

Reports to Council

5th week michaelmas term 2011

Martha Mackenzie

President

Evening Council,

I hope everyone's getting through term well and managing to fight off those pesky fifth week blues. Here's what I have been up to:

White Paper:

As promised I created a shorter summary page and a survey, both have been circulate through OUSU Reps, CR Presidents and via the all-student email list.

We have also put together a final version of the WP Response based on the changes proposed in 3rd week and the feedback gathered over the course of this consultation. This version is coming to a vote tonight.

OUSU Elections:

I organised and publicised the Central Husts, held yesterday at Corpus Christi College. Thanks to all those who attended; we were at maximum capacity for the Presidential round. I have also been producing publicity and disseminating it far and wide. In my roll on elections committee I have been supporting the RO where possible. We are doing everything we can to spread the elections far and wide and really boost turn out. If you feel there is anything we can be doing better *please* let me know.

Student-Led Teaching Awards

The NUS released some funding to aid unions in starting up a Student-Led Teaching Awards scheme. I sent off a bid to access some of this funding and (hooray!) the bid was successful. I will now be attending a planning day on the 17th of November to start thinking about how the awards will be structured in Oxford.

Hannah and I will be working closely with Sally Mapstone, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education on these awards and we will also be consulting with YOU about the best categories, the issues you particularly want supported and, more generally about how these awards can fit in to our current feedback structures and really boost accountability and quality.

Head Residents Scheme

Jim and I have finally been able to make some progress on this. We attended a meeting with the University Land Agent and pushed for a pilot version of this scheme. We managed to get the scheme on the agenda for the next meeting of the property management sub-committee and agreement that the accommodation office will speak in favour of the scheme. We also got an agreement that the 'no overnights guest rule' was certainly undesirable and work is being done to move away from this.

Also...

Attended

JS-c (EC) SM: *spoke to the officer review, bye-laws review, the community warden scheme and the state of OUSU's finances.*

First Student Community Partnership Meeting: *attended with Daniel Stone to kick-start the official partnership between students and the city council.*

Termly meeting of the Proctors and Assessors and Common Room Presidents.

The first full OUSU Rep Com of term.

Dinner of PPH Presidents/ Deputies at St Stephen's House.

Social with Graduate Exec, Chair of Prescom and new Graduate Divisional Board Reps.

Visited:

3 More Common Rooms

Ran:

A community organising workshop with Sarah Santhosham specifically focused on local action and achieving change in your own community.

Film screening as part of the 'Idea...' project.

Met 1-2-1 with:

17 students including 9 common room Presidents.

Head of Conference of College Secretariat to discuss OUSU college fees.

Member of NUS NEC.

Director of International-Affairs at Sciences Po University, France to talk about expanding opportunities for travel and study abroad in the undergraduate programmes in the Humanities and Social Sciences Division.

As ever, any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Martha

Yuan Yang

VP (Women)

Hi everyone,

Whoah, we're halfway there!

Sexual Violence & Relationship Abuse

87% - the percentage of serious sexual assaults which are committed by an acquaintance of the victim.

50% - the percentage of serious sexual assaults which are committed by a partner or ex-partner of the victim. (British Crime Survey 2005/06)

Sexual violence is an **issue for our communities**, because it is **perpetrated through communities**.

• **Make Oxford University abuse-aware:**

- I am meeting with Women's Officers and other students in colleges whose staff are judged most receptive to an **education and awareness-raising** campaign on the extent of abuse (sexual, relationship, stalking) in colleges.
- I've organised the first of a series of 3 awareness-raising workshops, teaching the **basics of recognition and referral** for abuse-related harassment. This is targeted at staff, as part of our campaign to **improve staff response** to abuse-related harassment. These workshops are targeted at Welfare Deans, Senior Tutors, Chaplains, Head Porters, and Harassment Advisors. **Do you know if your college or department has trained and abuse-aware welfare staff?**
- I am also looking into the possibility of creating a network of **abuse-aware peer supporters** in Common Rooms, using a model similar to Oxfordshire's Domestic Abuse Champions Network or to Harvard's Women's Resource Centre. If the University isn't in a place to equip and train its staff, **we can place students in the best position possible** to deal with this.

- **Zero Tolerance on Sexual and Physical Assault:** My most unexpected evening of working in OUSU so far involved a 9pm meeting with the **Varsity Events manager and nightclub managers**, followed by a 10pm talk with Steve, the head bouncer at The Bridge, over the Zero Tolerance

Policy. NB: Steve seems to be incredibly lovely. Our focus now is to consult with further nightclub managers and bouncers as needed, and to put pressure on Varsity Events so that they will follow through with the policy.

- Convened a **Multi-Agency Interpersonal Violence and Night Safety Strategy Meeting**, bringing together the Specially Trained Officers (STOs) at Thames Valley, the County Council's Nightsafe Manager, Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre, and the City Council's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator, with OUSU sabs and Brookes SU. The forum will meet three times a year to review and put in place strategy for dealing with IPV and Night Safety in Oxford. Together we are stronger!

Inclusive Leadership

The Inclusive Leadership Action Group meets to brainstorm and plan initiatives to increase the engagement of Common Rooms with students and to **increase the diversity of student leadership**. Its membership is open: email me to take part!

- Increasing **student engagement in Common Room elections** is our current project. Last week, I talked with JCR PresCom about why it is certain groups of people run or don't run in CR elections. Am working with JCR Prescom on **best practice for chairing hustings**.
 - Wrote a brief guide to writing **role description adverts**, and am preparing a guide on **getting people to run**.
 - Looking into **training for Common Rooms about to run elections**.
- Our first Leadership Skills week, on **Public Speaking Workshops**, was great fun and, as judged by the feedback surveys, a success - I spent an hour training over 70 students across 4 workshops. Many people asked about follow-up workshops, which bodes well for Hilary's skills week! I am currently organising this to be on **Assertiveness Training**.

Academic careers progression

Background: The **Athena-SWAN Charter** is a national body that audits science departments' policies on their gender equality effects. This includes policies surrounding flexible working, childcare, student and staff development, and transparency of promotions and governance procedures. To apply for an Athena-SWAN award, a department must demonstrate ability to implement an action-plan on areas it can improve on.

- Met Kay Davies, Associate Head of Medical Sciences and Athena-SWAN Champion for the Division, along with Trudy Coe, Head of the Equality & Diversity Unit, to discuss how we can **ensure MedSci departments have student representation** on their Athena-SWAN Steering Committees.
- Met Annie Ng, President of Oxford Females in Engineering, Science and Technology (OxFEST) along with Clara, our Graduate Women's Officer, to set out plans for a **wide consultation of female graduate students** in Hilary on their experience and expectations of academic career progression.
- Presented an introduction and "next steps" guide to the **Graduate Departmental Reps** in MedSci, so that they can take the lead in their departments.

Jim O'Connell

VP (Graduates)

Γεια σας Council

Life is good and I have been busy since the last meeting.

A lot of positive achievements in the last couple of weeks:

- The University has agreed to provide feedback on most assessed work for taught Master's students. This addresses one of the core complaints that Master's students have had in the past.

To get the University to act as quickly as it ultimately has done on this issue is fairly unprecedented, and very pleasing.

- We have some fantastic new Divisional Board Reps who have been swinging into action. They have been given training and are ready to go forth and win for students.
- We have now met all the grad departmental reps in Medical Sciences and are developing productive relationships on a set of Medical Science issues, working towards the Medical Sciences Divisional Review amongst other things.
- The PhD Movie screening is next week, all ready to go and will be fantastic for DPhil students and others, and our representational work.
- The Graduate Ambassadors Scheme is up and running and successful applicants have been selected. The Development Office now has a brilliant team of grads doing various exciting things to use to raise lots more money for grads.
- I have run negotiation training for MCR Presidents and Divisional Board Reps in conjunction with the training machine that is Sol Pomerantz.
- We have finally got through to the Accommodation Office and they are tentatively supportive of the Head Residents proposal as a way of addressing the issues that student tenants have with them. Martha, Rob Noble and Ruben Kubiak have put a lot of effort over the last months on this - it's frustrating it's taken so long to make something happen but pleasing we're getting there.
- I am working with James Anderson and Richard Hills on a proposal for a central talks database run by the University. There's a motion about this.

Thinking about all this, it's quite a lot.

I have also been going to lots of committees. Amongst others I sat through OUCS Management Committee and learned all about the OUCS PICT Envelope, which is a very clever jargon way of asking for lots of money. In fairness, they probably need a lot of money to keep all the computers working, although I find it difficult to distinguish between necessary and optional spending because I know nothing about computers. If anyone knows anything about computers please teach me.

The other big thing I have been doing is being a DRO in the elections. The elections are very important and I take being a DRO very seriously - we need to have good people next year and having a free and fair election is crucial to that. It is a big time commitment, however. There is a huge volume of admin and candidates have a tendency this year to produce vexatious and time consuming complaints, or break the rules in such a way that I have no choice but to make equally vexatious and time consuming complaints. That aside, the elections this year are very pleasing in that we have more candidates than possibly ever before, all sabb offices are contested and, from my point of view, it's great that three of the six sabb positions are contested by grads.

Looking ahead to the rest of the term, I feel we are well placed to achieve the targets that were set by grad representatives in the graduate strategy meetings we held before term started. I will be talking about supervision a lot more from this week onwards, canvassing expectations of supervision online and in focus groups, and preparing for the Supervision Review being held at the start of next term. In this vein I will be putting on 'making the most of your supervisor' sessions at the earliest opportunity, although I'm aware term is flying by very fast and I haven't yet done this.

One particularly welcome development is that, following the Vice Chancellor's Oration and pressure from student representatives, most of the University is genuinely adopting graduate funding as a priority and actually doing something about it. By the end of term, for example, colleges will have partnered with departments to offer joint college-RCUK fully funded packages to applicants applying this year. This is great. Even organisations that have no real relationship with funding have done their best to jump on the grad bandwagon. So all told I think things appear to be going well.

A political theory quote with a topical spin to close:

"The rule of many has first a name attaching to it which is the fairest of all names, that is to say 'Equality'"

A fundamental statement of democracy, or isonomy, from the Greek writer Herodotus in Book III of *The Histories*. Wonder if Angela Merkel is familiar with it?

Hello everyone,

I hope that you are all well as we progress to the second half of Michaelmas. I've been continuing my work along the same lines as before, broadly working on the following areas:

1. Common Room Support

I've been continuing to meet with JCR and MCR welfare officers who are responsible for welfare, equality and disability. As of yet, I have met with officers from 23 common rooms, totalling about 40 officers in total. I am continuing to work with a number of them on college-specific projects.

2. Training

I have organised two training sessions, Student Support Training (with Laura Hancox) on Sat 5th Week, and Equality and Diversity Training on Friday of 6th Week. These sessions are open to any JCR officers - if you would like a spot, please catch me or send me an email.

3. Disability Awareness Week

Next week is Disability Awareness Week, and I have been working with the Students with Disabilities Campaign to finalise the timetable, work on our second round of publicity and get the word out for our main events. Please do come along to Abnormally Funny People which will be on Tuesday at 7pm in St Johns, and to see the inspirational sailor, Hilary Lister, at the Oxford Union on Friday.

4. Mental Health Campaign

We had an awesome meeting last week at Keble, where 12 people came and we had a very productive opening discussion about values, objectives and strategy. Myself and Tatiana from Keble have gone away and started to turn this into a constitution, which will be ready for ratification next week so that we can get on with the important business of opening minds and changing attitudes.

5. Other Campaigns

I attended the SWD Campaign's first meeting of the new academic year, and there was a valuable discussion about what we might want to achieve after DAW has finished.

I also attended the first meeting of the rebooted LGBTQ Campaign, which will be looking into the use of gendered language in university forms.

6. Student Advice Service

Casework has increased in volume since 3rd week, and I have spent a considerable amount of time fielding queries from students. As always, if you or a member of your common room need support or advice, please get in touch with me or email advice@ousu.org

I will be going to London on Monday to a round-table discussion about the development of complaints and appeals in British Higher Education, hosted by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. We have been having conversations to this effect with the Proctors, to see if there is any scope for making the Proctors' Office a more student-friendly C & A body. More news on that as it happens.

7. Prayer Space Campaign

I have met with Adam Ali and Liban Saleh from Islamic Society, who have managed to get a meeting with the Vice Chancellor which I will be attending before council on Wednesday. I will let you know how it goes.

Dear Council,

Since we last spoke I've most been in quite long meetings and dashing about in between them.

Common Room Support

- Following up on the successful Academic Affairs training which took place in 3rd week by creating several guides for reps to use in the colleges.
- Teach First training, is happening tomorrow for Access, and Academic Affairs reps. The focus will be on creativity, Encourage your reps to come along.
- One on One meetings- continue to take place., there have been 7 in the diary in the past 2 weeks. Some are with outgoing reps and focus on making handover effective, other just building a relationship with new reps, listening to what they want to achieve and letting them know how OUSU can support them.
- Prescom- thanks to James for organising this a such short notice. Really good to get to know all the presidents better and we talked about when a good time to hold training for Academic Feedback was.
- Briefings- I've been sending out a few to individuals or small groups, say on PQA and suspension policies but I'm thinking about making these more structured and regular.
- Support for Access Reps projects- I'm coordinating the access reps collaboration on an FAQs guide to creating an Alternative Prospectus and planning a session with Anne-Marie Canning in 6th week on Student Ambassador Schemes

Committees

- Roughly 16.5 hours in the past two weeks spent in committee meetings and then the preparation for each one brings it over 20 hours.
- The committees are JCCSM, Access Officers, Adex Access Subgroup, Bridging and Foundation Years Working Group. Admissions Committee, Education Committee, Student Number Planning, Planning and Resource Allocation Committee, Committee for the Language Centre
- Notable highlights include- securing feedback for PGT students after years of persuading the university; getting a proposal included in a key report for flagged candidates to receive mentoring between getting an offer and taking up a place; university desire to maintain current level of spend on access & student support; support for the idea that the university needs to be clear to 2012/13 students paying £9,000 where their tuition fee is going.

Complaints and Appeals

- Had a couple of meetings both with the sabb team and the university on this in the past two weeks. Focusing on university complaints and appeals and the role of the Proctors. This is likely to be a sensitive and long running project, if you have any experience of the above issues get in touch. I'll keep updating as and when.

Collections and Feedback

- Created a survey to see how Collections are happening across the collegiate university. Had over 200 responses, which is amazing. I have two confessions: 1) Merton does not feature as a college option so big apologies to Merton for having to put 'Other, please specify' and 2) it wasn't laid out ideally. I'm hoping to do another one same time next term to capture 1st years and will lay it out better. I'll be carefully analysing the response to put together a more comprehensive picture of collections and will use this in discussion with a few Senior Tutors that I've arranged, over tea and cake, next week.

Creating better academic representation

- Huge focus of the past two weeks has been Divisional and Departmental reps. For two reasons- 1) is that we've been asking to coordinate the student response to the Medical sciences review. 2) In the past OUSU hasn't been able to focus on it, so we're starting from a low base, but we think it's incredibly important. I've been sending a lot of emails, collating lists of names, meeting reps one on one, devising and delivering training and creating resources.

Co-ordinating our access work

- Access Showcase- 3rd February, really really pleased this is off the ground and going well. Have sent out to Access staff an invitation to submit proposals to have their work showcased. And the Save the Date email has gone out. We're now thinking of a way to invite student groups to showcase all the work they do.
- Working with Senior Tutor of St Anne's on a handbook that people who want to set up access initiatives can
- Working and supporting Target Schools to make sure they're the most effective they can be and that the Shadowing Scheme is a success.

Creating a strong student union

- Significant amount of time spent in meetings to make sure OUSU is working the best it can with a focus on tidying up the governing documents, considering whether we're sharing out work effectively between the sabs and a little bit of making sure the elections are going well but this work is mostly being done by Martha, Jim and Jonathan so big thanks for all their hard work.

Daniel Stone

VP (Charities & Community)

Dear Council,

As election fever sweeps the town, you'd be happy to know that the prospect of becoming a lame duck in a matter of days isn't stopping me from pressing ahead in a number of areas! As always if you'd like me to expand on anything written below please email me at charities@ousu.org

Community

In my last report I mentioned the commencement of a community partnership group focusing on student issues in the city. We met for the first time on Friday 2nd Week and had an incredibly productive meeting. The next meeting will take place on Thursday 7th Week where the partners will discuss landlords, housing and accreditation. If you have anything to feed into this meeting please drop me an email

- The inaugural City Centre Area Forum will take place at 7pm on Tuesday 6th Week in the Assembly Room in the Town Hall. We'll be discussing student safety and homelessness alongside city councillors, college representatives and various community groups. Please email Councillor Mark Mills if you'd like to attend (cllrmills@oxford.gov.uk)
- There will be an immediate opportunity to put some of what you'll hear into action with the Oxford Sleep-out and a street collection for Crisis both taking place on Saturday 6th Week. For more information send me an email on charities@ousu.org
- On Wednesday 6th Week from 5-8pm the police will be running a workshop on PREVENT; their anti-terrorism campaign. PREVENT could have significant implications for students and student groups so its well worth attending. Spaces are limited so drop me an email to book your space
- As promised I have brought my Student Community Wardens paper to Council this week. I think it's a really fantastic scheme that everyone benefits from, so please pass it!

Charity

Since last Council I have thrown myself off a platform raised 175ft in the air, tended to 'gunshot wounds' in my chest and found myself stuck underground with thousands of Londoners, all in the name of charity!

Oxford RAG has raised thousands of pounds through the bungee jump, Halloween Club night at Wahoo and the Poppy Appeal Mega Raid in London. Monday Night at Wahoo is now a regular RAG club night so if you're Common Room is looking for a good night early in the week, its definitely the place to be!

- If you haven't bought your ticket for the RAG Ball yet, do so ASAP as they're selling quickly!
- I also held training for Charity Reps covering Event Management and Fundraising

Environment and Ethics

The Environment and Ethics Committee have now elected their three campaigns for the coming year, namely Green Events, Fair Trade and Double-sided Printing

Since last Council I have:

- Organised a meeting for E&E Reps to meet representatives from the University Environment Panel, Sustainability Team and Domestic Bursars Committee
- Continued talks with the Careers' Service and the Oxford Hub to plan an 'Ethical Careers Event' for next Hilary
- Attended the E&E pamoja organised by Alastair Marsh and the E&E Committee
- Continued to plan and formalise the End of Year Recycling Scheme

Living Wage

The Living Wage Campaign has put on a number of actions as it seeks to put pressure on the University to pay its employees a living wage

- Along with a number of other Living Wage supporters, I gave out flyers to people as they entered SSL to raise awareness of the campaign
- Attended a round table discussion on the Living Wage Campaign on behalf of OUSU
- Yesterday afternoon we had our community action at the Social Sciences Library

PART TIME OFFICERS

Sarah Santhosham

Community Outreach & Charities Officer

Dear Council,

The last two weeks have been a whirlwind of activity on the charitable and community front. Here's a run-down of my activities since my last report:

Living Wage Campaign

There have been a lot of developments since my last report to Council, with more common rooms passing motions in support of the Living Wage and continued press coverage aiding our campaign. We have run two small actions in the past two weeks: the first took place outside the Social Science Library, where many members of our campaign were engaged in flyering and talking to the library's users. The flyers were produced by the kind sponsorship of the Jellicoe Community. The second took place last week, when members of our campaign left pieces of testimony on desks in the SSL. I also organised and chaired another community meeting on the Living Wage, bringing together community leaders to discuss their involvement with the campaign and come up with concrete action points. I have also been working to get other groups involved with our work, and in the last two weeks I've given talks to WomCam and the Oxford University Campaign for Higher Education (OUCHE!) about our work. We've got quite a lot of things planned for the rest of term, so do get involved!

RAG

I have continued to attend RAG reps and exec meetings. We also had our first two information evenings for the adventures we are running through the new partnership I am managing with Student Adventures (Cycle the Cape and the Inka Trek) and we had good attendance at both.

Other: Community Organising, OxHub collaboration and other plans

Last week Martha and I delivered a workshop for OUCHE! on community organising to a room full of activists, consisting of students and academics. It was great to engage with education activists and share our campaigning skills with them. I had a meeting with Amy from OxHub to discuss how we can work together on a scheme to make college space more accessible to community groups, a project I have been working on since last year. Additionally I have also had meetings with interest groups on how to connecting students with volunteering and identifying the motivations for community engagement.

As ever, don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or want to get involved with anything community/charity related. I can be contacted through the following e-mail address: communityandcharity@ousu.org

Sarah

Alastair Marsh

Environments & Ethics Officer

Hi students,

Environment & Ethics Pamoja

Gathered reps from different colleges have a nice dinner together, to help usher in a new era of intercollege cooperation and communication.

As a result, an environment themed comedy night is perhaps in the pipeline...

Recycling

Visited Balliol, St. John's and Christ Church to discuss recycling with staff. We're almost there on our goal of compiling a 'Norrington table of recycling'.

Discussion with domestic bursars

Dialogue with some domestic bursars with how to more effectively achieve environmental 'wins' in colleges and inspire both students and staff.

Have a lovely week,

And remember - wrap up warm, and the heating takes care of itself.

Alastair

Katie Colliver

LGBTQ Officer

Hi Council,

The LGBTQ Campaign is off to a good start; in the past couple of meetings we have been developing strategies for tackling the exclusive gendering of positions in common rooms and for encouraging inclusive events where all students can feel comfortable attending. Tonight we'll be drafting motions to take to common rooms so do come along to OUSU after council if you want to get involved.

I've also been attending brunch and drinks events run by LGBTQsoc in an effort to get people thinking about how the upcoming OUSU elections can affect them and what they want out of their OUSU LGBTQ Officer.

As always, feel free to drop me an email (lgbtqofficer@ousu.org) if you want to get involved in campaigning, rewriting the handbook or anything else!

All the best,

Katie

Nicola Sugden

Women's Officer

Hello Council,

Most of my time so far this term (and indeed since the middle of September) has been spent organising the annual Gender Equality Festival, which is in full swing at the moment. We've already had two film screenings, a discussion on socialist feminism, a knitting and bonding session, and a workshop on Black Feminism - and there are another two weeks to come! We'd be really grateful if everyone could take a couple of posters and flyers to spread the word around common rooms, and point people towards www.facebook.com/OxfordGEF

I've also continued to build WomCam's online presence by updating www.twitter.com/womcam and womcam.tumblr.com more regularly - particularly in the case of the blog, this makes it much easier for people to find out more about WomCam and what we do.

WomCam committee is starting to solidify into a more concrete structure, with better-defined roles (rather than just a group of people coming together), which we hope will help keep the inner workings of WomCam more sustainable.

We'll be holding new committee elections at the end of term.

COME TO THE GENDER EQUALITY FESTIVAL!!!!!!

Nicola

David Bowe

Graduate Welfare Officer

Recently I have been mainly pointing individuals to the appropriate resources to help with their particular problems. There's the upcoming Humanities Graduate Open Day which I'm looking forward to being involved with and of course it's election season, so that should take up some time in the next week or so!

Any queries or ideas regarding Grad Welfare, please do get in touch, gradwelfare@ousu.org.

Dai