



termly reports

hilary 2004

Helena Puig-Larrauri

President

City Council

I think the increased liaison with the council this term has been beneficial. Student matters seem to be more on the agenda, and I am please that there is a meeting of the Central Area Committee on Tuesday of 8th week that will deal mainly with student matters. The meeting is open to everyone (as are all meetings of the council) so do come along. Issues to be discussed so far: safety in clubs, bike safety, safety on Magdalen Bridge and recycling. Let me know if you want anything else put on the agenda.

Clubs and Societies

This needs more work than I have been able to devote to it in the last term. Krizia and I are working on establishing a resource centre for clubs and societies in the OUSU offices. This would probably have equipment to hire (TV, video, projector, etc), a photocopier and possibly pidges. We need to finalise all this, and talk to the University about it, before writing to clubs and socs about it. I also want to write to them about hosting more contact details and information about them on the OUSU website (even having some webspace on ousu.org) and about using OUSU live if they want to. Edd and I have been looking into this.

College inequality

This definitely needs more work. We have had a couple of meetings, and have begun to make head way in re-assessing some of the statistics of last year's report and producing more detailed sections on some - graduates and hardship especially. Thanks go to Jamie Ballin for his excellent case studies.

Common room liaison

Common room liaison

I've visited lots more common rooms this term to spread the OUSU gospel. Also produced posters and information packs about how the student union works. These all seem to have been well received. All the common rooms that have held re-affiliation votes this term have re-affiliated. I'm now preparing a survey for common room officers to try to assess how the student union is doing in this area. The survey will go out early next term.

Entz

I've been working on sorting out entz for Freshers' Week - I know it may seem a bit early for that, but it's not really. I've now booked The Bridge and The Studio. This means that common rooms will be able to buy tickets for these nights off OUSU at affordable prices, and that we will ensure only students who have bought tickets off common rooms are allowed in. Digo and I are also working on helping common rooms book smaller clubs both for finalists bops at the end of Trinity and for freshers' flings in Freshers' Week.

Finance and Funding

I spent much of the beginning of this term campaigning on the Higher Education Bill. Together with the F&F team, I produced the alternative white paper and presented it in several forums. We also used it to lobby MPs both by writing to them and by meeting them in parliament. We encouraged lots of students to write to their own MPs and provided them with arguments to use against the bill. The campaign came to a head on the few days before the vote, with the occupation of Exam Schools and the lobby and protest in Parliament on the day of the vote.

The campaigning has continued in the latter half of this term, but in a different form. Firstly, there has been the supporting and informing people about the AUT's action. Secondly, I have produced a document outlining some of the amendments to the Bill that the select committee might want to consider as a way to help students (and in particular Oxford students). We've sent this out to all the members of the committee. I've also helped students who are from the constituencies of these MPs to write to them about the amendments. We will be chasing up these letters with phone calls next week, and then probably move on to lobbying the Lords. Thirdly, we are organising a drinks event to raise funds and show support for those students who took part in the occupation - Thursday of 8th week, 8pm in Wadham's Old Refectory.

Thanks go to all the activists involved in the campaign, and in particular to Emma, Bryn, Torsten and Alice.

NUS

NUS conference is fast approaching. I'm putting together a briefing for delegates to conference, which is a bit of a mammoth task. You think OUSU council is bad? Try National Conference. I also arranged a training session for delegates with the NUS South West regional officer. I've been sorting out registration forms and other bits of boring admin. I've also arranged for all the candidates to NUS president to hust in Oxford - Thursday of 8th week, 8pm in Wadham's Old Refectory - same time and place as the F&F drinks. All are welcome.

I've also continued to try to get somewhere on the idea of an opt-in centralised affiliation for the NUS. I think I'm now getting somewhere with this - the NUS South West regional officer tells me that they are willing to discuss the plan. I'll bring a proposal to 1st week council so we can discuss the finer points of how this could be done, and then will try to get NUS to agree to it. If it all works we could be centrally affiliation (opt-in) by October.

OUSU structures

Most of the critics of OUSU suggest that the student union needs structural reform. I would hope then, that they would join me in thanking the outstanding work that Andrew and Daniel have done on the review of OUSU's structures. A certain amount of navel gazing has produced radical structural change.

The majority of the proposals in the report coming to council this week are, in my humble opinion, extremely good. I do not, however, agree with much of what is said under the 'full time elected officers' section, and I wanted to take the chance to express my disagreement here, with all due respect to the authors of the report.

The report does a very good job of addressing the difficulties of the VP (Welfare and Equal Opportunities) and the VP (Access and Academic Affairs). The excess of work in these two jobs, by virtue of their nature, can be easily addressed - split them. In addition, it is much easier to define in concrete terms what each of the parts ought to do, which again the report does admirably. The report does not, however, address the main problem with the job descriptions of the President and

in concrete terms what each of the parts ought to do, which again the report does admirably. The report does not, however, address the main problem with the job descriptions of the President and the VP (Finance). It does not even acknowledge that both these positions are already overstretched (I'm not even going to contemplate that this could be disputed - excuse my arrogance, for once, and check the bags under my eyes). In fact, the report adds to both the jobs (or their equivalent creations). This may not be immediately apparent, because the new jobs are ill defined, so the work load is in no way obvious. Try "overseeing the work of OUSU's campaigning committees" to give one example.

Or for that matter "overseeing the maintenance of OUSU services". The jobs as defined in the report are vague enough to allow for nothing to be done. They are also vague enough to require well over 40 hours a week.

In addition, concentrating all the representation, liaising with common rooms and campaigning in one post entrenches the hierarchical distinction between the positions in a way that the job title President cannot even begin to do. One of the main reasons why the President in our current structures does not take on a hierarchical mantle is because in order to work effectively all members of the sab team have to 'brief' each other on their areas of work. In the proposed system, all the sabs would brief the one sab - itself a surefire recipe for an entrenched hierarchy in the student union.

I am also concerned about the proposed Women and Equal Opportunities sab. It seems to me that to amalgamate these two jobs is incongruous. Either we recognise the need for an officer to aid an autonomous Women's campaign, who is then only elected by women, or we decide to create an Equal Opportunities post and do away with women's representation on the sab team. To have someone dealing with equal opportunities who has the accountability problems of a restricted electorate (as laid out elsewhere in the report) seems to me a mistake.

My thoughts, for the record. And again, a huge thank you to Dan and Andrew for their work.

Referendum

Online referendum on student funding happening in 8th week. There has been a lot of interest on this already - three campaigns are running, the OxStu is interviewing them all, and six husts are scheduled. Posters and stickers for computers have gone out, as well as loads of emails. All the instructions are on the web, as are the manifestos. www.ousu.org/referendum is the place to be.

Thanks go to Chris-I know how it all works-Allan and Digo-I'm locked in the shop with Chris-Davies for their work on the voting system, as well as to the Ian, Dan, Ed and Charlotte.

Rent

Most of this has involved running negotiation training sessions and providing support to common room officers involved in negotiations, including producing the rent support pack and collecting statistics across the university. At this stage, I don't think it is possible to have a joint approach across colleges. This may change in the next few weeks.

Representation

As usual, I've been attending University Council with Dan and Emma. There are a couple of points that came up in University Council that we are still chasing up - notably, the issue of fees for students from countries that are about to join the EU.

I also went to the Joint Committee of Council with student members, and had to prepare a number of papers for this committee. The bulk of the papers were on the financing of the student union (which is one of the statutory agenda items for JCC). Changes in the grants available from the government and the University have required a re-think of some of the student union's finances. Most of the papers relating to this matter will go to University Council early next term, and I will report on the results. The issue of services to disaffiliated common rooms came up again, and again is pending ratification in University Council. We also discussed a proposal to take steps towards making Oxford a fairtrade university. The proposal was accepted by JCC and is now going to the next stage of University committees (tea making committee??).

Thanks to Tom, Digo, Dan P, Dan S, Conor, James and Helen for a few hours of banter :)

And more thanks

Everyone who volunteers to work for the student union - it would collapse without you

There are a lots people I would like to thank individually, here are a few...

Digo-shamooown-Davies: for so much. coffee at 10, being blunt and eloquent all at once, msn at 2am, new left - an alliance of the willing and an island in the pacific next year.

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Rosie Buckland: for undampened enthusiasm in a very hard term

Catherine Wallis: for the sanity you bring into OUSU

Dan-eeeeeephant-Paskins: on whom I tend to collapse

Louise-how rude-McMullan: for all your energy and a lot of gossip

Jo Henry-Bochan: for persevering and always being supportive

Ian Caddy: for making sure everything in OUSU is working just right.

Chris Allan: for the sheer number of hours you put in...

Dan Simpson: for enthusiasm and good humour. and back of the hand.

Conor-ousumedia.com-O'Neill: for help with election regs, Tina and much personal support.

Edd-that email-Southerden: for outstanding results as shown in the budget. just master that forward button.

Maria-i work for a union-Burgess: because we really could not run without you.

Rodrigo Davies

V-P (Finance)

The slight (but perhaps quite obvious) irony of report writing is that the busier things have been, the briefer the reports that materialise. In that vein, this report will be somewhat briefer than I might have liked, but I will attempt to cover the key areas of my work over the previous term, and in particular those areas that have not been given a great deal of attention in previous Reports to Council.

The Amended Budget

This year's Amended Budget gave me a great deal of cause for celebration, and in particular affirmed my faith in OUSU's ability to be an efficient and successful commercial player. Our expenditure has largely been kept under control, which puts to rest many of the rumours that the original Budget was either misleading or unworkable. Having presented the AB to the University's Joint Committee With Student Members and received very little in the way of criticism or reservation from the University, I am very confident that 2003/4 will be looked upon as a commercially successful and financially responsible year. Of course I can only claim a small personal measure of the credit for this success, but needless to say I have been delighted to be part of wider successes in the Student Union.

The Oxford Student

Little talked of in Council, little mentioned in my reports, the Oxford Student newspaper has gone from strength to strength over this term. Unlike rivals that have slipped into covering internecine strife between so-called political players in Oxford, the newspaper has impressed me from a reader's point of view and I think the relative satisfaction with the newspaper among the student body is additional evidence for this. The fact that we don't charge subscriptions is no doubt a plus point, however it is this point that I feel breeds a loyalty among students to the newspaper, affirming its public service ethic above that of either money-making or self-aggrandisement. For my own part, the ritual rumour-mongering prior to my election about the difficulty that an ex-Editor might find as Publisher has proven entirely unfounded. It is no negative statement to say that as Vice President (Finance) my role in the newspaper has declined somewhat, aside from the very seasonal administrative tasks and occasionally the legal side of things. I firmly believe that this is a positive trend and on the point of legal issues, it strikes me that the positioning of the Vice President (Finance) as libel consultant is not at all a healthy one in the long term since it is both a great responsibility and implies a reasonable level of journalistic experience that it is surely not reasonable to expect an office holder to have. Nevertheless, I continue to look for legal solutions to deal with the newspaper's needs, though the problem in itself is very slight and only likely to cause a major problem once a year or so.

Staff Management

I am glad to see that OUSU's attitude to its staff is evolving, and that finally the Student Union is taking seriously its obligations to those that work for it. As the sabbatical in charge of staff matters, it always pains me to walk into college lodges and see their Investors In People plaques proudly displayed when it is patently obvious that under the status quo OUSU could not dream of qualifying for such an award. However, provisions to ensure that staff are treated fairly and have their concerns and changes to their jobs considered not by a mass of people, but in a controlled and directly accountable body that allows them proper representation suggest that we are moving in the right direction. I will be deeply saddened to leave the staff in the state of irresponsible limbo in which they currently are, should the second and third readings of today's Staff motion not be

and directly accountable body that allows them proper representation suggest that we are moving in the right direction. I will be deeply saddened to leave the staff in the state of irresponsible limbo in which they currently are should the second and third readings of today's Staff motion not be passed by the required majority. Unfortunately I think this is the sort of outlook that only someone who has worked at the Student Union for several months could have built up; the fact that these points are not clear to everyone is a mark of the discretion with which the currently precarious situation has always been treated. Our handling of the restructuring of OSSL staff arrangements was a sore lesson in this, but I am pleased to say that that decision has, on the whole, been vindicated.

Referendum

A point of particular difficulty for me as a member of Elections Committee has been the technical organisation of the Referendum. Its commencement will no doubt be cause for great celebration and hopefully political expression but it has indeed been a great learning experience for me. Chris Allan has been absolutely superb in his work on implementation and risk assessment, and I hope very strongly that the hard work that has gone into this project will be able to be harnessed on future occasions by OUSU.

Council and the Executive

On the whole I have been relatively happy with my work both within the Executive and vis a vis Council. I think that though the Vice President (Finance) structurally is destined to have less connection to the Executive, I have been happy with the co-operation and commitment that has been shown by the vast majority of the Executive. It is certainly a far cry from the problems that my predecessor reported at this time last year, and for that I am extremely grateful. Council now shows some signs of retreating back to its old cycles of procedural points and principled pedantry, which is unfortunate; hopefully the majority of this trend is a function of the great deal of structural reform that is currently underway. I have always felt that OUSU Council does not confront policy issues often enough, and that more motions raising issues of importance to students should be brought. Council is, after all, the political centre of the Student Union and as such it should be encouraged to function as a policy maker and not purely as a management exercise.

Reviews of OUSU, and the Financial Outlook

I think great thanks are due to both Andrew Copson and Daniel Finley for their sterling work on the Structural Review of OUSU; it has for the most part allowed the Student Union to deal with a number of underlying issues that should have been confronted many years ago. Unfortunately there are a number of areas regarding the full-time executive with which I cannot ever agree, and I will outline my concerns for Council's consideration here.

Firstly, the clarity with which the jobs relating to Access, Welfare, Equal Opportunities and Academic Affairs are defined is admirable: it does arguably stray into policy making, though this is no terrible sin in a review of this nature. The unfortunate point is that the obvious successor to my position is despatched in a paragraph. Not purely brevity, but also sentences of such remarkable conciseness as "overseeing the maintenance of OUSU services", which gives no voice whatsoever to the specific remit that this might include. Secondly, the net result of the restructuring of the job is to encapsulate the entire job of the Vice President (Finance) at present and to add a raft of constitutional duties. Given the many protestations at the beginning of the document regarding the notion that many of the sabbaticals are overworked I can only interpret this restructuring as an implication that the position of Vice President (Finance) is currently insufficient as a role and leaves a great deal of slack for extra duties that is not present in the roles other than President. It is a matter of great concern to me that these two positions have been singled out, though probably not intentionally. Thirdly, without wishing to descend into self-aggrandisement or martyrdom, I would simply invite any member of OUSU or indeed future proposers of motions on the subject of my position to spend a day in my office and write down the "areas for slack". It will probably be a very short list. I am a great believer in time being put in, and have consistently worked at the OUSU offices from 10am until 6pm or later every week day so far in 2004, and check my email religiously at evenings and weekends. I would estimate that my average working week totals around 50 or 51 hours a week during this term; that's pushing the Working Time Regulations – something that, for some reason, OUSU sabs traditionally opt out of, thereby pushing their salaries below the £3.88 per hour at which it would stand on that threshold. Even with that in mind, I'd say that during Michaelmas and certainly the summer it's much closer to 65 hours a week. It is a little embarrassing to admit that I earned over a third more per hour working at McDonalds.

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during Michaelmas and certainly the summer it's much closer to 65 hours a week. It is a little embarrassing to admit that I earned over a third more per hour working at McDonalds. If the members of OUSU believe that this position is inefficient and wish to adopt the structures proposed, so be it, but those are my thoughts on the matter.

Thanks

Finally, I would like to thank many of OUSU's superb workers who have made my life a great deal easier: Vishesh Srivastava and Rachel O'Brien, excellent editors; Edd Southerden, a superb Business Manager for yet another term; Chris Allan for his perseverance and professionalism with the Referendum; Josefa for providing a source of inspiration and helping me out in innumerable ways; Conor O'Neill for an excellent Returning Officer's handover and advice for the forthcoming Referendum; Helena for continued hard work and refusing to sink to my level; Dan for immeasurable maturity when I'm still wearing slogan t-shirts; Catherine for timely text messages; Louise and Rosie for keeping the humour level high. Finally, thank you to Eleanor Thompson and Anatole Pang for reminding me that Oxford will still exist next year.

Rosie Buckland

V-P (Welfare & Equal Opportunities)

This term has been incredibly busy and diversity week created an extra strain on my time when there wasn't really any time to spare. My successor will need to think long and hard about its value in relation to time spent on it, but this year's was pretty good nonetheless. Student interest and involvement on a grand scale was lacking a bit, as ever, and I am interested in surveying students next term to find out what they really want from the equal opps campaigns-I'm not sure how this can best be achieved, but I think it needs to be done-I want the campaigns to be doing what students want/to be set up to serve them best and I'm not really sure they're doing that at the moment. However, anti-racism, DA and QR are all working on things at the moment and I have some very good co-chairs who are working hard, so hopefully that will be continued well into next term. Health and Welfare is also going well and will be putting on sessions for officers on a range of issues next term. Pride will also be happening next term (May 1st) and we discussed it at the lgbt officer's meeting last week (which was good-reps seem really keen to hold joint inter-collegiate events and are starting the use the lgb reps' mailing list more now as well.) Do come along to Pride-QR and lgb soc will both have a presence, so come and support us.

I'm also drawing up a draft survey to go out to all clubs and bars asking questions about staff training/awareness and provisions for safety and equal opps issues, as drink spiking etc is still a problem. I've also made a load of big factsheet type posters covering cycle safety, nighttime safety, drink spiking and home security, so they'll be going out soon. I'm compiling officer packs with a bunch of info in them all, so the posters will probably go in there. I've also extended the remit of the condom consortium (it doesn't get more glam than this, I swear) and will be asking common rooms to order personal alarms, lube, UV pens etc for the following year through us next term, as that should really be quite useful-services...Another police surgery was held in OUSU last week and there will be another one on Tuesday of 9th week and I've also sent copies of all welfare publications to college deans, junior deans and GPs and have had some lovely responses back saying they've found the stuff really useful-on graduate/junior dean/warden etc training provision, Dan and I are meeting with the co-ordinator of the Peer Support programme next week to see whether we can arrange some basic training for them. Things are also moving forward on the 'Student Property Index'-the database of houses and the committee has sought advice from Unipol. I've also with Louise and the University Equal Opps Officer and we told her that we want the VP(Women) and VP(WEO) to have better representation with regards to university academic policy committees and that's been taken on board, so we'll wait and see on that one. The committee on student health and welfare has also produced some very good guidelines for tutors on students with mental health difficulties, and I persuaded them to put OUSU in as a resource for more general advice and advocacy

The Student Advice Service has taken up quite a bit of my time and I will be bringing several motions to council in a review of its workings next term. In the meantime, I've been collecting statistics for its workings from the Christmas vacation to the end of this term and have divided up our stats to those we keep public and those kept private-allowing us to keep full records for use in the Service's appraisal, but also standardise the records we make public-to council/the university etc.

Overall the term's been pretty good, and I'm enjoying having more time to do stuff now that Diversity Week's out if the way! Student apathy and the behaviour of the proctor's both continue

Overall the term's been pretty good, and I'm enjoying having more time to do stuff now that Diversity Week's out of the way! Student apathy and the behaviour of the proctor's both continue to frustrate me on a regular basis, but apart from that...The exec and my co-chairs are all working hard, so thanks to them, especially Steve, my diversity week exec, Paskins, for being baited and Louise for just being absolutely wonderful.

Catherine Wallis**V-P (Women)**

I have been doing a lot of work with Finals Fora. Unfortunately, the English one has had to be cancelled because the tutors who were due to run it are taking part in industrial action with the AUT, but they may be willing to hold it early next term if their dispute is resolved. In the meantime, Fora are taking place in 7th and 8th Week. I will be doing a renewed push during the early part of the vacation to get more tutors to agree to do them in early Trinity, but so far many people have been too busy to host one. If you know of a good female tutor who may like to participate, do pass on her contact details to me.

In terms of the Women's Open Day, I have been gathering quotes for the glossy posters I want printed. I will be sending the packs out to schools in the Easter vac – they'll include letters to the school and to potential applicants, which I have drafted.

I've spent a whole day answering emails (you'd be surprised how they build up, even with my best efforts to keep in contact with people) and doing the various things they requested – sending out publications mainly and varied bits of information.

The Reclaim the Night March took quite a lot of preparation – including a morning sat in the police station trying to get permission for it to take place, which was very scary! Anyway, my original letter was eventually answered the day before the march, having got lost in between police departments for a while. The rest of the organisational stuff wasn't too bad, although I apologise to those who only got their additional posters for the event (on top of the glossy Diversity Week ones) on the day. The actual march went well, I thought. Thanks go especially to Erica, who provided the chants from her university in the USA and proved to be an excellent chant-leader when I had to step in as a steward.

Media – I seem to have been doing an inordinate amount of research on behalf of journalists, and also giving various interviews thus, happily, getting women's issues (they seem particularly concerned about safety) into the student newspapers. This will be a good lead up to campaigning Women's Campaign will be doing next term on safety issues, especially safety in college accommodation.

I've met with the NUS Women's Officer, who was visiting Oxford for a day. We talked about a lot of things and she helped me to get a few campaigning ideas and put me in contact with other people who might be interested in getting involved.

I've organised a meeting, jointly with people from Oxford No Sweat, for Wednesday evening of 8th Week. It will be an open meeting, for students and citizens of Oxford, to listen to a speaker (and watch a short video) on sweatshop labour and have a little discussion afterwards, should they wish. I really encourage everyone to come as it'll be a great chance to find out more about the issues and specifically about fighting the use of sweatshop labour in the University.

As soon as I get another exec member for Pro-Choice, I'll be starting to revise the Unplanned Pregnancy: Your Options booklet along with them and the co-chair, Bridget.

Lastly, I've been dealing with lots and lots of requests for shop items – personal safety alarms, sanitary items etc. Just to let you all know that we'll be doing a big order of these for CRs over the summer, with the intention that these will last all year rather than having a rolling order. For the moment, however, we can still supply them to individual CRs as required.

Dan Paskins**V-P (Graduates)**

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In search of inspiration for what to write in my termly report, I decided to look back over last year's Hilary Term sabb termly reports. I was amused to find that the President in his report last year described me as a 'former OUSU stalwart', but what was sad was when I got to the VP (Graduates) report from last year, and it was all about why he had decided that he had to resign from the job.

I, you will no doubt be delighted to hear, have absolutely no intention of resigning, so it was a rather unhelpful report from the point of view of trying to copy. What was interesting was the reasons that he gave for resignation. Since we'll be discussing the Future and Finance of OUSU at Council, I thought it might be of interest to look at what Andy thought the main problems with the VP (Graduates) job was, and how things have (or haven't) changed in the past year.

Andy raised four major concerns:

1. Overall graduate involvement in OUSU is very low 2. Working relations between sabbaticals had become increasingly strained 3. It is hard to form graduate policy, as OUSU Council is undergraduate dominated and Postgraduate Assembly is inquorate 4. It is hard to generate a broad picture of graduate affairs, as response rates to surveys are extremely low

Now, for me, the second of those just hasn't been a problem - I've worked with all the different sabs this year on different things, and they have all been brilliant to work with.

The other three concerns, though, are real ones, and ones which are ongoing problems. It isn't just me that has found that - the co-chairs of the Future and Funding Committee mentioned exactly the same problem in their report.

It is worth mentioning that graduate involvement in OUSU is rising - Postgraduate Assembly last week was not desperately well attended, but it was, at least, quorate, and the discussions which were held there are ones which will be very useful in allowing the co-chairs of the Graduate Funding Committee to produce a report on the role of the college for postgraduate students. It is also the case that for all the difficulties in involving people found in Oxford, when I discuss our situation with members of the National Postgraduate Committee, it becomes clear that we are streets ahead of other SUs which have both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

I think that the other two major concerns, that very few graduates want to participate in decision-making within OUSU, and thus it is hard to make 'graduate policy', point to the fact that we should have a rethink about how important mass involvement in OUSU by graduate students is. Rather than getting upset because hundreds of people do not flock to our meetings or fill in our surveys, maybe we should just accept that this is the case and adapt our structures to take account of that.

This would involve policy being made by a smaller groups of interested people who do quite detailed research in particular areas, and write reports based on that research to be discussed and approved by OUSU Council and graduate common rooms. I believe that this has the advantage of playing to graduates' strengths as researchers, and that for the issues affecting graduate students, often a small group of people prepared to do some research is more useful than a mass meeting of people who are not that well-informed about the issues.

Unless these thoughts provoke an outcry at Council, I intend to bring a report to 1st week Council next term with recommendations about how we should change the way that we consult and involve graduate students. If it does provoke an outcry, I'll be pleased because at least it will show that things have changed since Andy's resignation provoked a total of zero questions at the following council.

On the subject of the Future and Finance report, I think that Andrew and Daniel should be thanked for their amazing efforts in putting together the report. It is an enormous and pretty thankless task, and already some of the recommendations are ones which have led to positive reforms to OUSU. Some of the recommendations are ones which are easy and quick to implement, while others are ones which start or contribute to quite big debates about OUSU, debates which will still be going long after I finish working here and become once more a 'former OUSU stalwart'.

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Though I ended up disagreeing with Andrew and Daniel over the recommendations for OUSU as an employer, the motion which comes before council for its second reading includes a lot of their hard work, and, I believe, builds on that to introduce a set of measures which will be indispensable for improving OUSU as an employer. I attended the very lengthy discussion of the staff handbook at exec, which reinforced my view that having a specialist committee to look at staffing issues is a really good idea.

This links to another point which I would like to make, which is about aspects of the job of sabbatical officer which are not very visible and not many people know about, but which take up an awful lot of time. Things like writing electoral regulations or looking at how to adapt the constitution and standing orders to fulfil a desired aim, or making sure that campaign co-chairs have made and delivered posters for a meeting, or even finding out who all the representatives to all the JCCs and divisional boards are, take up an awful lot of time. Quite how much time this can take up is something that I didn't appreciate until I started to work for OUSU, which is why I mention it. The less visible parts of the job are also things which are often pretty boring to do, and underappreciated when they do get done. At the moment, every sabbatical officer has to do a certain amount of all of that, along with more fun stuff, and I have serious concerns at the idea that the great bulk of that sort of work should fall to two of the five new proposed sabbaticals set out in the report. The other thing that I can say (because my job is specifically excluded from this so it's not a comment on me), is that it is possible to state with certainty is that workload for all the sabs covered by the terms of the report is far too high, and salary is too low. Since we are not going to get the funding for the six or seven additional people that would be required to provide the current level of service and ensure that our full-time staff only have to work 35 hour weeks, we need to try to even workloads as far as possible, and a massive increase in the workloads of some, already overstretched, jobs can't be the way to go about this.

On a happy note, the meeting of the Joint Committee of Council with Student Members was very productive, and the JCC will be recommending to University Council that the university continues to fund the post of VP (Graduates), the funding for which was due to run out at the end of the year. I sent off five sets of nomination forms today for people who are interested in standing in the elections next year - I hope that next term will see the first ever contested VP (Graduates) election, which would show the success of switching the election from Michaelmas to Trinity term.

There's lots of good stuff happening with the International Students campaign as well - I went on a bit of a spree of appointing co-chairs, so that we now have four. This will enable us to work on two major projects next term. One is producing an International Students handbook, and the other is helping to organise a series of events for One World Week. Before Friday I hope to meet with the co-chairs of the Mature Students campaign as well to plan ahead for next term, now that the Amended Budget has given that campaign the resources to put on another major event this term.

All in all, this term has been a long and exciting one, (I'm off to the Proctors' Court on Wednesday to be sentenced for what they very sweetly if inaccurately call my organising role in the occupation) and unlike my predecessor, I am full of optimism for the future. Graduate representation in OUSU has come a long way in the past year, and there's lots more good stuff to come before I finally shuffle off.

Louise McMullan

V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

Does anyone know where this term has gone? Not sure how we got to 7th week without dying or crying too much. All of the OUSU sabs have been working really hard this term and much of it has been without recognition. I,m not going to be in council on Friday (I,ve run off to Newcastle to see my family,) but I do think everyone who goes to the pub afterwards should buy their favourite sab a pint.

Academic Affairs

I'm very pleased with Acaff this term. The CR acaff officers have really grown in confidence and from what I,ve seen, they,ve been making great contributions back in their own common rooms after the training they,ve received in OUSU. I,m also really pleased with the unexpectedly massive turnout at 5th week,s revision skills session. It was great to see so many unfamiliar faces in OUSU.

Many thanks to Annily for running this session and sessions in individual colleges. Other things that please me: Steve Harper is a great co-chair and has been very enthusiastic in his efforts with

turnout at 5th week,s revision skills session. It was great to see so many unfamiliar faces in OUSU. Many thanks to Annily for running this session and sessions in individual colleges. Other things that please me: Steve Harper is a great co-chair and has been very enthusiastic in his efforts with the libraries campaign since his appointment, Nick has been great at chairing meetings and Ian Caddy is just fantastic in all regards - whether he,s producing posters or pottering about with the website he,s always very hardworking and very committed to everything he does. A real asset to OUSU.

Academic affairs casework continues to take up a lot of time. Much of the casework this term has been to do with sending downs and appeals - and much of this occurred in 5th week at the same time as the Target schools mailing and Diversity week, which meant that I was completely knackered by 6th. Since then things have calmed down a little but there remains a core of steady casework.

Less good things:- the reception for OUSU,s QAA submission (when presented to EPSC) was less than enthusiastic. This was to be expected but I didn,t expect such a cold reaction to the proposal to get faculties to take on more study skills teaching. You won,t believe it but EPSC was typically reactionary - saying that tutorials covered study skills already and to move this teaching centrally would be to effectively ask for a cut in tutorial teaching. Ah well, at least they were better with JCC reform and are starting to respond to the case for researching women,s performance in finals. I,m yet to get a response to my request that Senior Tutors standardise the way that they treat people who fail their first public examinations. This is very pressing and I hope to get this achieved during next term.

The Writing Workshop:- Gareth Lloyd will be ending his term as co-ordinator of the Writing workshop at the beginning of Trinity. The workshop has been publicised very well during his time in charge and take up has increased. OUSU,s hoping to take on more study skills work in the future - providing support to students in science based disciplines in subject specific one-off workshops which I hope to try out next term or at least put in place for Michaelmas.

Target schools:

Has been insane. And has a nasty habit of completely taking over sometimes. It,s been hard to accept that some things just don,t work - Jesus college open day is causing a bit of stress at the moment as bookings aren,t coming in but I hope that we don,t have to postpone the event.

Sheffield is also a bit of a nightmare - getting some of the local schools motivated has been quite a challenge but we,re getting s there, slowly. Northern Ireland makes me very happy though. The Belfast and Derry regional conferences are going to be ridiculously good and there is lots of interest in the Enniskillen visit. It,s been so much easier getting through to these schools when we have Irish co-chairs and lots of great volunteers from the target areas. It has made me very homesick lately to talk to all the Northern Ireland schoolteachers on the phone but it gives me great pride to be going home and working there.

I,ve been quite stressed with a lot of the target schools work this term - so thanks to the co-chairs for being so good humoured. The mailing was a Herculean task - carrying dozens of boxes of Alternative Prospectuses around, photocopying and stuffing envelopes is surprisingly hard work but immensely good fun, again because the people who volunteer for target schools are hilarious and make the work seem a lot less dull. Target schools doesn,t work without the dozens of volunteers who help out and hundreds of students have applied to take part in the Easter schools visiting scheme. Next week we,ll be giving training to those going out to schools on the Easter visiting scheme so if this applies to you please do come along - Thursday 1-2pm in OUSU.

On general access we,ve been moving forward on the issues of standardised testing and race and admissions and motions will be coming to council on these issues early next term.

OUSU in general:

Has been a bit mental this term. It hasn,t been a very fun time - weeks like Diversity week were incredibly stressful for all involved. The vote on the Higher Education bill was also a real low, but I,m glad OUSU did its best on all fronts to try and resist it - including a piece of direct action, which I,m very proud of. Looks like I,m off to the court of summary jurisdiction (or as someone who will not be named put it to me - I am being repressed by the capitalist University of Oxford and their evil agents. Please do not let me be taken in the night by the cruel mechanisms of this pseudo-state) in the next few weeks so if anyone in council is feeling a bit flush, send us a fiver.

Equally so, if anyone needs advice or has any questions about being summoned, I,m your woman. Hopefully the exec will be chatting to the Proctors next week about how they,ve handled these offences (it,s been the first time they,ve operated under the most recent changes to the statutes) - so any feedback we can take forward would be much appreciated.

The new exec have been very hardworking this term and my own two - Charlyne and Ian have been brilliant, not just at their portfolio work, but at also at being very cheery good people.

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Josefa Henry-Bochan

VP (Charities and Community)

Since my last report we have had the Alternative Careers and Volunteering fair, which attracted about 900 students. I know we have had quite a lot of volunteers from there on the OUSU local hospitals scheme – so hopefully the other groups have had a similar response. The hospitals scheme now has 64 volunteers and are launching a smoothie bar at the John Radcliffe on 26th April. There is a free four day café catering course for all taking part and the hospital have been very pleased with our efforts.

We have had raids for Antony Nolan and Help the Aged, between them raising over £1000. Mr and Miss Oxford will be happening on Tues 8th week at the Oxford Union and the reps have been working getting representatives for that. I have also ordered another few hundred college pants.

We hope to have the RAG week schedule finalised by the end of this week. It will be happening in 2nd week and consist of at least pub crawl, beerfest, Irish night, pop idol event, raffle, lots of raids, a pub quiz, picnic, pedelo race. We hope that many colleges will be having their own events – it should be a great week and I'll be working mostly on that over the vacation.

OUSU Staff

Edd Southerden

Business Manager

Relative to Michaelmas, Hilary term was always going to be quieter: Recruitment has quietened down in the Ox-Stu, and we don't have distractions like the summer publications to sort out. So I've mostly been doing the Hilary Term Oxford Student, which I'm very pleased with. I think the editors have worked very hard to make the paper the best in Oxford, and I've also been pleased with the level of advertising revenue we've managed to raise. Revenue is up 50% on last year (which was a notably slow year), and the Ox-Stu is looking quite healthy. Thanks must go to the Ox-Stu editors and team, even if they have a tendency to moan and whine like babies some of the time.

Another major Hilary Term thing is the invoicing and general chasing up of Summer publications. This has been made infinitely easier by the recent restructuring of ousu, giving me a few more hours of the accounts department's valuable time. When I took over this year, there were large amounts of un-paid debt still owing to ousu. With luck and Barbara Godfrey's hard work, this situation will not arise this year and ousu will be on a firmer and more sensible financial footing.

As a member of staff, albeit one who looks like a sabbatical, I welcome the excellent work of the future and funding committee. Although I have not been directly involved, this has been going on in the background of my day to day work. The staffing structures of ousu are a bit of a mess, and a more formalised and fair working environment can only be welcomed. It is good that we have been able to sort these matters out in times of relative calm, so that when relations in ousu get rocky, as happened last year, there is a proper rule book to fall back on.

This brings me to a final point: given these times of relative calm, and also the two term's experience of how ousu and oxford works, we've been able to take mature and necessary decisions about the things ousu does. Not living in a situation of constant bickering and tantrums is, of course, to be welcomed, and means that we can make good and difficult decisions. For this reason, I'd like to thank all the sabs for their hard and diligent work, sometimes in the face of hilarious adversity, specifically Helena for keeping the ship afloat whilst not being a bureaucrat, and Digo for putting up with me asking for full page colour adverts at midday on a Wednesday afternoon.

Executive Officers

Chris Allen

Being on exec this term has been great - it's been really nice to work alongside a group of such committed people.

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General Exec: Over the last few weeks I've become more and more aware of the ambiguities surrounding the role of part-time exec officers, which occasionally mean that OUSU isn't getting as much out of the exec as it could. Fortunately this seems to be a universally acknowledged problem so hopefully we can move towards clarifying things next term.

F&F: This campaign occupied most of my spare time at the beginning of term, and despite the somewhat disappointing Commons vote it has been as rewarding as ever to work on. Things are still moving ahead, and despite a lower profile in the last couple of weeks there's a lot going on in terms of lobbying MPs and the like. It goes without saying that the co-chairs and other exec members involved have been amazing.

Battels: I've spent a fair bit of time doing various bits of research to help with the battels campaign, including one memorable morning spent phoning virtually every letting agency in Oxfordshire. Who said being an exec officer wasn't glamorous?

OUSU Reps I've really enjoyed going along to OUSU reps meetings, and the co-chairs have been excellent. Turnout was fairly disappointing at the beginning of term but it's improving steadily, and everyone seems to find it useful (I know I do). I'm aware that MCR reps are under-represented on Repcom, hopefully we can do something to improve this next term.

Referendum: Finally, I've spent nearly every waking moment of the last couple of weeks trying to make the online voting system for the referendum work. I never thought putting together an intricate combination of PHP, HTML, Perl, LDAP, CSS, MySQL, SSL and HTTP could be so complicated. Things are finally working though, so make sure you all remember to vote.

Ian Caddy

Let's start with the big things: Is it me or did 200 people sat in the Exam Schools speak volumes for our belief in free education? What an outrageous success for such an impromptu event. Everything else: lobbying MPs, countless emails, letters, the AWP, the vote, the tears, the aftermath, the slight pause whilst we wondered what to do next... THE REFERENDUM WHICH YOU WILL ALL VOTE IN NEXT WEEK, more lobbying, committee stage optimism (ongoing), et cetera. There is still a lot that we can push for at the Committee Stage and we're not alone in doing this with many MPs really wanting significant concessions as well. Only time and hard work will tell... Many thanks to the four fantastic co-chairs we've had this term who kept everything moving and Helena for absolutely everything she's done (and there's a bloody lot of it).

The Referendum is here for YOUR benefit and please spread the word to everyone. This will give OUSU a massive mandate to campaign for what the students of Oxford want – *whatever that may be*. If you have a view then we've made it easy for you: sit on your arse, be a lazy git, surf the web 24-7, stop off at ousu.org/referendum, click on the 'vote' link and tell us what you think. Easy? Easy-peasy-lemon-squeezy.

Let's continue with the big things: Is it me or did 80 people sat in the Meetings Room speak volumes for the lack of space in it? What an outrageous success for such a well-organised event. After the success of that revision skills session there are more in the pipeline. The term has also seen highly informative talks from the Junior Proctor and Keble's Senior Tutor. I've spent a fair bit of time redoing the website and trying to organise stuff on there and make it relevant and useful – it's not finished yet but it's getting there. As always let me or any of us know if you think something's missing or needs doing or should be there etc..

On a more general note... The structural review has been interesting and contentious and I can only feel that it is good that we are thrashing out things that have to be thrashed out in order to make OUSU work well for all of us. There is a lot that can be improved and I'm optimistic that this will all happen in the near future. Personally it has made me think about what I do, what value I have, and assess whether I am a 'glorified co-chair' or an important cog (well, maybe just a ball-bearing) in the workings of OUSU. Thanks to all the Sabs and Exec and Maria and everyone else for being great to work with and I look forward to the rest of the year.

Steve Harper

My first term as an executive officer has, on the whole, been an agreeable period of time. I've had an enjoyable portfolio of Diversity Week, Queer Rights and Ethics.

In terms of time spent, Diversity Week has possibly taken up the greatest amount of time of the items in my portfolio. It occurred in 5th week, and generally went pretty well. Each of the Equal Opportunities campaigns had events, and the week cumulated in the Future Outlook diversity and alternative careers fair which was held in the Examination Schools. Attendance at the week's

Opportunities campaigns had events, and the week culminated in the Future Outlook diversity and alternative careers fair which was held in the Examination Schools. Attendance at the week's events varied - and in the case of the anti-racism event it wasn't helped by confusion over the location of the event! Parts of my portfolios crossed over in that the Queers Rights campaign, as an equal opportunities campaign, had a Diversity Week event. Attendance for this event was moderate, as has generally been the case this term. I hadn't attended before this term, but have been told that it has declined. This is a source for some concern. However, the co-chairs are keen to reverse this and are running a poster campaign in order to target apathy vis-à-vis such issues.

Possibly the Queer Rights highlight of the term for me has to be the tombstone cake we had at our end of Section 28 party (run as part of Diversity Week). This was one of a number of interesting events held. Last, but by no means least, is the Ethics campaign. This started brightly, with a visit by a representative of the No Sweat campaign, and a decision taken in first week council to campaign against sweatshop labour in University merchandising. This resulted in a petition being sent out to Common Rooms. Since then, however, we have received counter claims from the companies involved. To simply ignore these claims would be irresponsible, and so the campaign is 'on ice' while we investigate - at the time of writing we're about to start communication with the UMT Union in Morocco to try and investigate specific claims. We'll work on this over the next few weeks, and hope to have a better idea of how the campaign stands by the start of next term.

Rather more generally, I've been to all but one of the Exec meetings for this term, and have attended all of my duty mornings. For the latter, I know my way around the office reasonably well - thanks have to go to Maria for her patience in showing me things on the Computer/Phone/Photocopier! Overall, I've enjoyed the term and I'm looking forward to next term.

Alia Parpia

Entz- well haven't done too much on this portfolio this term- really only helped out with thirst nights but hope to do more on it next term.

International Students: International Students event in Diversity Week was a success, with a good attendance (i.e. more ppl present than just the societies involved). Right now, interested in producing a guide for international students to be sent to students on their making their grades, so as to help them prepare for life in England/ Oxford. Also the campaign against visa extension fees needs to be livened up next term, and hopefully send resolutions for JCRs to pass, condemning these exorbitant rates.

One World: There will be a One World week next term but I am yet to be convinced of the merits of having an exec officer for this portfolio- we should think of this portfolio in the long term and whether it should be merged with another portfolio

Fairtrade: This seems to have become part of my work and right now researching whether OUSU as a central provider of fair-trade tea/coffee/ hot chocolate for JCR/MCR teas is viable.

Charlyne Pullen

The transition from being a co-chair to being the exec for Target Schools has worked well, and the election of two new co-chairs was a good experience to be involved in. As a team, I think we all work very well together, and have managed to organise three open days and three regional conferences this term, although two of the open days will be held next term. We've also done the mailing (mammoth ten hour stint!) this term, and finished exactly within the allotted time, despite the arrival of 12 pizzas for 10 people. In terms of the mailing the attendance was not great, although we did have a good number of people coming in to help for an hour or so (Linsey somebody.....), but we all worked hard and got it done. We've also got names of college reps for most colleges, but if anyone wants to volunteer, I'm sure we could fit you in. Personally, I've been organising the open day at St Hugh's on the 22nd June, organising rooms, food, tutors etc. This wouldn't normally be part of the exec's job, but I wanted to carry on with the work I'd done on it as a co-chair, and have managed to find time for it somehow.

Women's Campaign

Women's Campaign has been really good this term, especially with Diversity Week events. We had a Women's Cabaret on the Monday night of Diversity Week, where me and the other two remaining co-chairs performed, bringing the number of performances up. Also, we had a Reclaim the Night March on Thursday of 6th week as part of an NUS nationwide Reclaim the Night March event. We have been running a campaign on security, which I suspect will run on into next term,

the Night March on Thursday of 6th week as part of an NUS nationwide Reclaim the Night March event. We have been running a campaign on security, which I suspect will run on into next term, which fitted in well with the idea of reclaiming the night. There have been a few problems with Women's Campaign this term, just in terms of co-chairs and relatively low attendance compared to last term, but with two new co-chairs and a third to be elected in 8th week, we should be back to strength and running more high profile campaigns to attract more women to attend.

TUC

Seeing as there is nowhere else for me to talk about this, I figured I'd include it in my report. TUC meetings have been very interesting this term, and indeed since I was elected at the beginning of Michémas to attend them. We are working on events for May Day currently. The TUC is very vocal in its support of our Free Education policy and it supports the occupation. I believe the TUC can only teach us more in regard to campaigns, and feel glad to be able to attend their meetings.

General exec

It has been difficult to understand how OUSU works, although I was already involved in campaigns before being elected to exec, but now feel I could explain it to others. I have attended all council meetings, all executive meetings, and women's campaign and target schools meetings since I was elected.

Dan Simpson

I have found my first term on the executive extremely fulfilling, thanks in large part to the help and dedication of the OUSU staff as well as that of the sabbaticals and the part-time executive. In addition to the normal work of my portfolios, which I will discuss below, I have been involved in the organisation of Diversity Week, the campaign against the introduction of top-up fees and I have sat on JCC.

College Inequality

I should begin by thanking the President and Jamie Ballin, the JCR president of St Anne's, who has made an invaluable contribution to the work of this committee. There remain a number of outstanding recommendations from the College Inequality report published last year. The current focus is on producing a number of practical proposals to take to JCC next term. However, this committee is in need of invigoration and I am in consultation with the president as to how this can best be achieved.

Mature Students

The principle event of this term was the drinks event held in Diversity Week at which a number of guests were available to give career advice to mature students. This was principally organised by the Vice-President (Graduates) with my assistance. There have also been experiments with different types of social events that would be worthwhile for mature students. The committees increased budget should prove invaluable in this regard. Coming up later this term will be a feedback panel which will give mature students a forum to make contributions to the University's policy-making structure. I have also been in contact with the DWP regarding employment prospects for mature students.

Disabilities Action

I am pleased to report that for the first time in a number of years DA has an official (co-)chair. Mat Paskins was elected in third week and has done valuable work as has Nancy Mendoza who has been involved in this campaign for some time. This term DA has discussed the new Mental Health Bill. We have also been looking at a number of proposals which I hope to take forward next term. These particularly include the possible recording of lectures and the establishment of a Deaf Network, probably in the form of an email list. The main focus of DA this term was Diversity Week. There was a disabilities awareness training session on the Friday morning and there are positive prospects for the increased occurrence of such events in conjunction with Target Schools. We were also fortunate to have Al Davison speak on the Friday evening. This event, incorporating a martial arts demonstration, was well-attended and extremely enjoyable.

Sarah Waight

I've really enjoyed my first term on exec and have attended all but two exec meetings, and attended all four councils.

Charity – Currently I'm in the middle of organising the RAG skydive which will take place next term. It is all going well so far, and it looks like we will be taking just under 30 people to take part,

Charity – Currently I'm in the middle of organising the RAG skydive which will take place next term. It is all going well so far, and it looks like we will be taking just under 30 people to take part, and hopefully will raise several thousand pounds for RAG. I also helped out on the RAG College Bar Crawl, which took place this term.

Community – At the start of term we had a couple of meetings of the community committee that had met each week last term, however very few people attended these meetings, as there wasn't really a lot to discuss as a committee. An important factor of the community portfolio is about increasing the numbers of students volunteering and it doesn't seem that this needs a committee as such, but different means of promoting volunteering opportunities. I'm involved in the new scheme of volunteering in local hospitals, and I did a stall at the recent Volunteering Fair, where quite a few people expressed interest in volunteering and they will hopefully start soon. I've added a few groups to the Get Involved website, and I think that an important thing to do next term will be to promote this website more as it has the potential to be an excellent resource in promoting volunteering to students.

Dave White

One term down and two to go I am enjoying working in OUSU and have almost worked out how to use the phone in the OUSU offices. Health and welfare committee have met four times with fairly low attendance but those who do come get a lot out of the good speakers and training which has been on offer. I will be seeking to advertise this more fully next term and hopefully recruit a second co-chair. Accommodation committee; I have been fairly useless here and done nothing. NUS; I am in the process of organizing T-Shirts for all those delegates whom are going. I hope they have a good time and enjoy themselves. The rest of my time has been spent fairly evenly between putting things in envelopes and shouting abuse at the OUSU computer network.

Katherine Lim

This term has been very productive. The International Students, Campaign held a meeting to discuss further plans for campaigning against visa extension fees. Dan will be writing a report about the issue of visas, in order to lobby the government to drop the exorbitant fees (£155 by post or £250 in person). I, m also going to compile a list of people,s experiences with the new system, how long it took to get the visa extension, etc.

We, ll hopefully be producing an international students handbook, to be distributed to all international students at the start of next academic year. The Evening of World Culture, during Diversity Week was a smashing success, with loads of societies attending. We had native food and drink, as well as stalls featuring opportunities to volunteer and work abroad over the summer. Plans for One World Week next term are also in the pipeline.

Graduate Involvement: a meeting of Postgraduate Assembly (with a relatively good turnout), where there was a discussion about what colleges should offer to graduate students. There still is a lot of work to be done in getting graduates to be more involved with OUSU, but the word is spreading. We had 2 grads apply for posts on the Graduate Funding Committee.

Tom Packer

This term has been an interesting one from a student union point of view.

In terms of my portfolio's I have focused more on Graduate Involvement. I found postgraduate assembly went quite well in terms of focusing on the graduate perspective in Oxford for example that colleges do play a real role for graduates as well as undergraduates. I have also helped in terms of difficulties with the application system for graduates-though this depended on Dan. Clubs and Societies I intend to push more next term. There is now an excellent co-chair and I anticipate useful reforms.

I have also undoubtedly an active voice on the exec and Council albeit ideologically out of sync and nearly always in a minority. I like to think that I have represented some views in OUSU that generally go massively underrepresented in comparison to their support among the student population.

OUSU Committees and Campaigns

Academic Affairs

Academic Affairs

This term, the academic affairs committee have run four events - one per fortnight. Overall, attendance has been good, though this is with one exception. The events for the term started in first week with a listening skills session with the Student Advisor. She took a session aimed at equipping Common Room officers with the basic listening skills. It was a useful and informative session and a good start for the newly elected common room officers. This was well attended by officers, as was the event in third week. In third week, we were visited by the Junior Proctor - Dr Ian Archer. Dr Archer talked about the examination and appeals progress. Again, this was informative and will doubtlessly have provided information that should be of use to Common Room officers during the exam period. By far the best attended session of the term came in 5th week, with a revision skills session - this was, again, taken by the Student Advisor. This was held in the meetings room, which was absolutely full. Seeing such a good turnout was heartening, and should act as a good reminder of the usefulness of these sessions. Finally, in 7th week, we were visited by the Senior Tutor at Keble, Dr Sonia Mazey. Despite the lower than usual attendance, those present will have gained a useful insight into the role of a Senior Tutor. It should be remembered that the Academic Affairs committee also acts as a campaigning body. This term, we have been laying the groundwork for a campaign on the issue of opening hours in central Bodleian libraries. The campaign shall take the form of a petition via postcards which students will be able to send in to the appropriate office. We have recently finalised a design for postcards, and hope launch the campaign early in Trinity.

This term's co-chairs are Steve Harper and (the outgoing) Nick Butterley. On behalf of the committee, thank you to Nick for the work he has put in. Our Exec officer is Ian Caddy.

Anti-Racism

This term the anti-racism campaign has organized events almost every week. After the general meeting for the first week, during which we managed to set the term card, we started to carry out our plans as best as we could. The activity for the second week was reading for the memorial at the chapel of Wadham College. In the third week, we invited two officials from the Admission Office and had a very enlightening discussion on the admission policies for students with ethnic minority background. For the fourth week, we co-organized with Model United Nations a presentation given by a UN official on job offers to all graduates, especially those who may be disadvantaged regarding ethnic background. In the fifth week, which was also the Diversity Week, we invited three student leaders from different parties as well as a member of the city council to a discussion, with our main topic as the attitude government should adopt towards black people. In the forthcoming week, which is the seventh week, we are thinking of offering a free introductory dancing lesson to all who would be interested. And in the final week, we are going to invite some officials from the International Students Office to give a talk on scholarships for international students, with a question-and-answer session afterwards. On the whole, our work this term has been fairly successful and we shall make great efforts to ensure that the remaining two events will live up to peoples expectations.

Disabilities Action

There has been little activity from Disabilities Action this term, though the campaign is starting to move forward on a number of issues. A co-chair was elected in fourth week, for the first time in a while.

Disabilities Action contributed to Diversity week through a training session, organised through the university's disability service, for students working on the target schools. There has been some suggestion within our meetings that such training should be compulsory, though it should perhaps be part of a general awareness concerning 'diversity'.

Also in Diversity week, Dan Simpson, DA's executive officer, organised for the cartoonist and martial artist Al Davison to speak. The talk attracted about twenty people. Al has agreed for his artwork to be used in future DA publicity, and OUSU has bought copies of his two major books.

The issues under discussion, on which action has not yet been taken, are as follows:

1. The possibility of tape-recording lectures for students unable to attend.
2. The redrafting of OUSU disability advice material to make it more informative and accessible (eliminating jargon, providing more precise information about the role of the counselling service, ceasing to refer to mental disabilities as 'hidden' etc). The, related, possibility of auditing college welfare and disabilities officers as to the information they would like to disseminate concerning life for students with disabilities.

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3. The possibility of setting up a deaf network, along the lines of the existing diabetes and dyslexia networks.
4. Updating the 'disabilities' section of the OUSU website.
5. Passing a motion through council in support of British Sign Language as a language of education.

Finance & Funding

Its been a busy term but we're tried our best to keep it short and sweet:

The Term So Far Most of the Finance and Funding campaign's work this term has revolved around the unfortunately successful passage of the Higher Education Bill through Parliament. We don't need to tell you that the most significant part of the Bill is the introduction of top-up fees, something that OUSU has rightly opposed and that F&F has done its best to prevent. Our campaign has involved a meeting with leading rebel MPs in the Grand Committee Room of the houses of Parliament, at which Helena spoke, to bolster support for the vote against the bill. We lobbied on the day of the vote in Parliament and joined a protest in Parliament Square, organised by ULU. Our campaign has involved both the traditional, such as letter writing to MPs and the unconventional, such as mass emailing the Higher Education Minister, Alan Johnson and Charles Clarke's personal secretaries leading to their email servers crashing. It would be wrong to not mention the occupation of Examination Schools in our report. This was not a project of F&F but in line with OUSU policy we supported those who occupied Exam Schools. Our present concern relating to the occupation is the treatment of those being disciplined by the Proctors and we'd like to draw attention to the seemingly random, arbitrary and unfair nature of the Proctorial discipline system. In aid of those who are fined and whose JCR's are unwilling to pay fines there will be a drinks event to raise money in The Old Refectory, Wadham College, 8pm-11pm Thursday of 8th week,

F&F Now

AUT - Right now, the AUT are involved in a significant pay dispute with employers. This led to the strike and "shutdown" (supported by NUS. They're always there when you need them.). F&F was and is keen to get involved in this - offering to flyer, support pickets and demos. Organisation by Oxford members of the AUT meant it was sometimes difficult to put together a real campaign.

Having said this, the gathering outside the public meeting in the Town hall was so successful it turned into a mini-demo. Of course, negotiations continue now, and there is the possibility of further strike action. F&F will continue to support the position of the AUT. Referendum - Top-up fees, and University funding generally, have obviously been the major concern of F&F this term. It is absolutely vital to have a mandate that reflects student opinion. Student Unions are about representing students. With this in mind, F&F worked towards having a referendum at the end of this term on "how to solve the problem of university funding". This is now well under way, with campaigning having begun on Monday. Tell everyone- www.ousu.org/referendum. Hopefully using e-voting will maximise turnout. Chris A and Digo are negotiating with those at OUCS. Committee Stage of Higher Education Bill - The Bill is being discussed at Committee stage. We have written a list of areas for the Committee to consider (the cap, regional weighting, variability, means testing) and suggestions for improvement. This was sent to every MP on Committee and we should be receiving replies shortly. If not, then we'll just have to start calling them.

The Future

In many ways, this has been a successful term for F&F: there has been good organisation; the core of the campaign has been focused, and things have been done. But there Common Room involvement must increase if this is to be an effective campaign, now more than ever. Top-up fees have not got a clear path ahead yet - there is the Committee Stage, 3rd reading, Lords. But we must also work with the worst-case scenario in mind - it all gets through. And this means we need to start lobbying the university about bursaries, grants, loans: minimising the effect of fees on students must be our priority. This is where Common Rooms come in. We need motions passed, but more than that, we need JCR officers coming and helping lobbying for that which they know students in their College think will make a difference. It's also important to explore what colleges offer in bursaries and grants. St Johns and Somerville have comparatively good hardship systems - we need to start expanding this to all Colleges, hence the need for Common Room involvement

students in their College think will make a difference. It's also important to explore what colleges offer in bursaries and grants. St Johns and Somerville have comparatively good hardship systems - we need to start expanding this to all Colleges, hence the need for Common Room involvement. Generally, a move from government lobbying to University lobbying is going to have to take place to limit the damage of fee increases.

Rent - the position of F&F and rent is complicated. F&F campaign deals with financial issues that affect students, and rent is certainly one of these. Problems of hardship, impact of cost on applications and access awareness relate both to fees and rent. Separating them inevitably creates areas which will crossover into both campaigns creating confusion; it may also damage the effectiveness of rent campaigning. There have not been any applications for a co-chair position, and currently the effort to stop extortionate rises is handled by no campaign. Rent is fast becoming THE issue in Oxford. Over 3 years rents will have risen by up to £600 in some colleges, with loans increasing by inflation. This is quite literally unsustainable. Choice of College will increasingly be made with financial considerations taking precedence (this sounds familiar..). While the need for technical support to Common Rooms may be better handled by exec officers, campaigning should be a responsibility of F&F if we are serious and realistic about a counter-movement.

Thank-you!

We wouldn't have done as much as we have this term without the previous co-chairs, Alice and Torsten, without the Sabs, especially Helena (organiser), Dan (organiser) and Digo (NUS press officer), without our exec members, Chris (computer genius) and Ian (gets cuddlier each term) and without everyone who turned out selflessly and consistently for demos, meetings etc. THANK YOU!

Ps, we still need a third co-chair to have the joy of writing this report next term.

Health & Welfare

This term has been what I can only describe as a moderate success for the Health and Welfare Committee. In spite of what was an extremely varied and enlightening series of speaker meetings, training sessions and discussion forums being held attendance is still low and next term, and any successor to the position of co-chair, will have to take steps to see how this could be increased, notably among those who are not directly responsible for welfare in common rooms (though there has been some discussion as to the extent that this is appropriate). In addition we have suffered on more than one occasion from having to rearrange meetings because speakers have been unable to attend for a variety of reasons.

However the committee has done much that has been worthwhile this term. Our first session was spent in providing a listening skills workshop for newly incumbent J/MCR Welfare Officers and two discussion forums has enabled a significant number of important issues to be raised, debated and action taken on a number of issues as a result including the possibility of informal peer support twinning between colleges, variety of contraceptive supplies and topics to be covered by future speakers.

It only remains for me to thank Rosie Buckland and Dave White for their parts in the organization and publicising of the committee and the speakers for sharing their time and knowledge with us.

A co-chair post on the committee remains vacant and it would be immensely appreciated if OUSU could take steps to ensure that it is filled before the close of the academic year.

Target Schools

This term has been ridiculously busy. With three conferences, hundreds of schools visits and three college open days to organise the term has passed very quickly. Things are progressing well, with a good take up on schools visits most recently. The Northern Ireland regional conferences are the real success story, bookings are coming in very steadily and we've secured Marc Mullholland as our mock interviewer in Belfast and Derry. Sheffield has been much more sluggish, with only a handful of schools expressing interest in the regional conference there as yet. Very many thanks go to the volunteers from Sheffield and Belfast who rang around the local schools to drum up interest. This, however, worked much better in Northern Ireland than in the Sheffield area. Three open days have been scheduled - Jesus college, St Hugh's and Univ/Teddy Hall. Bookings for the latter two events have been very steady but Jesus college has been disappointing. Many thanks to those who helped with the mailing in 5th week - this was an epic 6 hour long task for many, but special thanks to Glendon (helped with 10th week staff meeting) and Ben (signed up for 10th week meeting).

events have been very steady but Jesus college has been disappointing. Many thanks to those who helped with the mailing in 5th week - this was an epic 6 hour long task for many, but special thanks go to Charlyne (who sat for 10 hours stuffing envelopes) and Dan Simpson - who went beyond the call of exec duty. All of the admin has taken a great bit of time and effort this term, so there hasn't been as much time to focus on the Target schools meetings on Thursdays. We have, however, managed to get some useful input for future motions to OUSU council, most recently on standardised testing and race and admissions.

Queer Rights

QR events this term have had varied degrees of success. We have continued to run our regular meetings at 17:30 at the Northgate, but there has been a substantial drop in attendance. Most LGBT Reps who are mandated to attend fail to do so, and it is therefore difficult to make the campaign representative.

We did, however, manage to run several special events, including a speaker meeting on the history of the struggle for gay rights. Our Diversity Week events were a debate discussing the relative merits of assimilationist versus non-assimilationist approaches to minority integration, and a party celebrating the end of Section 28 for which a spectacular cake was produced.

The co-chairs have also been attending weekly meetings of the Oxford Pride group to represent students' views in this community endeavour, as well as dealing with problems such as JCRs planning to drop LGBT Reps from their committees. We met with LGBT Reps in the 6th week meeting to get some input as to what kind of support they wanted from the campaign. We are currently considering running a poster campaign to target student apathy towards queer rights issues, and assembling a resource pack for LGBT Reps.

This term's Co-Chairs are Sarah Cotterill, Aidan Randle-Conde and Martin Sullivan, and our Exec Officer is Steve Harper.

Womens Campaign

At the beginning of this term two new co-chairs were elected, Rosalyn Stanley in 2nd week and Megan Challis in 3rd week.

The main campaign for the term has been Safety Awareness. We have been encouraging people at Women's Campaign and in particular Women's Officers to ask around their colleges to find out what safety measures are in place and what the major problems are. Issues that continually come up include basic things like window and door locks. Raising awareness of the importance of this issue and the potential safety risks has been the central aspect to this campaign.

The main focus of this term has been Diversity Week.

Women's Cabaret raised money for Oxfordshire Women's Aid and Eating Disorders Awareness.

The Reclaim the Night March was held on 26 February to coincide with a national NUS event. We marched around the city centre with the Women's Campaign banner and several excellent chants!

At the 6th week meeting of Women's Campaign, Andrew Copson and Daniel Finley came and spoke about the conclusions of the Future and Funding Report, which were discussed by those present.

Our plans for next term include continuing with the Safety Awareness Campaign and focusing on a new issue, possibly of a more political or international nature.