union)

I have attended some of the national conference and meetings, hoping to work with student union officers across the country- these include the National Postgraduate Committee (NPC) annual conference at the Open University and the Aldwych Group (group of student unions of the Russel Group Institutions) meeting at Bristol. I also joined rest of the sabbatical officers for meeting with officers at the Cambridge University Student Union (CUSU) and the Oxford Brookes Student Union to exchange ideas and share best practices.

#### International Students' Campaign and Handbook

The International Students' Campaign is going good. I am very delighted to report that the campaign published first ever – 'Oxford International Students' Handbook' ([www.handbook.oxfordisc.com](http://www.handbook.oxfordisc.com)). The handbooks have been distributed to the freshers through their common rooms. The campaign also had a stall at the freshers' fair. I will be meeting the campaign committee next week to discuss various projects and plans.

#### Mature Students' Campaign

Sarah Hutchinson( Graduate Welfare Officer) and I are trying to set up the Mature Students' Campaign, which will represent the needs and interests of mature students across the University. We are currently looking for committee members to help establish the campaign, decide what the campaign should do, and adopt a constitution. In the meantime, we are holding some social events at the start of term: 5-6.30 on Thursday of 1st Week in the Stapledon Room in Exeter College, and 5-6 at Harris Manchester College on Tuesday of 3rd week.

#### Groupware Launch Project Consultation

I attended workshops, panel meetings and launch event organised by the Groupware Project Board (i.e. mainly members from the OUCS and ODIT and PRAC-ICT Sub committee). The University has planned to replace the Herald based email system to the Microsoft Exchange one by the summer of 2009. The Groupware project aims to provide a new collaborative working environment for email, managing calendars, sharing documents and many more things.

#### Common Rooms Outreach : MCR Introduction Talk & the PresCom Meet

I tried to meet with MCR Presidents and their committee in their common rooms. Since the start of the freshers' week I have visited 19 MCRs and gave introductory talk to the freshers about the OUSU. I have been working on organising the first MCR PresCom meeting of this academic year. It will be held at the LMH on 28th October, Tuesday of third week. I am looking forward to meet many of you there.

#### Publications & OUSU Website

I worked on the graduate sections of the Freshers' Guide, Oxford Handbook and the Survival Guide. I also updates most of the sections of the OUSU website relating to graduates, international and mature students.

#### Student Advice Service (SAS)

I had a lots of caseworks and information requests over the summer. I am working with the Student Advisor for creation of an information bank for general information requests.

#### Graduate International Students' Orientation Day & Freshers' Fair

Lewis and I had a presentation and question-answer session about OUSU and the graduate life at the Graduate International Students' Orientation Day organised by the International Office. It was attended by more than 700 new graduate international students. Rosanna and Rachel helped for the undergraduate international students' orientation day. It was very great to meet so many new students personally at the fair. There I manned the OUSU stall and coordinated the international and mature students' campaign stalls.

**Jack Wellby**

**V-P (Charities & Community)**

Welcome back everyone to the first council of the new academic year. I'm your VP (C&C) this year so it's my job to get everyone in the university involved in doing some good. It's customary to say how strange the Summer has been with no students around but to be honest it has been great – no one to disturb our plans for world domination. In all seriousness though I was apprehensive when beginning in 9th week and was quite frankly terrified that all the rumours of OUSU geekiness were true. I have to say that with the exception of Paul (who uses the constitution as his pillow) the team is fantastic and I think we are going to have a really good year. I must also thank Claire for all her hard work last year and her help in getting me to settle into this role. Apologies for this length and I'm sure I've forgotten lots.

Charities:

\* I've been working closely with presidents from a wide range of student run/student led charities in Oxford. The idea is to bring the societies together both socially and actively as there is much to learn from each other. We're encouraging joint events to raise awareness for similar issues and raise funds for the charities.

\* I've worked with my full-time counterparts at Jacari (Mona – based in office in OUSU) and Keen (Rhian) who are both brilliant.

\* I have changed the nomination procedure for the choosing of RAG charities so that we support more local / student led projects in preference to the very large national charities. I have produced a document detailing how RAG will choose its charities and this is to be reviewed at the end of the year.

\* I had an excellent meeting with the charities/RAG reps on Monday. They seem really good this year.

\* Visited Oxfordshire Mind on Cowley Road.

\* I've been in contact with Tom Haynes and we have exciting plans for this year...watch this space.

RAG:

RAG has been a major focus for me over the summer as stated in my manifesto. RAG was the reason I ran for the job so I've been very active over the summer. Here is a brief summary of what's been sorted – please ask me about any of them if you are interested –

\* I sent out 15 cheques of around £700 to the charities supported last year – well done to that committee but we can do better.

\* I attended the RAG conference in Warwick early in September and learnt a huge amount about how we can improve RAG in Oxford and raise huge sums for charity. As a result of the conference I...

o Over-hauled the charity nomination procedure.

o Have decided that we'll elect a committee in 3rd week for 2 terms then move when the election will take place to late in Hillary term.

o Produced a comprehensive RAG reps guide which has gone down well.

o Learnt about a wide range of events we can run this year...

\* We'll be choosing our 10 charities for the year on Monday and the deadline for nominations is midnight tonight (Friday)

\* I secured sponsorship of over £2000 from Accenture to help with promotional and set-up costs.

\* RAG has purchased a large set of casino equipment available for hire to common rooms / balls / large events in Oxford for a cheap rate which is donated to RAG.

\* I'll be training croupiers to run the games and volunteer for free at the events.

\* I created a term-card which was distributed at Freshers' Fair and we still have lots left so if you'd like some for your common rooms let me know. We also have 20 lovely red RAG t-shirts too.

\* As a promotional gimmick I purchased a lot of 'charity bugs' which advertise the RAG website – [www.oxfordRAG.co.uk](http://www.oxfordRAG.co.uk).

\* I have continually updated the website and it's pretty good now. We're moving the hosting of the website over to OUSU to cut costs.

\* We've got a range of events planned for the term from 'Wear it Pink' to RAIDS and the big one which is 'Oxford's Got Talent'. Please ensure your college takes part by running an internal talent show to choose your competitors.

\* We had a successful Freshers' Fair with amazing volunteers helping gather and type up over 600 names – many thanks to them.

Environment and Ethics:

It's be great getting to know Dan Lowe (part time exec) and working with him. We must congratulate him on the handbook which is excellent and I've had very positive feedback about it.

- \* I attended the 1st E&E meeting on Monday and an exec meeting before that to get to know everyone.
- \* Dan has put together a survey for the colleges regarding environmental issues.
- \* I'm writing an article about climate change for next weeks' Cherwell.
- \* We have lots of freepost bags which people can send old mobile phones and print cartridges and raise £1 for OUSU each time!

OxHub:

- \* The Oxford Hub are an organisation set up to connect students with causes. The VP (C&C) is a trustee of OxHub and works closely with them to get students volunteering.
- \* This year they have 2 paid staff coordinating volunteering opportunities and placing volunteers. It is my aim to formalise a relationship with OxHub so that OUSU can work in partnership with them.
- \* They also work closely with OH:CV

Community/University:

- \* I have attended 4 local council meetings and 1 full council meeting. Thus I have built some contacts in different areas in Oxford so that if (when) issues (positive or negative) come up regarding student involvement in the community I hope to be their first port of call.
- \* I met with Richard Jarman and we also had a more general 'community' meeting where Richard is trying to draw together all that Oxford does in its wider community.
- \* Met with Elizabeth Crawford – head of domestic bursars committee.
- \* I met with Leyla Okai who is active in encouraging students to volunteer in the university.
- \* Coordinating the Oxford University Yearbook – please forward my emails to students.
- \* Date for the Alternative Careers fair (NB: from this point on to be know as \*\* Beyond Profit: The ethical and community careers fair \*\* ) is set for 14th February 2009.

General OUSU stuff:

- \* I have been put in (temporary) charge of the OUSU website – please direct suggestions / comments / ideas/ criticisms etc to me. I hope it's greatly improved over the summer – take a look.
- \* Rewritten articles for the Handbook and Freshers' Guide.
- \* Done timing of council report – presented today.
- \* Lots of heavy lifting (that wasn't in the job description) but I warn you don't challenge a sab to an arm wrestle at the moment...unless it's Lewis.
- \* Freshers' Fair was exhausting but went really well – thanks to Ed and Jake.

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." ~Anne Frank

**PART TIME OFFICERS**

**Adam McIvor**

**Common Room Support Officer**

Hi all and welcome back for the new term! Not a lot going on my way. I will be around at the OUSU roadshow and I'm looking to arrange the first OUSU Reps meeting for 3rd week. Please could you send me an email if your OUSU Rep has changed (or if you are the new OUSU rep). Feel free to send me any questions at [commonrooms@ousu.org](mailto:commonrooms@ousu.org)

**Sarah Hutchinson**

**Graduate Welfare Officer**

The main focus of what I've been doing over the last few weeks has been getting the Mature Students' Campaign up and running. Kaushal and I met with a couple of mature students during the summer, and we discussed what we felt the campaign should be - providing students with the opportunity to meet other mature students, and also using the campaign to identify what support mature students need. We agreed to start by holding a couple of social events at the start of term to get students together, then look at getting a committee and constitution in place. The first drinks are this week (ie last night), the next ones Tuesday of 3rd week.

**Jaimie Li**

**International Students Officer**

The International Students Campaign is ready for another term of providing representation and support for international students! I hope that you all have enjoyed the first-ever International Students Handbook from the ISC and that it has been very helpful to the international freshers in your colleges. The new committee members will be holding an open meeting in the near future, so keep an eye out for some new developments!