



## reports to 5th week council trinity 2004

**Helena Puig-Larrauri**

**President**

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I was away for two days this week, so I have a little less to report than usual.

JCC

The Joint Committee of Council with Student Members was last week, and preparing papers for that took some time. All the constitutional amendments made by council since this time last year, the budget and the accounts were accepted by JCC. Which is nice. We had a long discussion of funding from the University for sabbatical posts, but that is still to be finalised. We are also seeking to clarify the legal position of common rooms that choose not to affiliate to OUSU within the Education Act 1994. This is still pending further legal advice as the arrangements in a collegiate university are not specifically provided for in the Act.

Oriel JCR

Which leads me nicely on to the next point. Rodrigo and I produced posters for the Oriel JCR referendum (although the posters were only displayed on the internet in the end...) and I spoke at an affiliation debate in Oriel. Oriel JCR has chosen not to affiliate to OUSU next year. I am making arrangements (pending legal advice) for what services Oriel JCR members will be entitled to, and have spoken to the Junior Proctor, the Provost and the incoming and outgoing JCR presidents about this. When we have a clear decision, I will write to all Oriel JCR members to inform them of the situation.

Clubs and Socs

The online registration of clubs and societies wishing to hold stalls in the Freshers' Fair has made it possible to set up an online database of clubs and socs easily. It should be going online in the coming weeks.

NUS

I attended NUS regional conference at Oxford Brookes and spoke to the NUS president and the incoming NUS treasurer on the new arrangement for NUS affiliation as approved by last council. They have provisionally accepted this arrangement, and we will be signing a formal agreement soon. I am in the process of ensuring that all currently affiliated common rooms are happy with the new arrangement. At NUS regional conference, the issue of NUS reform was also discussed. There is a special NUS conference to discuss reform later on this term, which I hope an OUSU representative will attend.

New Vice Chancellor John Hood came to visit OUSU and we told him what we do and how we liaise with the University. Which was nice.

Entz

School's Out is in full swing - publicity going out soon, advance tickets available from [schoolsout@zoozoo.org](mailto:schoolsout@zoozoo.org). Freshers' Week tickets selling quickly, so email me if you want any.

Socially Responsible Investment

At the request of Ethics Committee, I'm looking into how the University is fairing on its SRI policy.

F&F

Meeting on where next with the F&F campaign on Tuesday. Please come along and have your say. The lobbying of Lords is drawing to an end and we need to re-assess our priorities.

**Rodrigo Davies**

**V-P (Finance)**

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The past two weeks have been a mixture of dealing with affiliations, Freshers' Fair and OUSU's business plans for next year.

I helped in the campaign to bring Oriel back, including some superb posters that only saw the light of day for a few hours thanks to a campaign of sabotage. Nevertheless I felt that OUSU received a good reception at the Oriel JCR meeting and among the most interesting suggestions was that individuals at disaffiliated common rooms could pay (or ask to have paid on their behalf) for full membership of OUSU. Though I don't think this system is workable on a large scale, it was a suggestion that highlighted the odd position in which OUSU finds itself. Further conversations with the University and colleges need to happen in order for a clear status quo to be established. I was disappointed with the Oriel result however the combination of lack of publicity and the necessity

suggestion that highlighted the odd position in which OUSU finds itself. Further conversations with the University and colleges need to happen in order for a clear status quo to be established. I was disappointed with the Oriol result, however the combination of lack of publicity and the necessity of securing a two-thirds majority (as far as I know, the only student body in the UK to require such a majority for affiliations) rather put a dampener on the pro-OUSU campaign. I hope that Oriol is receptive to continuing the discussion next year, although in the meantime a great deal of thought needs to be put into how OUSU is to deal with the deficit that is incurred as a result of the services that OUSU provides for free.

I am also pleased to report that we are in discussion with Exeter MCR regarding their proposal for a referendum on OUSU affiliation and I hope that we can ensure that the Common Room is both fully informed about the benefits of OUSU membership but also has a clear route to obtaining the services and representation that we offer. Above all, I would hope to secure a turnout well above the 35 who voted last time.

The Freshers' Fair online booking system is now online and fully operational. I am extremely pleased with the result and hopefully this will save both societies and the Fair organisers a great deal of time. It also forms plans for a much more comprehensive Clubs and Societies database online, which has the potential to be very useful to students. It will also be one of only a few comparable systems in the country.

OUSU's business team has now all been appointed, and the interview process has thrown up some exciting suggestions for how OUSU can adapt its activities to secure stable sources of revenue. Entz in particular can be a growth area and pave the way for a fully fledged Entz team in 2004/5 should council consent to the appointment of an Entz Manager. Furthermore, I think it is now time for OUSU to begin planning in terms of the next five years or so and to think about issues such as a Central Student Venue.

## **Rosie Buckland**

## **V-P (Welfare & Equal Opportunities)**

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I've had a lot of casework to do over the past couple of weeks, and as you can see from the statistics from last term, the Student Advice Service has been doing really well. We do fill a vital gap within the university, providing advice, advocacy and representation both of out of college and outside the university, but with knowledge of and links to both. In the past few months we've represented students at disciplinary hearings, helped students to move accommodation, taken cases from the disability office, advised students on harassment issues and helped them to make formal complaints, supported students with exam stress, written angry letters on student's behalf, advised them on changing course, college and tutor, helped students to find accommodation, advised them on childcare and finance issues and a number of other things. No other college or university group or person is better equipped to do this. The motion that, disappointingly, passed nem con at 1<sup>st</sup> week council, to strike policy for a full-time student advisor and instead look for specialists in legal, housing, benefits and disability issues will help us to fulfil an even better service to students and I've been working on drawing up the ground rules for these positions by talking to the legal services department in the university. I've also been talking to OSLAS, who are winding themselves down at the moment so that they can be brought under OUSU's banner over the summer and I'm working with the law faculty to ensure that we can provide trained individuals to give the best quality legal advice. I've also been working with the Dyslexia Forum on a number of issues and have also set in place the structures so that my successor can work well with the new university Dyslexia Support Worker, who will be holding weekly surgeries and sessions in OUSU as well. The police surgeries/drop in sessions are also still working well this term, with a steady stream of people using the service.

Other stuff-thanks to James Frew, who took a self-defence session this week, which was very well attended. I'm also running a listening skills session in 7<sup>th</sup> week on Tuesday at 5.30 in OUSU, so please do encourage any newly elected officers who may be doing casework (presidents, academic affairs, lgbt, welfare officers etc) to come along. I've also had a meeting with the College Doctor's Association and raised the issue of confidentiality. It was taken seriously and they're considering ways of ensuring students know that everything will be kept in confidence except in extreme circumstances and consent will first be sought. The counselling service are also going to write to the community mental health team, after I raised the issue of provision for students who have gone down for a year but are still around in Oxford, so that's all good. I also had a meeting of the committee on health and safety, where we noted the incident of someone accidentally getting mouse urine in their eyes and talked about lasers a lot. I've also helped to interview prospective mentors for the national mentoring project. And please don't forget that the ousu messageboards are now up at <http://discuss.ousu.ox.ac.uk> They're becoming a really good way of informing debate at campaign and committee meetings, and are a way of getting involved with the campaigns, even if you don't come along to meetings regularly, so please use them.

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## **Catherine Wallis**

## **V-P (Women)**

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The majority of my time has been spent preparing for the Women's Open Day. The deadline for applications has past, but I have still spent some time dealing with people who want to make late applications and have a variety of queries about this, as well as people who have applied and have not yet had their place confirmed. I have been making a detailed time-table and map to Keble to send out to all participants and will be mailing it tomorrow. **I really really need lots of volunteers for the day itself and for the accompanying booklet, so please consider it!** I need female students to cover most courses and colleges, so whatever you're studying please help out – you can do either a morning (explaining your course), an afternoon (taking people on tours of Oxford) or preferably both. Please email me your offers! I have also been doing lots of peripheral things to do with the Women's Open Day.

I have spoken to the Deputy Equal Opportunities Officer in the University about childcare in Oxford. She was preparing a paper on where funding for student parents should be concentrated and the main areas of concern and I had quite a long conversation with her about my experience of the plethora of problems faced by student parents in Oxford.

Women's Campaign have been planning a picnic for Sunday of 7<sup>th</sup> Week. OUSU will be providing lots of nice food and selling some other stuff (also nice food and drink) to raise money for RAWA (the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan) – all women students are very welcome to come along and have a great time together! We'll be in the University Parks, posters will be sent out to colleges.

With Ethics Committee I have been contacting hundreds of people (ok, probably more like dozens) to try to build the movement for Socially Responsible Investment in the University and colleges, which really needs lots of grass-roots support to get it moving. Tom Dale, one of the co-chairs, has been doing a great deal of this and I have been doing it whenever I have a spare moment. If you read this before Friday morning, we're planning to have a big meeting then to explain it all to people and ask for new ideas and support so if you're interested in helping to clean up the University's investments (so that they invest in ethical companies rather than horrible ones) then do come along – OUSU offices at 10.30 on Friday. If you don't read it by then or can't make that time but are still interested then please contact me or one of the co-chairs or exec (details on the OUSU website).

I have been doing quite a lot of talking about pro-choice (and little action, but the co-chair, exec and I will be meeting next week to rectify this). Initially the talking was with pro-choice people in other universities - one who wants to propose a pro-choice policy in her university and wanted advice from various people about wording etc. and another who had a good policy in her university about a pro-choice fund which I was interested in setting up here. The other talking was with journalists reporting the anti-choice march in Oxford.

Anyway, I have done various other things which I don't have time to tell you about since this report is due in now but they included investigating some details of contraception and some casework.

## **Dan Paskins**

## **V-P (Graduates)**

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The last couple of weeks have been taken up with One World Week and with a load of university committee meetings.

One World Week included some extremely good events. The Fair Trade lunch which had more than 150 people come along to was an especial highlight, as was the international students cultural evening the night before. I am meeting with the organisers of the Oxford One World Trust to arrange more funding for next year and will be bringing forward suggestions for how OUSU can make One World Week a major event each year.

I attended University Council, Joint Committee of Council and Student Members, Educational Policy and Standards Committee and Tutor for Graduates committee in the last week, some of which were more enjoyable and useful than others. I also went to MCR Prescom, which was extremely productive.

Casework has been quite heavy at this time of year, particularly with students having financial problems or examination-related complaints. It's almost exactly a year since I came to visit the Student Advice Service with a complaint about the conduct of my viva, so it is nice to be able to pass on advice to other students in the same position.

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**Louise McMullan                      V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)**

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Target schools: Has met once in the past two weeks. We are currently looking to replace our co-chairs, whose terms finish at the end of Trinity. We are continuing to work on policy issues, both in meetings and through the message boards on [discuss.ousu.ox.ac.uk](http://discuss.ousu.ox.ac.uk). Both open days are now also fully booked up.

Academic affairs committee: Is meeting today (Wednesday) taking the form of a joint meeting between academic affairs officers and CR admissions/access reps to mimic a mini EPSC style agenda. If this works we may combine the two and concentrate on broad policy issues in the forum structure of Target schools while dealing with more practical matters affecting CR representatives through academic affairs and admissions committee. Acaff committee is also continuing its work on exam failure and study skills – a motion on the former, emanating from the committee is on today's council agenda.

Casework: Caseload remains high, a number of students are now coming forward with exam related problems, mostly to do with withdrawal and getting help because of illness affecting performance. There has also been a significance increase in other kinds of academic welfare enquiries – changing college/course and academic discipline forming the majority of issues.

A fair bit of time has also been spent running the recruitment drive for the National Mentoring Project on behalf of the Oxford Education Action Zone. Interviews were held for the posts on Wednesday – many many thanks to Rosie and Dan S for sitting through those 6ish hours!

I could say plenty more but I'd add it in Council - not enough time now!

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**Josefa Henry-Bochan                      V-P (Charities and Communities)**

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Most events have stopped now, but we had Corpus, Hilda's and Keble events over the weekend.

There is still stuff going on, including raids, pants, BBQ's and five a side football. The skydive will be happening (again) on June 7th. This week we also had our first speed dating event which was very successful and we hope to continue to run next term. Charity Nominations are open until Fri of 6th week, anyone can nominate a charity, details on [www.oxfordrag.co.uk](http://www.oxfordrag.co.uk).

Next week is Student Volunteering Week and among other events we will be running a workshop in Volunteering in Oxford, which we have several volunteer co-ordinators from different sectors in the local community coming along to.

I have also met with the Mandela Rhodes Foundation again, along with other societies involved in working in Africa. I think it would be a good idea for OUSU to build links with them and hope to bring a motion about this to the next council.

Environment Day is June 5th. Environment Committee are producing t-shirts for this and will be having a stall on Bonn Square/Westgate featuring Envirocop, as well as organising publicity stunts.

They have brought a motion confirming our belief that the University should continue to use green electricity.