

OUSU

reports to council

5th week trinity term 2010

Stefan Baskerville

President

Common Rooms

I attended JCR Prescom, where we discussed the Teaching Review and OUSU's response, rent negotiations, higher education funding and the University's response to Browne, and a few other things. I continued to meet common room presidents to discuss issues in colleges, primarily but not exclusively rent negotiations. I attended Exeter Junior Common Room's meeting with their Rector and Bursar to discuss rent for the coming year.

I ran two training sessions in negotiation for common room presidents, treasurers, and environment and ethics reps – both very successful with good feedback.

University

I attended General Purposes Committee, where we discussed a range of issues including University governance, the Joint Recognized Independent Centres, and University subsidiary companies.

I attended Joint Committee of Council with Student Members, where we discussed the draft documents for the upcoming governance changes (Memorandum and Articles, Operating Agreement and Transfer Deed).

I attended the Proctors and Assessor's meeting with common room presidents, where we discussed inter-faith relations, post-exam celebrations, welfare for graduate students, among other things.

I met with the Proctors and Assessor along with the rest of the sab team, where we had a productive discussion with a number of action points arising.

Governance

I met with the University a number of times regarding governance changes and the planning of the new arrangements.

OSSL

I chaired a meeting of the board at which we discussed a variety of upcoming projects.

Miscellaneous

I met with others to plan the new freshers fair website...out soon I hope! Met and communicated with candidates for positions in common rooms. Met to do further planning on handover. Met to take forward the recruitment process for maternity cover in the post of Publications and Media Administrator.

Kat Wall

V-P (Women)

Hi Council,

Gender Equality Report

I have been continuing to work on gathering information and statistics for the Gender Equality Report. It is growing apace. And will be published at the start of 6th week.

Springboard

We have met to go through the feedback from the pilot session – all of which were extremely positive and I have put together a summary of that feedback in addition to a report which has been sent to Senior Tutors Committee for consideration regarding future funding of the programme.

reports to 3rd week council trinity term 2010

Night Safety

Met with key members of the city council, the police and local community groups to discuss the issue of student safety in Oxford at night. I am taking a paper to the NAG on 7th June to encourage the incorporation of key considerations on this issue into the strategic plan for the upcoming academic year. Please get in touch if there are any issues you want to raise: women@ousu.org

Domestic Abuse/Sexual Assault and Harassment

Met with Liz Jones from the city council, the coordinators of OSARCC and Keith Zimmermann (Director of Student Services) to discuss provision for students who are victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault and harassment. I am currently writing a briefing paper to be sent to key actors in the University and the local community with recommendations. We hope to push these through in Michaelmas Term 2010.

Training

Ran 'Supporting Students' training with Dani Quinn with excellent feedback. If you want us to run this for your common room committee then do get in touch at support@ousu.org

Women's officers

Had the first of two women's officer meetings of term. Poor turnout, however we had a very fruitful discussion on issues relating to night safety and the activities taking place in St John's and Univ.

Dani Quinn Opportunities)

V-P (Welfare & Equal

Hello Council,

The volume of casework didn't really abate since a fortnight ago, so I continue to be disappointed with how much else was achieved that wasn't student advice/support. That said, it's been a helpful and interesting reminder of the need for us to seek more support (i.e. staff) to work on the Student Advice Service: a sudden surge, or staff illness, do really put things on hold for me! I'm sure this is something Tom will be working on, and it's covered explicitly in the Strategic Review Report, so I am optimistic.

As always, if you feel more detail would be in order, please get in touch on welfare@ousu.org - I'd be happy to hear from you!

Dani x

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Student Representation

Attended the Disability Equality Scheme Working Group – they were pleased with the work the SWD Campaign has been undertaking.

Attended the Race Equality Working Group (as an observer). It was great!

Consultative Committee for Health and Safety – I cannot express the same enthusiasm as for the REWG. On the bright side, we did not discuss the safe use of abrasive wheels...

Student Advice Service

I've started the report for JCC on the Student Advice Service. I don't think it's been submitted to OUSU Council before, or at least not in recent years, so you can look forward to that in a fortnight. There will be a more statistics/detail than before, though still not too much detail (to protect anonymity). In particular, there will be info about: number of cases, duration of cases, gender, graduate/undergraduate status, home/EU/overseas status, EAL/ENL, division to which clients belong, anonymised college breakdown (to investigate the extent to which some colleges 'produce' more casework), and type of issue (harassment/abuse, academic discipline, academic complaints, non-academic complaints, accommodation problems, health/disability/long-term health condition, mental health-related issue, admissions query, international/visa, financial, miscellaneous). There will also be more on developments and outstanding issues. Let me know if you have anything you especially want to see, or think should be excluded!

Chinese Nightline

Xiaowei and I met with Anne Ford (Peer Support trainer) – progress has begun☺ Many students have written to us to express interest in training. We are now waiting to hear from existing Mandarin-speaking peer supporters and work out finer issues around confidentiality and quality control. If you know anyone who would be interested, or who you think would be a good volunteer, put them in touch! chinesenightline@ousu.org

Students with Disabilities Campaign

There will be another meeting of the campaign in 7th Week. In the mean time, Danni and I have started on the different action points that came out of the meeting (including one of the motions on this agenda – please support and implement it!). We're hoping to have achieved a 'quick win' with disclosure forms being sent out with acceptance letters, and Danni is working on the design for an information campaign about free bus passes.

Separately from the campaign, but in disability news, we'll be running the Aspegrer's buddying scheme again. If there is anyone in your Common Room who you think would be a good buddy, let me know! It's a small time commitment and a fab opportunity to help a new student integrate into life at Oxford: welfare@ousu.org.

Also – and as always – had a good meeting with Pete Quinn (Senior Disability Advisor) to discuss issues of mutual interest.

LGBTQ Campaign

We had a really interesting and productive meeting on Thursday, and now have lots of plans and activities lined up (plus a fairly controversial motion for the next Council...enjoy!). There will be 'Sshh...after dark' tomorrow – come along and support if you believe anyone should be allowed to kiss in public, not just straight people. There will also be a friendly and informal 'information picket' outside the blood donation centre on Thursday from 6-7.30. Come to OUSU at 5 to make your own poster, come to the centre at 6 to join in (or donate blood – also good!), or join us for our campaign meeting at 7.30, in the Jolly Farmer pub.

Freshers' Week

Ellie and I are making our plans for Freshers' Week training. It is going to be *amazing*. Make SURE your successor attends (Wednesday afternoon, 6th Week).

Common Room Officers' Website

I made a shiny (if, admittedly, totally silly) website for Welfare Officers, and am now working on updating it to be a general Common Room Officer and Campaigner website. I imagine it will be completed over the summer, but it is definitely an exciting opportunity (and hopefully a decent resource even at this stage). If you haven't seen it, let me know – I'll send you the link and you can send me feedback (please!).

Student Support

Kat and I ran our final 'student support training' for the year. The attendance was disappointing (especially compared to the number of people who signed up) but the feedback was very positive.

I ran the second-last Support for Supporters for this year. It was all new students this time, which was interesting, and we were lucky to have a Senior Tutor there to answer questions about Colleges' roles. There are many more students out there who would (hopefully) benefit from attending – please let them know they are welcome to come along!

Candidates for Common Room positions

A LOT of people got in touch – meetings and email conversations with them was really exciting, as they were full of ideas and I got to mould them (mwahaha), but it was also very time-consuming...

OUSU stuff

Attended meeting to discuss the design of the Freshers' Fair website.

Working with the sab team to make sure our handover is helpful and leaves the new team in a good position to get straight to work (in a good way!).

Giving feedback on other people's papers/plans/ideas – I mention it only because it takes up more time than one would expect, but it is essential to our jobs.

OSSL Board met and I attended.

Standing Committees met to discuss (and then invite applicants for) maternity cover for the PMA.

Hi everyone,

My penultimate Council report. To warn you now - the last one will be long. I'm sure that you're surprised. I also warn you that if you're reading this at Council then I have just got out of a meeting of University Council with an 800 page agenda. I don't want to hear one word about this agenda being too long for you. To fill you in on what I've done in weeks 3 and 4.

Teaching Review

This has been really really big. The report is now done having been written by Hannah and myself over weeks 3 and 4. It is long but presents a comprehensive overview of the 40 focus groups which we ran in weeks 1 and 2 and offers some tangible improvements to the way that Oxford provides for undergraduates. This report is being taken seriously - Conference of Colleges, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Academic Registrar are all interested in it and I think that it is one of the most exciting projects which OUSU has been involved in for several years. It's now up to us to keep taking the project forward and this will be a big part of my role in weeks 5-8 of this term before I hand it over to Alex. Copies of the report will be circulated at Council.

Student Advice Service

As exam season gets underway so too does a spike in casework. As usual I can't really say much more but rest assured that casework continues.

Higher Education Funding

So you will have all seen that Oxford has now called for a truly variable-fee based system, stating that the cap should come off undergraduate fees. I finalised OUSU's submission to the Browne Review in week 3, incorporating many of the comments which you all made. I think I should draw attention to the fact that our submission to Browne will almost certainly be one of the two most comprehensive submitted by students in the UK (the NUS may have us beat but they also have a full-time Social Policy Team). I know that it can appear that our position hasn't made a difference yet but the arguments we make are important - they not only test our own thinking on a crucial area for the future of British universities but also boost our credibility. The battle over HE funding was always going to be won and lost in Parliament and we now need to start seriously thinking about how we will win this next year. In addition to finalising and making our submission I also co-ordinated press releases and our media work around the call for proposals, with OUSU gaining national coverage (again) in the BBC and Daily Telegraph

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/7737660/Oxford-and-Cambridge-back-tuition-fee-rise.html>, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/10119279.stm>).

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/7737660/Oxford-and-Cambridge-back-tuition-fee-rise.html%5D>)

After NUS OUSU is now getting regularly quoted in the national press on this issue and we need to keep this work going - we are able to draw media attention as a result of Oxford's status within the HE sector and it's important that we fully exploit this as the debate gets more heated. I'm working with Stefan on getting senior officers of the University to come to 8th week Council to take your questions on Oxford's position on higher education funding.

University Committees

Undergraduate Panel: Met on Monday of Week 3 and primarily looked at matters arising from our own initiatives (e.g student understanding of marking criteria and finals forums). The committee noted that the finals forums which we have run were hugely successful and also spent time discussing a report by the former Junior Proctor on problems with examiners following the regulations governing their behaviour.

PRAC: Met in week 3 with the main item of business being major building projects. I spoke up on several which I believe are particularly in student interests but am able to say much more because of confidentiality rules.

Joint Committee of Council with Student Members: Met on Thursday of week 3. In a stunningly short meeting we heard that OUSU wouldn't be charging matriculated students for Freshers' Fair 2010 in any circumstances and would be charging visiting students the lowest fee in years. We also heard an update on OUSU's development as a more professional student union, with the student union requesting changes in meeting times

to enable record-breaking levels of financial transparency. All members of the committee left feeling that OUSU was coming to the end of a record-breaking year of change.

Education Committee: Met on Friday of week 4 with the major item of business being the consultation on extending fee liability for postgraduate research students. With Sarah I spoke in line with OUSU policy which is against extended fee liability but for improved provision for students.

General OUSU Stuff

This has taken up more of my time than I would have liked. I have attended several meetings of Standing Committee to arrange maternity cover for one of our staff and have also been involved in writing a lot of the motions on the agenda today to either implement the report of the Strategic Review Group or to bring our governing documents in line with one another after OUSU registers as a charity later this year. With my colleagues I also met the Proctors to discuss their priorities for this year and socially responsible investment, and also produced a report on the basis of a survey on student representation in colleges which I conducted over the Hilary vacation. This report is being used to lobby for improved representation in several colleges currently - please email me if you would like a copy.

As always please email access@ousu.org if you would like any more information on my activities.

Jonny

Eorann Lean Community)	V-P	(Charities	&
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Sweatshop Stash

Talked to the proctors about getting the ethical policy that Oxford limited has as a requirement for clubs and societies who want to register. They were interested and I am at the moment waiting to get the ethical policy off the E&E working group so that I can send it to the proctors and write up a proposal.

Meanwhile E and E are still looking for societies and clubs to sign up to the pledge and appear in the naked calendar.

Safety Bus

Met up with Lucie (Brookes sab in charge of Safety bus and president elect) and Lukas (Brookes activities sab elect) to talk about safety bus and how OBSU and OUSU can work together on it. We talked about feedback - putting laminated signs in the bus with OUSU and OBSU emails so there is an easier way for people to contact than have to message safety bus on facebook or look up contact details - it'll also mean OUSU is more in control of feedback as at the moment it all goes to OBSU! We talked about better communication about when the bus will be on - they are hoping to get a smart phone for next year so that they can tweet and update facebook when the bus is on and when something goes wrong (like a bus breaks down) they can update people. We've planned training for next year and to get every sab to have done training and a shift on the bus so that they can talk about it properly to common rooms and the university. Finally we've set a plan for better publicity to Oxford students - including more informative posters, volunteers going to common rooms and freshers publicity. So hopefully the bus will grow even bigger next year and more oxford students will get involved.

Night Safety

Kat and I had a really good meeting with the city council about night safety and how we can work with them. We talked about ding a lighting audit and getting better bulbs on streets that students feel unsafe on, about street pastors and where they should go and how to connect them up with the bus. We also talked about a campaign to change the culture of leaving people behind - at the moment there seems to be a big problem with people leaving their drunken friends behind or letting them leave clubs on their own. Belinda Hopkins (crime prevention officer) would like to come and talk at prescoms about night safety and reaching your freshers. We're also hoping to do some focus groups on night safety, what people would like to see and

what sort of campaign would be effective to alongside the survey people have filled out. If you're interested in doing one in your common room please get in contact.

10:10

Alastair, Ben and I are meeting to discuss 10:10 plans tomorrow at 5 and then meeting with Jenny Ekelund and Kate Aydin if you want to get involved with the campaign and work to get us to hit that 10% this year please come along at 5 in OUSU or send me an email.

Sound Impact masters class

I went to this NUS training day – which was in some ways very frustrating as OUSU is very different from other student unions but in other useful. Some of the stuff was relevant to CRs so if your interested in ethical procurement in your bars etc. Then do get in touch and if I can't help I can get you in contact with someone from NUS who can. I discussed inter college competitions for energy saving with Student Switch off who run inter halls competitions – they felt it was hard to do here but that it could be possible if we could get colleges to buy into it – so that will be something for Daniel to try and fathom out I think! I also got some info about work that can be done with departments so I'll be feeding that into Environmental panel. Finally something we can all do is take part in snap it off – which is an NUS campaign where students take photos of lights that have been left on by the university/college and upload or text them to a website where the university will be named and shamed – and there is a mp3 player for the best photo every month. For more info go to www.nus.org/snapitoff.

Big Brother Big Sister

Amanda and Mirelle went to talk to the access office, as at the moment the scheme doesn't seem to be filling a niche that isn't already covered. So we are now in the process of changing the scheme so that it is more relevant. We are having a meeting with Debbie Wiseman who is our contact on the county council on Thursday – so I'll keep you updated with changes.

RAG

Rag is doing awesomely under its new committee. They made £2000 at the weekend on their mega raid to bath and they are going to be at summer eights on Saturday at Balliol Boathouse with pimms, strawberries and cream and G&D's ice cream as well as raiding up and down the banks!

And Finally – do you have any summer plans? Do you just want to escape from Oxford? Well RAG are challenging you to get as far away as possible in 36 hours – the only catch is you have no money. There is an information evening on Thursday at 6pm come along and find out about Jailbreak and get free ice cream!!

PART TIME OFFICERS

Yuan Yang

Women's Officer

"If you're having no projects, I feel bad for you son
I got 99 projects, on the WomCam Com (read me)"

Hello Council,

- Come to the WomCam's annual Love Your Body GARDEN PARTY, on Sun 8th Week! Middle Eastern dancers, art supplies to go wild with, Pimms and anti-perfectionistic standards of body image!

I've been working on publicity for this. See the smile-inspiring photo album on my Facebook titled "Feminists Gone Wild in Uni Parks". I'll be working on designing eye-grabbing and thought-engaging posters questioning how it is that our society acquired its body image insecurities. Where did this obsession with weight, age, and certain racial features come from? What can we do with our beauty myths now?

- INVITE THE NEW PIE GROUP TO YOUR COMMON ROOM!

I've been publicising the New Pie Group, our mixed-gender discussion group on sex, gender and society. After a very interesting 3 weeks of discussing gender in magazines, we now have lots of displays, cut-outs and thought-provoking readings of magazines. We would love to engage students who are new to the discussion of gender, and the best way of helping us help us all in questioning gender norms is to invite us to hold an open discussion in your common room! Just email me: womensofficer at ousu.org.

Interestingly, our current series of discussions on Pornography is attracting the most number of emails and new sign-ups to the group, so now's as good a time as any to join the group!

- We are working on a WomCam ZINE. If you've got quotes, personal writings, or any personal anecdotes about how you became a feminist or why you are a feminist, do send them to me. I'm trying to make it both personal and political, but above all welcoming. The Zine is intended to be a large-print-run publication to introduce people to questions of gender equality and the Women's Campaign.
- I've been talking to people about the possibility of creating a permanent MIXED-GENDER CAMPAIGN on gender alongside or as an arm of the Women's Campaign. If you have thoughts or advice about how to better include students in general, particularly men, in gender equality campaigning, please talk to me – I'd love you to be a part of the discussion.

"If you grew up with holes in your gender role,
You'd be celebratin' the moment you was takin' back control!"

In sisterhood,
Yuan
Balliol College
OUSU Women's Campaign Officer

Jack Matthews

Common Room Support Officer

Hi Council,

Hope you are well and enjoying the nice weather. Its been a busy few weeks since last council, here's what I've been up to;

MiVoice

Lots of elections have been going on in Common Rooms recently. I have been training Common Room

officers how to use the system and replying to any problems they have had, at all times of day and night!

Societies

I have contacted all the societies I have details for to make them aware of the clubs committee funding that it available from the University. The application period is once a term, and I will make sure to remind clubs again next term, hopefully I will remember a bit earlier to give them more time.

Common Room Support

Have been replying to emails and phonecalls from Common Room Presidents on issues from Freshers Week to UK University Best Practice for Student Housing, and also CRiS.

Future

By the time you sitting in Council reading this, I will be halfway through my finals (apologies to all those who have had slow replies to emails over the past few weeks, blame revision). However by 6th Week they will be out of the way, and here is what I will be doing then. If you want to get involved or know more, please drop me an email or find me in Council.

- Write my handover document; next term will be my last at CRSO, so if anyone is interested in taking up the baton, come and have a chat. Subject to the motion passing in Council I will also be writing a handover document for the CSSO (Clubs and Societies Support Officer) position. If you are thinking of running for CSSO, get in touch.
- OUSU Publicity; I will be working with member of the exec, and anyone else who is interested to get involved, on looking at everything OUSU publicity, from our brand image to our website.
- Sky TV; Several other Universities are on board now. I need to write a letter which can be agreed on by the other Universities so we can move forward.
- Society Bank Accounts; I will be continuing to work with Santander to design a new bank account for student societies to fully cater for their needs. Currently things are looking very positive.
- Punting; I will be using some of my post-exam time to go punting, if anyone wants to come along, let me know! All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.
- Discount Bus Travel - I have submitted the results of some research I did into student bus use to the Oxford Bus Company. I hope to continue our discussion once they have had chance to process the data.
- Anything else your Common Room requires; if you need anything or have any questions, feel free to email me.

Best of luck to all those with exams, much envy to those who don't,

All the best,

Jack Matthews
Common Room Support Officer
commonrooms@ousu.org

Danielle Fraser Solomon

SWD Officer

Hi council,

We had a very successful meeting of the SWD campaign in first week, at which we discussed and outlined the aims and objectives of the campaign for the near future. I am working on a welfare-related survey, which should be going out to all students, to find out the welfare needs of students with disabilities (including those who don't necessarily self-identify) and how they should be addressed. I am also planning a Disability Awareness Week for Michaelmas term, and I already have a few speakers who are very interested in getting involved.

With lots of help from Dani Quinn, the campaign has got its first poster campaign off the ground - a poster highlighting 'invisible' disabilities has been going around the university over the last few weeks. The next two posters, with information about Disabled Students Allowance and free bus passes, should be up by the end of term.

Danni