



reports to 5th week council trinity 2005

**Nicky Ellis
Opportunities)**

Vice-President (Welfare and Equal

Proctors meeting

The President, VP (Access and Academic affairs) and myself met with the senior and junior proctors and the assessor; matters I raised included the promise by the previous senior proctor to look into opportunities for providing legal advice for students about accommodation; sadly this project seems to have got lost in the proctors' office handover, as has the old idea of the student aid office, but we are doing what we can to resurrect them. I also raised my concerns about the sale of graduate housing and wrote a brief paper on these on the assessor's request. He then took these concerns and others that he had received to the Vice- Chancellor; the feedback was that it now seems extremely unlikely that sale of the university's graduate student accommodation to a college consortium will take place. Apparently, what will happen instead is currently being considered by the parties concerned. This gives us some breathing space, and takes the worry from those with immediate concerns about their housing; however it obviously doesn't address the more general concerns. The Vice Chancellor indicated that he considered this to be a college matter, and that concerns should be addressed to conference of colleges in future, a frustrating response. I will continue to make our concerns known.

Thanks to all of those that attended the extraordinary council on the governance review- though bits of it were clearly trying for all, I think it was a valuable and impressive discussion, and certainly raised some points that were useful for my thinking. If anyone would like to see my submission- which concerns student services and equal opps provision- please do ask. I talked this through with some members of the disability office, who were supportive, and made some very helpful suggestions which allowed me to tidy up my thinking. This was part of a general meeting, which I took Aidan, my successor to, so that he could start to become familiar with the disability office- part of this job involves working closely with them, and they are extremely helpful and dedicated.

I attended, also with Aidan, the beginning of the meeting of the Exec Sub-Committee for the Counselling Service- we are not allowed to attend the full meeting, unfortunately. I raised all the general issues of concern that had been brought to me, but it is not the most helpful of forums- those there are mainly well up on the issues which concern us all. On the other hand, it is not the most effective forum for lobbying for changes to established practice. It only meets once a year, which somewhat limits its efficacy as far as the sort of issues that we are concerned with go; it was helpful to ask some questions, nonetheless, and I am grateful to Aidan for taking the time out from finals to attend. If anyone would like a copy of our notes from the meeting, again, please ask.

I have circulated some more detailed information about the condom machine proposals, and hope that we can put in an order for all those who are interested before the end of term, so as to be ready for Michalemas.

On the equal opportunities front, Disability action will be meeting twice next week- many thanks to our co-chair Leonardo for his work on this. We have received responses from 23 colleges to our freedom of information requests to see their disability assessments, and we will be discussing these. We will also be looking at the Disability guide, our reference for students with disabilities, as we intend to produce an update this summer. If anyone is interested and would like more info

or to be put on the group maillist, please contact either leonardo.martinez@magdalen.oxford.ac.uk or myself on welfare@ousu.org.

By the time council meets we will have held a QR meeting to gauge interest- more on that to follow; I've also met with a graduate student who is planning to work with us to hold a series of events on race and racism in Michaelmas- we're planning some speaker events and debates, and she has many other good ideas as well. If you have any ideas or would like to help us plan this, then please email me on welfare@ousu.org.

I have been working on the website, believe it or not; there is now a section on counselling options, one on legal advice, which provides details of voluntary organisations helpful in this area- many thanks to Frances Barnwell in the university legal services for having this information compiled to me. I'm also slowly getting the DA guide on line.

Rebecca Wilkinson	V-P (Women)
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I have spent a lot of the past two weeks in talks with various parts of the University. I have sorted things out with the Marshall and the Head of Security services, so that the VP(Women) gets final say over what goes into the University diaries distributed at Fresher's fair. This should prevent the scenario which happened last year re-occurring. There is also a lot of discussion surrounding the childcare fund currently ongoing. I have been trying to find out more about this, and what it will mean for student parents. The final plans should come out some time around the end of June. As soon as they are announced I will inform people of the changes, and create a new student parents guide to reflect the funding changes. This will also include the information about the new child-minder network, which has become up and running. Hopefully, when the changes have been decided upon we will then be able to apply to the University for some funding, so we can have a properly re-vamped student parent guide. The finishing touches of the ED Guide have been worked on – it still lacks a suitable front-cover, suggestions gladly received- and am still in negotiations as to where the funding for it will come from. The SWEDA board is now up and running, and I would encourage Common Rooms to advertise it. I have also been looking into the possibility of OUSU having a No-Diet-Day next year, inline with many other Universities. Cambridge is the forerunner on this event, and I have been liaising with them about how they support this project. Now that we have moved the Women's Open Day, it seems like an ideal focus for Trinity Term. I put together a finals strategy survey, but sadly no-one can decide when is the best time to do a survey of how people revise for finals. Nonetheless everyone is pretty agreed that mid-way through finals is probably not the best time! So that project will have to be held off. Hopefully, it will be able to be rolled out soon and the results will give us something to build on in the finals forum write up. The Nightbus has now been wound-down for the Summer. Negotiations over next years scheme will begin shortly between myself, my successor, the Brookes Deputy President and his successor. I will keep you updated on them. I have also been working on some council motions, including the ones in this council. And attended Emergency Council last Friday. I have also been avidly listening to OXIDE: 87.7FM, but sadly missed the show put on by our great leader!

Linsey Cole Affairs)	V-P (Access & Academic
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Over the past two weeks, lots of the projects I have been working on over the past year have been coming together.

One of my priorities for the year was study skills – there is little organised ‘study support’ in Oxford, with many students not knowing where to seek additional help with academic work from, should they need it. As some of you are aware, I undertook a study skills audit of the university, compared it with the level of support at other institutions and took a paper to EPSC. Following what seems like weeks of committee meetings, the paper was approved and the university are now trying to earmark funding for the creation of a ‘Student Learning Advisor’, to oversee study support across the departments and colleges. The need for such a post can be seen in the success of recent workshops/sessions run by OUSU; we’ve held a couple of “Exam Essay Writing” sessions in the past two weeks – both were well-attended and the feedback showed how useful people found them and interestingly, how students wanted more of them throughout the academic year...Nick Cole was, as ever, brilliant at delivering the sessions so thanks to Nick.

I had a mammoth day of meetings on Tuesday of 4th week, involving the Proctors, Congregation and Senior Tutors Committee. Congregation has to be one of my strangest experiences of Oxford committee meetings; the turnout (in excess of 500 academics/senior staff) showed Oxford’s academics were keen to make their voices heard. With debate involving turkeys, Benedictine monks and Trojan Horses, it certainly was an interesting 4 hours in the Sheldonian Theatre. Five hours later, I was still stuck in meetings, this time Senior Tutors Committee! Tuesday really was an epic day...

I also spent much of last week writing the motion on Governance that was taken to the Extraordinary Council in 4th week and this week, writing the submission based on the motion. I really valued the discussion in that particular council, so thanks to all who made it along and brought amendments forward.

Libraries have also been keeping me busy – I’ve met with several Common Room representatives and committees to discuss issues/concerns and am working on how to feed into the formulation of the proposals. The summary sheet seems to have increased awareness of what changes are being proposed; Academic Affairs Committee has also been working on an electronic survey over the past few weeks, which should be ready to go on Monday of 6th week – THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD – MAKE SURE YOU USE IT!

With Target Schools, I have been supporting those students who do lots of access work off their own initiative. We had a successful school visit last weekend from London Academy and I’ve supported individual students in their outreach work. The Admissions Discussions Sessions in 4th and 5th week prompted some interesting debate – I will be bringing a motion to 7th week Council to clarify our current admissions policy. Plans for open days are going well – what is now needed is lots of eager people to take over from this years co-chairs when they step down in 9th week. If you’re interested, email me on access@ousu.org - Target Schools is such a wonderful thing to be involved with, a chance to meet like-minded people and to make a real difference. I’ve also been speaking to various people about the creation of a VP Access and a VP Academic but I shall save that for 7th week....

Ian King Community)	V-P	(Charities	and
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This is my penultimate Council, so it is with a happy mind which I write this report. There’s a lot on the agenda, so I shall keep this as brief as possible. The last week and a bit’s been markedly less hectic than I am used to in OUSU. The bungee jump went without a hitch, though the rain and

the low numbers of people attending dampened the mood a little. The RAG Sports Day was great fun. Of the nine teams who entered, New College triumphed and won the coveted prize: a crate of Fosters. The OxStu joined in too, with a team of editorial (male) staff, but retreated to a pub having been crushed by all but a girls team from St John's. Other things that have been eating up my time recently have been meetings in London to meet with headteachers and other people involved with the Olga Primary School volunteering scheme; we're hoping to get more and more volunteers recruited to do mentoring in this school in Tower Hamlets next year. Last night there was an introduction and drinks evening held at Magdalen to encourage people to get involved and volunteer as well as to thank those already helping out.

Around 10 voluntary groups attended and the evening was a huge success. I've been doing other things too, but compared to bungee jumping and sports days, they're rather banal, so I'll bring this report to a close. If you have any questions, as ever, I will be happy to answer them.