

Reports to Council

7th Week Council Trinity 2015

Sabbatical Officers

Louis Trup – President

End of Year Report by Louis Trup

I apologise, fans of the quick and snappy. I campaigned in poetry, but I did the job in prose. This is a long piece of prose, yet it is important to me. I am proud of what I have done this year. I hope you, the students of Oxford, have found the work I have done to be up to scratch. This is my full report to OUSU Council.

Innovation

Of all the things I have done this year, I am most proud of the IT Innovation Award run between OUSU and IT Services. It may only have given out funding to 9 student projects this year, but I am sure that this will grow in the future. Supporting students (be they hacky students or just people with good ideas) in finding innovative solutions to Oxford's problems is, for me, key to what OUSU needs to be doing. Seeing £135,000 go to student-run projects tackling issues as diverse as book costs, sexual violence and support for disabled students is genuinely proof of how your student union can empower others to bring about positive change.

It has taken a lot of my time to get this project off the ground, but I am confident the foundation is set for next year so that Becky and her successors will only ever have to spend half a day a year hearing pitches from students and then deciding who to support.

I am also happy as this has engaged a whole new group of students in what OUSU does, and as such fulfils the principles upon which I ran for this position which were new thinking and getting new people involved.

Clubs and Socs

My work in clubs and societies was also aimed at bringing a new area of work into OUSU and engaging a different group of people in what we do. Making OUSU more relevant to more people. I have been working on this in three key ways - firstly with a review of what provision there is for clubs and societies in Oxford, second, through a focus on sport, and thirdly, through recognising what these extra-curricular activities do for students.

- Clubs review

The provision for clubs and societies in Oxford is far below the average compared to other British and American Universities. This is mainly because unlike elsewhere, the University (in the form of the Proctors' office) oversees clubs and societies, rather than the student union. A two-way communication channel between clubs and societies and the organisation which oversees them is crucial to ensuring that they receive the right amount of support - both financial and other forms. This is difficult with the proctors office due to lack of student specific knowledge, a high turnover of staff, and clubs and societies being a low priority. However, with OUSU's current funding situation, it is impossible for us to take on the registration of clubs and societies (though I would recommend future Presidents and Clubs and Societies Officers working towards this in the future) so there is little we can do beyond offer additional help which

we hear is needed. Yet, without the ability to get the up to date contact details of clubs' committees, this is almost impossible. This year, through reviewing the provision for clubs alongside the proctors' office and others at the university, we have found ways of working towards better data sharing, easier registration for clubs and societies, and more (and easier) funding options. However, I regretfully have failed in bringing these changes this year, and so I urge Becky and Will (the Clubs and Societies Officer) to work hard on this next year.

- Sport

Having been involved in University Sport as a student, this was an area of interaction which I believed to be a significant area of potential for OUSU and I am glad that this year, we have worked together better than before.

I helped the sports department with their bid for an extra £170,000 of funding from the University and Colleges. I believe this additional funding is of crucial importance to the >4000 students who will benefit from it. This is not only in that it will improve training through a greater focus on conditioning and physiotherapy, but because it will give clubs more money to ensure they get a qualified coach. Issues around unqualified coaches have plagued some University sports clubs for numerous years and seeing an end to this will be a massive step forward for many sportspeople at Oxford.

I have also worked to support the sports federation with issues they have - be it from support for their sabbatical officers from University services, to getting OUSU to support Wednesday afternoons for sport.

- Student Awards

In the area of clubs and societies and broader student activities, I am most proud of the OUSU Student Awards which I organised for the first time. I believe this event sends a clear message to the University that extra-curricular work is of significant value to students, and also sends a message to student artists, campaigners, organisers, innovators and more, that we value what you do. Like the many of the things I have worked on this year, this event sought to engage more people in OUSU, do something new with OUSU, and to communicate what OUSU does better. I really hope this continues for years into the future, and that Becky and the new team take this event to greater heights.

- Oxford Hub

I was very upset to hear about the loss of funding for the Oxford Hub. As somebody who used to be heavily involved in the Hub through the Oxford Climate Forum and subsequently becoming the Vice President of the Hub, I wanted to do my best to ensure the Hub could continue to provide the wonderful opportunities it does. For this, I lobbied the University to continue their support. After finding this would be impossible, Ruth and I spent a lot of time working on a proposal to support the Hub to the tune of covering the costs of one of their members of staff, thus reducing their funding shortfall (we could not offer them cash as OUSU receives funds for ring fenced activities - we could have covered the schools plus role from our access and widening participation budget). We worked hard to get this approved through OUSU's trustee board, then presented this to the Hub. They rejected this offer, claiming they could only accept cash. Still wanting to help, I approached others at the University and in the

Colleges asking for funding support. However, each person came back with the response that they were not comfortable that the Hub is a sustainable organisation, and so would only provide them with funding if they committed to a review of their service. Wanting them to be able to receive this funding, Ruth and I worked to get a proposal for this review ready so that the Hub could sign onto it and subsequently get interim funding. Once again they rejected this help. It is worth saying at this stage, that the students involved in the Hub have been brilliant in their campaign (which I helped with too - even providing them with some campaign training), it is purely the non-student owners who have personal grudges against OUSU and thus will not work with us. As someone who has a strong personal connection with the Hub, I found this part of my work this year some of the most frustrating, and I just hope that the opportunities for volunteering and more which the Hub currently offers can continue to be offered to Oxford students in the future, though ideally by an organisation whose owners are more committed to transparency, accountability, democracy and genuinely student-led change.

Communications

One of the key areas of work I have worked on this year has been OUSU's communications. Through working on the weekly email, we have increased open rates from 25% in October, to 43% last week. I have also tried to engage students in ways which extend beyond comments on serious topics - it is crucial that we in OUSU are approachable. For this reason, I have gone to a wide variety of student events, some of which have introduced me to people who I believe will come to shape this University in ways I never could. This kind of thing is time-consuming, though arguably the most important for me to do as much of the public face of OUSU.

General Election

There were two key areas of work around the general election which I did - voter registration and political engagement. The former was far more successful than the latter.

Ruth and I led on the project to get as many students registered to vote, especially given the changes to voter registration. Through videos, Facebook competitions, stalls, posters, bookmarks, tweets and more, we ran what I believe was a highly successful voter registration campaign. We have also started working with the council and the university to find ways of integrating voter registration with student registration. I urge Emily and Becky to continue our work to make sure this happens in the build up to the EU referendum.

The political engagement element of my planned work for the general election was much less successful. The process of creating a General Election Manifesto aimed to bring debate to OUSU Council and Oxford. This didn't really happen - most of the motions passed without discussion. On top of this, once sent to Prospective Parliamentary Candidates in Oxford's constituencies, we only got five responses. It seems to me that very few students actually engaged in the responses published on OUSU's website. In short, this didn't go so well. Sorry.

Common Room Support

When I ran, I said that I believe common rooms to be the most important part of Oxford's student democracy, and I stand by this. As such, I have tried to support common rooms in what they do - generally through common room presidents and common room OUSU reps. Support for common room officers has been on the up over the past year, and for this, I want to add a

considerable amount of thanks to Joe, OUSU's common room support officer who has been brilliant.

- Rent negs

I have worked to support common rooms in their rent negotiations. As well as meeting with many presidents to talk through their situations, I also arranged for the chair of the domestic bursars committee to speak to JCR presidents (apologies for not being able to do the same for MCR presidents) which many found very useful. I also arranged a rent negotiation breakfast, alongside our wonderful rent and accommodation officer, Danny, which allowed for sharing of good ideas around keeping rent low. This was also well received by those who came.

- Finance committees

The achievement in this area which I am most pleased about came recently. Early on this year, it became clear to me that many of the issues common rooms face in college is due to the college keeping information secret. The key bits of information which common rooms need when negotiating rent, their own budgets, or trying to get living wage are all discussed in finance committee, which many colleges do not have student representation on. After lobbying a lot this year, I managed to persuade the Estate Bursars' Committee (the meeting of all college bursars) to agree that having student representation on finance committees is a good idea. This will hopefully make life easier for many common rooms in the future.

- MiVoice

Noting that decisions taken by my predecessors were sometimes not perfect, I have worked with staff at OUSU to find funding to provide common rooms with the MiVoice voting system as we used to. This has come from listening to common rooms who joined me in being frustrated at the fact this was taken away and no good replacement was provided. Next year, it will be back and life will be good.

NUS

Following last years' referendum, I decided that I would seek to get as much out of our affiliation to the NUS in order to justify the decision made. From serving on the NUS's faith and belief advisory group to representing student unions at the houses of parliament three times this year, and working with them on international students issues, fossil fuel divestment, setting up a conference for collegiate student unions and more, I have put in time, but received a lot in return. I found the affiliation fee to be worth it. I hope we remain affiliated for years to come.

Committees

I have sat on about 17 University committees for various things this year - feel free to ask me questions about what has happened on them:

- Committee for Development and Alumni relations
- Sports Strategic Sub-committee
- University Council
- General Purposes Committee

- Conference of Colleges
- Estate Bursars Committee
- Domestic Bursars Committee
- IT Committee
- ICT Steering Committee
- WEB CMS Project board
- Cloud Computing (C3E) Project board
- Education Innovation Committee
- Clubs committee
- IT Innovation Project group
- Joint Sub-committee (of Education Committee) with Student Members
- Careers Service Committee
- OUSU Constitution review group

I have sat on these OUSU committees:

- Nominations committee
- Finance committee
- OSSL Board
- OUSU Trustee Board
- Steering Committee
- Internal Affairs Committee
- OUSU Executive Committee

All of these have taken up a lot of time, though are key to what the job entails and have been very enjoyable.

Castle Mill

Part of my job involves dealing with things as they come up, and the next few things fall into that category.

Castle Mill was a team campaign, worked on by Ruth, Anna, James and I, and now being led by Jack. Through triangulation of campaigning methods (from the demo, to speeches, to postcards, to quiet chats with key people in the university), we managed to get a monumental result which was people in the University woke up to the fact that their decisions affect students and that they must be taken into account. This victory will be remembered by those within the university, as will our articles in the Oxford Magazine and the University Gazette. This campaign win for OUSU will ensure that there is a greater focus places on student input in big decisions.

Living Wage/Fossil Fuel

The aforementioned increased focus on student input was also symbolised in key university decisions on living wage and fossil fuel divestment. Although I was not involved in the campaigns and Ruth spent the most time on these campaigns, I did spend a lot of my time

going between key players in the University to ensure that we could get people onside. Although I was the person arguing for fossil fuel divestment and the living wage in the decision making bodies, it was the work of Ruth and the campaigns over the past years that ensured we won on both those fronts. I am truly grateful to Ruth and the Divestment and Living Wage campaigns for their work and support, and I hope to see further successes in the future.

Firefighting

One of the biggest drains on my time is firefighting, which seems to occupy my time as president more than other sabbatical officers. Firefighting refers to the random things that come up almost daily - including press enquiries, random people calling, student emergencies, questions about bike racks outside exam schools and more! Each issue takes some time but despite this, it is an honour to be the person who is approached by those with problems that need solving. When I can solve problems, it is also great, though this is not always possible. During handover, I will hopefully be able to give Becky as much advice on this as possible, though you can never be fully prepared for what may arise.

Internal OUSU work

It is annoying that as president, I have to spend so much of my time looking inwards at OUSU's problems, though actually this year I have found that solving OUSU's internal problems can help with our external image.

- QR

The review of OUSU's constitution takes place every five years. It is an absolute ballache and has taken up more of my time than I would have liked. However, I believe that by increasing the number of student trustees, reworking the job of sabbatical officer into being a sabbatical trustee, and by better situating OUSU's policy at the heart of our governance will allow for OUSU to improve in the future.

- Other Governance

Working on other pieces of governance such as Bye-Laws and Regulations has been good as it has allowed for me to implement the desires of OUSU Council and students into OUSU's governing documents, which is an important link that the president must maintain. The work on giving the OxStu more freedom and clarity in the governance has been important following previous issues with editors. Although time-consuming, this is some of the stuff that comes with the role, and I hope Becky feels comfortable getting in touch next year if she has any questions as things arise.

- Trustee board

I have worked to try and balance my duties as a trustee to those as a sabbatical officer. I am happy with how I have done - ensuring the trustee board serves to further the decisions of students and not to override them. I hope the changes as part of the review of OUSU's constitution review will ensure this continues.

- Finance stuff (i.e. audit)

Spending time working on the budget, the management accounts and the annual report of OUSU has been interesting and useful experience, and has also allowed for things like MiVoice to come back. I hope that future presidents continue to take an active interest in OUSU's finances in order to make changes that are requested of students.

Manifesto pledges

- Monorail. There is a proposed tramline to LMH and St Hugh's on the council's local transport plan for 2031. There are also plans for a Monorail to West Oxford (www.westoxmonorail.com). The leader of the County Council presented this plan to OUSU council.
- Double beds for all. Having worked with the lead salesperson at Dreams, I have got a quote of £9million for 21,500 double beds (see appendix 1). These will have coiled mattresses. I have been looking into ways of funding this, thought this has been difficult - I hope my successor will take this on.
- SocSoc with Abbas Kazmi. The student awards acted as the first meeting of SocSoc. Abbas Kazmi presented an award. I am the president, and I decided I will not give up my power to Abbas Kazmi.
- Get rid of 5th week. I have supported the inclusion of a reading week into our education vision, and have supported the 5th Week Free campaign. I hope that OUSU continues to campaign for a reading week in the future.
- World Peace. My planned trip to Israel and Palestine last summer was thwarted by a war. Instead I went to Magaluf. With Anna, I visited Myanmar to show solidarity with Burmese Student Unions. With Anna again, I organised a return trip to Oxford for some of the student union leaders we met. We also have met with Aung Sang Suu Kyi and other Burmese leaders to show solidarity with their work to bring about peace. I also arranged a trip to Oxford for a delegation of Saudi Arabian students to help build bridges between our countries. Neither trip was during paid work hours or at OUSU's expense. I hope these steps have aided in building global links to bring about world peace.
- I am still a top clubber, still love geography, am wearing flip flops as I write this, and firmly believe that the mob spoke and this kid delivered.

Thanks

I want to say a big thank you to Anna, Ruth, James, Jack and Yasser for being great colleagues. I want to thank all the OUSU staff for their support and being wonderful. I want to thank the OUSU Executive 2014 and 2015 for all the work they have done. Thanks to OUSU's external and student trustees for all the support. Thanks to the people at the NUS who have been great. Thanks to Tom, who came before me and did a great job. Thanks to everyone at the University who has helped OUSU and me. Thanks to Theo, Matt, Jamie, Ollie, Jules, Josie, Anya, Ben, Tanya, David, Jonny, Ashley, Winnie, Jess, Hector, Callum and others. Thanks to my mum, my dad, my brothers, grandma Sheila, Bibi and Gladys for just being wonderful. Thanks to C.J. Cregg, Andrew McAuley and José Mujica for being inspirations. Finally and most importantly, thanks to every Oxford student who has been here for this monorail ride of a year - you are worth the effort.

Appendix 1 – email from bed salesperson

Hi Louis

The initial quote came in at circa £9million (ex Vat). This includes mattresses, bases & delivery.

However we are confident that we would be able to get this significantly cheaper over the next couple of days. I would hope to come back with a revised quote by the end of this week/ start of next week.

Kind regards

Peter Lally
Central Sales Supervisor
Dreams Ltd, Knaves Beech, High Wycombe HP10 9YU



James Blythe – VP Access and Academic Affairs

Hi Council (one last time!)

Well, it's the end. It has been an enormous pleasure and privilege to be your Vice-President (Access & Academic Affairs) for the past year. I have found this role exceptionally interesting and fulfilling, and I am very confident it is one of the most interesting graduate jobs you could hope for.

Over the past fortnight:

- PPH issues have remained lively: we had the Education Committee discussion of Wycliffe Hall, the results of which remain confidential for now, and I also had an excellent meeting with PPH Common Room presidents. I've written to the Principal of Wycliffe too, to suggest a meeting to build bridges and move on with a constructive relationship.
- Handover: I've been arranging lots of handover meetings for Cat, my successor, with senior people in the University.
- Libraries: I attended the Congregation meeting on libraries. It's clear that this issue isn't going away, and I expect my successor to have to bring a motion to Council on how OUSU should approach the balance required between setting a sustainable University budget and funding libraries at their current level.
- Open Days: I'm once again preparing the Student Room for Open Days in July, which should feature student societies, OUSU campaigns and an opportunity for prospective students to pick up an Alternative Prospectus.
- Target Schools: work on Target Schools has probably consumed most of my time in the last fortnight. We presented to all the college outreach officers on the work of TS and got loads of constructive feedback from them on what we do and how we could do better. I now want to produce a 'you said, we did' document that closes the feedback

loop and helps the TS committee come up with solutions to all the issues that have been raised.

- Committees: Education Committee; PPH Supervisory Committee; Undergraduate Panel; Senior Tutors' Committee.

The big issues for next year:

- The Higher Education Review: the University getting a visit from its regulator is a major opportunity for students to raise issues and get their voice heard. It will be a major piece of work for OUSU to write a really effective student submission, get a good and vocal range of students to meet with the reviewers during the visit, and to ensure that afterwards an effective action plan is drawn up to respond to the recommendations.
- Senior Tutors' Committee is apparently going to review the college approach to suspended status. It will be really important to seize this opportunity and to move forward the gains we made by the University changing policy to achieve more change in colleges on this key issue.
- The new Access Agreement sets really stretching targets for the University that will require real changes of policy in admissions rather than just more outreach work. OUSU needs to get really involved in this and ensure that the student voice is heard, but also hold the University to account and work to ensure that we actually hit these new targets.

Thank you for all your commitment, Council, over the past year. It's been a real joy to work with so many committed and thoughtful students who care so much about making our University better. OUSU can, should, must be better, and I am confident that it will be safe in the hands of the new sabbatical team.

James

Jack Matthews – VP Graduates

Friends,

Since last we spoke I have been working on the following, amongst other things:

International Students Festival

It is with great disappointment that I announce we have had to cancel this weekend's International Festival. Unfortunately a number of societies pulled out of the event over the past few days, and the Festival no longer has the critical mass needed for it to be a success. The event will return in the future, and hopefully can return to its original Hilary Term schedule which has served it well in previous years, but which we were unable to do this year. I want to personally apologise to Council, the Societies involved, and the International Students Campaign – I will ensure that lessons are learned from this so that this doesn't have to happen again.

Classics Review

For Monday and Tuesday of 6th Week I sat on the Review of the Classics Faculty. It was a productive endeavour, and while I can't say much about the outcome before the publication of the report, know that the concerns of students will feature highly in the recommendations.

Postgraduate Study Support Consultation

On Friday on 5th Week I submitted the OUSU response to the governments consultation. We expect to hear a response to the consultation in the next 12 weeks. As promised, a copy of the response I wrote is now freely available on the OUSU website, alongside the agenda for this meeting.

Student Written Submission

Working closely with the Vice President Access and Academic Affairs, I have been working on a draft of the first chapter of the student response to next year's higher education audit of Oxford by the Quality Assurance Agency. The part I am writing involves looking at the recommendations we, as students, made as the last review in 2009, and judging what progress has been made since then.

Common Room Support

I continue to support a number of Common Rooms, both JCR and MCR with a number of governance matters, and am working to making available a major database of academic data to representative before the end of term. Junior Common Rooms were further supported through my acquisition of wine glasses and a bottle opener at the recent JCR PresCom dinner.

In additions I have had the following meetings:

Education Committee

Meetings with members of the Scrutiny Committee

Teaching Awards – I had the honour of presenting the awards for Outstanding Supervisor

Extraordinary Council

6th Week Meeting of JCR Presidents Committee

Meetings to plan the International Students Festival

A meeting with Executive members to discuss Suspended Students Status

Thesis Working Group

A meeting with the Deputy Bodleys Librarian to discuss how students can be better involved in decision making across the University Libraries

Graduate Admissions Committee

The Joint Fees and Student Support Advisory Group

The Quality Assurance Sub Committee

Declarations of Interests and Gifts

On Monday of 6th Week I received dinner at Quod as a member of the Classics Review.

Thoughts on the Term of Office

Firstly I want to say what a great honour it has been to serve as Vice President Graduates for the past few months. When I wrote my final report to Council as Common Room Support Officer in Michaelmas Term of 2010, never again did I think I would be writing to Council, to say my thank yous, and sum up on the year.

On the matter of this role specifically, I have for the most part been planning ahead, and putting small measures in place to help those in the future. A 'steady as she goes' approach. That said, there are three things I have begun which I would like to see preserved and used in future years, and so I highlight them here. The first is the Student Consultation Benchmark. Over the coming years, there are going to be a great many changes proposed within the university,

about how and where our teaching and services are provided. The Benchmark offers a clear, evidence based direction on how students should be involved in this decision making – one that not only empowers students, but also enhances decision makers ability to make informed policy. Second is my analysis work of the Student Barometer Results. I would strongly recommend that one of the sabbatical officers, each year, takes a lead in analysing the results as soon as they are available, and converting them into a usable format for Common Rooms and Course Reps. It may take a long time, but I have found it immensely interesting and useful, and I have so far had good feedback from elsewhere in the university. Finally is the work I and others have begun on Postgraduate Access. This is a vital piece of work for OUSU, and one we have overlooked for far too long. I hope that in the coming years, Postgraduate Access will be given the same importance as Undergraduate Access.

To the thank yous. I must begin by thanking Joel Mullan, my JCR President, who got me involved with OUSU so many years ago. To Daniel, Elena, Ian, and Madeline, thank you for all your support and friendship while we were on the Executive. To Martin, Stefan, David, and Martha, it was a pleasure to work with such inspiring and committed Presidents – the students of this University owe you more than they will ever know. To Louis - it's been an honour to be part of your team this year – stay true to your beliefs and don't be swayed. It is undeniable you have changed OUSU for the better. To Ruth – your commitment and resolve is unwavering. I only regret not getting elected earlier so we could have been working on Castle Mill together. Anna – thank you for meeting with me so early in my campaign, and for your wise words. I have no doubt that a more equal world is more likely, if you're involved. And to James – I never thought when we first awkwardly got chatting in the KA nearly 2 years ago that we would ever get to work together like this. I always knew you were very good at your job, but even then I was surprised by your ability. Students deserve to know what a superbly talented and committed advocate you have been on their behalf. That first Education Committee I attended with you back in Hilary Term left me with a feeling of great honour to have had the opportunity to work alongside you. It is no exaggeration to say you are one of the finest Sabbatical Officers I have known. There are so many others who I owe thanks to across the years, but I fear if I wrote them all down, E+E would condemn me for using so much paper. You know who you are, and I am truly thankful.

The Future

The future of our organisation lies in its origin – a democratic body, driven by its membership to build a better learning environment at Oxford. Too often we are diverted from this task by flash-in-the-pan ideas that may seem good at the time, but have no lasting benefit to students. We must redouble our efforts, to communicate what we do well, to improve or drop those things we fail at, but more importantly than anything else – to remain a membership organisation, where decisions are driven by the concerns of students. None of this can happen without two things – a new democratic culture where no student conceals their viewpoint; and a new intake of students willing to facilitate and police our democracy. Its up to you now...

Ruth Meredith – VP Charities and Community

HelloGoodbye Council!

This is my 12th and last Council report, and before I do actually report, I just wanted to say a couple of thank-yous:

Thank you to all of my PTE; Xav, Emily, Leonie, Yoni for working hard and running innovative and effective projects for students. Thank you to all of the C&C campaign people: Molly and Chris who have worked tirelessly with RAG; Ellen, Rivka, Cara and Miriam who've made divestment happen; Freya, who pulled off the impossible – getting Oxford City Council to reverse a decision; and Fergal and Sam who have been exceptional as Living Wage co-chairs this year.

Thank you to OUSU's staff and trustees, who put up with so so much without ever getting credit. They are the best. Particular thanks to Anna, Louis and James who have been so supportive this year, and who made me a better sab.

Finally, thanks to everyone who's ever helped on a project, sponsored a fundraiser, waited (very) patiently for me to reply to emails or gotten involved in any way. Nothing changes without that.

Massive good luck to Emily next year, who has proved time and time again that she will be phenomenal.

So, here's my report.

Projects achieved:

> I established and ran a specialized campaigning leadership course to equip Oxford students with the skills they need to become leaders. 100% of participants said they were happy/very happy with the course, and 90% said they believed it made them a better campaigner.

> I designed and delivered negotiation training, assertiveness training, and public speaking training with Anna and James and Eden Tanner.

> I designed and ran a Voter Registration campaign week, registering 3500 students (twice as many as Brookes!). I also ran Pledge2Reg, registering a further 700 students, and making enfranchisement cool. We're now also a lot closer to the university integrating registration in 2016/7, and for 2015/16, the City Council and university have agreed to put flyers about voter registration in every fresher's pack.

> I organised a General Election hustings with Louis, David Parton and Will Brown. I tried (with Lindsay Lee) to organize a disability hustings that unfortunately didn't work out.

> I tried to hold an event to allow students to scrutinize Thames Valley Police and Prevent.

Unfortunately only 3 people came, but I have maintained good, critical relationships with TVP and have regularly attended their Independent Advisory Group to encourage accountability and ensure that they are working hard for students.

> Worked hard to find ways of continuing Oxford Hub's provision. I'm not sure this worked, but Louis and I tried.

> I worked with Louis and Anna to deliver OUSU's first ever Student Awards.

> Line managed the Community Warden teams, who delivered 90 responses from Castle Mill due to community wardens, delivered 250 newsletters in East Oxford this year, and ran 3 events in Jericho. The wardens worked 960 hours. I have trained them, and have altered the structure of the wardens to make them more effective and better supported. The team is also fundraising with Cowley Road Carnival.

> Worked with Security Services to introduce bike lights for sale at £4.50 at OUSU, and start up a taxi safety scheme so that students can get home any time without cash.

> I've worked this year to be a great trustee for OUSU. A project which I particularly hoped to deliver was a new complaints procedure for OUSU – however, team difficulties prevented this, although I'm hopeful that a better draft will come to our 8th week Trustee board.

On Your Doorstep & Homelessness:

> distributed information packs to all colleges about how to effectively help homeless people

> ran an awareness week with 8 events attended by 800 students in 3rd week of MT, the biggest ever event run by students around homelessness.

> supported OYD from being very new and fragile to very very strong with a real sense of purpose

> organised a panel event around the housing crisis in Oxford, at which I spoke.

> OYD achieved 80,000 signatures on a petition to prevent Oxford City Council criminalizing rough sleeping – the first campaign group in the country to achieve this!

RAG

> recruited a RAG staff member to provide RAG with the resources they need, and to allow future C&Cs to do the rest of the job effectively.

> set up a new tracking system for Jailbreak and managed the safety and co-ordination of the event for 200 people which raised over £30,000.

> spent weeks on implementing gift aid, and overhauling RAG's accounts.

> ran and delivered RAG Charity elections with the highest ever turnout of 6.25%

> oversaw Blind Date with 250 participants, a raid at the Boat Race, and sold 400 tickets on a trip to Amsterdam, and 15 raids. Firewalk, Kilimanjaro climb, Undie Run, Casino events,

> RAG Ball was the most profitable yet, and went off without a health and safety issue. I've also trained and started planning 2015's ball with a new committee.

> wrote and delivered the first ever RAG Impact report, which you can read for more on what I've contributed!

Living Wage

- > University of Oxford became an accredited Living Wage Employer.
- > 5 colleges accredited, 8 paying living wage and working towards accreditation, and 15 paying living wage and not working towards accreditation.
- > Hertford's scouts are beginning to unionise to ensure long-term gains.

E&E

- > The University of Oxford decided to ban investments in coal and tar sands oil.
- > The campaign ran an average of 4 events a term, engaging with lots of different kinds of students.
- > The campaign achieved over 2100 petition signatures, an open letter from academics signed by 200 people, and got 70 alumni to hand back their degrees to show how important Divestment is to the wider Oxford community.

Sustainability

- > I ran #VeggiePledge with Xav, in which over 500 participants pledged to lighten their meat intake to become more sustainable.
- > Collecting 150 linen sets for the Oxford Women's Refuge, and organizing a launch event with Anna.
- > Over 21 colleges signed up to do foodbank collections in each term, creating a huge benefit for the Oxford Community Emergency Foodbank, and reducing waste.
- > Worked with the British Heart Foundation to encourage donations of everything else at the end of term. This project is ongoing, but is running in more locations than ever!

Anna Bradshaw – VP Women

Hi Council –

Writing this report has been kind of weird, trying to summarize the key things that I've achieved this year. I think I've got most of it down, but it is, of course, incredibly hard to give any kind of measurement to liberation. Time spent one-to-one or in groups with women students has often been as valuable as anything written here, and it is definitely the thing that I will miss the most.

I also want you to know that I'm writing this in a pretty detailed way because I'm personally disappointed by the Scrutiny Report coming to this Council. There are lots of things I've achieved that aren't in there, or are described oddly. I want you to know what I've done, because, frankly, it's a lot and it's basically been my whole life for a year. I also want you to know what my PTE and campaigns have achieved, because it's incredible and a lot of it was missed out.

I wish every bit of luck to my amazing successor, Lucy, as she takes over this rewarding, painful, phenomenal job.

xAnna

Sexual Health, Sexual Consent & Sexual Violence

During Freshers' Week, OUSU Sexual Consent Workshops were run by 400 student volunteers (that I trained) in all undergraduate common rooms, two thirds compulsorily, and in ten graduate common rooms. Over 3000 freshers attended the workshops, with 99% finding the session 'helpful' and 98% agreeing that it is important for people in their community to have a good understanding of sexual consent. The workshops have been extensively evaluated and improved for Freshers' Week 2015, and I will have trained 300 facilitators with the new materials by the end of term.

I evaluated and improved the Queer Consent Workshops, piloted Consent and Disability Workshops, and am about to run a focus group towards creating Kinky Consent Workshops. I have also expanded the training sessions run in this area to include Bystander Intervention Training (about 50 people trained) and First Responder Training (about 300 people trained), and ran (for the second time) a full-day Sexual Violence Awareness Training with OSARCC (Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre).

I worked with the University to (finally) update their Harassment Policy and Procedure, and wrote the first two drafts of a template for colleges that will be ready for Michaelmas. I ran equipping sessions with students from 30 colleges and have supported common rooms presidents and women's officers in lobbying their colleges to update.

I have successfully worked to get the University to make a number of significant commitments in this area, including to supporting OUSU in making consent workshops a compulsory feature of orientation for all undergraduate students, and available to all graduate students. (More info will be available on Friday 12 June.)

In response to student demand, I worked to expand the provision of OUSU welfare to include sanitary products, with OUSU absorbing the 5% luxury tax placed on these items. In the pilot scheme 28 common rooms bought over 1000 boxes, and we collected many more through the 'Period Match' function of the scheme for homeless people in Oxford.

I have worked to set up a pilot zero-harassment accreditation scheme to run in the 2015-16 year as a collaboration between OUSU, Sports Fed and Good Lad. I have also trained Good Lad's leadership and many of their facilitators.

I have worked closely with a number of local organizations, and at the moment I am working with Ruth to add linen to the end-of-term collections that we run, to provide much needed linen

to local refuges. I lead the successful campaign to elect OSARCC as one of the four annual RAG Charities.

I am working closely with It Happens Here and Code4Rights to creating a First Response App, which gives users support and information on potential routes of action for survivors of sexual violence and their supporters. The app is entirely coded by women students at Oxford who are taught to code through workshops. The project is being funded by a grant of almost £10,000 that we won in a bid to the University's IT Innovation Fund. With some assistance from OSARCC, I have written almost all of the content of the App.

I have run Consent Discussion Groups and similar workshops for around 100 students in Oxford schools and colleges. I have worked with the Thames Valley Police, OSARCC and Wycombe Rape Crisis to incorporate consent education into the Thames Valley-wide crime prevention plan in this area. Workshops based in part on my work at OUSU will be rolled out to Pupil Referral Units, schools and colleges across the region in 2015-16.

Women in Leadership & Women in Academia

I secured the future of the OUSU Women's Leadership Development Programme by winning sponsorship for the programme for the 2014-15 year. I am currently in the final stages of evaluating the programme and re-negotiating sponsorship for the following years. (Though this is secure: the remaining question is whether they will commit to more than just next year.) This programme trained 38 women, a mixture of undergraduates and graduates from all divisions. 93% of participants said that they found the training interesting and helpful. At the end of the programme I held a drinks event for women in positions of leadership across the University to celebrate the programme, and to meet each other.

I worked with two students in St John's MCR to pilot a micro version of the programme, which trained 13 graduate women. This went very well, and I am hopeful that the model will be rolled out to another 5 common rooms next year.

I am currently at the beginning of the pilot OUSU Women's Mentoring Scheme, which includes a Community Stream and an Academic Stream. Administrative difficulties have been frustrating, but I am confident that I will leave office with a group of about 50 women students in mentoring families with resources, training and having taken the initial evaluation.

I have worked to help five more common rooms bring in women's officers, and have worked closely with women's officers and common room presidents to encourage women to stand in common room elections. The number of women JCR presidents has doubled since Michaelmas Term.

With the Graduate Women's Officer, I ran three Ask-a-Grad panels in the sciences to help undergraduate women who are considering further study. I have gotten agreement from all four

divisions to hold these, in collaboration with OUSU, in Michaelmas 2015. I ran or assisted with Finals Forums in a number of colleges, and worked with the Graduate Academic Affairs Officer to pilot Forums specifically for students on taught Masters courses. I have worked to join up the people in OUSU who hold women's positions, and those in academic positions, and we have held a number of joint events, including a forum for department and college academic representatives looking at causes of the Gender Gap.

I was shortlisted for the NUS Inspirational Woman Student of the Year (HE) award.

Student Parents and Carers

I introduced a new position on our Part-Time Executive: Student Parents and Carers Officer. This position has just been filled, and I have been working to induct and support Sam. I have also made more of OUSU's events family-friendly, and have created OUSU policy that assists with this.

I won for student parents in Childcare Services Steering Group, making greater money available to students through the Sponsored Places Scheme and introducing a finer gradation to the provision of places and funding to student parents.

Self-Care

I have been so pleased to see a real blossom in the attention paid to self-care this year. I have been careful to include it every training session that I run, to emphasize it with the Part-Time Executive Officers and campaigns that I supervise, and to hold events that are about fun and connection as well as events that are about campaigning. The biggest of these was the Women's Garden Party, which brought together work in previous years to host a WomCam Garden Party or a Women's Societies Garden Party. This year I coordinated the party, where ten different women's groups (campaigns, societies etc.) ran different stalls or activities, supported by about 25 volunteers. Over 300 students attended, including many student families, and lots of (particularly graduate) students who have not interacted with OUSU in any other way.

Non-Portfolio Work

A significant amount of any sabbatical officer position is work that isn't directly related to your portfolio. I have served on the Finance Committee and Risk Committee of the Trustee Board, and lead a working group of Trustees to re-draft the OUSU Complaints Procedure and to adapt the University's Harassment Policy and Procedure for OUSU's use (both still in the works). I worked closely with the rest of the Sabbatical Team on representing students to the University committee that chose the new Vice-Chancellor, on the Student Awards, on saving Castle Mill, and on a complete review of the OUSU campaigns and the start of a review of the Sabbatical Officer remit. I worked with the full OUSU Executive on statements, responses, letters,

campaigns and support. I also took on a serious amount of work from other Sabbatical Officers' portfolios during periods of suspension, illness or when the position was vacant.

Part-Time Executive

I have worked really closely with a whole range of people on the Part-Time Executive. I've worked with Rita on First Responder Policies, with Marina on academic attrition, with David on the provision of sanitary products, with Lindsay on sex, relationships and disability, and with others on a whole range of smaller projects. I have also, of course, worked most closely with the three officers in my portfolio. Sam has just started, but is already proving himself to be a thoughtful and effective member of the team, and I look forward to everything that he will achieve over the next few months.

Aliya has had a really amazing six months, and I am sad to see her leave, though I completely understand that it is the right decision for her. She has lead WomCam with ambition and heart, and has run two terms bursting with events. She has also re-integrated the Oxford Uni Sexism Project, and has developed the working groups and discussion group almost beyond recognition. She has also worked really well with the other liberation officers and campaigns to make WomCam and OUSU's work intersectional and inclusive. I am so, so proud her.

Züleyka has had an amazing six months in a lot of very different ways. She has overcome serious demands on her time and energy elsewhere to deliver real and meaningful connection with graduate women across the University, particularly through her fantastic clinics. She worked with Jenny to introduce a new Graduate LGBTQ Officer, and has been a huge asset to WomCam and to work for women at OUSU. I wish her luck with everything she goes on to do, and am so grateful to have been able to work with her, even if it is only for six months.

It Happens Here

By the end the summer of 2014, It Happens Here was completely without a committee or Chairs, due to people graduating, otherwise leaving, or needing time away from this kind of work or the group that made up the last committee. I ran the stall at Freshers' Fair, with the help of WomCam, and events over Michaelmas Term to attract people. I inducted two new Chairs at end of Michaelmas, and have worked with them to build a now vibrant committee of about ten members who cover all of the essential roles and are expanding in new and exciting directions too. I have increased the support that they, and all, campaigns get by establishing the option for Part-Time Executive Officers and committee members of campaigns to have termly supervision sessions with the OUSU Student Advice Service. I have also provided them with training specific to their area, and have worked closely with the Co-Chairs to think about strategy and about cultivating a culture of self-care. Our biggest achievements have been Anti-Violence Valentine's, a day-long conference for students and other activists that was headlined by the phenomenal Staceyann Chin and featured a panel and workshops as well, and the collaboration with Code4Rights to create a First Response App coded by women at Oxford.

Current projects include a publicity video, an art exhibition, and preparing for the launch of the App.

WomCam

WomCam has honestly gone from strength to strength this year, putting on a huge range of events from beginner-friendly discussion groups to art sessions, talks and workshops. They've also expanded away from the traditional Monday-night events to strengthen the working group structure, which lets people get involved in particular areas of activism and to spend time in closed, safer spaces, and have put more of a focus on campaigning. Reproductive Justice Week and #5thWeekFree both brought attention to really serious issues that disproportionately affect women, and were really amazingly well attended/used. Lucy and then Aliya and their committees manage a huge group of people working in a huge variety of areas, and I am so pleased that WomCam is working in areas that cover so many different aspects of being a woman at Oxford Uni. A new website over the summer and a well-planned 1st Week event will hopefully make it easier to get new people involved, and I look forward to seeing what happens next year. When I first got involved with OUSU in any capacity, it was joining the WomCam committee at the end of my first year. There were maybe 10 of us. Now WomCam has a committee of over 20 people, as well as seven working groups that all have their own chairs, who are all active and engaged and doing really great work.

Part-Time Executive Officers

Marina Lambrakis – Graduate Academic Affairs Officer

Hi Council!

I've been pretty busy since 5th week. I organised a meeting to think about how we can expand our current access work to postgraduates, and I'm happy to say we have a plan of attack, so that's something I'll be working on throughout the summer with Jack and Nick. The aim is to have something up and running by the time Michaelmas starts. I'd better start working on my video editing skills...

Together with Julien, I've set up a meeting for the outgoing Divisional Board Reps and all full and part time officers involved in Academic Affairs, to come up with a framework for how the Div Reps can intersect with central OUSU work and how we can best work together to ensure cohesion across the board. Things are also moving on the Suspended Status Students front - we have a meeting later this week to come up with a strategy, so once we've established that I hope we'll do considerable work over the summer to collate resources and support common room officers in the fight for better college provision.

Other than these, for the rest of term and over the summer I'm planning on doing some data collection and analysis on women at DPhil level. I'd also like to resurrect the Ask-A-Grad panels

from last year for next term, so we can catch any final year undergrads or Masters students who might be interested in applying for graduate study. In 8th week I'll be attending Research Committee with Jack, and I'll be helping out at the University Open Days on 1 & 2 July because I think it's important for graduates to be represented as well as undergrads! (currently trying to sneak onto one of the Student Life Q&A sessions to push the graduate agenda...)

As grad life never ends, I'll be mostly in Oxford throughout the vac, so you can drop me a line at gradacaff@ousu.ox.ac.uk if you need anything :) Have a lovely end of term and enjoy your summers, and see you in Michaelmas!

Marina

Sam Shearn – Student Parents and Carers Officer

In the past weeks I have continued to make contact with more student parents through facebook and encourage people to sign up to the student parent mailing list.

I am reviewing the data from a survey which took place in 2014 and considering how to present its results, and reviewing a student parent handbook from 2011 which I want to republish in time for Freshers Week MT 2015.

Danny Waldman – Rent and Accommodation Officer

Hello Council! Not a massive amount from me this week - been responding to Presidents' requests for information surrounding rent negotiations and assisting where I can there as usual. Been getting in contact again with the Tenants Union about potential upcoming events/meetings, distributed the Living Out Guide for an event at St John's, and still compiling the College Accommodation Database (still seriously lacking in responses - reminders going out again!). Also, noting the motion of censure brought against me this week, I think it is completely fair, just and reasonable to censure me as I have been lax in reporting to Council with no excuse other than my own disorganisation in a busy term. I will be using my vote to support the motion, will make all efforts to report on time for my last term, and apologise for failing to do so this term.

Minerva Lim – International Students' Officer

Hi Council, over the past two weeks I've been busy organising the International Festival which will be held on Sunday 14th June, 2-5pm at Bonn Square opposite Westgate Shopping Centre - please come down to support us and to enjoy a fantastic afternoon out! I've also been in touch with the international reps from the various colleges and am looking to set up a meeting for all of them at the end of Week 7.

Lindsay Lee – Disabled Students' Officer

The Oxford Students' Disability Community and I are working together on a new initiative to

encourage local businesses to become more accessible to disabled customers. We are hoping to find one business in the beginning to become our “accessibility superstar” (or something with a less cheesy title) that agrees to small immediate access changes and commits to longer term goals. We’ll then go to other businesses with this “superstar” example and encourage them to follow suit. We’ve started contacting local business and we’re awaiting response!

This summer I’ll be focusing on giving the Disability Advisory Service input on their Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students and planning focus groups with students about it for Michaelmas. I’ll also be planning the disability and sexuality workshop for Michaelmas. If you have any questions or comments, as ever, let me know! disability@ousu.ox.ac.uk

Julien Coyne – Academic Affairs Campaign Officer

I’m having a meeting (the one organized by Marina, Graduate Academic Affairs officer) with the other academic reps and divisional reps to discuss the structure of all our roles, which will hopefully be helpful in making this role more effective next year.

Other than that, I have an exam this week, so I’m not doing too much, OUSU-wise! In 8th week I’ll be making some summaries of what I’ve been doing and trying to make sure the transition into next year (when I won’t be here anymore) is smooth and the work I’ve been thinking about, linking up academic reps, carries on.

Rita Nissim – Graduate Welfare Officer

Hi OUSU Council!

In the last two weeks, I have met with Anna to discuss ideas about how OUSU’s **First Responders Policy** can be more versatile to meet the needs of common rooms; I’m looking forward to further work with Welfare Officers on this ☺ Other than that, the **Alcohol Awareness Training** survey has been sent out to common room Welfare Officers and Social Secretaries so I will soon have feedback to pass on to the representative from Turning Point who will be working on developing a training session. Chris and I are also currently discussing whether termly **HIV and Chlamydia testings** can be held at college venues. I have in addition had a meeting about how to best help **Suspended Status Students** with a few other members of the Exec Team; we have now planned our work on this for the summer and I’m actually really excited about working on this project. The rest is as you know it ☺

As always, don’t hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions/issues! Email me at gradwelfare@ousu.ox.ac.uk!

Rita

Yoni Stone – Community Outreach and Charities Officer

The core of the committee for Oxford Donors is now in place (Treasurer and Secretary). I will be going to the bank with the treasurer this week in order to set up a bank account (necessary in order to register with the society). Having an open meeting early in 8th week in order to get more ambassadors on board (especially with a view to helping out with the Freshers' Fair stall). Have some initial plans for a video which should all happen early Michaelmas (along with the launch).

Will Brown – Clubs and Societies Officer

The last two weeks have seen me quite busy personally and academically, and so I've not been able to dedicate quite as much time to Clubs and Societies projects as I would have liked.

Consequently, I don't have much to report other than that - as usual - I've been replying to emails and enquiries from various clubs and societies, and that I hope to make the last two weeks of term as productive as possible.

Aliya Yule – Womens' Campaign Officer

WomCam has had a very busy and productive term, and launched several new projects and campaigns. As ever, none of this would be possible without the incredible WomCam committee, who keep me going and are the most wonderful group of human beings.

Discussion Group

This term, we have launched WomCam's discussion group sessions, which are designed to be informal, relaxed spaces where people who are new to feminism or want to explore ideas can meet to chat, learn, vent and ask questions in a non-judgmental and non-hostile space. The new Discussion Group chair, Fatema, has done an amazing job of creating a relaxed and respectful group where anyone can come, talk, and ask questions. The first discussion group looked at the question of 'how to discuss in feminist spaces'.

Holly (LGBTQ Rep), Cynthia (Women of Colour Rep), Catherine (General Committee member and also sits on LGBTQ Campaign committee) and Jenny the OUSU LGBTQ Officer also set up the first Queer Women's Discussion Group. In its inaugural meeting, people chatted about what it meant to be a woman in the LGBTQ Community.

The next Discussion Group event is on Friday, and will be co-hosted by the Oxford Uni Sexism Project. The theme of the event is everyday sexism and microaggressions, particularly in an academic context. This links in well with the work that the Cherwell did last week looking at women in academia, for which I wrote a short article.

#5thWeekFree

Throughout 5th week, WomCam launched the #5thWeekFree campaign which was designed to bring attention to the call for reading weeks, destigmatise discussions about mental health and struggling with work, and reiterate to students the importance of self-care. The campaign received a lot of support on Twitter and in the student press (shout out to Louis Trup for sticking

true to his promise to abolish 5th week), with testimonials from students being posted daily on the WomCam website. We received many messages saying that the personal stories resonated with students, and we had messages of solidarity from students at Cambridge fighting for a similar thing. Thank you to everyone who submitted a testimonial and tweeted throughout the week – and a huge shout out to the WomCam Publicity Officer, Stephanie, for being a boss at the internet and effectively running the whole campaign!

Intersectionality 101

With the chairs of the different liberation campaigns, I ran an Intersectionality 101 workshop that was supposed to be a ‘beginners guide’ to intersectional activism and campaigning. We had good feedback from the event, where I did a whistle-stop tour of the history of intersectionality (shout out Kimberlé Crenshaw), before the different chairs chatted about the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, class, and disability, and finally doing a privilege walk.

Committee

The new members of the committee have hit the ground running and become an integral part of WomCam – I am so proud to have them in the campaign, and am excited to see what they do with WomCam over the next few years!

At the end of 5th week, and after our committee meeting, a group of us went to the pub to get to know each other better and to have a nice time after the week-long campaign. We have also set up our committee buddies, so that new members can learn from old members, and also to ensure that someone is there as a support and friend, as campaigning can be very draining. We are hoping to crewdate the LGBTQ Campaign committee later this week.

Interwebs Things

We are continuing to try and grow our online presence, so check out our new website (still under construction) with the shiny domain name of ousuwomcam.com (you can follow us as it’s a Tumblr!). The website has the #5thWeekFree testimonials, as well as fun blog posts and information about the committee and what we do. Also check out what we are up to @womcam on Twitter!

LibCom

I attended LibCom and met with lots of incredible Women’s Officers and Gender Equalities Officers, as well as with other liberation reps from throughout the university. I chaired the ‘Women’s’ break out session, which was (I hope!) useful, as we got to talk about the many different problems facing people in each college, and hear how others had strategized / tried to resolve the problems in their own colleges. I hope that this can happen more frequently in the future, as it was great to meet people working on liberation issues and hear about the frequent problems people are facing, as well as finding ways together to solve them.

WomCam Zine

The zine, entitled *Irrationality*, is finished and available to be ordered! We are asking for ~£1 donation per zine to cover the costs of printing, and we can send it to common rooms. The zine

will also be available at the GRRRL Zine Fair at Freud's (happening at the same time as OUSU Council). Shout out to Rose, the editor of the zine, for getting it all together!

Sexual Violence Training Day

I attended a sexual violence training day, run by OSARCC and Anna, which was an incredibly difficult day, but very rewarding and useful. I would recommend that anyone in a welfare role attends the training, Please keep donating to OSARCC to support all the incredible work they do to support women survivors of sexual violence.

Working with other liberation officers

I have been working with the other liberation officers, and in particular, the other liberation campaign chairs, on a number of different things. We have drafted a letter entitled 'The Need for Liberation Reps in Common Rooms', which urges common rooms to introduce different liberation reps. The document has a list of FAQs, as well as a 'Potential Responsibilities' list for the officers. We are also going to be co-hosting an event to make banners / placards for the Anti-Austerity demonstration on June 20th, and we hope to get a liberation OUSU bloc to go the demo (#smashpatriarchy #smashcapitalism)– get in touch with me if you would like to find out more!

Bye & Thanks

Sadly, I am resigning my position as of the end of this term, due to mental health problems. I want thank OUSU and members of the exec who have been so supportive through this term – particularly Anna, who has been a rock and a brilliant Sab. I hope that Council and OUSU remains committed to truly placing liberation at the heart of what it does.

Joe Reason – Common Room Support Officer

Hey Council,

Sorry, it has been a slow couple of weeks due to my finals. I have held the third meeting of the OUSU reps this term and have been looking into organising the fourth one with a dinner held afterwards - OUSU reps check your emails for more information. Regular OUSU newsletters to the OUSU Reps mail list have started as well after feedback from the OUSU reps on this.

I will be starting working on compiling information on balls and the way their committees are run for use by the ball presidents and hope to spend some of the summer working on reviving the Common Room Information Service (or CRiS for short) and updating my lists of officers.

If you think there is a project that I should work on over the summer, let me know on commonrooms@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

Nikhil Venkatesh – Black and Minority Ethnic Students Officer

Over the past fortnight I have been representing OUSU at a range of activist events, including the launch of the Rhodes Must Fall campaign. It's really exciting that so many students of colour and allies are working on liberation issues at the moment. I have also met with the University's Equality and Diversity Unit to discuss the process of applying for the Race Equality Charter Mark. Tomorrow I will be bringing common room representatives for ethnic minority students together to share ideas and problems. Sorry I can't be with you today - if anyone has any questions drop me an e-mail at bme@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

David Parton – Health and Welfare Officer

I have been in contact with the Oxford College Nurses Association in a recent drive of mine to increase awareness of PEP antiviral treatment to those who have experienced potential or actual exposure to HIV. I have received an encouraging response from OCNA but I look forward to a potential drive I have instigated to ensure college nurses are aware of the treatment and are able to assist and advise students about it. I also attended a Suspended Student Status meeting with other members of the Exec where I was assigned, and have begun working on, the task of collating information from different colleges on the provisions they provide to suspended status students, with a long-term objective of having this completed by the start of Michealmas. Upon discussion with Chris Pike, I have also decided to temporarily postpone the roll-out of the mental health awareness packs due to insurance liability concerns. This we seek to address, with the assistance of the Student Advice Service.

Henna Shah – Access and Admissions Officer

Hi Council

Happy end of term! Since I last saw you I've had a super productive meeting with lots of access reps who've given me a list of priorities to focus on over the summer. I've also been continuing to support the first-gen campaign which looks to be gaining pace really fast and is generally fantastic. Not much more to report - unfortunately I've been pretty busy recently with finalists and the Hub etc. but hopefully I will have lots of shiny things to show you come the start of MT! As per usual though I'm always happy to offer support/advice to individual access officers/JCRs so drop me a line if you would like to chat.

Henna

Divisional Board Representatives

Eden Bailey – Humanities Undergraduate Rep

Seventh Week will include a Divisional Board Meeting, the Humanities Undergraduate Studies Committee meeting, the Humanities Undergraduate Joint Consultative Committee Meeting and a meeting of div reps and academic reps from across colleges.

Big success in sixth week with the rejection of the proposal concerning the Oriental Studies

Library and the Sackler. Well done to all of the students who have worked so hard on that campaign, collecting information, and giving me written comments.

The Humanities UJCC will meet on Thursday 11th June, so if you have anything you'd like to ask about that, or even matters for the agenda, please do not hesitate to get in touch, and I will do my best to ensure that they are covered.

Hilary Chow – Social Sciences Graduate Rep

1. I have attended the Library Committee meeting and reported to them feedback from student representatives.
2. I have attended OUSU Teaching Awards.
3. I have attended OUSU council.
4. The Graduate Studies Committee will meet on 5 June and discuss the following issues:
 - Continuation Fee Waivers for MPLS students: To note that neither the Medical Sciences Division nor the Social Sciences Division supported the MPLS proposals for revising their fee waiver practices
 - Revision of guidance on examination conventions
 - DTC Management Board (DTCMB) report
 - Scholarships update
 - Consultation on revised procedure for dealing with cases of plagiarism
 - Education Committee consultation – Transfer and Confirmation of Status assessments
 - Student Barometer 2014 results
 - Teaching opportunities for graduate students
 - Postgraduate Student Discussion Forum
5. I'm very happy to announce that the Social Sciences Library will extend its opening hours on Sunday to 11am-7pm from next Michaelmas!
6. I have received a cup from the Bodleian Library in the final Library Committee meeting as an attendee.
7. I'm attending OUSU Garden Party on 9 June.
8. I'm attending a meeting with other divisional representatives and the academic affair officer on 9 June.
9. I'm attending my last divisional board meeting on 12 June.
10. I have drafted an email on my thoughts about my role attached with the reports for a smooth transition to my successor, whenever that might be.

This is my last council report and I'd like to take the opportunity to thank council for giving me this opportunity to serve for the year. It has been an interesting experience and I definitely would recommend people to run for the position. Good luck everyone with everything you do!

Emma Alexander – Social Sciences Undergraduate Rep

Hi Council! This is my last report after 2 years in this role - I'd like to thank all the OUSU officers I've worked with over two years who have helped me and generally done outstanding jobs. I'm especially grateful to James and Matt for the help this year!

Just to round up my work this term, it's been curtailed a lot by finals; however I planned to get

most of my projects out of this way last term which is what I did, and overall I managed to achieve some progress on all of my pledged manifesto projects over the year. I held a Gender Gap forum in Keble at the start of term, which was a fantastic event, and I'm really grateful to Anna for her help in this regard. I've been attending all the Divisional Board meetings required of me in the meantime. I'm going to be spending the last two weeks thinking about handover, and chasing up any last issues I can! I really recommend anyone considering getting involved with OUSU to do so - the Div Rep role is a nice one particularly if you want to run your own projects. If I can help with anything in the last two weeks of term, please do let me know - I'd be happy to talk to you! Thanks :)

Julien Coyne – MPLS Undergraduate Rep

Apologies for the brief report - final exam this week! There is a final meeting (for this academic year) of the Working Group for the Future of the RSL in 8th week, which I'll be going to, and the final Divisional Board of the year is this Friday. There is also a final meeting of undergraduate course reps (an "undergraduate joint consultative forum") in MPLS in 8th week.

Besides those meetings, I'll be looking forward to handing over this role to whoever is elected!

Kristina Carney – Humanities Postgraduate Rep

Dear council,

This term I have attended 1 divisional board meeting and will attend two graduate committee meetings. I also plan to submit my recommendations for the future of PG Div Reps by the end of 8th week.

Returning Officer's Report on the Referendum on Moving Statutory Elections, Trinity Term 2015

This report is a summary of the referendum on whether to move OUSU's Statutory Elections from Michaelmas Term to Hilary Term, which took place between Wednesday and Friday of 4th Week, Trinity Term 2015, alongside the referenda on sub fusc and gowns and mortarboards, and has recommendations for future referenda. I am happy to answer any questions or take comments by email at joseph.smith@some.ox.ac.uk or via the President at president@ousu.ox.ac.uk. I am pleased to report that this referendum, along with the other two, were conducted fairly and properly.

Turnout and Voting Statistics

It was pleasing to report that the turnout in these referenda showed the highest turnout of any cross-campus ballot in OUSU's history and were also one of the highest turnouts of any English University Student Union on record, almost certainly given that they were held alongside the sub fusc/gowns and mortarboards referenda on the same day. At 40.62% and with 8,671 individual voters (when assuming that there are 21,345 students at Oxford), the turnout was simply astounding and beyond the wildest imagination of myself and my team, who helped me conduct the referenda. In the referendum, there were 2,445 (62.69%) cast in favour of 'yes' and 1,455 (37.31%) votes cast in favour of 'no' with 3,986 abstentions, a total of 7,886 votes. The headline figure covers the number of individual voters across all three referenda so is less in each individual referendum. It is notable that the number of abstentions was so high. I believe this to be due to apathy towards the issue of moving statutory elections, which we were aware of beforehand. In OUSU's referenda, abstentions do not count in view of the overall result, subsequent to regulation 26.3 and therefore the answer was answered in the affirmative and Statutory Elections will be moved from Michaelmas Term to Hilary Term. It is perhaps also worth noting that more people voted either yes or no in this referendum than voted in the last set of Statutory Elections.

Gender: 4754 Men (54.85%), 3906 Women (45.06%), 8 Unspecified (0.09%)

Year of Study: 2,892 Year 1 (33.36%), 2,499 Year 2 (28.83%), 2,156 Year 3 (24.87%), 1,020 Year 4 (11.77%), 47 Year 5 (0.54%), 45 Year 6 (0.52%), 9 Unknown (0.10%)

Degree: 6,660 Undergraduates (76.83%), 2,003 Graduates (23.11%), 5 Unspecified (0.06%)

Please note that the numbers only add to 8,668 as there were also three paper ballots that were cast. The identities of the individuals have been kept confidential as a result. Moreover, these statistics are for voters across all three referenda.

It is worth noting that when assuming 10,345 undergraduates and 10,000 graduates at Oxford (itself an arbitrary number) that turnout amongst undergraduates was 64.37%, almost two-thirds, and that amongst graduates there was a large improvement (a turnout of around 20%

compared to under 5% in Statutory Elections). This therefore reflects how the referenda appear to have engaged everyone across year groups (whilst first years were more likely to vote than later years, not excessively so), undergraduates and graduates as well as people of all genders with the number of women voting much higher than is usual in Statutory Elections. The gap between men and women and between undergraduates and postgraduates is, however, something to work on.

The figures for the voting times were also interesting, with a large spike on Wednesday morning with 3,500 votes being cast (around 1,200 voters) around lunchtime that day in a response to the email sent out. It is notable that the majority of votes cast were on the first day with people voting in steady numbers on Thursday and a spike in the numbers following a reminder email that was sent around lunchtime on Friday. As such, we can see that the voting emails had a large impact on people voting with the opening rates for the emails being 32% and 29% respectively, reflecting no large drop. Therefore, the communications team deserve credit for helping to energise students and improve turnout through social media.

The detailed figures are available on request by contacting the Democratic Support Officer at dso@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

The Question

The question set was as follows:

‘At present, OUSU’s Statutory Elections take place in Michaelmas Term. Should they be held in Hilary Term instead?’

The question was amended by me in consultation with the original proponent of the motion (Martine Wauben, Pembroke College, ex-RO) as I felt the original question (Should OUSU’s Statutory Elections be held in Hilary Term?) was too vague and did not indicate clearly enough to voters that elections are currently held in Michaelmas Term. Although many insiders are highly aware that OUSU’s main elections take place in Michaelmas Term, there are others who are not. Information was given to voters to clarify what Statutory Elections are, when they are held and for what positions. Concerns were raised about the question being misleading as the status quo was to be maintained by the ‘no’ campaign, where the subfusc and gowns and mortarboards encouraged the status quo to be kept by a ‘yes’ vote. There was a formal complaint lodged to this effect, which I dismissed. My reasons for doing so are set out later in this report.

Early Publicity

Publicity for these referenda began well in advance of polling day, after the VP Grads by-election in Hilary Term, which ended on Thursday 7th Week. Nominations packs were written by the Returning Officer, along with a more condensed Student Information Pack, with advice on amendments to them being given by Ami Gell (Democratic Support Officer), the sabbatical team, and my then Deputy Returning Officers (Matthew Collyer and Tiphaine Ramenason). These were published on the OUSU website at the end of 8th Week and publicity was circulated in the form of a news story, which was shared widely on social media. It was also emailed by

me to many JCR Presidents and OUSU Officers when I asked for hustings requests. There were multiple emails over the vacation encouraging people to hold hustings in their colleges with a final deadline being set at Friday 1st Week, Trinity Term. In the end, three colleges held hustings (inclusive of OUSU Council in 3rd Week). More details about these can be found later in the report.

I kept in contact with the Democratic Support Officer, the Communications Team and the Sabbatical Team throughout almost the entirety of the Easter vacation and publicity was circulated through the student press following the passage of the motion. This also occurred in the President's email at the start of 1st Week, Trinity Term, which announced the opening of nominations was to be Wednesday of that week.

The OUSU website facilitated the publication and updating of the nomination packs in advance of the opening of nominations and provided a central space for voters to gain information, see rulings made by the Returning Officer and when hustings would be held. Use was also made of social media, with tweets having been sent out by the OUSU Communications Team.

Nominations and Briefing Meetings

In total, two candidates nominated, one each to lead the respective sides of the referendum. These were Ruth Meredith (Brasenose College, OUSU VP Charities and Communities) for the 'yes' campaign ("Ready for Hilary") and Jack Matthews (University College, VP Graduates) for the 'no' campaign ("Don't Mess with Michaelmas"). All nominations were received within the deadline and candidates were required to fill in a sheet from the nominations pack, signing that they had read the relevant paragraphs of the Election Regulations as well as bringing their bod cards, subsequent to a direction from Martine Wauben, the Michaelmas RO. I would recommend the retention of this direction in the forthcoming Statutory Elections and the next set of referenda.

Open Meetings

Following on from last year's referenda, I saw it as important that the referenda received maximum publicity and that OUSU was seen to be a transparent organisation. To this end, advertisements for Open Meetings (often referred to simply as hustings) were outlined at the end of Hilary and Common Room Presidents were contacted on multiple occasions about holding hustings. In the end, three colleges offered to hold hustings. These were Wadham, St John's and St Hugh's, the latter of which played host to the Central Hustings, even though the regulations do not mandate a Central Hustings to take place. I would, however, recommend this as something to consider in the future.

The turnout at hustings varied across colleges with some being very poorly attended, whilst others were much better. I agree with the principle of college hustings and felt the number of hustings to be adequate and not too much pressure on campaign leaders. However, I would encourage more advertisement from inside Common Rooms, rather than simply from OUSU, as where this did happen, the turnout was often much better. I did permit delegation between the campaigns if they were unable to speak at a husting, provided the spokesperson was on their Campaign List. However, this right was not exercised in this referendum.

The format of hustings was kept similar to other years with a 90 second opening speech for each campaign, followed by questions from the audience with up to 45 second answers. I felt that this format worked well as it is easy for voters to follow and helps to allow for some debate between the campaigns. However, I also introduced a third phase, a debating phase, at the end of the hustings, allowing each campaign two minutes to argue against the other's points and reinforce their own. This was then followed by a two minute closing speech. I was slightly worried that this would have some teething problems and simply would not work. However, it was pleasing that it did allow for a significant amount of debate between the campaigns, was rather simplistic and easy to follow and would therefore recommend its retention in future elections and referenda.

Student Media

Compared to the referenda on sub fusc and gowns and mortarboards, this referendum received relatively little coverage from the student media, which was what I expected given the somewhat procedural, albeit equally important, nature of the issue at stake. It was seen as something of an OUSU insider issue. I do, however, believe that the Campaign Leaders and OUSU tried their best to make the arguments seem relevant to students. However, student media was disappointing in this respect. Advertisements did appear in the Oxford Student however, which was something agreed upon by the communications team and me.

Voting and the Count

The 2013-14 sabbatical team decided to introduce MSL, an online system to which no student member of the university has access. I felt the system worked extremely well and was relatively simple and easy to use. Although concerns had been expressed about the difficulties of locating the voting page on the OUSU website in Michaelmas, I heard very few concerns this time and the extremely high turnout seems to have proved that voters were able to log into the MSL system with great ease in order to vote. No voting irregularities were reported and I felt that the system was easy to use, despite not dealing with much of the admin side of things myself. It was feared in Michaelmas that the system was somewhat complex to use. However, voters appear to have gotten used to MSL and I would support its retention in future.

There were only four instances reported of people being unable to vote through the system when there was no reason why they should not have been able to. I therefore directed that they be able to vote via paper ballot, pursuant to Election Regulation 32.3 (Direct Elections). To do so, they had to demonstrate that they were categorically unable to vote and then present their bod card. They were then presented with a paper ballot, which was sealed afterwards in an envelope marked for my attention (one for each voter), all of which were opened prior to the main online count. Their votes were incorporated into the final turnout figures. Whilst I see this as regrettable, it was primarily due to the incomplete nature of the University's data system, which must be corrected in the future. However, I acted swiftly on Wednesday afternoon, when the issue first arose, to allow for an alternative manual voting system to be put in place.

Rather a few instances of people being unable to vote were recorded in the course of the voting other than these four instances. However, the vast majority of these were either visiting

students or students who had otherwise opted out of OUSU. It may be worthwhile to define exactly who a 'student member' is in the nominations pack and information packs for future elections and referenda in order to reduce the number of instances where this occurred.

I followed the model of most results nights from recent OUSU elections, returning to the traditional format of announcing the result on Oxide radio that was not carried out last year. The count was conducted in OUSU offices at 7:30pm with the results being read out in a live results show by me with comments being given by James Blythe (Vice President for Access and Academic Affairs), Jack Matthews (Vice President for Graduates) and Harrison Edmonds (Leader of the Yes Campaign in the sub fusc/gowns and mortarboards referenda). The decision was made to permit the Campaign Leaders to attend the count as well as the sabbatical team and Deputy Returning Officers, partially in response to the debacle in last year's NUS Referendum and the need for transparency in OUSU's democratic process. I felt that this approach worked well and would strongly recommend its retention in the future, perhaps even enshrining it into the Election Regulations.

The decision was also made to tweet turnout figures on social media, partially to encourage people to vote as the turnout was excitingly high, but also to allow for transparency and to illustrate that the voting was not being tampered with, which I felt worked well and something we ought to retain.

Other Complaints and Concerns

There were notably very few complaints and concerns expressed in the course of the referenda, a testament to the hard work of the elections team. There was, however, one formal complaint, about me as Returning Officer.

1. That the question set out in the referendum used misleading, vague and confusing phrasing and that it was the only one of three to advocate a 'no' vote for the maintenance of status quo.

As this was a complaint made about the Returning Officer rather than by the Returning Officer, a Junior Tribunal was not immediately convened as I hold the first ruling on all complaints not made by either myself or my Deputy Returning Officer(s). I made the decision to dismiss this complaint, a decision that was not appealed by the complainant and as a result did not lead to the convention of a Junior Tribunal.

I made the decision to dismiss the complaint for a multitude of reasons. Firstly, the question had been made available to all voters at the end of Hilary Term, thereby allowing ten weeks to complain about the question, a question that had been amended to be made fairer and clearer by me. Moreover, the question was the first out of three referenda and students were therefore not misled as they had not voted on the sub fusc/gowns and mortarboards referenda. The result was also decisive and given the large number of abstentions, students did think carefully about the question. The voting system can also not have created a false result as it is practically impenetrable. The question was also set with regards to the AV referendum, which used similar phrasing, which I felt to be a good precedent as it followed in the footsteps of a UK-wide referendum, a question that had to undergo much more scrutiny before being put to the electorate. Manifestos and information on what Statutory Elections are were also available

on the voting page and publicity of this referendum was given almost equal weighting as the subfusc/gowns and mortarboards. I believed that I maintained Regulation 5.1 (running elections fairly, properly and impartially) and that the result delivered was decisive. The full text of my ruling on the complaint can be found on the OUSU website.

Expenditure

I felt that the ability of the campaigns to spend up to £230 (pursuant to Regulation 19.1) was much too high. Campaigns may claim up to £25 for each campaign back from OUSU, a threshold I felt was adequate (£25 is enough to run a co-ordinated referendum campaign). However, £230 per campaign is much too high and I would recommend a regulations change to limit this to somewhere in the range of £150 or even less than this. The need to spend money at a cost that is similar to the cost that the average student would pay is something I felt should be retained although this must be explained clearly at Briefing Meetings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, I consider these referenda to have been run freely, fairly, properly and transparently, as well as having delivered a result in which the students of Oxford can have confidence. I believe that these referenda were a huge success owing to the near absence of any formal complaints as well as the huge turnout, one of the highest of any English university in history and the fact that I managed to maintain sanity throughout the referenda.

To summarise the report, I make the following recommendations to Council, the Trustees and to future Elections Committees (along with the next person to be blessed with the position I've held for the past two terms):

1. Plan early - I cannot stress the importance of this enough. The fact that we began planning the referenda in 7th Week of Hilary Term paid its dividends and that a communications schedule was outlined by the time I left for the Easter vacation was commendable. If holding a referendum in Trinity, plans should ideally be outlined by the end of Hilary Term and much of the organisation of hustings should take place over the vacation.
2. Have good communications and make use of social media - The communications team did an outstanding job in these referenda, ensuring that voters were well-informed and the numerous tweets and facebook posts put out by the OUSU team and other OUSU Officers helped to energise voters.
3. Devise a better twitter hashtag - #OUSUReferendum2015 never took off. I would advise that hashtags are kept short, even something as short as #GetVoting, which could lead to even better communications.
4. Work as a team - I feel that I have had a good working relationship with the communications team, the Democratic Support Officer and the sabbatical team. Whilst Elections Committee does not play a role in the regulations, the support of the sabbatical officers was very much appreciated and I felt that the ability to work as a unit contributed to good communications and a high turnout.

5. More flexibility in the timetable - Election Regulation 11 is pretty clear about what the timetable for referenda should be, although this took some untangling. It could have been made easier by allowing for more flexibility, such as the concrete nature of the timetable that means that polling has to open exactly 14 days after a Briefing Meeting and that Campaign Lists have to be submitted exactly 24 hours after a Briefing Meeting. In the latter case, I had to accept one set of statements and lists at 7pm, another at 8pm and another at 8:45pm, which did not seem to make sense.

6. Make Central Hustings a compulsory part of the campaign - If we have Central Hustings for Statutory Elections, there should similarly be a Central Hustings for referenda. I see no good reason for not doing so and as these were the best turned out for this referendum, post-Council hustings should be kept.

7. Keep the debating phase in hustings - This worked much better than I expected and was something I took up following frustration in the Michaelmas elections that there was enough debate between the candidates and that they all seemed to agree. In future, I would shorten the speaking length from two minutes to 90 seconds or even one minute for these. However, I maintain that OUSU is a student union that values free and fair elections but it is also one in which tasteful debate must be actively encouraged.

8. Make sure the questions are clear and that the status quo is always maintained through a 'yes' or 'no' vote - Whilst the complaint I received was regarding events that I believe did not have an effect on the free, fair and democratic conduction of the referenda, I take the comments made by the complainant on board and agree that questions in multiple referenda should always maintain a consistent status quo option. Therefore, I would argue for a regulations change (to Schedule Two as part 2f) to clarify that if multiple referenda questions are being asked, the status quo option should be either the 'yes' or the 'no' side of the debate on all questions.

I would like to thank everyone at OUSU for all their help in the conduct of these elections, notably Ami Gell (Democratic Support Officer) for answering every little query that I had, as well as the Communications team, who did an exemplary job of advertising these referenda and ensuring that publicity throughout them was of a good level. Moreover, I would like to thank the sabbatical team and my Deputy Returning Officer, Benji, for being a bedrock of support and answering any questions that I had, as well as for helping me to not become too stressed by the long and arduous process of overseeing the referenda. Finally, thank you to the Campaign Leaders for running such clean and energising campaigns, to everyone who got involved with a campaign, and of course, to all those who voted.

These referenda have delivered a result in which our Student Union can have confidence, a far cry from the fiasco of the NUS Referendum last year. This result has restored the faith of students within OUSU's democratic processes, a legacy that I am proud to be a part of. I hope that such engagement from students can be carried on into the next set of Statutory Elections and the next referenda, and that the turnout can be even higher than the astonishing 40.62%

target that we have now set ourselves to beat.

Joe Smith
Somerville College
OUSU Returning Officer
Trinity Term 2015

Returning Officer's Report on the Referenda on keeping sub fusc and gowns and mortarboards compulsory for University Examinations, Trinity Term 2015

This report is a summary of the referenda on whether to keep sub fusc clothing and/or gowns and mortarboards compulsory for University Examinations, which took place between Wednesday and Friday of 4th Week, Trinity Term 2015, alongside the referendum on moving Statutory Elections, and has recommendations for future referenda. I am happy to answer any questions or take comments by email at joseph.smith@some.ox.ac.uk or via the President at president@ousu.ox.ac.uk. I am pleased to report that these referenda, along with the other one, were conducted fairly and properly.

Turnout and Voting Statistics

It was pleasing to report that the turnout in these referenda showed the highest turnout in any cross-campus vote in OUSU's history and was also one of the highest turnouts of any English University Student Union on record. At 40.62% and with 8,671 individual voters (when assuming that there are 21,345 students at Oxford), the turnout was simply astounding and beyond the wildest imagination of me and my team who helped me conduct the referenda. In the sub fusc referendum, there were 6,403 votes in favour of 'yes' and 2040 votes in favour of 'no' with 103 abstentions (a total of 8,456 ballots cast) and in the gowns and mortarboards referendum, 6,242 votes were cast in favour in favour of 'yes' and 1,759 in favour of 'no' and 128 abstentions (a total of 8,129 ballots cast). The headline figure covers the number of individual voters across all three referenda so is less in each individual referendum. It is also notable that more students as a percentage voted in favour of keeping gowns and mortarboards compulsory (by 78.02% to 21.98%) than in favour of keeping sub fusc clothing compulsory (by 75.83% to 24.17%).

Gender: 4754 Men (54.85%), 3906 Women (45.06%), 8 Unspecified (0.09%)

Year of Study: 2,892 Year 1 (33.36%), 2,499 Year 2 (28.83%), 2,156 Year 3 (24.87%), 1,020 Year 4 (11.77%), 47 Year 5 (0.54%), 45 Year 6 (0.52%), 9 Unknown (0.10%)

Degree: 6,660 Undergraduates (76.83%), 2,003 Graduates (23.11%), 5 Unspecified (0.06%)

Please note that the numbers only add to 8,668 as there were also three paper ballots that were cast. The identities of the individuals have been kept confidential as a result. Moreover, these statistics are for voters across all three referenda.

It is worth noting that when assuming 10,345 undergraduates and 10,000 graduates at Oxford (itself an arbitrary number) that turnout amongst undergraduates was 64.37%, almost two-thirds, and that amongst graduates there was a large improvement (a turnout of around 20% compared to under 5% in Statutory Elections). This therefore reflects how the referenda appear to have engaged everyone across year groups (whilst first years were more likely to vote than later years, not excessively so), undergraduates and graduates as well as people of all genders with the number of women voting much higher than is usual in Statutory Elections. The gap between men and women and between undergraduates and postgraduates is, however, something to work on.

The figures for the voting times were also interesting, with a large spike on Wednesday morning with 3,500 votes being cast (around 1,200 voters) around lunchtime that day in a response to the email sent out. It is notable that the majority of votes cast were on the first day with people voting in steady numbers on Thursday and a spike in the numbers following a reminder email that was sent around lunchtime on Friday. As such, we can see that the voting emails had a large impact on people voting with the opening rates for the emails being 32% and 29% respectively, reflecting no large drop. Therefore, the communications team deserve credit for helping to energise students and improve turnout through social media.

The detailed figures are available on request by contacting the Democratic Support Officer at dso@ousu.ox.ac.uk.

The Questions

The questions set were as follows:

‘Should students at Oxford continue to be required to wear sub fusc clothing to University Examinations?’

‘Should students at Oxford continue to be required to wear gowns and mortarboards to University Examinations?’

These questions were the same as those passed in a motion at 7th Week Council in Hilary Term 2015 (albeit amended to ask two questions rather than just one on sub fusc) and it was deemed that the questions were clear enough to be answered by all students, something reflected in the turnout and the relatively low level of abstentions. Although concerns were raised that the questions were not clarified enough to dispel myths that the referenda would abolish sub fusc entirely, rather than merely making it optional, I rejected these concerns on the grounds that the questions were published well in advance on the OUSU website and were available to all students. Furthermore, no evidence was found that student media had misled voters with regards to what the questions were asking.

Early Publicity

Publicity for these referenda began well in advance of polling day, after the VP Grads by-election in Hilary Term, which ended on Thursday 7th Week. Nominations packs were written by the Returning Officer, along with a more condensed Student Information Pack, with advice on

amendments to them being given by Ami Gell (Democratic Support Officer), the sabbatical team, and my then Deputy Returning Officers (Matthew Collyer and Tiphaine Ramenason). These were published on the OUSU website at the end of 8th Week and publicity was circulated in the form of a news story, which was shared widely on social media. It was also emailed by me to many JCR Presidents and OUSU Officers when I asked for hustings requests. There were multiple emails over the vacation encouraging people to hold hustings in their colleges with a final deadline being set at Friday 1st Week, Trinity Term. In the end, six colleges held hustings (inclusive of OUSU Council in 3rd Week) and two further debates were held at the Oxford Forum and at the Oxford Union in the form of an emergency motion. More details about these can be found later in the report.

I kept in contact with the Democratic Support Officer, the Communications Team and the Sabbatical Team throughout almost the entirety of the Easter vacation and publicity was circulated through the student press following the passage of the motion. This also occurred in the President's email at the start of 1st Week, Trinity Term, which announced the opening of nominations was to be Wednesday of that week.

The OUSU website facilitated the publication and updating of the nomination packs in advance of the opening of nominations and provided a central space for voters to gain information, see rulings made by the Returning Officer and to find out when hustings would be held.

Use was also made of social media, with tweets having been sent out by the OUSU Communications Team. There was also a video (starring Louis Trup) that has since been seen 3,000 times on YouTube, which added to the publicity of the referenda. Feedback on this was seen as broadly positive.

Nominations and Briefing Meetings

In total, two candidates nominated, one each to lead the respective sides of the referenda. These were Harrison Edmonds (University College) for the 'yes' campaign ("Save Subfusc") and Xavier Cohen (Balliol College) for the 'no' campaign ("Subfusc Off"). Both Campaign Leaders nominated for both referenda, as allowed under the regulations, and were subsequently elected unopposed. Whilst Facebook campaign groups for both sides of the referenda had existed since the end of Hilary due to the publicity the referendum received in Hilary, the campaigns only became the Official Campaigns upon the election of both campaign leaders (unopposed) at Briefing Meetings on Wednesday 2nd Week. Whilst all nominations I received were validated, I add a small caveat. The nomination for the 'no' campaign was validated in part due to my discretion in accepting a nomination a few moments after the deadline. Election Regulation 11.2 permits the Returning Officer to do this in order to ensure a fair and proper referendum. I was of the opinion that the lack of a 'no' campaign leader would, subsequent to regulation 17.1, have meant that there could be no official 'no' campaign. Candidates were required to fill in a sheet from the nominations pack, signing that they had read the relevant paragraphs of the Election Regulations as well as bringing their bod cards, subsequent to a direction from Martine Wauben, the Michaelmas RO. I would recommend the retention of this direction in the forthcoming Statutory Elections and in any future referenda.

Open Meetings

Following on from last year's referenda, I saw it as important that the referenda received maximum publicity and that OUSU was seen to be a transparent organisation. To this end, advertisements for Open Meetings (often referred to simply as hustings) were outlined at the end of Hilary and Common Room Presidents were contacted on multiple occasions about holding hustings. In the end, six colleges offered to hold hustings. These were Balliol, Jesus, Lady Margaret Hall, Wadham, St John's and St Hugh's, the latter of which played host to the Central Hustings, even though the regulations do not mandate a Central Hustings to take place. I would, however, recommend this as something to consider in the future.

I felt that the length of the hustings was adequate and decided to combine the two referenda into one debate as the issues being discussed were broadly similar. I felt that the debates were kept relevant and the campaign leaders were able to address both questions in the debate. I feel that this was a slightly unique campaign in having two questions that were extremely similar but should the issue of two similar questions arise again, I would encourage the RO to compile the debate into one set.

The turnout at hustings varied across colleges with some being very poorly attended, whilst others, notably Balliol, had a packed room of 70-80 people. I agree with the principle of college hustings and felt the number of hustings to be adequate and not too much pressure on campaign leaders. However, I would encourage more advertisement from inside Common Rooms, rather than simply from OUSU, as where this did happen, the turnout was often much better. I did permit delegation between the campaigns if they were unable to speak at a husting, provided the spokesperson was on their Campaign List. The 'no' campaign did this twice in the course of the campaign, which I felt worked well and did not disadvantage the other side of the campaign.

The format of hustings was kept similar to other years with a 90 second opening speech for each campaign, followed by questions from the audience with up to 45 second answers. I felt that this format worked well as it is easy for voters to follow and helps to allow for some debate between the campaigns. However, I also introduced a third phase, a debating phase, at the end of the hustings, allowing each campaign two minutes to argue against the other's points and reinforce their own. This was then followed by a two minute closing speech. I was slightly worried that this would have some teething problems and simply would not work. However, it was pleasing that it did allow for a significant amount of debate between the campaigns, was rather simplistic and easy to follow and would therefore recommend its retention in future elections and referenda.

Student Media (and National Media!)

The way that the student media engaged with the referenda was commendable in this respect. I was broadly impressed by the reporting of the Cherwell and the Oxford Student through comment pieces, news articles as well as some topical pieces, such as the 'BNOC Baby' that combined pictures of the 'yes' and 'no' Campaign Leaders. I support a free press and was pleased to see that the newspapers acted in good taste throughout the campaign period, with even the Cherwell's endorsement of the 'yes' campaign being handled in a way that kept within

the spirit of a free and proper referendum campaign. I emailed the newspapers over the vacation to outline the Election Regulations to them and answered any questions that they had. I would advise my successors to do the same to ensure that no student feels harassed and that a fair and proper election is kept.

There were a couple of concerns expressed with regard to the student media and thoughts that some of the reporting had been misleading. However, I monitored press coverage carefully and found no evidence that the newspapers had actively misled voters.

It was also pleasing to see that the referenda made it into the national media, both printed, broadcast and television. The referenda were featured in the Daily Mail, the Times and the Daily Telegraph, which was pleasing to see as it added to the sense that the issue at stake was one of great importance. Moreover, various radio stations contacted myself and the campaign leaders, mostly local, and we were pleased to offer comments. Perhaps the most euphoric moment of the campaign was the appearance of the campaigns on Newsnight, which directly contributed to greater publicity of the referenda. Giving comments to media outside of the Oxford bubble was supported if done so in the spirit of the Election Regulations, something I would be in favour of retaining. Campaigns were warned that they must not say anything libellous, slanderous or illegal to the media and they did so accordingly.

Voting and the Count

The 2013-14 sabbatical team decided to introduce MSL, an online system to which no student member of the university has access. I felt the system worked extremely well and was relatively simple and easy to use. Although concerns had been expressed about the difficulties of locating the voting page on the OUSU website in Michaelmas, I heard very few concerns this time and the extremely high turnout seems to have proved that voters were able to log into the MSL system with great ease in order to vote. No voting irregularities were reported and I felt that the system was easy to use, despite not dealing with much of the admin side of things myself. It was feared in Michaelmas that the system was somewhat complex to use. However, voters appear to have gotten used to MSL and I would support its retention in future.

There were only four instances reported of people being unable to vote through the system when there was no reason why they should not have been able to. I therefore directed that they be able to vote via paper ballot, pursuant to Election Regulation 32.3 (Direct Elections). To do so, they had to demonstrate that they were categorically unable to vote and then present their bod card. They were then presented with a paper ballot, which was sealed afterwards in an envelope marked for my attention (one for each voter), all of which were opened prior to the main online count. Their votes were incorporated into the final turnout figures. Whilst I see this as regrettable, it was primarily due to the incomplete nature of the University's data system, which must be corrected in the future. However, I acted swiftly on Wednesday afternoon, when the issue first arose, to allow for an alternative manual voting system to be put in place.

Rather a few instances of people being unable to vote were recorded in the course of the voting other than these four instances. However, the vast majority of these were either visiting students or students who had otherwise opted out of OUSU. It may be worthwhile to define

exactly who a 'student member' is in the nominations pack and information packs for future elections and referenda in order to reduce the number of instances where this occurred.

I followed the model of most results nights from recent OUSU elections, returning to the traditional format of announcing the result on Oxide radio that was not carried out last year. The count was conducted in OUSU offices at 7:30pm with the results being read out in a live results show by me with comments being given by James Blythe (Vice President for Access and Academic Affairs), Jack Matthews (Vice President for Graduates) and Harrison Edmonds (Leader of the Yes Campaign). The decision was made to permit the Campaign Leaders to attend the count as well as the sabbatical team and Deputy Returning Officers, partially in response to the debacle in last year's NUS Referendum and the need for transparency in OUSU's democratic process. I felt that this approach worked well and would strongly recommend its retention in the future, perhaps even enshrining it into the Election Regulations.

The decision was also made to tweet turnout figures on social media, partially to encourage people to vote as the turnout was excitingly high, but also to allow for transparency and to illustrate that the voting was not being tampered with, which I felt worked well and something we ought to retain.

Complaints and Concerns

There were notably very few complaints and concerns expressed in the course of referenda, a testament to the hard work of the elections team. There were some concerns that OUSU had not clarified the question far enough and that voters were liable to be misled by the idea that were the question to be answered in the negative that sub fusc would immediately disappear. Whilst this would not have happened in any case as the referendum is non-binding on the university, although OUSU would have mandated to negotiate on the basis of result, I did not believe that voters were misled by OUSU's communications over the question. However, to remedy any concerns that they might have done, I added a clarifying sentence to make it clearer that the referendum was advocating that sub fusc/gowns and mortarboards would still be kept compulsory were the question to be answered in the affirmative. No formal complaints were issued with regards to these referenda, which was highly pleasing as I had feared that a high turnout over such a contentious issue would have led to complaints. It is therefore to the credit of the campaigns for having led such clean campaigns, which struck the correct balance between debate and respect and promoted such a high turnout in referenda that were simultaneously managed well by the elections team.

Expenditure

I felt that the ability of the campaigns to spend up to £460 (pursuant to Regulation 19.1) was much too high. Campaigns are allowed to spend £230 in each campaign and may claim up to £25 for each campaign back from OUSU, in this case being £50 owing to the combined nature of the campaigns. Whilst I felt the threshold for claiming back money was adequate (£25 is enough to run a co-ordinated referendum campaign), £230 per campaign is much too high and I would recommend a regulations change to limit this to somewhere in the range of £150 or even less than this. The need to spend money at a cost that is similar to the cost that the average student would pay is something I felt should be retained although this must be clarified

clearly at Briefing Meetings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, I consider these referenda to have been run freely, fairly, properly and transparently, as well as having delivered a result in which the students of Oxford can have confidence. I believe that these referenda were a huge success owing to the absence of any formal complaints as well as the huge turnout, one of the highest of any English university in history and the fact that I managed to maintain sanity throughout the referenda.

To summarise the report, I make the following recommendations to Council, the Trustees and to future Elections Committees (along with the next person to be blessed with the position I've held for the past two terms):

1. Plan early - I cannot stress the importance of this enough. The fact that we began planning the referenda in 7th Week of Hilary Term paid its dividends and that a communications schedule was outlined by the time I left for the Easter vacation was commendable. If holding a referendum in Trinity, plans should ideally be outlined by the end of Hilary Term and much of the organisation of hustings should take place over the vacation.
2. Have good communications and make use of social media - The communications team did an outstanding job in these referenda, ensuring that voters were well-informed. I also felt that these referenda were notable for their use of social media and the internet with the YouTube video proving popular and the numerous tweets and facebook posts put out by the OUSU team and other OUSU Officers helped to energise voters.
3. Devise a better twitter hashtag - #OUSUReferendum2015 never took off. I would advise that hashtags are kept short, even something as short as #GetVoting, which could lead to even better communications.
4. Work as a team - I feel that I have had a good working relationship with the communications team, the Democratic Support Officer and the sabbatical team. Whilst Elections Committee does not play a role in the regulations, the support of the sabbatical officers was very much appreciated and I felt that the ability to work as a unit contributed to good communications and a high turnout.
5. More flexibility in the timetable - Election Regulation 11 is pretty clear about what the timetable for referenda should be, although this took some untangling. It could have been made easier by allowing for more flexibility, such as the concrete nature of the timetable that means that polling has to open exactly 14 days after a Briefing Meeting and that Campaign Lists have to be submitted exactly 24 hours after a Briefing Meeting. In the latter case, I had to accept one set of statements and lists at 7pm, another at 8pm and another at 8:45pm, which did not seem to make sense.
6. Make Central Hustings a compulsory part of the campaign - If we have Central Hustings for Statutory Elections, there should similarly be a Central Hustings for referenda, which are

accessible to all voters. The current regulations stipulate that hustings must be held but do not clarify far enough that they should be accessible to all students. I see no good reason for not doing so and as these were the best turned out (after Balliol), post-Council hustings should be kept.

7. Keep the debating phase in hustings - This worked much better than I expected and was something I took up following frustration in the Michaelmas elections that there was enough debate between the candidates and that they all seemed to agree. In future, I would shorten the speaking length from two minute to 90 seconds or even one minute for these. However, I maintain that OUSU is a student union that values free and fair elections but it is also one in which tasteful debate must be actively encouraged.

I would like to thank everyone at OUSU for all their help in the conduct of these elections, notably Ami Gell (Democratic Support Officer) for answering every little query that I had, as well as the Communications team, who did an exemplary job of advertising these referenda and ensuring that publicity throughout them was of a good level. Moreover, I would like to thank the sabbatical team and my Deputy Returning Officer, Benji, for being a bedrock of support and answering any questions that I had, as well as for helping me to not become too stressed by the long and arduous process of overseeing the referenda. Finally, thank you to the Campaign Leaders for running such clean and energising campaigns, to everyone who got involved with a campaign, and of course, to all those who voted.

These referenda have delivered a result in which our Student Union can have confidence, a far cry from the fiasco of the NUS referendum last year. This result has restored the faith of students within OUSU's democratic processes, a legacy that I am proud to be a part of. I hope that such engagement from students can be carried on into the next set of Statutory Elections and the next referenda, and that the turnout can be even higher than the astonishing 40.62% target that we have now set ourselves to beat.

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Trinity Term 2015