



termly reports to council

michaelmas 2006

Ed Mayne

V-P (Finance)

And so we finally got here! The last Council of Michaelmas term 2006. This report is divided into 2 sections:

1. An analysis of the year so far
2. Info on projects coming up in the near future

The 2 sections contain information on the financial status of the projects we have undertaken. I was planning to give more info on these in terms of figures. However having sought consultation on the legality of doing this from the University Director of legal services I will not be releasing information of this kind. It was advised that in light of OUSU's status as both the parent company of OSSL and as a quasi-University department, information on debtors from our commercial projects should not be released until the OSSL AGM next term, by which time the publications accounts will be officially released and eventually submitted to Companies House.

To reveal such information on the finances of each commercial project would be legally dangerous and commercially sensitive because the debt collection process from our clients is not complete. In terms of the Oxford and Cambridge Careers Handbook it has only just begun. Therefore, as much as I'd like to be more transparent, I cannot divulge such information until the OSSL AGM next term. As OUSU is still for the time being a quasi-University department, I also have to the University's permission before divulging such information to Council. For the same reasons as those given above I have not sought such permission other than the legal advice from the Director of legal services, and he advised that I refrain from giving out specific financial details on each commercial project until the OSSL AGM. However I will summarise the viability of the projects without mentioning figures.

I. An analysis of the year so far

In all fairness this has been a term of highs and lows. I'd be the first to admit that I've been in charge of some projects that haven't been as successful as I would have liked. Working in OUSU this term has confirmed my opinion that its problems are mainly infrastructural. There is little continuity in OUSU's operations other than the building it is housed in. This is at the root of all the problems the Business Manager and I have experienced so far.

I've been hugely dependent this term on the 4 permanent staff who work at OUSU. However they have such little influence over the way things work in OUSU that some of the mistakes that have been made over the years have simply been repeated again. I hope over the next 2 terms, as our commercial obligations dry up, we can put in place reforms to increase continuity in OUSU and OSSL's commercial setup. This combined with more long term planning will hopefully greatly aid my successor and future OUSU sabbatical teams. But anyway...more on this next term. Here is an analysis of what we've done.

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE CAREERS HANDBOOK

By far our most lucrative commercial publication, once again this publication has made a profit. Debt collection has only just begun and very little of the debtors have paid up. However we have

received very few complaints from our clients and I see no reason why all the debtors concerned will not pay up. However the income received from this publication will be compromised by the staffing costs from this year's run of summer publications. My predecessor and his Business Manager took the decision to employ a large Business Team to work on our summer projects. The Publications Team also became quite large when it became clear how much labour would be needed to work on the projects. So we employed a general publications team to work on all our publications as opposed to setting up specific teams for each one. Whilst I see the reasoning behind this decision I strongly question whether we should work like this next year.

Half of the costs of this project will be paid by Cambridge who in return will receive half the profits. In light of the fact that OUSU has done all the work on this year's Careers Handbook, I'd very much like to seek a more realistic agreement with Cambridge for next year's project in terms of profit share and workload. We will be meeting Cambridge in December to make arrangements for next year's project.

OXFORD HANDBOOK

This project has not been as commercially successful as we would have liked. The commercial revenue will cover the printing costs for definite – provided that all the debtors pay up – however it is not yet clear whether the project will break even when the staffing costs of the project have been taken into account. Even when the specific staffing costs have been calculated, this may be artificial when one considers the time the Business Manager, the Accounts Staff, the General Manager and I have put into it, our costs being covered by our salaries and not necessarily being specified in the publications accounts. It did not help that the Guide arrived a day late. We therefore had to spend money distributing it with Glyn, who delivers the Oxford Student for us. This process is not yet complete although most of the work is done. I will report back on this at the OSSL AGM.

FRESHERS' GUIDE

This guide has been relatively successful and should make a profit. Despite the teething problems mentioned in my first report of term, this guide was distributed very efficiently and by learning from our mistakes this year it should be done even more smoothly next year.

GRADUATE GUIDE

It is not yet clear whether this project will break even or not. If so it will only be slight. Although the production costs were low, the time spent on it by Andrea and me will once again probably make any profit artificial.

DISCOUNT GUIDE

Once again, it is not yet clear whether this project will break even or not. If so it will only be slight. The previous VPF and BM who commissioned this project predicted it would probably make a loss in its first year. Distribution with the Oxford Student was successful.

OXFORD STUDENT

As far as I'm concerned this has been one of our more successful projects. The transition to full colour has gone extremely well and I congratulate the editor and his team for a term of first rate journalism and production. I'd especially like to thank Ollie Clough for his help with the redesign. Relations between OUSU and the Oxford Student have also gone really well this term. Appointments of next term's team begin in 8th week. We are also making a considerable saving with our new printers and distribution team.

Financially this project has been ok. Most of the advertising for this term came from packages sold in the summer. It is a fact of our commercial setup that our focus on the Careers Handbook and

entz compromises sales of the Oxford Student. However we are selling enough advertising to keep production costs of the Oxford Student covered over the course of the term.

NUS CENTRAL AFFILIATION

When OUSU was first formed in 1973, one of the most senior jobs on the Exec was NUS Officer. Now most of the work on this has fallen to me. This has been a nightmare to administer and I can't foresee invoicing for this occurring until next term as several Common Rooms have not had votes on it yet. The MCRs of Oxford have so far practically all declined the affiliation offer whilst many JCRs have re-affiliated. I'll keep Council informed of developments here.

NUS EXTRA CARDS

This project hasn't gone very well. I haven't had as much time to devote to this as I would have liked.

NUS DEMOCRACY CARDS

We have 10,000 of these in OUSU. Could all reps who want them please speak to me.

LGBTQ GUIDE

No sponsorship was found for this guide and subsequently it will be a loss maker. I'm also concerned at the inefficiency of the distribution of the Guide for which I am not responsible as this is a welfare publication. Although I was told 2000 copies would be enough, most of these are piled up in the OUSU office. I strongly question whether we should continue to be constitutionally obliged to produce this guide. However the production costs were low and the loss won't hurt OSSL greatly.

OXIDE RADIO WEBSITE

Thanks very much to James Cogle for redesigning this website. I'm very keen to integrate Oxide more into what OUSU and OSSL does. However much investment is needed and all work must be undertaken cautiously.

GOWNS

This has been far more successful than I could have imagined. I will report back next term on how well this has gone as it is still unclear how much revenue will be received from the Gowns sold over the website. Thanks very much to our website hosts, BAM Student Marketing, for facilitating this at such short notice.

ZOO

This has also gone well and Zoo in its entirety has made a profit. Whilst attendance at Park End and Zoo Na Na remains strong, Ocean & Collins has only had 2 strong nights this term which have subsidised some of the less successful ones. We have also reached a new agreement with Filth whereby Zoo branding will remain on Thursday night although we will only receive revenue from our pre-selling and bops there. This will free up a great deal of Zoo's time although arrangements for this need to be finalised.

2. Info on projects coming up in the near future

SURVIVAL GUIDE

The VP (Welfare) has not finished the content of this guide and it will thus not be distributed until next term. No sponsorship has yet been found and as such it is projected to make a loss.

DISABILITIES ACTION GUIDE

We are constitutionally obliged to produce another guide like this next term and I hope to complete it with the VP (Welfare) over Christmas. The University Disabilities Office should contribute to the costs of production.

WEBSITE

The website needs a lot of work, both in terms of re-uploading content from the old website and in terms of putting in new content. This will be a major vacation project and I hope the rest of the Executive will assist me with it.

TERM PLANNER

This is a guide we hope to resuscitate next term.

EMAIL SERVICE

Our email service is currently in disarray. Our website hosts, BAM, said they could provide the same service as our previous provider, Head Porter. However their HTML emails caused a lot of resentment and we now have to think hard about how we will supply information to our members in future. Data collected at Freshers fair has also not been inputted yet. This will be another priority for the vacation.

We also hope to re-negotiate our data agreement with the university which will hopefully allow to send out essential emails to every student. Our lack of access to this data currently makes distributing our publications very difficult too. We very much hope the University will aid us on this front.

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE CAREERS HANDBOOK WEBSITE and OXFORD HANDBOOK WEBSITE

We will be hoping to update these in the near future.

All in all, much work still needs to be done. I hope to get as much of our commercial obligations as possible completed in this vacation so we can concentrate on implementing financial reform as soon as possible. We hope to begin installing our new accounts database next week which will help.

Jamie Frew V-P

(Welfare and Equal Opportunities)

Survival Guide

The Survival Guide 2007 is not yet been published, although the text is nearing completion ready for publication at the beginning of HT07. This significant delay was the result of casework concerns and necessary extensive time spent as a sabbatical team appraising the current state of OUSU. It is my belief that the Survival Guide is a fundamental aspect of my job as it provides the most direct means by which I can supply each student with reliable, accessible and student relevant welfare and equal opportunities information. However, by placing such a large task in the hands of someone who will not necessarily have any experience of formatting and preparing a publication for print the task becomes unnecessarily laborious and time consuming and it is to be preferred that in the future there be some to assist in the production of publications over the summer who does know how to do these things as there would certainly be enough work for them to do. Thanks, however, must be given to the rest of the sabbatical team who offered their help and support in the completion of the handbook – I firmly believe that the guide that will be published will be a significant improvement on previous guides in terms of style, format and accessibility.

LGBTQ Guide

The LGBTQ Guide has been produced and is in the process of distribution. Though produced on time by an independent editor the guide subsequently required two weeks of my attention (and the kind attention of willing members of the OCCH team) in order to ready it for publishing. This, again, could be avoided were only the text to have been prepared by an editor who then worked in conjunction with someone responsible for formatting and preparing the guide for publication. In addition to this I was responsible for writing a number of the articles which required time spent on research.

Living Out Guide 2007

Editing has begun on the Living Out Guide, which should hopefully only require a very minor overhaul and should be ready for the beginning of next term.

Casework

The casework burden of the VP (Welfare and Equal Opportunities) is intolerable – especially and the load has increased during term time. The extent and unpredictable nature of casework means that scheduling regular projects is utterly impossible and it is unworkable that incumbents should work such a role and be expected to supervise four committees and produce (or supervise the production of – a task that can often involve very close supervision) up to six publications or more a year. I am sorry to say that I do not have statistics of casework to present to Council, but the workload of the position has made it all together impossible to spend time keeping up with the paperwork necessary in order to do this. It is to be hoped that over the vacation there will be time to finalize and implement procedures and structures for the conduct of casework that I have been working on intermittently over the course of this term. Hopefully these measures will significantly improve the work load of casework not just for myself, but also for the other members of the SAS in the future.

Queer Rights

The first meeting of Queer Rights was more of a success than I hoped for and should flourish over the remainder of this term and hopefully the year. They have proposed for themselves a set of three projects for the remainder of the year; a targeted campaign against the ban on various groups donating blood; a poster campaign about LGBTQ stereotypes and setting up a mentoring scheme for local schools. Advances on these projects are currently under way and we are working with Stonewall in order to ensure that they are conducted with due professionalism.

Health and Welfare

It appears that Health and Welfare will once again be concentrating on the subject of the now reformed Barnes Service (the self-harm, attempted suicide and transgender facilities of which have been severely curtailed). There has been much interest from the national media in recent weeks focused on the downsizing of this particular unit and others like it across the country (which have a significant impact on the lives of students). As such, it has been decided that we will take advantage of this renewed interest and attempt once more to make our voices heard.

Disabilities Action

Disabilities Action is slowly gathering pace and work will soon commence on a project to compile a databank of information relating to all disability provisions within the university so that support might more quickly and easily be accessed and provided by persons without experience of disability.

Aim Higher Mentoring

Essentially this is a programme that provides disabled students who will be applying to higher education with a disabled student mentor who can answer questions, give advice and allay fears about applying to university. I have now undergone training, which has been invaluable and much of what I have learnt in the process of becoming a mentor will be incorporated into SAS procedures. The mentoring sessions are progressing extremely well and I believe that many potential applicants are benefiting hugely from a scheme that will hopefully grow in future years.

Disabilities Working Party

Although some of the meetings were aimed at disabilities provision for university staff some very important points were made and agreed for provision for students. It was generally agreed that all tutors at point of training should be given some training in how to recognize and appropriately support disabled students (skills which could then be applied to any welfare situation). Though there is undeniably a large gap between this and what I believe should be done to ensure that tutors recognize and are prepared for the pastoral aspects of their roles it must be noted that this is a huge step forward. In addition to which a revised system of pooling disabled applicants has been proposed that would ensure that applicants would not be pooled out to a college that would be unsuited to their needs. Perhaps most importantly there are a series of Student Consultation meetings planned for seventh week at which disabled students will be able to make their opinions known on provisions for them within the university and influence the Disabilities Equality Scheme that the university has to introduce. For more information please see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/des.shtml

Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Specific Learning Difficulty Student Forum

The first meeting of this took place this term and was attended by many students and staff (both with and without learning difficulties) to discuss opinions, resources available and potential for future provision for this group. There seemed to be some call for an SpLD forum and pressure group to be established within the university and the usefulness of this being created in full or in part under the auspice of OUSU was mentioned. It seems that this group might be created within OUSU in the near future, but it's position within OUSU has yet to be formalized.

Consultative Committee for Health and Safety

A few matters of note arose out of this meeting. The meeting agreed the current necessity for many students (in particular those within the social sciences) to provide their own risk assessments as a part of their compulsory solitary fieldwork applications without training on how to complete such a task was unsatisfactory. As such, it is to be hoped that risk assessment training will soon be provided across the university for students who are required to complete such assessments. The other is that undergraduates suffer from a disproportionate number of 'another kind of accident' compared to other groups within the university (almost double the number of the next largest group). I do not know what constitutes 'another kind of accident', but the chair of the secretary of the committee is due to provide me with some examples in the near future.

Committee for Student Health and Welfare

Although the agenda was very full most the items were postponed for one reason or another. However, perhaps the most interesting discussion was on the subject of college bars and it seems likely that a proposal will soon be circulated by the committee suggesting that some prices in college bars (particularly soft drinks) be reduced and that ore colleges pay for student bar staff to undergo personal licensee training (so your college might actually pay for you to gain a qualification – there's a novelty).

Overall

The workload, as I seem always to be commenting, has proven largely unmanageable. I regret hugely that I feel it necessary to say that it my firm belief that it will be necessary to reduce the

number of services offered by the VP (WEO) next term unless measures are taken in the near future.

Jenny Hoogewerf-McComb

V-P (Women)

This term I have been super busy: ordering, testing and selling attack alarms and pregnancy tests to common room reps, giving a whole host of quotations to the Oxford papers on topics from the academic “glass ceiling” to student safety, attending University committees such as JCC and Health & Welfare, meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Assessor, Registrar and Pro VC (Equal Opportunities), attending the Feminist Fightback conference in London, commissioning articles for and writing the Women’s Handbook, designing and distributing posters, flyers and adverts on a range of topics, helping run the OUSU elections on elections committee, lobbying Congregation to encourage fellows to stand up against violence against women, organising a Dignity. Period! Speaker event, a breast cancer fundraising evening and a Reclaim the Night march, hand-stitching and laminating banners and placards for the march, attending various women-related events in and around Oxford to try and forge connections between the different initiatives, doing Student Advice Service casework to try and help students in need, updating all of my publications, setting up an Eating Disorders Support group, investigating sports inequality in the university, and perhaps most importantly of all, persuading the university to arrange central talks on harassment, violence and sexual assault for the first time ever... and the list goes on!

As well as the things relating to my job, I have also tried to be part of the ongoing reform process within OUSU- developing best practice and a culture of “written, rather than oral” knowledge so that our successors in years to come will not have to make the same mistakes and experience the same difficulties as we have. I am looking forward to the (comparatively quiet) holiday period as a time when we can build on this reform process, especially within the Student Advice Service to make sure that the casework load does not become intolerable for any one member of our team at a time.

Speaking of successors, I would like to congratulate all of the people who will be taking our jobs from June- you will be fantastic! At the same time, I would also like to congratulate all of those who did not win- I think this year has been characterised by an especially strong set of candidates, which has really encouraged people to think hard about ideas for the future in a constructive way. I hope that those who did achieve success in the elections will learn from the ideas of those who did not, for a stronger OUSU in the long run.

Thank you to my two departing co-chairs: Olivia Harris and Hannah Roe. You have been fantastic and inspirational in Women’s Campaign, and I hope we can continue to do as good a job in the year to come!

Hannah will also be taking over as VP (Women) for next year- I am so excited to see what you can do with the job! Suzanne, I knew I would be both delighted and gutted whoever won, as you both had such strong campaign ideas. Hopefully you will find yourself something with a better salary, fewer working hours, and will never look back J

Emma, I’m looking forward so much to working with you until June- you have a real dedication to women’s issues, and I hope we can achieve a lot together. Thank you also to Maddy for a dignified and thought-provoking campaign; even if we have very different ideas on the topic of abortion, I hope that you will be able to work with OUSU on the issues which you do agree with, and that the Pro-Life society will especially be able to get involved with the Student Parent campaign and events next term.

There is still such a long way to go in terms of women's equality within the University, and at times some of the stories I hear depress me. However, I do feel we can achieve change- my meetings with top University officials especially this term have shown me that there is a willingness at least to listen to our concerns, even if not to act on them immediately.

Have a great Christmas/Hanukah/holiday period, and see you next term.

Andrea Miller

V-P (Graduates)

I. Committee Meetings: I am satisfied that several major administrative committees have finally started to pay attention to graduate needs. The EPSC has led the charge with its paper on 'Embedding Graduate Studies' and the Student Funding and Access Office has done similarly well with its paper 'Proposals on Funding for Graduate Students.' The EPSC Graduate Skills Group is focusing on improving transferable skills in graduates as needed for securing future employment in and beyond academia. The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, in tandem with the Oxford Learning Institute, is working to improve training for graduate students who teach. In general, the administration has basically acknowledged that graduates do not receive the same quality of education as undergraduates at Oxford (though they would never actually come out and use those words), and they are trying to do something about it. What is more, they are actually interested in soliciting student opinion on these matters and using them to inform new policy. The extreme enthusiasm of the Radcliffe Infirmary Planning Committee to have student opinion regarding the facilities that ought to be available on the new site is one excellent example of this general trend.

II. Business with the MCRs has been well attended this term. We have had two meetings of MCR PresCom, one at Jesus and one at New, which proved very useful and productive. A survey of MCR services is in the works, which really ought to help MCR Presidents in future projects.

III. Casework has been busy this term. While I obviously cannot go into specifics, I can say that general troubles have been with supervisors and departments, especially when students want or need to switch. Colleges have generally been supportive of graduates in these processes.

Helen Bagshaw

V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

Termly Council Report: Michaelmas Term 2006

For my termly report to Council, I'm going to be brave and lay out my job description with the ways in which I have, or intend to fulfil the points. Now I have an updated job description, this should be somewhat easier...

Access

1. To serve on all University committees and working parties having to do with access and admissions, providing a dedicated, full-time student voice on access issues.

4. To campaign for a fair and transparent admissions procedure and for changes to the applications and admissions process in line with OUSU policy

7. To monitor the success of the University's attempts to widen access, and to report regularly on the issue to Council.

This term I attended Admissions Executive in 0th week and 6th week. The second meeting was much more productive than the first, and there are a number of discussions being carried forward. One of the most promising was a debate about admissions for disabled students, and the colleges they are reallocated to if necessary. Committee members were keen to address the problems of

being reallocated to colleges that are not suitable for those students with physical disabilities, and I hope to update next term that a positive solution has been found to this problem.

AdEx also discussed the Admissions websites, both undergraduate and graduate, and it was agreed that neither are as useful as they could be. My offer to recruit student volunteers to look at sections of the website, and give constructive but honest criticism, was gladly accepted so if anyone has any comment to make or would like to get involved with this, let me know.

2. To liaise and act as the student point of contact with all University officers who have responsibilities for access and admissions.

Like all VP (AccAcAff)'s before me, I have found it is increasingly difficult to balance the two sides of my job, and we all end up being essentially a VP (Education) that gets to concentrate a small amount of time on access as an aside. I hope to do much more next term, but I am holding a meeting of Admissions Reps this week to talk about the interview process and how student helpers are involved, which I hope will be useful. Over Christmas, I intend to fulfill my manifesto promise of writing a guide for JCR Admissions Reps, to include information about requesting more student representation within college access work and a guide to producing an Alternative Prospectus.

3. To sit on the Publications Board for the Alternative Prospectus and any other OUSU publication that aims to widen participation in Higher Education, having responsibility for the overall content of the particular publication.

Trinity Term will involve a lot of work preparing for the Alternative Prospectus to be redone over the course of the summer vacation, but at the moment the University itself is producing a Widening Participation Prospectus, in which OUSU has two dedicated pages. I wrote the blurb for Target Schools and the mentoring scheme this week, and the prospectus should be ready by February 2007.

5. To supervise and support the work of students appointed by OUSU to administer the 'Target Schools' scheme, and to edit and oversee the production of any publications for the scheme.

Again, **targetschools** is something that I would have loved to have spent more time on this term, and I apologise profusely to my co-chairs for being a bit rubbish in communicating with them! On the whole, the scheme is now looking very positive; a complete turnaround from the end of the summer vacation.

Following a couple of meetings with the new Head of Student Funding and Access within the University, the funding situation for this year had definitely been resolved; we have enough money for our events this year, including the Women's Open Day. At the moment, one of the problems with funding is that we have to justify the scheme year on year and there is nothing secured. However, with some negotiation in the meetings I have attended we are on the brink of agreeing guaranteed funding for the 5yrs after my tenure, at a decent amount per year. If this goes ahead, it will be one of the most exciting things to happen to the scheme in a while, as it means that planning can start to be a bit more long term. More on this after Christmas.

In terms of our events, Northern Ireland conference planning is going ahead, and we will almost definitely be doing our fourth Regional Conference in Scotland. I attended a talk at St Anne's on Scottish Qualifications, which provided some necessary information for planning the conference there. Outside of that, I am impressed with the number of ideas my co-chairs have come up with in a short space of time, and we hope to be improving the Easter Visiting Scheme, instating a new

one-day Shadowing Scheme for prospective students in the local area, and setting up a system of targetschools Reps within Colleges. If anyone would like any information on the scheme, or how to get involved with our events, please get in contact with me on access@ousu.org

6. To assist with the running of and promotion of mentoring projects in Oxford and in the nation as a whole, designed to raise aspirations of potential applicants to higher education.

The OUSU Mentoring Scheme has been running properly since last year, but it a somewhat autonomous project. I hope to have a meeting with the current coordinator next term to discuss how we can be more integrated, at least in terms of providing support.

Academic Affairs

1. To represent OUSU to the University on its main committees, including University Council and Educational Policy and Standards Committee, as laid out in Schedule 1 of the Standing Orders.

2. To oversee and co-ordinate the representation of the members of OUSU to the University on its committees and panels.

Currently the list of committees I sit on that relate to the Academic Affairs side of my job is as follows: University Council, Educational Policy and Standards Committee (EPSC), EPSC Undergraduate Panel, Curators of University Libraries, Committee for the Language Centre, Information and Communication Technology Committee, Senior Tutors' Committee and Joint Committee of Council with Student Members. I hope that this list will soon officially include the Student Administration Management Group, after negotiation with the Academic Registrar.

Going to meetings of these committees takes up a large amount of my time, but is one of the most worthwhile parts of the job. Many of the members of these committees are not anti-student, but seem to genuinely not have thought about the repercussions of their decisions on the students of the University. As such, our viewpoints have often been well accepted and much appreciated. Most of the issues that we have discussed have been related in my previous reports, so I refer you to those.

I also attended Congregation for the first round of the governance proposal discussion, and will be back there next Tuesday for the final (hopefully!) debate.

3. To provide support, training, and up-to-date information for other student representatives to the university, whether OUSU representatives, representatives to JCCs or Divisional Boards, or student representatives within constituent organisations.

5. To provide support, information and training for common room academic affairs officers.

A lot of my time this term has been spent keeping my head above water in terms of committees and casework, so this is one which has temporarily fallen by the wayside. In terms of Academic Affairs Officers, the publications we used to produce to help with the role will be reinstated over the Christmas vacation, in time for a number of new officers. Likewise, the JCC and DB Reps guides will be redone, and around two or three days of my holidays dedicated to finding out who the reps are on Faculty Boards, which is a (maybe not) surprisingly difficult process. It took an entire day of internet searching to find an administrative contact within each department that runs an undergraduate degree course...

4. To be a member of the Student Advice Service, providing information and advocacy to any student on any academic matter.

The Student Advice Service has been fairly swamped this term, I think it is fair to say. Casework has been the most difficult thing to get to grips with in this job, and I still find it hard. Yet another

bit of my holidays will be dedicated to going through all of the College Handbooks and Regulations, alongside the University Statutes and Regulations, to produce a number of guide sheets for how to deal with specific academic issues and appeals within the various sections of the Collegiate University. This will hopefully help me for the remainder of my tenure, and James as my successor by ensuring that we can have a good casework handover.

There are a number of policies that need to be written for the SAS, along with creating a basic constitution and making contacts within the University and outside to facilitate better handling of individual cases. Coming to you as soon as we get chance to sit down as a group!

6. To take responsibility for leading campaign work on issues such as study skills, libraries and facilities, appeals structures, examinations and marking schemes, potential changes to the tutorial system and graduate teaching and support.

7. To take responsibility for the OUSU Writing Workshop and oversee OUSU's study skills support.

Study Skills

The Learning Development Advisor position within the Learning Institute has been advertised, so Andrea and I will be taking part in the interviews for that position. This will be a great step forward in terms of campaigning for study skills provision within the University, and our discussions in many other meetings keep centring squarely on this as a major issue. A meeting we had with the Humanities Library Planning Group even culminated in the idea of using the Rad Cam as a central resource for essay writing, lectures and examination papers and reports. We'll see how far this idea gets...! I also have a meeting organised with the User Education Coordinator within the Library Services for next Tuesday, to discuss the LS's education provision and how we can work together – more on this next term.

Libraries

A big area of work in terms of the Academic Affairs portfolio, and one which seems to be going relatively successfully at the moment thanks to some wonderful members of the Library Services administration. I have been at meetings to discuss the standardisation of OULS Library opening hours, and the fines that they give out (which resulted in tutors being given the same fines for not returning books – hurrah!). We were invited to a meeting of the Humanities Library Planning Group, taking along the library survey done in TT 2005. Following this very productive meeting, Andrea and I will be working on a new survey with Judith Finch, the Project Manager for the Humanities Library, and Elizabeth Fallaize, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education); this should centre a lot around working space, opening hours and facilities within libraries and will hopefully be rolled out in Hilary Term.

Examinations and Assessment

A report is currently underway into the Collegiate University's provisions in terms of Examinations and Assessment, which I will be discussing at a meeting with the report's writer next week. The preliminary work looks positive, and several improvements have already been made; these include making sure students get their exam timetables at least 5wks before their finals/mods, which I can personally back as a great improvement (I got my exam timetable 5 days before my finals...).

Gender Gap

A study done into the finals gap is now at the analysis stage, so hopefully we should soon have some more information with which to work on a problem that the University is taking immensely positive steps to combat, especially within the English department.

Rustication and University Welfare Provision

The last free part of my vacation (!) will be reserved for research into the status of students and their access to facilities during rustication, and the provisions for welfare within the University. I am hoping to write a report in the Hilary Vacation following lots of research next term, so if anyone is interested in getting involved with this work or indeed has any comment on the current systems and provisions, get in touch.

Finally...

Congratulations to all the new sabs-elect; you all fought good campaigns, and I look forward to working with you during handover. Now (with my Academic Affairs hat on) go and do some finals work and don't get too involved in OUSU; this is from someone who should have taken this advice and gone on to get a better degree!

Imran Khan

V-P (Charities and Community)

Dear Council,

Sorry this is so short again, I'm having to write this very, very quickly!

RAG:

I can't mention how RAG has gone this term without stopping to thank the new RAG exec for the oodles of work they've put into making things a success, and still enjoying it when things haven't gone quite as planned! We've had bungee jumps, street collections, poetry slams, speed dating, film nights, bar crawls, club nights, Rhythms of Dance, with more still to come this term – including Wear it Pink this Saturday! So thankyou to Una, Chris, Rosie and Rosie, Danielle, Catriona, Pippa, Juliette and Alex, you're all absolute saints. We'll be back in Hilary with an even better lineup... As well as all that, the new website still looks brilliant, the RAG offices in OUSU have been completely revamped from last year, Ernst & Young have been very kind in sponsoring some of publicity, the Everest Expedition is starting to roll, and a glitzy Fashion Show is already in the works...

Community:

The new community committee is still finding its feet, but already finding opportunities for students to engage in the local community. We've worked with the Oxford Muse, Science Oxford, Oxford Philomusica, Make a Difference, the OxDox Film Festival, the North Oxford Association and Helen & Douglas House to place volunteers already, and we're looking to work further with the Oxford Advocacy Development Group, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Blackbird Leys Neighbourhood Support Scheme, and the Northmoor Trust.

Environment and Ethics:

As ever, the Co-Chairs of this committee are completely indispensable. Niel, Hector, Sam and Rich's hard work means that I have to do relatively little to support them besides helping out with their integration with OUSU. They've been moving ahead with supporting college E&E reps and continuing to help coordinate the national Contraction & Convergence in campaign, are grateful to Council for passing the C&C motion.

Alternative Careers:

This is one area where I must admit to Council that I haven't been able to spend as much time as I'd like on, but the Careers Service are being enormously helpful. The Future Outlook committee are also being inspirational in helping to find interesting and relevant speakers for the Fair.

OUSU et al.:

If anybody wants to know, as well as my specific portfolio work listed above, I also sit on the following bodies/committees/etc;OSSL board, Oxford Inspires Liaison Group, JCC, Clubs Committee... and I would sit on Environment Panel if it actually met!

Dave Green

Exec

This is both my first and last report to OUSU council. Thanks, therefore, for electing me: it's been a whole lot of fun. Of late I have been helping someone I know to secure a low paying administrative job; however, I have been keeping up with my exec duties. I have attended exec, council and OSSL board, holding OUSU officers to account and contributing to decision making.

I have assisted Alan with the Oxford Student Scholarship. It looks likely that we will be awarding two (or possibly more) students from the developing world the opportunity to fund a degree at Oxford from the coming academic year, an improvement on last year. We waded through over 70 application forms and applied the criteria for acceptance assiduously. I hope that my successor in this portfolio enjoys this opportunity as much as I did. I also hope that they act on the many good ideas about how to improve the administration of the scheme - in particular, transferring the administration to a charitable trust and collecting small contributions towards the cost from many colleges and JCRs simultaneously, and rotating the residence of the scholars around participating colleges.

I would like to thank a few people for making my time on OUSU exec. Alan - I was on your slate, and have never regretted it. Helen - OUSU's institutional memory! I don't know what the place would do without you. Imran - a breath of relative normality in the whole crazy place. Jamie - wisdom and humour in equal measure. Very useful. Jenny - I never want to hear about moon cups again, but thanks for livening things up. Andrea - don't worry, it's all just banter. Ed - "and the winner is...". Tom - what can I say? Legend. I don't know how you keep on doing it and staying so cheery, but somehow you do. Best of luck to you all for the coming 2 terms with the new exec (many of whom I landed on you). To the new exec - Don't worry if you don't know what's going on. I never really did.

Iain Simpson

Exec

This term I have minuted meetings of the executive committee and Student (née OUSU) Council. I have assisted the Vice-President Welfare with his portfolio work, including helping sub-edit the 2007 Welfare Guide. During freshers' week I helped out at Zoo nights. This term I've also done the usual share of photocopying and other similarly enthralling office tasks. I plied candidates and myself with spirits during the count. I have observed the consequences of the Simpson-Russell 2006 electoral reform.

Oxford is, as is frequently pointed out, a collegiate university. But it is also the case that almost all common rooms experience similar problems, and issues such as library provision, the student contract and admissions reform require clear and persuasive central student representation. The last few years have seen increasing understanding amongst the student body of the vital role a central student union does and can do in promoting and defending the interests of all students. Likewise within OUSU there has been increased importance attached to common room outreach. I am sure that this and next year's sabbatical teams continue this trend.

This is my last report to Council, after spending two years on the part-time executive the task of rescuing my degree is looming. Thanks are owed to huge numbers of people, many of whom have now left Oxford. In vaguely chronological order. Helen Bagshaw has managed to survive working alongside me for two years, and hence deserves some sort of civilian medal. John, Nicky, Linsey,

Bex, Lorna, Matt etc. nearly all have proper jobs now, but were great fun whilst they were here. The same goes for Chris, Rob, Ollie, Ellie, Aidan, Emma and Charlyne. Rich Hardiman spent an entire summer in publications room with me and lived to tell the tale. Best of luck to this year's team, who have so far set a record for reaching 7th week whilst avoiding a crisis. Hels, Jenny, Jamie, Ed, Alan, Andrea and Imran – enjoy the rest of the year. Likewise next year's team, especially Rich and Martin, have fun. There are many more people I should thank, but there simply isn't space. Lastly, thanks to Maria and the rest of the office staff, without whose hard work and surplus of common sense nothing would ever get done.

Environment & Ethics Committee

Over summer, OUSU Environment Committee (EnviroComm) and OUSU Ethics Committee merged to Create OUSU Environment and Ethics Committee (E&E Committee). Richard Ollerhead, a co-chair from Ethics Committee, and Niel Bowerman from EnviroComm, and joined two new co-chairs, Hector Guinness, and Sam Baars to create a strong group to lead the committee. Each co-chair is responsible for one of four areas, namely national/international, local/university-wide, colleges, and ethics.

Our national/international campaign is on Contraction and Convergence: The global solution to climate change. It is an international cap-and-trade emissions framework, similar to that of the Kyoto Protocol, except that Contraction and Convergence (C&C) uses an atmospheric concentration stabilisation target (in ppmv) and emissions quotas are allocated equitably on a per capita basis, i.e. so that everyone in the world gets the same amount of carbon dioxide. Quotas can be traded on an international market, which encourages efficiency, and creates a multi-billion dollar market for investment in emissions-reduction technologies. The committee is co-ordinating the national campaign, with teams in London, Middlesbrough, St. Andrews, Birmingham and many other universities getting involved. Our campaign press team have been working wonders getting multiple radio interviews and press coverage. The whole team went down to London for the climate change rallies on 4th November, with a giant banner reading “Oxford University for Contraction and Convergence”. At the march we had a press photo session with several MPs that are supporting our campaign, the images of which are on media and campaign portals around UK.¹ We are submitting a motion to NUS Congregation, and our nine regional co-ordinators are contacting every university in the UK to raise awareness and support for C&C by getting motions passed. Our campaign website will shortly be online at www.candc.org.uk One member of E&E Committee joined members of the international C&C team at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change talks in Nairobi to promote C&C and act as an adviser for nations working to support the framework. We also had two members going to the launch of the Stern Report to ask Nicholas Stern, previous chief economist of the World Bank and government economic advisor to the UK, for his position on C&C. The campaign is growing rapidly with teams around the UK more people here in Oxford getting involved each week.

Our local/university team has been working largely on awareness raising here in Oxford. We are consistently getting articles published in the student press, with three pages and a half pages dedicated to E&E Committee and our campaigns in last week's Oxford Student. We published our annual OUSU Environmental Handbook over summer, which was distributed to 1000 interested students at freshers fair and beyond. The guide has received praise from several members of the university staff, and from several environmental groups in Oxfordshire. We also have a new website at <http://ousuenvironmentcommittee.googlepages.com/> which contains over

¹ <http://www.saocc.org.uk/>
http://www.icount.org.uk/get_involved/image_gallery/102.asp?galleryName=November_4th&page=2&iRows=4&imgsPerPage=16&language=¤tSection=1&pbStart=1&pbEnd=4

one hundred resources for College E&E reps and campaigners to use. The University team have also been promoting Forest Stewardship Council timber (sustainable timber), which is now being used in construction work throughout the university. The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) logo ensures that seafood is fished sustainably, and MSC seafood is currently being promoted to halls throughout the university. The team is also working with MPower Oxford to organise a huge climate change event early next term. The event is particularly targeting local residents, who we would like to 'MPower' to take action on climate change. We are working with local groups, businesses, university departments such as the Environmental Change Institute and Oxford City Council on this event.

The College group have been co-ordinating college E&E reps to create a strong university-wide team. They have been providing advise on everything from setting up recycling in college, to installing micro-generation facilities. A college league table has been drawn up to encourage inter-collegiate competition, and several colleges are currently racing to install solar panels. We are also working to get an effective environmental policy adopted in every college.

The ethics team have been working on the Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) campaign. The SRI motion passed in university council and there is now a university ethical investment committee, which is chaired by the Provost of Oriel College and includes the OUSU president. Oxford University will soon be adopting an ethical investment policy.

With people becoming more aware of the impacts of their actions on others, and with Government scientists calling climate change "the most pressing issue of the 21st century", it is an exciting time to be involved in ethical and environmental campaigning. OUSU Environment and Ethics Committee has been moving from strength to strength and our campaigns are rapidly gaining local and even national recognition.

RAG

Since the new exec formed in 3rd week a range of events and raids have been organised and put on by RAG. This has included included a poetry slam, two themed pub crawls, speed dating for the jcr and mcr, film nights, a dance night and the selling of poppies and breast cancer awareness badges. These were co-ordinated through weekly Monday meetings with the rag reps and Thursday meetings with the exec. Each member of the exec has taken responsibility for an event and built a team from other exec members or reps to help them.

The Monday meetings with college reps have allowed us to co-ordinate and encourage RAG fundraising on the college level. Many colleges have taken individual initiatives to fundraise, such as Univ where a 24-hour bounce-a-thon in the quad raised hundreds for Brest Cancer Week. Other college events have included and a number of themed halls and slave or promise auctions. To maintain such fundraising we have created a competition between colleges to see which one can raise the most by the end of the year.

We are currently putting effort into planning future activities and events to ensure next term is even more successful. Highlights include a Battle of the Bands, Valentines roses, haircuts and a skydive and hitch towards the end of term. The vote for which charities will receive RAG donations from these events took place in 7th week. The following charities were successful; Alliance DARC, Ataxia- Telangiectasia Society, ROOF, Jubilee and the Oxford Poverty action trust. These are all great causes and we look forward to supporting their work.