

# OUSU

## reports to council

5th week trinity 2008

**Martin McCluskey**

**President**

Welcome to 5<sup>th</sup> Week OUSU Council. This week, coming from the leafy north Oxford suburbs. The last couple of weeks have been pretty busy as we work towards completing the reports to go to Extraordinary Council next Friday and preparing for the handover to the new sab team in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Week.

### Extraordinary Council

At their 5<sup>th</sup> Week meeting, the OUSU Executive resolved to have an extraordinary Council in 6<sup>th</sup> Week to discuss the changes to Policy Making/Governance and Elections.

### Diversity and Equal Opportunities

Along with the other sabs, I met with Felicity Cooke (the University's Head of Diversity and Equal Opportunities) to discuss the University's work on Equal Opportunities.

### Proctors

I attended the Common Room Presidents' meeting with the Proctors'. Among other things, we discussed taking bottled water into exams, behaviour after exams and special arrangements for exams.

### Rent

Along with Dom, I met with Tim Knowles, Estates Bursar of Lincoln College, to discuss this year's Oxford College Costs Index (which replaces the Van Noorden Index). We received info from him on the methodology for this year's index and changes that are being proposed for it next year. I also raised the issue of student representation on the College Finances Working Group (which formulates OCCI), which Tim Knowles said he would raise at a future meeting of the group.

OUSU was also successful in a Freedom of Information Request to the University for detailed College financial information for the past few years.

With Dom, I hosted a Rent Meeting for JCR and MCR Reps in OUSU.

### Groupware

I attended a meeting of the Groupware Shortlisting Panel. There are going to be public demonstrations of possible solutions next week. To register, go to [https://register.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxford/groupware\\_demo\\_booking\\_students](https://register.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxford/groupware_demo_booking_students)

### Conference of Colleges

I had a meeting with the Master of Pembroke, head of the Conference of Colleges, to discuss a number of issues including student representation on Conference Committees and College Governing Bodies.

### Charitable Status

I have had a number of meetings with JCR and MCR Presidents regarding the implications of the Charities Act 2006. Lord Butler, Master of Univ and head of the Conference of Colleges Legal Panel, has sent a letter to all Head of House asking if they want independent legal advice on implications of the Act. **I think it is essential that Colleges commission this advice and to the benefit of JCR and MCR Presidents.** The deadline for Heads of House to get back to Lord Butler is May 30<sup>th</sup>. Please raise this with your head of house prior to that date.

### Prescom

I attended JCR Prescom at St. Benet's. Much fun was had.

### University Council

I attended University Council. Most important thing coming out of this meeting is the formation of two groups looking at Fees Policy for the University, in the run up to the 2009 Review. OUSU will be represented on both groups. This is also significant as it is the first time we've been represented on a fairly high level working group of PRAC, which we are requesting representation on at the moment.

### Appointment of New Staff

We held interviews for the Strategy and Financial Admin Manager. Appointment is expected within the next week. We'll be holding interviews for Student Advisor in the next couple of weeks.

### Accommodation Office

With Louise, I met with Sue Jacobs from the University Accommodation Office. We discussed Tenancy Agreements and the possibility of changes to the agreements for University accommodation.

### Reach Oxford

I met with Emma Sabzalieva from the International Office for a final wrap-up meeting about the Reach Oxford scholarship.. So far, we've made four scholarship offers. I'll update again on this in seventh week.

### Common Rooms

I attended a Magdalen MCR Exec Meeting

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| <b>Rich Hardiman</b> | <b>V-P (Finance)</b> |
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The best there is.

The best there was.

The best there ever will be.

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| <b>Louise Randall<br/>Opportunities)</b> | <b>V-P</b> | <b>(Welfare</b> | <b>and</b> | <b>Equal</b> |
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Welcome to 5th week council, and I hope you've avoided the blues so far! We are hurtling towards our handover to our successors at a rate of knots, and I can't believe we only have 3 weeks more of term time left as OUSU sabs. Here are a few of the things I've been up to over the last few weeks:

## SAS

The SAS has been, as always, extremely busy this Trinity. I'll try and have some total user statistics for you by 7th week! Looking ahead, beyond the day to day struggle to keep on top of casework and other responsibilities, Martin & I have finished off the SAS Review Group report, after 4 long months, and we're confident that if accepted by Council, it will do a lot to improve and stabilise the work of the SAS. We have also been processing a good pile of very good applications for the position of Student Advisor. We'll be interviewing and appointing soon. Watch this space!

## Welfare audit

Currently OUSU is writing a document for the QAA audit that the University will be undergoing next year – not unlike Ofsted in schools. A large amount of data collection and research has been done for the paper, which we will be presenting as a preliminary draft soon. I am currently wading through the slow process of data analysis, and looking at what students think of the welfare services provided by the central university, and what inconsistencies (if any) there are in the quality of welfare support students receive between different colleges. It's a time consuming process for all, but well worth it if positive change can be brought out of the audit.

## Disability support

We're currently making lots of progress in the world of Specific Learning Difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia etc). We've been working on proposals to take to the University to improve the way that students needing special exam arrangements are dealt with. Currently the system is pretty complicated and bureaucratic to navigate, and the experience of students varies greatly between colleges. The University has been making positive noises about our proposal, and hopefully a working group will be set up to improve the system. I'll keep you posted!

## Other...

Other than that I have been busy with the day to day business of liaising with the University welfare services, and also supporting common room officers e.g. JCR welfare officers, MCR welfare officers, LGBTQ reps, Equal Opportunities reps – writing mailings, organising meetings, answering questions that they may have, distributing publications, etc! It is a growingly time consuming part of the job, and I hope that reflects well in how OUSU has been increasingly engaging with and supporting common room officers to do their jobs. They're a fantastic group of people, and I've loved working with them this year.

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| <b>Hannah Roe</b> |
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| <b>V-P (Women)</b> |
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## Audit

I wrote an initial draft on the University's structures and student representation for equality and diversity issues which I discussed with the Head of the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Unit and the Pro VC (Personnel and Equal Opportunities). The way that the University addresses Equal Opportunities issues has been a certain degree of flux over recent years - and student representation seems to have been rather left behind in the process of change. Hopefully this is something that we can work constructively with the University to address. I will be having a follow up meeting on the Audit submission. I've also organised focus groups and a questionnaire, the results from which I will spend the majority of next week on assimilating into the OUSU submission on equality and diversity.

## Safety Bus and Student Safety

I wrote a short document explaining the importance of the safety bus in the context of OUSU's work

on student safety issues. I contacted Brookes on a number of occasions, arranging meetings, finalising contract issues, addressing student questions about the running of the bus. I contacted Thames Valley Police about more recent crime figures- I'm awaiting a reply.

The OUSU website now contains information about the distinctions between the two types of licensed taxis, private hire and hackney - and the general importance of only using properly licensed taxi vehicles.

#### Women's Open Day

Information about this is now all on the OUSU and University website.

#### OUSU's Promoting Choice Policy

Both of Oxford's MPs voted in line with OUSU policy in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, notably in retaining the current time limit. This was subsequent to e-mails I sent, outlining OUSU policy, though the causal relationship may be weak! The OUSU Pro-Choice campaign also organised a group to attend the protest outside parliament on the 20th May.

#### Thirst Lodge Motion

I drafted and sent a letter to Thirst Lodge, signed by Martin, Louise and myself. This was following the motion passed at the last OUSU Council on the mirror. I sent copies to Evan Harris MP and the Head of the Student Health and Welfare Committee.

#### Harassment

Subsequent to the training for the women's and women's welfare officers on harassment and conversations with the International Students Campaign and Women's Campaign, it has become clearer that it would be useful to introduce a positive initiative to increase student awareness about the standards of behaviour the university codes of conduct expect. Following various conversations this week, it seems that there is a college interested in trialling a presentation in Fresher's week, potentially from the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Unit, on codes of conduct and how the Harassment Advisory network operates. The long term goal is that this approach be adopted by other colleges.

**Ingrid Frater**

**V-P (Graduates)**

#### **Audit Student Submission**

Audit is now taking over – we're steadily getting our submission ready and it'll be brought to seventh week Council.

#### **Mature Students**

We're organising an evening for mature students on 30th May. So far I had nearly 20 interested students which is great. I'm hoping that this can be a bit of a launch for the Mature Students' Autonomous Campaign.

#### **Equal Opps and sixth week**

Linked with the mature students' evening, we're going to be widely publicising the work of the autonomous campaigns in sixth week and hopefully getting more people involved and raising awareness of Oxford diversity.

#### **Election Group**

We've been plugging away at sorting out how elections can be run in the future, ready to report to

Council.

### **Felicity Cooke**

We met with Felicity who is the Head of Equal Opps, discussing the University's work.

### **Graduate Admissions**

This is slowly getting there... A consultation paper should be going out this week or next. I fully endorse what's happening.

### **EPSC**

We discussed issues including Grad Admissions, plagiarism and widening participation.

### **Teaching and Learning Space**

I've been on this working group all year and the final report is now being finished for EPSC in sixth week – it looks very good, putting T&L spaces as a priority in education and finance.

### **Graduate Committee of Conference of Colleges**

Met on Tuesday. College Advisors, Audit, Grad Admissions, fees policy etc were all discussed. Plenty of progress needed, but it is coming.

### **Magdalen MCR**

Martin and I went to speak to their Exec.

### **College Academic Administrators Communications Briefing**

James I went to this, discussing future admin processes, inc. Grad Admissions.

### **University Council**

We asked for student representation on fees working groups and got that,

### **Committee for the Language Centre**

There is now a paper on language learning going to EPSC, which uses all the work we did in Council and with JCRs and MCRs – woop woop!

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| <b>James Lamming</b> |
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| <b>V-P (Access &amp; Academic Affairs)</b> |
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It is fifth week, and I've been particularly busy so haven't had time for any blues. Which is a good thing on balance. My main work has been on supporting Target Schools and the Student Written Submission. Tangential work out of the Student Written Submission including a paper on giving students entitlement to get their university examination papers back. Little to add, except to say sign up to the Target Schools mailing list and come along to the training sessions.

**Target Schools** – The Target Schools committee have continued to be stunningly brilliant. Training sessions are now in full swing, two planning groups to look at shadowing and interview training have been formed, and information about the schools to visit is being distributed. It is not too late to get involved. In fact, if you not already involved, you should be! Sign up to the mailing list at [www.targetschoolsoxford.com](http://www.targetschoolsoxford.com) and come to one of the training sessions in Exeter College on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> week (29th May) at 7pm, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> week (2nd June) at 5pm or Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> week (11th June) at 5pm. And bring all your friends!

**Disability Paper** – A working group looking at Students with Specific Learning Difficulties is being formed almost identical to the one Ingrid and I proposed in our paper to EPSC.

**Student Written Submission** – Some progress writing the introduction, digging out data on college endowments and how this affects the likelihood you'll have senior academics teaching you. Produced a comment piece for the Ox Stu on this issue, though my humorous analogy was edited. However, I've posted the original article on my blog ([www.ousu.org/about/blogs/james-blog](http://www.ousu.org/about/blogs/james-blog)).

**Misc** – Casework, EPSC, prepared paper for Admissions Executive covering my work this year, University Council where I won student representation on the University Fee Policy Working Groups, have prepared a paper for the next EPSC on giving students entitlement to receive their university examination scripts back, and attended Committee for the Language Centre where their recommended policy statement matches previous policy passed by OUSU.

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| <b>Claire Addison<br/>Community)</b> | <b>V-P</b> | <b>(Charities</b> | <b>&amp;</b> |
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RAG

The RAG committee have been pretty busy this past fortnight organising the Summer Twist Cocktail event in the Union Chamber. Special mention has to go to Riya for working so hard to get this event off the ground. It was a huge success and has made hundreds of pounds for charity.

I've also been working on Festival4Darfur, which was postponed from last Sunday to this coming Sunday (hint hint). We've lined up the Belles, the Imps and loads of open mic performers from amongst the student body. Entry is free but donations are very very welcome.

This Saturday is also Summer Eights and RAG will be down by the river selling all manner of fun things.

E&E

Green Week 2008 was a huge success and further cements the event in the university calendar. The launch picnic drew a massive crowd, as did the Amnesty International letter writing lunch, complete with environmental theme. However, the highlight of the week was the conservation day at Aston Rowant Nature Reserve where we learnt how to herd sheep. We're currently working on the Green Handbook to be given out at Freshers' Fair and the Green League Table. 7th week is also National Recycling Week so there will be informative posters up for that.

COMMUNITY

I've had meetings with several community groups in the past week including Black Oxford, the Cowley Soup Kitchen and Headington Hospice.

The student volunteering committee continues to go from strength to strength. We've just sent in our enormous application for funding for loads of new projects starting in Michaelmas, so fingers crossed.

OUSU

The usual OUSU drudgery continues apace! Highlights include the institutional audit (woop woop) and near concussing myself on the iron trolley whilst cleaning the office for SAFAM. I will not be sad to leave these troubles behind.

That will have to do for this week. Huge final report to come at the next council - the last one!

## **PART TIME OFFICERS**

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| <b>Daniel Lowe<br/>Officer</b> | <b>Environment and Ethics</b> |
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Hello Council,

Not much to report on the E&E front. Green week went off without a hitch last week so we're taking a bit of rest at the moment to plan for next year. Elections for Chair of the E&E committee are being conducted online this term, and its the first time ever we have a contested election. We're also setting up the framework for the business award scheme and really stepping up on writing the E&E handbook. Also watch this spae for the Green survey, more dilligent than ever before, we're making up the green norrington table again, results will be out (hopefully) for 7th week council.

Wow, it looks like we're doing a lot more than I realised.

Happy 5th week,