

Reports to Council

5th Week Council Michaelmas Term 2013

Tom Rutland

President

Evening Council,

Can't believe it's election time again already - I've still got 7 months left to go! Enjoy the husts and use your chance to quiz the candidates wanting to represent you. Don't forget to vote next week!

OUSU Strategy and Finance

I have brought OUSU's 'Mission, Vision & Values' and 'Core Objectives' to today's Council meeting for approval. These set out what OUSU is for, what it seeks to achieve and its main areas of activity. Budget Subcommittee is meeting this week to look at the budget proposals for the next three years, which will be brought to Council in due course. Our request for increased funding, will have been considered by the Joint Committee (JS-c(EC)SM) of the University and OUSU between the writing of this report and 5th Week Council, so I shall provide a verbal update at Council. This will be the first of many committees to consider the funding bid.

Fees & Funding

There will be a verbal update on this at Council.

Rent & Accommodation

I've worked with the Rent & Accommodation Officer, Will, to provide assistance to JCRs/MCRs on rent negotiations (or the lack thereof in some colleges). I am working with Will on rent negotiation training to be delivered in Hilary & Trinity terms.

Student Complaints & Appeals

OUSU has long been lobbying for improved resources for the areas of the University handling student complaints and appeals, as well as the handling of issues surrounding the administration of examination. In the past, cases have been delayed due to poor resourcing and as such students have received poor and slow feedback during the course of complaints and appeals. I have worked with the University for several weeks to secure improvements in support arrangements for the Proctors' Office. Improvements in responsiveness should begin in January 2014.

Clubs & Societies

Hamaad (the Clubs & Societies Officer) and I are in the process of developing a part of the new OUSU website that will provide clubs & societies (and those wishing to set them up) with a useful set of resources: a step-by-step guide to registration, a model constitution, a guide to grants available and the University's minibus service that clubs & societies can take advantage of.

Elections!

I've been working with Nick (OUSU's Returning Officer) and the rest of Elections Committee to ensure a well-run and well-publicized elections - both running in them and voting in them - and there's a new poster explaining how (and when) to vote here to take away today.

Any questions? president@ousu.org

Tom

1. Met with the new chair of the Mature Students Campaign and discussed future social activities, mature students' Oxford experience, and strategy for the campaign.
2. Met with the new chair of the International Students Campaign. Gave handover advice and discussed the organisation of the International Festival taking place on 9 March 2014.
3. Met with the University and College Union (UCU) Oxford rep and discussed postgrad contracts for paid teaching.
4. Met with the University's Development Office and discussed campaigning for Phase 2 of the Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Fund.
5. Met with the Development Office's Student Ambassadors to inform them of their role.
6. Met with potential applicants whilst representing OUSU at the Humanities Graduate Open Day.
7. Read last year's Masters course student feedback and emailed my concerns over quality of some of the courses to the University.
8. Attended MCR President's Committee and discussed provisions for spouses and partners of students, and we discussed the issue of international students not being able to become a Junior Dean at Exeter College.
9. Met with the Junior Proctor, Senior Proctor, and the Assessor to raise the issues brought up at MCR Prescom.
10. Met with the chair of the Graduate Committee and discussed the issues raised at MCR Prescom.
11. Supported students as part of OUSU's Student Advice Service.
12. Attended the Living Wage Campaign's 'thank you' card-giving event.
13. Met with potential OUSU election candidates and discussed the issues concerning graduates at Oxford.
14. Am in the process of setting up the first common room International Students Rep mail list.
15. Met with Cambridge Student Union's Graduates President and discussed academic representation and how we could help each other on general student union issues.

Disability Awareness Week

Along with Will, the Disabled Students Officer, and the Disability Advisory Service, I have been busy organizing this exciting week. All plans are now finalized, so look out for our posters and come along to some of our events!

World Aids Day/National HIV Testing Week

I've met nurses at the Churchill hospital to arrange HIV testing for students in 7th week, and have ordered lots of resources for the Week so keep your eyes peeled for that.

Living Out Talks

Keble invited me to give a Living Out talk, and I have many more booked in. If your college would like one, just let me know ☺

LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer) Rep Conference

This was put on by the LGBTQ Society- I attended to meet LGBTQ Officers from different colleges, and hope to support them through helping ease communication between them, and organizing specific training with help from the national Union of Students.

Student Advice Service Update

The Service was reviewed by my predecessor, with help from the National Union of Students. The result was an action plan approved by the Trustee Board to professionalise the Service. The associated resource for this move has been included in the OUSU budget submission, which is currently being approved. I have been working with the Chief Executive and the Student Advisors on an interim plan to manage the service. It has been agreed that the Vice-President (Welfare and Equal Opportunities) will retain overview of the service as part of their portfolio, but the Service will be managed by staff, which is in line with sector norms, and the ultimate aim of this is to provide a better service for students, with more transparency.

I am always happy to hear from you about any concerns, ideas or things you'd like me to be working on. Email me: welfare@ousu.org or tweet me: @OUSU_WEO!

Rachel Pickering

Vice President (Access & Academic Affairs)

Hello Council ☺

I hope you've had a great two weeks since last Council. Hopefully no 5th week blues here tonight as we get ready for hustings! I wasn't at the last Council as was on a train up to the National Union of Students (NUS) Higher Education Conference - it was an interesting day and ended with a panel discussing women in academia. We also looked at the topics of educational qualifications, employability, workspaces and partnership. Here's a bit more about what I've been up to over the past couple of weeks:

JCR Academic Affairs Meet and Greet

I've held three drop in meet and greets for JCR Academic Affairs Officers this week. We discussed a broad range of issues, covering Academic feedback sessions (AFS) to Saturday tutorials. Looking back at our last Student Advice Service report (2012/2013) recommendations I've been encouraging reps to go back to their colleges and talk to Senior Tutors about clear and transparent disciplinary, complaint and academic procedures in student handbooks and also looking at access to college facilities for suspended status (rusticated) students.

Student Led Teaching Awards (SLTA)

Our SLTA are still a way away but I've been busy this week, planning out a timetable for the awards, writing a grant application to the NUS for our SLTA and planning with Division reps how our selection panel and process will work this time. Watch this space for more information - I'll be bringing posters to Council for you to take back to your common rooms in Hilary!

Teach First

This week I met with two employees of Teach First to discuss Oxford access work with them. Following on from their recent training of ambassadors at Wadham we are going to explore what other training and workshop sessions they could provide to Oxford students interested in higher education and access. I'm just waiting to get a list of potential sessions from them, so watch this space and I'll be reporting back on what's been arranged soon ☺

Access Hub

David Messling (my predecessor) created an Access Hub which till now has been hosted on one of the many Target Schools websites... (we are currently working on getting the Target Schools websites sorted so watch this space for news on this soon). I've been updating the Access Hub info, working with Diane (our web editor) to create some new graphics for the page so fingers crossed when you get home and check out the 'Get Involved' section of our website tonight this should be up and running 😊

Target Schools

Shadowing starts this week, which is really exciting. The team have been working really hard to get everything ready in time - I'll make sure to report back in 7th week to let you know how the first few days of our new Michaelmas term shadowing goes! Any questions about how to get involved, especially for the Hilary term shadowing then do email: studentshadowing@ousu.org. We have also just managed to secure £1000 sponsorship for Target Schools t-shirts for Ambassadors who volunteer for shadowing so will be ordering these soon 😊

If you have any questions for me about this report or anything else, you're always welcome to get in touch with me at access@ousu.org. Also you can add me on twitter (@OUSU_AcAff) and I'll make sure to keep tweeting about access and academic affairs issues and events and that you might be interested in :D.

Rachel

Dan Tomlinson

Vice President (Charities & Community)

Good evening.

It's 5th week Council already, and my successor is in this room (probably). I hope you'll stay around for the hustings for all of the candidates and that you've got some questions ready for them!

One number

4.

This is the number of University Departments that pay a Living Wage to their indirectly employed staff. Last week the Living Wage Campaign said a massive thank you to those departments as part of the national celebration of the Living Wage that took place in 4th week. The campaign is now working on ways to use this positive action to encourage other departments to follow suit. Like the Facebook page: www.facebook.com/OxfordLivingWage



Environment and Ethics (E&E)

The E&E Campaign had a well attended meeting in 4th week and I think that is because the Campaign has a clear focus this year - divestment from Fossil Fuels. As I mentioned in my previous report a paper has been submitted to a University Committee to begin the conversation on divestment. If any of you are interested in this work then please get in touch or come along to the meetings on Tuesday at 5pm in OUSU.

Community

In 3rd week I hosted the first of the twice termly Oxford Student Community Partnership Group meetings in the OUSU building. These meetings bring the University, OUSU, Community Wardens, Council Staff, the OxHub, the Police, Oxford Brookes and a few more relevant community people together in one place. They are a great place for information sharing and act as a springboard for partnership work.

RAG

This is a very, very, busy time for RAG. The Bungee Jump is taking place on Gloucester Green on Sat 5th week (spaces still available), the RAG Ball has sold out to 1,200 students and is taking place on Sat 6th Week, sign-ups for Jailbreak have opened and are closing at the start of 7th Week and we are beginning to recruit for our summer challenge, a Kilimanjaro Climb. Oh, and, through the hard work of Ben Rosenbaum (the RAG Vice-President for Reps), there are 540 Oxford students taking part in Movember this month. Let the free Byron burgers roll in. If you want to get involved with any of these events, email me on charities@ousu.org

Sarah Pine

Vice President (Women)

Heya! Things I have been up to:

Consent

Trained 14 Consent Workshops Facilitators from four more common rooms. These were really fun sessions!

Written the report of the consent workshops. Drop me an email for the assessment about how successful people they were (very!)

Student Parents

Had the first Student Parent focus group. It was really great to hear from student parents about the issues they face. I'll be chasing a few of the things that came from the discussion! These include a lot of the other things on this report, as well as some broader goals about funding and social events that I'll be following up. This includes the Student Parent social this week!

Changing Facilities

A few wonderful Equal Ops officers have decided to take up the mantle of more changing facilities in colleges, working off the master list that I have put on the OUSU website. This is really helpful for new parents whose access to college activities is limited by the lack of family-friendly services.

Spouses and Partners

Spouse and partner access to college facilities. I've worked with the Mature Students Campaign, Mature Students Officer and Wadham MCR to move towards getting spouses and partners access to college facilities. This is extra helpful for student parents, who could benefit from having their whole family allowed on college sites. We've moving forward by looking at already existing policies, and asking students with spouses and partners what would be most helpful for them. I'm also putting together information for the guide that Wadham MCR are making for their members.

Women's Officer Forums

Brought together women's officers from across the university to discuss the pressing issues which they might be facing or projects that might be pushing in their common rooms. This was a really fun event, where I prepared help and materials on a range of issues. Opening up spaces of support and communication for women's officers was a main goal of mine, so I'm really happy to get this going.

It Happens Here and sexual violence

The campaign is moving forward! We've got together to solidify a lot of our goals and take them forward.

Part of this is about clarifying the current services available to students. This was echoed by the women's officers, who feel like flow charts of how to respond. I've started this project and have contacted Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre and the Counselling Service about checking the information.

Harassment

Have fixed a date and venues for our focus groups on student experiences. This is part of my continued work to highlight the prevalence of harassment for students in Oxford.

Worked with St Antony's GCR and St Anne's MCR to support them on their work on their harassment policies, as well as volunteering to support St Anthony's welfare team enforcing this at their bop.

Women's Leadership Development Programme

I've done extensive work putting together this application cycle. This has involved re-wroking the application form and putting it up on the website, re-doing the publicity, and getting the information out there. If you're interested, or women in your community want to increase their confidence as leadership skills, please get them to apply! The information is on the ousu website.

Other fun things I've done in my role have been to meet with a couple of common room officers and presidents about some shared goals and put them in touch with helpful people, met with a Nightline co-ordinator about ways that OUSU can better support a vital welfare service, went to the really fun LGBTQ Officer conference organised by the LGBTQ society president, start planning for International Women's Day and chaired an event about sex work and sex worker rights for Queer Pride week.

Sarah

PART TIME OFFICERS

Katherine Stagg

LGBTQ Officer

As part of the LGBTQ Campaign I have been working on World Aids Day (1st December) and HIV Testing Week (22nd-29th November). We are going to be holding two HIV testing events in colleges, as well as an information/awareness campaign around HIV and Aids. If anyone is interested in getting involved, please email me at lgbtqofficer@ousu.org.

Rebekka Hammelsbeck

Women's Campaign Officer

Hey Council!

Our annual Gender Equality Festival is coming up in 7th week and organising this event has taken up most of my time over the last two weeks. It's going to be a Funny Feminist Week with lots of comedy, open mic, theatre workshops, film screenings.... so get excited! (And click "attend" on facebook).

Apart from organising the festival, I've also delivered a very successful campaigns training for WomCam in 3rd week. I've also been to CRAE meetings every week (Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality) and I hope that we will work quite closely together in the future.

Cheers, Rebekka

Michael Davies

Community Outreach and Charities Officer

Hello Council! Over the past two weeks I have mainly been working on Jailbreak. This has involved:

- Organising two information evenings. These saw well over 150 attendees in total, the majority of which had not yet joined the hundreds-strong mailing list.
- Working on our online publicity and adding more content to our website (<http://oxfordjailbreak.tumblr.com>).
- Preparing for the launch of sign-ups (they're open!) by creating a network of college-based Jailbreak reps, organising sign-up sessions etc.

I also attended the Oxford Student Community Partnership Group meeting, where we discussed the future of the group and what students and staff from both of Oxford's universities and members of the council were doing to improve student-community relations.

William Brown

Rent and Accommodation Officer

Hi Council,

I've met with several Common Room Presidents to discuss specific issues relating to annual rent negotiations (or in one case, their complete absence in their college), and enjoyed being able to support and advise student representatives who were showing such diligence and dedication in working to reduce the cost of living pressures affecting their members. I am also continuing to develop plans for OUSU's rent negotiations training programme for Hilary and Trinity terms.

I have begun to investigate the feasibility of a detailed survey into Oxford students' experiences of the privately rented sector, identifying examples of best practice from other Student Unions, and will look to work on this with the next Rent and Accommodation Officer.

All the best,

Will.

Jonathan Metzger

Common Room Support Officer

As part of the ongoing effort to engage with and enthuse OUSU Reps I hosted a trip to G & Ds in which we discussed current projects and how to get involved. The event was well attended and everyone seems to have had a great time! Further such events will take place later on this term.

William Neaverson

Students and Disabilities Officer

Hi Council!

This is my last chance to tell you about **Disability Awareness Week**. It's happening *next week!* There are loads of great events going on from film screenings to seminars and I'd love to see as many of you as possible at the events. Thanks go to the OUSU publisher and the website manager for doing all the brilliant publicisation for the events after our meeting last week.

To Common Room reps/officers/presidents, if you have any normally-scheduled welfare/equal ops events in 6th week, please consider making them disability-themed! Welfare teas that focus on Mental Health or film screenings (email me for a film!) are always great ways of engaging with OUSU's wider message for the week.

I've managed to also meet with the disability officer within WomCam, and I'm looking forward to building on that connection. She had the excellent idea of an anonymous submission blog/website for disabled students' experiences in Oxford. We will be working out the logistics and launching this soon!

I hope to see you all during Disability Awareness Week! Any questions to disability@ousu.org.

Anya Metzger

Academic Affairs Campaigns Officer

I met with Rachel to discuss the publicity campaign for Online Lectures and planned how they would look and be disseminated...watch this space....

A group was established on Facebook for JCR Academic Reps/Officers and I will be posting relevant information and sharing cross-common room ideas on this space.

Nick Cooper

Grad Academic Affairs Officer

Evening Council,

Hope term is serving you well, and 5th week blues aren't striking too heavily (luckily we have Central Hustings to keep them away for tonight!) I have to admit to having been very busy simultaneously being Returning Officer for the elections in 6th week. But that aside, I've found time to look into some graduate academic issues including:

- Giving feedback to the university on how and when students use the Exam Regulations, so the eventual online version will be of use for students who need to find information without having to sift through thousands of pages
- Discussing best ways to take forward changes to Confirmation of Status for DPhil students
- Joining the University's Digital Strategy (Education) subgroup. More to come; I know you're excited!

Enjoy hustings, please vote in 6th week, and see you in 7th week when I've had a weekend of sleep.

Nick

Hamaad Mustafa

Clubs & Societies Officer

My main aim for this term is to roll in orgsync, an online platform for clubs and societies. I am currently negotiating with the US based developers over the annual price of the platform, and will be meeting with one of their representatives in person in the coming days.

Jiming Zhu

Health & Welfare Officer

This term I will be focusing on raising students' awareness of some mental health problems. I am planning to have a film screening in collaboration with the Public Health Film Club, and a group-counselling event for international students.