

OUSU

reports to council

7th week and termly hilary term 2010

Stefan Baskerville

President

University

Relations with the University are generally good. Without referring to the meetings held by other sabbaticals, this term I have met with the Vice-Chancellor twice, the Chancellor, the Pro-Vice Chancellor for personnel and Equality, the Academic Registrar twice, the Director of Student Administration and Services a number of times, the Proctors and Assessor. Topics have included representation on the V-C Nominating Committee, extra time in exams, asylum seekers and fees, student representation on University committees, Urgent Challenges, HE funding, among others.

I have represented students on the Joint Teaching and Student Funding Review Group, General Purposes Committee, Development Committee and University Council. Issues that have arisen include HE funding, accommodation for students, students in the community, the review of teaching, prayer space for Muslim students,

We made a presentation to University Council, covering OUSU's history and structure (very briefly!), focusing on our activities in a range of areas including representation (disciplinary procedures, sexual health provision, graduate provision, among other things), student support, common room support, representing graduates, and widening participation. I concluded by pointing to the challenges we face in terms of registration, incorporation, and funding. It was very well received and I would recommend to Common Rooms that they consider making a presentation either to Governing Body or a main college committee on the CR's main areas of activity – you'll be surprised by how much people don't know, and how much of your work is appreciated by fellows and administrators. I think it is also beneficial to sit down and write a presentation in preparation, as you are forced to consider what you're doing and how you're doing it.

Joint Teaching and Student Funding Review Group. This is the group looking at issues of teaching and student funding and is responsible for drafting the University's responses to the Browne review of undergraduate fees. The group met to discuss the University's response to phase 1 of the Review, which has now been submitted and is available for public consumption. Oxford is quite a lot more detailed than those from elsewhere, or so I have heard. The group has since met to begin discussion of phase 2 (which is looking to possible future funding systems). We lobbied successfully for graduate tax to be on the agenda and I informed the committee of our HE policy and particularly emphasised two principles underlying it, namely opposition to variability in fees at the point of decision on entry into HE, and that HE should be more progressively funded than it is currently.

Along with a range of other higher and further education institutions, the University won an award, which the Vice-Chancellor was given by the Queen in an awards ceremony, and Jonny, Sarah and I attended as representatives of the student body. Buckingham Palace is massive! I told Prince Phillip about London Citizens and community organising, and I told the Queen about how many of you there are! Unfortunately I didn't have enough time to tell her about urgent challenges.

OUSU

The focus of the term has been around funding and governance. I have spent considerable time writing, and meeting people to discuss, Urgent Challenges, which I presented at 1st week Council and which has since been passed by OUSU Council and the main committees of University Council (Education, Planning and Resource Allocation and General Purposes). PRAC has recommended that the University should underwrite the costs of the student union for 2010-11 and to write off accumulated debts up to the point of registration, in order to facilitate incorporation and registration with the Charity Commission. This is subject to scrutiny of the OUSU Budget by the PRAC Budget Sub-Committee, and the development of a financial plan including options for 10% efficiency savings over 3 years. The paper is going to Conference of Colleges for its consideration, including whether colleges wish to contribute to OUSU's funding. On premises, it was agreed that whilst we

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cannot move out of Thomas Hull House immediately, University officers would continue to work with OUSU to try and find cheaper and more accessible alternative premises. This is a decision of PRAC and will go formally to University Council. This has taken and will continue to take a lot of time and energy, but I think it is necessary for the long term health of central student representation in Oxford.

I have spent a long time on the business of the strategic review group, planning the focus groups and the running them! We have conducted five with one more to come. Support from our NUS Regional Organiser, was helpful in planning the process of the review. We concluded early in the term that it would not be realistic to report back in 5th week and are now planning to report back in 1st week of Trinity Term in order to complete the process properly and ensure our report and recommendations are as comprehensive as they can be.

Common Rooms

I attended every Prescom this term and both MCR Prescom meetings. Have also attended a number of Common Rooms meetings to talk about OUSU's activities and answer questions. I have met with many JCR Presidents to discuss activities in their common rooms and the University, which have included student representation, academic feedback, rent, vacation residence grants, JCR-SCR relations, and building institutional relationships, decanal fines and disciplinary procedures.

Rent

One area I am less happy with is the rent pack. It has taken too long to get this out to Presidents and I have not met my own hopes that it would come out early in the term. I am in the process of trying to update the data we currently have on rents to include the 2009-10 academic year. I'm looking forward to a practice-run training in negotiation this week, and to getting stuck into the issue next term.

Kat Wall

V-P (Women)

Well Being Week:

In 3rd Week, Dani Quinn and I organised well-being week which included a series of events to reduce stigma around mental health, provide information to students about local services and increase the well being of students across the University. It was a great success!

Springboard:

We won funding for the Undergraduate Pilot for Springboard – a personal and professional development programme for women, secured two trainers to run the programme and signed up over 60 students to undertake the programme in 0th Week of Trinity Term 2010. I am now working to secure funding for future years of the programme from Conference of Colleges.

Assertiveness Training:

In 2nd Week of this term, Dr Peggy Frith and I piloted an assertiveness training session for students at Oxford with very positive results including positive feedback and an article in both the Guardian commenting on its success and in Jezebel. We hope to run the programme again next term.

Finals Forums:

Over 5th and 6th week I have organised 9 different finals forums for women in a variety of subjects. Tutors have been speaking to students about how to plan for revision, deal with stress and anxiety and strategically answer questions in the exams. The subjects include: History, English, Philosophy, Politics, Classics, Modern Languages, Physics, Maths and Economics.

Open Days:

I have planned and organised two open days - one for Women in Politics (with Baroness Jay of Paddington, Emily Thornberry MP and Nicola Blackwood PPC) and one for women in Science (with Professor Alison Noble, Averil MacDonald and Valerie Jamieson). These aspiration days are targeted at year 12 female students with the aim of encouraging them to apply to Oxford.

Gendered Perceptions of Careers:

Working with Jonathan Black, Director of the Careers Service, I have helped write a report about the findings

of our student survey last term, which highlighted that men and women both observe high levels of discrimination in certain professions. This report is being circulated to national and student press.

Thirst Lodge Campaign:

Thirst Lodge acquired a lapdancing licence. With the women's campaign and groups in the local community, I have been spearheading a campaign to get this repealed. Last Saturday we organised a protest in Bonn Square and over 150 people came down. We are now working on getting letters of opposition sent to the Magistrate's Court and getting names on the petition.

Common Room Training:

Dani Quinn and I have run Student Support Training for various common room and society committees. This includes basic listening skills, how to approach common concerns students may have, establishing boundaries and referring people on. I also ran this session for students at Balliol College as part of their welfare week.

Disordered Eating

Enough has been run every week this term. We are also looking to get professional debrief support for the coordinators from the Counseling Service. Dani Quinn and I have also run two 'support the supporters' sessions which we said to be useful by those who attended.

Student Parents:

Over the Christmas Vacation I undertook a consultation of Student Parents and have turned the findings from this survey into a report, which is going to the Childcare Steering Committee early next term. It is likely that the majority of recommendations will be adopted.

Dani Quinn Opportunities)	V-P	(Welfare	&	Equal
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Hello Council,

Time constraints have caused this to look rather like an essay (starts out with a lot of detail, wraps up very suddenly) – let me know if you'd like the 'extended' version!

Enjoy the Easter break,

Dani x

welfare@ousu.org

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Student Representation

These are the committees and groups on which I have sat this term:

Committee for Student Health and Welfare

This Committee will be convening in 7th Week, to consider the proposals, and working group recommendations, that I brought to the Committee's attention in Michaelmas Term (sexual health provision and College policies for students with disordered eating). I have also fed into the other papers for this group (e.g. graduate welfare, fitness to study, mature students' information, etc).

Sexual Health Working Group

This group met twice in Hilary, and its proposals will be considered by CSHW (the committee above) in 7th Week, to be forwarded (hopefully) to Colleges for their consideration.

College Doctors' Association – annual meeting

Spoke to the paper on Sexual Health provision in Colleges. The response was divided between those who were very positive about the proposals and those who had reservations. I also raised the issue of language problems affecting students' ability to access healthcare.

SpLD (Specific Learning Difficulties) Working Group

The group had its first meeting in early Hilary Term, and is reviewing the University's provision for students

with SpLDs. I'm really pleased that this is being addressed by the University, as it is something I had promised in my manifesto (although I can take no credit for the group being established!).

Disability Equality Scheme

Due to a timetable clash, Jonny attended in my place this term. I believe he contributed a lot! It will be covered in his report.

Consultative Committee on Student Health and Welfare

Although health and safety is of great importance to students (as with anyone else), the committee's passionate commitment to health and safety means I don't have to contribute a great deal! That said, if there is an area of University life where you think the health and safety aspects could be improved, please do let me know!

Fitness to Study Working Group

Of all the groups I'm on (I'm on this one with Jonny), this is probably the most exciting and has the greatest scope to impact upon students (in a good way!). We've talked about it at length in past reports, and have consulted with a lot of students on the proposals, so I shan't bore you. We're hopeful that the policy and panel will be in place for the next academic year.

Common Room Support

Training: advocacy catch-up (two hours is *definitely* not enough time!), student support training for individual Common Rooms and societies (all with really positive feedback...and some requests for more!), and Equality and Diversity Training.

Individual meetings with officers: I've met with about 20 common room officers (welfare officers, presidents, equal opps reps) this term. Some have been 'general' meetings for officers who are starting out, and some have been about specific issues.

Weekly mailings to officers: These have been themed (with issues including substance abuse, living out, mental health and sexual health).

Student Advice Service

We've had approximately 300 students approach us since July 2009 – a huge increase on past years. Scarily, there are still many students missed – please tell your friends about the service, or let me know if you'd like bookmarks/postcards/posters.

We now have a data protection policy, new systems for case-notes, and an online resource to have an overview of cases and compile statistics.

Student Support (non-Student Advice Service)

Living Out: Lisa and I had two drop-in sessions for students; I'll be visiting a Common Room to give a talk and run a drop-in for their students (get in touch if you'd like the same!); and the Living Out Guide has been updated to be more practical.

Well-Being Week: this was a huge success (and cost £10 to run!) – let me know if you'd like to see the report on it (it's 8 pages long, so I don't want to append it). I'm hoping it will be run next year, as it's an excellent opportunity to connect students to mental health services.

Support the Supporters: We had two support sessions for students whose friends have disordered eating. These were both really successful, and we intend to have one more 'pilot' session before setting it up as a 'permanent' thing.

Autonomous Campaigns

LGBTQ Campaign: This campaign has really blossomed, with a huge amount of energy and ambition. Their meetings are at 7pm on Thursdays, in Jesus College.

Campaign for Cultural and Racial Awareness and Equality: This campaign has also gone from strength to strength (again, the result of an excellent and dedicated committee). Interesting and inclusive discussion events were held this term, and papers are being sought for their conference next term. Planning has also started to

reinstate the Ethnic Diversity handbook (who!).

Students with Disabilities: The lovely and brilliant Danni, the SWD Officer, has made valiant efforts to restart this campaign. So far, efforts haven't borne fruit but we won't be deterred! Disabled students' experiences are (on average) notably worse than that of their peers, and it's essential that there is a strong and articulate mechanism for them to campaign for improvements. If you want to be involved, or just know more, contact Danni on swdofficer@ousu.org or me on welfare@ousu.org.

Other Projects

SWD (Students with Disabilities) Access Guide: This is still a very slow project, and I haven't made much progress with it. On a bright note, the University is currently reviewing the information it makes available to potential applicants, and Jonny (who is on the review group) made them aware of the importance of making this information available.

'Nightline' for Mandarin-speakers: This project has only just started, but I'm really hopeful it will be a success. It's still at the consultation/information-gathering stage, but responses so far have been very positive.

Open Minds Magazine: Again, this a project with an amazing team behind it! The first edition of this new mental health magazine should be launched next term – get in touch if you'd like to contribute or be involved. In particular, they are planning a centre-page photo-shoot for students who are ready to 'come out' about their mental health problems – just brilliant. I should add that I can't take credit for this – I've just done what I can to support them.

OUSU (general)

Attended meetings of OSSL Board, (*ad hoc*) Exec (weekly), sab team (weekly), Standing Committee (convened twice), Appointments Board (at the very end of last term), Strategic Review Committee (and the associated focus groups), and other miscellaneous groups.

I visited several Common Rooms (honestly can't remember how many) to talk about the work that OUSU does and to answer questions.

Plans for the rest of my term in office

Primarily, I would like to complete the projects I've started (or, at least, leave them so that Tom can easily do so!).

Issues that have transpired to be significant (either because of the number of people affected, or serious way in which they affect people) are self-harm, alcohol abuse (particularly for people who are worried about a friend), depression and anxiety awareness and disability awareness. Lastly, I would like to work with Common Rooms on the structures they have (or not) to promote equality of opportunity within their community. I also want to make sure I prepare an awesome handover for Tom and encourage lots of people to run for the position (for it is a brilliant job).

Sarah Hutchinson	V-P (Graduates)
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I had secretly expected this term to be less hectic than last term, which almost immediately proved a ridiculous thought. The first week back brought Adrian Smith and his team of civil servants, who are carrying out a review of postgraduate education in the UK, which will feed into the Browne review of higher education fees and funding. It was a short and rather frustrating meeting (key lesson: there will be no more money for postgrad education or support) but I emphasised the need to improve access to postgraduate education and the high cost of career development loans.

I had an interesting meeting with a couple of Domestic Bursars at which we discussed problems international students and graduate students face in getting accommodation when they start at Oxford. Access to accommodation and vacation residence and storage is unequal across the colleges and we discuss ways to better advertise accommodation (online, hopefully through a website but at least through a facebook group) and to open up access to the accommodation that exists in college and the university. I have discussed this

issue with MCR Presidents throughout term and will be bringing policy on it and lobbying the University over the next few weeks.

The experience of International Students, has been a key concern for me this term, with the language and cultural barriers many face in both learning and socialising becoming clearer to me throughout term. The graduate exec and I have discussed improving the pre-arrival information for all students, we have discussed improving this on the side of the University, too. Jonny and I have also pushed for increased and improved access to English classes within the Language Centre and Dani, Deeksha, Xiao-wei and I are looking at ways to improve the information we offer regarding welfare support, particularly in other languages. We are continuing to highlight the issue within the university, though I believe it is not going to be an easy issue to resolve, particularly in the context of looming budget cuts.

On a happier note, the mature students' campaign has been going well, and huge thanks to Rainbow for all her hard work putting on some lovely events. We've had a good number of people attending events, and a large number of students joining the mailing list. We hope shortly to be able to access all mature students when they arrive, so hopefully we will be able to improve the service we offer. I have also been working with the university and one of the members of the campaign to improve the information offered online, including how to apply as a mature student. We are in the process of redrafting the webpage and this will be online asap.

Working on the Graduate Survey has been much slower than I hoped, in part because of the issues I will deal with in the next paragraph. However, it is pretty much finalised now and will go out once the election for V-P Graduates is over.

I spent a large proportion of the first part of term meeting with MCR Presidents and OUSU reps. This was incredibly useful in that it helped me to explain what OUSU does for graduates, and gave me a chance to meet graduate reps and find out what sort of things are going on in their common rooms. However some of the conversations were focussed less on graduates and more on the administration of OUSU. While I recognise how important this is, it was frustrating that what should have been conversations about how we can work together to ensure that graduates get value for money from their time at Oxford turned into me trying to (often unsuccessfully) correct huge misconceptions about OUSU and it's work. These misconceptions are very damaging to our ability to work collectively, as have been deliberate attempts to undermine OUSU's representative role.

We have all welcomed the constructive input we have received from graduates, but I am very concerned about the impact on individual vulnerable students of some of the misinformation about OUSU and our work for graduates is concerned. I hope that students and MCR reps come and ask us what we do if they're not sure about this, particularly if they have ideas about how we can improve the way we communicate with individual students. I hope that we can now focus on working for graduates.

I have also visited a number of graduate common rooms this term, and other exec members have visited more, and one of the key pieces of feedback we have received is that graduates would like to hear from OUSU as soon as possible when they start at Oxford. We hope that more MCR Presidents will invite OUSU to speak at their MCR introductory meetings next year. The college system means that we rely on MCR Presidents to allow us access to their students: they are a key element in us improving our service to graduates. We would also love to attend any MCR meetings happening this term and next, let us know if you'd like us to pop along.

I will be working on putting up graduate-specific content on the website over the vac, and planning out what information should be provided in the pre-arrival information we send out. If you have any ideas on this, please let me know.

Less than a week has passed since the last Council so there's not a huge amount to catch you up on since then but highlights include:

- University Skills Group – discussed a number of issues regarding skills training for research students. I said I would promote the plagiarism online course, and raised the problem of supervisors not understanding what skills training is available and appropriate to their students

- Queens Anniversary Awards – on Friday Jonny, Stefan and I represented Oxford Students at an award presentation at Buckingham Palace.
- King's Arms petition – we sent this out in the all-students email and there was a big jump in signatories to the petition. I have contacted the Bodleian regarding their views on the crossing and after I've heard from them will be contacting local news sources to promote the petition further.

Jonny Medland

V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

Hello Council,

Somewhat controversially we're going for a 2 part report this week. The first part will be a report on what's gone on in weeks 5 and 6 this term, the second will be an overview of the whole term. Following the usual format:

Council Mandates

- Taken forward issues around student understanding of marking criteria with Senior Tutors and Education Committee.
- Got confirmation from the Admissions Committee of Conference of Colleges that they will be voting on the issue of student representation there in week 5 of next term.
- Heard back from Divisions about our proposals to improve student representation (Humanities & Social Sciences like them, which is good as those were the two which they were targeted at).
- Took forward the issue of fees for asylum seekers who are students here – the university was initially positive and I am now scoping out the situation nationally and at the universities mentioned in the original motion.
- Continued promoting the National Student Survey including to every JCR President – last count we were at 35% although I'm anticipating a bit of a spike in week 6. I'm sure I'll update you at Council.

Common Room Support

This has been a bit quieter than normal but activities have included:

- Helping Nathan Jones organise an access reps meeting in 6th week (which I sadly can't make as I've got a university committee). The meeting will be on student involvement in access work involving teachers.
- Supporting Common Room representatives take forward access work in their colleges in line with the university's regional coordination of outreach strategy.
- Supporting Common Room representatives take forward improved levels of student representation in colleges – we've made a lot of progress on this this year at the university level and this is going to be a big workstream for us late this term and into next. Given how many university committees we sit on it is frankly ridiculous how bad some colleges are at encouraging student representation and I think it's an area where we can get a lot done next term.
- Attended MCR Presidents' Committee and provided updates on the university review of teaching and the graduate admissions process, among other issues.
- Produced and distributed information on study skills in colleges and how to implement them for JCR reps. This is very similar to the work I did around academic feedback sessions last term and will hopefully be similarly fruitful (more colleges are taking an interest in feedback sessions, most recently Lincoln and Oriel).

Representation

This has been pretty big. As you'll all have seen from Stefan's e-mail we have been added to a range of committees of University Council. This is a huge victory for students – step 1 is always being included in the discussion and we'll now be able to put student views forward into the university decision-making process. Here's what I've been up to in chronological order:

University Council. We had a 4 hour session of Council on Monday of week 5. We discussed a lot, but the most important agenda item was for 'strategic discussion' and focused on the funding environment facing the university and challenges going forward. I can't say too much about this but there was a diverse discussion where Stefan, Sarah and I raised student concerns about the funding environment, emphasised the importance of a sustainable funding system for higher education and noted the importance of outside perceptions of Oxford. Other items for discussion included university governance and the Oxford Staff Pension Scheme.

Committee on the Language Centre. I went to the termly meeting of this – it was striking in terms of the Language Centre being something which everyone agrees is both excellent and underfunded but funding not being available for. We also got an update on the issue of language teaching for international students which is a very important issue across the university.

University complaints & appeals group. This is the meeting which I was late to 5th week Council as a result of. The 1st meeting of the group was very positive – there was a strong feeling around the table that current arrangements don't really suit any of the parties involved and can be both simplified and professionalized. The paper I wrote for the group was also well received and we are aiming to report back by the end of Trinity of this year.

University disciplinary procedures working group. This group has been set up in response to a decision from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (the highest appeal body for university students in the UK). It is considering 3 specific questions and I wrote a paper with Sarah Hutchinson responding to them and then answered questions before the group before about 30 minutes. I think we got our points across well and we will now see what the group reports back with early next term.

MPLS Undergraduate Joint Consultative Forum. This meets termly and brings together Divisional Board reps, me, Joint Consultative Committee reps and academics in the MPLS Division. We discussed student understanding of marking criteria and issues around prelim resits which are hopefully to be resolved soon. We reached the consensus that I wanted on both questions (e.g prelim resits should be earlier and student lack of understanding of marking criteria is a problem) so that was nice.

Senior Tutors' Committee. This met Monday of week 6 – I got quite a positive response to my peer marking paper to improve student understanding of marking criteria. Speak to your senior tutors about this if you are interested. Other things discussed were the university review of its teaching model, the maternity/paternity policy working its way through the system and a university review of visiting students which I have asked to be shared with JCR and MCR representatives at governing bodies.

PRAC ICT Committee. I couldn't make this as Senior Tutors' Committee overran. Sorry!

Planning and Resource Allocation Committee. We've been added to the university Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) which basically decides where the money goes. I'm the student rep on it and in addition to discussing Urgent Challenges we also looked at Divisional 5 year plans and proposals to do with graduate student fees, which will be ongoing about the next couple of terms.

AdEx Working Group on the Admissions Timetable. This was set up explicitly in response to student concerns and was really positive – the group recognises that more comparative information about college provision would be useful to applicants and we're working on taking this forward on rent, accommodation, childcare provision, and a host of other issues including for international students and mature students. We're also taking forward the issue of information given to students with disabilities.

Admissions Executive. Meets Thursday of week 6 and we'll be considering the issues of undergraduate applications made by international students, visiting students coming to Oxford and a comparison between the Oxford and Cambridge Admissions systems.

Education Committee. I have literally just got the agenda for this but among the things we'll be looking at is the Humanities project to benchmark what sort of teaching it does (which will feed in to the university review of its teaching model), a consultation of 4th year postgraduate research student fee liability and a further discussion on the future of quality assurance in the sector (both more important and fun than it sounds).

Other representation: I wrote responses (with my colleagues and on behalf of OUSU) to University consultations on the proposed Fitness to Study policy, the review of Degree ceremonies and the initial stages of the Browne Review into Higher Education Funding. I also have been added to the working group looking at taking the Fitness to Study policy forward.

Meetings with University officials

Met with:

- Pamela Flood & Victoria Wilson to talk about promoting scholarships to applicants - a lot of undergraduate scholarships have one or fewer eligible candidates as they are available to so few people. This is undesirable.
- Toby Whiting from the Public Affairs Directorate to talk about branding, how OUSU does it at the moment and what we can do to improve our brand within the university. This was a really useful meeting and will hopefully be particularly valuable to next year's sabb team who I know have an interest in this issue.
- Mike Nicholson (Director of Undergraduate Admissions) to talk about stuff in general, relations with alumni, the backdrop to the AdEx group on information provided to applicants and a paper which will come to the University in week 6 of Trinity outlining what OUSU has done in terms of access in 2009/10 and what developments have taken place.
- Michael Sibly & Keith Zimmerman (Academic Registrar & Director of Student Administration and Services) to talk about the campaign to get asylum seekers treated as home students (they're interested in the issue), funding requests from the university and the Iran motion which passed in 5th week.
- The University's year abroad co-ordinator and two members of Student Financial Support to talk about support provided to 3rd year linguists, what information is given to them, and how the university can make it clearer what is available and how to plan a year abroad. This was a positive meeting and I think we can improve the status quo quite a lot.
- Keith Zimmerman & Lesley Sims (Head of Planning for the University). I met these two with Stefan to talk about PRAC which took place in week 6.
- Emma Sabzalieva – met her with Sarah as she interviewed us for a DPhil project she is writing. Emma is Head of Graduate Funding for the University.
- PVC Education and Head of Education Policy Support. Me and Sarah met them for our usual pre-Education Committee Briefing.

Student Advice Service

Is still very busy. Slight uptick in the number of cases heading towards the end of the term. It's worth noting that the university is increasingly impressed with the service that we provide, particularly in terms of how it can improve the representation which we can offer on groups such as that looking at complaints & appeals.

Target Schools

Has been really busy! The Shadowing Scheme will have finished by the end of week 6 but has been hectic – I've mainly been providing administrative support but it seems to have gone really well which owes a huge amount to the whole committee but especially to Caitlin Weeks who has been coordinating it while getting multiple law internships. We also had a committee meeting where we talked about taking projects forwards including the issue of new media participation.

General OUSU stuff

Has again been really busy. Highlights include:

- Me, Stefan and Sarah had a day (Friday of 5th) in London to see the Queen with the Vice-Chancellor and other university officers as a result of Oxford winning a prize for the quality of our libraries and museums. This was awesome – both as we got to see the Palace from the inside (and admire the art) but also because we got to spend some time with Lord Patten who is quite fun to hang around with.
- Finals Forums. Hannah and I have been organising these for weeks 7 and 8 of this term. At the time of writing we are up to 11 confirmed plus one for next term (Physics). If we can't cram them all in this term (and we probably can't as some academics aren't getting back to me) then I will do what I can to organise them for next term. The Finals Forums are booked in under the exciting name of 'Back Yourself 2010' which is too awesome to contemplate, really.
- Strategic Review Group. We had a meeting to consider how best to move forward and also the MCR Presidents Focus Group which was very insightful. Please remember you can send your submissions to strategicreview@ousu.org (more and more people are, which is great).
- Went to Exec, Scrutiny Committee and did a range of other things to help keep OUSU ticking over including a lot of work ahead of PRAC in preparing our case for it.

Report on the Term.

It feels a bit odd writing this, to be honest. Primarily because it is still only week 6 (I have all sorts of things planned for weeks 7 and 8!) but also because I only have one term left doing this which makes me feel a bit sad as it's a lot of fun. I hope that OUSU never has to have a term like this again – I think that one of the most significant things that we have done this year is to grab the nettle of OUSU's finances and attempt to finally turn the organisation into something which can work. At the time of writing I am very confident that we will succeed but do not quite know what that will look like. I do know that the amount of time which Stefan has had to spend trying to resolve our currently unsustainable financial model is a great shame as it means that the OUSU President can't spend their time working on actual issues, meaning that it looks like we're doing less than we are.

That said I think that we are nearly there. We've held together in terms of what sort of funding model we want and I think that we have gone a long way to persuading the university that our solution is the right one. I hope that by 1st week Council of next term we will be able to report back with the desired outcome. Major areas of work for me before then will include the Strategic Review Group, the student response to the university's review of its teaching model (which is being devised at the moment) and more stuff around the area of higher education funding. The latter two of those are two of the most exciting developments within Oxford in years – they are challenging as a lot is on the table and there is disagreement as to what the university should do. But they also represent a real opportunity for student representation to make a difference to fundamental questions about what sort of university we actually want Oxford to be. This seems to me like an opportunity which should not be passed up.

Other things coming up next term – the 3 groups I'm on which are looking at some issue to do with complaints & appeals will report back and I'm very hopeful of positive outcomes. The current arrangements are good for no-one, least of all students and I think that if we can help fix this system then it will be one of the most significant achievements of our year in office. I'll also be finishing off stuff on my manifesto – this will include working with Conference of Colleges and Divisions on tutor training (which is the one outstanding promise on my manifesto) and continuing to take some major strategic issues forward within the university (such as doing whatever I can to make sure that some projects which will transform graduate provision keep going forward in spite of the financial environment).

All in all I think that Hilary has been a good term. At times it's been very stressful and so busy that I've barely had time to go home before having to be back in the office but I think that the outputs which we're seeing OUSU achieve are testimony to the fact that all the work is at least starting to pay off, which is probably just as well. To briefly recap on the term, major areas of work have been:

- University committees and working groups. This term has seen a dramatic increase in the number of committees we're on, a lot of which have ended up going to me. This term I've gone to the Admissions Executive, Undergraduate Panel, the Admissions Committee Regionalisation Working Group, the college complaints and appeals working group, a working group on the use of contextual data in the admissions process, a working group on the OUSU complaints process, University Council, a working group taking forward the Fitness to Study policy, Curators of the University Libraries, Education Committee, the Disability Equality Scheme Steering Group, the Student Number Planning SubCommittee, the Joint Committee of Council with Student Members, the university working group on the admissions timetable, the university working group on complaints and appeals, the Committee on the Language Centre, a working group on university disciplinary procedures, the MPLS UJCF, Senior Tutors' Committee, the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee, the AdEx working group on information provided by colleges to applicants and I will also go to the Gender Equality Scheme Steering Group.

These committees have covered a truly vast array of issues and I have submitted papers on study skills in colleges, student understanding of marking criteria (both in terms of peer assessment and in terms of improving marking criteria), college and university complaints & appeals procedures, and university disciplinary procedures. All of these issues are now working their way through the system. Being on 22 university and Conference of Colleges decision-making bodies is frankly a bit crazy but also means that I get to develop a good understanding of university-wide issues and I hope that the fact I now get more papers from the Conference of Colleges and we are increasingly embedding our work into the Divisions will pay dividends in future.

- Other representation. It feels like ages ago now but I led on producing our response to phase 1 of the Browne Review and will do so again on phase 2. Our response has attracted a fair amount of interest and it is important that we continue to engage with the NUS and university on this debate. Next term is really where the fun begins so stay tuned for more on this as the state of the debate starts to take shape. Other things that fall into this category – Hannah and I have been developing how OUSU will address the issue of the university's review of its teaching model. This is going to be a very exciting project which will show interim results by the end of Trinity Term which Alex and his colleagues will then be able to build on.
- Student Advice Service. I can't say much about this but we are making progress both in terms of quality assurance (more feedback) but also in terms of our profile, as seen by the number of cases we get, and how we are seen within the university. The Student Advice Service has a big impact on the quality of representation that we can offer to university bodies (in a good way – it means we see the problems) and also in how we can help Common Rooms. Although the bit of my job which I was least familiar with when I started it is unquestionably one of the most important.
- Common Room Support. I've been pleased with how this has gone. We're helping Common Rooms produce alternative prospectuses, take forward academic feedback sessions and better study skills provision, introduce e-mentoring in their colleges, and embedding regional coordination of outreach. We've also run advocacy training and are now – I think – becoming fairly well established as people who Common Room officers can talk to (I normally get about 7 or 8 Common Room reps a week getting in touch to ask a specific question about something they're doing, which is great!) We've also kept running reps meetings, looking at student understanding of marking criteria, getting your colleges to do more outreach work, the university review of its teaching model and much more besides. To give a general reflection on this student representation can only work university-wide if college representation is good and next term will feature a lot of work around student representation.
- Miscellaneous Academic Affairs. I've done a lot of work around promoting the NSS (and think we will get to 50%) and also around organising finals forums. We're up to 12 with more to come next term.
- General OUSU Stuff. This has taken up a lot of time this term. In addition to doing a lot of work with Stefan around Urgent Challenges I've also gone to Exec, Steering Committee, Standing Committee, Internal Affairs Committee, Elections Committee, Budget Committee and OSSL Board. I think that our

new governance structure is paying off – the Budget was very well received both in Council and in the University providing an indicator of why it was we needed Budget Committee in the first place and I think that things will continue to develop on this front. I also think that we've made real progress this term in engaging with OUSU's stakeholders, not just among the student body (although we have – given how ambitious the scale of what we're trying to do is, the support for it indicates that we are well trusted among the students who engage with OUSU most frequently) but in the University. Our presentation to University Council went down very well, especially among those members of Council who have little contact with our work. One advantage of increased representation within the university is that they will see more frequently just what it is that we do and (hopefully) appreciate its value more going forward!

- If you have any questions about anything which I have been up to then please email me on access@ousu.org.

Eorann Lean Community)	V-P	(Charities	&
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Beyond Profit

352 people came, 160 attended speeches - the feedback suggests people liked the change of location to the Careers Service as it was informal and friendly, and that people found the talks and stands effective and liked the diverseness of stalls and wanted that improved on. So Daniel, the careers service and myself are looking into inviting more think tanks and corporate responsibility companies next year - but as always it's who takes up the opportunity.

Volunteering Fair

This was on Tuesday - we had 54 stalls and the feedback from those attended was positive saying it was friendly and helpful and stallholders enjoying the chance to network with each other and funders but the student turn out was disappointing (the snow didn't help). Would love for it to happen again next term especially as it gives outside community groups some contact with the university. I'll be working on a handover for it with ideas such as doing it in Michaelmas, having more international summer volunteering opportunities and making it a shorter time etc.

The booklet has most of the organisations that came in it with a short description and contact details so if you'd like some please take some for your college - I'll also be putting it up online and there will be booklets at the careers service.

Volunteering Week

It was student-volunteering week in 6th week - which is what the Volunteering Fair was in aid of. Have had taster sessions, training and a social to give people an in to the wonderful world of volunteering!

Swapshop

Was a really fun event on Sunday of 4th week – this started from talks with the County Councillor in charge of environment and work with the Community Action Group. Thought it would be good to do another at end of Trinity to take stuff that can't be taken home and catch the finalist - have nothing to do wave... Was thinking of working more closely with the canal side CAG and seeing if they have any swap shops next term that I could work with them on and advertise - so its more conjoined.

'Cancer research'

Information meeting on 10th march to set up the student committee

Environment Workshop

Aecom emissions workshop, presenting bottom line for total co2 emissions - important as shows university waking up to the huge challenge in front of them. They have lots of work ahead of them to get buy in from colleges and departments and students are going to be an important part of this.

Sustainability Steering Group

We now have student representation on this committee, which is the highest up environmental decision committee. Shows Jenny Ekelund and the university realising the potential of students to help them.

Community Engagement

Meeting Jim Campbell of the City Councils Scrutiny Committee on Thursday - will update in council.

This term have had lots of talks with Richard Jarman about how to take the C&C job forward and what the university needs to do about community engagement.

Meetings

- Met with Preservation trust about 'Open Doors' and how to involve students in it
- Cowley Carnival about how to get student involved – going to ask student art societies to take part and advertise it to graduates
- Macmillan – helped them advertise and get volunteers for their clothes sale –Saturday 7th week – come it'll be awesome!

10:10

Has been going through committees all term am awaiting communication from Jennie Ekelund - will update you at council

RAG

Mr and Miss Oxford - was a terrifying but wonderful event once again and raised £400

Rag Blind Date - raised £990 – and was a huge success!

Articles

Hope you all saw my article in the OxStu - thank you very much to the lovely OxStu for being bullied in to doing a feature on volunteering for volunteering week

I have also written an article on OUSU for the Leavers handbook

VC Awards

Have been launched. The awards are for students at Oxford undergrads or grads who have given extraordinary commitment to making a difference to the state of society – the deadline for application is 20th March (end of 9th week). I am to be one of the judges along side the Assessor and Richard Jarman

Common Room Support

Met with Charity Reps new and old, found out what they were doing, whether they wanted to be RAG rep too and how I could help them.

Created an event feedback form - so reps could write about events they did, what went wrong what went right and contacts etc. to be put in a folder together so new reps could access them and get ideas about events

E & E rep list is coming up to date – thanks to the lovely Ben West so I shall be making an effort along with him to meet up with reps.

Societies

Have worked to provide resources for societies – have been using the OUSU events part of the website to publicise society events. – seems to work well – would like it to be prettier but is something for the website review.

Also worked with community / volunteering and charity societies – have created a list from Freshers' Fair stalls to offer opportunities such as the volunteering fair, advertise beyond profit in case any of their members were interested and other opportunities too.

Website

I haven't done as much as I should and I'm sorry – I am looking for a Website editor who could come in on the project too for the interim period while we design it to give us some technical assistance and this may then be turned into an appointed role next term.

PART TIME OFFICERS

Eleanor Hafner

Health & Welfare Officer

Three main achievements:

- Organised a “Welfare social” for welfare officers across University. This took place at Zizzis. Providing welfare for JCR and MCR officers by letting them meet one another to exchange event ideas. Welfare bags were included; consisting of important information and comfort food!
- Talked to welfare officers about event ideas and met up with them to discuss any problems which may have arisen throughout term. This was done on an informal basis. I also sent out emails to try and encourage welfare officers to contact one another and discuss ideas and welfare issues.
- Responded to welfare queries sent to me via email – these queries included basic information about OUSU services, times for events and more general questions about services in Oxford.

Next term I will be organising “well-good” packs on a university-wide scale – these will be handed to all welfare officers and will include important information about OUSU and welfare in general. These will be given in the hope that all welfare officers will replicate them and hand them out to incoming freshers in Michaelmas 2010.

Nathan Jones

Access & Admissions Officer

Supporting JCR Access

I have worked with Jonny Medland in liaising with JCR Access Officers, and have attended training and consultation sessions with Reps. I introduced a motion to introduce onto the JCR Committee of my College, St. Catherine’s, an Access Rep, and used my knowledge and experience of Oxford access to offer support and advice to the new College Access Rep- a service I am happy to replicate for other JCRs introducing new Access posts. Next term, I would like to improve my one-on-one face time with individual JCR Access officers, and will make myself available for one-on-one meetings at least once a term. I will also look to working with JCR Presidents to raise attendance and involvement of all Access officers, as well as looking to supporting Common Rooms in ensuring all have a dedicated, and well- supported, Access officer.

Working with Teachers

As part of my target to increase OUSU interaction with teachers in the delivery of access initiatives, I have liaised with the National Association of Schoolmasters, Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and am to meet with Phil Siddle, their National Officer for Recruitment to discuss a closer relationship between OUSU and the union. I have also consulted the Association of Teachers & Lecturers (ATL) and have negotiated the hosting of a ‘Fringe Meeting’ to take place in the Conference Centre at their 2010 Annual Conference in March to provide information about the admissions process, and to seek to tackle the myths which deter applications, which I will lead.

Teach First

I worked with Jonny and HEAPS (the Higher Education Access Project for Schools) in planning and supporting an Oxford visit. I sat on a panel comprising a student representative from Somerville College, and officers from the Widening Participation team, UNIQ Summer Schools unit and Teach First.

BBC Newsbeat & Access

I have begun negotiating with Natalie Ostroff, Producer at BBCI’s Newsbeat programme to discuss a potential feature on applying to Oxford, and debunking myths. We are working together to develop innovative and imaginative ways of doing so, and are evolving towards some kind of programme on GCSE/A-Level Results’ Day in August 2010.

Looking Ahead: Trinity Plans

Teacher Conferences- I am running a JCR Access Reps consultation on Wednesday of 6th Week to discuss running a series of Teacher Conferences for teachers to attend. Standard format would include showing

teachers a mock interview, putting on a Q&A panel with current undergraduates, admissions tutors, and academic tutors, and giving tours of Colleges and Oxford the city, as well as providing an afternoon opportunity for teachers from across the country to share good practice with each other and Oxford tutors, and take part in idea-sharing forums such as 'Supporting Students Carry Out Independent Research'.

Access Freshers' Fairs & Access Week- I would like to pioneer a Michaelmas 2010 'blitz' on Access initiatives, in which, during the first four weeks of term, the wide array of Access programmes visit individual Colleges to advertise opportunities for student involvement. I will also be liaising with the student leaders of these projects to discuss incorporating them into a designated 'Access Week', to raise student awareness of access initiatives.

Interview Prep Training- Throughout Trinity and Michaelmas terms, coinciding with the beginning of interviews in December, I will be organising a number of training sessions to help current undergraduates deliver interview preparation sessions to students coming up to interview.

Summary

My second term serving as your Access & Admissions Officer has been a fascinating one, and I have found the opportunities for new and innovative projects endless. I am keen to consolidate my formative experiences of Hilary term into solid and lasting policies and programmes over the coming year, and am particularly optimistic about a growing relationship between ourselves and the teaching unions, and more, with individual teachers. I look forward also to working with the excellent student-ran programmes in expanding both the number of undergraduates participating in our projects and the number of potential Oxford students reached by them. I would like to thank the many students here in Oxford who throw themselves into access work with such enormous passion, enthusiasm and dedication, from involvement with Target Schools to e-mentoring and student shadowing.

I am always more than happy to hear your ideas, and if you would ever like to discuss the contents of this report over with me, or if you have any suggestions/comments or complaints about anything I'm doing (or not doing!), please do not hesitate to contact me on accessandadmissions@ousu.org, or feel free to call on 07905143051.

Nathan Jones
Access & Admissions Officer
Oxford University Student Union

22 February 2010

Hannah Cusworth

Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

Hello hello Council,

It doesn't seem that long ago since I was writing one of these but here's what's been going on since we last spoke. After Council Jonny and I went and got strategic about the teaching review. The first round of meetings with common room presidents is very much in the diary and will have begun by the time I'm reading you this. This very exciting and has been taking up pretty much all the time I spend on OUSU, that and arranging the hilariously titled 'Back Yourself 2010' Finals Forums. They'll be running over the next two weeks with a few crammed in next term. Encourage all your finalists to come, encourage them to back themselves.

Now on to the termly part of this report:

When I first began the job I didn't really know what was going on. I read a lot of pdfs and things began to become a bit clearer but I suppose I'm still surprised at a) how much reading there always is to do and b) how much we're doing but how much there still is to do. The term has been taken up by some pretty urgent challenges, I volunteered myself for Budget Committee so spent the first two weeks of term learning about net liabilities and proof reading guidance notes. Getting to understand what the situation was, what the solution was, and realising that I knew enough to explain it to others was a bizarre but surprisingly enjoyable experience. I don't really know what that says about me...

Most of the rest of my time has been spent turning up to general exec things and just generally fulfilling point 3 of my job description.

I looked back over my manifesto yesterday and realised that actually quite a lot of it is getting done. Library opening hours- Medland is on it and the Library Guide will be with you all asap; Common Room Support- I helped Dani and Jonny run the amazing advocacy training they put on at the beginning of term and baked jam tarts for academic affairs reps meetings, next term I'm looking forward to working more closely with the reps as the first stage of the teaching review really gets under way; Academic Feedback sessions- are popping up left, right and centre, I can't claim much credit for that but if any common rooms are looking to set them up get in touch and team Ac Aff can help out.

Next term it's onwards and upwards towards the teaching review and probably a good few more papers and pdfs. I'm excited.

Finally, I'd like to say a big thank you to all the sabs and the staff who have been lovely, laughed at me when I was being stupid and listened to all my endless questions.

Hannah

Yuan Yang

Women's Officer

My first term working with the Women's Campaign has been an incredible experience for me – through the Women's Campaign, the WomCam Committee, and the OUSU Exec meetings, I have access to this unbounded supply of enthusiasm, ideas, and energy. As a result, we've had a very active term at WomCam, and I hope this can continue!

The main focus we've had this term is on the Let's Talk About Sex campaign, to encourage more open and frank discussion of sexuality. Leonie Northedge launched a book group which met every Wednesday, going over a range of texts and approaches to women's sexuality. I invited Zoe Margolis, writer of the Girl with a One Track Mind blog, to speak to students, and had a great turnout with a lively discussion on sexual liberation, owning one's sexual desire, and sexual education. Emily Pfefer is hard at work directing a production of the Vagina Monologues, which will be performed at the end of 7th Week, displaying a classic piece of first-person stories about female sexual discovery.

A large part of the aim of any movement that strives for cultural change is to engage the wider community in discussion and the transmission of ideas. We hope that the Let's Talk About Sex campaign, and further initiatives in that campaign, can continue to do so. I have written an article for the Lifestyle section of the Cherwell on the Zoe Margolis event, which I hope will be read and discussed by those who would otherwise not hear from the Women's Campaign. I have also written an article, helped by Helen Reeves and many other members of the Women's Campaign, on the harms and perpetuation of sexual objectification and unequal power relationships, relating to the ongoing campaign against Thirst Lodge's lapdancing activities.

The Thirst Lodge campaign has been a large part of this term's activities, and we will have more to report in future months. For now I can just say how happy I am that there is such widespread community and student support for the petition and for the boycott, and I hope this is indicative of a recognition of the problems of sexual objectification for women. Secondly, there has been a huge amount of political initiative from the Women's Campaign and all those many people involved in collecting research, drafting letters, and specifically Kat for organising the protest. We've shown that the Women's Campaign is willing to take an active stance on pertinent issues, can engage in community organising, and is very successful at doing so.

Finally, an important project for me is developing the New Pie Group, the mixed-gender discussion group on society, gender and sexuality, as part of a wish to bring in a diversity of voices and opinions to the discourse on gender equality. With the help of Will McCallum and many other supportive friends, we launched the group on Thu 5th Week in Wadham, with a big turnout of around 25-30 people, over half of whom were male. Our second week discussion had a turnout of 20 people, just under half male. We have discussed sexual reputation, masculinity and femininity so far. I hope this can become a long-standing, stable group for people interested in thinking about gender and social structures to meet and engage with one another. I hope you might want to

come along if you haven't been before, and meet a group with a great discussion dynamic that's inclusive and diverse. I hope this group will be, and see itself as, a very valuable addition to the gender equality movement.

Let me know any ideas you have for taking any of these campaigns further – I'm always happy to receive more stimuli!

Yours in sisterhood or siblinghood,
Yuan
womensofficer@ousu.org

Charlotte Carnegie	Rent and Accommodation Officer
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Individual Issues:

- I have had enquiries regarding the failure of guarantor forms from some students. I have dealt with individual concerns. This has been a recent issue as students begin to finalise their accommodation next year. Students have asked whether colleges will act as guarantors, this is not an available facility at most colleges. Starting this week I am compiling data as to which colleges will agree to do this. A related issue is that of guarantors for international students, again an issue which has arisen in the last week, and I have just contacted the estate bursars committee to begin a dialogue about provisions for international students regarding this issue.
- I have also dealt with individuals' concerns regarding the letting agent, which has now gone into administration proceedings, Charles Lawson. Certain students' properties are now being let by Beehive Lettings and I have been solving individuals' issues relating to deposits.

Rent Negotiation Pack and Training:

- I have rewritten the rent negotiation pack. This now includes more information relating to negotiation with college authorities and mobilising support within your common room. Also, included are common tactics used by common rooms, such as raising food prices and kitchen fixed charges, and how to work to overcome such challenges made by college authorities. The section regarding rent strikes will now be a separate guide, as rent strikes are not solely applicable to negotiations regarding the levels of rent, but also issues around accommodation standards and health and safety provisions in college. This pack is currently being reviewed by the OUSU sabbatical officers to be published next week.
- I have been in dialogues with common room presidents who have completed rent negotiations, both during the present academic year and the preceding academic year, in order to compile comprehensive advice regarding the various approaches a common room can take with regard to rent negotiations.
- I am also planning rent negotiation training for common room presidents and treasurers, to focus again on mobilising college support for the common room's rent campaign. In order to develop the requisite skills to run this training I have attended training sessions regarding negotiation skills run by external organisations.

Common Room Visits:

- This term I was asked to visit Jesus College Junior Common room to discuss issues regarding upcoming rent negotiations. I was able to provide them with a rent negotiation guide from last year and statistics relating to how various rent rises will affect the debt faced by students who have different household incomes.

Living Out Guide:

- During the Christmas vacation and at the beginning of this term I contributed to the Living Out Guide, both by reviewing and commenting on the content which was written by the Vice President for Welfare and Equal Opportunities and also providing content regarding Landlords and Letting agencies. I contacted all Letting agencies, which provide accommodation for students, in the Oxford area in order to collate information about administration charges, the deposit required and basic information such as location.

New Legislation regarding landlord accreditation:

- I was able to meet with the Minister for Housing and Planning, John Healey MP, in a dual capacity relating to my role in OUSU and another student organisation. I reported to both the student press and OUSU council regarding legislative changes due to take place in April this year, which will feed into the landlord

accreditation scheme in Oxford and also regarding the new restrictions on converting 'family homes' to Houses of Multiple Occupancy.

- I have started a dialogue with Andrew Smith MP and a number of City Council representatives to ensure that student views with regard to the implementation of this scheme are heard when this process begins.
- As soon as the landlord accreditation scheme in Oxford is finalised I will be providing a guide for students regarding their rights.

Manifesto Pledges to be fulfilled:

- This term I have refrained from focussing on the Code of Conduct relating to building works in colleges, which I wish to encourage domestic/home bursars to sign up to. My rationale for this is to not detract from the rent negotiations which have been underway this term. I intend to begin this process by consulting with common room presidents in trinity term, as rent negotiations begin to culminate.

Xiaowei Xu

International Students Officer

This term I've mainly been working on the third annual Oxford International Festival, which will be held at the Exam Schools this Saturday. For the first time we've succeeded in getting a number of African and Caribbean societies involved, ensuring truly diverse representation. The ISC has raised its profile on campus, hosting a number of informal events which have been extremely well-attended, including the Ice Cream & Brownie Night in 2nd week that was attended by over 100 students.

Dani and I have been discussing the possibility of offering welfare services in different languages to reach out to international students who may not feel comfortable discussing their personal problems in English, and/ or would prefer to talk to someone with a common cultural background. We're hoping to work with Nightline to launch a pilot scheme in Mandarin, though there are some logistical challenges in training volunteers who will be working in a different language.

For the rest of the term I plan to focus on improving access for international students. I'm currently in talks with Cat Murdoch, who's in charge of student recruitment in Europe, on launching a Target Schools-type initiative and possibly organising large-scale events in major European cities, similar to the Regional Conferences held around the UK. At a minimum we'll be holding training sessions for international students who are happy to promote Oxford at their old schools next term. I'm meeting Helen Charlesworth from the Admissions Office next week to discuss other ways in which we could work with the University to make sure that international students are not disadvantaged when it comes to access.

Jack Matthews

Common Room Support Officer

Common Room Support

I have worked with a number of Common Rooms this term to set them up on the Mi-Voice elections system. This has involved training returning officers how to use the system, helping Common Rooms get use of Mi-Voice through general meetings, and being on standby pretty much 24/7 should any technical issues arise.

I met with a representative of a company wishing to work with Common Rooms to install free to use ATM's in Common Rooms across Oxford. I will be working with Common Rooms for the rest of term to spread the information I was provided and answer any questions anyone may have.

The Sky TV campaign has not gone as well as I would have liked this term. Common Rooms from across the country have joined our campaign to get a cheaper subscription rate, including Common Rooms from Cambridge, St. Andrews, Reading and Durham. However I have been hampered due to external forces. I was working closely with my counterpart at CUSU, who was committed to write the letter whilst I increased support around the country. However I was only recently made aware that he was no longer in the position and that a replacement had not been elected. I will therefore be drafting the letter over the coming weeks.

The Common Room Information Service (CRiS) has expanded well over this term. This system for information exchange across the JCRs of Oxford now has a solid foundation which I am working to build on over the coming terms. I have already expanded CRiS so that data can be quickly analysed by Common Room

Presidents. Over the coming terms I will be working to expand the amount of information on the system to include such things as rent and information on college provisions. If this proves successful, I hope to copy the system for use by Graduate Common Rooms. I have also worked to maintain and update the JCR and MCR Officers database.

I have attended meetings of both JCR and MCR Prescom where I have worked with Presidents to help provide solutions to current situations in Common Rooms.

Following a mandate I gave myself from OUSU Council, I contacted the Oxford Bus Company to ask for a meeting to discuss the possibility of a discount for Oxford Students. So far I have had no reply, but I will be chasing them up in the near future.

Common Room Visits

Over this term I have been organising the calendar of visits by Executive Officers to Common Rooms across Oxford. As part of this I have attended four Common Room meetings myself. We would all very much like to attend as many as possible this term so do please email me if you would like us to come along. We particularly want to answer any questions students may have of OUSU, as well as talking about what OUSU will be doing over the near future.

Clubs Committee

In 5th Week I attended Clubs Committee at the University Offices. We discussed and made several grants to various clubs and societies across the University. I also raised the issue of welfare and equal opportunities with clubs and societies.

OUSU Reps Meetings

This term I have been pleased to see an increased turnout at OUSU Reps meetings, especially from graduate common rooms. However, I would still like to see a further increase and will be working with OUSU Reps to increase attendance. Meetings involved such issues as the OUSU Council agenda, the sharing of best practice across Common Rooms and discussions on how to improve OUSU itself.

Clubs and Societies

I have been continuing my work with Santander to design a bank account specifically for the needs of University clubs and societies. A questionnaire was sent out to all societies, and their feedback will go into the making of the bank account.

I have formalised the contact details for clubs and societies that we have into a maillist, and this is now in use to send out information to clubs and societies, as well as get feedback on certain issues.

Using clubs and societies maillist, I have been working to create a database of all the clubs and societies in Oxford to go onto the OUSU website. This is work in progress and I will be working with Clubs Office at the University to make it happen.

On Monday of 7th Week I will be holding a Societies Workshop, open to all students. It covers issues such as registering with the proctors and how to apply for funding, as well as the support that OUSU offers to clubs and societies.

Work within OUSU

Since my last Termly Report I have done various work within OUSU. I have helped to clear and set up the Exec Work Room in Thomas Hull House. I also worked with Eorann Lean to reorganise the reception area. Working with Imogen I also arranged for OUSU to get 15 new chairs for the Pit Area from Freecycle. After the terrible disaster in Haiti, I helped Eorann to hold the Haiti Tea and Coffee Morning.

I have also worked in the publications store, taking of full stock check of what publications we have and generally sorting out what was in there and tidying up. The list of publications has been advertised to Common Rooms so they can make use of this resource. I have also worked to maintain the computers in OUSU, making sure that those that are for the use of the part-time exec and the RO are in a good a condition as possible. I also attended a meeting of Budget Committee where I worked with other to scrutinise the OUSU budget.

MPLS Divisional Board

Although not associated with my role as Common Room Support Officer, I was elected by Council to the MPLS Divisional Board. This term I have been attending both the Divisional Board meetings and Academic Committee meetings. At these meeting I have been promoting such issues as Finals Forums and access to exam papers for those that fail exams. I have also been to the Undergraduate Joint Consultative Forum where as well as discussing issues affecting students, I have been working to increase communication between myself at a divisional level and my colleagues as Departmental Representatives.

Publicity Committee

I have been working as Chair of Publicity committee this term. We have done another poster run to all colleges. This seems to have been very successful and feedback is good. My thanks go to everyone who helped out, especially Kat Wall and David Bowe for helping to put all the posters into envelopes. We have also co-opted two new members onto the committee who I look forward to welcoming. Over the coming weeks and months I hope to focus Publicity Committee on looking at the OUSU Brand and specifying this to create consistency in our image across all OUSU does. We will also be looking at the OUSU website.

Should you have any questions or queries, please don't hesitate to contact me,
With all good wishes,

Jack Matthews
Common Room Support Officer
commonrooms@ousu.org

Ben West	Environments & Ethics Officer
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Hi Council,

Great stuff has been happening all term on Environment & Ethics at both at the college level and across the university.

High points included the talk on life after the collapse of UN talks in Copenhagen, which was part of People & Planet's Green Week. A fantastic level of effort by a really dedicated group of people went into making that a success, so big congratulations are due to them. We also had the first ever Oxford Climate Forum organised by Julia Koskella and the (always amazing) team at Linacre. That brought together around 100 student campaigners, SU Presidents and E&E officers from across the country for a really great weekend, where we heard from people such as Lord Giddens and Jeremy Leggett.

It's great to see the E&E committee working in an increasingly coordinated way with student groups from across the university, whether it's People & Planet or projects like Green Cycle or Food Justice. I'm looking forward to seeing the committee continue to develop as one of the main forums for bringing these groups together to cooperate on projects, cross-publicise events and generally increase our campaigning voice in Oxford.

There's been a lot of activity at the college level too. Several CRs have been working to pass motions in support of the Meat Free Mondays initiative, and while it's polarised opinion in some quarters, the response has generally been positive, with people seeing it as a good chance to do something, which makes environmental sense whilst at the same time looking after their wallets and health. I've been keeping up to speed with the work of common room E&E reps on this and other projects such as Fair-trade fortnight and 10:10, and working to bring all of this common knowledge and experience into a set of campaigning resources which can be passed on.

Next term, look out for a series of issue-based workshops and skill learning sessions in week 1, work on making student stash such as hoodies sweat-free, and I'm sure a whole host of other things too!

Claire Handel

Community Outreach & Charities Officer

Danielle Fraser Solomon

SWD Officer

My main aim for this term has been to ascertain the problems facing students with disabilities at Oxford, so that I can concentrate my work over the next couple of terms. To that end, I held a focus group for students with disabilities on Tuesday of 3rd week. I got a lot of very interesting information from the people who attended, and there are a few issues which I aim to address over the coming year. Something that I am particularly concerned about is the difference between colleges in terms of disability provision. I am hoping, by the end of this year, to have persuaded many more colleges to adopt the role of students with disabilities officer, and am working with the colleges who have already decided to implement this. I am also trying to kick-start the Students with Disabilities campaign, and I have a core group of people with whom I am going to start working over the next couple of weeks. Most importantly, I have been contacted throughout the term by students with disabilities who need advice and information, and I have been helping them with their individual enquiries.

Matthew Tye

BME & Anti Racism Officer

Jasper Minton-Taylor

LGBTQ Officer

This term I have been creating events for and advertising Queer History Month, a month to celebrate the lives and achievements of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans community. The main publicity was through a glossy A3 colour photo that went up around colleges and libraries in Oxford and through a facebook group, where the most up-to-date information has been posted and from which specific facebook events have been created.

Overall I would say it has been a success - notable was the Same-Sex Hand-Holding (Sshh...) round the Radcliffe Camera on Valentine's Day which attracted many people, partly I think because the venture was with both OUSU and RAG and attracted people from both groups. There have also been failures - the Queer Poetry Evening which was to begin the month did not go ahead because of a lack of speakers and an inability to find a suitable room, something which I left too late to do. Also I only created a specific facebook event for the Oxford City Amnesty International LGBT event a day before and so this had a poor turnout.

However, there are a host of events to come, most importantly on the side of OUSU the 'Queers and Careers' on Wednesday 3 March which Dani and I have been organising since December, and which, like the Same-Sex Hand-Holding, is a first for Oxford.

On reflection, I would definitely want there to be a Queer History Month committee where different people were in charge of organising events as I have found it sometimes difficult and stressful to organise, publicise and be present at all of the events this month. I have also found it a struggle to keep up with the rest of my mandates, such as liaising with the LGBTQ Officers in colleges and addressing their suggestions and concerns.

On that side, there have been two important problems raised: homophobia within the sporting world in Oxford, whether this be intended or otherwise and tension between college Christian Unions and LGBTQ students. These issues have affected many different LGBTQ people in different colleges. Actions have been taken by two LGBTQ Officers to bring about a motion which more strongly condemns homophobic language in the Oxford University Rowing Society, something which will hopefully trickle down into college rowing societies. A similar motion to the Oxford University Rugby Society will follow. Dani and I recently met up with the Christian Union to discuss ways to tackle problems which have been occurring and we hope to meet with them again soon.

Looking ahead to next term we have been trying to organise sexual health training or training about domestic

abuse for reps but this has been difficult. However, we hope to have one training session in 5th week of next term which we hope will be helpful for everyone.

Jasper, LGBTQ Officer

Rainbow Chang

Mature Students Officer

Dear Council,

It has been a good term for the mature students.

I have just returned from the mature students social event at Merton College MCR. It was wonderful to see the regulars and many new comers getting to know each other, sharing their stories of life and studying in Oxford. There has been a growing sense of community with people exchanging contact details and making new friends.

It has been hard to get the full mailing list of the mature students because of data protection. At the moment we are just building up our own mailing list through different events. Therefore, unfortunately many mature students are not receiving emails from me about our events at the moment. However we have been communicating with the university and it looks like we are going to have the full mature students mailing list very soon and it is going to be updated each academic year. This is very exciting! Through this mailing list we will be able to reach everyone who is qualified as a mature student. Everyone will have the opportunity to be part of the community and issues or concerns will be heard from them and we can be a voice for them and campaign on their behalf.

It had been good to work for them these last few months, a great joy and very rewarding.

If you are a mature student, please feel free to contact me on maturestudents@ousu.org

[Rainbow Chang](#)

Ian Lyons

Grad Academic Affairs Officer

Deeksha Sharma

Grad International Students Officer

Objectives at start of term

- 1) To work at targeted information dissemination amongst graduate international students about OUSU activities via a graduate e-mail list.
- 2) To co-ordinate with national interest societies on issues of information dissemination about the International Student Campaign and various OUSU services in general as well as qua international students specifically.
- 3) To work on the two most predominant issues faced by International Graduates- Accommodation and welfare access including the language impediment in a large number of cases
- 4) To organise a Graduate specific International Students events in order to facilitate informal voicing of opinion by international graduates and thus facilitate opportunities for their greater integration and involvement with OUSU and larger University life.
- 5) To work towards making the Oxford International Festival a more participatory event involving varied national interest societies and groups.

Activities/ Steps taken/ Involvement

- 1) Proposed specific information to be sent out on graduate mailing list.
- 2) Pursued discussions with Oxford Indian Society and Oxford SAARC Society to be able to send information updates about the International Student Campaign activities on their mailing lists so that the

campaign can work towards targeting a pool of people larger than only those who signed up at the fresher's fair. Both have agreed to the same.

- 3) Discussed with Dani, Sarah and Xiaowei the idea of welfare services in national language- Mandarin as a Pilot project. A
- 4) Also worked on informal accommodation related problem survey amongst International graduates for the living out clinic.
- 5) Organised International Graduate evening – an informal discussion oriented event in Week 4.
- 6) Post Graduate Assembly discussion in Week 5.
- 7) Working towards Oxford International Festival on coming weekend.

Conclusion

The focus of the present term was threefold- effective information dissemination about OUSU and its welfare services, response gathering from International graduates about major issues faced by them and making attempts to facilitate social involvement for them.

For many International Graduates one of the main beckoning factors to come to a place like Oxford is also an 'International experience', which I believe remains incomplete if they cannot identify and involve themselves with the University life at a greater level or remain unaware of what all is for them on offer and my first term in office was focussed around these issues of International Graduate Students.

Deeksha Sharma
Graduate International Students Officer
Oxford University Students Union

David Bowe

Grad Welfare Officer

What I've been up to this term -

- Highlighted the problems surrounding Postgraduate re-admission system change over to Embark in January, resulting in action being taken by Graduate Admissions office to clarify the situation and ensure students and departments were up to date on the process.
- Regularly attended Executive meetings and contributed to discussion.
- Given feedback on various surveys and submissions related to the role of Graduate Welfare Officer (e.g. Student Parent Survey).
- Regularly met with other Graduate Executive Members and VP Graduates to discuss and organise PGA and discuss ways forward on graduate accommodation issues.
- Will be meeting with VP Graduates in coming weeks, to discuss the Graduate Accommodation Website with a view to suggesting improvements for clarity and accessibility.
- Helped VP Welfare & Equal Opportunities and VP Women to organise and run the Sensual Wellbeing event at Angels.
- Attended PGA and took part in discussions about postgraduate involvement with OUSU, including format of council, communications, and effective service provision.
- In the process of organising a film screening themed around the portrayal of women in film in association with Womcam and hopefully Magdalen Film Soc.
- Will be meeting with MCR welfare reps to discuss issues facing their members and approaches to graduate welfare.
- Met with 1 MCR welfare officer and 1 MCR social sec and have spoken to 2 MCR Presidents to begin addressing the issue of student parent friendly events at a common room level, which I will be raising in meetings with MCR welfare reps.
- Have helped with distribution of publicity for various OUSU events, including Volunteering Fair, Well Being Week, and New Pie discussion group.

If you have any questions please email me at gradwelfare@ousu.org

This term, I have tried to focus on issues surrounding the lack of graduate representation in OUSU and the causes of MCR disaffiliations (and their impact). On the whole responses to OUSU were overwhelmingly "What's owzoo?" From there, I have also observed that graduate students feel that it is of lesser importance to become involved in student politics because they are often only here for a year, and feel that their common rooms have more of a responsibility. Usually they are completely unaware of services provided by OUSU and the benefits from these collaborations.

There are numerous issues facing graduate students: academic stresses, lack of advice and financial support, poor teaching, departmental concerns, loneliness, and so the list continues. These issues have not been brought to the forefront of their common rooms because they involve university-wide concerns.

I am currently creating a database of MCRs and their individual women's, equality or welfare officers, including those not affiliated to OUSU. Through this, I hope to host a general event on the weekend before Trinity term begins for all women and those concerned about gender equality across campus. From this event - which will be fun as well as informative - I will organise various subgroup meetings and conduct official surveys for women across campus to complete, finding the key problems that they have faced as well as building a potential guide for graduate women to be able to access online before Michaelmas 2010.

Otherwise, I have also been researching methods for international women's rights, especially those which we can assist as students and consumers. There have been various reports and concerns across poorer nations where workers have been unfairly treated due poor working conditions. Women are particularly been susceptible due to greater family financial responsibilities - giving them less opportunity to stand up for their own rights. This has been the case with garment workers in Honduras, Egypt, and Cambodia. Thus, I have helped scribe a motion with the Ethics & Environment Committee for the university to join the Worker Rights Consortium, which will be presented at the beginning of next term. I will also be working towards ensuring that all further procurement in the university is taken with more detailed ethical responsibility, including the rights of women.