



termly reports

trinity 2004

Helena Puig-Larrauri

President

It has been a pleasure to work for the Oxford University Student Union over the past year. The Student Union does three things - campaign, provide services and represent students. This year has also been a year for reform and internal change. Here is some of what has happened, and my interpretation of it.

CAMPAIGNS

Finance and Funding

The actions of the Finance and Funding Campaign this year were framed by the Higher Education Bill that was going through Parliament. From the start, the strategy of the campaign was threefold - educate students, use direct action as a means of protest and lobby the government with intelligent arguments. The strategy was also aimed at maximising the impact of the campaign by targeting some things at all students - email your MP, wear a gold ribbon at matriculation, postcards and leaflets with information on them, write to a Lord at your college - and others at a core group of anti-fees activists - block a road, lobby parliament, march in London, occupy exam schools. The Alternative White Paper became an invaluable lobbying tool - for the first time, OUSU's free education policy was being articulated in a way that allowed for much more persistent lobbying. I hope that this will set a precedent in elaborating our HE funding policies in order to campaign on them. The HE Bill is now entering its final stage in the Houses of Parliament, and the campaign is still keeping up the pressure on the Lords. When that is over, it will be time for F&F to re-assess where it goes next.

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The referendum at the end of Hilary Term changed OUSU's policy on HE funding. A lot of agro has been generated by this result - it's become the battle ground for the OUSU sceptics, the OUSU traditionalists, the right and the left to discuss exactly what is wrong with the F&F campaign and with OUSU. The result of the referendum will not be 'dropped', nor will it kill our access work, nor will OUSU become an aid to the Conservative Party. Oxford students used the referendum to express a simple opinion about HE funding. It is the job of the F&F campaign to now articulate this opinion (not to 'fudge' it, but to make it a useful tool) in the same way that the Alternative White Paper articulated the previous policy. The campaign chose not to do that this term, because fighting the HE Bill in the House of Lords was by far the greater priority.

The F&F campaign continues to be one of the most vibrant campaigns of the student union. It attracts a small core of extremely committed people who get the word out to other students, mostly through word of mouth, on an issue that is a concern to the majority of students. I think F&F will continue to do this. Perhaps next year it would be wise to concentrate more on issues affecting Oxford University students instead of concentrating on the national political arena. It's something which has been neglected this year and could do with more attention.

Rent

The rent campaign this year has lacked direction and purpose, and I think needs to be rethought. The Rent Support Guide, the online resources on rent levels and rent rises and the two rent negotiation trainings for CR officers were all well received and well attended. I have also helped a number of CRs with their specific rent negotiations. However, the rent committee was never well attended, and even when it was it discussed mostly the issues at the colleges which had sent representatives, but never a cross campus strategy. Rent negotiations are fundamentally a college based issue, but the rises across colleges are pricing out all Oxford students. Perhaps there is a case for allowing Finance and Funding to deal with rent as well - as part of a general campaign to address the hardship problems of students at Oxford. When we wrote the submission on the Student Aid Office, issues of fees, rent and maintenance were addressed together, which I think presented a better picture of the problems faced by students. A joint approach is probably the way forward on this issue.

College Inequality

College Inequality also deals with rents and fees, but its remit is specifically comparisons across colleges. The college inequality, rent and F&F campaigns should endeavour to share data and be aware of each other's strategies, because there are a number of cross over points. It has been useful for me to be involved in all three campaigns as a means of ensuring communication across them. College Inequality, however, has not been all that active this year, largely due to a lack of volunteers. A number of CR officers, particularly JCR presidents, are interested in the issue because they see its effects on students, but it is not a campaign that has captured the imagination of most students. The work involved in drawing any conclusions is also tedious. Ferdinando (co-chair of the campaign) has begun the labourious process of collecting up to date information from colleges. The committee also has an interesting strategy that it would like to pursue over the summer and next year - to go through any publications of the University and of colleges (including websites) and ask that any misleading information about the differences between colleges be corrected. It has also become increasingly clear that the committee will need to look at the increased effects of college inequality on students with the introduction of top-up fees - hardship provision is very unequal. College inequality perhaps should be viewed as a research committee to produce supporting papers/letters for sabbatical officers and common room officers to take forward.

SERVICES

Entz

For the first time in its history, the Student Union is in a position to provide student entertainments. Freshers' Week entz were a success. Two of the three weekly nights run in Michaelmas were also successful, one succesful weekly night ran through Hilary Term, and OUSU will probably run a regular night at the Bridge in Michaelmas. OUSU has also been helping promote established student nights, and one off events. It is also running an end of year party which you should all come to because it will be *awesome*. The introduction of a full time Entz Manager next Hilary Term will consolidate a year and a half of steady rise in OUSU's presence in the student entz market in Oxford. There are two good reasons for OUSU to do entz. Firstly, it is a service that students want and enjoy. As an OUSU service, it will be monitored for equal opportunities and can be changed to suit what students want. Secondly, although OUSU entz will be cheaper than most other entz, any profit will be reinvested in OUSU to subsidise loss making services

that students want and enjoy. As an OUSU service, it will be monitored for equal opportunities and can be changed to suit what students want. Secondly, although OUSU entz will be cheaper than most other entz, any profit will be reinvested in OUSU to subsidise loss making services (such as the Student Advice Service). If it makes a lot of profit, that could be put aside to eventually fund a Central Student Venue. It won't change the nature of the Student Union; it will expand its remit. Presidents won't run on an entz manifesto; it won't be their job, but rather that of the entz manager.

Clubs and Societies

OUSU can do a lot more to provide support for the many clubs and societies in the University. The new clubs and societies room gives them a physical base within the student union and a series of physical services (photocopying, pidges, computers, hiring material). The website has been revamped to include an intuitive step by step guide to setting up a society and a searchable online database. Clubs and Socs are now welcome to sign up to use the OUSU live email system which is linked to the online database and to online registration for Freshers' Fair. The changes this year that have broadened the support to clubs and socs form the base of what could become an expanding resource from the student union. The OUSU and Accenture dinner for clubs and socs could also become a regular feature, and could lead to more help from OUSU to finding sponsorship for clubs and socs.

REPRESENTATION

Opening up the Student Union

The new technologies employed this year in the student union - OUSU live, the OUSU fora, e-voting - have brought the student union closer to students in a different way. Perhaps in the internet age we should look to more communication through our online facilities and less to people turning up for meetings. More publications are online and more will go online next year. More of our campaigns use the internet as a tool. It's cheap, it's easy and it's accessible.

Access to ousu.org, however, is not the only way to make the student union accessible. I have endeavoured to talk to and write to as many students as possible over the course of this year, to explain that OUSU is what students make it and that it is **their** student union. The results of OUSU's survey of common room officers show that publicity and information are still the major problems faced by the student union. OUSU can always do more to reach out to students - next year's team might want to reconsider whether some of our traditional means (posters, for example) should be replaced in favour of others (online fora, online polls, etc).

NUS

I don't think I have done as good a job as I could have in representing Oxford students to the National Union. In part this is because I didn't make it a priority from the start; in part it's because of a series of structural problems in the relationship between Oxford and the NUS. I hope I've gone some way to address the structural problems so that, if he makes it a priority, John can fully engage with the NUS. All but one of the JCRs affiliated to the NUS will now have OUSU administer their affiliation. This has benefits both for the JCRs and for OUSU. NUS cards will now be OUSU/NUS cards and will have names printed directly onto them, hence allowing for them to be individually pigged to students, solving the problem of distribution of cards. JCRs will retain their own NUS delegates, but the mailings from the NUS will arrive in the OUSU offices. The OUSU sabbaticals will then be charged with filtering down the main messages in these mailings, organising training and coordinating cross-campus campaigns. OUSU's increased role in liaising with the NUS will also make it easier for the OUSU sabbaticals to engage with the different NUS conferences and to encourage JCR NUS delegates to bring amendments, understand the compositing process (perhaps take part), etc. OUSU will be in a better place to facilitate representation for Oxford students in the NUS.

University Representation

Possibly one of the most frustrating but also important parts of the job. Sitting on University committees, taking papers forward, speaking on student interests, meeting with University officials. It's often difficult to know what the impact is, to quantify the effects of representation. At the end of the day, it's all a question of how much voicing student opinion can affect what the University does, even if it never quite defines it. The Exam Celebrations Code of Conduct is a case in point - we got half of what students wanted (road closed, throwing confetti) but not the other half (spraying liquids). Much of the representative work of the student union is like that.

INTERNAL CHANGE

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Independent report into the Future and Finances of OUSU

The report was an excellent exercise for OUSU to undertake. It allowed for constructive criticism of the student union, some of which is already being acted upon. The debate on the changes to the staffing structure which the report has sparked (and which will conclude today in council) was a much needed one. Whatever the outcome, we will be in a clearer position than we were before.

Closing the shop was a major change to OUSU this year. For years the shop had been making a loss. It was a difficult decision, but one which I hope will benefit the student union in the long run. The report suggests changes to OUSU's commercial arm (OSSL) which will allow for it to expand and develop to provide better services for students and turn over a larger profit.

There are more suggestions from the report that have yet to be discussed - I would encourage next year's sabbatical team to take them to council throughout the year.

Affiliation of Common Rooms

I have spent the whole year trying to understand what position OUSU is in with regards to the provision of services to Common Rooms that decide not to affiliate. The problem is as follows:

1. (a) OUSU receives grants from the University for specific things (rent on our building, some salaries, access work) but does not receive a block grant. Instead, we charge subscription fees to JCRs and MCRs. Every year, each JCR and MCR has a vote on whether to affiliate to OUSU and, if they vote to affiliate, they pay OUSU a subscription fee. These fees make up about 25% of OUSU's annual income and are paid out of the JCR and MCR block grants.
- (b) Every college has a Junior Common Room and a Middle Common Room that are defined as student unions under the Education Act 1994. Each JCR and MCR receives a block grant for their activities from their College.
2. (a) Any student at the University is a member of OUSU by virtue of being a student at the University (in line with section 20.1.a of the Education Act 1994).
- (b) Those JCRs and MCRs that affiliate to OUSU are also the constituent organisations of OUSU. OUSU is defined as both Association of the Generality of Student Members of the University and also a Confederation of the Junior Common Rooms, Students' Unions, Middle Common Rooms, and other equivalent Organisations of the Colleges (point 2 of the OUSU Constitution).
3. (a) Any student at the University has the right not to be a member of OUSU (in line with section 22.2.c.i of the Education Act 1994) and can exercise this right by writing a letter to the President of OUSU. This is laid down in Appendix C, section 3.b of the Proctors' and Assessor's Memorandum and in point 4 of the Preamble to the OUSU Constitution.
- (b) JCRs and MCRs may also vote not to affiliate to the Oxford University Student Union, and hence cease to be a constituent organisation of OUSU.
4. (a) Any student who chooses not to be a member of OUSU will not be unfairly disadvantaged, with regard to the provision of services or otherwise, by reason of their having done so (section 22.2.c of the Education Act 1994). This is provided for in Appendix C, section 3.b of the Proctors' and Assessor's Memorandum.
- (b) Any student at a JCR or MCR which votes not to affiliate to OUSU is still a member of OUSU, unless they also send an individual letter to the President.
5. (a) OUSU continues to receive money for students who exercise their individual right not to be members of OUSU - there is no cut in the number of students that the subscription fee to their JCR or MCR is calculated on. Individual disaffiliation is therefore a purely political act, and is not linked to funding.
- (b) OUSU receives no funding from a JCR or MCR that chooses not to affiliate to OUSU. However, the members of that JCR or MCR are still members of OUSU. Disaffiliation of Common Rooms is crucially linked to OUSU's funding. Therefore, OUSU is forced to provide services to students for whom it receives no money.

The current position that OUSU finds itself in is untenable - OUSU is required by law to provide services to students for whom no funding is provided. The University Legal Services Department has advised OUSU that there is no way around the requirement to provide all services for free to students who are members of disaffiliated common rooms. They have also indicated that it is their opinion that the problem is not with the double affiliation of OUSU given the collegiate structure, but rather with the way this is linked to funding - ie the fact that OUSU receives no funding for students from non-affiliated common rooms.

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Currently, out of 31 JCRs, only Oriol JCR and St Benet's JCR are not affiliated to OUSU. All graduate common rooms are affiliated to OUSU. OUSU spends approximately £24 per student per year. Approximately 75% of this expenditure is funded out of commercial revenue and project-related Government grants. College common rooms contribute 25% to OUSU's income. Oriol JCR and St Benet's JCR are getting a free ride off the other common rooms, and 23 JCR presidents recently made it very clear in a letter to the student press that they were unhappy with this arrangement.

This is a problem which OUSU will have to resolve next year. I have tried to use the University representation structure to arrive at a solution, but it has now become clear that this is in fact a matter for the colleges and not for the University. I will be advising John on how I think this can be taken forward.

THANK YOU THANK YOU

There are many people who give up their time, energy and enthusiasm to the student union, and without whom it would not run. Thank you to the part time executive (past and present), to all the co-chairs (and in particular the ones I have personally worked with), to all the other volunteers who hold posts in OUSU (elections committee, the authors of the F&F2 report, pubs board, complaints boards), to the two Press Officers, to the Oxford NUS delegation, to all the JCR presidents, to all the OUSU reps. To all of OUSU's permanent staff who have worked for the student union through the years. And to this year's sabbatical team and business manager, for working so hard.

That's too many people to name individually, but there are a few that I'd like to mention by name... Mim Saxl, for cigarette breaks, poetry slams and not being involved in OUSU. Emma Norris, for teasing me endlessly (okay, okay, I know she's old) and always helping me talk through political worries. Conor O'Neill, for not just being a general OUSU gimp, but also a constant source of support and an unexpected friend. Louise Radnofsky, for overcoming your fear (!) and making me laugh. Dan Paskins, for your fairness and good humour, and for making me understand the importance of party politics, and of eleeeephants. Maria Burgess, for putting up with me making coffee that is too strong (hey, it wakes you up) and more importantly for devoting more to the student union than anyone could expect of you. Digo Davies, for being an outstanding student union officer, keeping me sane and generally telling people to Have A Check. Good luck, John.

Rodrigo Davies

V-P (Finance)

It has been a truly amazing year, which I've found more challenging and varied than I could ever have expected. It's crazy to put a 22-year old in charge of lots of cash, crazy to expect people to work 70-hour weeks and then say OUSU isn't doing anything: but then Oxford is a crazy place. I'm proud of what we achieved this year - exec, editors, staff, helpers, and sabs - though after four years of OUSU and innumerable OUSU Councils, I am happy to be moving on.

Publications

2003/4 has been one of OUSU's most successful years in terms of its flagship publications, with the Oxford Handbook, the Oxford Student and the Survival Guide each improving both commercially and in quality terms. In addition, I have given help to several JCR and college magazines. OUSU's publications stable has remained large, well produced and profitable. Everyone who has played a part in achieving this should feel proud.

This term has seen a lot of work preparing the ground for successful publications next year, recruiting and managing editors, and arranging printing so Laura can take over the reins without any problems.

The Oxford Student has had an eventful and successful year. I'm glad that it has continued a tradition of professionalism of which I was once a small part. The sheer professionalism and courage shown by the newspaper's staff this year has been a joy to behold, and has been one of the factors firmly establishing the OxStu as the most authoritative, oft-sourced and readable newspaper in the university. I believe the team can, with a recruitment drive in Michaelmas and a good harnessing of their abilities, continue to be the better newspaper for students in Oxford week-in, week-out.

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There are a number of publications that promise to deliver new successes next year. The return to print of the Students With Disabilities Handbook, the LGBT Handbook and the Minority Careers Guide offer an excellent opportunity for OUSU to excel in areas that should allow its publishing reputation and political nous to be exploited to the full. The Careers Handbook was a project which encountered major problems, issues that were partly resolved through liaison with CUSU but ultimately made the finished product slightly disappointing from a commercial point of view. Though the commercial future for graduate recruitment-funded publications is not quite as positive as it was some years ago, the steps we have taken this term to reaffirm the production and concentrate on making next year a turning point for OUSU's role in the careers market should return the OCCH to winning ways.

Finance

OUSU's finances are healthier now than they were this time last year. The main reason for this is the hard work done by the Business Manager this year. The recording of the first surplus in three years was especially pleasing given the kerfuffle surrounding the passing of the Budget in TT 2003. That debate, like so many things in OUSU, was undoubtedly politically and personally motivated. Likewise, there seems to be a few small and self-proclaimed spokespeople who are to blame for OUSU affiliations hitting the headlines as often as they have this year. This is all the more ironic since I am delighted to leave OUSU with more affiliated common rooms than I found when I started. Since September, Keble MCR and St Cross have joined, convinced of the value for money that OUSU offers. Oriel JCR's continued withholding of subscriptions is sad but not surprising, and it is a great shame that a few people's misinterpretation of the Education Act will cost Oriel's freshers so many useful services, while saving the JCR very little. I only hope that our successors are able to separate the political from the financial when finding a settlement to this thorny issue next year.

Building and Facilities

OUSU's other sabs and exec officers have carried a fair few boxes this year. And wasn't it fun, especially during the summer when obstinate lorry drivers would dump pallets on New Inn Hall Street while we battled with the deeply inept lift system.

This year has been the first full year in Thomas Hull House, and we've finally secured the hallowed blinds that many people thought we'd never get. The closure of the OUSU Shop was a sad but ultimately necessary evil, and the future for the Clubs and Societies room looks bright now that we've begun some moving around of furniture. Further equipment will be forthcoming so that by Michaelmas the OUSU Offices will have another valuable string to their bow.

The OUSU Van was a wonderous beast this year. Seemingly rock and roll at the best of times, immovable and dangerous at others, the van just about hauled us through a year of deliveries. Huge thanks to everyone who drove, navigated, loaded and unloaded. Conor, thanks for the Peterborough trip when the OxStu delivery machine ground to a halt. Roadchef wasn't that bad. In reality, all power should go to Josefa, who was absolutely first class in terms of commitment and organisation - consistently volunteering her services and organising for the many service trips that were required. This was one of the areas where Josefa's commitment to OUSU was virtually unmatched by any other member of the executive. I'm eternally indebted to you for that!

Entz

Where to start? After a summer spent brainstorming, machinating and trying to write OUSU Entz on a blank canvas, it was one late and bleary-eyed night that the Zoo idea came about. Having pushed it on through one term with the most ambitious entz programme OUSU has ever seen, we finally realised that the energies and spare time of the President, Business Manager and myself were simply not enough. It made me chuckle in 5th week to hear someone describe entz as "Digo and Helena's hobby" but that was pretty close to the mark for a while, not forgetting Edd of course. Perhaps this puts into context why I was so irritated to find people suggesting that this work was an attempt to undermine the student union, since our efforts were purely an expression of how much we wanted to make OUSU the best it could be. With the much-loved arrival of Jamie Audsley, entz has been given a vital new lease of life and under his stewardship next year's programme promises to be excellent. At the time of writing ticket sales for School's Out were going very well, and I must admit to feeling slightly smug that it might be an opportunity to combine success for OUSU with a step for The Shamones on the ladder to International Pop

programme promises to be excellent. At the time of writing ticket sales for Schools Out were going very well, and I must admit to feeling slightly smug that it might be an opportunity to combine success for OUSU with a step for The Shamones on the ladder to International Pop Stardom.

Computers & IT

Two years of relative neglect of OUSU's IT infrastructure have resulted in a semi-professional network that is flexible but now in need of investment. Though every full-time officer or staff member has an iMac, everyone uses email and complains about the server are rare, printing has been a perennial problem as has been the reliability of computers in the Publications Room. Nevertheless I am confident that next year's budgeted expenditure in this area will reap big rewards.

The OUSU web site is in a good position now. Nothing gave me more relief during the early months of my tenure than to discover how to get to the stylesheets of the website and finally tear out the Arial font and replace it with a nice Verdana 8pt and clearer red headings. Cosmetically the whole thing looks far better than it did. The website has been kept relatively up to date, and Helena's What On At OUSU section was an excellent addition that many suggested but when push came to shove only the President was willing to implement. Major expansion in the sections covering the Oxford Handbook and Clubs And Societies are now underway, and should be ready in time for Michaelmas. The launch of ousulive.com was relatively painless and has proved to be one of the most effective ways of reaching students we've ever possessed. Admittedly the software needs some tweaking and there is room for improvement, but the relationship we've established with Headporter has proven to be very useful, not least in also allowing us to deliver Freshers' Fair stall bookings online for the first time ever.

OUSU Card

Quoted as being in existence in an old Oxford Directory, promised by Ben Harris when he ran for this position in 2001, I was more than a little pleased to have been able to deliver on the long awaited OUSU card this year. With stacks of colleges upping sticks and leaving the NUS the need for a proper discount card with some leverage to get new discounts was clear. Once sponsorship had been secured the overall execution of the cards was satisfactory. Distribution was very difficult, but given the usual uptake of NUS cards in colleges I felt we coped very well. Next year the cards will be individually pigged at the start of the year and will also bear the NUS logo for affiliated colleges. Two fantastic results for two very different problems.

OUSU Shop

A long overdue but nevertheless disappointing end for the OUSU Shop, this year's closure was something that made me feel rather hard done by, since the decisive action had obviously been left to me by a number of predecessors. After much soul-searching, I am very glad that we did close the shop and radically restructure OSSL, since it is now a leaner operation that has a great deal more commercial flexibility. A great deal of thanks must go to Ann, Barbara, Gill and Maria who all dealt with things fantastically well and each has made an excellent contribution to the running of OUSU for many more years than I've been around. I am very pleased that the staffing situation related to the shop was handled fairly smoothly and also taught OUSU council some important lessons about how policy is not above the law and that calling yourself a socialist doesn't grant you the right to treat employees badly.

Thanks

It's a list of names, as per, but all of the following helped to make my life a little brighter and made OUSU work a little better over the past year. I'll try and save at least some of the best ones for last so you keep reading.

Firstly, my family, who I never see but always brag about. Vous me faisiez ce que je suis. The friends I never see, also, you've been lovely and very understanding. Especially Sushi. I hope I was worth the wait.

Printers: Thanks to Sharman and Co, Stephens and George, Trilogy, APD Print - many thanks for being so professional and delivering everything on time.

The University: Thanks to Andy Lane, Dr Brian Gasser and Dr Ian Archer for assistance with Freshers Fair and innumerable other minefields.

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Publication editors from the summer: especially Zoe - we survived in the end, and I'm sure we'll meet again! OxStu people, Zoe, Coats, Vish, Rachel, Mary, Peter, Patrick and all the rest, you were absolutely superb and far too serious for your age. Well, except Patrick.

Staff: Maria, still keeping OUSU in business and tying up all the loose ends after all these years. I'm amazed you can still keep a smile on your face, but it's been a pleasure to work with you. Gill, Sue and Barbara, thank you ever so much for your hard work. I'll never sign another cheque in my life!

Exec: Jamie, there are no words, you've been a star. Just keep smiling and take it easy in New York. I'm telling you, he's nearly 30. Simpson, stay keen, just sharpen up on the jokes. You'll go far. Chris, you were the only one that knew I was blagging on the IT, thanks so much for really knowing what you were doing. Ian, thanks for being very useful and dedicated at odd moments. Steve, best of luck with the Fair and thanks for keeping my inbox full! Packer, don't compromise, stay out there. OUSU needs a least one Tory.

Even bigger thanks go to:

Conor, there from the beginning. An iconic Campbell figure you were. One minute they loved you the next minute they didn't. Either way you were unparalleled. Few people I've ever met have a greater level of integrity or efficiency than you, and my god did that prove a lifesaver to me on a few occasions. Having been the functionary for so long, I hope you got enough special adviser perks to appreciate staying in the loop. Above all, thanks for being a fantastic friend. One day, we'll be back here again. If only in spirit.

Josefa, the unsung hero who saved my life. Thanks a million for always laughing when clutches were broken or everything had gone completely wrong. Most of all, thanks for always being free for a chat and fixing my logistical problems. Krassi is a true gentleman, and a great loss to the Bulgarian team in the European Championships.

Edd, we made it. Friends, enemies, we did the lot, but it was a pleasure to work with you. Few people could have been as inspirational and also been able to pull all-nighters and still find the energy to launch a new brand. You really are made of gold.

Paskins, the voice of reason. I never thought we'd get on quite so well, or that you'd manage to give me patience with local politics, but you've done well. You've got incredible patience and a sense of humour that was invaluable. So often a perfect judge of the situation, there were a number of times when the extra years of MSt study and Labour party politics served you well in keeping the young sceptics in line. I hope that by the time you're reading this you've been rewarded with another tenure as councillor since you've restored my faith in local government. No mean feat. Very best of luck in the future, but I'm sure I won't be too far away.

Speaking of the Old Guard, many thanks must go to Eleanor Thompson, who actually got me into all this mess. You were the best sab OUSU never had.

And last of all, Helena.

"It is a true saying that a man must eat a peck of salt with his friend before he knows him."

You've won my complete respect, and a friendship I didn't quite anticipate 12 months ago. The moans, the struggles, the plots, the Cafe Orient dinners, the OC afternoons, you made it all worth it. Nothing was more gratifying than to be putting in the hours and going through the motions with someone as acutely intelligent and committed as you. I say without reservation that you are the best president that OUSU has had in the last four years and probably a lot longer still. The fact that no one could ever quite make anything stick on you is justification for a very smug grin this time next week when term finishes. It's not because you were simply an adroit manager - which you were - they couldn't bring you down because you were a bloody good president, and over this year have helped me more than anyone else not only to do my job but to believe in OUSU and the things that we tried to achieve. NUS, affiliations, cards, emails, entz, all quite unglamorous things beneath the surface but aren't you glad we made them happen? It's pretty humbling to realise that you also did a hell of a lot of the really dull stuff I'd never have had the stomach for and which no one ever thanked you for. It's too late now to take back so many lost evenings and weekends, but

you also did a hell of a lot of the really dull stuff I'd never have had the stomach for and which no one ever thanked you for. It's too late now to take back so many lost evenings and weekends, but you really did yourself proud. I doubt I'll have another colleague as dependable, hard-working, supportive and inspirational as you. At least not until we meet again, probably in a tower owned by a faceless corporation, in a lounge, overlooking Manhattan, wearing suits with fierce stripes, reading the FT, looking fierce, always in a rush, eating power takeaway, one eye on the computer, gossiping about hacks, talking shop, selling out, pissing from the inside....

Rosie Buckland

V-P (Welfare & Equal Opportunities)

The ranty, reflective bit:

I'll miss getting emails beginning with 'dear sir' or 'dear welfare', the University telling me for the millionth time that they can't make colleges do anything, the meetings to which only 3 people turn up and my general incarnation as the condom queen, I really will. Seriously, it's been fun and I'm proud of the things I've managed to achieve; neither the University nor OUSU are perfect, but OUSU's pretty bloody good. It will always have its critics and I'm openly sceptical about elements of it, but regardless of everything else, the Student Advice Service is fantastic. I get to see the less glamorous side of Oxford through its work-the students who are ill, mature students struggling with the workload, those who've been harassed by their tutor, those with not enough financial support, those whose disability is not understood or provided for adequately by the University or their College. And an often inadequate and frustrating University that underfunds core services. Those who've used the SAS have been able to be supported, advised and represented impartially, and being outside the collegiate system is a positive benefit. Do remember that the next time you dismiss OUSU as 'irrelevant'; you won't know which students have used the SAS, but I can guarantee there will be at least one within your college, including those common rooms which are 'disaffiliated'.

I've spent a good proportion of this year looking at what the SAS does however and what it should do and am proud that I've been brave enough to ask council to overturn four year's standing and continually reaffirmed policy to seek funding for a full-time Student Adviser. What the SAS needs is more specialist advice and I've set in motion the procedures for my successor to set up posts giving this advice by the beginning of next term, alongside a more general advice-giving Student Adviser. This will signal a really big change in the Service and will enable us to do what we currently do well, even better. It won't mean, however, that sabs stop doing casework; it's certainly something that has informed my views on the more policy orientated side of things with the university, but by ensuring sabs are there to provide non-collegiate, experienced and dedicated support, representation and advocacy, they are best used within the Service. The SAS has held successful police surgeries as well as sessions on various other issues this year, not least since OUSU simply can't get out to every common room to talk on every issue and university-wide trainings and information sessions are definitely a positive thing and which I hope will be continued next year.

Other stuff: Apathy, particularly in relation to campaigns and committees, continues to frustrate me. Common room officers can and should have a much greater role beyond the confines of their jcr or mcr, but there will always be a number who simply don't see it that way. I've accepted this trend for not wanting to become involved in university campaigns to an extent this year and have provided training sessions and information to all officers. OUSU is again, uniquely placed to be able to do this and I'm pleased with the success of the Rough Guide to Welfare and Equal Opps, a new publication I wrote that has been used by a range of officers and covers issues from casework records to confidentiality and holding events for students with disabilities. Providing people with the basic information and the resources to be able to find out more/contact other officers through general co-ordination enables them to do the best job they can within their college. (look, services...and I've also increased the number of sexual health and personal safety stuff that crs can buy from us at cost-price-more services...) I'd love it if more officers got more involved in the campaigning side of things, but that's something that will take a long time. Though PRISM (a media watchdog in a good way) and more generally, the messageboards, are new, focussed ways of getting students involved and I hope they continue to thrive. My favourite baby is the Survival Guide however; I entirely rewrote and extended (with helena's and louise's help) something which had, content-wise, remained untouched for years and ensured it was distributed to all freshers. Trying to ensure that students have as much information as possible and can be proactive, knowing their rights, on any number of issues, is something I've continually strived for this year and I hope I've succeeded to some extent. The more information OUSU can help students to be armed with, and

rights, on any number of issues, is something I've continually strived for this year and I hope I've succeeded to some extent. The more information OUSU can help students to be armed with, and the more bolshy, assertive students we have, the better. If one student has used the guide as an invaluable reference tool on academic affairs issues, drugs, mental health etc then I've done my job well.

It's not all been wonderful though; equal opps within the university is frustrating and slow-moving and has been 'mainstreamed' too quickly, to its detriment, the lack of women on university committees is just disgraceful, diversity week wasn't exactly earth-shattering, poor attendance has often been dispiriting and has continually hampered the work of my campaigns-through no fault of the co-chairs and I do feel a little disappointed that the majority of students who voted in the referendum want to decrease student numbers; but hey, at least I wasn't censured for the occupation. And I got to be on page three, albeit in The Times, talking about exam celebrations. Much of my work will only come to fruition next year, not least my work for the housing bank, which will be up and running for the next big house-finding-rush and really should revolutionise (in a politically neutral way, don't worry) the nature of house-finding in oxford, the changes to the SAS and continued work with university equal opps officers; much will also simply carry on as normal and is run-of-the-mill stuff that simply needs to be done. Much of OUSU's work in general also goes unnoticed; the casework and general donkey-work, but that doesn't mean it's not of any value; when we represent a student voice on university committees, when we represent a student who is threatened with sending down, when we provide impartial advice, when we help students to make complaints of harassment and apply for hardship money, when we provide cheap condoms etc etc. We do this regardless of our critics and will continue to do so, so please remember this incoming exec and sabs and don't apologise for not being all things to all students, as students... There are many, many things it's entirely appropriate for a central student union to be doing and that we do well, so be proud of that, remember it and don't be afraid to remind people of it-and good luck!

The luvvie bit:

In no particular order, thanks to all the staff for being wonderful, to the sabs for their hard work and support and the exec for being a lovely bunch; Paskins for not complaining about the continued harassment, Digo for the Koala, Edd-your music scares me and there's no need to shout, Dan for laughing at me, Chris for being my curly haired computer gimp, Steve for also letting me bait you, Charlyne for Northern Ireland fun and Louise-where do I start? This year wouldn't have been half as fun, successful or dramatic without you-you've been a fantastic colleague and caseworker (Bernard better watch out!) and an even better friend. Thank you so much. My co-chairs, exec and others past and present, thank you for doing an often thankless job-Tsin, Ruiling, James for all the welfare, Sonalini, Ross and Sarah-look after qr for me, Aidan and Martin-your commitment and passion for all things queer never fails to amaze and impress me-best of luck to the both of you, Emrys-you're doing brilliantly, Mat-'it's mini paskins'! Sarah Jenkins, Esther Clarke, Nancy. Very very good luck to Heather and Aidan and mini paskins on the handbooks and finally Nicky-look after the SAS for me-it's pretty special-and enjoy the job! And John-good luck! Final thanks to the nice people at the University (there are some), to everyone who came to the exam school's occupation, to all the campaign regulars and the fantastic officers in the common rooms-keep up the good work. To my Mum and Sammy for keeping me grounded, Hilda's and Louise. And Ros-the love of my life.

Catherine Wallis

V-P (Women)

First things first – I have spent the vast majority of my time this fortnight preparing for the Women's Open Day; including buying refreshments today as well as preparing name-tags, organising a prayer-room for Muslim students and other such sundry items. The women's Open Day will go well, I hope, when it is held this Saturday; we certainly have far more students coming than ever before. However, the preparations for it have rather lurched from one minor crisis to the next than progressed smoothly – initial publicity was held up by the postal strike, students with hotmail addresses didn't receive confirmation of their places, people are still pestering me at the rate of about 10 a day with late applications to which I have to reply and speakers have just dropped out. Still, I am optimistic that all will be well on the day if only I can get sufficient volunteers for the afternoon among current students as despite constant asking through various media since 1st week, I have only six people and need thirty; I am particularly short of medics as around a third of the participants said they are interested in studying medicine and as yet I have no representatives.

Back to a short review of my year as Vice-President (Women) – and it will have to be brief so I am writing this report late whilst running around on election day trying to get people out to

Back to a short review of my year as Vice-President (Women) – and it will have to be brief as I am writing this report late whilst running around on election day trying to get people out to vote. Finals Fora didn't go as well as I had hoped – or rather the few that happened went very well but most subjects didn't have one owing to a lack of available tutors. My method of approaching tutors to hold them was the same as that which I believe previous VP (Women) to have used, i.e. I first wrote to a list of tutors who had previously expressed interest in participating in the Fora and if I received a refusal from them, wrote to any female tutor in that subject. I don't believe this is the optimal way to get tutors to agree to hold the Fora, especially given the time constraints, so I have prepared what I think will be a better method which I will give to Bex in her handover report.

The Nightbus has had its up and downs. On the downside, there appears to be some problem with the phone so people can't always get through the first time they call, but I have had this investigated and no cause can be found. Negatives also include the time the Nightbus has spent off the road owing to repairs needed and the delay surrounding the MOT renewal and the phone number change which some people have not picked up on despite extensive publicity. On the plus side, the change of running hours in Michaelmas Term has proved slightly more popular than the previous hours and awareness of the service as a whole seems to be rising. We were fortunate in gaining extra funding from PWC, and thanks go to Edd for negotiating that, and that has allowed us both to publicize the Nightbus further and to expand to a six-day service; it is too soon yet to judge the popularity of this move but I have hopes of its success.

Student Parents. I was unable to hold a big, central, Student Parent Welcome owing to the absence of the University Childcare Officer and thus my inability to access a comprehensive list of student parents across the University. Nevertheless, I have met many student parents through the year (mainly through casework) and have offered them the opportunity to network with each other via myself and by recommending other suitable groups. Recently I have spoken to the Deputy Equal Opportunities Officer (formerly the Childcare Officer) and I hope that the paper she is producing on the problems facing student parents and the concentration of funding designed for them. I have also been investigating the funding available to student parents myself from all sources and have prepared notes for my successor so that hopefully she will find it easier to deal with queries on this matter.

Campaigns. Promoting Choice has not met regularly this year, but that is its nature as an ad-hoc committee. However, I do plan one meeting with the co-chair and exec in 8th week as we do have a few things to discuss. Nevertheless, I have been working on pro-choice issues this year, including updating the Unplanned Pregnancy: Your Options booklet. One idea which I would like to see developed by my successors is a Pro-Choice fund which one other university (at least) has in place and sounds like a great plan if we could get it to work in practice. It is a pot of money to which the University and student union contribute and which the student union administers to enable pregnant students to make the choice they really want be alleviating the financial burden on them – it can be used to pay for a private abortion if they cannot get one on the NHS (although this would be unlikely to be used here as Oxfordshire has the highest rate of abortions on the NHS in the UK at well over 90%); pay travel costs; cover ante-natal care or contribute towards child-related costs if they keep the baby.

Women's Campaign and Ethics are both submitting their own reports so I won't attempt to replicate them here and will only say that I have thoroughly enjoyed working with both and I feel they have achieved a lot throughout the year.

I'm not going to attempt to produce a long, exhaustive list of people I wish to thank as inevitably I will forget some, bore others, alienate still more etc. so I will only say a big thank you to everyone I have worked with over the year – sabs, exec, office staff, co-chairs, University staff and others – you have been invariably fantastic, I have loved working with you and thanks for all the times you helped me out! Good luck to all the incoming sabs and to all who will be involved in OUSU next year.

Dan Paskins

V-P (Graduates)

To get inspiration for what I should be writing in my end of year report, I decided to have a look at past sabbatical reports. This proved less helpful than I had hoped. Past OUSU Presidents mentioned about how they had had to spend lots of time trying to find a graduate to do the job, and past VP (Graduates) had explained how much they were looking forward to working for

past sabbatical reports. This proved less helpful than I had hoped. Past OUSU Presidents mentioned about how they had had to spend lots of time trying to find a graduate to do the job, and past VP (Graduates) had explained how much they were looking forward to working for OUSU over the summer having recently started work, but I couldn't find anything which related to my experience of having been a graduate sab for a full year, and handing over to an elected successor.

Anyway, the thing I really wanted to emphasise in my report that I've had a really enjoyable year. It's been a particular pleasure to see all of the different work that OUSU does, which despite the many years that I've been around in Oxford I never appreciated until this year.

When I went to speak to Exeter MCR last week, to explain why they should reaffiliate to OUSU, I was able to talk about all the new stuff that RAG has been able to do as part of OUSU, about how our finances have been sorted out, about the extra running times of the Nightbus, about our publications, about the campaigning and representation, particularly on rent, that we do and about our Student Advice Service. I take no credit for the fact that they decided to reaffiliate - all that I had to do was publicise the work which others have been doing.

I also had the advantage that my predecessor, Chris Griffin, had done an absolutely brilliant job of sorting out the problems which had developed while the post lay vacant, and as a result I had an easy job of building on all his hard work. I don't think OUSU will ever have graduate students queuing round the block to get involved with (or even vote in) it, but the fact that every graduate common room, including the two which were not affiliated when I started working for OUSU, has decided to affiliate makes the point very clearly. Any graduate who needs help, or who wants to get involved, can do so, and that's what is important.

Across the course of the year, though less this term, I have tried to boost OUSU's provision for mature students. We organised some successful events, and I know that my successor wants to make a priority of this. I hope that the large budget will enable this to happen - I usually hate organising social events, but these were extremely enjoyable and something which could only have been done on a university-wide basis. The international students stuff has been mixed, though One World Week went well, and particularly in light of the OUSU survey we might like to have a look at the way that we provide for International Students and whether leaving this in the responsibility of the VP (Graduates) is the best way of doing this.

I am slightly hampered in my report in that two of the major bits of my job - representing students at university committees and doing welfare casework, are necessarily confidential. The university committee work has been sometimes useful and sometimes quite horrifying. At its best, the university can work together extremely productively with OUSU, and I've enjoyed the opportunity to participate in this, particularly over bidding for government money to fund training for graduate students who teach. At its worst, I've sat through hours of extremely well educated men talking absolute nonsense. My favourite examples of this are:

- opposition to looking at how to improve study skills because "we provide lots of study skills to our students already, and it would be a lot of work for us and we all know that nothing would get achieved."

- discussion of what should be done to respond to a complaint that someone is a bad lecturer which concluded with a decision that they had absolutely no idea what should be done in such a situation, and no idea how they might go about finding out what should be done in such a situation.

- repeated attacks on the idea of spreading good practice on the grounds that "if you say something is good practice it means that everyone should do it, and some people may not want to"

- the incisive summary of the problems of the higher education sector thus. 'The government's relationship to Oxford University is rather like that of the colonial administrators of old to the Belgian Congo'.

The main thing that I didn't like about this year was the terminally dim critics of OUSU. Good to see them still recycle the hilarious old gag about OUSU Council discussing Bolivian basket weavers (I am old enough to remember when that joke first started to circulate. It was never very amusing

The main thing that I didn't like about this year was the terminally dim critics of OUSU. Good to see them still recycle the hilarious old gag about OUSU Council discussing Bolivian basket weavers (I am old enough to remember when that joke first started to circulate. It was never very amusing at the best of times). I also like the charge that it's run by political extremists, or as one MCR President put it, 'OUSU has improved a lot this year, because it used to be run by really political people'. I wanted to hear the rest of what he was going to say, but I was late for my Labour Party meeting so couldn't.

OUSU isn't run by out of touch political people. OUSU cons political people into coming and doing the photocopying, staffing ballot boxes which graduate students don't vote in, making posters and generally doing all the boring things which mean that we do a good job for students. We do this every year and it's great, but it just doesn't mean that there is some kind of clique and the reason why people with political beliefs often get elected as OUSU sabs is because they are more qualified and have better ideas than their opponents.

What has been proved this year, were it ever in doubt, is that there isn't some trade-off between providing high quality services and running effective campaigns. It is at times like this that we can take stock - I remember when it was generally assumed that OUSU would never be able to hold another occupation, and when the idea of an OUSU discount card was felt to be a nice one but impractical and unworkable.

I'm still about for the summer, when I'll be working on the Graduate Guide, on an International Students Handbook, on building better links with the AUT and on organising training for Junior Deans. Come the end of my sabbatical year, there will be things which I haven't done which I wish I had, and things which I've done which with hindsight turned out not to have worked out. From helping individual graduate students sort out their problems to campaigning against top-up fees to persuading the university to try to become a centre for excellence in training graduate students as teachers, though, there's been a lot of good this year. Before my thanks, here's a quick list of some of the things which I have learned from being an OUSU sabbatical officer:

1. Where Green College is. Not that I ever got it confused with the hospital next door. Especially not just before a meeting with the QAA.
2. How to fund a universal grant for all students through progressive taxation.
3. But that students would rather decrease student numbers.
4. That you can get graduate students to stand for election to OUSU.
5. But not to come to Postgraduate Assembly
6. Or to vote in OUSU elections.
7. That students will queue round the block to get a Fair Trade lunch.
8. That providing extra financial support for students is roughly one third as important as deciding whether the new Vice-Chancellor should have a special gown.
9. That one of the nice things about being VP (Graduates) is that everyone that I represent is cleverer than me.
10. That voting is better than consensus decision-making.
11. People will nod through any motion or report, as long as you make sure to put the words 'graduate students' very prominently.
12. That standing to be Returning Officer on the grounds that 'it won't be much extra work because I'd have to help with the only election that's happening this term anyway' is a really stupid thing to think.

Having been involved in OUSU as long as I have, there's an awful lot of people that I'd like to thank for all sorts of reasons from 'nominating me to stand for the Making Students Matter slate' to 'helping organise One World Week with me'. All the people that I intend to thank should already know how grateful I am to them. Which isn't going to stop me writing a big long list of thank yous.

To anyone whom I've missed off, my apologies, and my only excuse is that I am just a little bit tired and forgetful at the moment.

Thanks to:

All the part-time exec officers that there have been this year and last, particularly those who donated hours of their life to sitting next to ballot boxes waiting for graduate students to come and vote.

Sue, Gill, Barbara, Annily and especially Maria - why you put up with us I shall never know, but I'm

and vote.

Sue, Gill, Barbara, Annily and especially Maria - why you put up with us I shall never know, but I'm so glad that you do

All my co-chairs - Sue, Sheila, Simon, Felicia, Kati, Emmanuel, Helene, for international cultural evenings, wine and cheese.

Ros and Sinead - DROs who managed to cope with the challenge of running a cross-campus election each fortnight during the first half of term

Old people - Sacha, Kirsty, Anneliese, Ed, Rick, John, Antonia, Ben - for a range of reasons, but basically for persuading me to get and to stay involved in OUSU.

Pete and Duncan, for many reasons, but particularly for taking direct action and picketing the OUSU offices to secure the key campaigning aim of making Chris Allan exec of F&F, as well as posing the crucial question while waiting for the result of the referendum, 'If you were a cactus, which kind of cactus would you be?'

Thanks and good luck to:

Roland, John, Linsey, Laura, Bex, Ian and Nicky - I hope you find OUSU in a good state and that you are able to get on with having an absolutely amazing year.

And, of course, particular thanks to Josefa, Catherine, Louise, Digo, Rosie and Helena. It's been a real privilege to work with all of you, and I hope that you've all enjoyed the year as much as I have - certainly you've all got plenty of reason to be proud of what you've achieved this year.

Louise McMullan

V-P (Access & Academic Affairs)

A tube of Smarties to the first person to spot a cryptic reference:

This past year it was my intention to get academic affairs a bit more recognition. Hopefully this has been done. Common room academic affairs officers have certainly received much better training than ever before and I hope they feel confident about how important their job is to students. Some, I have to say, have been outstanding: Claire at Wadham and Caroline at St Hilda's have been ridiculously good (thank you for always coming to my meetings!) and as a bunch academic affairs officers have been great to work with. Academic affairs committee used to struggle to get any sort of attendance or even to get co-chairs. This year we've got rid of this and it is with great reluctance that I hand over one of my favourite parts of the job to Linsey - look after it!

The sad truth is that no one really reads these reports so I'm not sure how effective it will be to say that academic affairs isn't just about library opening hours, it's about a whole spectrum of problems and concerns that can affect any student at any time. Anyone can fall ill and need to defer their finals, anyone can suffer depression and decide to take a year out. Ordinary students fail exams, have bad relationships with their tutors/college/course or suffer from dyslexia and they come to OUSU to help them when it goes wrong. Don't give me this cobblers about OUSU just being irrelevant,, rubbish and ineffectual, every single day a student will come in needing help and they get it. Students who I take on as casework significantly reduce their risk of being sent down or receiving a harsh punishment, this is because I'm damn good at my job and that's what I've been most proud of this year.

Target schools has been great fun, I will laugh for years at the silly stuff we've got up to. I nearly cried when we arrived in Northern Ireland, not just because I was going to see my brother but because I was really proud about going home and showing them this superb thing called Target schools. We've done all the necessary stuff, the handbook, the mailings, the events and they've been brilliant but I'm most pleased about the change in outlook of the average Target schools volunteer. Through debating the issues in meetings this year and challenging students we've all learned a lot.

So often I feel like the two parts of my job are in conflict. In academic affairs casework and sitting

learned a lot.

So often I feel like the two parts of my job are in conflict. In academic affairs casework and sitting on University committees I see this place at its worst, racist, sexist, socially elitist and sometimes just absurd. If you're then faced with a group of particularly cynical prospective students from South Yorkshire it's rather hard to sell the place. We really should have two sabbaticals, one for Access and one for Academic Affairs. Not just because there is this conflict, but because there's more than enough work for the pair of them to do, and hey Cambridge do it, so why can't we?

I've really enjoyed working for OUSU. It's not exactly how I would like it to be, but it's doing a lot of good stuff on a shoestring and people so easily forget this. One thing the new sabs will have to learn is that you can never, ever please everyone all the time, or even some of the people any of the time. Instead of forever apologising for what OUSU is, or attempting to make it endlessly relevant, whatever that means, be proud of the things that it does and does well and assert these as often as you can. OUSU isn't going to achieve anything if it isn't proud of and properly committed to its bread and butter campaigns, advice and representation.

Enough of my self indulgences, time for all the thanks:

In chronological order: To Nick and David for getting me this job and to my dad for telling me to go for it (even though I'll never be as good as him!). To exec, past and present and particularly those who've had my portfolios, those who've helped when they didn't have to and those who were a good laugh in the pub. The co-chairs: Nick, David, Steve, Tom - thanks for all your hard work. Eric, Katie, Paddy, Catherine and Dave - well done everyone and especially well done Ryan.

So many laughs, far too much pizza (Paddy, you're still horrid). I hope Linsey gets co-chairs who are as much fun and as hardworking as you lot. To my housemates for their help in victimising poor Digo. To the other sabs for not killing me: I didn't know all of them before I started and I was supposed to hate Rosie because she ran against my friend for her job, how things change!

Thank you for agreeing to be my friend. Charlyne and Linsey, both wonderful friends, best of luck for the future.

I'll miss you both loads. And finally to those I love the most and who've kept me going, my family, Rosie and especially John.

Josefa Henry-Bochan

VP (Charities and Community)

We've had some fun events over the past 2 weeks. Most notably I skydived yesterday along with 8 other students - it was a great way to end off the year.

RAG

Overall RAG total 03-04 so far: £50,488.89

College Totals - Up to date 10th June 2004

Premiership

Christ Church £2296.63

St. Hilda's £1808.54

St. Anne's £1678.33

St. John's £1675.09

Wadham £1629.23

1st Division

Brasenose £1551.42

Univ £1312.70

St. Hugh's £1178.53

Balliol £1130.22

Lincoln £931.73

2nd Division

Magdalen £863.12

Oriel £860.36

Corpus £821.01

Magdalen £665.12
Oriol £860.36
Corpus £821.01
LMH £819.15
Keble £811.09

3rd Division

New £800
Hertford £674.81
Teddy Hall £628.48
Trinity £421
Pembroke £330

4th Division

Jesus £319.39
Worcester £194.37
St. Catz £187.16
Merton £175.23
Somerville £2.27
St. Peter's £0
Exeter £0

Community

This started out as being an indistinct portfolio, my job description was vague and there were mixed ideas about what it should do. This year has gone a long way in sorting that out and I feel that Ian, Alice and Jo will go on to much better things. In terms of some main things we've achieved this year:

The Alternative Careers and Volunteering fair. Attended by over 900 students interested in the 28 volunteering opportunities presented. A 48 page guide was also produced which provided information on all the groups as well as covering issues to do with volunteering and diversity.

Opening up the university to organisations that have had few or no student volunteers.

Hosting events for students involved in voluntary work to meet and providing a venue for volunteer co-ordinators to come in and meet students.

Establishing new schemes for students to work in local hospitals, particularly the Radcliffe Infirmary and John Radcliffe, where we have had over 60 volunteers already and about 200 who have been in contact about volunteering next term.

Worked with the Cowley Carnival organisers, the largest community event in the city, with 15,000 people attending. Organised funding from them and recruited volunteers.

Have disseminated good practice information and offered support to existing student run volunteer groups, for example have offered advice on child protection policies and have carried out over 150 CRB checks on student volunteers.

Organised training courses worth around £8000 (funded through Millennium Volunteers) for volunteers working in hospitals. They were awarded a government recognised qualification.

In terms of what I would like to see happening next year, here are some thoughts:

Running the Alternative Careers and Volunteering Fair again

Expanding the hospital volunteering:

Working with the Nuffield Hospital in partnership with other groups, to recruit volunteers in areas such as:

Working alongside health professionals

Working with the Nuffield Hospital in partnership with other groups, to recruit volunteers in areas such as:
Working alongside health professionals
Business/Project Management
Sport and art groups
Hydrotherapy
Liaising with patients and local community groups to produce a better website

We are working on the principal of creating a bank of young volunteers which would be administered by the Vice President (Charities and Community) and would include young volunteers from Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, the local community and local schools. Volunteer placements would then be organised in conjunction with the PPI manager. As with the previous hospital volunteer work that we have done we are planning to work with a number of partners including:

The Nuffield Trust
The National Association of Hospital and Community Friends (NAHCF)
Oxford Brookes University
Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action (OCVA)
Millennium Volunteers

As with the previous scheme we intend to send volunteers on government recognised courses to develop skills in the areas in which they are volunteering. In return the volunteers will be asked to commit to a certain number of hours and they will be awarded certificates to mark their achievements.

The key difference between this and many other schemes is that it will be created with the needs of student volunteers in mind as well as those of the hospital staff and patients.

Working with Olga primary school, which has a large percentage of Bangladeshi children who do not have English as a first language. Volunteers would help the children with reading and other language skills. We intend to send the first volunteers there in October. The school currently does not have any volunteers.

National Student Volunteering and RAG conference
Jan 2nd-5th

I think this conference has amazing potential and we've secured a good amount of funding for it, so I can't wait to attend.

Environment

I haven't been as involved with Environment Committee as with RAG or community, although more this term than the previous two, thanks in part to be bring assigned a decent exec officer to the portfolio. Dominique and Max are great co-chairs and I wish them the best of luck for next year.

Funding

I have put in a bid to HEACF for the VP C & C salary for the next two years, as well as for some other things including the Alternative Careers and Volunteering Fair. So fingers crossed. Jennifer Noon wrote in her memo on the subject:

"A key aim in allocating the HEACF 2 funds will be continuation funding for the post of OUSU Vice-President Charities and Community, as this has been such a success in the last year (as well as continued funding for the Museums and Sports Outreach programmes, which have also created a good number of volunteering opportunities)."

Which gives room to hope. I am helping to prepare a large bid to send to the Department of Health for our hospital volunteering programme.

Thanks

I am actually, as it turns out, pretty sad to be leaving. It has been a steep learning curve this year and this term I've felt that at last I was getting to grips with it all. There wasn't much structure in place for me in Michaelmas and I basically had to do a lot of donkey work – I still do but now there are lot more people to help out and we get in done much faster and better.

place for me in Michaelmas and I basically had to do a lot of donkey work – I still do but now there are lot more people to help out and we get in done much faster and better.

I've worked with some really great students over the past year, that have impressed me with their enthusiastic, positive attitude, efficiency, kindness and generosity. I hope that those I've worked with know how appreciative I am to them for keeping me sane throughout the year. But, as my report is not yet long enough (!) I'd like to run through some particular thanks.

Thanks to my RAG exec of this year and last – great bunch of people and friends: Simon, Imy, Omar, Crispian, Mr King, Dave “Parasite” Salcedo, Lucy “Axe-Murderer” Phipps (the only person other than me to be at every RAG week event), Liz “Hog” Jeremy, Owain “I can handle that” Mulligan, Joy, Adam, Hollie and Katie P.

To ALL the RAG reps – the year would not have worked without you. Just some particular thanks to those who really went above and beyond the call of duty and who were always willing to help:

Jennifer Garn - amazingly efficient, even getting people from Brasenose involved, incredible ability to collect money!

Selina and Louisa – it's no surprise Christ Church topped the tables with these guys in charge, absolutely lovely to work with.

Hannah and Kirsty D – always ready to help out, and coming up with great ideas in college.

Ed Young – one of our few men! Oh but we value the ones we have, always really helpful and energetic

Ellie and Jessica.

Kirsty (Ross) and Rachael

Lorna Stevenson – how much energy can one person have?

Martin and Kirsty (Rolfe) – I could ask the same about these guys....

Anne-Marie and Poppy – so sweet, and went to enormous trouble to organise events – which really paid off in the end.

Adele and Kate – for finally getting Wadham's arse in gear....I'm looking forward to great things next year.

To my new community co-chairs Alice and Jo – it took me nearly a year to find people who could do that job well, but at least I found you in the end.

People who have helped in various ways: Nina Wilson, Rob Opher, Lauren Osbourne, Kim Hardman, Marie Wright, Mike Holden, Will Reynolds, Elisabeth Gray and my boyfriend Krassi who undoubtedly got roped into more driving, carrying, street collecting, bar tending and helping out at events than anyone else.

Sarah (Charity and Community) and Jamie (Environment) are great executive officers and have restored my faith in the position after the horror that was most of Michaelmas Term exec, with me particularly being assigned the Tory jokers. (Just, by the way, if anyone's reading this, I am not and have never been active in OUCA and am not a crazy Tory – this reputation has somewhat plagued me). I'm sure the current exec will do a great job in helping the new sabs settle in.

Thanks to all the sabs – it wasn't the horror story everyone said it would be! Especially to those I've worked more closely with over the year - Helena for her fairness, support, efficiency and great leadership skills, to Digo for his skills in so many areas – one talented boy, and thanks for sharing them, Edd for helping me out, being cute (if a bit obsessed....).

Thanks to Maria for being great – helpful, fun, keeping everything in perspective, putting up with loads of crap (and encouraging me to do my skydive). Thanks to Gill, who's coped brilliantly with all the changes. Thanks to Annily, for listening to my whinging. Thanks to Barbara for being brilliant to work with, fun, encouraging and making a massive difference to the way RAG works.

Thanks to Sue for being fun, calming and organised. Hurray for the General Office!

Sorry for the heavily indulgent nature of this report.

Finally to say, very good luck to Ian – he knows I'll be watching!!!!

OUSU Staff

Edd Southerden Business Manager

It is with a peculiar cocktail of nostalgia and dread that I look back over the last twelve months working for Oxford's 4th favourite graduate employment destination. I think, now, it fair to ask how the hell on got the job in the first place. The dark shady worlds of media sales, entz negotiations and graduate recruitment was entirely alien to me, and it is something of a scandal that I was allowed to pilot this particular ship. I certainly wouldn't have employed me: certainly a case for re-advertising the position. The Business Manager job is one of the best things that any Oxford student could do – it's combination of real world mad dog cut and thrust combined with a further year of Oxford University's own brand of wildly arrogant eccentric nonsense. I've really enjoyed it, though I fear it's turned me into a complete ****. My thoughts are the following:

I. Publications:

The summer period was very successful thanks almost entirely to the hard work of one Daniel Finley. The Freshers' Fair and the Oxford Handbook were particular revenue highlights. My own stuff: The Oxford and Cambridge Careers Handbook was a little disappointing, though through circumstances which were beyond my control, even if the responsibility is mine. The MT Oxford Student was much better than previous year's, though there is definitely scope for masses more revenue. I'm worried about the OCCH frankly; we're extremely reliant on it to make us cash, the structure of raising revenue and generating a good and useful publication is a bit out-dated, and I'm not sure how to fix this problem. We've changed things a bit this year, so we'll see whether this bears any fruit. Essentially, we're going to invest substantially and cut the prices at the same time, so I expect to loose lot's of money in the short term and come back with a much stronger proposition next year. The Summer was also a period of substantial brain storming and development which was both fun and I think broadly successful, even if some ideas haven't quite worked out as well as we hoped. I definitely believe OUSU as a commercial enterprise is in much firmer shape than when I started, and I feel sure Dan will carry on the Good Work of fleshing out the stuff we tried out this year. The on-line database/ousucard/networking stuff is going to be particularly exciting.

As *business director* of Oxford's premier student newspaper, I've particularly enjoyed ruining their natty vanity publication with marketing materials from whichever multinational I can lay my hands on. I've despised student journalism pretty much since Michaelmas 2000 – amateurish, boring yet pretentious nonsense much across the board. I have almost changed my opinion having had the sincere pleasure of working with messers Flood, Coatsworth, O'Brien, Srivastava and Morgan. Almost, but not quite. I'm sorry I ruined your paper guys. The Ox-Stu has gone from making an embarrassing subsidised deficit to netting approximately 15k profit. This Trinity in particular has been the most successful for 6 years a fact of which I'm actually genuinely proud. The obviously pathetic rivalry between us and Oxford's other student newspaper is something I now feel to my bones and will take me about 20 years to shake off (see paragraph 1 above).

2. Cash.

I get paid very little. (More than most of the sabs though. Huzzah.) I think we should all be paid a living wage. Not particularly controversial I don't think. The Student Union shouldn't exist if it can't afford to run itself. Sorry. That means cuts, but the current situation is unacceptable.

Probably one of the most important changes has happened behind the scenes: Having the very excellent Barbara Godfrey on an invoicing mission is an innovation that will save ousu thousands in unpaid invoices and wasted BM time. In a way I'm glad we don't have a shop...

3. Entz.

An extremely dirty business, this has been an eye opener. Turns out I really don't/didn't have the time and endurance to do this as fully as I'd have liked. Full Time Entz Manager – A GOOD THING. Good for OUSU's revenue, but more importantly, good for the Students of Oxford.

time and endurance to do this as fully as I'd have liked. Full Time Entz Manager – A GOOD THING. Good for OUSU's revenue, but more importantly, good for the Students of Oxford. Someone employed to organise good club nights at a fair price without the need for peculiar marketing ideas like 'guest-list' queues and other shady practices. My thanks must go to Balrick for giving me something to think about.

4. 'Targeted Distribution'

You know all those awful and seemingly inappropriate flyers you get in your pigeon holes. The ones you 'put in the bin without even looking at'. Well I put those there. Sorry. It's made us lots of cash. Eternal thanks to everyone's favourite illegal immigrant.

5. Thanks (short).

Digo - You're a ****ing genius. Good luck with whatever you do mate, it's been a pleasure. Finley – The baby's all yours now my son, I think you'll enjoy it. Don't be too evil. Sue & Barbara – Sanity, concern and sensible advice: OUSU's best-kept secret. Maria – Eternally patient, I'm not sure how (or indeed sometimes why) you do it. Au Revoir! Gill and Annily – stop laughing at me. Helena – commitment matched with exuberance and a low idiot threshold that is stunningly brilliant. You'll go far my girl. Joesfa – you understand the attractive evils of raising money like no other. I thought we were going to fight like cats for the entire year, but I think it turned out ok in the end. The rest of the Sabs – Rosie, Louise, Catherine, Dan, cheers guys.

My friends in the real world, who have shown such a refreshing lack of interest in what I have become obsessed that they almost certainly will never read this. Fran, Rhod, Kieran, Rob, Rachel, I love each and every one of you.

Executive Officers

Chris Allen

This has been another rewarding term on exec. F&F has been quite low-profile this term, but hopefully our quiet lobbying of the Lords and Univeristy will meet with some success. This took up most of the campaign's time at the beginning of term, so we're just beginning to look at how to campaign for the referendum policy, no doubt this will get more attention next term when the top-up fees issue is less urgent. Thanks to everyone who came along to the 6th week meeting to work on this. Rents - I've been disappointed by the complete lack of attendance at Rents Committee this term, which has made it extremely hard to do anything about rent increases. Hopefully if we manage to get people talking about rents earlier next year then we will be able to get a decent size campaign going to support common room negotiations next summer. OUSU Reps - this has been going really well, thanks to the co-chairs. As ever, it would be nice to see a wider range of people - we'll be organising introductory/training sessions at the beginning of next year, which should be useful for any new OUSU reps. In addition, I set up the new OUSU discussion boards at <http://discuss.ousu.ox.ac.uk> - take a look if you haven't already.

James Audsley

Equal Opportunities

There has been a minimal amount for myself to undertake in this portfolio but I shall look to become a monitor of the newly created discussion boards and help ensure that PRISM continues to move forward next term.

Environment

The environment committee had not been visited by an OUSU representative for quite a while but I and Jo have tried to attend as many of the meetings as possible. The committee is highly self sufficient but we aimed to improve its running by introducing the committee to services that OUSU offers such as the email list, publishing facilities and the press officer. Apart from this we have helped with the coordination of environment day, bringing the green electricity motion to council, investigating publishing information in the Oxford Handbook and raising the committee's budget by £100. The committee's aims are progressing well with pressure on improving recycling increasing and greater information for students about the environment being put in place. The only thing I think that the committee suffers from is a low profile relative to other OUSU campaigns

budget by 2100. The committee's aims are progressing well with pressure on improving recycling increasing and greater information for students about the environment being put in place. The only thing I think that the committee suffers from is a low profile relative to other OUSU campaigns and the publicity that it receives as a result. I shall try and work to improve this next term. Go and see "The Day After Tomorrow" be worried and come to Environment Committee!

Entz

This is the portfolio that I have spent most time on this term. Although OUSU entz has made efforts in the past with Zoo etc it has lacked a continuity and presence within Oxford. Hopefully this will change. Having done little in the way of university wide entz I began by investigating the possibilities and pitfalls that await OUSU by talking to as many people involved in this crazy game. The word on the street so to speak is that many people at all levels would love to see OUSU play a greater involvement and feel that there is space in a competitive market to make our presence felt. How to go about it was another matter; people feeling that OUSU lacked credibility and image in this sphere. Anyways we began with the aim of building a long term basis for OUSU in the entz market and it has been an organic process that has come together well. Should we promote? Should we run nights? Or should we just put our logo on someone else's event to improve publicity? What direction should our entz take?

All or nothing was the decision. The average student wants a quality, fun and cheap night and who else should provide this service but a student, and I mean *student* run organisation. Thus this term the entz team which has consisted of myself, Helena, Digo and Ed set out to put on an end of term event that would lead well in to next year and get a team together that could secure a regular night in one of the major clubs, providing the newly created Entz manager with a great basis to kick off from. With a bit of luck we may just about have achieved all this. We have a great event lined up for next week, a strong team and a night which could be a fantastic success in Michaelmas. If OUSU is to succeed the effort will have to be large and concerted, but to shy away from it would be to lose an opportunity that allows us to reach out to a far greater range of students. School's Out and I'm looking forward to the holidays. Have fun.

My thanks to all those that I have worked with this term and thank you for the welcome late in the day. Special mention must go to Helena, Digo, Ed and Jo, it has been a pleasure working with you all.

Ian Caddy

Apologies for the briefness of this report but do feel free to ask me any questions that you have. The most obvious thing to talk about is the direction of the F&F campaign over the past term. Most of our energies have been directed towards fighting the Higher Education Bill in the House of Lords which is obviously still an ongoing matter which needs attention. When the committee stage has finished we'll be able to concentrate on lobbying the Members with regards to specific amendments which our policy supports, e.g. scrapping variability of fees. The other more contentious issue has obviously been the result of the referendum. After lengthy and heated discussions we still have little consensus as to how to actually move forwards within the scope of our new policy but we are hoping that further consultation with interested parties will enable us to have an enlightened and productive discussion of it at Council next term. I'm optimistic that we can thrash this out successfully and avoid any negative press coverage which might arise.

Academic Affairs has been having productive fortnightly meetings generally with a good attendance which have focused on discussing issues on an ad hoc basis. We will be getting the campaign to swap central Bodleian library opening hours from a Saturday morning to the afternoon at the start of next term. This will be a postcard campaign which we have now designed and will be getting ready along with other publicity over the summer ready to swing into action at the start of Michaelmas.

Finally I would like to express an enormous thank you to all of the Sabs who are now sadly leaving us. Having worked with them for the past year I've gained a lot of respect for them and the work they do and would like to wish them all the very best in whatever they choose to do.

Steve Harper

This term, I have again enjoyed being on the OUSU exec. In terms of my general duties, I have been to all my duty mornings/afternoons and all the exec meetings that academic commitments have not prevented me from making. Badly times tutorials on Friday,s have hindered by presence in council this term, however. In terms of my portfolios, diversity week has been inactive this term as the events happened during Hilary. Of my other two portfolios, I have particularly enjoyed working with the ethics committee. As the specific report for ethics committee details, we are presently working on foundations for the SRI campaign and look forward to launching that in

as the events happened during Michaelmas. Of my other two portfolios, I have particularly enjoyed working with the ethics committee. As the specific report for ethics committee details, we are presently working on foundations for the SRI campaign and look forward to launching that in Michaelmas. That said, I hope that the ethics committee can remain a broad campaigning committee, and will be seeking to revive the campaign on sweatshop labour or to seek a new area of [ethical] interest to look at in order that the ethics committee doesn't become the SRI campaign committee. That cautionary note aside

, I'm delighted at some of the progress that has been made so far and look forward to seeing some of that come together in the coming year. It is also my hope that Queer Rights may be able to follow suit in improving attendance as this has been ailing this term. I believe that a campaign targeted towards freshers will be vital for the committee, and will ensure that I am in contact with the new sabbatical and the co-chairs about how we can best keep the committee relevant to students. We've talked about quite a variety of things in Queer Rights this term, including the situation of homophobia in schools and the continued ban by the national blood service on blood donations from gay men. All in all, I'll be looking forward to next term

Emrys Jones

Anti-Racism Campaign

It has been a quiet term for the anti-racism campaign. Despite poster campaigns, at time of writing, our weekly meetings rarely get many people turning up – perhaps this is mainly down to Trinity malaise and to the fact that PRISM has become a useful forum for those who otherwise might have brought issues to us. I have emailed various college ethnic minorities officers in the hopes of getting one bigger meeting together in 7th Week. I am hoping this will go well and that we will be able to talk about plans for the future of the campaign. Certainly, with Black History month happening in October, there are things for us to talk about, but we really need more people taking an interest. Depending on the success of the 7th Week meeting, it may be an idea to make the distinction between small and big meetings more official – to schedule a meeting every week for those who want to come, but also to specifically publicise two or three large gatherings in a term in the hope that more people will be persuaded to turn up. It will depend on the turn-out for this meeting though, whether or not I would actually advise this.

Health and Welfare Committee

We've had two main events since I took over this committee from Dave. The most popular, our self-defence workshop at Keble had many people asking if this could be a more regular event, so I may try to put on several more next term. The listening skills workshop we held in 7th had slightly fewer people but was also successful and I anticipate being able to hold more of these next term for interested new Welfare Officers.

NUS

Apart from answering a number of enquiries, my workload for this has been small this term. I do look forward however, presuming the council-passed resolution is acted upon across the university, to being very involved in the new centrally administrated NUS affiliations in the future.

Alia Parpia

Well I seem to have spent this term stuffing envelopes and have made the wonderful discovery that Fox FM subscribes to two Oxstus. How curious! Anyway, One World Week was this term and was a success- the international cultural evening was well attended and very much enjoyed. Well done to the committee. I feel that OWW should be integrated into the International portfolio, as it functions with pretty much the same people and is just for one week once a year. Otherwise International Students was relatively dormant and Pro-choice same.

Charlynn Pullen

Target Schools

Well we all decamped to Sheffield and Northern Ireland over the Easter vacation, and tried to spread the word about Oxford being a place full of normal people (!). I hope we achieved our aims, we made a massive effort, and it is a tribute to the co-chairs who organised the regional conferences, and the co-chairs and friends who travelled with us that we managed to speak to so many people. Sheffield and Derry were fairly well attended, Belfast, as ever, was enormously well received, and Enniskillen was an experience! People may wonder why we bothered to spend 4 and a half hours on coaches to speak to a group of around 15 students in rural Northern Ireland.

Well, if you asked me I would tell you that is exactly the kind of thing Target Schools should be

received, and Enniskeen was an experience. People may wonder why we bothered to spend 1 and a half hours on coaches to speak to a group of around 15 students in rural Northern Ireland. Well, if you asked me I would tell you that is exactly the kind of thing Target Schools should be doing, those students will hopefully now think about university in general, and Oxford, and believe they can achieve things they may not have otherwise considered as feasible options. Ok so I'm being slightly melodramatic, but the point still stands, it was so important to go, and I hope Target Schools can continue to visit similar areas, in addition to its traditional Belfast regional conference. Other things I've done for Target Schools this term include more work on the Open Day I'm organising at St Hugh's on the Tuesday of 9th week. The Standardised Testing motion that came to council was extremely important, and I'd like to report from the History JCC that the tutors felt it was inappropriate to charge a fee for the test they will be making applicants for History sit in November, and will indeed be closely monitoring the tests. A big thank you to all the leaving co-chairs Ryan, Katie, Paddy, and Catherine, well done and welcome to the new co-chairs, and see you next term to Eric!

Women's Campaign

This term we have been working on the Women's Open Day, which is on Saturday of 7th week, we held a Women's Picnic last Monday and are helping Emma with her campaign to support RAWA.

Attendance has been fairly low this term, and we are losing two of our co-chairs, with elections on Monday of 8th week hopefully we will be able to make up a full team before Michaelmas. Both Women's Campaign and Target Schools seem to have suffered from the 'Trinity term curse', but hopefully they will both be back to good levels of attendance in Michaelmas.

TUC

The May Day events were held on the May Day bank holiday this year, and Helena spoke alongside other important trade union figures in Oxford and district. The events were fairly poorly attended, largely due to the rain, and so work is being done on how it can be made better next year, but thank you from the TUC to all the students who attended, we were the biggest trade union group there. Other important work the TUC had been doing is organising speaker meetings with international trade unionists, particularly one in conjunction with those currently visiting Ruskin, on Friday the 11th June at 7.30pm at the Asian Cultural Centre entitled Free Trade vs. Community and Workers' rights?

General Exec

I have attended most exec meetings and councils, and have attended all Women's Campaign and Target Schools meetings. I have very much enjoyed working with the sabs and the part-time exec, and will be sad to see the sabs leave, although am looking forward to working with the new team.

Dan Simpson

I have continued to find my time on the executive extremely fulfilling, thanks in large part to the help and dedication of the OUSU staff as well as that of the sabbaticals and the part-time executive. There are many people to whom I am extremely grateful both on and off the executive. In addition to the normal work of my portfolios, which I will discuss below, I have continued to be involved in the F+F campaign, have sat on the selection panel for mentors to go work in schools in the East Oxford Action Zone, have been elected to Rules Committee, have served on Elections Committee and have sat on JCC. I have also been appointed to the position of Assistant Business Manager which I will perform for part of the long vacation.

College Inequality

A new co-chair, Ferdinando Giugliano, was appointed at the beginning of this term and he has continued the committee's work regarding differing rents and hardship provision between colleges, in which I have also been involved. The domestic bursars and accommodation managers of some colleges have been helpful whilst others have been reluctant to share information. Given the current focus of the campaign a close cooperation with the F+F and Rents campaigns has begun to form and will continue next year.

Mature Students

Trinity has seen no Mature Students events, although the representative and advice elements of the Vice President (Graduates) job continues. I am pleased to report that interest has been expressed regarding greater involvement in this aspect of OUSU's work for the next academic year.

Disabilities Action

This campaign has been less active than it was in Trinity, in large part due to lower attendance from JCR welfare officers. However, useful recommendations have been received from the Dyslexia Network regarding ways in which exam procedures could be adapted to reflect the needs of dyslexic students. These suggestions will be passed into the University's decision making process

John Wainwright's report, however, several recommendations have been received from the Dyslexia Network regarding ways in which exam procedures could be adapted to reflect the needs of dyslexic students. These suggestions will be passed into the University's decision making process and there is a realistic prospect of some or all of them being implemented. Next year's SWD guide is now in development and looks like it will be very impressive. The campaign also welcomes the City Council's guide to disabled provision in Oxford and we hope to have a great deal of input to future editions.

Sarah Waight

I spent a lot of time this term organising the RAG skydive, which was supposed to happen in 2nd week, but after spending a day at the airfield waiting for the weather to improve it didn't so I had to reschedule it, and some of the people went this Wednesday and did their skydives. When all the sponsor money is collected, it should have made quite a lot of money for RAG.

As for my community portfolio, I've done some work on the Oxford Get Involved website. I've contacted charities to get some volunteer profiles for the website, and a few are on there now. There are about 50 voluntary groups on there now, so I want to get some publicity sorted out for it for Michaelmas so people wanting to do volunteering will use it as a resource to find out about opportunities. I also went to a meeting with Josefa and the community co-chairs about possibly setting up a volunteering scheme in schools in London, and I plan to get more involved in this in Michaelmas if we do decide its possible to set up.

Tom Packer

This term has been a relatively quiet one from a student union point of view.

In terms of my portfolio's graduate involvement has been quite quiet this term. This is of course in large part because though many undergraduates do not realize this, exams or equivalent effect the graduate population as well. There is of course one significant exception to this general rule and that was the election of a graduate sabbatical in which I helped slightly chiefly in terms of ballot boxes. I would say it was a fairly significant success. Turnout though not high in absolute levels was massively higher. Moreover given the relative size of the eligible electorate it was not massively different from the numbers who voted in the undergraduate sabbatical by-election. This was particularly so when one takes account of the fact the latter had more than one candidate. This brings me to the one problem -the fact several candidates for graduate exec positions had to withdraw due to their supervisors refusal to give permission . This is a problem which as far as I can see is much less significant for undergraduates- and will affect graduate representation for the foreseeable future. I also must say that I disapprove of the new guidelines for graduate exec responsibilities that will take effect after the term of the current graduate exec ends- I fear that this will effect participation at the non-Sabbatical level, severely.

I have also helped in terms of difficulties with the application system for graduates-though this depended on Dan. Clubs and Societies are finally starting to progress-overwhelmingly due to Helena and my excellent co-chair as well as Council's decision to pass some sensible new policy. We are in the process of having a new society room in the old shop to claim some abandoned responsibilities of the University. This should provide useful facilities including photocopying and storage to all societies regardless of their nature. This provides a rare opportunity for OUSU to provide services for ordinary students-since virtually all students are active in some society or another to a great or less extent. In just about all students union,s societies are a major way in which they actually serve their members and this could be true of OUSU. There also should be a clubs and societies dinner this term. I also hope that the new ents officer will eventually prove to be very useful to all sorts of societies in Oxford. I think it would also be fair to say that I have continued on exec and council to expound an underrepresented viewpoint clearly and firmly.

OUSU Committees and Campaigns

Academic Affairs

This term, the committee has worked on a couple of things. To recap on Hilary term, we proposed to start a campaign on the issue of Saturday afternoon opening hours in central Bodleian libraries. As this has been happening this term ^ presumably due to examinations ^ it was decided that it would be better left until Michaelmas. The ground has been prepared for this now, though, and so we,ll be ready to launch that in the first half of next term. As would be expected in Trinity, a good part of the time of the committee has been dedicated to exams: in particular the area of

that it would be better left until Michaelmas. The ground has been prepared for this now, though, and so we'll be ready to launch that in the first half of next term. As would be expected in Trinity, a good part of the time of the committee has been dedicated to exams: in particular the area of examination failure. The Academic Affairs at Wadham College prepared a help sheet for internal use; this was revised by both of the current co-chairs and a motion on this was successfully brought to Council in 5th week. We hope that this will be a useful resource for common room officers and the students they seek to support. 5th week also brought a change for the meeting in that college admissions officers were invited along. This provoked some interesting discussion, and may well be something to look into again in the future. This term we welcomed a new co-chair, Tom Pountney. He worked alongside the existing co-chair, Steve Harper. The executive office for the committee was Ian Caddy and the Sabbatical officer was Louise McMullan.

College Inequality

The College Inequality Campaign was centered on the preparation of the new College Inequality Report. It was decided to sharpen the structure of the report, focusing on two main issues, bursary schemes and accommodation price, so as to make it more cohesive and easier to read: in this new format the report should be able to have a stronger impact on the university. It was also decided that every effort should be made to include graduate students in the study.

Data concerning rent prices were asked to the various colleges: a third of the colleges replied promptly and comprehensively, while most were often extremely reluctant to provide the figures: such reluctance should, hence, be seen as the best indicator of the poor transparency of the University on the issue of rents. This difficulty of access is then combined with an extremely variety of names of charges, which makes different rent system very difficult to compare. Even by solely comparing the few figures we could collect, it clearly emerges the fact that every effort should be made to standardise the way in which rents are expressed, and, indeed, publicise them more widely.

On the issue of bursaries, a questionnaire was sent to the JCR treasurers and presidents, some of whom replied promptly and comprehensively. On this issue, as on the previous one, though, the data were still not enough to draw any precise conclusion.

For the College Inequality Campaign this term was, hence, a good starting point. Nevertheless, much more needs to be done: rents figures need be asked to JCR presidents in order to obtain the missing ones, and data on bursaries need to be completed. All of this was not possible, mostly because of the extremely small number of people directly involved in this work (two): with a wider participation the important tasks set by this campaign will certainly be achieved more easily and more rapidly.

Clubs and Committees

This has been a much more dynamic term for the Clubs and Societies Committee. First, I met up earlier in the term with Helena and Rodrigo to discuss our aims of what we wanted the Clubs and Societies Committee to achieve; then I met up with Executive Officer Thomas Packer to detail what exactly we wanted from our Committee. We all agreed that we wanted to raise the profile of OUSU Clubs and Societies Committee within Oxford societies and clubs and to promote co-operation between student groups, and by doing so we have enlisted the help of the Freshers Fair Committee.

What we have done so far:

► The database for Freshers' Fair data is also to be used as a searchable online accessory for OUSU representatives and clubs and societies personnel to facilitate communication between OUSU and groups, as well as between groups.

► We have converted the closed OUSU shop into a Clubs and Societies Resources Room to provide centralized photocopying, publishing, fax facilities etc. to clubs and societies free of charge, as well as the renting out of DVD players, TVs and projectors at minimal cost.

► Society post has been centralized and is to be delivered to personalised pigeon holes in the Clubs and Societies Resources Room

► The Clubs and Societies section on the OUSU website has been extended and made more comprehensive, including a step-by-step guide of how to set up a society and more updates on what has been done and what we aim to achieve.

► Business@OUSU is working with us to organize the Accenture Dinner for OU Clubs and Societies. This will raise the profile of OUSU in club and society activity and bring the student community closer together.

► We are collaborating closely with the Freshers' Fair Committee to produce advertising emails

Societies. This will raise the profile of OUSU in club and society activity and bring the student community closer together.

► We are collaborating closely with the Freshers' Fair Committee to produce advertising emails and distribute pamphlets/material about the improved Clubs and Societies Committee facilities.

This is to raise the profile of services such as OUSU Live to the groups and to increase usage of our provided facilities.

Aims for next term:

► Freshers' Fair – publicity drive for OUSU Clubs and Societies and OUSU Live.

► Committee Set up – recruitment to set up a formalized committee structure, and to create an arena for effective advice and discussion.

► Society Socials – to facilitate inter-society co-operation, we plan to hold socials for each category of student groups throughout the term.

► Facilities Database – a searchable database of college and town-based facilities to help societies and groups organize more efficiently.

► Perhaps an online calendar to help groups advertise their events on OUSU Live?

Ethics

Preparing the ground work for a university wide Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) campaign has been the major focus of ethics committee this term. This has involved the following:

- outreach, in order to find people willing to help run the campaign (ethics committee had been relatively poorly attended of late). This has reached contacts willing to work on the campaign at a significant number of colleges.

- integration, developing a group sense of our aims and preferred methods of achieving them.

- organisation, such as setting up coordination mailing lists, starting to set up a specific SRI website and getting access to OUSU IT facilities.

- developing a core understanding of the legal, financial and political issues surrounding SRI in Oxford.

- early stages of research into the university's holdings, and thinking about the possibility of presenting alternatives to the University.

- making contact with those who have run the campaign in the past, so as to learn from previous successes and failures.

We anticipate that the campaign's work will become more proactive next term. In the latter weeks of this term attendance has increased ^ this is certainly pleasing and we hope to keep this going into next term. This has certainly been the major focus of the committee this term, though we hope that next term it may be possible to revitalise the sweatshop labour campaign that was started this term. We welcome Tom Dale as co-chair, and would also like to say thanks to soon-to-be-outgoing co-chair Charles Smith for his hard work on the committee. The executive office for ethics was Steve Harper.

Finance & Funding

As a new member of the team this term, My first task began in the Easter holidays by writing letters to members of the House of Lords that were alumni of my college.

Once arriving in Oxford, meetings at the begging of the term focused around what to do with regards to amending the Higher Education Bill with the discussion mainly on lobbying the lords.

As well as attending the F&F meetings, we (the co chairs) also chaired the rent meetings that took place. In rent the main topic on the agenda was how to mount a university wide campaign amongst college's to help each other prevent rent rises.

Toward the end of term, it was felt that F and F needed more direction. The focus then became the new referendum result and how to incorporate it into F and F operations. A well publicised meeting was organised to try and get some idea of how people thought F and F should implement the referendum result to reduce student numbers.

As a result of the meeting it was decided that some find it difficult to reconcile the outcome with other parts of OUSU policy. It was agreed that the F and F co-chairs would go away and draw up a report explaining the different options open to OUSU and propose that OUSU council determine F and F's future path in a meeting at the beginning of next term. At present we are about to prepare the document explaining the new referendum result and implications of its implementation.

Queer Rights

We've been very busy in QR this term, with several members involved in setting up off-shoot

We've been very busy in QR this term, with several members involved in setting up off-shoot projects from the main campaign. As a result of the ongoing debate within LGBsoc regarding the relation of transgender issues to issues of sexuality, QR has helped to set up a transgender working group to examine this more closely. Sarah has been particularly involved with setting up a queer theory discussion group, to take a longer look at some of the themes discussed in QR over several terms. All the members of QR were involved in setting up a stall at, and helping to manage, the second Oxford Pride, which was a great success. We've also been looking into the issue of the National Blood Service's refusal to allow actively gay men to give blood, as well as helping out with a graduate student research project designed to address any problems that might exist in queer-police relations. During the term we lost Aidan and Martin as co-chairs, but gained Ross. One (open place) co-chair place is still available for anyone who wants it. Out executive officer for this term is Steve Harper.

Target Schools

Target Schools continued to fulfil its aim of informing state-school students about the real possibilities of studying at Oxford University. We achieved this through two main projects: the Target Schools handbook and a mix of college open days and regional conferences.

The handbook was collated during Michaelmas term; many volunteers contributed to the writing of articles. This resulted in an interesting mix of styles and opinions and so should demonstrate the variety of students at Oxford to its readership. In Hilary Term, we mailed a copy of the Handbook, along with APs and invitations to our open events, to every state school and FE college in the country.

Also during Hilary Term, we organised our open days and conferences. We held a college open day involving Jesus and the other Turl St. colleges during ninth week of Hilary. We felt the organisation of this worked well with a good mix of information talks, question and answer sessions and time for the students to explore for themselves. The only problem was that the attendance for this open day was low, possibly indicating that March is not the best time of year for Oxford-based open days because of the AS system.

We then held 2 regional conferences; in Northern Ireland and Sheffield. Both of these were extremely successful; the format of these seems to work brilliantly, again due to the mix of different types of information provision.

Finally, the Easter schools visiting scheme took place, where Oxford students went back to their old schools to promote Oxford. Again, the feedback received from the students was positive; although the recurrent problem of teacher's prejudices being an obstacle for applications was once again highlighted.