



termly reports to council michaelmas 2004

John Blake

President

There would be very little point in denying that this term has been a difficult one, in which many and varied problems have arisen for OUSU and for the projects we have undertaken. However, I think the end result has actually been an enormous success, with more done in this one term alone, than has been done in the past by OUSU over the course of a whole year. We have established and maintained an extremely successful Entz promoter, enormously expanded the scope and quality of our publications, undertaken the vast administrative task of issuing every student in the University with an individual OUSU card, led a widening resistance to the National Student Survey, moved faster and farther than ever before on the issue of socially responsible investment in the University and the colleges, begun real processes of reform in those areas of OUSU's work where we have been less successful, recorded a record turn-out in our annual elections, and, I hope, produced a real awareness amongst Common Room officers and individual students that OUSU is ready and willing to reform to better represent Oxford students at all levels. It is true that some of the projects have encountered problems, and I will discuss some of these below, but I look forward to the next two terms with great hope and optimism that a genuine change in how OUSU is perceived by the Common Rooms and by OUSU members is possible and is coming, and that this will lead to better representation for all of us.

OUSU and OUSU-NUS Cards

Every student should now have received their OUSU Card and, where appropriate, their OUSU-NUS Card. I have had a number of inquiries from people who have not had theirs, whilst everyone else in their college has. Please keep those coming in, and the cards will be replaced: the reason is that the data used to produce these cards came from the Student Records Office over the course of the summer, and is what they call "dirty data", in that it had some people included who were no longer students, and missed out some who were. I am trying to see if there is any systematic reason for the names that have been missed out to be absent, but it may simply be a lack of original data from the colleges. I would like here to thank Adrian Simons of the Student Records Office for all his help with the collection of this data, and his willingness to put aside other work to assist OUSU in this and with other tasks.

The cards have proved an enormous challenge for OUSU, and I have received numerous sarcastic emails and letters from Oxford students questioning their usefulness, as well as some more polite ones questioning their lateness. I will try to answer each of those letters individually, but I will also answer the common concerns in a general way here. First, the lateness – I apologise, there is no real excuse for OUSU to have failed to send these cards out in the first half of term. Certainly, this task is a big one, involving the acquisition of all of the names of Oxford students, the production of the cards, stuffing them in envelopes and distributing them: all these things take time, and often quite a lot of money, and the way this University chooses to administer itself does not help, making both getting the names and distributing the cards harder than for OUSU's counterparts at other universities. However, it is ultimately the case that this should have happened faster, and OUSU takes full responsibility for the fact that it did not, and I will ensure absolutely that next year, the cards are available as soon as is feasibly possible for all students. That said, there is an enormous debt of gratitude which I owe to Dan Finley and Linsey Cole for their work in getting the cards produced and distributed, and to all those who are now part of OUSU's 'I Can Help' mail list, without whose efforts, these cards could not have gone out at all. Thank you to all of them.

In terms of their usefulness, there seem to be two sets of complaints – from NUS members and non-NUS members. To all those OUSU members in NUS-affiliated Common Rooms, I would like to say that the two card system was not my idea, and I will be working to try and get it removed next year if that is possible. The reason there are two cards is because some of the NUS discounts work on a credit system, and we couldn't get the credit strip on to our cards. Other universities,

next year if that is possible. The reason there are two cards is because some of the NUS discounts work on a credit system, and we couldn't get the credit strip on to our cards. Other universities, where the local student union card and NUS card are combined, have also had to adopt this system. That the second NUS card is in Welsh is also nothing to do with me: I assume that in order to save money and because they use the same scheme, just one card was printed to cover all of England and Wales. I've tried to use mine as a chance to learn how to say "student union" in Welsh, although I have yet to work out which part of the sentence those words actually fall in. If there are any Welsh-speakers who wish to enlighten me, I would be grateful.

For those not affiliated (and indeed for some who are) the question has been asked what use these cards are, since everyone already has Bod cards. To that I reply that, if you are getting discounts with your Bod card, many of them will be available because OUSU have negotiated them with the shops, and the shops are willing to be generous. Many of the OUSU discounts are specific ones for Oxford, but the card will also serve as student ID elsewhere in a way that your Bod card might not. If people experience problems with these, then please, please tell OUSU and we will be able to improve the card next year to iron out those problems. I have already received a number of very kind emails with potential improvements suggested, and I will happily take more of them.

Elections

As I write this, the OUSU elections have finally finished, with the following elected to serve as sabbatical officers for 2005-06:

President: Emma Norris (Somerville)

Vice President (Finance): Chris Allan (Somerville)

Vice President (Welfare and Equal Opps): Aidan Randle-Conde (Trinity)

Vice President (Access and Academic Affairs): Charlynn Pullen (St. Hugh's)

Vice President (Charities and Community): Hannah Stoddart (Wadham)

I'd like to congratulate all of them, and thank all of the candidates in the election for a fair and honest campaign.

In the referenda, Oxford student voted by 1982 votes to 1308 in favour of free higher education. The amendment to the Constitution regarding abortion policy was rejected by 1951 votes to 1559.

In terms of higher education funding, being in favour of it being free as I am, I am obviously very pleased that students have voted this way. But I feel I must say that generally low profile of the referendum campaign seems to illustrate to me something that I tried to say to Council when we originally discussed the question: that OUSU needs to think very carefully about where it places its campaigning resources, and whether to continue vigorously campaigning as we have done on HE funding is wise or helpful. The ten year fight students have had with government over the issue of free higher education has brought some significant victories: most obviously the move from up-front to deferred fees and the closest Commons vote this government (or indeed any with so commanding a majority) is ever likely to face. These are victories of which the student movement should be proud, and OUSU – ever at the forefront in these battles, our Alternative White Paper providing much of the intellectual basis for that backbench rebellion – has always in my view done its students proud in this fight. But now we live in a new age of higher education – the Bill passed, and we must choose our way forward now with care. I will, of course, continue to carry the message to the University, the NUS and to government that we believe higher education should be free, and have serious doubts about the manner in which the expansion of higher education is being dealt with, but I do not believe OUSU would be serving its members if it did not now begin to invest our energies elsewhere, into the many and varied problems and issues which face students, some as a result of fees and hardship, some from other sources. The Finance and Funding Campaign has not met this term – I do not anticipate that it will meet again, laid to rest in the light of both the student movement's victories and its defeats. The future of OUSU's campaigns will depend upon the reforms that have been proposed, and I will be discussing those reforms with many people including my successor, before bringing them at the beginning of next term. Policy will always, of course, be what guides our campaigns, and our policy must be set, and campaign enacted, which reflect the real needs and interests of students.

In the case of the referendum on abortion policy, I am enormously relieved that the amendment was rejected: ill-conceived and misleading, I have been receiving complaints from OUSU members and through Common Room Presidents for some days now that students were totally confused by the wording and voted Yes when they meant to vote No. For that reason, I'd like to make totally clear that the wording of the amendment was set by those who sought the petition for the

and through Common Room Presidents for some days now that students were totally confused by the wording and voted Yes when they meant to vote No. For that reason, I'd like to make totally clear that the wording of the amendment was set by those who sought the petition for the referendum, not by any OUSU officer. However, the confusion of the question was added to by the misleading publicity produced by the Yes campaign, and I would like to state here unequivocally that their suggestion that OUSU's pro-choice policy in any way inhibits our Student Advice Service from providing women facing unplanned pregnancy the facts they need to make a decision about their future is an absolute and total lie. It is a heinous untruth, and I hope desperately that it has not damaged the trust Oxford students hold in the Student Advice Service, the reputation of which has been steadily growing over the past years. The misleading and duplicitous nature of some of the Yes campaign publicity, and the complaints I had received about the question, prompted me to appeal the entire abortion referendum to Junior Tribunal, on the grounds that it was not free and fair, before the count had begun. Junior Tribunal considered this was an issue that Senior Tribunal (made up of Fellows) should rule on – they agreed that the material was misleading, but ruled that the count should be completed, with the result as stated.

This case has thrown up many questions about the OUSU elections and our procedures for referenda, which I will also be seeking to reform. I have asked the JCR Presidents and OUSU Reps to forward to me any constructive criticisms they wish to make, and I would ask the same of all Oxford students.

As a final word on the elections, I would like to pay tribute to hard work of Angus Heberton as Returning Officer, and his Deputies, Kimberly Gillingham, Tania Das and Dominic Curran. I note with annoyance the attack on the elections in the OxStu – I actually think that the problems we had with several boxes this year indicated harder work on the elections team's part in being out in the colleges to spot when the regulations were being broken, and indeed I think that this year, with an excellent turn out and a clean campaign, was one of OUSU's greatest successes. All of the Elections Committee deserve a great deal of gratitude from OUSU members.

Jesus

Just a brief note to say that Jesus JCR reaffiliated to OUSU by 172 votes to 62 last Thursday. Congratulations to the Cherwell for their extremely enjoyable "Dewey Beats Truman" moment in printing a headline made ridiculous by the result.

I am enormously gratified by the result, indicating a great deal of support for OUSU in Jesus. I am acutely aware, however, that this result should not be taken for granted, nor the concerns that led to it being held ignored: many of the criticisms offered by those proposing disaffiliation in Jesus were in whole or in part reflective of concerns about OUSU which I share, and upon which action is vital. Most obviously, as has been the case for a long time, perceptions of OUSU must be improved, and real knowledge about how this organisation works and is organised need to be spread more widely across the University. Again, these concerns will feed into the reform proposals brought next term.

The Press

The OxStu and the Cherwell have both taken pot shots at OUSU over the course of this term. In general, I try to avoid most of this, since I generally think that when OUSU is working well, people will see it regardless of what they read in the papers. That said, there does come a point where you must question what is going on. At present, it must be said, I am consulting lawyers over some of the attacks that the Cherwell has made on OUSU for their libellous content, and had a very heated conversation with the editor of this term's Cherwell earlier today regarding the general attitude of that paper to OUSU. Whilst I am more than happy to see a free press offer criticisms of OUSU, the constant pushing of an anti-OUSU agenda via deception (often through the use of headlines rather than in the actual content of the stories) is ridiculous and unfair.

In the case of the OxStu, occasional editorials questioning the whole purpose and point of what OUSU does are mildly annoying, but ultimately sufferable. What is less pleasant is being responsible for a paper - which is constitutionally editorially independent of OUSU, but which OUSU member's money pays for - when it does something you fundamentally disagree with. In this week's edition, the OSSL Board (made up of elected OUSU officers, which runs the company which publishes the OxStu) have written a letter expressing our unhappiness over the " 'Oxford' Guide To the Raj" article. Steps are being taken to ensure there is no repeat of this episode.

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Vice President (Finance)

The Exec met today and discussed for some time the situation surrounding the position of Vice President (Finance). Also present for the discussion were the President-elect and the Vice President (Welfare and Equal Opps)-elect; the Vice President (Finance)-elect and the Vice President (Access and Academic Affairs)-elect were also present as current Exec officers. The Business Manager also attended.

A great deal of ground was gone over in the meeting, concerning the present situation of OUSU's commercial operations, the immediate and long term needs of OSSL, and the general problems with the position of Vice President (Finance) – that is, that an elected position should require so much technical expertise to be done correctly. In light of this, concerns were raised that no adequate handover could be prepared for anyone entering the position of Vice President (Finance) mid-year, and that this would risk the success of OUSU's commercial operations – upon which so much of our income depends, and many of which are at a fledgling stage now, but would be coming towards fruition by the time a new VP (Finance) could be elected. It was considered that the expansion of the OSSL Board ensured continued accountability of OUSU's commercial arm to Oxford students' elected representatives, formerly a task solely charged to the VP (Finance). It was accepted that the priority of OUSU at this stage with regard to its commercial operations was to ensure that the Business Manager had greater support over this holiday and throughout the year to ensure that the administration of OSSL is dealt with adequately, but that this did not necessarily require an elected officer to achieve. Questions were also raised concerning the difficulties of holding a fair election when victory (and perhaps defeat) would require someone to defer for a full year – a difficult thing for colleges to accept at the best of times, and one which would also have serious financial implications as whoever won would be without salary or student loan throughout summer and autumn of next year, whilst having to cover the costs of an additional academic year.

The final outcome was that the Executive voted by a majority to leave the post of Vice President (Finance) unfilled for the remainder of this academic year, institute wide-ranging reforms to the position, and to take on as soon as is practicably possible additional, unelected, paid staff to assist the Business Manager with our commercial projects.

Thanks

Generally, sabs thank everyone in their end of year report, but I'd like to quickly thank all of my colleagues for all of their support over the past term. Its been difficult, but I believe worthwhile, and I look forward to working with them all, so that we can finish the year proud of what we have achieved. I'd also like to thank all the outgoing members of the part time Exec: Alia, Alison, Dan, Emrys, Jamie, Sarah and Steve have all done excellent work, and we're all very grateful. The rest of you are all coming back next year, so I'll say to you I say good luck. There are many others who I have tried to thank in the course of my reports this term – I reiterate that gratitude now.

Nicky Ellis

V-P (Welfare & Equal Opportunities)

Student advice service

The student advice service will meet again next week to review the term and decide what happens now, and what we are going to do about filling the student adviser position. I'll update you on our decisions in first week council next term, or via the website if it seems appropriate. Casework and welfare work continues much the same; in the last health and welfare meeting we had a useful discussion about ways and methods for training, which I will work on over the holidays; generally the feedback from the term was positive, and as ever I would encourage any further comment or criticism, especially now, so as to feed in to the planning for next term.

Referendum

I will say now what I couldn't before. I think that the amendment concerning abortion proposed for the constitution was a dangerous and dishonest thing. I've listened to many arguments about this over the past couple of weeks, and the saddest thing has been the lack of clarity in the whole debate and the fact that this lack of clarity stemmed from the very phrasing of the proposed

for the past couple of weeks, and the saddest thing has been the lack of clarity in the whole debate, and the fact that this lack of clarity stemmed from the very phrasing of the proposed amendment. Let me just clarify a few things. OUSU is not Pro-abortion. OUSU is pro choice-current policy reflects this, as for there to be choice, abortion must be legal. However, whatever the policy, the advice the student advice service gives is impartial and non-directive.

For the record, section E of the standing orders governs the student advice service. For anyone interested, you can find this at

<http://www.ousu.org/main/yourunion/rules/standingorders/advice>

In particular, the following: 2.4 The Student Advice Service shall not be bound by OUSU policy in relation to individual casework with students and shall always provide confidential and impartial advice and support.

Sorry to go on about this, but I think there is a real danger that some of the things said by the YES campaign over the past couple of weeks may have led people to think otherwise.

Then, the banning of LIFE advertising. Is the evidence selective? Life don't always say awful things to people, certainly- but there is always a risk. Sex doesn't always lead to pregnancy; one wouldn't want to argue that the evidence was therefore selective. Some people argued that various of the other pregnancy advice services we publicise were also directive, in that they encouraged abortion; therefore, we ought to allow advertising from LIFE. I hope most people can see the absurdity here, in this grand advocacy of giving up and declaring a free for all- if there is genuine evidence that another organisation is providing directive advice, then lets hear it- bring a motion to council, and try to ban that organisation advertising. That's the way to do it, if you think that directive counselling is wrong, not to allow them all, in the name of fairness. Also, if people do feel that the SAS is being led by politics, and is giving directive advice, there are procedures for complaints- use them! But until then, please be reassured that the only agenda we have is a belief in choice, a belief that people should make up their own minds, and not be influenced in doing so. If that is a political agenda, then it is one I am proud of. If keeping politics out of welfare in this context means sitting back, knowing that organisations are trying to influence the decisions of vulnerable people, and taking no action, then I don't think that's much to be proud of. However, I don't think that's the normal meaning of the word.

The holidays

My to-do list:

Continue to sort out my sections of the website- various people have emailed with suggestions, which is greatly appreciated; keep them coming.

Send this year's Living out guide to press; this will be distributed next term, in time for house hunting season; try to revive the housing bank scheme.

Review the student advice service as promised, and return to first week council with a coherent plan of action.

Review the equal opportunities work properly, and rationalise campaign for next term.

Get in an up to date stock of leaflets and resources on all sorts of issues.

And the usual day to day work.

Thanks are due to so many people- the other sabs and part time exec. No names, you know who you are. Dan and Gareth. Junior tribunal- you actually played an important role in restoring my faith in humanity. Angus for stepping in as RO at very short notice, and ensuring that there was an election, and the DRO's who worked so hard. Everyone else, inside these offices and out, who provides help and support.

Rebecca Wilkinson

V-P (Women)

Safetybus/Nightbus scheme.

Well.... The scheme has been transformed from a 3 nights a week, 3 hours a night scheme, to a 7 nights a week , 6 hours a night operation. This has of course had its hiccups, but on pros-and-cons I think this has been a very successful venture. Transporting around 1000 students safely home each week. Nothing could have happened without the wonderful support of Neil and Robin at Brookes [thank you both – not that you'll ever read this!] – and I really hope this joint scheme can continue.

Eating Disorders

This has been something I've put a lot of time and effort into over the last term. I hope we can produce a new guide in time for Eating Disorder Awareness week in Hilary Term, along with an awareness poster campaign and some speaker events. The support group I sought to set up didn't

This has been something I've put a lot of time and effort into over the last term. I hope we can produce a new guide in time for Eating Disorder Awareness week in Hilary Term, along with an awareness poster campaign and some speaker events. The support group I sought to set up didn't work as planned, but perhaps it was a case of running before we were walking.

I would like to thank Aidan for his interest in this project, and I hope interest can be sustained.

WOM CAM

Having been new to wom cam this year, I have really enjoyed becoming a part of it. On Monday, I am hoping we can have a comprehensive discussion on where the campaign is going next term. This term has been a culmination of random events, speakers and general discussion, which fulfils part of its function. However, I think the campaign might benefit from having more of a focus laid down at the start of each term.

I have been in discussion with various college women's officers, especially those who do not attend, in an attempt to discover how best to open up the Monday meetings and I hope that as the year progresses attendance will increase.

I have started to lay plans for next terms final forums and for Women's Cabaret, which I hope can be a larger event than previous years [perhaps in conjunction with ZOO!!!!]

The ELECTION/Referendum

Needless to say this took up a considerable amount of 5th and 6th week. The commitment and inspiration of those who worked on the "No" campaign was inspiring. I am very pleased with how the result of the second referendum went.

The entire election process did seem to suffer from a lack of adequately trained College scrutineers and CRO's. I have been told that my suggestion to fine colleges who have ballot boxes sent down, is unlikely to go down well, nevertheless I do think it is a real problem. If the only answer is centralising voting and spreading the election over several days [like at other Student Unions] then perhaps we need to move towards this system until colleges are willing to take responsibility for in college voting.

I did feel the referendum highlighted the inadequate structures OUSU has in place regarding referendums, and I will be seeking to bring reform motions to council next term.

I would like to say that I have the highest respect for all the candidates who ran in the elections. The presidential race was won of the nicest I've experienced in the last 4 years. I would like to congratulate all winning candidates and wish them all the best for their year in the zoo.

CLUBS & SOCS

This hasn't progressed as far as I would have hoped this term. Through no fault of anyone's – simply the fact that time is limited and it hasn't been a priority. The Room "formerly known as shop" has now become the Clubs And Socs Resources Room – however, this still does not fulfil all the functions we hoped it would. OUSU does however receive post every now and then for various societies- such as the Badger Watchers and the Role-model society, so please do come in and check our mail box if you know you get your post forwarded here.

ZOO

Despite not getting a jumper with a butterfly on the back – I have really enjoyed being part of the team that has transformed the work of the ZOO.

The entz projects that Dan and Laura brought to the OSSL board at the end of the summer have been a magnificent success. Apart from a lack of infrastructure [eg. People wanting to stand on the doors of club nights], the cohesive project has gone from strength to strength.

All this would be nothing without Daniel Finley, and it all breaks down without him. I would give everything I own, to have half as much stamina and ability to productively work on 3 hours sleep, as he has.

COLLEGES

At a JCR meeting the other week, I was asked by a member of the JCR why she had never seen me or heard of me! Fair point. I am always happy to come into JCRs, in fact I enjoy nothing more than discussing myself and OUSU at length. However, this can only be done on an invitation basis. Please. Please, do invite me [or the other sabs] to your JCRs, we are always happy to come.

GENERAL

This term, has been somewhat frustrating, in that I have not been able to do everything I had hoped. The amount of term-time which is occupied by administration, meetings, bits of research and answering queries is easy to underestimate. Some how 18 hour days, 5 days a week, just doesn't seem to be enough. Add in disputes with Ox Stu editors, unforeseen Referendums and Sabbatical vacancies and suddenly the job seems a lot larger than anticipated. I am hoping the vac will see some free time opening up, to allow me to pursue projects begun over the summer [eg. The Women's Handbook], However, I'm pretty sure I had the same thought re: term time!

Thank You..... (the only part anyone reads!!)

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Thank you..... (the only part anyone reads!)

To the exec (for fun and games), to Patrick (for throwing my shoes out of the window) and Peter (for retrieving them)– it was never boring, Roger (for star computer skills, and sane conversation), Pete, Dave and Jay (my star drivers), Gareth (what can one say?) Hannah, Tri and Steve (for a beautifully constructed campaign), Vance (for G&Ts), Tam O'Shanter (for the Pink flamingo), Lorna (for the gossip!), my wonderful co-chairs (for wonderfulness), Radnofsky (despite going to the darkside) and Laura West (for Cosmopolitans- the last real blonde in OUSU).

In absence- to Georgia, Sean and Antonia (no similarities!) for constant guidance, support and advice.

To my poor family: It is merely a matter of weeks, or days, or hours til I am coming home; apologies for my poor time-keeping, and my inability to give you a clearer idea of my movements at present, blame OUSU.

Siobhan McAndrew

V-P (Graduates)

I gave a detailed oral report yesterday to Postgraduate Assembly, but just for the written record I'll reprise.

I'm now coming up to my first three months in the job. It's been far more challenging than I could have anticipated and is perhaps the hardest job I've ever done. Graduate students are very busy and most don't have the time to be consistently involved. This is understandable but means I must work independently most of the time, relying on a core of excellent activists. Schedules conflict all the time and it's difficult to get people to meet; therefore relationships are one-on-one rather than having a coherent team. Consequently we work on a network basis without the structure and coherence of the undergraduate system, but this has its own strengths.

We have striven to keep people informed and get a spirit of involvement, and this appears to have been effective. I aim to reply to e-mail requests with as much detail as possible, and this has often drawn people in. Postgraduate Assembly was quorate this term (Wednesday 24th November), which was excellent. The MCR Presidents' Committee lunch (same date) was well-attended, and threw up issues and details of which we had been simply unaware. This meeting will be a priority next term, and we should have two or three each term. It seems that college liaison is important to MCRs, and I am sorry that there was only one such meeting this term. However, the effort involved shouldn't be belittled and it often makes sense to have ad hoc meetings rather than fix them in the calendar only to have to be cancelled.

We also have a full complement of graduate executive officers – with broad community/political experience and activist skills. This should be welcomed, and encouraged more – so that graduate volunteers do not feel criticised for lacking 'OUSU experience'. People here on one-year masters courses should be able to contribute even if they are only here for a short time. The student body is changing and it would be excellent if the make-up of the OUSU reps, committee members and the executive reflected this. I think we do surprisingly well but we should continue to welcome diversity of experience actively.

Good things this term: I've really enjoyed working with Graduate Committee of Conference of Colleges and on Educational Policy & Standards Committee. The affiliation negotiations with a certain graduate college have been stimulating if hard work – and a stormy relationship is certainly better than none at all. MCR liaison has in some cases been really rewarding, and being thanked personally for work I've done makes it so much more worthwhile. Helping individuals via the Student Advice Service has occasionally been harrowing but we can often make a big difference by empowering students to challenge difficult situations, and this 'hidden' part of our job is massively important. The good humour and energy of the sabs, permanent staff, part-timers, and everybody who comes into the office to help out make the long hours and difficult meetings wholly bearable. I feel privileged to work among extremely bright and highly committed people.

Less good things this term: bad computers, certain unintelligible university committees (now thankfully delegated), finding forgotten boxes of the Survival Guide and Graduate Guide a fortnight after they should have been delivered, sitting in Wolfson (having been drenched to the skin) with a ballot box knowing that almost all of their students were in labs all day, constantly apologising for things I cannot do anything about, surrealists in Council, realising that a minority of graduate students really believe in privatising higher education, not being able to do much for international students and mature students, not being able to get rooms for my own meetings, never knowing when or where other meetings are being held, verbatim minutes.

students really believe in privatising higher education, not being able to get rooms for my own meetings, never knowing when or where other meetings are being held, verbatim minutes.

Good things for next term: A lively and contested joint VP Grads/VP Women election, graduate focus groups really taking off, a charity intercollegiate graduate event at Thirst/Freuds/Po Na Nas, lobbying for university graduate accommodation to be targeted at international student freshers, and many, many more.

Linsey Cole V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

I'm not quite sure how its time to write Termly Reports ALREADY, but here we go...lots has happened in the last two weeks, so I'll cover that as well, but I'm bound to forget something, so PLEASE ASK QUESTIONS!

Academic Affairs

I missed the epic Council in 5th week, as I was in Glasgow, 'enjoying' the wetness of the British weather. The meeting with HEFCE about the NSS was really worthwhile; its interesting to see that opposition to the NSS is coming from all angles, not just Oxbridge. Since Glasgow, I've been working with the University on spreading the word about opting-out. All relevant students were emailed once by the University and I also emailed presidents and OUSU reps with notices for email lists – one of our main objections to the NSS was its intrusive nature, so it would have been hypocritical for me to begin a full-scale email campaign. By the time of Council, it'll be too late for finalists to opt-out of passing their data on, BUT finalists can opt-out at any stage of the data-collection process, and please encourage people to do so. The NSS, as you can probably tell, has taken up much of my time this term – I'm pleased that OUSU and the University can work together on this issue and I've really enjoyed working with other Student Unions on it. The motion of No Confidence that passed OUSU Council in 3rd week has now passed at least two more Student Union Councils in the same form and together, we'll be writing to the DFES. The work does not stop yet though; I really believe that we have made a difference on this issue and such strong opposition this year will lead to a major rethink of the NSS next year.

Another new project I've been pushing forward is Study Skills. I've met with the Head of the IAUL (the research-arm of the University that fuels much of the policy debate) and over the vac and early next term, I will be co-ordinating a study skills audit of the University, to establish what level of learning skills support already exists and where the weaknesses (and strengths) lie. To make this a success, I'm going to need the help of Common Room Officers and JCC Reps, so if you do get an email /letter from me about the situation in your college or faculty PLEASE respond, as without your support, this exercise will be futile. I'll be writing the results of the audit in a paper that will go to EPSC next term and suggest areas for improvement in the University.

I received a reply to the letter I was mandated to write about QEH and the Refugee Studies Centre at the last council and I'm liaising with the class reps at QEH to move things forward. The Curators of the University Libraries are discussing the issue at their next meeting and I'll report back at next council. The Open to Change campaign has highlighted concerns with opening hours across the University and been a huge success – user feedback said library opening hours were unsatisfactory and our campaign has further highlighted this. I have meetings about this in the vac, so expect updates next term.

As you can see, many of this terms 'academic' campaigns are bearing fruit in the run up to the end of term – we've purposely delayed having the last Ac-aff meeting of term until 8th week for this reason. Working with ac-aff officers has been great – we held an academic disciplinary session and have discussed issues of standardisation in collection practice, which again will be moved forward next term. Casework has come from all directions since I took office; I've worked closely with the VP (Welfare and Equal Opps) on many cases, as by their nature there is much crossover. The amount of cases the SAS deal with has increased hugely over the past 18 months and is a reflection of both the increased profile of the service and the demand for it amongst students.

Access

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When writing my reports this term, I've had a tendency to separate both my major portfolio areas, as it seems the clearest way to divide my role. However, in retrospect, it reveals that Access and Academic Affairs don't really fit together that well! I'm not advocating a split straight down the middle, as that would cause more problems than we have now, but over the Xmas vac, I will be having a good think about how to resolve this...and I'm not even going to mention how 'well' Welfare and Equal Opps go together!

After a short break to actually pass my degree, it's been wonderful to be back involved with Target Schools. It's what got me first involved with OUSU and it's what keeps getting very committed and wonderful people involved with it year after year. I've worked with some brilliant Target Schools co-chairs over the years and I'm pleased to say this year's are no different. The open days in September were a huge success and most of our events for next year are now confirmed. The Handbook is well on its way to being published and we have lots of new stuff for the website which will be uploaded over Christmas. New projects are also on the horizon: a mentoring project is being set up with local schools and colleges, which will give much-needed support to able students. The success of Target Schools is clearly seen by Oxbridge Applications use of its reputation among Oxford students to get them to fill in questionnaires to be used for one of their publications! If I wrote how I truly felt about Oxbridge Applications, this report wouldn't be fit for publication – so instead, all I'll say is I have a few ideas about what I'm going to do and we'll again see progress over the vac and next term! Thanks to all the co-chairs – Alice, Eric, Helen, Kum and Maighread for being wonderful!

I attended Admissions Exec, where changes to the admissions system were discussed: this year is a really crucial one for access policy, with moves towards PQA and the first admissions season with tests in Law and History. I've been asked to sit on the Working Party on Admissions and Selection, which will have its first meeting next week: this is something I'm really looking forward to, personally as I think it'll be really interesting and as a VP, to have representation on this is vital to the future of Oxford as an institution.

The life of a VP...

More generally, the Aldwych meeting in Glasgow was insightful, if only to hit home how much OUSU achieves with such paltry resources. Many of the other Russell Group Student Unions present seemed to be fighting to find the core of their representative element, which they had lost sight of in their service-minded world of just being seen as an entz-provider. Whatever happens with the expansion of the ZOO, the representation OUSU provides on a University level is not matched by any other Union in the country and this MUST remain at the heart of our work. Being an OSSD Director has helped to ensure that this remains the case and it's been interesting to say the least!

The turnout at this year's election was phenomenal – well done to all involved in running the election, especially Angus, Kimberly, Dom and Tania. Your dedication to getting the day sorted amazed me and although you all clearly have Pizza obsessions, it was a pleasure to work with you.

As a member of elections committee, I counted all night and then went to EPSC in the morning, where I proceeded to fall asleep...not ideal.

Other fun stuff this term has included: sitting in a van with Bad Nas 69 and Bad Boy Kenny 77 discussing the joys of fasting; walking through Radcliffe Square drenched on election day, ballot box in one hand, inside-out umbrella in other – not the typical postcard-scene; Chesney at ZOO!; phoning Ms Wilkinson's fantastic Safety Bus to take me home; orange bags ; and BOXES – A BOX IS A BOX was perhaps the height of my insanity...

Finally, a few thank yous...

To the part-time exec: ALL OF YOU have amazed me this term – you've pulled together and supported the work OUSU does to a level that was beyond the call of duty. I've been so impressed by your dedication to the cause and it's been a pleasure to work with you. OUSU was lucky to have you. THANK YOU so much and please keep popping in to say hello...AND good luck in finals guys!

To all those who work behind the scenes to ensure things keep on ticking over – you know who you are and thank you.

To all those who work behind the scenes to ensure things keep on ticking over – you know who you are and thank you.

To all the ZOO Team, especially Simpson, Chris and Jamie – be proud of what ZOO has achieved this term – long may it continue!

To Alison – Days that we spent when I was so small... being a co-chair/exec seems so long ago! Sorry for getting you involved again, but you know you've loved every minute of it! It has been fantastic to have you around and as one of the exec, rather than as co-chairs together. Go and do some work now and yes, the walkie talkies are working.

To Charlyne – the first year I met when you got involved with Target Schools and I was a co-chair seems a long time ago! Thanks for all your work, help and support this term and go get your 2.1. It's been fun and I couldn't ask to be succeeded by anyone better!

To Chris Allan – DO SOME WORK!

To all newly elected sabs – congrats! SLEEP NOW whilst you can and see you in June!

To Kim Hardman – the best Press Officer OUSU has EVER had.

To the two children – how you produced 8 papers I don't quite know.

To Gareth – for being fabulous and alive on such little sleep. You are a huge asset to OUSU and its been a pleasure to have you in the offices.

To Finley – for working beyond the call of duty and coping with the randomness of your colleagues. The work you have put in this term has not gone unnoticed - Go and have a holiday!

To the full-time exec and BM – one term down, two to go! Let's get some sleep over Christmas and keep the OUSU wagon rolling...I love my job and believe I am working with some immensely talented people. June seems a long time ago now (dog racing anyone – hmmm who lost the most money?!), but we are doing good things. Thank you for enduring my randomness – I promise, I do actually think sometimes! – and I promise never to ask if everyone else has left when you're all stood there!

To my family and friends – Yes, I know I haven't seen you in 8 weeks and sometimes all you get out of me is "life is hectic" but it is! I promise to be around more over Christmas – thanks for the support and keeping me sane.

To Phil Thompson and Louise Radnofsky – its all your fault!!

Daniel Finley

Business Manager

Michaelmas Term 2004 has been one of tremendous success for the commercial operations of the Oxford University Student Union. The financial gains made have been enormous and will safeguard the financial future of OUSU for years to come. Yet, still more remains to be done and will be done over the course of the next two terms.

Zoo has been a phenomenal success this term. We are running Scratch every Sunday at Thirst, Taboo every Tuesday at Thirst, Zoo @ Park End every Wednesday, Filthy Friday at The Studio (every Friday unsurprisingly) and Saucy Saturday (yes..every Saturday) at The Studio. In addition to this, we ran ten nights in Freshers week alone and brought Chesney Hawkes to Park End in fifth week. Each week, more than 2,500 students attend and enjoy our nights every single week during term time. In providing Entz, the student union are both providing a fantastic service to its members and securing an extremely important additional revenue stream. The income generated by Zoo will this year prove to be our single largest source of income.

The Oxford & Cambridge Careers Handbook is without doubt the premier careers resource for Oxbridge students. It has been completely overhauled since the last edition and is the result of nine months of exceptionally hard work by a group of enormously committed and talented people.

I hope that everybody has had the time to take a look at it. From a commercial point of view, there has been a massive increase in commercial income this year (nearly 100%) and on the back

I hope that everybody has had the time to take a look at it. From a commercial point of view, there has been a massive increase in commercial income this year (nearly 100%) and on the back of the tremendous product put out this year, we intend to increase income by a further 100% for the next edition (work on which begins, incidentally, on Monday of ninth week).

The Oxford Student this term has, without a shadow of a doubt, been at its best ever. Now running at 44 pages per edition, printed on much higher quality paper and with much more colour, commercial income has increased 100% this term. The Oxford Student has already brought in far more money this year than it is budgeted to for the entire financial – not bad given that there are still two terms to go. If you put any editions of the two student newspapers side by side this term, then I really believe that there is no longer a choice to make between the two papers – The Oxford Student is far superior in every respect.

The Oxford Student carried a piece in the seventh edition of term that has since been retracted by its authors. This retraction was carried in the eighth week edition of The Oxford Student and I would like to draw people's attention to the letter written by the Board of Oxford Student Services Limited, which published The Oxford Student. The article was allowed to be published because of the editorial independence of the newspaper. It was, however, extremely distasteful and it is the belief of the OSSL Board that it contained no journalistic merit whatsoever.

More generally, the sale of cap and gowns this year has been tremendously successful, income for the OUSU Card has been doubled, and the reintroduction of the Term Planner has secured enough income this term alone to cover a sabbatical salary.

Next term Zoo will continue with its current line-up of Entz events. We are also considering all the options available in terms of expansion and may well unveil new nights in the near future. In terms of publications, The Women's Handbook, The Alternative Prospectus, The Term Planner and The Oxford & Cambridge Career Handbook 2005/06 will all occupy much of my time. You will also note a motion before Council today for Access: Oxford. This has been something that I believe we should do since before I undertook my position this summer. A cross campus Oxford University event to be held in Hilary Term would be both a spectacular for students and a massive income generator for the student union. Profits would not be in the thousands but in the hundreds of thousands. The Oxford Handbook will be out soon and oxfordhandbook.com will be launching over Christmas.

As some of you may know, the Cherwell carried a letter in their last edition supposedly from me in my official capacity. I would like to make abundantly clear to everyone I never sent such a letter, nor was such a letter sent from any of my email accounts. You would hope to receive an apology and correction when such mistakes have been made. Evidently, the Cherwell do not share such sentiments. The matter has now been referred to the Proctors and are lawyers who are currently preparing legal actions against the Cherwell and Oxford Student Publications Limited.

This term has presented real difficulties and challenges but, ultimately, we are overcoming them. The hours are still long, with a minimum of 100 hours being clocked in every week, but the work is still immensely enjoyable and rewarding. A lot of people have contributed to the success of our commercial operations so far this year – far too many to name here.

Thanks: to all those who made the Careers Handbook what it is; to Peter Cardwell and Patrick Foster for a fantastic term of Oxford Students; to Jamie Audsley, Chris Allan and Daniel Simpson for all their help with Zoo; to all the Zoo team for helping make this term the success that it was; to John, Nicky, Linsey and Bex for all your help and support; to Gareth Lloyd for being exceptional; to Kim Hardman for all your hard work on so many of our projects; to Rowenna Davis – for lots.

This Wednesday will see the Zoo Christmas Party at Park End – complete with snow machine, Father Christmas, loads of giveaways and all the Christmas trimmings. Also, come along to Saucy Saturday this week and next to take advantage of cheap drinks and cheap entry as well as enjoy the cheesiest of music. Look forward to seeing you there.

Ian King **V-P (Charity and Community)**

This term's been amazingly hectic. Here follows a brief summary...

This term's been amazingly hectic. Here follows a brief summary...

Speed Dating – an incredibly fun event to run every other week, this speed dating venture was not tainted by any feelings of seediness or 'sad singleness' which haunts most events of such ilk. The inter-collegiate nature of the first three weeks provided a remarkably relaxed atmosphere which was softened by the cheap cocktails offered by Thirst. LGB Speed Dating, attended both by Oxford LGB Soc and by Oxford Brookes LGBT Soc members this week, was a great night, tempered only by a shortage of willing female participants! All in all, speed dating this term's raised well over £1,000, which I'm very happy with.

Film Nights – given that the films cost nothing to show and are top notch classics, the film nights have been ways of having a relaxed and enjoyable evening for the few who come. Tonight, there will be a showing of The Usual Suspects at 8pm in the Usual Venue – Keble's O'Reilly Theatre.

Bar Crawls – the two done this term – (by RAG and my MedSoc RAG) were both great, raising between them in the region of £600 in just two nights.

A Capella – tremendous nights. Many many thanks to The Oxford Alternotives, The Oxford Belles, Out Of The Blue, In The Pink and (in advance) to The Oxford Gargoyles for making the evenings so tuneful. Thirst on Tuesday nights has been packed to capacity for all the groups so far, all keen to hear the beautiful and creative harmonies which these renowned student groups work hard to create. Each night has raised something in the region of £600, which is an amazing total.

The Oxford Gargoyles are singing this Tuesday at Thirst – arrive from 8pm. Keep an eye out for next term – I'm hoping to do more a capella Taboo nights next term.

Wear it Pink and College events – Oxford was turned pink on the 29th October as pink bars, pink bops, pink halls, pink bar quizzes and pink cocktails were served throughout the University in aid of the Breast Cancer Campaign. Events have also been happening around the University's colleges organised by college RAG reps – from bar quizzes and topical film nights to calendars and auctions.

Bungee Jump – on Saturday of 3rd Week, over 60 people took the plunge for charity from a crane parked in the Oxford Ice Rink (safely, I assure you!). The sky was blue, the people were (clearly) mad and bubbling with excitement and the amount raised was in the region of £1,500 - £2,000.

Charity Auction – this will be tomorrow (Saturday of 7th) evening and will be auctioning off all sorts of things; jewellery, gym membership, nights in hotels, lush goodies, and so on. Do come!

Fahion Show – probably the most time-consuming thing I've ever done (bar Finals) in Oxford.

Numerous venue changes at the last minute, auditions, rehearsals, design and publication of publicity and programmes, liaison with shops, designers and stylists were just a few of the things that have kept my committee of 12 and I rather busy throughout the middle of term. Many thanks to Becks Brady, Kate Lear, Jo Steven, Alina Tuerk, Venetia Hendy, Sarah Collinson, Fiona Moodie, Lucy Foster, Katherine Noon, Clarissa Tam, Carys Hughes, Graham Alexander, Laura Wilson and Selina Jones for being a sterling and dedicated committee. A large thank you to the models and to Graham Alexander for excellent and stylish choreography. The event took place on Sunday of 7th Week in The Bridge and was a huge success. Ticket revenue is still coming in, but it is estimated that the show raised in the region of £1,000 - £1,500 for RAG's charities.

Collections – a moderate success, the Poppy Appeal and ZOV UK triumphed most of all, with £1,350 and £880 being raised respectively. Thanks to all those who took part and helped to raise money – it's great to see people giving up that their time to physically get money in for some absolutely deserving causes.

Still to come...

World AIDS Day – on the 1st December, a large number of Oxford's Student groups (inc. People and Planet, Students StopAIDS, RAG, UN, etc) are coming together to hold events throughout the day to raise money and, most importantly, awareness, of the AIDS pandemic. Events include a bottle top ribbon encircling the Rad Cam, an evening at the Oxford Union at which highly notable speakers will be talking about their work with AIDS, and following this, there will be a World AIDS Day 'Party' at The Purple Turtle. RAG's involvement is primarily with the World AIDS Day 'Party', which will be an opportunity for our avid collectors to warm up having been treading the City's

speakers will be talking about their work with AIDS, and following this, there will be a World AIDS Day 'Party' at The Purple Turtle. RAG's involvement is primarily with the World AIDS Day 'Party', which will be an opportunity for our avid collectors to warm up having been treading the City's streets with buckets for The Terrence Higgins Trust. If you want more information about what's going on, please do get in touch by email.

Oxbridge Tour of the South – to be held in 9th Week with Cambridge, we will be visiting Cambridge, St Albans, Norwich, Canterbury, Winchester and Oxford in our quest to raise as much money for MacMillan Cancer Relief as possible.

National Student Volunteering and RAG Conference – still going ahead, full steam. Apologies to my colleagues – if you don't see me leave my office for the next four weeks, this is why!

In terms of community volunteering, this term has been a success in getting more schemes run by OUSU up and running. The Hospital befriending scheme has taken off with many volunteers, as have the Homework Club and the Children in Touch schemes. The Olga Primary School scheme has been tremendously popular – last week there were so many volunteers wanting to go that some had to be turned away by the Headmistress. Helpers for the nightbus haven't been many in number, and I'm sure Bex would love to hear from more budding night owls to take some of the strain off her! OUSU on Mondays has been CRB Central, with Jacari volunteers invading my office to have their police checks done! The Jacari lot are a great bunch – email jacari@herald.ox.ac.uk to get involved. There's a lot of other things going on, but for some reason, my brain's gone blank and is glazing over – as I expect is yours, which is why I must bring this report to a close soon...!

Final thanks go to Sarah for being a wonderful executive officer and source of support and reliance. Always there, you've been a brilliant help with both portfolios, especially by taking the Olga Primary School under your wing and showing new volunteers how it all works. Good luck for Finals and with your teaching career! Finally, thank you to the old exec – Dave, Hollie, Lucy, Owain, Joy, Adam, Liz and Katie – you've been simply amazing. Without you lot, the sabb would be truly stuck (and possibly a little less sane)! Good luck for the exams... see you soon.

RAG's nominated charities for Hilary Term 2004 are:

- 1) ExVac (Exeter College Vacation Project)
- 2) ZOV UK
- 3) Childline (West Midlands)
- 4) Marie Curie Cancer Care
- 5) Medecins Sans Frontieres

Dan Simpson

This term has been rather different to my first two on the executive, both because of a different sabbatical team and because of the somewhat different nature of OUSU's activities. I am delighted that the Zoo brand is operating with such success, however, it is clear that a number of serious questions must be addressed if OUSU is to take full advantage of this increased commercial income. After a year on the executive I have formed certain views about the direction OUSU must take if it is to continue to perform its valuable role.

Campaigns

All three of the campaigns that I am responsible for, College Inequality, Mature Students and Disabilities Action, have been effectively moribund this term. That is not to say that OUSU has made no progress in these fields. For example, the recent Disabilities Action guide is a valuable resource for which Mat Paskins and Nicky Ellis deserve great credit. However, I believe that we must recognise that our current structure of campaigns and committees is failing to perform the role that it is intended to. Certain campaigns and committees such as Target Schools or OUSU Reps are well attended and perform vital functions. Others, whilst their purpose may be no less important, attract few people and achieve little. It seems odd to continue to allocate exec time and OUSU resources in this way. Both the F+F2 report and the President's subsequent document make valuable points about the way these activities can be reformed. I think that it would be extremely valuable to consolidate some

of our less active campaigns, or those which perform overlapping functions. For example, F+F, Rents and College Inequality could usefully be combined. I believe that the stress must also be placed upon membership driven campaigns, the executive should act as facilitators for campaigns

e of our less active campaigns, or those which perform overlapping functions. For example, F+F, Rents and College Inequality could usefully be combined. I believe that the stress must also be placed upon membership-driven campaigns, the executive should act as facilitators for campaigns or committees that consist primarily of Common Room representatives and other interested students.

Representation

The core of OUSU,s existence is our representative function. We must take advantage of the University,s structural review instituted by the new Vice-Chancellor to extend the voice of the student body in decision making processes. However, we must also integrate our representative function more fully into our other activities. Over the last year I have sat on the Joint Committee of University Council with Student Members and I have become concerned about the degree to which student representatives can act with relative autonomy on University bodies. I believe that in the future all elected student representatives to outside bodies should be required to consult with the OUSU campaign or committee relevant to specific agenda items before the meeting and that they should subsequently be required to present a report to Council detailing how they spoke and voted and be present at council to answer questions. I also believe that OUSU must integrate more closely with the local commun

ity and that this should involve a more explicit strategy of interaction with the City Council, for example when consultation takes place over licensing arrangements and on the issue of student safety.

Services

Tribute must be paid to Dan Finley and to Gareth Lloyd who have been integral to the expansion of OSSL,s activities this term. I have also been heavily involved in the entz nights, particularly Filthy Friday at the Studio. These have been safe and successful nights and they are both a valuable service and a means of moving the burden of funding OUSU away from Common Rooms. I am delighted to see the Zoo team growing and I hope that it will continue to do so in the future. As OSSL expands I also believe that we must continue to exercise democratic oversight over its direction, if not over specific commercial details.

Thanks

Over the last year I have accumulated many personal debts which will be hard to repay. This term has included personal sadness for me as well as a ludicrously high workload and it would have been impossible without the support of friends and colleagues. I would like to thank all of OUSU,s staff and both the full and part-time executive, particularly Charlyne, Alison, Chris and Nicky. I was delighted with the results of the recent elections and I am confident that, despite what I believe will be temporary difficulties, OUSU is passing into good hands.

Matt Baker

Having only recently taken up my position I am still finding my feet as it were. It has been an interesting baptism of fire since my first executive meeting involved the departure of the former VP for Finance. Although I have not been officially ratified as the exec member on any committees as of yet, I have been in attendance at the Ethics Committee meetings for the past couple of weeks. It seems that the Ethics Committee have been very productive but I will leave the substantial detail of progress to the co-chair to expand upon in his report. I hope to continue to work with the various committees in the coming year to further the interests of the student body as a whole. At times students may feel alienated from the activities from OUSU and this is something I hope to address through my work as an exec for the coming year. I hope to use this terms experiences in the many challenges OUSU faces in the next year.

Tom Packer

Firstly on my campaigns/committees this term.

On Graduate involvement I would say that there has been significant progress. Siobhan like Dan has been a great Graduate Sabbatical-pushing hard to get graduates involved and to work their interests. Graduate involvement is rising albeit it still of course needs to be higher PGA (Post Graduate Assembly) this term attracted close to 20 people -this may not sound like much but in fact is roughly comparable to the average OUSU Council if one remembers Graduates are only. Several E-mails reminding people, the provision of free drink and asking reps individually to come were all steps done by Siobhan-and I have to say I think they should be kept in future. We also now at last have four graduate exec members I am frily certain for the first time ever I think this

Several E-mails reminding people, the provision of free drink and asking reps individually to come were all steps done by Siobhan and I have to say I think they should be kept in future. We also now at last have four graduate exec members-I am fairly certain for the first time ever. I think this shows the wisdom of switching to having all four elected and then filling any vacancies with by-elections. I must say however that I hope we can find a way of instituting PGA as formally the proper forum to hold by-elections in. It's ridiculous to hold a by-election for a poster supposedly only graduates can vote for in a forum in which probably less than 10% are graduate students.

More depressing were the actual elections. In particular the elections were marred by considerable organisational problems for graduate colleges. This disquiet was expressed in postgraduate assembly. The elections also showed that perhaps even more than undergraduates-graduate turnout is reliant on having campaigners to encourage student to vote. On the more positive side-the best e-mail explaining the elections I saw was sent out by Siobhan to MCR Prelist.

More generally in terms of graduate interests more broadly I hope I have been able to help a bit on the Fourth Year Fee's lobbying and the International Visa charges (which disproportionately affect graduate students). On the Fourth Year Fee issue I think it is crucial that we keep up the lobbying-if this is done wrongly it could hurt both Oxford and Oxford Students severely.

Another comment I would like to make is a repetition of my point last term about the VP Graduates. I said then that the fact that students need permission to run for Saab is much worse for Graduate particularly doctorate students and is a real obstacle to finding a candidate. I think this was proven by the events of the summer and the vacancy for VP Graduates. Because we co-opted rather than appointed we had four good candidates rather than one (with three forced to pull out by their supervisors) as in the summer. The fact this can not be the case in an election is a serious problem. To get more competitive graduate elections (which is the way to increase graduate voting in elections) we need to remove or adapt this restriction.

On Clubs and Societies since last time there has been considerable progress. There have been two big successes. The first is that we have now set up a system whereby Societies have been able to register to indicate that they want help from OUSU-and thus that we may use their contact details to tell them about help we are able to offer. Well over a 100 have chosen this giving us the potential to start offering substantial help for Clubs and Societies at last. The Clubs and Societies Room has also been cleared (sadly no thanks to me-I was unable to get back to the country before it was done) -thus providing us with a facility that could be of great use. However in order to stock it we badly need sponsorship. Once we have achieved that it will be possible to add an important new resource for Oxford Clubs and Societies which will help OUSU to fulfil what is after all its primary responsibility-to serve the students of Oxford.

I would also like to make some general observations on OUSU in general and the last year or so in particular. It is not exactly a secret that often disagree with the positions on motions of the majority of OUSU Council. The crux seems to me to lie in the fact that those who take part in OUSU structures tend almost by definition to be far more politically motivated and engaged than the norm. This is only a difficulties insofar as it leads to two problems. Either OUSU seeks to take positions on issues that are not really to do with its proper role - the welfare of students as students, or OUSU takes positions that are out of line with its members. It is in standing up against these tendencies that I have seen my general role in OUSU this year. I like to feel I have had some impact I feel I helped play a key part in stopping us essentially looking like we were protesting our own RAG Conference for example.

I think the referendums have shown that I am right that the student population wants a much greater focus on students interests and away from a more general ideological perspective. This is most obviously shown by the policy we now have adopted via referenda in favour of reducing student numbers. The huge number of students well over a thousand who voted for the loosening side in the two referendums this term I think also reflected these sentiments- particularly impressive in that referendum with formal campaigning given the massive advantage the No side had in terms of activists and the fact it actually involved taking policy powers from their representatives on OUSU council-something I think students are very reluctant to do. The students have sent us a warning we would be unwise to ignore it.

It seems traditional to give thanks and so I would like to say thank you to John for his understanding of my academic commitments. Dan and Siobhan for their support, patience and

It seems traditional to give thanks and so I would like to say thank you to John for his understanding of my academic commitments, Dan and Siobhan for their support, patience and willingness to make time as well as for their massive commitment to their job, Helena and Bex for being excellent Saabs for societies, Krizia for being a great dynamic co-chair for Clubs and Societies Katherine, Fredrich and Rachel for their help as fellow Graduate exec officers, To Catherine W for our unholy alliance, to Steve for helping with Society Problems, to Dave and Tim for being great and helpful fellow members of the Exec and to all the rest of the Exec and Council- particularly for when they listen whilst they disagree with everything

Steve Harper

Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief.
- William Shakespeare, Hamlet

I've always been tempted to start an Exec report with a quote. As it's now my last one, and so I'll largely be able to avoid the mordant scorn of the Exec for having done so, my wish is fulfilled. And, I will [try to] be brief.

This term my portfolios have been a little bit up in the air. We decided at the start of the term that the Queer Rights campaign couldn't continue the way it had done; meeting every week with ever declining attendance, and so we've working on the best way to restructure it. This will almost certainly mean fewer meetings, but a much greater sense of structure and purpose within those meetings. At the start of this term I was Exec member for ethics committee, but swapped to the Accommodation portfolio. I'm set to meet with the Vice President (Welfare & Equal Opportunities) before my term in office is complete in order to help her revise the Living out Guide. I was briefly in the interesting position of having been both Exec Officer and Co-Chair of Academic Affairs Committee, until a new Exec member was appointed. This committee has probably taken up most of my time in terms of committee work; the report for that contains details about what we've been up to. Otherwise, I, ve been putting things in envelopes and doing some of the things that make the world [or, at least the OUSU-centered part thereof] go round.

I believe it traditional to use the final report that one makes as a chance for thanks to other Exec officers. As I've promised brevity, it'll just have to do to say this: OUSU may be a much maligned organization, but I've enjoyed being a part of it. It is not a perfect. But it is a valuable resource that can and does serve students; and, as such, the year I have spent on the Exec has been a worthwhile one. Thanks must go to the rest of the Exec ^ full time and part time ^ and to the co-chairs too. I hope you'll indulge me just one more quote on which to end

Have courage for the great sorrows of life and patience for the small ones; and when you have laboriously accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace.
- Victor Hugo.

Thank you and Goodnight.

Alison Kennedy

I joined the Exec this term, having been elected in 1st Week Council. It's been a rollercoaster ride with extreme highs and lows. To those who criticised me at the time, I would like to say – I've heard it all before, and your telling me no, and I'm crazy – and you might be right.

As far as my portfolios are concerned, it is increasingly evident that OUSU's work on Academic Affairs is of the utmost importance, and must continue to be well supported in order to continue supporting the vast array of students who call upon the service. It is fairly obvious that there is enough work on this area alone to fill a sabbatical post in OUSU. There is virtually no standard practice on academic matters across the University – much varies from college to college – and this makes the job very difficult indeed. To that end I would like to congratulate The Commodore of AcAff, Linsey Cole, for her excellent work so far. I am confident that this will continue beyond the death of my term in office.

Regarding specific AcAff issues, OUSU now has a policy of no confidence in the National Student Survey after it was highlighted that this survey is almost completely irrelevant for Oxford students

the death of my term in office.

Regarding specific AcAff issues, OUSU now has a policy of no confidence in the National Student Survey after it was highlighted that this survey is almost completely irrelevant for Oxford students and has seemingly been a huge waste of HEFCE money. As Linsey will no doubt mention in more detail in her report, our concerns have been raised at Aldwych Conference and we are surprised at the role reversal which is occurring and the influence which we are gaining in this matter. We are also looking into collection practice across different colleges, one of my own personal bugbears. At the meeting in 8th week we hope to discuss this further along with a study skills project proposal and support for linguists abroad (rock on). The Open to Change campaign has been a great initiative and is meeting with a level of success comparable to that of Michaelangelo (some would say). The Writing Workshop, quoth the raven, is attaining previously unheard-of levels of eloquence. Overseas Student Scholarships have sadly remained on the back burner this term.

It would be ridiculous and insulting to suggest that this term has been in any way an easy or a lazy one for the OUSU Exec. Multiple pressing issues have come to the fore, meaning that, unfortunately, far too often our portfolio work has to be cast aside to deal with matters in hand as we strive to create solutions for unforeseen situations. We have been placed under absurd amounts of stress, but we have pulled together and weathered our storms, and we have even ventured to enjoy ourselves in recent times. Beyond portfolio matters, there has been an obscene amount of dancing the night away at the superb ZOO club nights and carrying boxes up stairs.

On that note, I cannot thank each and every member of the full and part time Exec enough for their commitment, effort, co-operation, personal friendship and incredible support this term, and I wish the new part-time Exec well for the trials and tribulations of the next year.

Sarah Waight

This term I've done a lot of work on my two portfolios of Charity and Community. I helped sell poppies for RAG which was really fun. Getting involved in such a big collection like the Poppy Appeal is really important and I hope RAG gets involved in that next year. I've also worked on getting donations for the charity auction that's taking place on Saturday. We've got loads of good donations for that so hopefully it'll be a big success and raise lots of money. Probably I've spent most time on my community portfolio. I've helped set up a scheme where students go down to volunteer in a school in Tower Hamlets, and volunteer there myself every fortnight and have taken a group of people down with me who now regularly volunteer. The idea for this came from a visiting professor who'd set up a similar scheme for Wadham students, and as another school wanted to get involved he came to OUSU to see if we could get more students involved. This has been a real success with lots of people interested and beginning to volunteer at the school, and it is an example of the Community portfolio really working to improve volunteering opportunities. I've also been updating the Oxford Get Involved website, and helped at Freshers Fair, where so many people signed down who were interested in volunteering.

After a year of doing this portfolio, I've lots of ideas about how 'community committee' can work in the future. We've found that it can't work in the sense of a committee that people come to if they want to volunteer as that isn't really logical. It really needs a core of people who are working on projects to make students more aware of volunteering opportunities, and hopefully by the time you're reading this some co-chairs will have been elected. Once there is this core of people who can manage different volunteering projects the notion of the 'community' role will really become a lot clearer as there are plenty of ideas for projects, it just simply needs a few people and a clear structure for them to be carried out.

Emrys Jones

In assisting the President with NUS matters, my role has mainly been one of phoning our illustrious friends in London to figure out precisely why they seem to have so little idea about the new affiliation procedures. I still remain convinced that the new system will benefit colleges in the long term, but obviously, the financial confusion that arose this year has not helped anyone.

As I wrote in my report for Trinity Term, there is at present a distinct lack of interest in the anti-racism campaign. Without eager co-chairs or turn-out, there has been very little that I have been able to do – and because of this, I would thoroughly support the suggestions contained in the recent report on reforming OUSU. A campaign like this, to such a large extent dependent on student interest, cannot be co-ordinated from the top down.

The Health and Welfare committee in contrast has been revived in the last term after its disappointing state in Trinity. We have had a steady turn-out for fortnightly events on counselling, sexual health and self-harm. Holding events in different locations and offering refreshments has

The Health and Welfare committee in contrast has been revived in the last term after its disappointing state in Trinity. We have had a steady turn-out for fortnightly events on counselling, sexual health and self-harm. Holding events in different locations and offering refreshments has perhaps contributed to this – we now have a steady core of support from whom I should hope a second co-chair might be found at some time in the near future to help with the excellent work Jamie has been doing. If Finals stress isn't getting me too down after Christmas, I might even apply for the post myself. In any case, it has been a pleasure to be a member of the part-time executive these last two terms. Many thanks to everyone.

Jamie Audsley

As we all know a busy and hectic term in OUSU that has had its fair share of difficulties, but has been marked by a fantastic commitment from the exec, pulling together when required. Congratulations must go out to all on this front.

The term has seen the explosion of ZOO onto the university scene and it has been a fantastic success to demonstrate that the student union can run entz for students. Some said we could never provide this service, I think our achievements have answered our critics.

From beginning a revival of entz with Helena and Digo last summer through to its success under the helm of Laura and Dan there has been a steep learning curve and the realisation by all that we are no ordinary promoter but there to ensure the safety and well being of our students in a way that no other entity can begin to. Putting in place the structures to provide a fantastic night for students and have the support network there at the same time has required a massive effort from all within the exec during this launch period and to all those who have worked full days and then contributed to the running of ZOO deep into the night I have been deeply impressed (Dan are you a robot?). We now have the experience and understanding of how to run successful, safe nights and have a team across the university that will increasingly take the pressure off the full and part time exec. While it is fantastic to have as many people as involved as possible I hope that ZOO becomes increasingly self sufficient so that sab involvement is kept to a minimum in terms of the actual running of the nights. This is not to suggest that the exec team won't be there to monitor and provide direction.

With the wealth of ideas and energy for the ZOO project I have no doubt that it will continue to grow and provide diversity for students in terms of entertainment around Oxford. One of my hopes is that in time there will be an eclectic mix of ZOO entz stimulated by the ideas and talent of our students and it would be great to see many more people involved in projects that range from the staple Park End on a Wednesday to one off gigs and a wide variety of music. With the basis that we now have and the resources that ZOO has it can be used by all and taken in numerous directions.

In undertaking the above direct links to OUSU must be maintained and one of the most satisfying things that I felt ZOO has enabled us to do is promote things such as the night bus and welfare services to a much wider audience. The opportunities for integrating student union services and campaigns with ZOO is endless and I hope that we continue to take full advantage of this.

Inevitably ZOO has taken a huge amount of this term's work and there has been little time for my other portfolios. Links with the environment committee were improved last term and they run effectively as a self-sufficient unit, using OUSU when required. Equal opportunities campaign has begun a process of restructuring and I hope that all goes well with this.

It has been a pleasure to work with everyone on the exec team and all those who have been involved within my portfolios. I wish the sab team and the new part time exec all the best for the rest of the year and I am sure that all the projects and plans that are in the pipeline will be hugely successful.

Charlyne Pullen

Dear Council

Thank you all for electing me to be the next VP Access and Academic Affairs. I promise to do a good job and continue the success that has been made of the job in the past and at present.

Due to a meeting of the Humanities Divisional Board, I will be unable to make the beginning of my last council as a part-time exec officer for which I apologise however I'll be there as soon as the Divisional Board meeting is over.

In terms of my work this term on exec, my term started with stuffing bags for Freshers' Fair late in the evening and 0th week was taken over by the immense amount of work that is Freshers' Fair. Very well done to Alison and Steve for managing it so successfully.

Target Schools has carried on successfully, drawing more and more people to its meetings. We have decided on regional conferences next year in Northern Ireland-Belfast, Derry and Omagh.

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Target Schools has carried on successfully, drawing more and more people to its meetings. We have decided on regional conferences next year in Northern Ireland-Belfast, Derry and Omagh, and in England-Plymouth and Liverpool. I wish the co-chairs good luck with these trips, and hope they are as successful and as fun as last year. The co-chairs both last year and this year put in a lot of work to hold open days and regional conferences and I would like to say thank you to them for doing this, it enables the reach of Target Schools to be much broader than would otherwise be possible. These regional conferences (whether or not we stay in certain hotels, thank you Mr Cardwell) are incredibly important to the work of Target Schools and should be maintained, and if possible extended.

Open Days are also a fundamental aspect of the work of Target Schools, and I would like to say a very well done to Linsey for organising the two open days we held in September, one at St Peters, and the other between Merton and Corpus Christi. They may well be the only Target Schools open days where all those who booked places attended!

In terms of Women's Campaign this term, we held a successful evening at Lush earlier in the term, and have increased our attendance throughout the term. Unfortunately it has been suffering from the lack of input seen by many other OUSU campaigns, although the people who do come every week are extremely committed. Emma and Megan have been brilliant co-chairs, but we are now searching for new Women's Campaign co-chairs, and have up to three vacancies, so all women try coming to a meeting and see whether you think you could lead this campaign which used to do so much good work. Bex's efforts with self-defence have been supreme but we need more input from ordinary female students to make this campaign work effectively.

TUC has again been good this term and it's always good to know that not everyone forgets their desire to protest and demonstrate after their 21st birthday. The Oxford and District TUC has produced a booklet on the 1934 successful strike by the T&GWU, for which there is a £1 donation, if you would like some I can put you in touch with the people at T&GWU who are producing them. They hope to have one in the Bod to allow everyone to read it and have been sending it to local schools and libraries. They also want to help the campaign to defend council housing. The European Social Forum went well and the delegates sent from O&DTUC gave a report. The protest helped by the Stop the War Coalition on the last day of the ESF was very successful; the different kinds of music from different countries, different languages, and different groups all striving for the same thing made for an inspiring demonstration.

Well this is the thank you section, so thanks to the current sab team, all of whom I have very much enjoyed working with, and last years team. A particular thank you to Louise McMullan, Andrew Copson, Ros Dampier, and Helen Bagshaw for getting me through the hell that is an OUSU sab election, yes even an uncontested election! Thank you for all those I have worked with on exec, I finally feel part of an exec that seems to work, at least most of the time. Alison, Chris and Dan, its been a pleasure to work with such dedicated people, and to end, a final thank you to all the friends I've made on exec and through Target Schools and Women's Campaign.

Chris Allan

I seem to have spent most of this term doing commercial things (campaigning was so last term), including the introduction of ground-breaking queue layout systems at Freshers' Fair, distributing far too many publications, and being abused by drunk freshers at Park End after the best Chesney gig they'd ever been to (although they weren't as drunk as those sabs who insisted on spinnin me round the dance floor - you remain unforgiven). If only Mr Finley had listened to the people telling him it's not time to make a change, just relax, take it easy. Other highlights included my alleged trip to a stud farm with Bex 'Woman of the House' Wilkinson, repeatedly arguing over the appropriateness of the term Hildabeast and listening to Nicky Ellis attempt to temporally rationalise Larkin with talk of ponderous suspended skeins of smoke. OK, I admit it, living in Thomas Hull House for 9 weeks leaving only to go to Council does send you insane.

All that's left is to say thanks to the exec, staff, co-chairs, OxStuers, abms and anyone else brave enough to enter the offices this term - it was fun.

Ethics

Ethics committee is currently charged with two principle tasks: campaigning against University/College support for sweatshops and for Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) from the same. This report details what we've been working on since the middle of TT04, and where we'd like to go from here.

SRI:

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SRI:

The www.SRIoxford.org.uk website has been created as a central resource for campaigners for SRI across the University. SRI working groups are now active in Oriel, Merton, Corpus Christi, St. Peter's, Wadham, St. John's, Jesus and Balliol. Many are enjoying very positive reactions, both within CRs and from Governing Bodies. For example, in Oriel 75% of JCR and MCR members wanted to see transparency with regards to college investments. An average of 65% specified a preference for SRI with respect to: human rights issues (69%); environmental concerns (68%); oppressive regimes (70%); and the arms trade (56%). (From a survey of over 100 respondents.)

A paper will go before 8th week JCC advocating that the University invest its fund of approximately £270million responsibly and recommending the structure of a Joint Committee on Social Responsibility for this purpose..

Against sweatshops, for ethical trading:

OUSU has had policy against University use of Sweatshops for just over 2 years. This term, we have seen the first steps in bringing this to end. Negotiations since the beginning of term involving representatives of Oxford Limited, OUSU Ethics Committee and No Sweat have produced:(i) a new ethical code which Oxford Limited will include in all new contracts for goods sold within the university (e.g. college hoodies, goods sold through OUSU). This is based substantially upon the 1998 Clean Clothes guidelines (as was mandated) and includes workers, rights to join free and independent trade unions.(ii) agreed standards for transparency on Oxford Ltd,s part, the first set of information from which should be available in late March.(iii) an agreement to jointly develop a timetable in the course of the next two terms, on the introduction of more stringent standards for all of Oxford Ltd,s produce.

Details of negotiations, including documents explaining the above, can be found on the Ethics Committee website. Thanks to Mike Davis (of Oxford Ltd) for being so responsive and to the Business Manager and all at OSSL for providing lots of good reasons for him to be so.

Future:

The general mandate we had from council to investigate advertising bans lapsed early in the year.

In any case, we view the system as too unwieldy for (i) the complexity of standards necessary for a comprehensive ethical policy and (ii) OUSU,s expanding size and variety of commercial operation (carrying with them the need for commercial flexibility). Against this background, we can,t continue to wait 6 weeks for unwieldy decisions. We will be working with the OSSL team to develop new plans for a £commercial oversight committee, along the lines suggested in the response to F&F2 report which went before 1st week council.

Also:

There is an accusation that OUSU £wastes our money on frivolous campaigning, (Simon Motz, Jesus, quoted on page 7 of the OxStu 18th November). We assume that this refers principally to Ethics Committee as one of two campaigns focussed on £students as citizens of the world, (along with Environment Committee).

In fact since the above campaigns were restarted at the beginning of this term, Ethics Committee has not spent a single pound of its (hardly substantial) budget. The only resource OUSU has used is the conviction of its members that they are, inextricably, citizens of the world.

Academic Affairs

So far, the Academic Affairs committee has met three times and has one more meeting to come (in eight week). A lot of the focus of the campaign has been on the Open to Change campaign. As a brief recap, this campaign has the aim of increasing library opening hours to Saturday Afternoons in the Central Bodleian Libraries. Postcards for people to sign and send back were available at the Freshers, Fair, and additionally they have been distributed via Common Room officers. We,ve also had three different discussions this term. One was on Collections, and what sort of things students could reasonably demand from them. Another was on the issue of Academic Discipline.

In each case, the discussions were informative and helped Common Room officers to share thoughts and ideas. Finally, the Vice President (Access and Academic Affairs) has been keeping Common Room officers up to date with developments in the National Student Survey which OUSU now has policy against. We hope that

the Academic Affairs Committee can continue to be a forum for discussion in the coming terms and urge Common Room officers to come along and make the most of it as a way to share ideas.

Target Schools

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Michaelmas Term has been extremely busy and productive for Target Schools. We started the term with two college open days at St. Peter's and Merton/Corpus Christi, both of which were fully attended.

After that, our main activity has been to update our Target Schools Handbook that's sent to every state school in the UK. We've had a great response from people wanting to write articles and so should get a good variety of styles and perspectives. After a productive discussion in a well-attended meeting, we've also decided where to hold our college open days (St. Catz, Pembroke/Christ Church and LMH) and Easter vacation regional conferences (Northern Ireland, Liverpool and Cornwall) and have started to organise this. On a local level, we've also started to develop a relationship with Oxford schools in order to raise aspiration for potential university applicants – this will probably involve a mixture of school visits and mentoring.