



Emma Norris

President

It has been a pleasure to work with and for the student union, as OUSU president, as a JCR President and as the co-chair of the anti-fees campaign. This report is a description of all the major issues I have encountered this year, how they have progressed and how I hope they will continue.

Rent

This year's rent campaign has been twofold: papers and publicity. On a research level, I have provided a rent "argument" pack that deals with countering the arguments for extra-inflationary increases that college Bursars and Governing Bodies often use. This pack is based on a document originally produced by ex- President Will Straw, in response to a consultant report that recommended increasing rents up to 40%. The pack has been helpful, often being the basis for papers written by common rooms.

OUSU also distributed a rent "negotiation" pack, aimed at supporting common room representatives in the art of... negotiating. Whilst the tone of the document can be slightly annoying, it provides important advices, especially in its outlining of how to operate a rent strike.

Publicity has been an area the campaign has excelled in: student, national and international coverage has put pressure on the University and colleges alike. Highlights include having a petition written in old English presented to the Speaker in the House of Commons and selling the Bodleian to pay off our collective student debt. On a serious note, Martin and I have come to realise that unless sustained collective action (for instance a cross-college rent strike) becomes a possibility, and I don't currently believe it is, then an important role in OUSU's yearly campaign *is* publicity. By forcing the debate into the press, colleges are no longer able to ignore the affects of extra-inflationary rises.

On a general note, whilst this year's campaign has been the strongest for while (in no small part because of Martin McCluskey's commitment), the campaign has lacked central direction because it has remained fundamentally a college issue. Next year the issue of the "cap" on fees and its potential lifting will reignite the debate on student finance, so by including rent hikes in the arguments about pricing students out of higher education, the rent campaign may well stabilise.

Socially Responsible Investment

This campaign has been running for five years, variously focusing on college investments, University Investments, collective finds and individual corporate benefactors. In the past eighteen months the campaign moved away from street protesting toward a strongly research-led argument for ethical investment. Drawing upon comparative studies of SRI and non-SRI funds, the example of other universities, and the inadequacy of Oxford's traditional Good Corporation Charter policy, the campaign made headway in convincing University administrators. Particularly with the Joint Committee of Council with Student Members, the campaign produced a detailed paper on how to move to ethical investment.

Whilst attempting to have the paper heard at University Council, many problems were encountered (these included having our paper removed from the agenda, then at the next Council, having it annexed to a counter paper). These problems betray more significant problems in areas of student representation within the University; I will address these later in the report. For the SRI campaign, they were particularly frustrating, and resulted in a protest outside University Council. When Council finally rejected our paper, we decided that we could not let the debate end there. The campaign set about collecting signatures of fellows in order to present our paper directly to Congregation.

After collecting almost double the required number of fellow signatures, and formally listing SRI on the Congregation agenda, University Council withdrew their opposition to our original demands:

- * Take a firm pro-SRI stance
- * Take action to sort out its current incoherent SRI policy and practices
- * Stop pretending that the Good Corporation Charter is an SRI policy
- * Establish a Joint Committee on Socially Responsible Investment
- * Get advice from independent SRI consultants on their options
- * Publish details of its investments and periodically report on its SRI progress

Whilst excellent news for the campaign, it is frustrating that such threats had to be used before Council would engage in a meaningful discussion with students over this issue. An investigation of why our communication with the University was so complicated must accompany any future SRI campaign, and should also be taken up in a general review of how effective some of our representation is.

It is also vital that OUSU continues to strongly support the SRI campaign, until this year the campaign had little support from sabbaticals, which made communication with University figures very difficult. The campaign will need to focus on college investments now, whilst ensuring that the University honours its agreement on central SRI. OUSU must aid communication between the campaign and colleges (probably using Conference of Colleges) and must persist in holding the University to account on this issue by holding regular meetings of the new Joint Committee on Ethical Investment.

Student Contract

The contract was the most significant unexpected issue of the year for me. The contract was drafted as agreed in meetings that student representatives do not have access to. In terms of the contract itself, the thrust of opposition is not quite what the papers have suggested. The contract had no minimum level of provision for teaching or accommodation, and no commitment to discussing any serious changes to teaching or courses with students. This contract potentially leaves students at risk - should a college suddenly be unable to provide accommodation for first year students, there is little or no room for recourse as the contract allows for this. Likewise with teaching - whilst it is standard for teaching to vary subject to subject, the document made no commitment to discussing changes or limitations to teaching with students first. There is also the issue of fees and charges - the contract signed you up to fees and charges "varying from year to year" with no qualification. This leaves students contractually vulnerable to huge rent rises, kitchen levies, and so on.

I discussed the contract with common room representatives, then drew up a new contract with legal advice. OUSU then argued for these changes to Heads of House and to Conference of Colleges. It has been agreed that the contract will incorporate the legal changes OUSU drafted.

The concept of a more legalised, business-like relationship between student and college is not something I think students greatly support. The relation between a college and a student should also focus on the community that a college provides, and the pastoral role of the college. The relationship between and student and a college is more than just legal. However, if contracts are to be introduced, the new, changed, contract leaves students free from its original problems.

Alongside contracts, there is the concurrent issue of student charters, that Charlyne will address in her own report.

NUS

The relationship between Oxford and the national student movement has never been very easy. This is in part because OUSU tends to be well organised when it comes to national student issues – when top-up fees was the major student debate, OUSU produced the Alternative White Paper ahead of any

NUS report on alternatives. But the relationship is further strained by Oxford's collegiate system, and the feeling within Oxford and without, that often the issues that affect us are not the issues that affect others. I do not think this is true: rent, SRI, the lifting of the cap, license agreements, contracts, visa extension fees, all affect Oxford students *and* the wider student movement. Much of our advice, especially legal, has come from the NUS this year.

So rather than any significant difference in aim, it is actually the structures of Oxford that hinder its national representation. On almost all the issues above, OUSU is best placed to represent the students of Oxford. Indeed, on almost all the issues above OUSU has represented Oxford students this year. Therefore, I have sought to create a relationship with the NUS that reflects this. Rather than expecting common rooms to manage the above issues and the dialogue with the NUS, OUSU should play that role. For this reason, and the significant financial incentive (savings of up to £1500 for some common rooms), I supported a move to central affiliation to the NUS.

A referendum was held on this issue from Thursday 6th week to Sunday 7th week (4 days); the result was roughly **80% in favour of central affiliation**. Therefore, Oxford will be centrally affiliating to the NUS from Michaelmas 2006 onwards.

It will be important to follow through on the consequences of this: OUSU must manage the administration of NUS events (including regional and liberation conferences), organise officer training sessions, rent negotiation sessions, the large amount of paperwork the NUS generates and the Oxford delegation to the NUS Annual Conference (in practice this happens already anyway). It is also imperative that a system of election that works for Oxford's unique "central collegiate affiliation" status is developed. The NUS are happy to assist in creating such a system.

Block Grant

The complicated legal relationship between common room and OUSU has framed our bid for central funding. As has been well documented previously, a common room can disaffiliate from OUSU, whilst its members are still entitled to our services and support. As OUSU relies on common room funding, it is unclear who funds the services and support members from disaffiliated common rooms receive. Because of this, OUSU has been in discussions with the University about receiving some central funding for the essential services we provide regardless of common room affiliation status. The discussions this year have been slow but productive, and once the review of OUSU's financial systems is completed and agreed, I anticipate an offer of roughly **£50,000** worth of central funding. This should be finalised over the summer, so again, it is imperative that our successors continue to press on with this.

Representation

The role of the President does not contain a large amount of committee representation when compared to some other sabbaticals, especially the Vice President (Access and Academic Affairs) and the Vice President (Graduates). However, the President does seem to sit on the committees that do not work, namely University Council and the Joint Committee of Council with Student Members. Almost all issues affecting students will have been discussed and agreed before their rubber-stamping at University Council, however this is not the case with a few. Socially Responsible Investment is an example of this – University did not respond effectively to this, and having our paper heard was an unnecessarily laborious and difficult procedure. JCC is easier to engage, but again, quite consistently takes a minimum of six months to follow up on the most basic requests. I suspect that student advocated issues are often sidelined when they should be treated with the seriousness they deserve.

The route around this inertia for SRI was aggressive campaigning and the establishment of a separate ethical investment sub-committee of Council. This will not be possible for all issues that miss better functioning committees though. A reappraisal of JCC is needed in the coming year, and is an evaluation of our role on University Council, especially the existence of 'reserved business.

Internal Change

OUSU has been, as ever, under close scrutiny this year and many press stories have implied the breakdown of OUSU as a representative body. Whilst OUSU definitely needs to address certain areas of its work (most importantly, OUSU Council), it is worth mentioning that in every affiliation debate I have attended this year common rooms have voted to re-affiliate, except Oriel JCR. Even Oriel achieved 63% in favour of re-affiliating; they needed 66%. The student union's successes are often underplayed, but this does not mean they do not exist. I hope my own report, and the report of other sabbaticals, prove how much has been achieved in a single year.

The reforms of the part-time executive will, I hope, encourage greater participation in the student union. Alongside this, I hope the new sabs will hold a wider consultation into OUSU's representation structures, especially OUSU Council. Greater student involvement in elections and decision-making will give OUSU the support it deserves.

Thanks

Thanks to everyone I have worked with this year in any form, and special thanks to the following.. To the first OUSU exec, for helping us through the yearly changeover; to Dan Simpson for being a firm chair of Council, and for helping me so often throughout the past three years, to Bridget, Sian and Bryn for helping get me elected and for taking part in choosing *that* photo.; Jack Hawkins, Frank Hardee, Martin McCluskey and Christine Quigley for all your help on contracts and rent; 'prescomm' for generally being a great source of light relief, and formal halls.. and for the serious discussions, obviously.; Emma Jones for being extraordinarily committed; Rich Ollerhead for re-directing SRI, and having the guts to take on the University; Danny, Kieran, Aisling, Tom Harrison and the whole SRI team for my favourite campaign, especially when Tom pulled out the signatures.; Rob Robinson and Kate Ferguson Liv Bailey for being my main exec help and for running wicked campaigns and generally being cool people; Kate, Kat, Carys, Tom D, and Liv for a long but hilarious trip back/to Blackpool; Rich Hardiman for the being the loveliest journo I know the whole; to Sue, Barbara and Gill; p/t exec for all being involved and committed.

Deep and heartfelt thanks to.. John Hood, for an excellent game of "tennis" that didn't go quite the way you expected. Maria, for your sound advice, stamina and for always buying milk; Aidan, for always smiling and knowing a disturbing amount about condoms; Charlyne for being the archive of OUSU and for being the only "Marxist" with your taste in careers and shopping that I know; Ollie for being a rules gimp in a good way, for being absolutely reliable and for occasionally checking my post.; Ellie for the debates, the conviction, the parties (the subsequent conversations that will remain very secret) and helping make it the most incestuous sab year ever; Chris, for four years in Oxford politics – we were on the same side for most of it, for some very funny practical jokes (esp. the keyring), and for a definition of 'morning start' that echoes mine; Mads, for some of the most hilarious years and experiences of my life; Rob, I couldn't have done it without you – for your advice, reassurance, the West Wing, drunken nights in Wadham, your deep down lefty tendencies and a friendship that will outlive our time in Oxford.

Finally, of course, to Hannah – committed to the point that I've had to force you home too often, founder of the fittest night in Oxford. You've been an incredible support and inspiration in the office, and much, much more elsewhere.

The very best of luck to Alan, and all of next year's sabbaticals.

Chris Allan

V-P (Finance)

This report contains a summary of my activities over the year – I’ve tried to keep it brief, and avoid writing an essay on the future of OUSU. I’ve also left out everything that’s covered in the OSSL annual report, which should be read in conjunction with this.

Despite the “crisis” that struck OUSU in early Hilary (and the big hit to our reserves that went with it), OUSU is financially fairly healthy, and should rebuild the reserves over the next 3-4 years. I’ve done my best over the year to update OUSU’s financial processes to allow it to cope with the changes to OUSU’s finances over the past several years. I rewrote both the main finance databases and the advertising and invoicing databases, which gives us much more detailed management information. Over the last few months I’ve been working with Tom Lundie, an external consultant, to update OUSU’s financial control systems, which has been incredibly helpful. Some of the suggested changes are already in place, some should follow shortly. The finances of OUSU and OSSL have now been separated, and both now have independent strategies for managing their cash flow in the coming years. OUSU’s IT systems are now healthier than they have been since I first got involved three years ago, and hopefully by next term we should have a new website.

All that’s left is to thank everyone

Rob, for being the other half (well, two thirds) of the neo-conservative neo-liberal crypto-feminist international socialist tory OSSL faction; Madz, for making Zoo record profits while at the same time ensuring I didn’t have to spend too long in sticky clubs; Emma, for being my sidekick for the past four years (although voting Lib Dem is never acceptable); Aidan, for not throwing anything heavy at me no matter how offensive I was; Ellie, for continually being the victim of all our best practical jokes; Starlynn, for keeping up the communist façade for almost the entire year and reminding me that however extreme my leftist diatribe is, there’s someone who actually believes all that socialist rubbish; Ollie, for always secretly being on our side (can I tell them yet?); Hannah, you’re by far the best VP(Cac) OUSU’s ever had.

Sue, Barbara, Maria, Gill, for keeping OUSU running while we run around arguing, having ‘meetings’ in the KA and playing Deal or No Deal with Ellie’s handbag and 40 ballot boxes. To the OxStu and Oxide guys, for not walking out this year, and making my life easier than it could have been. To Dan, who came up with all the projects that are currently keeping OUSU afloat. To everyone else who needs thanking – Maria will kill me if this report is any later, so rather than mentioning you by name I’ll buy you a pint – come and find me on Friday.

Aidan Randle-Conde	V-P	(Welfare	and	Equal
Opportunities)				

This is my final report to Council. The report is split into three parts- what I’ve done, my thoughts on OUSU and reflections for the year.

(The content of this report is not endorsed by OUSU Council or any other body within OUSU. The opinions stated are those of the Vice President (Welfare and Equal Opportunities) 2005-2006)

The report

Committee for Student Health and Welfare

The Committee met and one of the main points addressed was representation to the Committee. The Vice President (Women), Ellie, attended to talk about women’s health and welfare issues and we made the case that having a graduate representative was not the best use of representation. The Committee agreed and now OUSU can choose which representatives will sit on the committee. Watch the Council agenda next term for when the issue resurfaces.

Support for students with specific learning difficulties

I have met with Dr Ginny Stacey from Physiology who specialises in specific learning difficulties and support for students. We discussed getting the Dylsexia Network up and running again, with a full

timetable of support events next year, which is great. I shall hand over this project to Jamie, but it's important that we get the ball rolling now.

Freshers' Fair

I've been asking the Student Services (Student Funding Office, International Office, Equal Opportunities Office, Disability Office, Harassment Line and Accommodation Office) to attend Freshers' Fair so that Freshers and current students can actually get information about the services available, as most students simply don't know that a lot of these offices exist, let alone how to get in touch. The response has been varied, but generally positive. Hopefully the services will be a lot more transparent.

LGBSoc

For once I've done more than just help out with drinks! There have been a few queries from LGBSoc about various welfare bits and pieces and I'm always happy to help. It would benefit everyone if LGBSoc and OUSU could continue this good working relationship next year.

Welfare Officers

I've been helping a few Welfare Officers with various questions about College welfare, and how to approach the College Authorities on issues. As ever, I'm more than happy to help out so please get in touch if you have any queries.

Condom machines

I've met with Sam Roe from Intelligent Vending again to fix some condom machines. There have been several fairly trivial errors which were fixed. For some machines they were simply over-filled. Please make sure that the boxes aren't squashed, or else the machine won't vend properly, so leave a little space at the top of the column. Also, ensure that the cover is on properly, so that all the machinery (including the refund buttons) work properly.

Website

Again I've been working on the website. It's slow work as the computer is still crashing, but I'm looking to fix it this week for good. The aim is to get the content organised in a way that makes sense and is easy to navigate so that when we move service providers next year the new sabs will be able to focus on making the website more user-friendly.

Handover

I'm in the middle of preparing for handover at the moment. It's a big task, but the only way to make sure that Jamie can hit the ground running and help students from the outset. This will take most of my time over the next week, but should make up for the last year's handover (when there were few written notes) and the year before (when there was no in-person contact.) A good handover report is useful for several years.

Thoughts about OUSU

For the most part OUSU works well. Sabs are on hand to respond to queries and this is showed admirably with our successes in the Student Contract, for example. The Common Rooms that engage with OUSU really do benefit, so for all the skeptics out there, I'd like to ask you to give OUSU a try.

Equal Opportunities Campaigns

The Equal Opportunities Campaigns in OUSU have varied success. WomCam is well attended and achieves a lot. International Students has blossomed this year. Disabilities Action has been working diligently all year. At the same time Anti-Racism has been put on the back burner and Queer Rights has had to be reborn twice. This points to some underlying problems in the way the campaigns are structured. Everyone needs to be aware of what their roles are within a campaign. There is also a need for autonomy (rather than semi-autonomy), even if this means a greater distance from OUSU Council. The Equal Opportunities Campaigns need to be able to organise themselves with their own

constitutions, their own elections, their own budget and their own rights of membership. At the moment Co-Chairs are left to flounder in a sea of confusion and ill-defined roles and told to “campaign”, while a rather exhausted and stressed sabbatical offers encouraging gestures but constantly aware that they cannot and should not lead the campaign. This simply doesn't work for some campaigns.

In response to this the Equal Opportunities should have:

- ❑ A written constitution which they have the power to amend
- ❑ Their own budget where they have decision-making power concerning expenditure
- ❑ A committee, including an External Affairs Officer (to attend OUSU Council and NUS Conferences), a Secretary (also acts as a Treasurer), a Publicity and Common Rooms Office (to communicate with the Common Rooms and advertise meetings) and Campaign Coordinators (to take care of the general running of the campaign)
- ❑ Regular General Meetings, where anyone in the membership can attend, speak and vote
- ❑ Open Meetings, where anyone from the University can attend and speak

The campaigns should:

- ❑ Organise campaigns concerning equal opportunities which affect students (whether in their capacity as students or otherwise)
- ❑ Maintain banks of useful information such as we contact details for welfare providers or political organisations.
- ❑ Produce a termly newsletter keeping people informed of events and developments
- ❑ Meet with the relevant University Officers to act as a point of contact between them and the Common Rooms

Once this is in place the Equal Opportunities Campaigns will be able to function much more effectively and this will also free up some (relatively expensive) sabbatical time for other projects.

The role of the Vice President (Welfare and Equal Opportunities)

To be blunt the role is far too large and far too demanding. The VP(WEO) is expected to help run Accommodation Committee, Anti-Racism, Disabilities Action, Health and Welfare and Queer Rights, as well as steering the Student Advice Service, offering training to many types of Common Room Officers, being responsible for the content of all the welfare publications and ensuring that OUSU complies with various types of legislation and sitting on nearly every body that manages OUSU's internal workings. In addition the VP(WEO) has to deal with emotionally demanding casework with very little in the way of support. Pretty much every VP(WEO) has in the past stated that the position is untenable, and I think this is more true now than ever. In the past OUSU has called out for a Student Adviser, and for 6 years we had a Student Adviser. Since Annily left over a year ago the job of the VP(WEO) has increased substantially. We cannot expect anyone to hold the position of a full-time and part-time job combined. It is simply unrealistic and does not help anybody. The role of the VP (WEO) needs to change and it needs to change soon, or problems will start to arise very quickly. I hope that Jamie finds the year less demanding than I have.

The newspaper

The Oxford Student newspaper has really gone downhill this year and whilst it has had its good moments, we have seen a return to the depths of the gutter-press with the story about the male escort. As soon as the paper was released the story appeared on Oxford Gossip, naming the student. This is simply unacceptable and not the way any newspaper should operate, especially one that OUSU/OSSL get into print every week. The only way I can see to get around this problem is to amend editorial independence. Editorial independence should not allow the newspaper to breach the Proctor's Code and should certainly never put the Vice President (Finance) in a position where s/he has to knowingly breach the code to get the paper to print. It is a liability we cannot afford.

OUSU adminastrative structures

OUSU needs to rethink how things are administered. We need to have an efficient system where everybody knows how the offices are organised so that we do not have to keep reinventing the wheel. For example we should equip the Press Officer with a set of resources to allow him/her to fulfil the role properly and then ensure that the Press Officer is used. Otherwise sabbatical officers and others are expected to find solutions themselves, and in an organisation that changes so rapidly this leads to enormous waste of labour. I once wasted 8 hours creating a newly organised system for the Welfare Officers' mailings and contact details, only to find that it was incompatible with the existing systems. Once this is dealt with the Executive can focus on their political roles rather than their administrative burdens.

OUSU Council

OUSU Council generally works well. We need to improve attendance and make it more transparent to newcomers. One of my final projects will be to get advertising sorted out so that next years' team can simply run ads in the newspapers telling students when and where Council is, as well as how to get the agenda and find more information about how the procedures work. We need to increase the number of votes used, not decrease them. The motion we see today is a short-sighted fix to a long-term problem. Let's attack the problem at the source and approach the Common Rooms who are currently not attending.

The workspace

Whilst OUSU generally works well the workspace leaves much to be desired. I have spent a great deal of time this year trying to improve the office environment, and it is very frustrating. The buildings must be clean, safe and accessible if we are to fulfil our responsibilities to students and staff. Again, this is a problem with admin structures, which will continue to be a problem if new Officers come in each year and change the face of OUSU. Frankly the office space is disgusting. Please keep it tidy next year.

Reflections on the year in general

This should have been the best year of my life. Unfortunately it's turned out to be the worst, most demoralising and difficult. This is not a reflection on OUSU at all and I have never once regretted working for OUSU. The people who work here are good people who are dedicated and work long hours for little pay. However, at the start of this academic year my brother died and this has hung over my head the whole time. Over the summer I took 8 days compassionate leave. In spite of this I have worked as hard as I could manage all year, often balancing what is an intense and stressful job with extended periods of bereavement. I would therefore like to thank the following people:

- Everyone who was there in July who offered support, however little
- Oliver, for stepping in to fill my job with literally an hour's notice
- Ellie, for taking over for a week in the Easter vac, and for constantly offering reassurance
- Maria, for being a voice of reason and reassurance on the days when I simply didn't feel I could go on
- Iain, for being one of the few people to realise when things were at their worst
- Kylie (who said I could mention her by name) for inspiring me to press on so often. Oxford has treated you terribly and your perseverance has kept me going
- There are so many other people to thank beyond OUSU, and all those people know who they are

For all those people I helped with a vague distant stare, or with E-mails covered in typos, or simply those I replied to a little too late, please accept my apologies.

With that part over with I'd like to make the tone a little more positive. As I said, this year should have been the best year of my life, and in many ways it still has been. I have really loved working with (most of!) the people I have worked with and gained a great deal from it. I shall be very sad to leave, but it is time I left. I need space and sanity and OUSU provides neither of those, especially at 11pm!

Thanks

The full-time staff...

Emma, for the most part you've been an exemplary President. We don't always agree on things, but we usually do and work well together when that happens. You've almost always got something positive and useful to say and that's just what we need in an organisation like OUSU.

Chris, I'm not sure what to say really. You're a funny guy with a heart of gold, but at the end of the day not the most politically correct of people. I'm sure OUSU would have fallen apart without you long, long ago.

Ellie, you've been amazing. You've taught me so much about women's politics and seeing the wider picture, as well as helping me in my little Equal Opps dugout time and time again. I'm sure you'll go on to do great things. I'm sorry that OUSU wasn't quite what you expected (especially the first week of Michaelmas Term) but I don't think that's stopped you enjoying it.

Ollie, of all the sabs I'll miss you the most. You ridiculously intelligent in the ways of OUSU and University politics and you always tell me when I'm being dense, which is appreciated. You've also been a massive source of support throughout the year. That's meant so much to me. Good luck for the future and whatever you choose to do- you deserve it!

Charlyne, it's been great working with you and having someone to counter my fluffiness. I wish we had more of a chance to work more closely, but it just didn't happen. You've been a great VP(AAA).

Hannah, you've made the year much more fun, with RAG Assassins and Eclectic! It's a shame we haven't got the recycling sorted out yet, but it's great that we tried. Thanks for all the fun times and stuff.

Rob, you're a legend. You always have something encouraging and enthusiastic to say and just spread happiness. Whenever you've spoken in Council I've been blown away by your eloquence and your dedication to the Michaelmas elections was amazing.

Madz, we never really spent that much time doing stuff together, but it's been great to get to know more about you. I hope your next job has more social hours than this one and I wish you all the best for the future!

Maria, where to begin? You've not only kept OUSU going for years and years and years, but you've kept me going too! Thanks so much for all your help and moral support. Sometimes we've just got to take a two minute break from it all and speak to a friendly face and you've been wonderful.

Gill, you've helped me no end this year. I realise that most of this has been about condoms and stuff, but it's such a major part of what we do. Thanks for instilling an aura of calm to me when I'm ready to overreact to even the smallest crisis. "That's not very good, is it?" is much calmer than "Argh! What do we do now?! Everything is falling apart!"

Sue and Barbara, we haven't spoken a great deal, but you've both always been really friendly, which makes a difference when others are stressed, busy or simply elsewhere.

The Executive...

Alice, you're cool and lovely. Thanks for your help with the publications review and just being quite chilled about the whole thing. It was a breath of fresh air.

Helen, I'm sure I'll see you a lot during handover, but in case I don't then good luck for next year! Your commitment to the Exec has been phenomenal. Thanks for all the support over the year and I'll pop in next year, just to see how things are going.

Iain, where to begin? You've provided all sorts of support, from helping with publications to Execing to having a laugh to the trademarked "Are you okay Mr Fluffy? You don't look very happy..." to which I usually reply something like "I'm fine, I just can't type properly today. I think I need new fingers."

Claire, it's been great to work with you and the projects we worked on together (Promoting Choice pamphlet, Close Campsfield and Holocaust Memorial Day) have been fascinating and really rewarding. You're the best Exec Officer anyone could work with.

Maja, you are amazing. With so much enthusiasm and wit you'll go really far. You can do pretty much anything you set your mind to in OUSU and seeing you always perks me up. You'll do great things, I'm sure! Have you ever considered one of the sabbatical positions?

Olivia, embarking on the Equal Opportunities reform is both necessary and wonderful. Please press on with it as it makes such a difference to so many people. It's great to have some enthusiastic input from the Executive on these matters, especially at a time when the sabs are starting on handovers.

Rob, Close Campsfield is great and certainly one of OUSU's better organised campaigns. Thanks for all your input, it's been great. Sorry I wasn't more help to you, but carry on with OSCC and they group will change many lives for the better.

Marco, you have been the voice of reason so many times. I was sad to see you go, but wish you all the best. Thanks for all your input, especially with Accommodation Committee.

Co-Chairs...

Leo, Adam and Jamie, you've taken Disabilities Action and turned it around into something to be proud of. Thank you so much for all your hard work. I'm sure Jamie Frew will pass the group into good hands next term.

Craig, Alanna and Rhiannon, Queer Rights could have been more active this year, but this was not your fault. Thanks for your hard work and enthusiasm and apologies for being of very limited use. If we reform Equal Opportunities Campaigns then things will improve for QR. In the meantime let's use the summer to get ideas together and have much fun.

Ailbhe and Jenny, things never really got off the ground with Anti-Racism, which is such a shame. Again, this wasn't your fault, but it is something that will need to change. You're both bursting with ideas and creativity for the campaign, but the Oxford terms are too short for us to fit it all in. Stay awesome.

Ram, Jamie and Gina, Health and Welfare has had a strange year. Thanks for helping out and showing me more about health and welfare than I ever thought I could know. Gina, your work with the Barnes Unit campaign has been incredible and I wait with bated breath for the final outcome.

And other people...

Laura, Health and Welfare wouldn't be the same without you. Having someone who is passionate about the issues has really helped and inspired me in the meetings. It's great that you always speak up and have some vital input to the meetings. Thanks ever so much for your help with the meetings (especially axeing your position for the greater good!)

Nightline Coordinators, I've really enjoyed helping with Nightline, even if it's just forwarding E-mails to Welfare Officers. Being able to help out a society that helps other students is one of the active ways of helping. You're all lovely!

LGBSoc Committee, you've made Tuesdays the highlight of my week. The free booze is much appreciated, as is bad dancing and silly conversations! I'm really going to miss drinks events. It's been great.

Rich, you're a funny guy and nearly always cheer me up. Thanks for all your help over the summer too.

Welfare Officers from across Oxford, thanks for being Welfare Officers and engaging with OUSU. It makes the job much more worthwhile for everyone. If you want to help more people you could consider one of the many positions in OUSU or consider Nightline or LGBSoc...

Thanks to everyone else who I've forgotten, it's been the most demanding, most rewarding year of my life.

And finally...

My advice to anyone in Oxford is this: Oxford takes everything you have to give. It takes your physical energy, your mental energy and your emotional energy, but the rewards are amazing. So remember to take time out to recuperate. Talk to people when things get stressful so that you can make space to do even more. At the end of a long day, when you're tired and emotionally drained be thankful that Oxford life can take and give that much and make the most of every day.

And for the record a CV is no more and no less than a list of curricular and extra-curricular activities. A CV is not a job application or an academic transcript.

Ellie Cumbo	V-P (Women)
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There's no doubt that having a job for just one year means that you are most knowledgeable and clear-eyed about it in the few weeks before you hand it over. This being the case, I am using my last few weeks to ensure that Jenny will start in the strongest position I can possible provide.

This week, Aidan and I requested that the VP (Women) should sit on the Committee on Student Health and Welfare. Although it has been down to lack of communication between us and the University, rather than anyone's personal oversight, it is quite wrong that this Committee has not previously included the SAS Officer who deals with female-specific health issues such as unplanned pregnancy, as well as matters which tend to affect women more than men, from non-barrier method contraception to drink-spiking to student parent concerns. Furthermore, I have isolated and asked the University to correct the administrative error which has meant that no VP (Women) has sat on the Harassment Advisory Panel since 2003. On top of this, I am in the process of working with my Co-Chairs to formalise and improve the structure of Women's Campaign, in terms of meetings, events, publicity and resources.

Successful WomCam events this year have included:

- The Wear It Pink Party, which raised over £600 for Breast Cancer Campaign,
- The Reclaim the Night March, which saw over a hundred women reject all forms of violence against women (as well as surrounding and berating two bearded old hecklers, who are unlikely to be dismissive of female empowerment again.)
- The V-Day Campaign, which brought awareness-raising benefit performances of the Vagina Monologues to packed out audiences, and raised almost £2,000 for the Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre.
- A Sex Workers' Forum and Pro-Choice Forum with the Labour Club, which made the all-important connection between women's issues and mainstream politics. Long may the Labour Club, and other

societies in Oxford, continue to demonstrate that efforts towards equal rights for women are inseparable from the struggle to properly enfranchise, represent and serve everyone.

- No Diet Day, which lost its momentum slightly being rained off and rescheduled, but has sparked the imagination of Oxford's women, and will hopefully be able to build on this next year.

Successful events and campaigns outside WomCam have included:

- The Finals Gap, which I am thrilled to see the University continuing to take seriously, but from now on using student views as part of their work. The Oxford Course Experience Questionnaire will henceforth carry questions on the subject and hence shed invaluable light on the real experiences of Oxford students.
- The Central List of Student Parents, which the University's Diversity and Equal Opportunities Department will now collate and use in order to reach out to this most busy, isolated and pressurised group of students.
- The Women's Open Day, which was extremely popular and successful this year this year, with an unprecedented no cancellations and some incredibly positive feedback. OUSU's access work is valued by our prospective students, their teachers and their parents; we must ensure that the University also continues to value it as it deserves.
- The Women's Finals Forums, which filled rooms and elicited tremendous responses from grateful students. We must expand these, proudly put OUSU's name on them and resist any suggestion that the intention is to disadvantage men. Instead, we must affirm our commitment to ensuring that women have academic and pastoral attention from a tutor of their own sex, for as long as our University continues to employ female tutors in such low numbers as 20%.

I want to highlight our pro-choice campaigning here. I am prouder than I can say that OUSU has remained so firm on this issue for the whole of my five years in Oxford, as well as long before and, I trust, beyond. When a vocal minority seeks to erode the rights enshrined by the laws of the land, it is right that the majority voices its commitment to individual choice and freedom of conscience, however bruising that may sometimes be. Pro-choice campaigning is not about favouring any one option over another; it is about enfranchising people to make their own decisions. OUSU must continue to make efforts ensuring that people realise this, but it must not hesitate to take steps in defence of the needs, and legal rights, of its students when these are under threat. I look forward to seeing the powerful campaigning arm of this union continue to respect and protect both those who would have abortions and those who would not; that is pro-choice, and humanist, and right.

Thanks:

My fellows Sabs, who are also my friends, in office order:

Charlyne, you are my favourite Marxist shopaholic. Thank you for reminding me to eat lunch every day; this week I have only forgotten once. Thank you for the letters, the open day and the contacts with whatever the Learning Institute is called this week. If the VP(AccAcAff) doesn't help, the VP(Wom) is going to find it exponentially harder to improve the lot of women students. If I have, much of it has been down to you.

Ollie, you know everything but are total pants in a row. This makes you the mirror image of me – the yin to my yang. You are perhaps the most consummate professional (/ gimp) of the lot of us, but also extremely funny, and even quite filthy, so still excellent company. What a shame I'm going straight to hell.

Emma, my respect for you is endless; I would follow you into a war zone. You have exactly the strength of purpose and the open mind that elected leaders need. And I'll happily throw wet teabags at anyone who says different, even when they're members of my own political party.

Hannah, you don't put up with rubbish, either on the office floor or from people around you. I admire that hugely, even when I don't agree with you. How about a joint effort next time one of us wants to take a bouncer down? You go for the neck and I'll rugby-tackle his ankles. Oh yes, scary women will one day rule the world.

Aidan, you are fluffy and I am steely. Together we are an invincible Welfare Robo-Puppy. Your commitment to your job has been total, even when things have been hard. OxGoss morons aside, I hope people appreciate you as they should; I do.

Chris, stop trying to hide the fact that you're a feminist. It's ok, I'm sure that with enough Lads' Mag therapy we can turn you normal again. Who ever heard of a witty, leftie CompSci anyway? Seriously, money talks and you've always spoken up for me. I'm grateful.

Rob. Hmm. if I say you're my favourite pain in the arse, Patrick will get completely the wrong idea. Thanks for the Handbook, the Women's Officer Dinner, the hilarious office japes, the furious head-nodding in Council, the cooking, the 9-3 and the rest. All right, I suppose you are f*cking clever. You also have excellent taste.

Madz, thanks for all the tickets and for listening to me about DancerGate. Go spread love and music into the world; invite me along for some of it.

P-T Exec and Co-Chairs

Thanks to all the Part-time Exec, for putting up with me in meetings apart from anything else. Kate F, you're great. Thanks for your help with the Labour Club events and No Diet Day. Sarah H, your ideas and calm approach have been much appreciated; graduates are so mature and reasonable. Ahem.

Hephzi, Maria K, Mary, Hannah and Liv: what a fabulous, diverse group of co-chairs. Let it be very clear that the successes of WomCam listed above have been yours too. Chocolate biscuits all round. Those of you still involved, you're going to take WomCam from strength to strength next year. Those of you who have finished, good luck with future plans; don't forget us.

Emma Jones, OUSU owes you so much. You are unselfish, committed and very, very smart. Good luck with whatever you do next; no doubt it will be something as good and pure as you are.

Claire Chalmers, you've worked as hard and achieved as much as any Sab, and maybe more. My gratitude to you is huge; you've contributed so many ideas and so much practical help even when you didn't have to. Most of all, though, your faith in WomCam's efforts, my job and me personally has played a massive part in the success of this year. I told the Labour Club and now I'm telling Council, I Love Claire Chalmers!

OUSU Past, Present and Future

Bex, you made this much, much easier than it would otherwise have been for a total newbie. Hope you're pleased that I've upheld your legacy of unashamed feminism and shoe worship. We disagree on only three things: the OxStu, Marilyn versus Grace, and the importance of cucumber in cheese sandwiches.

Rich, I haven't needed to watch Neighbours all year thanks to the drama you provide. Hope it continues, but that you take some time to be happy along the way; you're a thoroughly decent chap and quite my favourite son.

Maria, hope you're reading this as you type. You are OUSU's most effective hidden weapon, and I have no doubt will go on to enlighten yet another team with your wisdom, experience and surprisingly wicked humour.

All the accounts staff: like most students, I may not have had much contact with you but I'm very, very glad you're there!

Finally, to Jenny: you're going to be phenomenal. Even if you end up putting me to shame, I'm going to content myself with the thought that if I in any way helped or encouraged you to take on the job, that's one thing I managed to get completely and utterly right.

Charlynn Pullen

V-P (Access and Academic Affairs)

These past two weeks have involved a lot of stress. The very future of Target Schools was called into question, but I argued strongly for its worth in the Admissions Executive, and hopefully we will be able to come to an agreement whereby its work continues. The meeting was of the view that Target Schools should continue to work with students from state schools, as stated in the access agreement. We are also electing new co-chairs this week to continue Target Schools on through next year. I will hopefully be able to ensure its stability in the near future, although this will need to be done in conjunction with my successor, Helen.

I have secured a meeting to negotiate a new form for the student charter that will be sent to all students. We had hoped that this would go out with the new University contract in Michaelmas but it now seems that this is unlikely. It is significant however that academic changes have been made to the college contract that will go out in Michaelmas, so our short-term goals have been achieved. I feel glad that I have been able to lay the groundwork for more fundamental changes that recognise every student's right to an explicit level of teaching and support. It is true to say that this could only have been achieved through a shift in the internal politics of the University, but it is also a result of the persistence of your student representatives.

In general throughout this year, I feel that there has been a distance between what we, as the executive, do for students, and what students realise. I think the extraordinary council on the admissions reform was useful. I feel it could have been improved if common rooms had asked more questions of me before confirming their reaction, however, I accept that this may have been my fault for not producing a summary. I apologise, although I do feel that the summary made in the report was fully comprehensive and clearly comprehensible. An extraordinary council can be useful for particular policy issues, and although it is an extremely stressful way to focus attention on one particular officer, it is good and right to focus on particular policy issues. I would recommend to those who continue attending council past June 2006 that an extraordinary council is an effective way to create new policy by focusing only on one issue. I respect the existence of special council and would not seek to change it but would argue that extraordinary council is more effective as a debating and policy-making body.

Academic Affairs this year has worked fitfully. I enjoy sitting on University committees and feel I have made worthy comments during committees throughout the year. I feel I have the respect of the other members of each committee (with the possible exception of University Council) and hope that student representatives to council are pleased to hear that. I have ensured that students' views on particular issues have been heard, especially with regard to student contracts, the finals gap and exam timetables. I feel that OUSU still needs a better way to explain this to students. John's idea of a pull-out in the OxStu was a good one, and it works at other universities (Birmingham and others within the Aldwych Group), the problem now is financial. I hope Helen and Alan can utilise our position in the Aldwych Group effectively to ensure that we can see how other student unions make their members aware of their work.

Academic Affairs Committee has typically worked badly this year. It is difficult to maintain a standing committee of OUSU which has its main focus as libraries and subject-specific provision. It needs to change, but it is difficult to know how. If we had subject-specific, or possibly division-specific meetings, then would the JCR Academic Affairs Reps attend? Or if the role of the meeting is to make the JCR reps aware of OUSU's work relating to Academic Affairs? If so, then surely it is better to provide the reps with a written summary and invite questions? Personally, I'm at a loss with how to make this committee function and how to encourage people to attend. I would be very grateful for JCC reps, Divisional Board reps, or Academic Affairs reps to voice their opinions on what they feel OUSU can do for them and how. It is true that a lot of our problems stem from communication, reps in colleges do not feel they can approach us, yet many I suspect, do not realise that we would be very grateful if students gave us some input on how we can help them better.

I think most of my problems through this year have stemmed from communication with JCRs. Whilst some are very effective and its nice to walk round my old college and see posters I made up where they should be, but I suspect this is not the case in most colleges. I have been happy to work on particular campaigns of my choosing, but it would have been possible to do both this and work on campaigns initiated by ordinary students. My role is both political and representative. I have represented students on many issues and fulfilled political mandates (usually from myself), but feel that I have had little input from JCR presidents, OUSU reps and ordinary students. OUSU needs to ensure students both know who we are and know they can ask us about relevant issues, for communication to function.

But that's enough about what I think. Looking to next year, I hope the new sabs will be able to continue our work, but also innovate with new ways to inspire communication with JCRs and MCRs. Particularly JCRs need to be aware that they and ordinary students should seek help (whether from the SAS or otherwise) from the relevant sab or exec officer. I disagree that all these issues need to come through the president, and I feel that this has been a slight problem this year (mainly due to our lack of publicity). It is foolhardy to turn the OUSU president (and I don't think it has been for a few years) into some kind of uber-CR president who tries to dictate views in OUSU. The whole executive is on a flat-level structure, there is no boss, and no one person should seek to impose their opinion.

Thank you to all the sabs obviously, and thanks for a (largely) harmonious year. Thanks to all the office staff, Maria, Sue, Barbara and Gill. A big thank you to Ellie who has kept me (largely) sane through impromptu trips to Lush and Primark. It was truly comforting to share my anger with someone so equally angry. Oli, for being the voice of reason (well, most of the time) and for being the man who actually knows everything (its true, ask him anything). Emma, for discussing relationship parallels and scoffing every time Ellie and I went shopping. Hannah, for constantly asking for new emails about whichever 200 events RAG was putting on this week, and for always meeting in the loos! Chris and Rob, where would this term have been without drunken arguments in the Union (I still can't believe you both made me go in there, I blame the martini). Aidan for continual fluffiness at every turn, and Madz for drinks in random clubs on a promise of coming to more Zoo nights (ok, so I wasn't very good at that). Thanks to all the part-time exec for helping when we needed you. Assorted other people include Linsey and John, who were always around when people just didn't understand how things used to me, and making me feel old. Thanks to Lou and Helen who reminded me I was young really (youngest sab this year in fact, wouldn't have guessed it though, would you?). Martin, Matt and Kate at Hugh's for coffees at random times of day in order to get out of the office, and a variety of drunken evenings usually revolving around my house or Hugh's. Andrew and Megan who will never read this, but reminded me that OUSU is not the be all and end all. Target Schools people for stress relief in Northern Ireland, and the variety of AcAff co-chairs and execs I've had, who I've invariably asked to do nothing. Alan, for dinners over the summer. And finally to lovely Omar who has done more than I ever expected but who am extremely grateful to for everything, particularly escapes to London whenever I needed you, long may we continue. To everyone I've forgotten, I apologise deeply, I am in the middle of revision for an exam on Tuesday!

Hannah Stoddart

V-P (Charities and Community)

I will not attempt to report on a year's work here, but I will outline the main developments of this year which I hope will be built on by my successor.

Community and Volunteering

I feel this side of the post has developed positively this year. The volunteering website www.oxfordgetinvolved.org has been redesigned, consequently becoming more accessible and navigable, as well as offering a range of new features. I have plans to develop the site further which I will discuss with my predecessor. Ideally there should be a 'volunteering bank' facility where students

can type in their contact details and relevant skills so that organisations can seek them out, rather than students always having to find their own volunteering opportunity.

I have also tried to integrate community and volunteering into OUSU to a much greater extent. There is now more information on the ousu.org website about volunteering, and I hope the profile will only increase with the new OUSU website. I have also raised the profile of volunteering by promoting opportunities in weekly emails through OUSU news. There is still room for improvement, however, as the ousu live maillists do not reach enough students, and OUSU unfortunately doesn't have the rights to administer maillists itself. Hopefully next year's freshers' fair will offer a perfect opportunity for the volunteering maillist to expand significantly.

To decrease the workload of the VP CnC, and also make community outreach more effective, I have developed a network of community reps in different colleges, who are responsible for raising the profile of volunteering and community action in their Common Rooms, as well as doing research into volunteering opportunities in different parts of Oxfordshire. We have had positive feedback from a number of organisations, expanding the number of volunteering opportunities and generating a positive image of the Student Union in communities who rarely have contact with the University. There are endless possibilities and significant potential in this area, not least increasing the number of community reps and developing 'sub-committees' of students in each college who run their own particular volunteering and community projects. These developments can be integrated into the website, with contact details of college reps and details of sub-committees.

Oxford Get Involved week in 6th week this term provided a great opportunity to raise the profile of volunteering and get students to visit the website. This was really a 'pilot' project, and aimed to combine some of the ideas of One World week with a week more focussed on local and community action. We managed to integrate the two ideas very well, encouraging students to 'think global and act local', and we aim for 500 students to pledge 5 hours of volunteering by the end of term. This is an ambitious aim, but if nothing else it helps to raise the profile of getting involved. Hopefully, Oxford Get Involved week next year will be bigger and better, perhaps even taking place in Hilary term when students aren't so tired and worn out. The volunteering fair in the East Oxford Community Centre generated a lot of interest among local groups, but attendance could have been better. Perhaps choosing a more central venue next year would be an idea.

Oxford Inspires will offer a number of exciting opportunities for my successor and I have developed a positive working relationship with them this year. 2007 boasts '1000 years of Oxfordshire' and Oxford Inspires is co-ordinating and promoting hundreds of cultural, artistic and musical events, all of which have enormous potential to recruit student volunteers. Many of these projects attended the volunteering fair this year, and they will be looking for volunteers in Michaelmas term. I think it should be a priority for the VP CnC to get as many students as possible involved in all these events.

In general, I feel the Community portfolio of the CnC post has to take priority over RAG events. This is not an easy task, and I have been guilty of allowing there to be an imbalance at certain points during the year, but I think it should be acknowledged that the funding that the post receives is based on increasing volunteering opportunities. The Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) makes volunteering and community action a priority, and whilst RAG fits into this nicely, it shouldn't be the main priority. HEACF has announced that it will fund the post for another year, after which there will be a 'review', which no doubt will assess how effective the post is at creating new volunteering opportunities. The developments made this year need to be built upon to ensure that funding continues.

One of the major developments this year was the Future Outlook Alternative Careers Fair, which should retain an equally high profile in the coming years. It offers enormous potential to raise the profile of alternative careers and volunteering – many of the organisations attending the fair primarily offer volunteering opportunities, and this year we had various talks that focussed on the benefits of volunteering. The guide also offers a forum to discuss 'getting involved' and how that can enhance

career opportunities. I took on far too much responsibility for the event this year, the scale of which meant I didn't sleep for about a month, but I suggest that an editor for the guide is appointed over the summer so this isn't an extra workload for the CnC. There should also be greater communication with the business team to get relevant advertising to cover costs – the number of ABMs who will be working in OUSU over the summer might be able to contribute to this effort. A strong research team should also be established before the beginning of Michaelmas term so that speakers and organisations can be contacted well in advance of the fair. The fair cannot be allowed to shrink back to the size it has been in the last few years. Hiring exam schools is an enormous expense, and putting on a half-hearted event is pointless. It is also the responsibility of OUSU to raise the profile of alternative careers, considering the amount of money it takes from and exposure it gives to the likes of Deutsch Bank.

RAG and Charity Events

RAG has been an immensely enjoyable aspect of the post of VP CnC. There is enormous potential to put on new and creative events, and I think that RAG constantly needs to be re-inventing itself in order to continue its success. This year we have toned down the 'crayzee RAG' element of fundraising, which I feel has been to the benefit of RAG. Whilst there is a minority of students who enjoy dressing up as a large banana, or covering themselves in baked beans, I don't think this kind of behaviour appeals to the majority of students. Whilst there is a place for debauchery, such as events like Mr and Miss Oxford, I think RAG should aim to appeal to the greatest number of students possible. This means running a diversity of events so that every Oxford student will take part in a RAG event at some point during their studies. This year we have run a club night, Eclectic, as well as other music events, such as the Cabaret at Freud, but we have also branched out into new and inventive areas with games such as RAG Assassins, as well as running a termly Charity Beauty Salon. The beauty salon is a perfect example of how local businesses can be harnessed to the fundraising events that RAG runs. We offer the salons which take part in the event free advertising in return for their services. With the International food fair, we also gave free advertising to local restaurants who provided free food.

RAG should also be about taking risks, some of which will pay off. We decided to run a Paris hitch against all the odds, and ended up making over £3000. We decided to run an underground club night, which has made over £2500 over the course of the year. We decided to get students to assassinate each other, which made £600. It should be about acting on ideas with energy and creativity, and seeing what happens. We tried out so many new things this year, most of which were successful. The only idea that flopped was selling smoothies at Summer Eights, and this was down to the fact that Deloitte were giving out free ones in the next boathouse. A letter demanding compensation is being written.

I think the reason why we were able to try out so many new things this year was due to the energy and commitment of the RAG executive and many of the RAG/Charities reps. There is a tendency for any sabbatical officer to take on the bulk of the workload themselves. This is understandable given that most of the students who help you out are volunteers and also have a degree to do. What I have learnt, however, is that people tend to rise to responsibility rather than shy away from it. Each of the RAG exec has been responsible for co-ordinating one or two events this year, with the CnC offering advice and support, but leaving the bulk of the organisation to the relevant executive officer. This has benefited all parties involved – the events are better, the RAG exec and the reps feel more motivated and enthused, and the CnC gets to go home before 10 at night, which can only be a good thing. There is no way the CnC can take on responsibility for Community, Volunteering, Charity Events, Environment, as well as being a VP, if he or she doesn't delegate effectively. All that happens is that the RAG events aren't as good, the CnC nearly has a nervous breakdown, and all the other portfolios are neglected. I, and most CnCs before me, learnt the hard way. I will be talking to my successor about how we can ensure that his first term runs more smoothly. I will also ensure that all the members of the current RAG exec write detailed handovers.

And last, but by all means not least, comes the Environment portfolio of the CnC. This is something that I personally take great interest in and I have worked very closely this year with the Environment Committee to ensure that they work effectively within OUSU. Whilst my involvement with Enviro Comm has been influenced by my own commitment to environmental issues, I don't feel it should be at the discretion of the VP CnC whether they attend meetings or not. It is in the job description of the CnC that they should chair Enviro Comm. Whilst the actual chairing is quite rightly left to the Co-Chairs, it should be the responsibility of the CnC to oversee Enviro Comm and help them with any projects, especially when it comes to taking motions to Council or submitting papers to JCC and University Council. This year we have run a successful Green Electricity Campaign which was helped no end by the support of the sabbatical team, and we will be submitting a comprehensive report to University Council in 9th week. Liaising with the University should be the remit of the VP CnC, who should also represent students on Environment Panel which meets twice a term. Working closely with Enviro Comm also meant I could incorporate World Environment Day into Oxford Get Involved week last Thursday. Enviro Comm did a fantastic job, running a stall about food miles and giving out info about local markets and conservation projects, as well as running a low carbon food evening in Vaults café. This is a great example of how the different portfolios of the CnC can work together harmoniously.

I can't believe I have written such a long report which no-one, apart from maybe my successor, is going to read! Anyway, hopefully most people will flick to this section, which is where I thank all the wonderful people who have made this year so fruitful and helped me out along the way..

I'd like to send out the hugest thank you in the world to the RAG exec, who have worked so hard this year to make RAG work. So, not in any particular order, thanks Ellie for all those tedious tin-wrapping episodes and for running such an amazing Cabaret, thanks Roxanne for dealing with Mr and Miss so brilliantly, and becoming receptionist of a beauty salon in your spare time for the last two terms. Thanks Suse for running such a successful Food Fair, and generally being full of enthusiasm for everything, even sitting on the door at eclectic. Thanks Laura for making Paris happen, and also seeing the comedy of the smoothie debacle – I will never forget the gazebo. Thanks Rachel also for making Paris happen, and putting your heart into resurrecting International Beats – thanks also for all those Speed Dating sessions you made so successful! Thanks Dominique for being so committed to Speed Dating and also taking on Oxovision, which will be amazing! Thanks Ceri for being the most effective poster machine, and also putting so much effort into the Jailbreak, which will happen at some point! Thanks David for allowing your entire room to be covered in roses for a week!

And thanks to all the RAG and Charities reps who have put so much effort in over the year. I can't possibly name you all, but I'd like to give a special thanks to Cat and Rosie at Hertford for just being the absolute shining examples of RAG reps, as well as Jo at Keble for doing one of the best RAG stalls ever during RAG week. Thanks also to Guy for sacrificing sleep to make Assassins work, and to Jack for being tres enthusiastic about all things RAG. All those who I haven't mentioned personally, please know you have all been integral to making RAG work this year..

Thanks also to Barbara for sorting all the money and accounts which go over my head slightly!

On the Community side of things, thanks loads to all my community reps – Ankeet, you make great posters! Thanks to Ayoush and Jonny for being so prepared to help out. Thanks Finbar for some great ideas. Thanks Jo at Christ Church for being really enthusiastic about all things community.

Thanks also to all the local people I have met who have helped enhance volunteering in the University. Thanks to Roman and the Oxford Muse, thanks to Marie Wright who has helped with so many projects, especially the smoothies! Thanks to everyone who made the Alternative Careers Fair, and the more recent volunteering fair possible. Thanks to all those at Oxford Inspires, especially Robert, Eka and Kathlene who have been so responsive to some of my ideas. Thanks to HEACF, Jennifer Noon and Alex Hall for supporting the post of the CnC and making possible a lot of the projects this year. Thanks to all the people who I have communicated with to get students involved in volunteering. Last, but not least, thanks Matt (Sellwood, who else?) for being so supportive of my ideas, and being prepared to bring your wisdom to some of my projects.

Enviro Comm – thanks Ro, El and Dom for being prepared to work with a sabb, and being there for advice and support for the current committee. Thanks to Niel and Lara for being great co-chairs, running a brilliant Green Energy Campaign, and making World Environment Day such a success. Thanks Guy for religiously phoning Stagecoach despite all indications that they had no intention of talking to you. Thanks to all those who wrote such a brilliant Green Energy report – the VC WILL renew the contract.

Now onto the OUSU exec. It seems like ages ago now, but thanks of course to my predecessor Ian for giving me such a good handover, and to Lorna for always being there with some good RAG advice. Thanks to Emma Jones for always being so committed and reliable and generally full of ideas and enthusiasm – couldn't have done Future Outlook or Oxford Get Involved week without you! Thanks to all other members of the old exec for being so dedicated. Of the 'new' exec, thanks to Andrew for being such a star during Oxford Get Involved week – I couldn't have done it without you! Thanks to Maya for spending an afternoon knee-deep in underwear to help me out! Thanks Kate for generally being so amusing. Thanks Rob for organising a great day as part of Oxford Get Involved week. Thanks Lydia for doing such a good job on Future Outlook – Phillip Pullman, yay! Thanks also again to Roxanne for putting so much into it, and Katherine too for getting some great speakers. Thanks Mr Rob Vance for making the most amazing front cover for the guide ever.

And finally, thanks to all my fellow sabbatical colleagues for being generally great. Thanks Charlyne for putting up with all the times you discovered me using your computer, thanks to Ollie for being the source of all information on things I have no knowledge on and am likely to never fully understand (i.e. Constitution and Standing Orders), thanks to Chris for providing so much office amusement – I'll never forget the ballot box keyring. Thanks Aidan for teaching me everything I am ever likely to know about design software, and for generally being so supportive of the things I do. Thanks Rob for putting up with my advertising demands, and being really supportive of Future Outlook. Thanks Ellie for being the best kind of feminist and also hosting some awesome parties, as well as always being up for banter.. And last, but not least, thanks to Emma, who has been there through everything (literally) and has been the most consistent source of support and inspiration for all the things I've done. Thanks for making OUSU what it should be, and for being the fittest and coolest President in a long time... May the trend continue.

Rob Vance

Business Manager

This year has been one of consolidation and modest expansion. We inherited Oxford Student Services Ltd, which had been transformed by the extraordinary Dan Finley from a loss-making stationary shop into the conduit of all commercial activity. Its profitability has modestly increased, both from increased sales and reduced costs. I feel proud to report that we think that the profitability of OSSSL will be capable of supporting OUSU financial for the coming year.

Given the seismic mistakes and self-indulgence so common to these reports I intend, though may fail, to steer well clear of triumphing my own numerous successes and criticising those with whom I haven't agreed. Instead I want to firstly wish my successor, Tom Wrathmell, every shred of luck and every ounce of support, with complete confidence in his abilities to continue the good work I believe us to have done this year, I will always be on the other end of a phone or reading my email if he needs anything.

It would be a glaring omission not to suggest in this report where I see the side of OUSU I ended up working for going in the coming years. But first I thought I would emphasise that I am the biggest gimp in OUSU for a while. I started at OUSU as an F&F campaign activist, and then was an OUSU rep, College returning officer, member of Junior Tribunal, Common Room President, Chair of council, Presidential campaign manager, Deputy Returning Officer and finally Business Manager. I am not about to reinvent OUSU nor criticise anybody nor reminisce with rose-tinted spectacles about the past but I would like to say this: OUSU is contingent on people getting involved and was founded as a campaigning organisation by common room representatives fed up at the way that the colleges collude

with the university, danger lies in both too heavily institutionalising it and in de-professionalizing it; Council is the highest authority in OUSU and is where all decisions should be made on any motion, brought by anybody and where everyone instructs the

Executive what to do and hold them to account; the constitution is the fabric that defends the rights and equality of all members, not a gimpy inconvenience; the people both elected and appointed are resources for everyone to use; commercial activity exists to pay for the things that OUSU campaigns on, not an end in itself; OUSU should never be scared of doing things professionally, nor should it be scared of challenging orthodoxy and tawdry beliefs as this is when it is at its most successful.

OSSL now has the finest student publications stable in the country and a solid advertising base, both locally and nationally, it will continue to expand and professionalize and in doing so should be a model of a both a progressive and profitable business. It should continue to professionalize its image as an Oxford consultant for graduate recruiters; it should be well prepared to capitalise on its varied and profitable online presence; it should continue to nurture talent, both in print through its publications and on air through its radio station; it should work with other societies to bring in sponsorship and work on projects jointly with other aspects of the university, such as the Ski Trip, Careers Fairs and Summer Eights; it should use and expand its commercial activity to serve students' interests, as it has by bringing down the equilibrium price of a gown by £20, that is £20 for every single student, whether or not they buy it from OUSU – 3 times their annual subscription. It should provide cheap, accessible and safe club nights for students. I believe that Chris and I have left it better placed to do all of these things than when we took over and that OUSU will be stronger for it in the future.

I would finally like to thank all the people who have made the job both possible and deeply enjoyable. Firstly, thank you to those inspirational people who got me involved in OUSU in the first place, Louise McMullen, Conor O'Neill, Digo Davies, Will Straw, and Helena Puig-Laraurri. Secondly, to those people I have worked with this year, each one of which has been the most committed, friendly and supportive of colleagues, representing I think in many ways the most unified OUSU Sabbatical Team in my time in Oxford. In reverse order of post creation, to avoid arguments, To Madz (for working tirelessly at the things that would have driven me crazy, and making my work start times look more respectable), to Hannah (for being so committed and making me realise at times why we bother to do anything at all, even for charity), to Charlyne (for all the fun in the Union with gin, keeping me in the loop on the things I was interested in and so got involved with in the first place), to Ollie (for your sense of fun and secret shared love of all things constitutional), Ellie (for the arguments, the flirts, the love, the tears and for being so damned wrong, but so damn great), Aidan (for teaching me how to lift and giving me condoms), Chris (for doing my job for me) and Emma (for being the President I could never have been, but always proudly imagined you would be) my unqualified thanks extends to you all. Thirdly all those people who have helped me throughout the year, the office staff: Sue, Barbara, Gill and Maria, thank you so much for putting up with my innovative administrative efforts and unusual concept of time; to all the ABMs, Alan, Huston, Bryn, Rob, Chee-Hung and Gimpson Jnr; to the Freshers' Fair team, Matt, Nick, Alice and Helen (who did all the work); to the executive, whom I didn't ever really work with formally, but many of you helped out at various times, particularly Dave Green and Ollie Munn; to the OSSL board for making sure I did my job; to all the people I have worked with commercially, particularly Ngaio at Deutsche bank, Ed 'whistle-blower' Mason at the Union, Bridgette at Stephens and George, Kenny at Press-to-print, John for the gowns, and Mike at Oxford Ltd for his sage advice. I'm sure that I will have forgotten people, but please do not take it personally, I promise I will buy you a drink. I would also like to thank all the people involved in Zoo, the OxStu and Oxide, in particular: Sam Evans, (little) Rob Lewis, Simon Akam, Kiran Stacey, Rich Hardiman, Kim Hardman, Roger Waite, Tim Partridge, Patrick Foster, Jess Goodman, Ben Jones, Rachel Cornwell, Jack Shenker, Anna Mikhailova, Sian Davies, Rob Cookson, Andy Heath, Ed Hancox and Alex Baker, we could never have made so much money without your free labour.

Madhvi Pankhania

Entz Manager

The past year has seen many changes for Zoo, what nights hare running, which days we do them on and how we have promoted them. One of the main differences between this years and last year is that

michaelmas through to trinity has seen a fall in the number of nights that we have run. From a militant need to expand ZOO, the brand in its first year was continuing at an unsustainable rate. This year, as the number of students going out has decreased, so has the number of nights we have put on. We found that our lowest figures for the year came in weeks 4-6 of Trinity, which is somewhat to be expected, what with exams for both first years and finalists. The Summer eights party that was co-ordinated by ZOO this term was an astounding success and although this benefited the brand more from a PR perspective than financially rewarding.

This year ZOO has reduced its overheads considerably. For the nights we are running, the profit margin is significantly higher than it was last year, one of the main reasons for this is having the entz manager's role incorporated into that of night managers – ie it has been far more hands on. Obviously with the start of every academic year, a huge push needs to be made in order to market and promote the night to the coming freshers, which is likely to need some investment in Michaelmas to make the latter terms more profitable.

Park End, ZOO's flagship night has overall done better this year than last year, but again more promotion work needs to be done to maintain its status as the biggest student night of the week. We have also managed to hold a few nights in new venues and successfully organise a trip abroad, which even though made a profit for us this year, should definitely be looked at by the new business team as a venture to increase revenue for OSSSL by dealing with a larger travel company or one which will negotiate them the best deal.

With more and more students using internet forums and pages, more time will need to go into networking on websites such as facebook as well as the routine postering and flyering. The beginning of every year brings with it the opportunity to reinvent and remarket to our audience and that should be planned over the summer to increase the revenue for the 2006-2007. With no entz manager next year, the business manager will have to spend time delegating roles to other students who can run nights and network on his behalf.

There are things to be learnt from each year that OUSU continues its commercial operations, and ZOO is likely to have as many changes next year as it has this. The key will be consistency and a determination from the incoming officers to make the brand better next year.

Pro-Choice Committee

This term, the campaign's focus has been on the need to affirm student support for the current 24 week limit as well as counteract and condemn sensationalist press coverage which denies the few women who need later abortion the respect they deserve as well as preventing fair debate of the issue within our society. It's been great to see motions passing through both JCRs and MCRs this term. If your common room is yet to consider a motion on this issue, but you're interested in bringing one please get in touch with the VP(Women), women@ousu.org, who'll be able to give you a model motion to use or amend.

We've also seen Council support affiliation to Abortion Rights which secures important local and national support and resources for the pro-choice work OUSU can do. As with all of the work that's been done by the campaign throughout the year, this should hopefully see Oxford student's better supported by their union in the information they have as well as adding our voice to those movements which look to secure proper provision for women by our health service, so that choice is not simply an argument but a reality. This, along with the important work the VP(Women) has been doing to strengthen the relationship OUSU has with student parents and improve the support available to them from both the university and OUSU itself, can only be to the benefit students of Oxford.

They remains much work to do, both in campaigning on the issue and trying to make sure that people are properly informed on the choices that women have are able to make around pregnancy. Efforts are now being turned towards our Freshers' Fair stall and anyone who wishes to help should e-mail the VP(Women), women@ousu.org. Equally, the campaign will soon need new co-chairs, and once again e-mail women@ousu.org if you're interested.

It's been great to work with Ellie Cumbo, whose strong support for this campaign will, I'm sure, be taken on by her successor who has already put in so much work as a co-chair. It's also been great to have the support of both our official executive officer, Sarah Hutchinson, and Kate Ferguson. Both their efforts along with those of many other women and men in this university have moved the campaign forward this year. I wish the very best to all those who will carry the campaign on in the next year, it's an issue that OUSU cannot afford to ignore or let slip.

If you have any questions further to this report the please don't hesitate to e-mail me at claire.chalmers@univ.ox.ac.uk although I'll be leaving Oxford in a couple of weeks time so any general enquiries into the campaign are probably best directed to the VP(Women), women@ousu.org.

Target Schools

Northern Ireland Conferences:

The Belfast conference was a great success. Despite a postal strike it was well attended and the feedback forms suggested that the vast majority of students found the afternoon extremely helpful. People were particularly impressed that it was student-led and many commented that this made the material more accessible. The mystery surrounding the interview process was dismissed effectively with the help of the tutor who came along, and I think we gave a genuine flavour of Oxford life, both academic and general. Especially problematic is the distance students from Northern Ireland have to travel if they do apply, and while this is a barrier we cannot always overcome, many realised that the prospect of Oxford life may be something they are willing to make sacrifices for. At the end of the session many worries had been resolved and the students I spoke to were keen either to find out more from the literature we distributed, or get on with the applications process.

Robert Robinson

The TargetSchools conferences in N Ireland were a huge success, with all students giving positive feedback about the events. Having three events in various areas, I felt was a huge advantage as many of the students I spoke to in Enniskillen said that they wouldn't have gone to a conference in Belfast, even though it was clearly something they were interested in. Having run the Enniskillen conference just with myself and another cochair, one of the things the students seemed to have appreciated the most was the informality of the event, they said that with less 'official' people there they felt able to participate and ask questions more, which meant that they got the information they really wanted. I felt that we were still able to give them the same level of information, whilst letting them see the real side of Oxford as well, something that many students said was important in encouraging them to apply. The conferences in N Ireland were an amazing experience, and it was great to feel that we may have changed someone's mind, or given them that extra little bit of encouragement they needed to apply here.

Amy Beaumont

I was fortunate enough to run the Londonderry Regional Conference in 2006 and I think their relationship with Targetschools is important for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it puts students at the centre of everything. We all want to encourage more students from under-represented areas to apply to Oxford, and I think it's important that potential applicants meet as many students from the University as they can. Now what's particularly special about the Regional Conferences is not just that students are there to give presentations and talks, but that they have actually organised it. They therefore feel more able to answer questions about the University, putting the information in a form which is most appealing to school students who are only a couple of years younger than they are. What I found especially striking was the fact that the school students were so willing to chat about Oxford and ask lots of questions, but more importantly, that I knew the answers to those questions. I didn't have to refer them on to some employed officer of the University; I knew the answer because I'd written the presentation. I think that the Conferences work well because they are not stagnant - the structure of Targetschools means that there is constantly new input from new students about how to run things. This creates innovation, and I know that our year in particular saw some exciting games, talks and prizes for the school students which had never been utilised before. And the feedback forms from the Conferences prove how much of a success they were. Oxford needs

this level of innovation if it is to succeed in attracting all the best and brightest students. The Conferences were student led and student focused, and I think that half of the battle is just proving that Oxford is a normal University full of normal students. While all the typical information about finances and application procedures is a necessary part of any Regional Conference, it's not always enough to sell Oxford in the way it needs to be sold. I enjoyed the Conferences most because I felt like I was making a difference because I had had the opportunity to take it in any direction I felt like. Hopefully it will have paid off.

David Mendel

Easter 2006 was the first time that Target Schools has travelled to East Anglia for one of its regional conferences this first visit was a big success. Approximately 40 students from five sixth form centres in Norfolk attended the conference, which was held at the City of Norwich School and Hethersett School Sixth Form Centre. The conference opened with an introductory session led by OUSU representatives and Oxford students from the Norfolk region. This was followed by talks about studying at Oxford given by a representative from the Admissions Office as well as a guide to how to apply. A current Oxford student's view of the application process followed, as well as a demonstration interview with a tutor. There were several question and answer sessions both in large groups and smaller group sessions, giving the prospective students plenty of opportunity to ask questions to current students, tutors and admissions staff.

The feedback from the conference was overwhelmingly positive, with students saying they had learned a great deal about everything from student finance to how the collegiate system works. They mentioned how good it was to meet 'real' Oxford students, many of whom were from the same region as them, and to discover the truth behind the stereotypes. Several teachers also attended the conference, all of whom responded very positively to the day, saying that the information that had been given in the day would help them to both encourage their students to apply to Oxford and to guide them through the application process.

Overall, the conference was a fun, exciting and informative day for all the pupils, teachers, students and staff who attended. Target Schools has been asked by the host school to come back next year and this was echoed by teachers at other schools, saying that they would like to take more students to the event next year.

Jess Cordingly

We will also be holding two open days in June, and we still need volunteers. For more information email access@ousu.org.

Womens Campaign

This term the campaign has been consolidating the strong activity of the past year, whilst looking to the future. We therefore have spent time reviewing how Women's Campaign should function and its relationship with the rest of OUSU. Many members of the campaign, including the new co-chairs, have brought new and vibrant ideas regarding how Wom Cam can build on its successes. The excitement and enthusiasm of these women demonstrate further the fundamental importance of this campaign to the lives of female student and the campaigning thrust of OUSU.

Much of the emphasis of the discussion has been centred around ensuring women's representation in OUSU and adding to the already increasing participation of women in Wom Cam. The campaign has responded very strongly to some proposals in OUSU Council throughout the past year, particularly when it feel that's the representative importance of Wom Cam has been ignored. This term in particular has seen proposal to restrict executive voting rights, which Wom Cam disussed and opposes due the effect these suggestions would have on representation of minority groups in council. With the support of Wom Cam, motions have been passed against these proposals at a JCR level. In recent weeks we have also started to consider proposals to re-establish the semi-autonomous campaigns as fully autonomous. These will be coming to council next year. From my own experience I

feel that there are massive merits to fully autonomous campaign, due to the flexibility and empowerment of action. However what is most important is that there are very thorough and open discussions regarding women's campaign; JCRs need to be consulted and Women's Campaign needs to have extensive debates. Such a large change should not occur without adequate discussion with all involved.

To increase our publicity, accessibility and to incorporate the existing feminist groups in Oxford, we have supported the piloting a new Women's Forum. We have also continued to provide a forum for JCR Women's Officer discussion, organised a NO Diet Day and self-defence sessions within college. Next year there is still work to be done on student parenting, final gap, night safety, violence against women and pro-choice. With the Reclaim the Night March coming up in Michaelmas along with speakers meetings, forums, publications, letters and motions, WomCam will remain a strong in Oxford student politics.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Women's Campaign and am proud of its achievements. It has been very exciting to work with such an active, motivated and talented VP Women, who has proven the fundamental importance of this sabbatical position to the representation and campaigning activities of women in Oxford. We have a lot to learn, to build on and to campaign for in the future. Hopefully the attacks will cease and Wom Cam can get on with the important job that it does so well. I am sure that the next VP Women, co-chairs and the women of the campaign will be great. Good Luck.

Humanities Divisional Board	Academic Year 2005–06
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The academic year 2005–06 has been an active one for the Humanities Divisional Board, not least as the Division continues the process of planning both for substantial changes to the library services and for the construction of a new Humanities campus on the Radcliffe Infirmary site. The Board's work has primarily been to negotiate with the library services, its constituent faculties, and the University's leadership to develop a plan for the site which best meets the needs of all concerned. On current planning, the first phase of the Radcliffe Infirmary project will move forward in parallel with the refurbishment of the New Bodleian, though the two projects are financially and organizationally independent. Further details about both projects are available from Dr Peter Gambles, Secretary to the Humanities Division.

The Board has taken up a series of reports regarding academic employment, the release of currently vacant (or soon to be vacated) posts, the conversion of CUF to University lectureships, taught graduate courses, examination conventions, the status of recognized independent centres, and the establishment of a Faculty of Linguistics and a new Joint School in Classics and Oriental Studies. The Board took special interest in the 'Lankester Report' on selection and admission and submitted a response endorsing, with some reservations, the main lines of Model B. At its meeting of April 28, the Board also endorsed for consideration by Council and the Vice-Chancellor a five-year plan for its operations in 2006–10.

Of particular concern to students will be the Board's involvement in Council's attempt to divest the University of some of its interest in the Oxford Playhouse. Council had proposed to cut the University's present support of the Playhouse by 40% and to transfer the responsibility for administering remaining funds to the Humanities Division. At its first meeting of the year, the Board encouraged Council to re-think its decision to withdraw even the smallest amount of support from the Playhouse, which provides a substantial number of student thespians with the opportunity to begin their careers and which serves important artistic and educational functions in the broader Oxford area. The Board also asked Council not to assign responsibility for the Playhouse to the Division, since students from all five of the University's divisions participate in Playhouse productions. The Board set up a working party to study the way forward; the party presented its conclusions to Council's General Purposes Committee and ultimately received backing for the Board's

recommendations: to continue the Playhouse's stipend at present, to pay that stipend centrally, and to set up a body to manage the relationship between University and Playhouse.

Finally, it is with pleasure that I report that access to the Division and its management has been widened. On 28 November I wrote to Dr Ralph Walker, Head of the Division, to propose that the graduate student representative to the Board also be entitled to attend the meetings of the Humanities Division's Graduate Studies Committee. Much of the GSC's work is relevant not only to Directors of Graduate Studies but also to graduate students themselves, and it seemed to make sense that a graduate student should take part in its meetings. Dr Walker endorsed my request in a letter of 21 February, and the Divisional Board confirmed the arrangement on 3 March.