

OUSU

reports to council

5th week michaelmas term 2009

Stefan Baskerville

President

Common Rooms

Spoke and answered questions at Magdalen and St Peter's JCR meetings.

Attended Prescom. Issues discussed included CRiS (Common Room information Service), Sky TV subscriptions, HE funding, student representation at Conference of Colleges, Performance Rights Society charges for music in common rooms.

Attended MCR prescom. Issues discussed included student representation on governing bodies, Sky TV subscriptions, decanal rules on alcohol consumption, rules on associate membership, and Performance Rights Society.

University

Attended JCCSM, the committee of University Council that fulfils the University's obligations under the 1994 Education Act.

Met Sue Cunningham, Director of Development, to discuss Oxford Thinking (the University's development campaign) and how students can be involved.

Met with Keith Zimmerman, Director of Student Administration and Services, along with the rest of the sabbatical team, to discuss a range of issues including: college nursing provision, complaints and appeals review, review of graduation ceremonies, among other things.

HE Funding

Met with a number of JCR presidents to begin discussions around the review of HE funding and what we can do in this area. There is lots of enthusiasm for activity around raising the profile of the issue and engaging with the review process. This is an exciting year to be involved in the student movement but we will need to work hard to draw attention to the problems with the current system, and how we can fund HE fairly and sustainably. A rise in fees to £7000 would leave an Oxford undergraduate with debts of £35000 including maintenance loans. At that level of debt, under current repayment conditions, you need to earn £30k a year just to pay off the interest. And it is very likely that if fees rise, repayment conditions will get significantly worse than they are now (i.e. end to interest free loans). I hope that gives some indication of what is at stake. First stop: talking to students tomorrow morning, and a group going to London to lobby MPs. Meet at Carfax at 9.30am prompt if you want to come to London.

External

Attended a two day meeting of the Aldwych Group in Manchester. Postgraduate focus, especially on the current postgraduate review being conducted by BIS (Business, Innovation and Skills). Deadline for submissions is 18 December 2009. Attended sessions on information, advice and guidance for postgraduate students and quality assurance in taught masters. We took the decision to commission a report into Widening Participation in Russell Group institutions, and discussed what that report should look into.

Miscellaneous

Attended the launch of Gender Equality Week at Keble, and spoke alongside Kirsty McNeill and Alice Heath at a joint OUSU/OULC event on "Who needs leaders anyway?" (I think we do).

**Dani Quinn
Opportunities)**

V-P (Welfare and Equal

Common Room Support:

- Met with 3 JCR Presidents, 2 Equal Opps Officers and 5 Welfare Officers.
- Designed and distributed meningitis/swine flu posters, in light of the recent tragedy at a College. These were sent to officers in every College.
- LGBTQ Training: this will be on Wednesday, with two representatives from Oxford Friend. It's going to be brilliant.

Meetings with individuals/groups in University:

Rita Rattray (Secretariat for CCAT, with Jonny and Sarah), Keith Zimmerman (Director of Student Administration and Services, with others sabs), Sue Cunningham (Development Director, with other sabs) and the Proctors and Clerk to Proctors (with Stefan and Jonny). We covered a lot of issues, and all were really productive meetings. Please get in touch for more details.

University Meetings:

Attended JCCSM (with all the other JCC reps), I decided NOT to attend the Consultative Committee for Health and Safety. I did this on the basis that there was nothing on the agenda of any relevance to students, unless you think there is a strong student on voice on whether or not the University should revise its policy on the safe use of chainsaws. There was also going to be a discussion on the appropriate number of training sessions for the safe use of abrasive wheels. I think I made the right decision.

OUSU Committees and Campaigns:

Attended: LGBTQ Council, CRAE (twice), Publicity Committee, Elections Committee (validating manifestos, etc)

Organised/ran: Welfare Committee and Equal Opportunities Committee. Both of these had a lower turnout than the previous ones, which was disappointing. That said, both were useful, with many interesting action points emerging from the Welfare meeting.

Student Advice Service:

There have been lots of cases, some very time-consuming. I can't say much else... I'll have full stats on this term for the first Council in Hilary.

Projects:

Sexual Health Provision: we had a meeting of the working group, it was very productive. You can expect the following in the near future:

- Sample motions for the Common Room, and advice for bringing proposals to College
- Posters and other promotional materials
- Advice sheets on running your own in-college Chlamydia testing
- A report from me on the Committee for Student Health and Welfare's response to (i) The recommendations for sexual health provision and (ii) The gaps we have found in College Nurses and GP's awareness of some sexual health issues

Night Safety: I am working with Kat on this. You can look forward to:

- Posters in clubs and bars, focusing on encouraging students to drink more intelligently ('drink less' is probably futile) and to leave clubs/pubs in groups
- A briefing on setting up a WalkSafe scheme in your College
- An email full of practical advice on things you, as a Common Room, can do to help students stay safe
- Reports from Kat and me on the responses we get from JCCSM, CSHW, OSARCC and other interested groups in endorsing and – particularly – funding the CCTV camera on Magdalen Bridge

Colleges Nurses: it turns out this is another area of notable inequality amongst Colleges. Actions I am taking/have taken include:

- Surveying Common Room Officers to assess the level of provision and awareness
- Discussing it with Keith Zimmerman (Student Admin and Services)
- Submitting a report to CSHW

- Writing a briefing for Common Rooms on best practise, with advice on approaching College for improved provision

Please get in touch if you have any questions or feedback.

Dani x

Kat Wall

V-P (Women)

Hello council,

Gender Equality Week

In 3rd week we held a very successful Gender Equality Week with a range of events on issues from women and the recession to the meaning of modern masculinity, via women in the criminal justice system and the pay gap which still exists. With high turn out, engagement across the student body and really interesting discussion I think we can call it a success.

Taking forward the various ideas raised we have had a couple of follow up meetings which are helping to shape our campaigning activities over the coming months as well as influencing the topics of future events we hope to run.

Sexual Health Campaign

The Sexual Health Provision Working Group had its first meeting at which we discussed what action needs to be taken to try and standardise provision across the colleges. A couple of action points have been taken:

- Sending a model motion to Common Rooms to encourage them to reimburse the morning after pill and provide chlamydia testing
- Run an information campaign about GU clinics in Oxford, contraception other than the pill, STIs and so forth
- Encourage the provision of information to college nurses about LGBT sexual health, the morning after pill and so forth.

Night Safety Campaign

Currently still working with the Police and the City Council to try and get a CCTV camera on the Magdalen Bridge which has been highlighted as a place students are concerned to walk at night. Had a meeting with the Head of Night Safe to discuss other actions we can take including making students aware of the importance of being safe at night, the development of college walk-safe schemes and increasing the awareness of the Safety Bus.

Reclaim the Night march took place in Oxford as women marched the streets proclaiming our right to walk free from fear and protesting against the continued violence against women in our society.

Springboard

Working with the Careers Service and the Equality and Diversity Unit we are moving forward with plans to run the pilot of this personal and professional development programme for female students. We are at the stage of looking for funding and are working on acquiring external sponsorship for this pilot.

Sarah Hutchinson

V-P (Graduates)

The first thing to draw to your attention is that Stefan and I attended a meeting of the Aldwych Group (the student unions of the most research-intensive universities) in Manchester. The focus of the weekend was on Postgraduate Study, and we attended a number of workshops run mainly by the NUS including sessions on the review of postgraduate education that the government is undertaking at the moment, on the use of the data from the postgraduate surveys, and engaging postgraduate students. Sadly, as the main lesson from the last session seemed to be to give grads free stuff and I really don't have any money for Postgraduate Assembly branded travel mugs to hand out, I'm going to have to keep working on this. It was a very useful weekend, and it highlighted the similarities in issues facing postgrad students across the country, including access to teaching opportunities, dealing with supervisor problems, and the fallout from students who haven't met minimum language criteria. There were some interesting solutions being tried, and I'll be looking into these further.

Last Monday I helped organise the Graduate Supervision System focus group for the GSS User Group which is looking at how we can improve the use of online reporting for and by graduate students. We had a really interesting discussion that generated a lot of useful feedback. A number of students have also emailed their thoughts, so if anyone here has anything to add, do drop me an email.

Also last Monday, I attended the meeting between JCR and MCR Presidents. It was a really interesting discussion, covering everything from free speech to degree ceremonies to swine flu, and I think the Proctors found it really useful.

Last Tuesday we had the second Mature Students' social – about 15 people turned up to the drinks, which were very enjoyable, and a number went on to dinner afterwards, although unfortunately I couldn't attend the meal. Rainbow is organising a film night for mature students – do point any mature students in our direction if they are interested in getting involved.

On Wednesday I attended the Graduate JCC for Medical Sciences. This was a really useful discussion – we talked about the GSS system, and it was good to see this being promoted within the department, as well as a variety of issues relating particularly to studying in the Medical Sciences department.

On Thursday Stefan and I attended a reception celebrating the 5th anniversary of the University Club on Mansfield Road, which is free for graduates to join and houses a café, bar, gym, games room and can be used for events. It turns out giving me champagne is an effective way of getting me to promote you.

There wasn't much graduate-specific discussion at Education Committee, and I'm presuming Jonny has covered the main issues. The one thing I want to flag up is, like with the NSS, it's essential to encourage graduates to complete the postgraduate surveys and this is something I'll be working to promote this year.

Today, amongst other things, I'll be attending Graduate Committee and the Language Centre management committee and I hope to be able to provide a report shortly on that.

Jonny Medland

V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

5th week Council & central husts. Crazy. Here's what I've been up to since last time around. I know that you'll be tempted to ignore us and ask our would-be successors questions instead but please do remember that we're representing you now and would like to answer questions!

Common Room Support

Continues. I have had a meeting of academic affairs reps where we focused on study skills, looked at what sort of provision is best placed in colleges vs departments and why some schemes work and others don't. I'm currently working on a guide to implementing study skills sessions in colleges similar to the one which I've sent out about academic feedback. Please do encourage your reps to come to these meetings – I run them partially because they're fun but mainly because they can be very useful. The more people are there, the more useful they will be. And if your reps don't show up they're missing out on one of the big services we're offering this year – I'd really like to know what it is Common Rooms want from OUSU and do my best to achieve that so their input will make a lot of difference.

I've also worked with our Publications/Media Co-Ordinator on developing an Alternative Prospectus template for Common Rooms (in line with a request from a few reps) and with Dani Quinn on advocacy training. This looks like it will be taking place in 7th week and looks like it could be pretty awesome. Access reps meeting is taking place in 5th week and will look at running a good interview program. Important, particularly as numbers of undergraduate applications have just continued soaring through the roof. In line with my mandates from 3rd week Council I've prepared guidance on academic feedback sessions for Common Rooms. You'll have the chance to find out more about the greatest invention in human history during central husts. I've also sent out information on regionalisation, the Review of University Sport and some other areas to Common Room reps. I've attended a JCR Prescom too (well, will do...not yet at the time of writing) which I imagine will be fun. I also went to Merton JCR's reaffiliation debate which I'm pleased to say went very well and saw the JCR reaffiliate by a big majority. Common Room Support is obviously targeted at Common Rooms so do tell me if

you like/don't like what I'm doing as I can try different things depending on demand. OUSU is actually far more responsive in these areas than people think and your input can make a difference.

General OUSU stuff

This has been huge in the last 2 weeks. Madeline Stanley and myself spent the majority of 2 weekends in the office working on our policy-making reforms, details of which have naturally been completely misunderstood in this week's *Cherwell* who chose not to ask me to explain them. Our work uncovered some anachronisms in the OUSU Governing Documents which we have worked very hard to correct – I apologise for the length of discussion that will take place today but these areas are important, not just in substance but because credible organisations simply take the time to perfect their internal governance. That is the aim of this week's proposals. I've also been to OUSU reps Committee to explain the changes.

I've been on Elections Committee which means I've been spending more time than I ever imagined with Oliver J Linch, OUSU Returning Officer. This has been enjoyable. Validating nominations and other elections goodness was time-consuming but fun. I wish all the candidates running the best of luck...working for OUSU can be challenging at times but is phenomenally rewarding. I've also been to a meeting of Publicity Committee, helped tidy the office (more needed than it sounds) and attended Exec (twice). I've also taken the lead on writing a quick guide to OUSU for new members of the OUSU Exec who will take over at the end of this term since being on Exec can be quite confusing in terms of what it is you're meant to do. I've also met 2 more Divisional Board reps and am compiling a database of JCC/Faculty reps for use this year.

Meetings with University officials

These have been fun – me, Sarah & Dani met with Rita Rattray from the Conference of College Secretariat to talk about the workings of the Conference of Colleges Appeals Tribunal and a review of complaints and appeals procedures in colleges. Rita was very helpful, really shone some light on the issue and this was a very positive meeting. Along with the rest of the sabbs I met with Keith Zimmerman who is Director of Student Administration & Services and is one of the most important people in the university for students as his remit covers our entire time in Oxford. We also met Sue Cunningham, Director of Development where we talked about representation on the University Development Committee and how students could be more involved in Development work. With Sarah I met with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Head of Education Policy Support for Oxford to talk about the Education Committee agenda in detail, including university complaints and appeals and the funding of teaching at Oxford. Me, Dani and Stefan have met with the Proctors to talk about university disciplinary procedures and I have also spent a very pleasant hour with the Univ outreach officer discussing how best to improve access to Oxford. For anyone who doubts the work that OUSU does, it really is impossible to overemphasise how important these meetings are. The people we meet are generally at least willing to listen to student interests but having people who work full-time to present them is crucial.

Student Advice Service

This has been quieter – not really sure why (although I'm not complaining after the first 3 weeks of term!). I've had a few cases but please encourage your students to get in touch with any problems they might be having – either e-mail advice@ousu.org or access@ousu.org to get me directly.

University Committees

- **Joint Committee of Council with Student Members.** The University body which oversees OUSU, this was its first meeting of the year and was on the whole very positive. I really hope we can get some problems out of the way – the committee asked us to take some actions which we were very happy to do. We are reviewing OSSL, the OUSU complaints process and financial transparency and I would far rather work with people than engage in shouting matches. We all know OUSU's not perfect (particularly those of us who work there) but it seems a shame to engage in battles about the student union when we could get so much more done by treating each other respectfully and working together. I presented to the committee on our new policy-making structure which was well received.
- **Student Number Planning.** Otherwise known as the most committee with the most sinister title in Oxford. We discussed a need for more coordination in this area and possible directions of travel for the committee in the next year.

- **Education Committee.** This is exciting – the university is reviewing its complaints and appeals procedures, with a view to reporting by the end of the year. We asked for student representation and you'll all be pleased to hear that I'm on the group looking at these issues, along with a Proctor, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and some others. We talked about the National Student Survey, plagiarism and the plans that the university has for the Department of Continuing Education which runs part-time courses at Oxford. I'm writing this before the meeting so I will update you at Council.
- **University Council.** At the time of writing (00:22, Friday November 6) this meeting hasn't happened and I've just got several hundred pages worth of agenda and associated papers. I'll update you at Council but items we will be discussing are mostly labeled 'confidential' when they're not labeled 'strictly confidential' so it may be brief.
- **Committee on the Language Centre.** This is happening just before Council so I may have to dash out early – this is the body which oversees the Language Centre which a lot of postgraduates at Oxford make use of.

As always please do ask me if you have any questions and I'll do my best to answer them. Either in person or via e-mail – access@ousu.org.

Eorann Lean Community)	V-P	(Charities	&
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Hello all,

Here is my council report to take away those 5th week blues.....

- **Volunteering Fair**
This is progressing really well – The town hall is booked for the 23rd February, OCVA are onboard and are going to send out invitations to the 220 organisations actively seeking volunteers, the community and neighbourhood support department of the city council are also going to send invitations out to the organisations that they are in contact with and forward it on to colleagues to be sent round sport organisations. I will be sending invitations around student groups soon. We have also decided to make a booklet with a blurb about each charity and those who can't attend but would like to be in the booklet, the commitment wanted from a volunteer, contact details etc. The fair is going to be free for stallholders and attendees so hopefully we'll have loads of people there and it'll be really successful beginning of student volunteer week.
- **Big Brother/ Big Sister**
We had the first committee meeting to plan the activity day. The decision was taken to start with a "mocktail" making session and then to go on a photo scavenger hunt. Everyone has been working really hard and has managed to get generous offers from G&Ds and Green's to help us run the day on our tight budget. Amanda, one of the student presidents, and myself are meeting Debbie Wiseman from Oxford County Council Social services and the Key stage 4 co-ordinator from their virtual school to find out about the children are interested in the project and to match them up with mentors.
- **Cancer Research – engaging students**
I met up with Sinead from Cancer Research about getting students fundraising and volunteering. We are going to set up a student committee to run a fundraising event a term, to raise awareness of what Cancer Research does and advertise volunteering opportunities that I will help facilitate. If you are interested in the committee please email me charities@ousu.org
- **Homeless provision in Oxford**
I have had a meeting with Martin Wizard in order to get information about homeless provision in Oxford to send out to Students. I hope to work with Oxpat on this as well.
- **Volunteering and Community Forum**

I attend this on Monday so I will update in Council. The forum is to share best practice and attend training and workshops. The theme for the forum is 'Reaching out to everybody'

- **SRI committee**

This met last week and has decided to publish its minutes online –I'll let you know when they are available. No decision has yet been reached about arms divestment.

....See you feel much better knowing all the great things happening – don't you....

PART TIME OFFICERS

Jack Matthews	Common Room Support Officer
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Hello Council

Please find my points for report below. As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

- Sky TV. After discussing the matter with Common Room Presidents, I will be working more closely with other student unions to create a campaign for common rooms to have their own price plan.

- CRiS. The first part of the Common Room Information Service is up and running. It is a comprehensive database collecting comparative information from across the Common Rooms in Oxford. More will be on the way soon.

- Online Elections in Common Rooms. I am now trained to assist common rooms with their online elections. If you can let me know a few weeks in advance of your elections, it would be very much appreciated. I can then assist you with setting up your election.

- Society Workshop. I will be holding a workshop on how to set up a University Society on Monday of 7th Week in the evening. Time and Venue to be confirmed. Please let people know about this in your common rooms, and get those interested to drop me an email.

Jack Matthews
Common Room Support Officer
commonrooms@ousu.org

Daniel Lowe	Environment & Ethics Officer
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Hi Council,

Tomorrow evening is Lights, Climate, Action! Here in Magdalen Auditorium. Come along for an evening of great entertainment featuring:

- * George Wright and the Keynote Speakers
- * Crisis, What Crisis?
- * Dot's Funk Odyssey
- * Jazz Hop
- * Oxford Slam Poetry Champion Danny Chivers

and many more

Tickets are £5 on the door and there will be lots of Fairtrade Wine

University Environment Panel meets in 6th week so any issues you'd like to raise, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Lastly, I'm running a training session for Green/E and E reps/officers and anyone else who's interested on SATURDAY at 11am in the OUSU building. We'll be discussing how to beat bursars in negotiations, event planning, debate skills, public speaking and brief summaries of the science behind the issues on which we

campaign. Tell your officers to come along, and come along yourself if interested!

There will be cake

Best,

Daniel
eande@ousu.org

Portia Roelofs

Womens Officer

Gender Equality Week (3rd week) was excellent. We reached a lot of people, we engaged in debate, we changed minds. If you'd like to be involved in organising similar events during the rest of this term please send me an email: womensofficer@ousu.org.

Other things to do for the rest of term:

- JCR visits. It turns out that quite a lot of people have unanswered questions about the role of the womens officer and the need to campaign on gender equality in general.
- Lost Daughters - Howard League for Penal Reform campaign
- Training for JCR chairs, would people be interested in this?

Again, if you have any ideas or want to get involved, get in touch!