

Contents

Sabbatical Officers President

V-P (Finance)

V-P (Welfare)

V-P (Women)

V-P (Graduates)

Executive Officers Colin Anderson

Joel Brookfield

Laura Davies

Ben Harris

Sacha Ismail

Hanna Kwiatkowska

Melanie Marshall

Sonia Sohda

Mary Stevens

Jon Worth

Committees Academic Affairs
Disabilities Network
Pro-Choice
Queer Rights
Target Schools
Women's

OUSU Officers Press Officer

OUSU and Constituent organisations

This term I've gone to St Hugh's, Hertford, Keble, and Magdalen JCR meetings, and am set soon to go to those at Worcester, Merton, Univ, St Anne's and Queen's.

I am working with the VP-Graduates on sorting out a clearer relationship between the PACP's policy decisions and those of OUSU Council.

The collation of statistics for the College Handbook has been hampered by some JCRs taking ages to hand it in/ the questionnaire getting lost during handover, but I hope to have a (at least preliminary) Handbook going out to JCR/SU Presidents by beginning of 7th week.

I have been very disappointed by the behaviour of certain individuals at OUSU Councils at the beginning of this term. Working to sort out this situation took up a lot of my time and energy. I deplore the fact that a small number of people are able to hold up the workings of the union and waste constituent organisations' officers time to such a degree. The intervention of the Proctors was unfortunate but the only option left to deal with the sad people involved.

Work concerning OUSU's relationship to associated colleges is progressing gradually. I had been working with Joff Cooke, the regional NUS officer, with regard to setting up an (in effect) Oxford area NUS, until he came down with a snow-boarding injury. I hope to have a concrete report on this, with a set of recommendations to follow, for Council early next term. OUSU's relationship with its members and constituent organisations, as well as with associated organisations, is very woolly and I am trying to tighten this up in conjunction with the University and the NUS. I will be meeting relatively soon with DfEE officials and the SU presidents of Durham and Cambridge, to try and solve the anomalous situation of collegiate universities with regard to the Education Act.

Press relations

It has been necessary to liaise extensively with the OUSU Press Officer, both to establish their role (setting up a press archive, passing on contacts, and so forth) and in the day-to-day handling of press enquiries and "breaking" stories. Coverage of OUSU events has been relatively good both in the student and national press this term. The role of Press Officer is an extremely important one and I hope will be as useful for OUSU in the future as it has been this term.

Access, and student finance and funding

The campaign against tuition fees and the abolition of the grant has of course continued this term, most noticeably with the march on Sunday of 5th week. The turnout for the march was disappointing, especially considering the hard work put into massively publicising the event. The non-payment campaign has won the considerable victory of cancelling out the residency requirement in relation to fee-payment. Those non-payers who held out despite threats from their institutions should be

applauded for achieving this, which should allow for a much more flexible approach by colleges to fee-payment in the future.

The spectre of top-up fees has of course arisen this term, not unexpectedly given the introduction of fees. I have been liaising extensively with other SUS of the Russell Group to lay the foundations of renewed student finance campaign. I suspect that this issue will gain importance as the next General Election approaches but in order for any chance of beating the threat we must work hard now to inform students, senior members, parents and University staff of the problem. OUSU Finance and Funding has arranged groups to target these sectors and will be communicating with them from the end of this term onwards.

I continue to consult on the issues of access and of top-up fees with a number of University officials. Their attitude seems surprising considering their comments concerning increasing access. For instance, we won the largest amount of money ever from the University for Target Schools this year - £9000.

OUSU and the One World Group/ Ethical considerations

I drafted the report on Stagecoach, which is again up for discussion at this Council. I have been working with People and Planet and the One World Group to try and reform OUSU's relationships with similar campaigning groups. A motion concerning this will be presented to the first Council of next term. We are also working towards producing a "Green Guide" which will aid students interesting in living more sustainably in Oxford.

I have been working to co-ordinate the work of OUSU Environment Committee with that of the University and other college officials. The new "Green Card" scheme looks set to cover just about all college accommodation next year.

Internal OUSU matters

I drafted two papers on OUSU's financial reserves and on its staffing, with the help of the VP- Graduates, which were presented to the Joint Committee of Hebdomadal Council. I will be working over the Easter vac to produce concrete proposals which can be decided by OUSU Council early next term.

As ever, I have been assisting with OSSL, Publications Board; working on odds and ends of individual problems/ cases; and lots of other managerial / random stuff which there's not much point mentioning.

V-P (Finance)

Alex Freudmann

Healthy finances

It's clear that OUSU is performing well this year. Calculating the Amended Budget took a large chunk out of my time this term, but I am glad that the figures confirmed my expectation that there would be no repeat of last year's deficit. Upon taking office, our financial ambitions were two-fold: we aimed to investigate what had gone wrong and ensure that the errors of last year would not be repeated this year, and we promised the creation of long term strategy for OUSU's

finances. The Financial Assessment (Michaelmas 1999) and the Amended Budget (Hilary 2000) demonstrate success in the former aim, and we are now setting about achieving the latter: there is a motion about our plans to bring in professionals to examine the OUSU finances, and also one seeking to improve OUSU's staff management, going to 7th Week Council. The Budget (to be presented at 5th Week Council next term) will be more than a simple prediction of how next year will be funded. It will also be an objective study of the way we currently run the income, expenditure and the reserves of the Student Union and it will look to the long term so that we can see where we could and should be in 5 years time. OUSU has been too reticent about its finances in the past, and it's also been too short-termist in its approach to financial planning. It's my intention that this year will mark the beginning of the end of this trend.

Expenditure

I was aware all year that the provision of computers in the publications room was inadequate. There were only two computers which were powerful enough to allow QuarkXPress to run reliably and I felt that this was too few even for the *Oxford Student*, not to mention the other publications that will be being produced from the beginning of next term. I estimated that three extra computers were needed, but balked at the £1,000+ prices of the latest Apple Macintoshes and sought cheaper ways to improve the provision of equipment. The answer has been to upgrade three current machines (at £200 per computer) so that they are now very powerful and easily fast enough to run Quark. I believe that, aside from inevitable and unforeseeable maintenance costs, OUSU publications is now adequately equipped. I am now looking into the most cost effective way to provide equipment for the Vice-President (Access and Academic Affairs) and extra computers for the Exec/General Office, and will report back to Council next term.

Central Student Venue

In addition to the changes we made last term to our attempts to secure a new site, I want to make the campaign for a CSV central to the business plan that will be created next term. OUSU has always campaigned for a venue without a comprehensive business plan to justify how it could find the necessary funding. A detailed, competent plan will be a valuable tool in the acquisition of new property and is essential for OUSU to put forward a credible case to potential sponsors and commercial partners.

Publications

OUSU is organising its publications more efficiently than ever before. We have drastically moved forward the print deadlines for the Michaelmas publications which means that, by the end of this term, editors for the *Oxford Handbook*, *Oxford Directory*, *Freshers' Guide*, and the *Oxford and Cambridge Careers Handbook* will all have been appointed. Additionally, we have sought to alter the way in which candidates are appointed so that now candidates, in addition to being interviewed by the Publications Board, are tested on such skills as grammar, proof-reading, the ability to prioritise and spelling. We have also brought forward the appointment of the Business Manager so that (s)he will also have been appointed by Easter. When the new sabbaticals take office, the Michaelmas publications will be at a very advanced stage both

editorially and in terms of advertising income (although the new sabbaticals will be heavily consulted about editorial content).

ousu.org

At the time of writing the relaunched website has been live for over a week and thanks must go to the Web Manager who has done a tremendous job in creating probably the best Student Union website in the country. Naturally, such an enormous site will incur teething difficulties, but I am confident that it will become an essential resource for Oxford students as well as a welcome source of extra advertising revenue for OUSU.

Vacation commitments

I am looking forward to going on my second Target Schools tour, which I will do during 9th and 10th week. It will, of course, be tiring but will be fun and immensely rewarding and I'm glad that I can still play a constructive part in such an important campaign. The rest of the vacation will provide a chance for us to carry out more improvements to New Barnett House, such as the tidying of the Publications and Meetings Rooms.

V-P (Welfare)	Alice Hodgson
----------------------	----------------------

Welfare Training Programme

This term's programme has covered Listening skills (2nd and 4th weeks), harassment (6th week) and academic affairs (8th week). The sessions have attracted welfare officers, women's officers and lbg reps as well as a few interested others and I feel this is an area in which we can provide a very useful resource to CR/SUs. I have continued the policy of asking people with expertise in a particular area to facilitate the training sessions. I believe this to be an advantage because it provides an opportunity for people to seek answers to more complicated questions and because it can serve to introduce CR/SU officers to useful contacts in the University (such as Judith Secker, the Equal Opportunities Officer).

LGBT Officers' Handbook

I have been editing and largely re-writing this handbook with Llyr Roberts (Oriol) and with the assistance of Queer Rights committee and LBGsoc. Our aim has been to include more practical information and suggestions, such as how to advertise your position and listening skills. The handbook will be finished by the end of term and will be sent to LBG reps at the beginning of Trinity. I intend to produce it in the form of A5 photocopied booklets, like the Women's Officers' Handbook.

Supporting CR/SU Officers

I have continued my policy of trying to meet as many CR/SU welfare officers and academic affairs officers individually as possible. I find that this gives me a clearer picture of welfare/academic affairs provision in different colleges as well as (hopefully) making it easier for the officers to raise questions or concerns or ask for suggestions on how to go about a particular project. I have had positive feedback

about this plan and have generally remained in contact with the people I've met. Although it does take up a fair amount of time, I feel that it is a good investment.

Welfare Officers' Website

The first large chunk of will have been given to the web manager/be on the web by the time of Council. It has taken me longer than I anticipated because this term has been so busy and because even though Claris Homepage is very simple I didn't know how to use it initially. However I anticipate that it will soon become a very useful resource.

Graduate Welfare Forum

This has been delayed this term because Jason and I wanted to invite Catherine Maguire from the International Office. It will take place in 8th week and the topic will be International Students. I am also going to create an email list for graduate welfare officers before the end of term.

Student Advice Service

We are continuing to monitor the Service. This term Nicola has been particularly valuable in re-writing the Living Out Guide as well as her normal advising role. Nicola came to a Health and Welfare committee meeting at the beginning of term to talk to Welfare Officers about the Service and the work she does. The sabbaticals will be preparing a report on the Service for JCHC (see above) next term.

I have continued to do a small amount of casework this term. I continue to believe that it is very valuable having an experienced Student Adviser in OUSU, but that while the other sabbaticals also provide a casework service training for them is essential.

Drugs Handbook

I finished the corrections to the handbook early this term and am currently waiting for it to return from the printers. We have had 1000 copies printed (paid for by the University) which will be distributed to welfare officers. I hope it will be a useful publication and that it will complement the Welfare Handbook, providing more detailed and more technical information about drugs.

Health and Welfare

This term has been very successful owing to the commitment and excellent organisation of our two co-chairs, Katie Thomas (St Hildas) and Mike Cooke (St Annes). They have organised a varied and useful series of meetings to provide ongoing training for welfare officers. Topics have included depression and mental health, stress management and sexual health.

Academic Affairs

We started this term planning to work on formulating some minimum standards for academic provision that we hoped to persuade the University to adopt and impose on colleges. This project has rather stalled and I think we all feel the need for some reflection on the way forward. We have managed to improve attendance significantly; Mary Stevens' work on compiling a completely up to date list of AcAff Reps has been very helpful. The committee has discussed the election of

junior member representatives to the new libraries sub-committees, Finals Forums and the concerns of AcAff reps such as tutorial feedback forms. Mary Stevens, John Craig and Nicholas Cole also put together an excellent pack for AcAff Reps about exams this term.

Disabilities

The committee has made a good start this term with ideas around the issue of access to Oxford for students with disabilities. It has proved difficult to recruit students with disabilities themselves, in part due to the fact that we were unable to make use of the University's list of students who have disabilities because of the University's server being down. This is clearly something we need to work on next term.

I met with the Target Schools co-chairs and agreed that I or one of the University disabilities advisers could give a short talk and handouts at the Open Days next term. James Rowlands is writing to College Secretaries to find out about their existing provision for and experience of students with disabilities and the college's attitudes to them. Laura Davies has taken on the task of contacting LEAs to find out the addresses of schools which provide for disabled students so that we can contact their teachers ourselves (we will include independent schools). We held a lunch discussion to brainstorm other ideas with interested people.

Anti-Racism

The committee's main work this term has been the Anti-Racism Pack, which we are updating. Sacha Ismail and the co-chairs Sinit Zeru and David Mitchell have been co-ordinating the project and have worked extremely hard to get it to its present nearly-finished stage. They also organised a very successful and extremely interesting speaker/discussion meeting on being black and British jointly with Black Caucus and J-Soc. Plans for the Equality 2000 campaign next term are progressing apace.

Student Health Committee

I circulated copies of the Welfare Handbook and received useful feedback which I have filed for my successor. The committee is keen to take a more proactive stance in student health and welfare; the first action in this direction was the excellent conference organised by the Principle of Somerville (who chairs the committee) in 5th week. The afternoon involved three sessions on eating distress, exam stress and mental illness and was very informative. Several CR/SU welfare officers attended. I wrote to the Principle of Somerville afterwards to thank her for organising it and to suggest that a future conference might include a session on welfare co-ordination within colleges. The latter is an issue many welfare officers have discussed with me and would well suit a conference where senior members were involved.

Committee for Disabled People (CDP)

The main business of this committee is practical discussion of improvements to buildings to make them wheelchair accessible, allocation of grants (via the Southern Trust Fund Panel, a sub-committee) and questions of how disabilities issues are dealt with. We

recently discussed the QAA proposals for supporting students with disabilities. There has also been discussion of the re-organisation of several committees under the new governance structures, as the CDP, along with Childcare committee and the Harassment Panel, is to become an ad hoc Advisory Panel which will report to the new Committee for Diversity and Equal Opportunities. I agreed with the senior members of the committee in holding reservations as to how effectively the needs of people with disabilities will be served in a more hierarchical, bureaucratic system. The other sabbaticals and I intend to produce a paper on the re-organisation of these committees for the next meeting of the Joint Committee of Hebdomadal Council with Junior Members.

Accommodation Committee

The termly meeting has been postponed until 8th week. For information, the Accommodation Office has moved to Summertown.

Joint Committee... (to do with academic affairs)

The meeting will take place in 7th week, but I have prepared papers (mainly for feedback) on charges for the Language Centre, options for electing junior members representatives to the new Divisional Boards of the Faculties and Finals Forums (as the V-P Women would appreciate the committee's endorsement). Mary Stevens (Executive officer for Academic Affairs) has contributed a paper on the reduction of tutorials asking for clarification.

V-P (Women)	Rachel Griffin
--------------------	-----------------------

Women's Committee

Women's Committee continues to be well-attended and extremely active. The term began with Reclaim the Night, and will end with another traditional Oxford women's event, "Mighty Aphrodite!" the Women's Cabaret. This year, more women from Oxford will be directly involved in the cabaret than in recent years, both in planning and performing. I have taken a very hands-on role in organising this year's women's cabaret, as Oxford Brookes Student Union is no longer involved. I have auditioned acts and planned the event so far. It promises to be great. Do come.

The Co-Chairs of and Exec Officer for Women's Committee have worked extremely hard, organising one-off events such as "Women in Christianity" and the recent speaker event featuring Rosalind Copisarow, expert in micro-credit. They are planning a to take the university by storm with a high-profile campaign next term.

In a move to formalise the procedures and roles of the committee, two Women's Committee regulars, Abigail Coates from St Hilda's and Anna Barras from LMH took the initiative of volunteering to join me in drawing up guidelines for Women's Committee. These are due to be discussed for ratification by the committee soon.

Pro-Choice Committee

With two new Co-Chairs, Pro-Choice Committee is currently re-launching itself, both by taking on new projects, such as arranging debates and

speaker meetings, and by continuing last year's work, such as the research into attitudes towards abortion and the Unplanned Pregnancy Pack. There is a strong feeling within the committee that we need to encourage more JCR/MCR representation, and to this end, one of the Co-Chairs will address OUSU Reps Committee to discuss the work we do. The Co-Chairs are also planning a training session for Women's and Welfare Offices on unplanned pregnancy, to be held next term.

NUS

The Reclaim the Night March was addressed by NUS Women's Officer, Helen Russell. An unprecedented number of colleges will be sending delegates and observers to Conference this year and these will be trained in conference procedure by a member of Steering Committee. This has been organised by Antonia Bance, who has also actively encouraged JCRs to send delegates.

Computers

Following the positive reception to "On Line in '99", I have had great pleasure in overseeing the development of the women's section of the OUSU Website. Bryony Wilson from Jesus and Sherry Nursey from St Hilda's are both working on producing a site which promises to be impressive both visually and commercially. I have also sought actively to encourage Women's Officers, Co-Chairs, and other female students to use the IT equipment in OUSU to produce publicity for their college/inter-collegiate women's events.

Nightbus

I am currently involved in negotiations to revive the Nightbus, which, with the approval of Women's Committee, will be available to all Oxford students. I hope to be able to re-launch the bus next term.

Colleges

I have continued to pursue my goal of meeting as many college Women's Officers as possible this term, and have attended events at Worcester, Hertford, Wadham, Corpus Christi, St Peter's, Exeter. Later this term, I plan to attend events at St Catherine's and Balliol. As ever, all invitations to college women's events are gratefully received, and are proving one of the best ways to foster good relations between OUSU and, in particular MCRs.

Finals Forums

Hannah's Finals Forums scheme has been continued this year, and seminars have been arranged in Archaeology and Anthropology, English, Classics, Geography, Engineering, French, German, Modern History, Politics and Psychology. This list is by no means comprehensive, but includes forums organised by tutors who were not involved last year. I am to produce a report on the project for the university's Equal Opportunities Committee, which will mention the necessity for both university support for the scheme and time, to build a database of willing tutors to facilitate the scheme.

Women's Open Day

This year's Women's Open Day is to be held on 3rd June, hopefully in Balliol. For the first time the day will incorporate a science lunch and workshop at St Hilda's, a society as well as a subject fair, and an

optional trip down to the river to witness the Summer Eights celebrations. The Women's Open Day co-ordinators are meeting on Fridays of "even" weeks this term, at 4pm in the OUSU offices. All input and ideas for the day are most welcome.

Other Women's Groups

I have been meeting with representatives from the Rhodes Women's Group, who are keen to hold joint events with OUSU Women's Committee. I have also helped and advised the Women's Officer of the Labour Club, with an event she is planning for next term, and lent support to a group of MCR Women's Officers, who are arranging social events for female graduate students.

Next term and the vacation

My plans for the rest of the year include: organising an evening for women interested in pursuing graduate study, both at Oxford University and elsewhere; putting the Childcare Guide on the web and ensuring that the women's section is complete and comprehensive; seeking out those Women's Officers whom I have not yet met; encouraging MCR/JCRs without Women's Officers to elect them; finding a Childcare Officer for OUSU; holding a successful Women's Open Day, and preparing a clean, tidy office for Jane to inherit.

V-P (Graduates) Jason Dorsett

This term has been considerably more productive and easier than Michaelmas Term. Not only do I have a much better understanding of my job, but I have not been devoting vast amounts of time to running OUSU's elections. My report this term is very long for two reasons. Firstly my report last term got lost in the Office Manager's in tray and wasn't distributed. Secondly the University grant to OUSU which covers my salary is being reviewed next term and I am anxious to solicit feedback on how the post has functioned in its first 18 months.

Committee for Graduate Affairs

This committee is supposed to function as an informal fortnightly meeting to compliment the more formal Postgraduate Assembly. This term attendance has been patchy, despite better advertising than last term. It has proved a useful first point of contact for some new graduate representatives and has held useful discussions when feedback was needed quickly on an issue. The Tutors for Graduates Committee was very impressed with the ideas we generated here on the publication of more information on colleges in the Graduate Studies Prospectus. The committee could function as a meeting place for graduates who weren't college representatives, but at the moment it is disappointing. I will slightly revise the way the committee works next term, cut down the number of meetings and focus the remainder on specific topics.

Postgraduate Assembly

By way of contrast the Postgraduate Assembly this term was a resounding success.¹ This body was set up (partly by myself) a year ago because the old Graduate Committee failed to attract MCR/GCR representatives. Last term bad publicity led to a poor turnout, and the meeting was inquorate. This term 24 people attended including MCR/GCR Presidents or OUSU reps from 14 colleges. I am grateful that the other sabbaticals managed to attend. The Postgraduate Assembly is very different to OUSU Council. There is no independent Chair, which I would like to change. Debate is consensual and well mannered, which I would like to see in Council. Above all graduates go. The Assembly gives graduates a forum within OUSU to express their opinions and allows OUSU to genuinely represent graduates to the University on the basis of what a large number of their elected representatives think.

There are a few problems still to be resolved. Quite a few elections happen in the Postgraduate Assembly, but there are currently no regulations to govern them. I will write some and put them to Council next term. The Assembly has the power to pass OUSU policy on matters that affect only graduates (subject to ratification in OUSU Council). The mechanism to do this hasn't been established yet, although I have put a motion to 7th week Council to establish a temporary arrangement.

Above all the Assembly needs a few terms of regular and well attended meetings to bed down in MCR/GCR Presidents and OUSU reps minds as part of their jobs, and to be accepted in OUSU as the voice of graduate opinion. The business of representation and making structures work effectively is often tedious and time consuming. It is unglamorous and few ordinary students immediately value it. However, if OUSU can make this forum work it will have created something which is ultimately of great value to graduate students.

MCRs/GCRs

One of OUSU's most basic functions in a collegiate university is to support the work of college-based common rooms. This has long been done for JCRs. OUSU provides publications they cannot afford to produce themselves such as the LGB Handbook. We organise training for their Presidents and Welfare Officers. Most years we provide them with useful information derived from surveys and we provide email lists for their committees members to communicate with their counter-parts in other colleges.

All this should be provided to MCRs/GCRs as well especially as the more rapid turnover of graduate students, often on one and two year courses, means that there is even more of a problem with continuity than in JCRs. I have devoted a lot of time this year to trying to redirect OUSU's core services to better serve MCRs/GCRs. All our publications will have graduate input in future. I work very hard to keep the main 'gradreps' email list up to date (MCR/GCR President and OUSU reps are both on this list, there is no MCR 'Preslist'). This list is being used more and more by MCR/GCR Presidents who need quick answers to questions about charges or practices in other colleges. This term I have been producing a fortnightly email newsletter ('Graduate News') for this

¹ Technically the Postgraduate Assembly of College Presidents, but that's a bit of a mouthful.

list summarising developments across the collegiate university that graduate representatives should know about.

There is still much work to be done. When a president takes up office I have been sending them a letter introducing myself. I have now designed an information pack for them. Over the summer vacation I hope to improve on this. Last year OUSU sent out a badly worded survey to MCRs/GCRs, it was nothing like as good as the survey sent to JCRs last term. The responses are almost impossible to tabulate, but I have been working on this when I can. This week I have sent out a brief survey asking for information on key charges, to produce a resource to be used for the battels negotiating round. A fuller survey should be conducted next year in conjunction with the JCR survey. Anneliese and I will work with our successors over the summer to ensure that co-ordination happens.

OUSU's main training events are still attended primarily by JCR officers. The Proctor and Gamble event was perhaps pitched at them, but the welfare trainings are relevant to graduate welfare officers. Some attend, but more should. There is still some scope to make all of these training events more relevant to graduate representatives. There will be a second Graduate Welfare Forum in 8th week on International Students. Next term the forum will concern freshers. At the same time I am preparing material to help MCRs/GCRs design their Freshers' programmes. This will be distributed next term.

Joint Consultative Committees

This is an aspect of the Vice-President (Graduates) job that is developing rapidly. Once a basic set of services has been put in place for MCRs/GCRs it should be the next area to receive attention. Graduates are mainly taught and supervised outside of their colleges. As a result there is little scope for MCR/GCR Academic Affairs Officers. Instead we must work entirely with faculty or department based Graduate Joint Consultative Committees. I have completely updated the email list of these reps in preparation for the greater role these committees will play in the new divisional structure. I see them playing a key role in the election of the graduate representatives on the new divisional boards and on the new faculty based library subcommittees.

In the medium term these committees must be supported more effectively with a graduate version of the Academic Affairs Handbook. This could easily be produced online, although printing the first edition on paper would make it easier to publicise. I would very much like to get this done before I leave office in September, but cannot promise that I will be able to do it.

Representation on University Committees

Many people active in OUSU seem to be under the impression that the student union is primarily a campaigning body. There is no basis for this in our Constitution, which states that OUSU exists to represent and promote the interests of Oxford students. I firmly believe that campaigning is only worthwhile when representation has failed. Marches, demonstrations, anger and confrontation are frequently inimical to effective representation. OUSU's ability to represent students and to

achieve change in this university is hampered by the refusal of most people involved in student politics to pragmatically engage with the (in the main) sincere and principled individuals who run this university. I cannot think of a better example of this than the occupation of university buildings in protest at the actions of the UK government. Only those students who sit on university committees will appreciate how much this has cost students this year.

Fortunately this has relatively little affect on graduate students. Since the 1995 Graduate Charter OUSU's graduate representatives have been permitted to sit on the Graduate Studies and Tutors for Graduates Committees. We have two places on each committee with full voting rights. There is no reserved business. This term both these committees have been extremely active. Surveys conducted last term have measured the provision of facilities for graduate students in colleges and departments. Many initiatives are planned to improve conditions. One small change already agreed is that from next year the Graduate Studies Prospectus will carry details of key college charges with each college entry, allowing graduate students to make an informed choice of college.

The Graduate Studies Committee also scrutinises new courses and reviews complaints. One measure of the value attached to junior members on these committees are the requests for our help with additional work. I am sitting on a panel to review the regulations governing graduate taught courses, and two more panels are conducting reviews of established courses. The other graduate representative, Katerina Volioti, is sitting on another of these panels. We are both given a large amount of confidential information, such as the Bursars Committee summary of rents and charges across colleges. Although it is sometimes extremely frustrating to possess information that cannot be more widely disseminated the value of being trusted with these documents is immense. Simply understanding how the Bursars compare their charges has allowed me to design my own survey to find out the same information through legitimate channels from MCRs/GCRs.

I also sit on the Childcare Committee where I have been lobbying for childcare bursaries to replace the delayed student day nursery. On the Committee for the Management of the Language Centre I have been opposing the introduction of charges, and requesting an undergraduate representative place on the committee. I also attended the Rules Committee, although no substantive business was conducted. I sit as an observer on Hebdomadal Council, but this term there has been little of direct relevance to graduate students. When graduate matters have come up the Council has been very supportive of graduate students. The Joint Committee of Hebdomadal Council with Junior Members (JCHC) has occupied quite a lot of my time. It has met twice and I have helped to prepare papers for it.

I also co-ordinate a network of graduate representatives on University Committees (Accommodation Committee, Committee for the Careers Service, International Committee, Committee on Student Health, IT Committee, Libraries Committee and Telecommunications Committee). I have checked that reps were going to meetings, asked what was happening and filled gaps when there was no rep. I have written papers asking for a second

rep on the Telecommunications Committee, asking for junior member representation on the Bodleian Sub-Committee and suggesting how the junior member reps on the new faculty-based subcommittees might be elected. Early indications are that the proposal for the Bodleian Committee has been accepted. At the Postgraduate Assembly I asked those reps present to report, which provoked useful discussion.

OUSU

Although I have spent less time on general OUSU work this term, because there was no election, I have still been kept very busy. I have attended every Council, Exec and Pubs Board meeting. Much of my JCHC work was for OUSU as a whole. I'm currently convening the Electoral Reform Working Party, which is meeting each week at the moment and will lead to Council motions next term. I have acted as a steward on the Reclaim the Night march, the anti-fees march and the Queer Rights march. I have also done the usual box carrying and other menial work.

International Students

This portfolio has been transferred to the Vice-President (Graduates). The transfer should be formalised next term with a revision to the job description. I have assisted Hanna Kwiatkowska in reviving the committee and attended its meetings. I also arranged a very useful meeting for Hanna and myself with Catherine McGuire of the International Office.

Website

I wrote a basic new graduate section over the Christmas vacation with details of funding sources. I have added to this with lists of graduate representatives and other material. Most of the resources I have produced should be on the web by the start of next term. I am very grateful to Jon Worth for all his help in turning my efforts into reasonably slick pages. If they look dull it's because of what he started with from me.

In conclusion

This has been a very long and frank report. There is still much I have neglected. Very few people realise quite how hard the OUSU sabs work. If it takes a while to read a report of what I have been doing so be it. I owe thanks to everyone who has helped me work this term. I have six months left of my term of office and am anxious to achieve as much as possible in that time. I would be grateful for any comments about how my post has developed either at OUSU Council or in private.

Business Manager James Littlefair
--

Hilary has been a successful and busy term for the OUSU BM, with projects coming to fruition and ongoing tasks improving. The time taken on these things has, however, meant that some of my more ambitious projects have not yet taken off.

Throughout the term I have considered and (mostly) rejected many commercial schemes from outside companies that are thrust to my attention on an almost daily basis. Only a few I have accepted as sensible: the *Financial Times* scheme continues to grow and is of

tremendous use for many students; I have obtained two sponsors for the website, and I have made significant contributions to finding sponsors for entz events. However, next year's BM will have to be really firm in which schemes they get involved with; the volume of traffic, especially with the rise of the internet, is very nearly making the job unmanageable.

Over the start Christmas vacation we employed an ABM (intern), Jenny Erhardt, to help with work on the Law Careers Handbook, as I was very concerned that this publication should come out at the start of Hilary in time for the major law recruitment drives. Despite the failure of CUSU to provide an equal weight of canvassing, the handbook became a highly successful sales pitch and we managed to target successfully a really wide range of advertisers: from the big city firm to provincials to even Chambers and law schools. As well as being out on time and commercially successful we have had positive feedback on the guide from advertisers and I feel there is great scope for this guide to grow next year. I would not be unreasonable in thinking that revenues could increase by at least 25% if CUSU were to pull its weight properly next year.

Many thanks to Jenny for her work on this. She also did some preliminary research for the CSU investigations.

This term has also seen the *OxStu* almost reach parity with *Cherwell* in terms of advertising. A well timed period of cold calling to firms offering internships and placements in the city and along with the stronger first-port-of-call presence with media booking agencies (I have worked hard in establishing the presence OUSU Publications in many media guide Eg BRAD) has meant the *OxStu* made real advances this term commercially, smashing last year's gross commercial income by some £3,000. Hopefully, this trend will carry on into next term when revenues will be at their most minimal.

I have also worked hard with the V-P (F) to ensure that Pubs Board is more focused and standardised than in previous years; this term we introduced an interview formula, proof reading and other skills-based tests. Hopefully, these will enable us to come to much fairer conclusions. Later this term we will appoint a new BM and I am labouring with the V-P (F) to ensure the interview process is equally as fair.

Planning and appointments will also begin later this term for the OCCH. This year we are trying to work more closely with CUSU in order to be better co-ordinated and avoid last Michaelmas' debacle. Planning ahead and ensuring everything runs to schedule will be absolutely key to making the OCCH a success.

Due to constraints on my time I have not made much progress with the discount scheme. I hope to lay the foundations next term if time permits. My plans for next term also include sorting out the Pubs Room and making it a much more pleasant place to work, also appointing an ABM (summer intern). However, I envisage most of my time will largely be taken up preparing and executing the start of the summer sales drive. Following my experience starting the job I realise that this period is absolutely essential to smooth running next year.

Colin Anderson

Having only been in office for a week before writing this report, there is not really much to be said. I have attended the exec meeting this week, and the meeting of Health and Welfare Committee; the portfolios I will be working on are Health and Welfare, Careers, and Battels. I have been in contact with the current co-chairs of H&W committee, and spoken with the VP(Welfare) about the task I can undertake as exec for this committee. I plan to spend time next term putting the Welfare Handbook on the web, and to work with Alice to complete and maintain the web resources for college welfare officers. There is also work I feel I can do in keeping welfare officers supplied with the information and resources that are important to their roles. Over the next few weeks I will be investigating the recent work of my other portfolios, and making some plans for next term.

Joel Brookfield

Secretary

This term the vast majority of my work has been Secretarial. Something like 14 hours of minuting then typing up in two weeks is a demanding task and although it has been a worthy challenge, it is a job I am happy to pass to someone else in Trinity! I have prided myself on getting minutes done in time and making them much easier to follow. I hope the right balance has now been struck and everyone is clear what sort of minutes OUSU needs to remain accountable. Having put the motion through at 5th Week Council whoever takes over this portfolio will have a better idea of what to do - no more jumping in at the deep end! The minutes have also been developed for publication on the internet which will happen shortly. Exec and Council will have to note the fact that whoever does this portfolio is going to be limited in the amount of time they can devote to other tasks.

Queer Rights

Happily this Committee has been lead by a team of Stakhanovites who have produced one of the best Queer Action campaigns ever. The campaign has been expanded over two weeks rather than the usual one and has focused on a wide range of different issues facing lesbians, gays and transsexuals. I attended the discussions on politics and sex and will be taking on the front line in the March Against Homophobia. At committee we have discussed our response to the Armed Forces ban and whether we should lift out boycott of them and the issue of National Blood Service Discrimination. We decided to recommend the ban should not be lifted until the Armed Forces show signs of accepting gay men and lesbians, creating a climate of toleration and enforcing the code to prevent intimidation. In terms of the blood service it was decided to take this up as a campaigning issue and put a motion to Council. My thanks must go the Michael van Gelderen, Anna McNay and others who have

put in so much effort to make the QAC such fun and QR the most wonderful and hassle-free committee to oversee!

Accommodation

Accommodation Committee is coming! I had two aims this term, one of which has been completed and the other will come to fruition early next term. The first was to draw up a structure plan to cover what issues this Committee should highlight and campaign about. Having had two meetings with Alice Hodgson and one with the Student Advisor, we have agreed this years objectives for the Committee. These include a survey to all those who are or who have lived out to allow us to identify all issues and drawing together the key players to do with accommodation in a forum to monitor changes in law, services etc we need to be aware of. This group will include organisations such as Housing Rights, University Accommodation Office, Police, City Council etc. The second aim was to have the Committee established. I have identified one possible co-Chair but need more people to get involved - even if you want to just have ideas about what we should do please contact me via OUSU and I'll be more than happy to chat. Other work in progress this term has been the substantial rewrite of The Living Out Guide ready for publishing on the website in Trinity. Longer-term aims include developing the Housing Bank and making OUSU an effective player to prevent abuse of students by landlords. If anyone wishes to help in this committee it will be a challenging term in Trinity so do please come and have a word!

Laura Davies

NUS Committee

The focus this term has been on preparing delegates for the impending conference and meetings have involved some discussion of concerns raised by those going, as well as issues arising from NUS mailings. Sorting out training for delegates has been a priority and will be happening in seventh week with Janine Booth from the NUS Steering Committee, and possibly our regional representative. Turnouts have so far been low, and it has been quite a task trying to discover who actually are the NUS reps at each college to compile an up-to-date mailing list. The problem of turnouts and the role of the committee will definitely require some thought next term when there isn't even conference imminent to motivate reps. We have discussed and taken steps towards organising an information event for both affiliated and non-affiliated NUS colleges to improve knowledge of the services it can provide, to happen at the start of next term. We also hope to look into producing something like a guide to conference with experiences of this year's delegates whilst these are still fresh in mind. I intend to take minutes during next term's meetings with a view to emailing them to NUS reps, or perhaps to go on the web, and it would be nice to make the committee a little more purpose-directed next term. I'd also like to find a way of receiving NUS mailings so I can be more informed.

Disabilities

Things have really got off the ground in this previously neglected area. A Disabilities Action Network has been launched which we hope might eventually have both a social and supporting role for students

with disabilities, as well as being a committee body to take action on the relevant issues. Unfortunately, due to the University main computer being down, the disability advisers could not access their list of students with disabilities in Oxford to send out our mailing and as advertised only through JCR welfare officers the lunch and discussion was not very well attended. We have also been working on finding out about each college's provision and attitude towards students with disabilities with a view to being able to give advice on this basis, and providing a profile which might put pressure on the colleges poorest in their provision. Finally, we hope to work in conjunction with target schools: the disabilities adviser has agreed to give talks at these open days, and we hope to ensure they will be disabled accessible. We've taken steps to build up a list of schools across the UK which provide for disabled pupils with a view to inviting teachers and pupils to open days.

Other

I've also sat on the board of OSSL and on the University Rules Committee. With reference to the latter, issues might arise in the future terms of rowing regulations and not having rowed myself, I'd like to take steps to be informed about this.

This term has been a steep learning curve so thanks to all for putting up with my general ignorance and confusion. Thanks also to Alice, James, Colin and Katherine who've been fab to work with.

Ben Harris

My apologies for the rather short nature of this report. Having been elected only a little more than a week before writing this, there is not much to be said about my activities as an executive officer this term. I have attended exec, and have continued to attend various meetings, particularly those relating to higher education funding issues. The portfolios I have been allocated are Finance and Funding and Third World Action. I have liaised with the Finance and Funding Co-chairs, and look forward to working with others next term over the issue of top-up fees, as well as continuing to campaign for the abolition of tuition fees and the re-introduction of the grant. I have attended the first meeting of the Working Party on Electoral Reform, and will continue to do so. I also look forward to working with various groups on Third World development and human rights issues next term.

Sacha Ismail

My apologies for the abbreviation of this report, but I was rather overburdened with revision when I wrote it.

Anti-Racism

The committee has been busy writing OUSU's new Anti-Racism Handbook and while work on this has been a little slow it should go to the printers by the start of next term. The Co-Chairs and I are also arranging events for the Equality 2000 Anti-Racism Month. One slight worry has been turn-out, which has dropped substantially; in response we have

increased publicity and are attempting to get JCR Equal Opportunities officers to attend the committee.

Pro-Choice,

After various problems at the start of term, the committee is back on its feet, with two highly committed new Co-Chairs. Our work over the next term will include updating OUSU's Unplanned Pregnancy Guide, organising speaker meetings and persuading JCRs to clarify their policy on abortion issues. I believe the Co-Chairs have submitted a more detailed report.

Mature Students

Mature Students Committee has sadly been dormant this term, but the VP (Welfare) and I will begin resuscitation over the Easter vac.

Thanks to everyone at OUSU who thinks I'm a mad Trot, but doesn't mind; everyone who told me to go and revise; and Alison, Johnny, Fran, Ed, Dan and Bob for being fab and putting up with me through thick and thin.

Hanna Kwiatkowska

I attended all my OUSU Office afternoon duty hours, all Exec meetings including the one in 9th week Michaelmas, and all the meetings of the Women's Committee and of the International Students Committee, also I attended all Council meetings gave my reports and stayed to the end of every Council.

Women's Committee

I have been involved in production and distribution of the publicity for the Women's Committee. This would be much more effective if produced in advance, preferably during the holidays. However I recognise the difficulties VP WOMEN and the co-chairs would meet in order to do so.

I organised the speaker event with Rosalind Copisarow, which despite my efforts done to publicise the event was not well attended. However, positive comments of those who came to the event encourage me to continue inviting high profile speakers in order to publicise the Committee in general. I have plans to bring a successful artist and designer, an architect who works on Eco- friendly buildings and a feminist guru Rosalind Miles. I hope that these plans will be appreciated and accepted by the Committee and the Co-chairs.

I am looking forward to the Women's cabaret event in 8th, being involved in the auditions I know it will be great. Also, I am going to work at Women's open day.

My goals for the next term are to try to improve attendance at the Committee, as I think that, new comers with new ideas will give the Committee a stronger voice as well as making it even more representative. Also, I would like to help VP-Women and co-chairs to organise 'Rape is Rape' campaign.

International Students Committee

This Committee has been restored with my appointment and had proven that International Students are neither well represented nor heard at OUSU and University level.

With the great support from the Council, we will campaign to support International student's reps in their colleges and try to convince JCRs and MCRs that they definitely need such representatives. I have spent a lot of time investigating situation of International Students with regard to funding and possibilities for them to pay fees in instalments. I have been contacting bursars and talking to University officials about instalments issue hoping that the problems can be resolved in a formal way. I am going to devote my holidays to this campaign. The Network project will get started once the University Offices restore their data.

Thanks

To all Sabs, Exec and office staff. With special thanks to Jason Dorsett, who has been supervising the IntStu work, for all his help and advice.

To all those who had different opinions to mine, but argued with style and provided helpful and constructive criticism. To my electorate.

Melanie Marshall

Freshers' Week Committee

This committee will not convene until Trinity Term. However, in the meantime I have been reading through the feedback sheets written by last year's co-chairs and taking stock of the advice and suggestions they have had to offer, noting particularly their concerns about how to make OUSU stand out from the many other organisations vying for Freshers' attention. I look forward to the appointment of the co-chairs next term and to working with the President-elect, with whom I have had tentative discussions about ideas for innovations.

OSS

This committee too has not yet convened. Anneliese and I have arranged to meet the organiser early next term. As well as the decision-making side of the role there seem to be issues regarding the reluctance of colleges to accept overseas scholars. These I hope to investigate further and, if possible, ameliorate.

Other

In the absence of much committee work, in addition to attending council and Exec I have also sat on Rules Committee. This meets once a year to propose, discuss and rule on changes to University rules for the student population. The matter of time restrictions on rowing and other sports was prominent again, as in previous years. Although there is little scope for action and reform on a University committee including Senior Members, it is one of the few on which Junior Member representation is relatively extremely high (four undergraduate and two graduate reps). I am anxious to see all these places filled so that Oxford's student body can exercise this very real influence, and, with a view to that, hope to see more widely publicised the two non-Exec OUSU members' vacancies in time for appointment before next year's Rules committee (HT 2001).

Sonia Sodha

I was elected to serve on OUSU Executive in a by-election in Council in first week as a result of a resignation. Since my appointment I have attended all Executive and Council meetings, and have stewarded at the Grants Not Fees march on Sunday 5th Week. I have also been allocated a duty afternoon at the OUSU offices. I have only recently been allocated my portfolios (beginning of sixth week) so have been able to carry out only a limited amount of work within these so far, but I hope to be able to extend this greatly next term.

Target Schools Committee

I have taken over this portfolio from David Brewis. The co-chairs of this committee (Dan Waites, Sash Willmott and Jenny Ward) have submitted a full report to Council which I feel accurately reflects the hard work and dedication they have showed this term. Since being allocated this portfolio I have met with the co-chairs and discussed the administration for the Visiting Scheme this Easter vacation, and also the organisation of the Target Schools Open Days at Balliol and St Anne's next term. I hope that there will be a chance to discuss in committee next term the possibility of extending the scheme so that there is a Target Schools presence during the interview period.

Ethics Committee

Last term, this committee was more of an ad hoc committee, being convened when there was a need, ie to produce the Stagecoach Report. I feel this was due to there being no co-chairs and no Exec member with permanent responsibility for this portfolio last term. I would like a co-chair to be appointed if possible, and for the committee to have three or four meetings next term. I believe that there are a number of issues to be discussed, for example a code of conduct and register of interests for sabs. I would like to look at making a comprehensive list of companies OUSU has advertising contracts with available.

Mary Stevens

Since portfolios were only allocated at the start of term I have had to put a lot of time getting to grips with my job; in future I think it is essential that Exec are given the opportunity to prepare over Christmas so that they have a clear idea what they want to achieve from the start.

Academic Affairs

This is my main portfolio and the above comment is particularly relevant to it. Anyone who suggests that AcAff does not require a full time sabbatical has obviously never attempted to work on the issue! Academic Affairs involve every single student in the university in a way that no other issue does and I would like to see academic campaigns much more highly prioritised. Higher education, and this University in reorganising its divisional structure, is undergoing a period of very rapid change and it is essential that students are not trampled all over in the process. My greatest concern at the moment is that

undergraduate teaching is facing cuts in order to compensate for the cut in the college fee; this issue is being raised at the Joint Committee on Undergraduate Studies but it illustrates the extent to which OUSU must be proactive.

I have spent a lot of time trying to establish a better network of contacts for Academic Affairs reps in colleges and JCC reps and have updated databases for both of these. Hopefully these contacts will soon be on the web. JCC reps have been much neglected by OUSU recently and yet they are the only people who can really affect policy in the faculties. I would like to set up an archive of JCC reports that other reps can refer to and also to begin work for a revision of the JCC handbook (last done in 1996 and urgently needed for the university's restructuring). I have also created AcAff case feedback forms so that we can establish an archive of problems that arise in colleges that reps can use as a point of reference. So far however the response to this scheme has been disappointing.

I have attended all committee meetings, produced campaign packs for new reps and an exams pack to help reps support students with public exams this term, who are too often neglected. The committee is also investigating the possibility of creating a minimum standards charter ratified by the University. Rhodri invited the Junior Proctor to come and talk about it although the Proctors have so far been unhelpful. We will be reviving the issue with the new Proctors next term. We have also looked at best practice in academic discipline. John and Nicholas, the two co-chairs have both worked extremely hard - if I ever boss them about I really don't mean to and I very much appreciate all their efforts.

Entz

Entz this term has been highly problematic and due to the problems associated with booking a suitable venue and not repeating last term's losses there has been no event this term. At the time of writing I am preparing with Eleanor Fletcher for a one-off Entz forum to discuss the future of OUSU entz. I feel very strongly that OUSU should have a clear rationale behind its entz policy - not just putting on events because that's what Student Unions do.

I have also been encouraging the co-chairs to develop the Entz webpage. I hope that by the end of term this will be up and running properly with contact details, advice for bands etc and maybe listings.

Student Volunteer Action

This is my final portfolio and one which I must apologise for having neglected. I had hoped to work with Costas on this area and co-ordinate with Third world action. I look forward to investigating with Ben how OUSU can best serve the interests of campaigning groups in Oxford, possibly by organising a similar forum to the Entz event to find out their needs.

I have also attended (and even spoken at!) Heb Council (very scary) and JCHC. Since being elected onto Exec I have become increasingly aware of the problems within OUSU, the biggest being a lack of continuity leading to a lack of professionalism. I feel very strongly that this is the image OUSU often conveys to the University making it difficult to make real gains. It is a real pleasure though to work with a full

team of enthusiastic and dedicated people and I hope that next term I will be able to consolidate what I have done this term, in particular in preparation for the V-P Access and AcAff. Sorry if I've forgotten anything or anyone!

Jon Worth

Computing Portfolio

This term

Much of my time over the past few weeks has been spent improving the OUSU website, <http://www.ousu.org/> Having taken into account the views expressed by those who had visited the old site, it was clear that the new site had to be more clearly laid-out and straightforward to navigate. Also, the 'new look' OUSU logo had to be incorporated. I think these aims have been largely fulfilled as initial response to the site has been favourable. There are a number of pages that remain unfinished but once these are done and all links thoroughly checked, the site will be officially relaunched. It is a pity that the updates have taken so long to complete - I think I underestimated the scale of the task! Many people within OUSU who do not have specialist web design skills have been willing to put together basic web pages which I have subsequently edited and added to the site.

The future

(1) I shall be running a forum for all those that wish to learn how to make webpages on Monday of 9th week at OUSU - please look out for details in OUSU Mail. Any work that committees do making their own webpages would be most welcome!

(2) After having secured a first online sponsorship contract with graduatebase.com, there is potential for significant future income for OUSU from the website.

(3) Once the initial updates are complete, I plan to expand the amount of information on the site and make it an even more useful information resource for all Oxford students. Displaying the Oxbridge Careers Handbook and information about clubs and societies online is a priority.

Environment Committee

This term

The committee has met weekly this term. Before a coherent strategy for the committee's actions over the coming terms can be drawn up, it was deemed necessary to undertake a comprehensive environmental audit of all colleges, thereby ascertaining where the greatest improvements in recycling and energy efficiency needed to be made. The survey was distributed to all college environment reps and the committee is in the process of collating the results. Preliminary discussions have also been started with the City Council to look at ways the university can benefit from the city's recycling schemes.

The future

The future for the committee is bright - the aim initially is to increase levels of recycling of paper, bottles and cans and improve energy efficiency across the university by fostering cooperation between college environment reps and the committee. Another plan is to display a 'green card' in every student room in the university

encouraging them to recycle. It is also hoped that colleges will adopt the environmental criteria submitted the motion to 7th Week Hilary council. Also, plans are afoot to change the committee's name to something more catchy such as 'Green Action' and to start cooperation with other OUSU Committees such as Third World Action wherever possible. The committee is still lacking one co-chair - please contact me at OUSU for details.

OUSU Reps' Committee

This term

The committee has met every even week this term and continues to play a small but vital role in making the job of being an OUSU rep easier. Different committee co-chairs have attended the meetings each week to explain the work that their respective committee does. There has also been much discussion about how OUSU council can be improved and how OUSU reps can better publicise the work of the student union within colleges.

The future

The committee will be drawing up a straightforward, no-jargon guide to OUSU Council and is looking at providing improved publicity materials to reps for display in their colleges. A basic job description of what OUSU expects from college reps is also a possibility.

And finally...

Thanks to all who have produced webpages and have made comments about the new site - I value your input greatly. To the co-chairs of OUSU Reps' and Environment Committees - thank you for your hard work. To the Sabs, Exec and Maria and Jenny in the office - thanks for the ideas, encouragement and support.

Academic Affairs John Craig (New)

This term Academic Affairs committee has begun to try to encourage more JCC reps to attend the committee, in recognition of the representative function that they fulfil and of the value of JCC channels in liaising with the university. This aim of integration will hopefully be helped by the new departmental structure, and OUSU's proposals for systems of student representation on the new Library Curators Committee and its sub-committees.

The committee is increasingly concerned that the university might be looking to reduce the number of tutorials in some areas, and that this aim is financially motivated. We are currently looking for a clarification as to precisely what the university's position is, and what its plans are for the future of the tutorial system. We have also addressed issues of basic academic provision by looking at the possibility of drawing up a student charter; a document detailing meaningful minimum standards to which we would ask the university to commit. While discussions on this have been useful, questions remain as to the workability of general standards across academic disciplines, and we look forward to the chance to discuss this with a representative of the university.

The committee has also functioned well as a resource for JCR officers and a forum in which the issues confronting them can be discussed. This term, we have looked at attitudes towards different methods of academic assessment, the best ways of getting tutorial feedback and have provided an exam stress mailing to help with the work of AA officers in college. Thank you to everyone who has attended the committee this term, and to Mary, Alice and Nicholas for all their hard work.

Disabilities Network James Rowlands (Pembroke)

Much of my work for the Committee this term has been initially to try and advertise the Network to both students with disabilities and others who may be interested in the area, such as JCR Welfare or Access Officer. The Networks long-term aim is to encourage applications from disabled students and to ensure that a constantly high level of access provision is provide by both Colleges and University. The Committee has started to approach this issue in several ways. Firstly we are currently attempting to determine what the spread of provision is like across the University as a whole by communicating with individual JCR Officers and College authorities. Once we have been able to draw up a guide this will be useful in ensuring Colleges have a good policy in place, and will provide the necessary information for any disabled student applying to Oxford. At the same time the Committee is also contacting LEA's so that we can begin contacting schools with disabled students of any kind directly, so as to improve link and hopefully boost applications. Attempts have also been made to contact other Universities Union's to gain an insight into provision elsewhere in the country. In the main I, my Exec and the VP-Welfare have focused on re-establishing the committee and on preparing the ground for next term, when we hope to encourage attendance and increase our range of activities.

Pro-Choice Abigail Coates (St Hilda,s), Antonia Bance (Somerville),Victoria Tomlinson (Brasenose)

This term has been difficult for the committee due to the changeover of co-chairs. However, Pro-Choice is now back in gear and building on the excellent work done last year, such as the research into attitudes in the university and the advertising of Emergency Contraception before the Millennium holiday. The Unplanned Pregnancy Pack is completed, and we are now planning for next term,s campaigns. We want to hold a training session for Women's and Welfare Officers about unplanned pregnancy, and to organise debates and speaker meetings on topics like "Is pregnancy a choice for students?". Another major project will be to continue the research into the attitudes of Oxford students so as to be able to formulate OUSU policy and have a mandate for campaigning. We intend to do this by putting motions to every CR: for this we need the co-operation of CR officers in communicating the results to us. Finally we want to look into setting up a scheme of interest-free loans for women who are unable to get abortions on the NHS, and compile a list of pro-choice college doctors and nurses. The committee desperately needs people to come along and get involved ^ not only

women or those who have strong views either way. We are open to all students, male and female, regardless of their beliefs, and we do not make moral judgements. Finally, thanks to Jane Blumer for all her hard work over the last year.

Queer Rights Michael van Gelderen (St Hugh's)

This term has been mostly taken up with work for the Queer Action Campaign, which should have by now come to a successful finish on Saturday 26th with the March Against Homophobia. Events during the campaign covered a variety of themes: Work, Politics, the Media, Queer Theory, Parenting, Gay Sex & Relationships, and alternative sexual choices (SM, etc...)

This term also saw a very well attended vigil for the repeal of Section 28, the application of pressure on Stagecoach to distance itself from its homophobic chairman, the continuation of work on the lgb rep's handbook, the careers for queers handbook (which is well under way and has already secured sponsorship), and the general lgb handbook.

Queer Rights also continues its work with the NUS LGB Campaign, the Oxford Homophobia Monitoring Group and the Terrence Higgins Trust Oxfordshire, as well as frequently co-ordinating action with other universities in the UK.

Target Schools Sasha Willmott (St Hugh's), Jennifer Ward (Exeter), Daniel Waites (St Anne's)

Hilary Term

1. We organised a two week tour to North England and Scotland. Eight Oxford students will be visiting state schools in the following areas: Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Darlington, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Stirling, Glasgow and Carlisle. We have arranged two host schools in each area and have invited all the surrounding state schools in the area to attend the talks.

2. We distributed letters to all first and second year undergraduates inviting them to participate in the Target Schools Visiting Scheme in the Easter Vacation, and have so far had a good response.

3. We successfully sent off the Target Schools Publications to all state schools across the country.

4. We have arranged two Open Days in Trinity Term at Balliol College and St Anne's college and have invited state schools across the country to attend.

5. We gave a Careers Talk at Gwent Careers Fair and showed a group of students around the university.

Michealmas Term

1. We produced a new edition of the Handbook, with a new cover design. We also improved the Target Schools posters. These were successfully printed and have been distributed.

2. We attempted to arrange a £4,000 sponsorship deal with Nat West but unfortunately this fell through because of a hostile bid made by the Bank of Scotland.

Final thoughts

So far we have been able to accomplish the work which Target Schools Co-chairs are responsible for. We have been impressed with the initiative and enthusiasm of the Committee who have been very helpful on a number of occasions.

This is by far the busiest term for Target Schools, and although we have coped, the situation has not been helped by the lack of an effective exec. officer. In future, we hope that priority will be given to ensuring that a good, committed executive is given the Target Schools portfolio.

Women's Committee Alison Parkinson (St Peter's), Leonie Parkin (Balliol), Antonia Bance (Somerville)

This term has been very successful for Women's Committee: our theme was „Women in Britain%. We held several very successful events, including the Reclaim the Night March, which although not hugely attended, due to the cold, was very loud! After the march we drank mulled wine and listened to the NUS Women's Officer, Helen Russell, who spoke about women's safety and the NUS Women's Campaign. We hosted an event called „Women and Christianity%, which was a lively discussion exploring the relationship between feminism and the church, and invited Rosamund Copisarow, the micro-lending specialist, to speak. The last event of the term will be „Mighty Aphrodite: The Women's Cabaret 2000%, on Thursday of 8th Week, and will be a fantastic night out. As always, Women's Committee has been active in campaigning, from highlighting the review of sex offences legislation, to protesting at the decision to allow Mike Tyson, a convicted rapist, into the country. The co-chairs have organised NUS Women's Conference training, and have worked hard to encourage colleges to send representatives. The Women's Handbook is now online, linked from the OUSU site: thanks go to the women's web weavers, Bryony and Sherry. Guidelines for the functioning of the Committee have also been formalised this term. Women's Committee has continued to provide a forum for college Women's and Female Welfare officers and for female students to air their concerns. We are now gearing up to resurrect the „No means No% campaign next term, and planning for the Women's Open Day. Thanks to everyone who attends, especially our active and involved Exec Officer, Hanna.

Press Officer Jeff Glekin (Mansfield)

As this is a new position it has taken some time to set the structures in place in order that an effective role can be played. My main duties have included co-ordinating an OUSU response to breaking news; drafting press releases on OUSU activities for the student, local and national press; keeping archives of press coverage OUSU receives in the press and maintaining a list of national press contacts.

My first role, co-ordinating a response to breaking news, has been made much easier with an increased flow of information. The Sabs in particular have been quick in contacting me with information on issues which have arisen this term. As a result of close co-ordination with them we have been able to achieve a cohesive response to the breaking news items. I feel that allied with this, a closer contact with individual journalists has allowed OUSU a greater right of reply in many of the items of press coverage this term.

In drafting press releases the Sabs, Exec members and co-chairs who have come to me with positive news items are to be thanked. If the role is to continue then an increased awareness of this resource will be helpful in the build up of positive press items that OUSU receives. I have, this term, aimed to release two items of positive news a week and this should allow for a trickle of more pro-OUSU stories in the student press.

I also have begun to create a press archive of coverage OUSU receives, in order that this might be reviewed each term and new press strategies developed. I hope that this initiative will continue.

Our list of press contacts has also increased and this is again in the process of being collated into a useful format for use when co-ordinating national press releases.

I feel that the role of Press Officer has been an important addition to OUSU's staff. If it continues then this continuity should prove rewarding in generating more positive press coverage for OUSU and also in responding with greater effect to any issues which face OUSU in the future.

Thank you to the Sabs, the Exec and the office staff who have made my term as press officer so rewarding and enjoyable.
