

OUSU

reports to council

5th week trinity term 2009

Lewis Iwu

President

New OUSU Premises

Last week I met with various parties from the University to discuss a list of suitable properties that would house the Student Union. An important factor in moving to a new location would be prominence and how prominent any new premises would be, the space to expand into new activities and new areas as well as accessibility for all students.

One of the leading locations is the former abacus colleges next to Old Orleans and STA Travel. A major advantage of this location is its prominence and the fact that it is off George St with the ability to place a very prominent sign at the front plus the ability to put up a flag. The Interior has recently been refurbished and has no internal walls as such (it is spread over two wings and occupies the entire floor over STA travel and Old Orleans. This has the huge advantage of allowing us to mould the wings to our specific needs. There is no doubt in my mind and the mind of the University that this property is a significant improvement on our current one.

The owner of the property are also completely revamping the front to make it more welcoming than it is at present.

Nothing has been finalised and we are still on the lookout for property but once the official specifications have been sent over we will have a serious think about this location debating the pros and cons. Needless to say this is a very positive development for the Student Union.

Common Rooms

Thank you to all the common rooms that have hosted me recently either to talk about Tuition fees or the work of OUSU more generally. It is amazing to be able to meet many students with a diverse array of opinions and I look forward to meeting more of your common room students during my remaining weeks. As always feel free to contact me if you want me to attend either a meeting of your executive or a general meeting of your common room.

NUS Funding our future

The details of the NUS' alternative funding blueprint have been finalised and will be published on June 10th. As soon as this is allowed to be released I will send a copy to your common room representatives.

Rosanna McBeath

V-P (Welfare and Equal Opportunities)

Hello everyone,

I'm so sorry for the quietness on my end over these last couple of weeks. I was out of the office for a fortnight with a very bad back. I'm back now, though still on painkillers. Because of this, I've spent the last week trying to get back on my feet and catch up. I'm getting there...slowly.

Before I get stuck in, just a quick note to say that the new bod cards are now being printed!

I am currently working on a report about the Student Advisor for JCC. This is looking at the work Lisa has done this last year, and how great she has been. If any one has any input on the role, please let me know. I am

also starting the groundwork for part three of my College Equality report. We still have quite a few college offices who have not responded, so I am chasing them up. I've also started to put together a survey to be sent to common rooms, so we can find out what students would like their colleges to offer. I am hoping to have a draft report done by 7th week council. If anyone would like to get involved please let me know. As soon as this survey is completed I would be really grateful if you could all forward them out to your common room

On a related note, we have put together a database of library hours from the information gathered, which has been emailed out. From the other data collected, I'm looking at putting together spread sheets with information on numbers of years accommodation is offered, remit of the Deans, intermission vs rustication, penal collections and nursery help. If there are any more databases you would like compiled, please let me know.

I am having difficulty booking an accessible room in the centre of town for the SWD campaign meetings. If your college has a room we can use, please let me know.

I am currently working on condom suppliers and I'm confident we will have new suppliers within the next week or so. However, we will need to sell the remaining stock of Safex and Durex before we can start selling the new brands. I will send around an update on this on prelist next week.

I am looking to hold Welfare Officer meetings and Equal Opps officer meetings next week, so please encourage your common room officers to come along.

I wish everyone with exams coming up the very best of luck! If you have any questions please ask me in council or send me an email: welfare@ousu.org

Welfare love!
Rosanna x

Rachel Cummings

V-P (Women)

In the past two weeks:

- We held the **Women In Politics Access** day on Saturday 23rd, with 100 16/17 year old young women attending the day at St John's. There was a speech from Ann Cryer MP, buffet lunch, a forum (with Rosa Prince from the Telegraph, Amanda Farnsworth from the BBC, and Bridget Kendall BBC diplomatic correspondent) on political journalism and four different graduate seminars for them to attend. Initial feedback was very positive, but we also distributed feedback forms and will be looking through them to work out how to improve for the future. A news article on the event will be/has been published on the University website.

- **Ladyfest** was a massive success last week, congratulations to Lucy Edwards in particular for making it awesome. On Sunday night we launched the event with a Sunday Roast evening, lots of live female bands, zines, cakes, boardgames, newspapers etc. On Monday we had a special Ladyfest themed WomCam, Tuesday saw the excellent Film and Ethnicity Workshop, Wednesday was the big gig at the Jericho Tavern with awesome bands and more zines, Thursday was a Ladyfest themed Feminist Book Group and then we made lots of money for the Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre through cake sales at the Crafternoon as well as having workshops and exhibitions of our female icons on Saturday.

- On Monday night held the second **Public Speaking Workshop** with Mel Bunce and Elizabeth Bauer leading the session. We did practice exercises and then mock debates, there was a good turn-out and we now have a maillist of around 40 women interested in the series.

- I helped at a **Graduate Humanities Teaching Seminar on Gender**, having been asked to go and speak about the Women Report.

- Attended and helped organise the **OUSU consultation meeting**. Working on info about OUSU's representational successes and on OUSU's relationship with the wider world from suggestions in the meeting

- Working on the **hust** code of practice document, and helping with the new college **database** system suggested by JCR presidents.
 - **Presentated a paper** to International Gender Studies Circle entitled 'Minding the Gap: WomCam and the Vice-President (Women)', widening links with other organisations e.g. Network of Oxford for Justice & Peace
 - Did further work on the **Women's Graduate Study Event** - which will be in Balliol 5-7pm, June 4th. Both graduate and undergrad women very welcome.
 - **Women's Officers Meeting** on Thursday 4pm in OUSU, with a good discussion.
 - **WomCam** had two excellent meetings discussing decision making processes and women in the arts, we are working on a map on feminist groups world-wide, planning the Love Your Body Garden Party (June 13th) and linking up with St Catz group on international Women's Rights. We had two more WomCamCom(mittee) meetings planning future discussions and campaigns.
- Also** held another Tea and Toys, and Enough!, attended the JCR PresCom meeting and a Somerville JCR meeting.

Kaushal Vidyarthee	V-P (Graduates)
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University and College Committees: - Since the last OUSU council meeting, I have been to the meetings of the University Council, Education Committee; Graduate Skills Advisory Group, Clubs Committee and the Graduate Tutors' Committee of Conference of Colleges.

International Students' Campaign: The campaign is doing great job. They are having open meeting and bye-election for its committee members on Thursday.

Oxford International Festival: The festival was a huge success and we had more than 1200 visitors (almost double than the last year). Food stalls were major attractions at the Festival this time. Many University officials including Dr. Heather Bell, Director of International Strategy came to the event. I would like to thank the OIF Committee and especially the chair- Xander who put in so much time and effort to make the event so successful.

Mature Students' Campaign: MSC drinks' evening is now on Thursday of sixth week.

Student Advice Service: It is going good.

Common Rooms- I attended the JCR prescom and the OUSU consultation meeting. I am also looking forward to the MCR PresCom in Sixth week.

Postgraduate Assembly: At the PGA we discussed the review group's report and came up with final recommendations.

Paul Dwyer	V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)
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Well here we have it- my penultimate council report. What follows is an exciting account of the past weeks since last we met. More contemplative than an Ingmar Bergman film, and yet with more twists and turns than anything M. Night Shyamalan could ever hope to produce. This is my masterpiece effort- my 'Wild Wild West', if you will.

The Big Brother/Big Sister kicked off properly on Saturday, and was a huge success. We had three young people come to us from all over Oxfordshire, with the aim of meeting their mentors and generally having a great day out in Oxford. Each of the students was trained to use the e-mentoring programme that we will be using (Confident Futures), before going for lunch and then on to the Oxford International Festival.

The aim of the scheme is to provide young people who are currently in care with a mentor, who they can talk to online during the week about their work or about their life in general. Every few weeks we will be holding activity days for the young people, and we hope that the pilot will carry on being as successful as this initial day has been.

Target Schools is looking pretty awesome as always. Training sessions are fully underway, with two a week being the aim for the rest of term. If you haven't been trained then you need to ask yourself why not, and make sure to get yourself on the school visit bandwagon. We do offer expenses, although nothing quite as extravagant as a Duck Island.

There will be a major recruitment drive on the Saturday of Summer Eights, where we will be handing out gallons of sweets and signing people up for our mailing list- so look out for our fetching red t-shirts!

I have been talking to the Access Office recently, and have negotiated with them a deal that sees 400 Alternative Prospectus's being given out to students who are visiting Oxford this year to take part in the various summer school programmes being run. This is a really positive step in getting the AP's out there, and I'm really happy that we could go ahead with this. (Less happy at having to lug 14 boxes of the things over to Wellington Square!)

You might remember that in Michaelmas and Hilary, OUSU undertook quite a lot of work as part of the University's institutional audit. This process involved us both writing a submission that would be used by the auditors, as well as meeting with the audit team to talk to them about student life as we see it. The university has had an initial report back, and while I cannot reveal the contents of said report due it still being confidential at the minute, I can say that the QAA obviously took the work that was carried out by OUSU very seriously, and that this is reflected in their observations.

The results of the NSS survey were recently published (well, the results of the results, as opposed to any real findings as of yet), and the most disappointing news is the Oxford was the only University in the country not to hit the 50% threshold. This means that when the results have been fully analysed, Oxford's will not be published for use by prospective students, as well as having knock on effects in other areas (such as league tables that are put together using the NSS results). Ahead of next year we need to formulate a policy in terms of advertising the survey adequately, and making sure that we can hit the 50% target.

There is a possibility being mooted that Turnitin (the software that the University uses for detecting plagiarism) is to be used more extensively, but as a formative tool rather than simply a detection tool. This means that it might be possible for students to submit a piece of work into the software, and then talk about proper academic practice when it comes to citation with their tutors. This is likely to have a significant impact on both undergraduates and postgraduates, and could be quite a positive step. Nothing has been agreed upon yet, but this is a step in the right direction, and I will keep you posted of any developments.

I am currently undertaking tentative negotiations concerning the Alternative Prospectus, and will be hopefully in a position to start advertising for an editor/project leader at some point in the very near future. If you know anyone who has mad design skills, or who might be good at handling a project of this size, then please do let me know! Look out for future adverts in papers and on mailing lists etc.

Hopefully you will have all got Lewis's email this week concerning the fact that there are no longer going to be pass/class lists displayed outside Exam Schools this year telling people of their results. Instead, the results for both finalists and prelimists will be accessible through their own Single Sign-On accounts, as outlined in the email. If anyone is unsure about the process, or would like any more information, then please do email and let me know.

We come from the land of the ice and snow, from the midnight sun where the hot springs blow- Robert Plant.

Jack Wellby

V-P (Charities & Community)

The past two weeks have been hectic. Who said anything about winding down?! Here's a quick summary of what I've been up to. As always if you'd like to know more about anything listed below then drop me an email (community@ousu.org) or come and find me!

- We have continued to have a very productive 'charity reps' meeting every Monday at 5pm. There are usually about 30 people representing most common rooms across Oxford. In the last two weeks we have discussed the working group's proposal regarding common room donations to charities; upcoming RAG events; assisting and sharing of best practice between reps and what we could purchase as a central resource for affiliated reps to borrow from OUSU (BBQ is top of the list currently).
- RAG is still going very well and projections are for a very successful year. We have a stall at Summer Eights with an Alcohol license and strawbs and cream so pay us a visit on Saturday.
- Summer Twist is on Saturday of 6th week. Billed as the cheapest unlimited alcohol black tie event of the year it is not to be missed. Tickets are £15 and can be bought online at: <http://oxfordhub.org/RAGSummerTwist>.
- 6th week is Green Week and we have a range of events throughout the week including many colleges screening 'The Age of Stupid' – a film about climate change. The end of the week sees a street collection for the environmental charity 'EarthWatch'. If you'd like to get involved in any of this please let me know. For more details search 'Oxford Green Week 2009' on Facebook.
- Talks are well underway with The Oxford Hub about formalising a relationship with OUSU which would be brilliant for both organisations. I'll be bringing a motion in 7th week about this.
- Attended the OUSU International Students' Festival which was superb.
- Organised a Refugee Forum on Tuesday in the Union with speakers including Lord John Krebs, Gustav Born and Katie Ghose.
- The working group on Common Room Charity Giving met for the last time on Wednesday and I'm putting together the final version of the report. It suggests a 'duel-pot' approach which can be incorporated into common room giving. We are looking to pilot the scheme in a few common rooms next year so if you have had issues this year then this may be an opportunity for your common room.
- The University Socially Responsible Investment Review Committee met for the first time this week and I attended. Being the first meeting time was spend outlining the remit of the committee and it was decided that minutes of the meetings will be made publicly available once ratified. The next meeting is in 7th week.

"It's not that some people have willpower and some don't. It's that some people are ready to change and others are not".

James Gordon

PART TIME OFFICERS

Daniel Lowe

Environment and Ethics Officer

Hi Council,

Its all about Green Week: here are the details. Sadly, we didn't get the Ebay bid for the parts we needed for the bike generator, so no bicycle powered rave. Sad face.

MONDAY: GREEN WEEK LAUNCH

Cycle Rush, in conjunction with Climate Rush

Meet at Wellington Square for a drums-and-bells cycle to Cornmarket Street for a flashmob style picnic. Bring along food, games, drums, bells or anything impressive (we like circus skills) whilst we remind the university of their environmental commitments made last term, and the businesses of Cornmarket to stay sustainable. Dress like a suffragette!

Meet at Wellington Square at 6pm, or rock up to Cornmarket from 6.15

TUESDAY: AGE OF STUPID

Screenings of the Age of Stupid in conjunction with Climate Camp

Colleges across Oxford will be screening the critically acclaimed Age of Stupid: a dramadoc entailing the problems climate change will cause. We challenge you to come away and not feel impassioned. Contact Daniel Lowe at eande@ousu.org for details of your screening.

THURSDAY: ALLEYCAT

A citywide game/race with bikes in conjunction with People and Planet

Arrive at Broad St at 6.30 for a cryptic treasure-hunt-race around the city, followed by free green curry for participants (both ethics AND colour). Literally the most fun you can have on a bike. The theme is 'Climate change: victims and villains.

FRIDAY: PICNIC

A green and Fairtrade picnic in conjunction with Oxford Students' Fairtrade Coalition
1pm Uni parks

We're throwing a green social with the Fairtrade students. Bring a dish to uni parks and there will be free food and Fairtrade goodies to buy. No hassle, no preaching, just good clean, green fun.

SATURDAY: EARTHWATCH RAID

A street collection for the oxford-based charity Earthwatch in conjunction with RAG

From 9am-4pm RAG and E&E committee will be collecting for the charity Earthwatch in Oxford city center. Raids are an amazing experience and a great deal of fun. If you want to get involved email Daniel Lowe at eande@ousu.org

SUNDAY: GREEN CAMPAIGNERS' NETWORK

A co-operation and co-ordination meeting in conjunction with OxHub

A chance for all the keen green campaigners to meet and co-ordinate activities over the coming months over dinner at the Vaults and Gardens. If you want to be heavily involved over the long term, email Daniel Lowe at eande@ousu.org for an invitation.

Jack Matthews	Common Room Support Officer
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Sorry I can't be at council today - if anyone has any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Since last council I've been working on ideas for institutional memory across common rooms. This is looking like it will take the form of some kind of database - but we are still working on the details. I have also convened the usual OUSU Reps meeting.

I also attended a common room meeting at Corpus Christi JCR - if you would like anyone from OUSU to come and talk at your common room, or you would like to talk to me personally about anything regarding OUSU, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Regard

Jack Matthews
commonrooms@ousu.org