

# OUSU

## reports to council

7<sup>th</sup> week michaelmas term 2010

**David Barclay**

**President**

### **David's Termly Report to Council**

This term has been an incredibly busy and productive one for the Student Union, amidst some of the most difficult conditions for Student Unions and Universities in many decades. My work this term can be fairly well split between student fees and funding, representing students to the University and organisational leadership.

### **Student Fees and Funding**

The Browne Review and Comprehensive Spending Review will both have a profound effect on the student experience in Oxford over the coming years. OUSU's response to the issue of University funding and student fees was at first directed by our policy in support of Graduate Tax, and then by the Council discussions in 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> week. We have achieved a number of things on this crucial issue, including:

- Becoming the most vocal Student Union in the country behind the NUS in the national media.
- Lobbying Nicola Blackwood and Andrew Smith MPs, ensuring that students' views were understood by their representatives.
- Mobilising over 400 students to attend the National Demonstration in London.
- Supporting the Oxford Education Campaign in its activities, most notably in the protest against Vince Cable's cancellation.

So much work remains to be done on this issue. Until the vote in Parliament we will be lobbying Nicola and Andrew, as well as continuing to make our points to the press and joining in the wider Student Movement's activities. After that vote we will shift our focus to the regulation around Universities which will be contained in the White Paper, as well as focusing on how best to maximise our access work under any scheme decided on by Parliament. We will also be closely involved in the University's decisions on fee levels and bursaries.

### **Representing Students to the University**

OUSU continues to have a very productive relationship with the University, building on their commitments last year to OUSU's independence and funding. This relationship allows us to make a significant impact on a range of decisions affecting students. Successes of this term that I have been involved in have included:

- A real impact on the University's thinking on A stars.
- Proposals to integrate the work of OUSU with the Careers Service.
- Water in exams!
- Movement on Prelims feedback.
- Significant support for increased job opportunities for students and increased summer research opportunities for undergraduates.
- Serious concessions on the continuation charge for postgraduates.

### **Organisational Leadership**

Leadership of the organisation is a huge part of the role of OUSU President, and became even more so with the departure of our General Manager soon after I took office. In this area we have taken significant strides which will allow the Student Union to develop and flourish in the medium to long term. They have included:

- The conclusion of the process of establishing OUSU as an independent company, including the signing of the Operating Agreement with the University.
- The appointment of a Chief Executive to lead the permanent staff team and have responsibility for the budget and the strategic direction of the organisation.
- The establishment of a Trustee Board.
- Significant discussion on the role of the OUSU Executive which will feed into the handover process over the holidays.
- Input into a proposed plan to allow OUSU to move building.

## Conclusion

I have done many other things already during my time so far as OUSU President, including running training sessions for Common Room Presidents, playing an active role in JCR and MCR Prescom, establishing a relationship with a huge number of student leaders across a range of fields, setting up a mechanism to launch a discount card and a housing fair and much more besides.

Overall it has been an extraordinarily bust term and a steep learning curve for myself and everyone at OUSU. I believe the story has been one of great progress and forward movement amidst a hugely uncertain and difficult landscape, but I am keenly aware that the story of this year's sabbatical team has just begun and I look forward to completing the many projects which have been started since I took office in the summer.

<b>Katharine Terrell (Women)</b>	<b>V-P</b>
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This term I have worked on the following:

### Harassment

Worked on University harassment procedures with the Student Advisor, PVC (Personnel and Equality), Director of Student Administration and Services, Head of the Equality and Diversity Unit and Harassment Advisor Network Coordinator.

RESULT: the University has agreed to take expert advice on their harassment procedures, find best practise from other universities and to set up a group to improve harassment procedures.

Organised a workshop for college staff on awareness of relationship abuse.

RESULT: great response from colleges, workshop to take place this week.

### Student parents

Worked with the Childcare Steering Group to improve students' access to affordable childcare in the University.

RESULT: process is underway to make student parents a priority on the waiting list for nursery places and more money is going into creating more nursery places.

Worked with Childcare Coordinator to get "Tea and Toys" off the ground.

Pushing for paper on student maternity, paternity and adoption leave (started before I was in office) to remain on the University's agenda.

### Student Advice Service

Have had a handful of information requests, many focusing on students with children. Also a couple of larger cases that are still ongoing.

### "Town" feminism

Heavily involved in Reclaim the Night, which had its biggest turnout yet. Also smaller involvement in Oxford International Women's Festival.

## **Springboard**

Lobbied colleges for support of the Springboard for Undergraduates personal and professional development scheme and organised dates, venue, trainers etc.

RESULT – 21 colleges signed up, so 42 students can participate.

## **Non-portfolio**

In charge of letter writing campaign.

RESULT – a few people have come into the OUSU offices to write to their MPs but many more have emailed me to ask how to do a similar event in their CR.

## **Open Days**

Have spoken to colleges and started planning with Alex.

## **Gender Equality Festival**

Co-ran women's public speaking/husting workshop.

RESULT: great turnout and positive feedback.

<b>Beth Evans (Graduates)</b>	<b>V-P</b>
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## **Termly report to council – Beth Evans, VP-Graduates**

### **The VP-Graduates sits on the following committees:**

University Council  
Education Committee  
Fees Policy Group  
Research Committee  
Graduate Prospectus Advisory Group  
Curators of the University Libraries  
Gender Equality Steering Group  
Graduate Admissions Committee  
GSAPG (Graduate Studies Admin & Procedures Group)  
OUSU Executive Committee  
HE Campaigns Committee  
MCR Presidents Committee

Together with weekly Sabbatical officer meetings, Student Advice Service debriefs, Oxford Education campaign meetings, termly meetings with proctors - this term, and over the summer, I have spent over 175 hours in meetings.

The VP-Graduates' work as part of the Student Advice Service can also take up a lot of working hours. Casework can include face-to-face meetings, drop-ins and extended phone conversations in the case of International students living outside of Oxford.

Further work for the Student Advice Service this term included meeting with the Junior Proctor to discuss appeals procedures for students and carrying out research on Council Tax liability for graduate students.

Part of the VP-Graduates' remit is to liaise with MCRs. I have contacted all MCR presidents to request meetings, visited many common rooms to give presentations on the work OUSU does for Graduates and attended the Committee of MCR Presidents.

## **Events:**

UAS Conference - Presented to University staff on OUSU and the work we do at the University Administration Service conference.

University open day at Exam Schools – worked on the OUSU stall.

Freshers Fair was hugely successful – thanks to everyone who made it possible. A lot of hard work was put in over the three days and months beforehand in preparation. Met with heads of divisions

National Demonstration – we organised coaches from Oxford to London and back on the day.

NUS Road to the National Demonstration  
NUS 'Understanding Liberation'

### **Training received:**

- OLI – team management profile exercise run by the Oxford Learning Institute.
- Safety bus training
- NUS LGBT training – campaigning, running workshops
- NUS- in-house training
- Listening training

### **Other projects:**

Successful 'Drop-ins' at Exam Schools run by OUSU and Student Information. These were targeted at early arriving graduates (e.g. PGCE or medical students, International students) to help them settle in. Another event was held for mature students.

Delivered Orientation Presentations to PGCE students, and also to both graduate and undergraduate international students over three separate sessions – one to around 500 students.

Working with the Ox Grad Housing project to improve provision for graduates seeking accommodation.

Took part in the Humanities Divisional Review.

Discussions with the EDU over equality issues.

Discussions with careers service over provisions for mature students.

<b>Tom Perry Opportunities)</b>
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<b>V-P (Welfare &amp; Equal</b>
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Hello Council,

It's been quite a term for OUSU and the wider student movement. The big stories are obviously the Browne Review, HE Spending cuts and the National demo (which was attended by over 400 Oxford Students), but OUSU has also continued with other areas of work. Here is a round up of the work this term, including updates from the last two weeks:

### **Student Advice Service:**

- The Student Advice Service has now helped over 200 students this year, with around 80 of these being fully-fledged 'casework'.
- On Thursday we are holding a training session for Harassment Advisors and other College staff on Sexual Abuse and Stalking. Credit goes to Katharine for making this happen.

- I've given talks at the Career's Service, Counselling Service, Peer Support Conference and St Anne's Welfare Committee on the Student Advice Service to raise awareness.
- We have continued to work on the University's Harassment procedures and policies. Again, a big thanks to Katharine and Lisa (our student advisor) for pushing the issue with the University.

### **Common Room Support**

- I've met with over 25 Common Room Officers individually to discuss their plans for the year and how OUSU can assist them
- I've held two Welfare Committee meetings, both with around 20 attendees, and a third will be happening in 8<sup>th</sup> week. These give Common Room Officers a chance to find out what OUSU's been up to, and share ideas and best practices with their colleagues. They also featured a talk on Eating Disorders and Emergency Procedures in Oxford.
- I've also held two Equal Opportunities Committee meetings. These have the same aims as the Welfare meetings, and they featured talks on Trans students and Disability provision.
- I ran training on Freshers' Week, Student Support and (with Alex) Advocacy. The latter two will be repeated at the beginning of next term, so please get in touch if you would like to take part.

### **Portfolio Work**

- Work has continued on 'Say What You Want' (Chinese Nightline). A pilot will hopefully be up and running by Trinity Term.
- The 'Fitness to Study' has been making it's way through committees, and will continue to in Hilary term, ready for implementation in the next academic year.
- A lot of work has been done on the proposed Anonymous Incident Reporting System, which will be going to a University working group in December.
- Disability Awareness Week was a success and it's hoped that it will be run again next year.
- LGBTQ Campaign ran a Blood Donation Ban Protest and work has started on Queer History Month. If you want to get involved let me know!
- As I mentioned in a previous report the 'Settling In Scheme' was a big success and will be repeated next year.
- Work on 'Well Being Week' is starting to ramp up. If you want to get involved (both with organising and helping during the week) let me know!
- Focus groups with disabled students were held last term, and they were accompanied by a questionnaire this term. The results should be available in the New Year, when work will start to address the issues raised.

### **Non-portfolio Work**

- New website: most of the sabbatical and staff team have been involved in this but a lot of the credit should go to Alex. It will hopefully go live some point next year.
- OUSU Elections: well done to all those involved in the elections. As a member of Elections Committee some time in 6<sup>th</sup> week is dedicated to this.
- HE Funding: This has obviously taken up the time of everyone at OUSU, both sabbaticals and staff. Thanks to everyone who came to the National Demo, it was great to see so many Oxford students there!

**Alex Bulfin**  
**Affairs)**

**V-P (Access & Academic**

### **Termly Report: Alex Bulfin, VP (Access & Academic Affairs)**

It's been an exhausting but really rewarding term (and it's not over yet!) Progress has been made on a lot of fronts, and a brief snapshot of what I've been up to is below, but there is still plenty more to do and the Christmas period is going to be an exciting period for setting things up for the rest of the year. Thanks to all the common room officers, divisional and faculty board representatives and particularly outgoing Exec members who've put in so much this term to make it a success. Enjoy the vac!

## **HE funding**

Issues surrounding higher education funding and cuts to teaching grants have dominated this term. We achieved a great turnout to the NUS National Demonstration (over 400 students) and the sabbatical team has attended numerous common room meetings and events across the term to promote and discuss this issue. Along with other sabbaticals I have been involved with several meetings with University officers where we have been trying to make sure we are as informed as possible as to the government's current plans and also to raise our particular concerns for Oxford with the University. Recently I have been added to a new access working group which has been convened particularly to look at Oxford's outreach activities and how they might need to change if the government's current proposals are brought and funding is tied to meeting access requirements.

## **A-Stars**

The other significant campaign that has been run this term concerned Oxford's proposed adoption of A\*AA at A-level as the standard offer for next year's admissions round. Our analysis of this year's admissions data highlighted that the introduction of the A\* would disproportionately affect comprehensive and FE students, and that there was insufficient data regardless to make this important decision. Despite the speed at which this proposal was brought (catching everyone off guard including most of the University), OUSU Council reacted quickly giving us a mandate to lead the lobby against this change. Sabbatical officers, divisional board representatives and common room officers have been outstanding in lobbying University officers, departments and colleges to oppose this move. Last week the proposals to make A\*AA the standard offer were withdrawn, although new proposals have been brought which would likely see the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences division use the A\*, but no-one else. There is still a further round of lobbying to be done on this issue when it goes to University Council in 9<sup>th</sup> week. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has worked hard on this campaign; it has really highlighted for me how effective joined up, strategic lobbying can be and this is a real strength of the link between OUSU and common rooms.

## **Committee Representation**

This term I have represented Oxford students on a number of committees and forums including, but not limited to: University Council, Education Committee, Planning and Resource Allocation Committee, Undergraduate Panel, Curators of the Bodleian Libraries, Gender Panel and Admissions Executive. We have also now gained membership of the colleges' Admissions Committee as well as new working groups looking at Access, Visiting Students, Prelim Resits and International Student Admissions.

## **Teaching Review**

OUSU's Review of Teaching (conducted TT10) is still circulating the University and has been the subject of much discussion. The University's own review of teaching looks set to report next term. In the interim I have attended discussions at four departmental committees to discuss the teaching review and its recommendations with students and staff. This is likely to become a focus for next term as the University study reaches its conclusion.

## **Common Room Support**

This term I have met with a number of JCR access and academic affairs officers and my aim is to meet with everyone by the start of next term (apologies to those I have not been able to meet thus far). Together with the VP (Welfare and Equal Opportunities) I have run advocacy training for common room representatives to help prepare them for advocating for students in disciplinary processes; this training will be run again next term. I am also in the process of planning training in conducting focus groups and feedback sessions to be run at the start of next term. Finally, there have been meetings of access officers and academic affairs officers throughout the term. Among other things we have discussed bursaries, prospectuses and the HE funding and A\*s campaigns.

## **Website**

This year we are aiming to get OUSU's website redeveloped to make a useful tool for OUSU. I have been exploring the options open to OUSU and liaising/negotiating with potential suppliers, as well as working with the Exec to establish what we want from the new site. We are now at the stage where a preferred provider has been identified and we are currently putting in place a business plan to ensure that the site can be self-funding in the future.

## **Student Advice Service**

So far this year I have taken on or been involved with 25 full cases for the Student Advice Service, lasting anywhere between a few weeks and 6 months as well as those continued from last year. I have also handled approximately 50 requests for information on a range of areas from exam queries to admissions and changing college.

## **Target Schools**

The restructure of Target Schools is nearing its completion and from next term we will not only be able to communicate more efficiently with our own volunteers but will be able to link up with colleges, the University and other organisations to greatly enhance Oxford's overall outreach work. Target Schools also set itself a new record last year, clocking up more outreach events than all but 6 colleges and 3 departments. I'd like to also recognise the incredible work of the Target Schools committee this term, many of whom are finishing this term. The work they have put in on a range of fronts, particularly in boosting our recruitment at Freshers' Fair and revamping training sessions, has been phenomenal and has made my life much easier. There are lots of exciting potential plans in the pipeline next year, including more links with external organisations and exploring the possibility of e-mentoring, so 2011 promises to be a really exciting year for Target Schools.

## **Humanities Divisional Review**

For the first time this year OUSU was involved with a divisional review. I drafted OUSU's written response to the review, using feedback from divisional and departmental representatives, as well as making an oral submission to the review panel along with the VP (Graduates).

## **OUSU Governance**

Last year saw a huge number of changes to OUSU's governance structures and I have spent a lot of time this term tying up loose ends and addressing issues that have emerged. Pending the ratification of our external trustees by council, we will have completed charity registration and the changes to OUSU's legal status will be concluded. The process of registering with the charity commission has thrown up a number of other issues that have needed to be addressed along the way, mainly ensuring legal compliance for the organisation, and I have been working to solve some of these issues and will continue to do so over the coming weeks.

## **OSSL**

I have also served as a director of Oxford Student Services Limited (OSSL) this term, which is OUSU's business subsidiary which allows us to engage in commercial activity and transfer the profits to the student union. Recently I have been working with other directors to explore whether OUSU/OSSL might be able to secure a better deal for clubs and societies on stash (hooded jumpers, t-shirts etc) and some of my work on the new website has also fallen under OSSL's remit.

## **Snapshot next term:**

On top of the projects above, many of which will be running into next term such as Target Schools, the website redevelopment, teaching review and increasing common room support, together with members of the executive I am working towards implementing a study on peer feedback to see if aids students' understanding of marking criteria. A lot of work is needed to get this project in place ready for next term and is going to be a priority in coming weeks. Another continuing priority will be the fallout from the higher education funding debate. Whatever the outcome, it is likely that there will be significant work for OUSU to do both lobbying and liaising with the University and the government to make sure that the interests of Oxford students (current and prospective) are protected and taken seriously.

<b>Daniel Lowe Community)</b>	<b>V-P (Charities &amp;</b>
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**Termly Report to Council – Daniel Lowe, VP (C&C)**

Wow, that went quickly, but then again it still seems like a long way to go 'til the end of term and even longer to the point where I get any holiday. So, below is a report of what I did this term, as ever any questions, get in touch with me: [charities@ousu.org](mailto:charities@ousu.org). But first, a little nostalgia.

I would like to thank the part time exec for all their hard work: Ben and Gen, my part time exec in particular. It's been really great to work with you over this period and I'm proud to have had you on my team. Ian and Jack need particular mention as the hardest working exec members I've seen in a very long time. Without your tireless work, scrutiny and joy, we'd all be in a much worse off place. I think Ian has proofread hundreds of words for us, kept the grads on side when we had the most belligerent MCR presidents in history baying for our blood and provided some very useful medical advice (though of course, without liability). Jack has redefined Common Room Support and will be remembered for such moments as 'anyone else met with the European head of a multi national bank? No? Just Jack then...' (Baskerville, 2010) and the introduction of the word 'SOUND!' to exec. Lastly, Mr Joseph Wales, Internal Affairs, Scrutiny and Steering Committees, OUSUDRO and OSUROCOG in his time. Joe has injected banter into constitutional gimpery, run the smoothest election since before the 'ink in the ballot box' incident and kept us sane and on course this term. He now moves into the retirement of finals and is refusing to run for VP Grads.

End sentimentality

## **Environment and Ethics**

Committees Attended: (as of Monday 7<sup>th</sup>) (or not) – Sustainability Steering Group (1), Environment Panel (1, 1 apology), SRI Committee (1 apology), Oxford Fairtrade Coalition (1), E&E Committee (6), E&E Exec (6)

With the E&E committee we have instigated a number of reforms to our campaigning structure to provide clear and time bound goals. We are working on improving biodiversity in the university, making colleges accept a minimum standard of recycling (cue awkward conversations with 39 bursars) and improving the university's code of practice for the clothes it produces with its branding.

The E&E committee will be bringing a paper to Oxford Limited's board meeting (the company that controls the IP of 'Oxford University' before Christmas).

This term it has become apparent that OUSU cannot achieve Fairtrade status as an independent company. Sad times. I did however write and pass a new, comprehensive Environment and Ethics policy, now enshrined in our governing documents.

## **Charities**

Committees Attended: RAG (6), RAG exec (6)

RAG wise I've worked very hard on building bridges with other RAGs, notably Brookes, Bath and Cambridge, all of whom have invited me to their events and I've attended (they were awesome). Despite some bad press I'm pleased to announce a total raise of over £29k at the time of writing – more than £1000 over what was raised in the entire 2008-9 year. The bungee jump alone raised £9k and the RAG ball sold out weeks in advance. Extra tickets had to be released and went like hotcakes. They say actions speak louder than words - how's that for confidence?

Beyond RAG Oxfam and Crisis have sought my input on their new projects – Oxfam has new and very fun sounding event called Ride n Seek – a pan European scavenger hunt and Crisis are redeveloping the OFS into an amazing community venue.

## **Community**

Committees Attended: NAGs (East Oxford; Jericho, Abingdon Road and West; City Centre; Sumeertown and North) (Lots), East Area Parliament (1), Central, South and West Area Committee (1). Council Scrutiny Committee (Community Partnerships) (1 apology) Safety Bus debriefs (2)

The Community side has been awesome. There are some very colourful and committed characters in this city and its been great hearing their views. I presented a paper on night safety, which has sparked county councillors to ask for more lighting and will be bringing a paper for better pedestrian crossing provision outside the New Bod/KA. I've fought hard to dispel the idea that all students are evil (somewhat difficult) and liaised with Thames Valley Police to ensure the safety of our students in the recent activities surrounding higher education funding. I have also been volunteering on the Safety Bus

## **Safety Bus**

By far the best part of my job! I've now driven more than 100 miles and spent nearly 2 days taking our students home at night. There has been a notable increase in the number of Oxford Students using the service thanks to a (small) publicity drive in Freshers' Week. A HUGE drive is starting in Hilary now that elections and appointments are out of the way. If you are 21 and have 2 years driving experience we desperately need more drivers (also looking for co-drivers aged over 18, no driving experience needed.) Email [community@ousu.org](mailto:community@ousu.org) to volunteer!

## **General**

OSSL Board, Appointments Board, Standing Committee, Exec, Council, Sab Team meetings, Elections Committee

The back room side of the job has been much larger than expected having had to do two appointments (the chief exec appointment took over two days out of my schedule for interviews). Things will die down a bit next term, but council, exec and sab meetings are fixed appointments. Thankfully council is now streamlined so its slightly less work than my predecessors had to bear (incidentally this is my 42<sup>nd</sup> Council). I was glad that the election was the cleanest its been for years and OSSL is doing well thanks to continuity of permanent staff and consistency of approach and professionalism within the board.

I haven't seen the scrutiny committee report, but all in all I'd say that's a good term!

## **PART TIME OFFICERS**

<b>Nathan Jones Officer</b>	<b>Access &amp; Admissions</b>
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### **Michaelmas Term 2010 - Termly Report Nathan Jones- Access & Admissions Officer**

I have spent the bulk of my term working on the Fred Walker Essay Prize- an annual essay prize for State school students in the North-West. I have held a series of meetings with Pembroke College, who will be taking on administrative responsibility for the scheme. I have assembled a Committee of tutors to set titles and mark the essays, and have liaised extensively with North-West LEAs and schools.

Essay titles will be set by a committee chaired by the OUSU Access & Admissions Officer and comprising tutorial representation from four Colleges. Tutors will mark essays and send them back to applicants with detailed feedback commentary. The Committee will further award three prizes; a £100 first-prize and two runner-up prizes of £50 each.

Demand for more concentrated work in this part of the country is intense. The North-West is drastically under-represented in applications. 31.2% of the 2009 applications came from the Greater London and South-East regions. Just over 6% came from the North-West, and this Prize is an ideal opportunity to remind potential applicants there that we are an actively-recruiting University.

It is immensely satisfying to have organised a project which will put OUSU-led access initiatives at the heart of regionalisation. If managed properly over the coming year, a challenge for future Access & Admissions Officers, the scheme has the potential to demonstrate the power of essay prizes and, more, sustained tutor engagement in increasing interaction between underrepresented communities and the University.

### **Thanks**

More widely, it has been an enormous privilege to serve the students of Oxford in this role over the past twelve months, and I'd like to wish my successor, Harriet Green, every success in taking it forward. This job has given me the opportunity to work with countless peers who share a humbling and inspiring commitment to making our University a more diverse and representative academic community. I have worked with students across the country, and am consistently impressed by the enormous power and potential for engagement between undergraduates and sixth-formers in tackling the myths that continue to undermine applications.

In Higher Education's current climate, it is more important than ever that OUSU continues to mobilise and support the thousands of access-focussed students across Oxford. Jonny Medland and Alex Bulfin have been fantastic in recognising this and driving forward student-led access initiatives. I wish Alex every success over the next year, and hope that Hannah approaches the job with the same determination. I wish the whole Sab team well for the rest of the Academic Year, as well as offering my sincere good wishes to Martha and her 2011-12 team.

<b>Hannah Cusworth Campaign Officer</b>
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<b>Academic</b>
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<b>Affairs</b>
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### **Termly Report**

**Hannah Cusworth Academic Affairs Campaign Officer**

Dear Council,

Since we last spoke I have mostly been thinking of next year. My successor, the incredible Simran Dhaliwal, has been elected and I trust that Academic Affairs campaign will go from strength to strength in her hands.

This term has been incredibly busy but the results haven't been as good as they could have been. In part that is my fault as I have had more work than ever and the election took over my life in from 4<sup>th</sup> week onwards. For the rest of the term I plan to write Simran a good handover document and tie up loose ends. The biggest rolling project that I've been working on Alex with this term is peer marking. We have a plan, we have a timetable (which has been pushed back slightly) and there is momentum that I'm sure will continue with Simran and Alex. The second rolling project is pushing forward with the Teaching Review- to a certain extent some of the conclusions are being moved forward with but not enough.

The biggest projects of my term were the Teaching Review consultation and report where around 400 students were asked about their teaching and those views were then represented to the highest university decision-making bodies. And *Back Yourself 2010* where around 500 students attended the mixed gender finals forum at the end of Hilary and beginning of Trinity and got support from academics from their departments on how to smash their finals. Next year I'm hoping that departments will take this on themselves.

This is sadly my last council as Academic Affairs Campaigns Officer, I have enjoyed the role immensely and look forward to handover to Simran and returning next year as VP Access and Academic Affairs.

Have a lovely vac and see you next year!

Hannah

<b>Yuan Yang Officer</b>
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<b>Women's</b>
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## Yuan Yang (Balliol) – Women's Campaign Officer 2010 – Annual Report to Council

Dear Council,

A feminist's work is never done. There are many things left to do, but we've nourished our campaigns with fresh ideas and energy for the past year; I look forward to the next year, when I will be back as your Vice-President (Women) in July 2011 :)

Here are the things I've done with the Women's Campaign, to give you a taste of what we're about:

- Founded a **new mixed-gender campaign**, the **Gender Progress Campaign**, to include people of all genders in the movement for equality. We've been meeting every week since Hilary term, and are developing a core group of chairs and organisers to carry the campaign on! I've been really happy with the development of GenCam.  
If you're interested: **Balliol College, 5.30pm, Fridays.**
- Hosted Zoe Margolis (author, *Girl With a One Track Mind*) to speak to over 60 students on **positive accounts of female sexuality** and better sexual education
- Scrutinised our **democratic leaders** in a Students' Question Time for Prospective Parliamentary Candidates before the May General Election
- Promoted **positive body image** with an overwhelmingly attended annual Love Your Body Garden Party (over 200 attending)
- Published the first **WomCam Zine**, with introductory articles and comics on feminism, to introduce the discussion of gender equality to a wider audience
- Had a great **recruitment drive** at Freshers' Fair, with a WomCam and GenCam stall together, bringing in over 200 new members – including 80 new men
- Campaigned against Thirst Lodge becoming a lap-dancing club, on the grounds that such clubs perpetuate negative attitudes to female sexuality, harbour workplace environments of sexual harassment, and make surrounding areas less safe at night. I freely admit this has been the most controversial campaigning decision we have taken this year, and we are currently reviewing *whether* and *how* we want to continue to work against the harms of lap-dancing clubs, given that the Women's Campaign has changed in makeup over the past year.
- Held a brilliant 3 weeks of the **Gender Equality Festival**, expanded from the single week of previous years; attracting students and local people to 18 different events on a huge spectrum of topics: from public speaking to campaigning workshops, to women and the cuts, gender inequality in China, gender progress in the media, fatherhood and family law, sexuality, queer theory, and more...expanding the circle of people interested in gender at Oxford, adding different angles to the movement for gender equality, and spreading our message far and wide!

I cannot emphasise how valuable I've found the opportunity to work with the Women's Campaign in the past year. It is a strong, energetic and inspiring group of women whose camaraderie makes for a brilliant working group. I've also been fortunate in finding a similarly dedicated group of people of all genders who come to the Gender Progress Campaign meetings. I hope you all carry your society-questioning, equality-championing, norm-breaking, rule-changing awesomeness on in whatever institutions you find yourselves in!

my very best wishes,

Yuan

"If you're having no projects, I feel bad for you, son/ I got 99 projects on the WomCamCom"

**Jack Matthews**  
**Officer**

**Common Room Support**

Dear Council

After two years of Common Room Support, my time on the OUSU Exec is finally coming to an end. And so follows my summing up;

First, I must express my thanks to Joel Mullan, ex Pres of SPC JCR, who gave me the confidence to run for the position to start with. HT09 was a bit of a jump into the deep end. OUSU was in the dark ages of the Iwu dynasty, when OSSL profits happened to match OUSU budget deficits, and consultation of the Exec was at an all time low. I must thank Rachel Cummings, Elena Lynch, Madeline Stanley, Portia Roelofs, Daniel Lowe and Ian Lyons for being the members of the Exec (+RO) who really made me feel part of the team, especially at a time when being an outspoken Conservative wouldn't make you that many political friends in OUSU. Luckily I can now say things have changed, and I would encourage all people, whatever your political background, to run for office.

A few Gaza motions later and the Baskerville era began. The difference that Dani, Eorann, Kat, Jonny, Sarah and Stefan have made to OUSU and the students at Oxford cannot be underestimated.

Though I have only worked with you for one term, I know the current sabs are going to do a great job. It has been a pleasure working with you, and I know you will go forward to achieve your goals because unlike any sab team before you, you work as a team.

To the OUSU Reps – You do more than anyone else to help OUSU in its uphill struggle against student apathy, and for that I am truly grateful. Please continue to do the great work you do, to engage and inform your students, and never be afraid to ask questions of OUSU when it isn't doing what you think it should be.

To the CR Presidents – I have had great fun working with you all, and just like OUSU, you do more work for the students of Oxford than is ever properly recognised. I wish you all the best, and request that for the sanity of all those on the prelists, that you use CRiS to gather your information!

To the Sabbaticals – You are a great team, and one that I am proud to have worked with. Please don't forget the rest of the Executive. Engage them and include them, and never forget to send your press quotes around Exec!

To Council - There is so much I could say about OUSU Council, but I will keep it down to one thing. Please scrutinise your elected officials. We may have a scrutiny committee, but this is no replacement for regular questions within Council to all the exec, keeping us to account and doing what you elected us to do.

I must thank all the staff at OUSU. You have made my work so much easier with the support you have provided and the friendly way in which you go about your job. OUSU is very lucky to have you.

I apologies for not having fulfilled all my pledges (CRiS isn't completely finished, and the SkyTV debate continues) but I am happy with my term of office. University life wouldn't have been the same without it.

I wish both Chris O'Connor as Common Room Support Officer, and Jacob Diggle as Clubs and Societies Support Officer all the very best in their new positions, and offer my support to them at any time.

As ever, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me,

Yours in soundness,

Jack Matthews

Common Room Support Officer

commonrooms@ousu.org

Dear Council,

The past year as your Environment and Ethics Officer has been a learning curve, albeit a very enjoyable one. The role comes with a number of in-built challenges, including the ongoing difficulty with contacting common room environment officers as they are elected throughout the year. I'm sure that my successor will be grateful for common room presidents' cooperation on this. As someone who entered the role with very little prior experience of OUSU, it also took longer than expected to get to grips with jargon, structures and practicalities of getting everyday things done.

These obstacles have meant that in many areas I've been unable to deliver all the things that I initially hoped to. In my central aim of making Environment & Ethics more open, inclusive and in touch with ordinary students though, I think we've come a long way. Working with a great E&E Committee Chair (and, it turns out, my successor) the numbers of people now active in OUSU E&E are the highest we've seen in a long time. The campaigns we're currently running on ethical stash, college recycling and biodiversity are more strategic and highly targeted, as well as catering to a broad range of interests and issue areas across the university. We've also worked hard to make the committee a more fun and sociable thing to be involved in- as you'll see if you come along to the launch of the first ever E&E Naked Calendar this Thursday evening\*! All in all, a good foundation has been created upon which to build in the year ahead.

Big thanks to Alastair Marsh, Lucy Arora, Lukas Walrich, Ella Goschalk, Roberta Iley, Emma Fay, Mae Penner and the rest of the E&E Committee for all the amazing work and passion they've put in and continue to give, along with Daniel Lowe for all the support and advice he's provided along the way. Best of luck to Alastair in the year ahead!

\*It's at 7pm this Thursday at Thirst Bar, would be great to see you all there

Hi council,

The Students with Disabilities Campaign held the university's first Disability Awareness Week in third week, which was a resounding success. The events included a coffee morning with the charity KEEN, a joint discussion group with the Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality, a disability drop in clinic with the careers service, a 'Don't Lose the Music' club night at Lava Ignite, a letter writing lunch with Amnesty and a talk on chronic illness. The Disability Advisory Service ran a series of lunchtime seminars during the week, which were also very well received. The publicity surrounding the events really helped raise the profile of the Students with Disabilities Campaign, and that has put us in a position to aim for even bigger and better things next year.

Next week is my last week in office, the end of a year that has been more exciting than I had ever imagined it could be. As a campaign we've increased the number of Students with Disabilities reps in colleges, both by creating the role on JCR and MCR execs and by expanding the portfolio of Equal Opportunities Officers. We have created two poster campaigns, one to raise awareness of invisible disabilities and one to inform students about the concessionary bus pass scheme – the latter of which seems to have been particularly successful. Over the year I have also changed the information that is available to freshers about disability provision, hopefully making it more comprehensive. Most importantly I have been slowly raising the profile of the Students with Disabilities Campaign, something which is ongoing but has been very rewarding.

I would like to thank all of the sabs and members of the part-time Exec for making this year so wonderful. In particular I would like to thank Tom Perry (and Dani Quinn, in absentia), without whom none of this would have happened. It's been a blast, guys!

**Matthew Tye – Black and Minority Ethnic Students and Anti-Racism Officer, Part-Time Exec**

**Terms of Office: May 2009 – December 2010**

**Report: November 2010**

This is my final report to Council as BME Students and Anti-Racism Officer. Firstly, I am disappointed that nobody chose to run for this position at the last OUSU elections but anticipate that this position will be filled in the near future. It is crucial that a successor take up this position as soon as possible. The representation of BME students is extremely important at any university, not least here in Oxford. This position greatly facilitates the representation and the interests of BME Students to OUSU and University.

#### URGENT CHALLENGES

- **HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING**  
The conference for the NUS Black Students' Campaign – an autonomous, self-organised section of NUS that represents more than one million students – will take place from 27-28 November at the University of London Union in central London. It is a seminal opportunity for BME students across Britain and Oxford delegates to organize and strategise the next steps in a national campaign against education budget cuts, higher fees and rising racism, just days after a large national protest in central London.
- **SUPPORT FOR BME / EQUALITY COMMON ROOM OFFICERS**  
We need to continue to develop and support common room officers with training and other opportunities to meet. The OUSU LGBTQT officer has achieved incredible success in developing such a network and this can be replicated with the BME/Equality reps.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

- **OXFORD UNIVERSITY – A FUTURE FAIR FOR ALL**  
Undergraduate and graduate BME Students from across the University took part in filming by a BME Media Crew from Ravensbourne Media College to share their views of student life at Oxford. William Hague MP contributed to the short film. Whilst the editing of the film has only recently been completed, as this was done on a pro-bono basis, the actual interviews took place earlier in early 2010, before a change of government and new higher education proposals. Mr Hague's comments can still be evaluated in the current climate and context.  
Copies of this DVD were produced to facilitate access work. It can also be seen at:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0rEBca4KQc>  
Particular thanks to Anne-Marie Imafidon (Trinity), Kulveer Singh (Exeter), Burcu Ozemir (GTC), Edison Huynh (Jesus) and Daniel Stone (St. Peter's).

#### COMMITTEES

- I served on the University Clubs Committee until the end of the 2009/10 academic year. There are still substantial grant funds available for clubs and societies and applications can be accessed through the Clubs Committee website. Loans are also available from the Committee and also require the completion and approval of an application form.

#### SCRUTINY

- The Scrutiny Committee fulfils an important role in holding Exec members to account in addition to other rules. I would like to see mechanisms in place whereby Scrutiny Committees recommendations

are implemented by OUSU. For example, I have previously raised the issue that Part-Time Exec members have no direct access to budgets. Autonomous campaigns have an allocation and although they work closely with the portfolio members on Exec, these allocations are limited (e.g. budgets must be carefully allocated for printing, conference expenses, etc). In addition, members of the Exec may have their own projects which require support. Whilst I am not advocating a universal allocation, I do think provision must be made for the projects led by Exec members where funds cannot be raised elsewhere by sponsorship, JCR/MCR's etc.

#### CRAE (CAMPAIGN FOR RACIAL AWARENESS AND EQUALITY)

- When I first took up post, CRAE was a largely stagnated campaign. However, due to some very committed members and two superb co-chairs, the campaign now has regular meetings, organised its very first conference, sends delegate to the NUS Black Students Conference annually and was represented at the recent NUS March against the Higher Education Proposals in London. For the first time, earlier this term a joint discussion group was held in Disability Awareness Week with another of OUSU's independent campaigns. In future, further cooperation and joint events need to be supported as these are extremely successful.

**Jasper Minton-Taylor**  
**Officer**

**LGBTQ**

This term was my last of office, and has largely been a continuation of previous ones, except now I have been working with a new exec and Tom Perry, VP for Welfare and Equal Opps, in particular. A meeting for LGBT(Q) Officers and Reps was held in 3rd week, and another is being held on Tuesday of 7th. Jack Matthews, with information and design input from me, created an online database of all the officers. This has the major advantage of being always up-to-date and accessible at any time. A database is very important for officers as they organise joint events through it. I also have created the beginnings of a guide for LGBTQ Officers which included an events section which lists possible events to hold, how to hold them, and how to ensure turnout; 'how to' guides on creating a mailing list using group spaces, using the online document, and creating a doodle poll for the LGBTQ contingent within colleges; and JCR motions such as one which allows reps to get a budget. I again intend to make this an online document, continually updatable by all reps with personal accounts, ideas for events etc.

I have been in the role for five terms, starting in Trinity Term 2009, almost my entire Oxford life. I have been the first holder of the role, and I feel that I have had considerable input in shaping it. At the beginning, information on reps - which college had them, what their titles were, what events they held and whether they had a budget and if so, how much - was scarce. My first action in the role was to create a survey which most reps responded to. From these results, things could start to move on. Starting properly in Michaelmas term 2009, I worked very closely with Dani Quinn, former VP for welfare to put in place a number of things. We met individually almost once a week and together instigated a number of things: a mailing list of LGBT(Q) Reps/Officers, meetings for officers twice a term, a database and a facebook group of the reps, listening skills training from Oxford Friend and Sexual Health Training from Terrence Higgins Trust and did the first Queer History Month including the important Same-Sex-Hand Holding (Sshh), which was shortlisted for NUS LGBT Campaign's LGBT Event of the Year. Since the creation of the role, Queer, and its initial Q, has received wider recognition on behalf of reps and Oxford students.

As for the officers themselves, they have felt supported by the new role. More reps now have a budget, following on from a draft motion and crib sheet we submitted to them. I supported reps in person at three JCR meetings, and have met with almost every rep individually to ask how they're finding the role and what they'd like to improve in their college.

The LGBTQ Officer role has also created a more visible engagement with LBTSoc, the main LGBT society of Oxford, Queer Studies Circle, the discussion group, and the NUS LGBT Campaign, whose activist training days and national conference I have attended and whose campaigns LGBTQ Campaign have supported.

Dani and I also revamped LGBTQ Council. I encouraged people to run for elections, many more people were added to the mailing list by Dani, and a new committee was reinstated. Since then, the continuity and success of the committee has sometimes been unstable but the campaign have done a number of things: change its name to LGBTQ Campaign after considerable consideration and consultation across many groups, create a new logo which is visually stunning, do a Sshh after dark event which was a kiss-in at Lava and Ignite and organise picketing to protest the lifetime ban on gay and bisexual men giving blood. Last week we had a presence at almost every queer week event with our petition to urge the National Blood Service to change its selection criteria to one of safety of sexual activity rather than gender of sexual partner and a document which evaluated fairly the ban and proposed why it was illogical. We hope to use this presence to gather more members for the campaign and help in the organising of Queer History Month.

As for the future of the role, there are many things that are still to be achieved and which I think Katie Colliver, LGBTQ Officer elect, will achieve, in whatever direction she decides to take the role. Links between LBGT Soc and the campaign should be strengthened to ensure more activism on behalf of LGBTQ people in Oxford. I, or the campaign, have not explored working with local schools on their awareness and celebration of diversity as applicable to sexual orientation. More concrete motions and crib sheets could be created to support reps, we could work more other campaigns and the LGBT Staff group of the university and Queer History Month could be made better than last year. However, ensuring officers and reps are supported with the advice, guidance and resources they need to improve their own common rooms should I believe always take priority over other projects.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my role and it saddens me to leave it. But I do so with the knowledge that we at OUSU have made considerable improvements to our relationships with LGBT(Q) reps and officers and, largely through them, with the LGBTQ people of Oxford.

Hello council,

I'm going to be writing, after about two years, so there are various things to cover. In that time the university has seen an ever increasing number of graduate students. As it 's the last report I'm sending to council I've just put together some of the most important issues that have happened in y time, and also some of the big issues that I think will be taken over from my successor.

- Graduate finances – We made ground in the last year looking at piloting a new system for graduate financial guarantees, to streamline the process, ensuring that students got their colleges offer sooner. One of the issues that have been discussed is fourth year fees for graduate students; this is an issue that needs to present a problem.
- The University is in the process of conducting its review of the courses it runs – this includes all postgraduate taught courses. Exactly how the university does this is yet to be seen, but there should be an opportunity to contribute to this process as it develops. I've sat on the medical sciences divisional board, which has been looking at the preliminary data from other course and will be beginning its process of reviews shortly.
- In the last two years the structure of OUSU has changed considerably, we've seen changes to the funding structure of OUSU that make its future more secure. I've been working on OSSL board to improve the revenue streams available to the student union to provide additional funds as well as ideally making less reliant on the university as our sole source of funding. Coupled with this, I've had a chance to sit on the budget committee see the restructuring of the student union budget following the change in the university funding. With the recent appointment of a new chief exec, I hope to see this long term stability continue for many years to come.

Whilst there's still a lot to do in improving the graduate experience, we've seen a lot of developments in the last two years, but two that, whilst small have allowed us to allowed us to work towards providing a better student union experience, are the improved dialogue between MCRs and Common rooms and also the improved representation in the divisions; in particular it he last year, we have gained representation on the education subcommittees of the divisional boards to allow the students to have a greater input in discussion of all aspects of their courses.]

It's been a great two years and I feel privileged to have been part of so many changes that I hope have created a more stable student union which can focus on improving student experiences and tackle the issues that , and I wish the sabbatical team, and those taking over in exec success in the coming year.

**REPORT FOR THE MICHAELMAS TERM**  
**GRADUATE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICER**

**Objectives at start of term**

Being the first term of coming to Oxford and predominant issues being settling down into Oxford life-academic and otherwise; the focus of this term was information dissemination and facilitation.

**Activities/ Steps taken/ Involvement**

- 1) Graduate International students addressed early in the term regarding general aspects of settling into Oxford like covering areas such as OUSU Welfare Services, Communication, Transport, Sports, Clubs, Societies, and Shopping etc.
- 2) Pursued discussions with research student representatives across various Faculties to study opinions about the issue of increasing social isolation expressed by graduate research students.

### **Proposed Tasks to be initiated and followed up in next term**

- 1) Work with University Counselling and Career Services to organise drop in clinics and talk sessions for graduate international students on issues of post-study work VISA applications, internships and work opportunities across various disciplines separately in Hilary Term.
- 2) Organise an international graduates social evening in Week 2 of Hilary Term.
- 3) Co-ordinate with International students Campaign and various National Interest Societies and Clubs to work identify and provide greater events and opportunities for social involvement for international graduates.
- 4) Study welfare support structures for international students across MCR's in order to prepare a best practice document and also explore the need and possibility of separate international student representatives in Common Rooms.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, the focus of the present term was twofold: - effective information dissemination about OUSU and its welfare services and response gathering from International graduates about major issues faced by them. The next term therefore poses an excellent opportunity to work on some of these main issues.

Deeksha Sharma  
Graduate International Students Officer