

Reports to Termly Council

7th Week Termly Council Michaelmas Term 2013

Tom Rutland

President

Hi Council,

OUSU Funding & Strategy

OUSU's three-year strategic plan has been endorsed by the University's Education Committee, which means we're one step closer to achieving the funding uplift that I made the cornerstone of my manifesto. Next term, we'll know for sure about whether there will be an increase in resources. We've adopted a 'Mission, Vision & Values' statement which finally gives OUSU an outwards-facing statement of what it is, why it exists and how it works. This area will remain my priority for the rest of the year. Student engagement with OUSU is its fundamental problem and even with the best efforts of sabbatical & part-time officers to reach out and communicate, we cannot reach enough students without more support staff - which requires more strategic thinking and funding.

Undergraduate Fees & Funding

The student body has sent a strong message to senior University officials opposing any rise in undergraduate fees. With a robust message from OUSU Council (with a resounding majority voting to respond to the Vice-Chancellor's comments) and at least 20 JCRs passing similar motions, it is clear that students feel as strongly about potential increases in fees as they did in 2010.

OUSU Website & Communications

This term saw the long-awaited delivery of the new OUSU website - catapulting us out of the 1990s and helping to improve our communications with the student body. I've made a real effort to publicize OUSU events and activity over Facebook, Twitter and worked with our staff to create posters for some of our campaigns and elections. Additionally, I've worked to ensure OUSU's activity is covered in the student press, and give robust comments so that students know what OUSU is doing for them.

Student Complaints & Appeals

This term, I worked with senior members of the University to secure an increase in resources for the Proctors' Office, which will make the administration of examinations easier for students - as well as speeding up the handling of student complaints and appeals. Improvements should be noticed from the start of Hilary Term 2014.

Next Term...

More on OUSU funding and strategy, and also the beginning of a student consultation on what our members want from OUSU - so that we make sure we're always delivering for students on the issues that matter to them.

As ever, please do get in touch at president@ousu.org if you've any questions.

Thanks for the support this term,
Tom

Garlen Lo

VP (Graduates)

VP Grads - Council Report

Grad Funding

- Contributed to the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) bid committee for the Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme.
- Began talks with the University for the second phase of the Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Fund
- Preparing for Hilary awareness campaign

Divisional/Course Reps

- Researched reps at other universities
- Met with OUSU CEO to discuss long term div rep plans
- Contacts, info, good models, database, and duties given to div reps
- Will be running training for Divisional Reps on 2nd December

International Students

- Gave presentations on the student experience to Int Students at Exam Schools during Freshers week
- Begun organising International Festival (Emailing sponsors; International Students Campaign speaking to national/cultural societies; Speaking with the International Student Advice Service; Reccying, floor planning the Exam Schools)
- Set up the International Students Rep mail list
- Emailed common rooms and ISC links to campaign against government's immigration bill
- Advising and encouraging the ISC on their good work, especially the improvement of their Facebook page

Mature Students

- 1ST Mature Students Campaign (MSC) social event
- Advising and encouraging the new MSC chair
- Supporting Wadham MCR's work on spouses and partners
- Discussion on Student Parents PTE
- Requested feedback to improve online info given to mature student applicants

College Advisers

- Attended College Advisers Working Group and discussed their role
- Attended Graduate Committee and asked Senior Tutors to encourage College Advisers to meet their advisees in the first week

DPhil Supervision

- Voiced support for a 2nd supervisor for DPhil students to the University
- Gave presentation to new Oxford supervisors based on the Postgraduate Research Report; it outlined what is most important to a DPhil student

PGT Feedback

- Attended Graduate Committee and discussed the importance of survey anonymity
- Met with Education Policy and discussed OUSU producing an annual survey on PGT courses

Bullying + Sexual Harassment

Sarah Pine and I to research using one-to-one discussions and online surveys

MCRs

- Took up the issue of international students not being allowed to be Junior Dean to Senior Tutors at Graduate Committee. I am working with the MCR Presidents' campaign on this.
- Met one on one with many MCR Presidents to discuss how OUSU and MCRs can help each other.
- Gave talks on the work of OUSU in MCRs during Freshers Week

Charlotte Hendy

VP (Welfare & Equal Opportunities)

World Aids Day/National HIV Testing Week

22nd-29th November is National HIV Testing Week, and 1st December is World Aids Day. Along with the LGBTQ Campaign, I've organised two HIV testings during 7th week at Wadham and Trinity, as well as a charity raid for the National AIDS Trust on the Wednesday.

I've also been working closely with the LGBTQ Campaign on LGBTQ asylum seekers and how Oxford could campaign on this. Though we have some ideas, this is a long-term plan, so get in touch if you'd like to get involved!

Elections

As you'll all be aware, 6th week was the annual OUSU elections, so I spent lots of time being consulted as part of elections committee, and publicizing and encouraging students to engage with the election. Congratulations to everyone who was successful.

Disability Awareness Week

This took place throughout 6th week- we had lots of exciting events, from film screenings to panel discussions, from a British Sign Language workshop to a welfare tea. We also have lots of ideas of how to improve it next year, and would appreciate any feedback 😊

Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality (CRAE)

I've been heading up the working group for workshops and trainings as part of the Campaign, and we are adapting the current Equality and Diversity training for common room officers. We're also looking at what else the campaign/those interested can do- I have some ideas (BME leadership development programme, unconscious bias training) but would like to hear more!

Living Out Talks

I've given Living Out talks at Keble and Exeter, and have a few more booked in. I've also circulated a check-list of things to look out for when you go on house viewings.

Supporting Common Room Officers

One of my favourite parts of my job is working with Common Room Reps whose passion is so great, and helping them to fulfill their role. I've produced a welfare rep handbook, ran meet and greets, and held a very constructive Welfare Rep forum, with the second happening later this week.

Homesickness:

Earlier this term I produced some Top Tips for Tackling Homesickness on our website: www.ousu.org/advice/life-welfare/homesickness/ and am looking at how the Student Advice Service can better support students through this transition in the future.

Safe Zones:

One of my manifesto goals is Safe Zones, and so I've been looking into these, and contacting other SUs that already have the scheme in place. This will be an ongoing project for the year, but do watch this space for updates.

Student Advice Service

After a rebranding, lots of further work has been done with the Student Advisors and the Chief Exec on the Service, particularly how it can be professionalized and ultimately improved for the students that use it! 😊

With Disability Awareness Week and elections out of the way, I am much more flexible to look at my manifesto pledges that I am yet to achieve, and am also keen to hear from YOU- what do you want me to do next? Email me: welfare@ousu.org or tweet me: @OUSU_WEO

Rachel Pickering

VP (Access & Academic Affairs)

Hello Council 😊

I hope you've had a great two weeks since last Council. Here's a bit more about what I've been up to over the past couple of weeks and over the term as a whole. I can't believe it's nearly Oxmas already, term has flown by! I've really enjoyed my first term working as your Access and Academic Affairs Vice

President and am looking forward to meeting more of you, through our rep forums and training next term ☺ And as ever if you do want to pop in then I'd love to see you to chat about all things access and academic affairs-y ☺

JCR Access Forum

On Friday I held an Access Forum for JCR Access Officers. Mike Nicholson (the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach) came to give an hours talk in which we investigated stories behind the headlines. We then had a great discussion, in which we shared ideas between colleges and best practice looking at the Reach Scholarship, OxTweet, Ambassador programmes and Alternative Prospectuses.

Student Led Teaching Awards (SLTA)

Last week we won a grant for £1000 for our Teaching Awards, which is really exciting. And this Friday Emma Alexander, our Social Sciences Undergraduate Division Rep will be representing us at an NUS meeting in London to discuss the awards, and how the NUS will be able to support us as we prepare for them.

Alternative Prospectus (AP)

Things are coming along with this years AP - Maeve and Laura (our editor and designer) are doing an amazing job and it's going to look great! We still need lots of photos of people in their colleges so if you have any then do email me and I'll forward them on!

Undergraduate Support Package

Building on a lot of research that David Messling (my predecessor) compiled last year I have written a paper for the Joint Fees and Student Support Advisory Group (JFSSAG - yes it is as fun as the acronym sounds!). My paper outlines the case for increased support to students in the 30-40K parental income bracket, and investigation into support banding levels to prevent the 'cliff edges' between support packages that students receive, students with siblings in HE at the same time and costs that students with extended terms and extra course costs (i.e. field trips) face.

And to sum up the term so far:

- Term kicked off with our partnership with Future First, which was a great success. We signed up more students, staff and alumni to #gobackgiveback than any other Student Union partner and accounted for 5% of national sign ups. Amazing! ☺
- The #21stcentury OUSU website now includes an Access Hub which is great - you can find relevant contacts, details etc for outreach and access activity across OUSU, colleges, departments and the University. If you know of any activity/project that's not included then let me know and we'll add it to the website. Currently working on a student led section, which will include projects such as OxTweet.
- Target Schools launched Michaelmas Shadowing for the first term this term - so now we'll have Year 12 students coming in two terms ☺ The committee are about to elect new members so check out this weeks all student email for more details of how to get involved. I've secured £1000 sponsorship for Shadowing t-shirts this term, which we hope, will be delivered soon ready for the Hilary term shadowers!
- Charlotte and I went to a couple of meetings at the beginning of term looking into access to facilities for suspended status (rusticated) students. The outcomes of these meetings look positive - and Charlotte and I will be pushing for increased access (to libraries, the Counseling service etc) next term when this gets to formal committee level.
- Extra Course Costs - this term I've also been involved in meetings looking into extra course costs (i.e. extended terms and fieldwork costs) that many of you face on course. This is also going to be heading to formal committee level next term so watch this space for an update!

If you have any questions for me about this report or anything else, you're always welcome to get in touch with me at access@ousu.org. Also you can add me on twitter (@OUSU_AcAff) and I'll make sure to keep tweeting about access and academic affairs issues and events and that you might be interested in :D.

Rachel

Hi,
Here we are at the last council of term and what a term it has been. I have had such a great time this term working with students on the things they care about, thank you for giving me the opportunity! Simply, it's been a term spent working 4OUSU4Change...

One Number 401.

This is the number of doors that the Community Wardens have knocked on so far this term in East Oxford and Jericho. They've been out and about meeting students and long-term residents alike, if anyone wants to contact me with any other ideas as to how OUSU can help students living out email me on charities@ousu.org

Community

I have been working with OUSU's student community wardens on increasing the publicity for the work that they do. Some lovely new leaflets have been designed and they will be going to print soon. In the past couple of weeks I've chaired a meeting of the Jericho Neighbourhood Action Group and have met with the police Inspector for Jericho. Also, since starting my job I have met with Liberal Democrat, Conservative, Labour and Green councillors.

Environment and Ethics

The E&E campaign's focus on campaigning for the University to divest from fossil fuels is bringing in lots of people, the meeting room was even fuller this week! If you want to get involved contact eande.chair@ousu.org. Also this term the NUS's student switch off campaign has engaged lots of students, with 1,266 students 'liking' the facebook page!

RAG

It's been a MASSIVE term for RAG. We had a bungee jump that raised almost £9,000 for charity and a Ball that we hope will raise in excess of £18,000 for charity. We have also been signing people up for Jailbreak, more than 100 sign-ups as I type, as well as for the RAG and Agape Kilimanjaro Climb taking place on July 7th. Still time to sign-up for both, check out the 'Oxford RAG' Facebook page for details. As a whole RAG has raised something like £50,000 this term!

Living Wage

As reported in the OxStu, the university has now included the Living Wage in its new 'Sustainable Procurement Strategy'. This means that the central University is now formally promoting the Living Wage to its departments; hopefully more than 4 will be paying it by the end of the year! The campaign is also looking for more people to join it to help organise some fun actions for the term ahead - get in touch on livingwage@ousu.org

I've also been up to St Anne's to train the new St Anne's Living Wage Campaign group in community organising, which was great fun. Looking ahead to next term I hope to put on a couple of organising training sessions for all Oxford students ☺.

Sarah Pine	VP (Women)
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It Happens Here

The whole campaign committee and I had a fantastic meeting with the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, in which she committed to a working group to look to at best practices for the university to respond to sexual violence, and to think about what recommendations they could make to colleges. Out of this we hope to get a specific policy on sexual violence, which is qualitatively different to harassment and requires different policy. Yay! We have also worked to clarify current procedures so that students don't have the additional burden of working out the system if this ever happens to them. We consulted with women's officers to see what they needed, and they really reinforced the need for clarity in these procedures, so this is a really helpful way forward.

We've also been getting zines out, about and into loads of colleges.

The consent workshops also fall under this campaign. Over the course of this term I've trained about 50 people to be facilitators for the workshops, so they can run them in their own colleges and wider communities. This had been really rewarding. It's one of my favourite parts of my job!

Sexual Violence

16 Days of Action film with Mansfield college, particularly their principal Helena Kennedy QC was on Monday - this was to highlight global elements of violence against women.

Spoke at Pembroke MCR about the current sources of support for students that have experienced sexual violence.

Sent out several resource booklets and information to the Junior Dean for Welfare at St Anne's, to better immerse this understanding in the institution.

The first queer consent workshop happened! It was great - the feedback was wonderful.

Trained a few more consent facilitators. woo!

Worked with women's officers and other common room officers on their common room motions for getting Sexual Assault Referral Centre transport sorted out and motions for making consent workshops compulsory.

Harassment

Have begun interviewing students about their experiences of harassment in university. The goal of this is to take this to the central administration so that they cannot but fail to act in this widespread problem.

We're concentrating on a few departments at the moment, ask me or Garlen if you want to help out!

Worked with St Antony's GCR and St Anne's MCR to support them on their work on their harassment policies, as well as volunteering to support St Anthony's welfare team enforcing this at their bop.

Working with common room officers

Supporting a student St Hughs and Teddy Hall who wants to make consent workshops compulsory.

I've been supporting students on understanding and changing the sexual harassment and assault policies in their colleges.

Helped write and support students who want to Sexual Assault referral centre transport from their college.

Some of this came from things people suggested in the women's officer forum, which opened up networks of communication between different common room women's officers, so they can mutually support each other.

Handbooks and resources

I have updated the student parent handbook, the women's officer handbook and have made the SARC process guide from scratch. The latter informs students of how they might access this vital service. As it is the only place that students can get medical and forensic support, as well as long term support, *without* going to the police, it's really important.

Student Parents

We had a social! It was great. I lost at battleships.

I've been able to link up more student parents by having a student parents freshers' fair stall. It was a great opportunity to let students know that they can link into to OUSU for childcare resources, funding information and social networks.

Apart from that, the student parent focus groups have helped me understand a lot of the issues facing student parents.

One of these that I'm currently exploring is future funding options for students who become pregnant during their degree. Opening up more hardship funds for these students has been requested from our focus groups, so I'm exploring that with the Assessor.

Went to childcare steering group and voice the interests of students. We discussed plans for a new nursery, supported the Maths Physical and Life Sciences's request for a feasibility study for one in the science area too.

I've made a comprehensive list of colleges with changing facilities for any incoming student parents. I'm planning to add a couple more resources of other places in the centre of town (like libraries) that have these.

To better support student parents, Garlen and I have been working on spouses and partners access to colleges facilities. This is really helpful for student parents and mature students. This has involved collecting different college policies with the mature students campaign, supporting Wadham MCR in codifying their associate membership policy, and collecting information from a LOT of different places around Oxford for a guide to go on the OUSU website.

Leadership Development Programme

I've been publicising this all over the shop! Email me (women@ousu.org) if you want to apply. It is targeted leadership training for women, regardless of if their interests are in student politics, non-profit work, consulting or whatever really. We get fantastic feedback on it, so please do think about applying! Applications close on Friday of 8th week.

Campaigns Training

Organising Campaigns training for campaigns, common room officers, and general keen bean students for 1st week of next term. We'll be coupling with People and Planet to do this work, which will be lovely! I also co-ran a 'how to get things done' session with WomCam early this term. This was to introduce members to a range of skills and techniques so they get things done in their own colleges.

Women in academia

The philosophy department wants to introduce their Gender Equality Charter Mark, so have consulted with the undergrad div Rep and Philosophy department graduate Women's Officer to put forward students views on what should change.

The Athena SWAN submission has gone in, with parts that affect graduate students in sciences. During this process I was able to voice the concerns of students so that the university better supports them in it's gender equality work.

Contraception

Charlotte and I did a lot of consultation around the C Card trials that are currently going on in Wadham, Brasenose and Somerville. We prepared the welfare officers and briefed them on how to run the scheme, and are now supporting them for the rest of the term and will be debriefing in the new year.

Going to be running one of Charlotte's HIV and Sexual health testing sessions next week. Come and get tested from 7-9pm at Trinity tomorrow!

Elections

Chaired some husts, they were great. The new me is Anna Bradshaw, congratulations to her!

Also, I've added the student-run activities into the Equality and Diversity Unit equality report, was scrutinised, was on BBC radio oxford, did the RAG bungee jump! I've also started planning a women in sport event with lots of other great athletes for international women's day.

Sarah

PART TIME OFFICERS

Nick Cooper	Graduate Academic Affairs Officer
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Evening Council,

Twenty-fourth, and quite probably final, report to Council. At the end of my term of office as Graduate Academic Affairs Officer, I thought I'd summarise some of the stuff I'd been up to over the last fortnight/term/year.

Most of my work this year has been looking at academic representation (in the form of Graduate Joint Consultative Committees, and Divisional committees) and how to improve this; taught Masters courses and improving the course descriptions, as well as hopefully improving the quantity of teaching involved; and looking at how to improve the funding situation for graduates. I have also had a few side interests, such as representing students on Exam Regulations Expert User Group to ensure the replacement of the Grey Book is user-friendly, and even though my term of office is soon nigh, I will also be representing students on the Digital Strategy (Education) Subgroup from December looking at how the university will use technology in the near future to improve education for students. So worry not, Council, the fun doesn't stop.

Thanks for everything, and congratulations to Jena who will be my replacement in a fortnight. See you at Council in Hilary Term!

Nick

Good afternoon council,

Thank you very much for allowing me to be your Academic Affairs Campaigns Officer this year, it has been a blast. I'm going to give a run-down of what I've been up to these past months regarding the three things I promised I'd work on in my manifesto

Academic Feedback Sessions

I met with the Academic Officers/Reps of the JCRs for a tea where they discussed a variety of relevant things, one of which was successes and failures in implementing Academic Feedback Sessions (AFS). This helped JCRs who had been thus far unable to persuade their Colleges of the virtues of AFS. I then sat in on an AFS at St John's JCR to use a model for a functioning method which has provided good student voice to College. I individually spoke to Academic Reps who had specific struggles in getting AFS in their college to think about ways the case for them could be made to College and how best to start the process of introducing them.

Online Lectures

It transpired after some research that the way Oxford puts lectures online is through individual academics requesting them to be recorded and disseminated. I met with the Head of Oxford IT who explained the way in which this is handled and the importance of understanding how public or private the lecturer was willing to make the lecture or series. I have begun organising a publicity campaign to make students aware of current online lecture provision and to urge them to approach their lecturers to agree to be filmed so that the bank of recorded lectures best reflects the lectures we want to see again.

Library Hours

I met with the Head of Bodleian libraries, Head of Social Sciences and Head of Humanities to discuss library provision in Oxford, with an emphasis on opening hours at the weekends. Although the libraries have faced large funding cuts we discussed ways of making the libraries better reflect the needs and desires of students. It is hoped that from these discussions we will see surveys and focus groups to ascertain whether we would, largely, prefer libraries to open later and shut later or to have limited hours in the week to allow more time at the weekend. We also discussed the idea of libraries sharing their stock such that one can order a book into e.g. the Rad Cam when the subject library would not be open. Furthermore, it was agreed by all that while the collection of books online should continue to grow, that was an additional service to well-stocked open libraries rather than a replacement. Another issue explored was that of academics taking reference books out of libraries and having longer and larger lending allowances than students. It was agreed that this policy should be reviewed.

I hope you can see that while none of these campaigns is exhausted, some headway has been made in each category. It has been a pleasure working first with David and now with Rachel, not to mention the other excellent Sabbs and the fantastic PTE. Many congratulations to my successor, and best of luck!

Hi Council!

Thank you so much to everyone who has been involved in the amazing **Disability Awareness Week**, which took place last week and was a great success. We managed to host a huge range of amazing events putting students in touch with disability as it actually presents itself in the real world.

More generally, this being my last Council as Disabilities Officer, I want to thank everyone involved in the campaign and OUSU and what it has achieved over the past year. We have shifted from the medical to the social model of disability, run an incredible OxDERN conference and the Disability Awareness Week, we have updated the Disabled Students Guide for the first time in half a decade and we have reinvigorated the Disabled Students campaign.

To all those who I have met and worked with, thanks for being such an incredible inspiration, and I hope that my successor will continue to be as enthused as I am by the wonderful disabled students of Oxford.

Will

Henry Chong

Mature Students Officer

Dear Council,

This will be my last council as Mature Students' Officer: it's been a great year!

In my first term, I was focused on communications and forming a social community. There had not been much of a community when I took over the role, and the Mature Students' Campaign had sadly been dormant for a number of years.

I have since re-established the Mailing List, which has now gone from 24 people to over 200 people. The Mature Students' Campaign is alive and kicking: running as an autonomous campaign, with a Chair who isn't me! Going forward, I would like to see the Campaign provide a platform for mature students across the university to meet, share, and promote the issues that we care most about. This will allow my successor to focus on policy issues.

The main policy issues that I am currently working on, and would like my successor to be able to carry forward, are those of Admissions and Student Parents/Spouses. It is a travesty that Oxford's current admissions system cannot properly deal with mature students and their unique circumstances. It is likewise sad that many colleges have neither the facilities nor the policies to support those who attempt to juggle the full time jobs of oxford student, and parent.

In future, I would like to explore having another Part-Time Executive role focused on Student Parents in particular. I have often found my remit to be very wide, and think that it would be very useful to have 2 members of the exec focusing on the often different groups of younger mature students, who have been out of university for a time, and Student Parents, who often return to education much later in life.

The position of Mature Students Officer next term is currently unfilled. If anyone knows of someone who is interested in being the OUSU Mature Students Officer, please encourage them to run in Council at the start of next term.

As always, email me with questions/comments/jokes at: maturestudents@ousu.org

Yours Sincerely,
Henry Chong
OUSU Mature Students Officer