



# termly reports

## hilary 2003

### **OUSU Sabbatical Officers**

**Will Straw**

**President**

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It seems almost astonishing that 14 weeks have passed since the last termly council meeting. However despite the time flying by it does seem clear to me that the Student Union is in a much more comfortable position now than it was then. Of course, there have still been cock-ups of various kinds over the last term, but the current executive and sabbatical team, I think, are in a far stronger position than was the case at 7.30pm as the final questions were flying around at 7th Week Council last term.

Why is that?

First, we listened to the concerns of the 2002 Executive. Action taken from Exec meetings is now much clearer. Indeed, I myself am much clearer about the role and scope of Exec meetings. Things that are decided are acted upon and there is much less confusion over what we have decided.

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Things that are decided are acted upon and there is much less confusion over what we have decided.

Second, we are really excelling at what it is that we do well. Diversity Week, which I can take no credit for, was a stunning success. Hats off to Andrew Copson, Mel Marshall, Helen McCabe and everyone involved in the equal opportunity committees for such great events, coverage and commitment.

More in my field, the Finance and Funding Campaign goes from strength to strength. The new co-chairs (Penny Berrill, Torsten Henricson-Bell & Omar Salem) are energetic, enterprising and above all else, bloody nice people. Although there was a bit of a hoo-hah over our (alleged) lack of commitment to free education and/or direct action, I think the success of the 'Take the shirt off my back, Tony' and the March for Free Education on Saturday (hopefully!) put an end to that one. F&F has continued to receive large media interest (e.g. coverage of our immediate response to the White Paper; BBC World Service at an F&F meeting) and I am working hard to build up contacts for the Student Union so that this can be continued in future years. I think that it is an unfair criticism to say that no-one would care if my pops wasn't in the public eye. After all we are the Student Union of the University with the best brand in the world. Indeed, the interest over the Chancellor elections and our successful manipulation of the agenda with the Chancellor statement proves that point. In any case, many other student leaders around the country (not least Paul Lewis who will be speaking on Saturday) have created high profiles for their student unions without being in my position. Another vindication of our strategy was the letters to tutors sent out last term. Through receiving responses we have been able to target senior members and, thanks largely to Dr Mike Woodin (Balliol) and Dr Patrick McGuinness (St. Anne's), a meeting of Congregation will be held for the first time since November 2001 and for the first time ever on the issue of top up fees.

The Environment Committee is also in its element. Luke Haywood, Albert Cho and James Blackburn are incredibly well informed and have been relentless in securing a new agreement from the City Council. The organisation of a meeting between councillors and domestic bursars was a huge success and the ball seems finally to be rolling. Momentum is gathering on all sides and with former OUSU stalwart, Cllr Dan Paskins, on the case, I think we can be hopeful that a full system will be in place by Michaelmas. On both F&F and the Environment Committee, Georgia Toynbee deserves particular credit for doing an exemplary exec job, while still finding time to do co-chair type things like buy 500m of gold ribbons, or set up an email list for tutors.

The college inequality report, due for publication in 0th Week, Trinity, has been another area where people have given up a huge amount of time and effort to bring the thing together. It looks set to make a real impact both on a national and University level. Although there are many people involved, special thanks must go to Ryan McGhee, Helen McCabe and Andrew Copson but also to Josh Kern who conceived the idea eighteen months ago. Entz Forum has also finally taken off and Laura West is full of great ideas and the meetings seem to offer a really good opportunity for entz reps and ball committees to meet and swap ideas and best practice. OUSU Reps is in the most organised form that I've ever seen it. Hats off to the almost sickeningly nice Dominic Curran and Ollie Kempton. Finally thanks to Matthew Richardson for helping to organise a couple of very successful NUS related events including the most lavish spread I have ever seen at an OUSU Committee meeting.

The final reason for OUSU's strong position is the atmosphere, which has returned to the jovial, well natured place that a student union should be. Perhaps this is the most apt point to offer some further thank-yous. First, thanks to all the sabbaticals, the Business Manager and the Shop Manager for doing and continuing to do what can seem like a pretty awful job at times. We all have our own motivations for persevering, but one of mine is working with you guys. Second, thanks to all the exec. You're all lovely and it's abundantly clear that you're all committed to the cause. Also thanks to Josh Bellin who has taken over the role of Press Officer brilliantly (and hasn't caused any controversy!). Also to Lyndsay Lomax who volunteered to do perhaps the least interesting job in the world: that of OUSU RO – sorry it was such a pain. Finally, finally thanks, as ever, to Maria, without whom none of this would be possible.

Long may the pleasantness continue. Questions?

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## **Sean Sullivan                      V-P (Finance)**

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Since last council I have performed duties as a member of elections committee – delivering ballot boxes, chairing a hust, running about on the day and attending the count. Thanks are due to the RO who did a superb job and managed a speedy and efficient count. I have met with Brasenose JCR committee and attended a meeting of University JCC with regard to OUSU's financial position. I have chaired two meetings of publications board to select the Business Manager for next year. Two more editions of the Oxford Student have been produced.

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**Andrew Copson**                      **V-P (Welfare)**

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My termly report must begin with a sadness - Andy Garlick is leaving us as Vice President (Graduates) and since he is a man from whom I have gained a lot of useful information - especially for my welfare work with graduates - I am sorry to see him go; but he is leaving a fine legacy, particularly in the area of mature students.

This term has been insanely busy. Holocaust Memorial Day was a success but obviously the largest single project was Diversity Week 2003. We successfully financed the entire week with public money so it cost OUSU members not a penny and we estimate we reached over 2,000 of our members at one event or another. Thanks to Andy Garlick, Melanie Marshall, Helen McCabe, John Blake, Louise Radnofsky, Laura West, Linsey Cole and to all the the co-chairs of our equal opportunity campaigns.

My committees have been well run this term - the new Health and welfare co-chairs have organised three excellent sessions and we have also held a listening skills training and a welfare feedback forum at which I gained useful information on what the common room welfare officers want from OUSU welfare - in a survey of common room OUSU officers welfare rated as the most well-known service and one of the best advertised. The Anti-racism committee co-chairs have been very constructive since they came into office (and into a very difficult position) and have good plans in place for the future development of the campaign. Queer Rights are on a firmer footing than for a long time with new collaboration with the LGB Society and with the Oxford Lesbian and Gay Community Centre. Disabilities Action is going through a bad patch but the activity of the new Diabetes Network is bringing hope for a possible new system of autonomous networks to bolster DA. International Students has launched its new campaign against inequalities between college fees. We now also have an Equal Opportunities Co-chair and Louise and I will be looking to develop that committee into a functioning unit. College Inequality has suffered slightly from being a committee that I only took from Will over Christmas but the report should be ready for Council by first week of Trinity. Accommodation committee has made progress on its online housing database and with the able help of Linsey, they will be making good progress by next term.

Work with the University has continued mainly in the same constructive fashion that was handing over to us by our predecessors. After repeated efforts by OUSU, the University has not renewed its 1991 recommendations to the colleges that bar prices should be fixed at no lower than 80% of local pub prices. In many other areas, my work on University committees has borne fruit. In one area, however, we have come up against repeated obstruction; as I mentioned last Council, we have still not heard anything of the University's review of the Equal Opportunities and I have put it on the agenda for the OUSU Executive's termly meeting with the Proctors and Assessor. Melanie and I will continue to pursue the matter in any way we can.

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**Melanie Marshall**                      **V-P (Women)**

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This term, like last, has been somewhat frustrating, in that I have not been able to do everything I had hoped. The amount of term-time which is occupied by quotidian administration, meetings, bits of research and answering queries is easy to underestimate in the rejuvenating atmosphere of the vacation, and hard to overestimate when in the thick of it. The intervention of Diversity Week was also instrumental in this, and has pushed to the end of term a number of things which I had hoped to find time for sooner (eg Women's Handbook). I shall endeavour to make headway on them after full term, though the imminent move to Thomas Hull House and its attendant time consumption does not inspire unmixed optimism in this regard.

I have throughout the term been grateful for the dedication of co-chairs and executive officers who have relieved me of many burdens. Notwithstanding their degrees and other commitments, the elected exec and co-chairs are an invaluable resource to the student union, and I think some strategic planning could make the efficiency of the relationship between the various positions even greater. I hope to improve on these (already very good) relations next term.

One area in which I expect to find an executive officer indispensable is in **Nightbus** administration. A huge amount of my time could be saved by delegating matters such as invoices, payment forms, banking money, photocopying etc to an exec member, and I hope to see this take place from next term when Nick Cole will take the portfolio for the first time. Generally the bus has been a menace again this term, again largely for unforeseeable reasons, but I'm pleased to

payment terms, banking money, photocopying etc to an exco member, and I hope to see this take place from next term when Nick Cole will take the portfolio for the first time. Generally the bus has been a menace again this term, again largely for unforeseeable reasons, but I'm pleased to report that private hire has been a success and that the nighttime service itself has not been dogged by too many disasters. More publicity went out both at the beginning of term – I trust it is being displayed in your colleges.

I hope people felt **Diversity Week** was a success. One of the most pleasing things from my perspective was that each event had different people at it, which somewhat vindicated its aims. Nevertheless, I think my and Andrew's successors will have to think carefully about whether the week is worth the vast amount of organisation it requires, and attendant neglect of other areas of work: like freshers' fair, it is almost impossible to give adequate attention to anything else. The women's cabaret was as brilliant as ever and I was proud to be associated with it – well done Ros, Georgia, Louise and Nancy.

An unforeseen but major call on my time this term has been the debate over the single-sex status of **St Hilda's**. Liasing with the JCR committee, strategic planning, attending debates, collating information and so forth are all essential to conducting a poll as important as this one, and I was pleased to have been in a position to help. It remains to hope that the governing body will take account of the views of its students and of all those who believe in the furtherance of women's education in this university.

One failure to report this term has been the organisation of **Finals Forums**. I am displeased with myself for having been able to manage so few, and attendance has been hit and miss in the extreme. The advertising will have to be upped significantly next year, and was a bit rough around the edges this term because the timeframe coincided exactly with diversity week. Further, the extreme difficulty I experienced in finding women tutors to help with the forums is a serious barrier. I am preparing a thorough hand-over for my successor on the shortcomings of this year's forums and how they can be avoided in future. Meanwhile I shall see what can be done for 0<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> of next term – tutors may have more time to get back to me in the vacation.

It's something of a pity that despite my frantic efforts only 5 college delegates will be joining me at **NUS Women's Conference** next week. If the NUS will persist in holding conferences during term-time then we cannot be expected to send more. I will be in touch with them about this: full-term is fine for the full-time hacks with nothing else to do, but it seriously compromises the inclusion of actual students with degrees. Oxford's terms are the shortest in the country and we still have this problem. Rant over: I will report back in full on my experiences as an NUS virgin in Blackpool for all who are interested. Thanks to those keen women's officers who have made the constant faff of trying to organise a delegation worthwhile.

To end with a success: the EU have ruled out the inclusion of Higher Education from GATS for the time being, no doubt due to the outstanding efforts of **Ethics Committee** and People and Planet. The Vice-Chancellor has written to us to say that he and his colleagues are keeping a close eye on the matter. We shall continue to ensure he does.

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## **Andy Garlick**                      **V-P (Graduates)**

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“And now the end is near, and so I face my final council....:

Well, I suppose I should try and summarise my experiences in this my final report to Council before I step down at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> week. My replacement will be co-opted on Monday in the OUSU Executive Meeting and be ratified in Council in 1<sup>st</sup> week of Trinity.

I think I'll go for the ups, the downs and the inbetweens of my term of office. The high points must include the successful relaunch of the Mature Students' Committee and the excellent response rate to the Mature Students' Survey. The results are gradually being analysed and are giving preliminary indications on what the Committee should be doing over the next few terms. Securing graduate representation on the Graduate Panel of Education Policy and Standards Committee was pleasing as this is where important policy proposals are drafted between the Divisions and the Colleges and hence a crucial point for student input. Diversity week was a real success this year and I enjoyed making contributions to it. OUSU really reached out this year and pulled in a huge range of people many of which may not have ever had any contact with OUSU before. From a more general point of view, Diversity Week is only as good as the time and money invested into it, and members of OUSU should be aware of the amount of effort put in by the VP (Welfare) and others to provide this kind of event. Finally, casework is one of those things which can be tiring and yet rewarding and I hope in my time in office I have managed to help all those who I have dealt with through the Student Advice Service.

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The lows of the job have to be considered also. The general graduate apathy makes the VP (Graduates) job quite unrewarding and difficult to motivate at times. There is a limit to how much enthusiasm anyone can invest with only small returns. Council by its very nature is almost entirely undergraduates, and hence perhaps not likely to be too excited in developments in graduate issues, probably explaining why any graduate motions pass *nem con* and the VP (Graduates) can resign to Council and escape stage left without a single question raised. I have spent the past few weeks trying to come up with ways to address this apathy and sought the guidance of yet another inquorate Postgraduate Assembly, (the third in my time in office). Formulating graduate policy is very difficult when nothing can be voted on! Before I lament too greatly however, it should be said that this is not a local problem and graduate involvement is relatively low at other Universities also.

As for the inbetweens, the general duties of the VP (Grads) involve sitting on about sixteen University Committees and generally co-ordinating information for the MCRs that want to be involved. The recent issues of continuation fees and the possibilities of 4<sup>th</sup> year University fees have ruffled a few feathers at least, but on the whole most of the time is peaceful.... It's very quiet... too quiet realistically.

My apologies if this report is something of a jumble but my aim was to just lay out my final thoughts and to try to come to a conclusion. As I depart OUSU I look back at why I took the job. I thought as an MCR President that there was a lot of good work to be done and improvements to be made for graduate life. I hope I have made some headway towards this, but as I look around now I realise that one person cannot do it alone. If graduate provisions are to improve then graduate students have to become more involved, as only through a strong unified voice will we achieve successes. I thank those who have supported me in my work, and I wish my successors the best of luck! Thank you and goodnight!

**Sonia Sodha**

**V-P (AcAff)**

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### **Access**

Target Schools has kept the whole TS team very busy over the last couple of weeks. We have had a great response to the Visiting Scheme – approximately 500 responses – with people offering to visit on average 2 schools each, that should mean we allocate 1000 school visits.

Much time over the last two weeks has been spent allocating schools by postcode to volunteers which isn't much fun and is very time consuming, but is extremely important! Our events are all on track too, with bookings coming in fast for our open days and regional conferences. We will also be visiting some schools in Omagh in Northern Ireland as well as holding conferences in Coleraine and Northern Ireland, and as well as holding our own conference in Sutton Coldfield, we will be assisting at an FE College event in Birmingham.

Huge thanks must go to the co chairs and exec officer – Linsey, Alison, Sian, Chris, Kike and Rob, who've all been absolutely fantastic this term – I continue to be impressed by their dedication and hard work!

The OUSU Admissions Working Party had its third meeting on Wednesday of 6<sup>th</sup> week, and we had an interesting and productive discussion about interview best practice. There's one meeting left in 8<sup>th</sup> week in which we'll be discussing greater coordination of the university's admissions system – please come along if you've got a view (Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> week 1pm New College Lecture Room 6).

I have attended the university's Admissions Working Party, and the Admissions Executive in the last two weeks.

### **Academic Affairs**

The model JCR Academic Affairs survey I put together was sent out by AcAff Committee to JCRs last week, and some JCRs who are not taking part in the IAUL Student Experience Questionnaire have already put out this questionnaire. The informal feedback I have had so far is that this survey is revealing interesting things, especially a lack of study skills support which I hope will help my case with the university for better study skills provision. I will be helping those JCR officers who distributed the survey to collate the results at the beginning of next term.

Academic Affairs Committee held its first JCC Forum in 6<sup>th</sup> week. The attendance wasn't huge (although History and History and Politics JCC were very well represented) but I think this was partly due to problems with advertising. It was certainly useful for those present. We intend to make the forum a termly occurrence, and will start plugging this one right from the start of next term.

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Saturday opening hours of the four central Bodleian sites was discussed at the Bodleian subcommittee. Oxford University Library Services have agreed to ask staff unions about changes to Saturday opening hours, and will consider the OUSU submission as part of the review of staff opening hours which will be happening next term as a result of technical staff moving to a different site. We may not see any changes immediately, but I'm hopeful that there may be a change in the next academic year.

The Writing Workshop sessions which have been held in JCRs have been really successful – please contact me to organise one for your JCR.

I also represented undergraduate views on Education Policy and Standards Committee.

Many thanks for all their hard work to David Cameron Smail, who has been a great co-chair of Academic Affairs Committee this term, and to John Blake, who's also been a fab AcAff Exec Officer.

### **General Stuff**

Much time was also taken up being on Elections Committee and running the VP (CandC) by-election.

I am attending the Mass Lobby of Parliament organised by the NUS on Wednesday on the fees issue, and will be stewarding the F&F March on Saturday.

### **Overview**

**For details of what I have done over the term as a whole, please see my three previous reports to Council as well as the one above.**

I am really pleased with what I've been able to achieve this term. Hilary is often one of the busiest terms for Target Schools, but we've really managed to not only to keep on top of the relentless administration that needs to be done, but also to expand and improve what we do. I'm hopeful that our events this Easter are going to be a great success, and together with the Visiting Scheme, I think our outreach efforts will be expanded even further. I'm also very happy with the discussion we've been having in the OUSU Admissions Working Party – the next year or so will be a time of great change (I suspect) in admissions and it's crucial that OUSU has up to date policy on the salient issues. I'm looking forward to bringing a report on the Working Party to Council next term. In terms of Academic Affairs, I think I've been able to advance issues such as library opening hours, the student charter and study skills, and keep these on the university agenda. I look forward to building on these issues in Trinity. I'm also very happy that we now have representation on Senior Tutors' Committee.

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## **Katherine Wheatley**

## **Business Manager**

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Hilary has been a busy and fast moving term for OUSU on the Business side, with the OxStu as always taking up the bulk of the day to day running.

And on the OxStu, revenue has been much as was expected, at an almost identical level to last year. Graduate recruiters were down (with notable exceptions from those few companies who are still spending), local and student marketing slightly up. On last years costs, this would have meant we were heading for a substantial loss, but due to stringent (and highly effective) cost cutting measures by the Vice-President (Finance) in terms of both printing and miscellaneous expenditure, we are heading to a far far more respectable tally on that score over the year. Indeed, I am delighted to report that the paper has already taken more advertising bookings by now for Trinity Term than it had for the whole of that term last year. Canvassing for it begins today.

On to other things. As you read this, my successor will be appointed and no doubt raring to get started with the many an varied projects that the BM gets to initiate. For myself, as the end of my office suddenly seems much closer, I am working on my own. These include various plans and 'alliances' (to borrow a management consultancy term) with other businesses also affected by the infamous economic slowdown to increase revenue all round, most notably for the Oxford and Cambridge Careers Handbook, which Oxford has the pleasure of taking on the bulk of the production for this year. OCCH is already being discussed, rates have been set and meetings are scheduled with our Cambridge counterparts so that we can be ahead of the game with this, our flagship financial publication. We predict a slight increase in the old favourites of graduate recruitment but, what with the prospects of war, this is a sector that cannot be relied on. Last years efforts to diversify the sectors from which our advertisers come from should come to fruition, with more in the way of management schemes, Law and IT as well as the same old consultants and financiers.

Other discussions are taking place with regards to Entz handbooks – it needs to be seen whether this is financially viable but could provide a wealth of support, as well as a bank of information on Entz, Business, Social Sciences and Public Companies with Marketing as well as

Other discussions are taking place with regards to Entz handbooks – it needs to be seen whether this is financially viable but could provide a wealth of support, as well as a bank of information, to Entz Reps, Social Secretaries and Ball Organisers alike. Watch this space for more information.

As well as the delights of OCCH, Entz and THE MOVE, we can look forward to appointments of ABMs, whispers of club nights hopefully becoming shouts, financial groundwork being laid for all the summer publications (as well as the appointment of their editors) and the continuation of the OxStu. It looks to be a Trinity of fun in our shiny new offices. I can but hold my breath for the wealth of invoicing and admin that is to take place over the Easter. Happy Holidays.

## **OUSU Executive Officers**

### **John Blake**

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The Academic Affairs Committee this term has been concentrating on the IAUL Survey being piloted in 17 JCRs this year (and given to all Finalists after their exams) before being rolled out across the university. To ensure that the other JCRs had some chance to discuss academic provision this year, the VP (AcAff) masterminded a smaller survey OUSU survey for them, the results of which are coming in now and are most revealing, and will certainly require a response from the Committee next term. The JCC Forum has also been established, occurring in 6th Week ^ sadly, this one was not as well attended as we had hoped, but even so was extremely interesting and very much suggestive that a broader forum would be extremely helpful.

With the International Students Committee, the most pressing concern was organising the ICE2003 event to occur in Diversity Week. Given its success, I would like to take the credit, but that must go entirely to the Co-Chairs (whose reports are elsewhere), whilst the more general success of Diversity Week ^ and it was truly impressive ^ must go to the VP (Welfare) whose tireless efforts made the week worth while, although it did involve me stuffing a distressingly large number of envelopes for long periods of time.

In general, the life of an Exec Officer has been an enormously interesting one, with the weekly Exec meetings being seemingly more civil than those of last term, and I believe in general that we have done good work. The clearest mistake we have made was the failure of the Executive to support at least the principle of direct action in the wake of the aborted occupation of the RadCam despite the clear statement of the policy book. However, increased familiarity with our roles, their duties and limitations, will I hope prevent such errors occurring again

### **Linsey Cole**

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#### **Target Schools**

The transition from being a co-chair of this campaign to be its exec officer has been both challenging and enjoyable.

At the start of term, the Target Schools handbook came back from the printers. This was sent as part of our mass mailing to every state school in the country in 3<sup>rd</sup> week, which also included postcards advertising our events and letters from the VP Welfare and VP Women advertising their publications and the Women's Open Day next term.

The importance of this mailing has clearly been seen in the positive response that we have had to our events and requests for the Students with Disabilities Guides that have occurred as a result of the VP Welfare's letter.

This term, we have been organising our events for the Easter vac and for next term: the first Open Day of 2003 will be in SJC in 9<sup>th</sup> week, with two more open days in New and Wadham respectively next term. Our regional conferences are happening in 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> week in the West Midlands and Northern Ireland, where for the first time, we'll be holding two conferences.

We're also in the process of contacting schools in these areas to arrange visits whilst we are there. Organising these events has taken most of this term, with tutors to find, flights to book and volunteers to recruit. But, everything is now in place and the Target Schools events of 2003 will hopefully be the most successful yet.

Target Schools has also co-ordinated its visiting scheme for the Easter vac. Every undergraduate in the university was pigged with a form and the response has been huge. Sonia, the co-chairs and myself have spent this week assigning schools to students for visits and reminding the volunteers of the training session that will take place on Thursday at 5pm in Mansfield Council Room.

I was also involved in writing to Gordon Brown with the VP Access-Academic Affairs, after his comments towards widening participation undermined the hard work that those currently and

Room.

I was also involved in writing to Gordon Brown with the VP Access-Academic Affairs, after his comments towards widening participation undermined the hard work that those currently and previously involved with Target Schools have undertaken. We received a reply from Mr Brown earlier this week stating that he would be unable to accept our invite to the St. John's Open Day, but wished the event every success.

### **Disabilities Action**

This has been my first term of involvement with Disabilities Action, yet the campaign has progressed well and we are looking towards restructuring next term.

Meetings have been held on Fridays of even weeks and although attendance has often been poor, the work of Penny Berrill as the sole co-chair has ensured that some progress has been made. The Students with Disabilities Guide was published in 4<sup>th</sup> week and has since been distributed upon request to prospective and current students. As part of Diversity week, a lunch was held with KEEN, which was well attended and involved a fruitful discussion on disability in Oxford. In addition, Target Schools and Disabilities Action had a joint meeting on the Thursday of Diversity week, to highlight the barriers to access for disabled students. We have continued to request that OUSU's meetings to be held in accessible rooms and I am now pleased to say that this has been achieved. The fact that an OUSU campaign is having to hold the student union to account is concerning, but hopefully, all co-chairs and members of the Executive will now endeavour to adhere to OUSU policy and hold their meetings in rooms that are accessible to all.

A major barrier to the work of Disabilities Action has been the lack of interest in filling the co-chair vacancies. If anyone is interested in being a co-chair, please speak to Andrew Copson or myself. Plans for next term include challenging English Heritage's reluctance towards physical adjustments to university buildings that are necessary to facilitate disabled access and creating a series of networks, including one for visual impaired students, hearing impaired students and students with mobility difficulties, under the Disabilities Action umbrella, bringing the networks together once or twice per term, to address more general concerns. We as a campaign feel that this is the best way for Disabilities Action to move forward, allowing specific issues to be dealt with more quickly and effectively and ultimately, achieving greater awareness of the needs of disabled students in Oxford.

### **Accommodation**

The accommodation committee is working towards creating a database on the OUSU Website, providing details of all the student houses in Oxford, which will aid those who have to live out during their course. Requests for information were sent to all common room welfare officers, but unfortunately, the response was poor. We have therefore decided to make postcards that will be pigged to every student in the university requesting details of their house e.g. location, size, facilities etc. These will hopefully be distributed early next term, which will allow the database to be up and running ASAP.

The Living Out Guide was also published and distributed to common rooms earlier this term.

More generally, I've attended all the exec meetings and my duty afternoons. I went to JCC earlier this week and have been to the Admissions Working Party throughout the term.

## **Stuart Colville**

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It's been a mixed start to my time in office. OUSU has faced hostile press, disillusionment and a negative perception among student members to a degree that I do not think has been matched in the last few years. This is obviously very disheartening, but it is vital that we as people that care about a successful and effective student union - a Proper Union, if you will - continue to look forward. Accordingly, it has been a very great pleasure to observe a distinct reduction in acrimony and tension in the last few weeks, and I am hopeful that this will continue. And after our initial period of orientation and familiarisation I do feel that I and the rest of the exec have really started to get our teeth into our portfolios and gel together very well. I am optimistic about the next two terms, and I am eager to work with the rest of the executive and sabbatical team to overcome any difficulties that may remain.

In terms of my portfolios, other commitments and serious illness have meant that I have not spent as much time on them as I would have liked. Unfortunately, I have spent numerous days this term in and out of doctors and hospital (incidentally my doctor, worryingly, keeps on calling me 'Simon' which doesn't bode well) but have otherwise done my best. With any luck the Battels pack should be fully updated by the time you read this and will hopefully provide a useful resource to JCRs. Clubs and Societies has been rather more nebulous: what do clubs and societies want? And how do we address that? What sort of committee is needed to discuss it? Do I need a chair for it? Will anyone bother coming? However, I am happy to announce that I have a plan. And I think it's rather good. Unfortunately, it will now have to wait until next term before being put into action, but I promise there will be a meeting in 1st week of next term

Do I need a chair for it? Will anyone bother coming? However, I am happy to announce that I have a plan. And I think it's rather good. Unfortunately, it will now have to wait until next term before being put into action, but I promise there will be a meeting in 1st week of next term chaired by a club/society secretary that will start generating ideas. It will hopefully be publicised very extensively with a letter and email sent to every single society we know about. I had hoped to get this sorted during this term, but difficulties with venues and the complicated nature of setting up a new committee combined with other problems to make it impossible. I also intend to assist Laura (Entz) in the compilation of data on rooms and resources for clubs, and possibly to contribute to a self-financing handbook-style publication for the use of anyone in need of legal, financial, logistical or other information relevant to the organization of events and activities. That's still very much at the drawing-board stage, but could prove to be a Very Good Thing. I have been performing all the other normal duties expected of me - including duty afternoons, box-carrying, pigeon-hole stuffing and a few other equally glamorous tasks. Joint Committee of Council was an enlightening experience with the highlight definitely being my spilling water over the Junior Proctor. Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to my fellow Exec. officers. They're a uniformly nice bunch, and most are surprisingly normal considering the strange nature of the job. I have been genuinely impressed by their hard work and dedication. So well done. In conclusion: "A lot done, a lot more to do."

## **Lyndsay Lomax**

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Unfortunately this term I have not been able to get as involved as I would have liked with my portfolios following my election to RO in third week. I intend to bring my RO report to first week council in Trinity term. In my absence though my committees have worked well. The ethics committee made a successful campaign against GATS and have been working on trying to impliment an ethical investment policy throughout the university. The health and welfare co-chairs have organised two meetings for JCR welfare reps on the topics of exam stress and cliques, which I believe were both well attended and well recieved. I am looking forward to next term when I hope that I will be able to get more involved in my portfolios and make more of a difference to these committees.

## **Helen McCabe**

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This has been my first term as an OUSU executive officer (obviously!) and I have been pretty much thrown in at the deep end with all three of the campaigns I facilitate being very active this term.

In line with my manifesto commitments to equality and battling prejudice, I took on the portfolios of Diversity Week and Anti-Racism. Because of my commitment to equality of services for students, I also accepted the portfolio of College Inequality. In line, again, with my manifesto I also offered to take on the Nightbus, but (luckily?) our Graduate exec. officer was given this campaign.

Diversity Week was in 5th Week of this term. I organised the sandwiches (and other refreshments) and helped out with the planning of some events as well as setting up rooms, etc. All in all I attended all but two of the events, women,s only space (I had a prior engagement) and the joint RAG bop (I was too tired!). I think you will agree that Diversity Week this year was great. We had record attendance and some exciting and interesting events. Council has already formally thanked Andrew Copson for all his hard work, for Diversity Week. But I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the co chairs and other exec officers associated with the equal-opportunities campaigns for all their hard work organising events, but most especially Linsey Cole who went way beyond the call of duty to help with the events in St. Johns. Thank you too, to all the people who came and made the week such a fantastic event.

My time this term with Anti-racism has been fairly full with our three Diversity Week events, but we have also held meetings to discuss experiences of racism in Oxford, and will be holding a mass anti-BNP letter writing and debate event next week.

The College Inequalities report is coming on apace, I have helped correlate some figures and discussed how to publicise it.

As well as helping facilitate my campaigns I have regularly attended OUSU exec. Meetings, come to OUSU Council to exercise my vote in line with my manifesto, and have also taken the minutes in 1st week.

I have also done a Thursday-morning duty-session answering the phone. Phoning other people, stuffing envelopes and not quite managing to master the photocopier. Oh well, Trinity is another term.

staining envelopes and not quite managing to master the photocopier. Oh well, Trinity is another term.

## **Louise Radnofsky**

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This term has provided an interesting start to both Exec and OUSU. I've attended all of the Exec meetings and carried out the other duties of an Exec Officer, as well as Council. I'm slowly getting my head around the way that the Exec structure of OUSU works, and still also trying to use the hitherto-pig-ignorant perspective to figure out what improvements to this could be made. With regards to the portfolios I hold as an Exec Officer:

**Women's Campaign:** I've attended all but one of the weekly meetings (Monday 5pm St. John's Larkin Room All Women Students Welcome). The Campaign's had an excellent term, with useful discussion each week on issues facing women students in Oxford, especially in colleges where people have been able to exchange valuable experiences and insights, discussed how to further campaigns such as Keeping Hilda's Single Sex and formed policy on issues facing Council. (There, that's what goes on behind those closed doors - no burning bras, or worshipping of Satan, on a pyre of tampons though maybe next term?) And fundraised - stop reading this now, and go and buy a cake instead. The Campaign also made a fabulous contribution to Diversity Week with both a fascinating open forum discussion on Women Only Space, and the Cabaret on Friday night which as promised did showcase some fantastic female talent in Oxford.

My contributions have largely been that of a woman student involved in the campaign - the hard work and competence of Ros and Georgia as co-chairs, and the strong involvement of the VP (Women) in the nuts and bolts running of it (and its standing as a long-running and active campaign) has meant a really basic acquiescent role for the Exec with responsibility. But a very enjoyable one.

**Queer Rights:** I've attended all the meetings again, now in a weekly format (Thursdays, 5.30pm, Northgate Hall All Supporters Welcome), where we've done a range of campaigning ^ from writing letters to LGBT prisoners of conscience, to discussing the donation policy of the National Blood Service, as well as discussing some of the most important aspects of LGBT equality campaigning in Oxford, in Britain and internationally and discussing what we as a group wanted to see change. Attendance has been really good as well, both in terms of numbers, and in being relatively gender balanced. However, the main bulk of our work this term, including mine as Exec Officer, has been in getting our Diversity Week events together. The lunch held for LGB, LGBT and LB reps and others with an interest in how we tackle queer issues in Oxford colleges provided particularly useful ideas about how to develop what's going on in different places both in terms of exchanging them and finding out how OUSU can help in particular ^ and the turn-out was great, with people from nearly every college coming to give a properly cross-campus perspective. Civil Rites, our devised protest ceremony for equal partnership recognition, took a lot of time to get together but paid off in both attendance and glamour. I was especially pleased by the big (and largely accurate!) press coverage that we managed to get from student, local and national press. Oh, and I wore not only stupid heels, but a hat.

**Equal Opportunities Committee:** This needs work to get off the ground again, and Hilary hasn't been ideal given the extent to which so many of the people who would be involved in this effort have been dealing with Diversity Week instead. We really need 2 co-chairs for this (email Andrew Copson). I'm looking forward to seeing what we can get going next term.

## **Daniel Rees**

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At the start of this term I was appointed Exec Officer for Finance & Funding. It soon became clear to myself and a majority in OUSU Exec that the role of the Exec Officers within this portfolio was somewhat ambiguous, and so it was decided to abolish one of the Exec Officer portfolios and create a new F&F co-chair. I am pleased to see that the campaign is running effectively with this new structure. As the Exec Officer responsible for One World, I have been assisting the One World Week committee with an application to HEFC for additional funding to sponsor volunteer opportunities. This will substantially increase the One World Week budget and naturally allow more and/or better events to take place.

## **Matthew Richardson**

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This term I have attended every meeting of exec, every OUSU council and every duty morning

This term I have attended every meeting of exec, every OUSU council and every duty morning required of me. I have worked towards NUS conference and to that end I have held three meetings with NUS reps. I have spent £30 from the NUS budget this was mostly on entertainment. I will be attending the NUS conference. I have overseen the administering of an OSS to a Vietnamese student who will be coming up to St John's to study computing. I am so far enjoying my time on exec. As yet I have not made any progress on my manifesto promises regarding pastries or the menstrual cycle.

## **Georgia Toynbee**

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This term has been very busy- with both successes and some frustrations. Getting to know OUSU structures and figuring out exactly what my role is as executive officer has been challenging. Obviously this term is an interesting one for all exec officers, but I think we're beginning to find our feet and hopefully will be more able to add to and enhance the structural side of the student union as we go. I am now thoroughly intimate with the photocopier which is dandy. Worth a separate mention in addition to my own portfolio committees (below), is OUSU Diversity. The events I attended were stunning- the equal partnership rights ceremony especially so. It was a very effective piece of campaigning- it got townspeople involved, it looked great, the message was loud and clear and it was a fantastic event, I was very happy to be involved in a student union that is capable of organising something like that.

### **F&F**

With the release of the White Paper of HE funding and the clear route to top up fees, this term has been busy informing students about the content of it, and campaigning for free education. Attendance has been good, and we have seen several new people come and get actively involved, although unfortunately a turnover in people who used to attend has also occurred (although to be expected in Hilary for finalists). Big thanks to the three co-chairs who have worked extremely hard, it was good to welcome Omar Salem mid term. It might perhaps be worth trying to stagger elections in the future, as it seemed especially with the coinciding change in exec, that things might be a bit smoother. We also saw the a reduction in the number of exec officers assigned to the committee. Given the large (although admittedly periodic) volume of work that is undertaken, it might be worth reconsidering the committee/exec structure. The work I have done relating to tutors has been particularly rewarding and the success of getting a resolution to Congregation (for the first time in ages) is a very positive step. If you have any sympathetic tutors (against top up fee proposals) then please get them to vote in Congregation and to sign up to our tutors email list. Finally get yourselves down to the march this Saturday starting at Jowett Walk at 2pm.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

Again a very active committee who's meetings have been well attended and who have been tirelessly campaigning on the recycling front. OUSU should be proud of this committee which doesn't necessarily get a lot of attention. Due to campaigning, both lobbying and the wonderful dressed up as newspaper leafleting, Oxford Colleges should finally see some progress made in recycling (at least decent plans are now being formulated). This term saw the start of two new co-chairs, both of whom are great (not forgetting the already legendary Luke Hayward). It is also worth publicising the changed location of the committee- we now meet at Mansfield. It has been a real pleasure to be part of such a vibrant, interesting and productive campaign. I've also fielded several enquiries from other student unions about the University switching to Green Electric which shows the impact this change could have. Thanks to the co-chairs and our Cehonorary, co-chair Ailsa Gibson for lots of fun and for such a comprehensive hand over.

### **PROMOTING CHOICE**

I am very pleased that we have appointed a co chair after a long vacancy period for this committee. However, another place is still vacant and I would welcome applications. With the appointment of a co-chair, I'm really looking forward to helping relaunch this committee next term.

## **OUSU Committees**

### **Disabilities Action**

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I am finding myself writing this report with a certain sense of disappointment. I have now been DA co-chair for four terms, sole chair for two of them. I have worked with two executive

I am finding myself writing this report with a certain sense of disappointment. I have now been DA co-chair for four terms, sole chair for two of them. I have worked with two executive officers, and two sabbaticals – all of whom are lovely.

The resurgence in issues for students with disabilities I saw last year from the University, Colleges and fellow students in the response to SENDA has now died down. Is it because people do not seem to be interested anymore? This is difficult to say. Disability is not a glamorous subject, people still have deep prejudices and misunderstandings. How can there be more than one type of disability? How can they be variable?

The battles merely to be able to get to the places to argue is still an issue. The Advisory Panel on Disability, which I sat on at University level, is not meeting at the moment. The University does not really wish to release the Registrar's Report. College Advisors are having inadequate information given to them. I spend more of my time referring people on for casework at the moment than I do campaigning. When students are not getting the help they need to sit examinations, the *raison d'être* of our university, because their college does not know there are funds available, this is **an outrage, an utter disgrace**.

James Rowlands wrote a report about an equitable way of ensuring colleges had a central fund from which they could apply to make adjustments to their premises. It failed to get through the committees (what a surprise) I shall try and take this report and do something with it, to make them sit up and acknowledge that unless something happens quickly, the University is going to be sued.

Nationally, I have done a little bit of work, well, tried to with the NUS. I know that OUSU does not affiliate centrally to the NUS, but several of the colleges with SWD officers do. They were unresponsive.

However, onto more pleasant things. I am really pleased that the Diabetes Support Network has been established. The KEEN lunch (part of Diversity Week) was good, with 15 people turning up to see about volunteering opportunities. I also attended Target Schools to talk about Students With Disabilities when faced with questions at a Target Schools visit. Andrew Copson wrote a letter to go in all the TS packs saying they could have a SWD guide on application. The numbers of offers made to students with a visual, hearing or mobility impairment can be counted on your hands. This needs to be addressed. If you would like a SWD guide to take to a school, please e-mail me, and I'll do a pidge session. I would have liked to have done more events, but time constraints, and a full programme of other events made it impossible. I am annoyed we got no mentions in the papers though.

Hopefully we shall organise DA into more networks, so the support network is there as well as the campaigning one. Disability is a very broad area to be covered by one committee. DA needs to be restructured whatever. It can not go on like it is. We shall inviting Welfare Officers to one of the events next term. We are drawing up a model job description for a Students with Disabilities Rep.

We are also going to run a 'disability and art' theme next term, just to get people thinking. Stilettos and the RadCam, juggling with letters... Co-chairs, please come forward. The rest of you, please get involved.

Thanks to Rosie, who has moved to the dizzy heights of sab-elect, Nancy, Ros, Andrew and Lyndsey.

## **Ethics Committee**

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The Ethics Committee have continued to campaign against the Higher Education implications of the General Agreement on Trade in Services. Before Term began we submitted a report to the Department of Trade and industry as part of their consultation of student unions nationwide. The success of this consultation and earlier pressure was shown by the announcement by the European Union that education would not be one of the areas that was offered in this round of negotiations. Despite this victory we feel that GATS could still be a risk to higher education since it could be included in future rounds of negotiations. We have written to the vice chancellor asking him to write to Margaret Hodge expressing concern for the issue.

We have been investigating the universities policy on ethical investment which recently changed with the adoption of the Institute of Business Ethic's 'Good Corporation Charter.' We have written to the University Investment committee requesting more information but initial feeling among the committee is that the charter is seriously deficient and is more geared towards good business practice than ethical investment.

We are currently also in the process of collating information for a guide to socially responsible investment for JCRs. We hope to have this finished by the beginning of next term so we can launch an initiative to encourage and support JCR representatives in pursuing ethical investment

We are currently also in the process of collating information for a guide to socially responsible investment for JCRs. We hope to have this finished by the beginning of next term so we can launch an initiative to encourage and support JCR representatives in pursuing ethical investment policies within their colleges.

## **Finance and Funding**

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### **MARCH IN MARCH! 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2PM JOWETT WALK.**

Yes, you've guessed it. Come this Saturday for the final event of the term. Bring your college banners and march against top-up fees and for free education.

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Well, well. This was the term everyone was waiting for. The accumulation of the protests in anticipation of top-up fees. It was certainly a baptism of fire for the two co-chairs elected last year, Penny and Torsten, as they begun arranging a protest on the day of the announcement of the White Paper. We offered help to the non-payers. The event was very successful, and Oxford University Students Union was yet again leading the way in student protest. It would have been good if we had had more notice, but governments tend not to fit in with student democracy. Daniel Rees left as co-executive officer and Omar Salem joined the F+F team as the third co-chair.

We begun to organise the 'Take the shirt off my back, Tony' protest. Please continue to collect shirts, it will be great when they are all ceremoniously dumped outside number 10. Send them to OUSU, further details are on the website. We wrote the 'Idiot's guide to the White Paper', which was a real challenge – 111 pages into 4 – not bad. We also picketed Stephen Twigg when he turned up at OULC, and inside were able to ask him searching questions. This made into the national press.

The quest to promote free education was ranked up a level when we decided to tackle the candidates for Chancellor with the rest of OUSU. We seem to have found one candidate who explicitly agrees with us, and other representative groups. We also undertook a mass mailing in response to the White Paper response we shall be writing. Owing to the amazing response rate we have had, this will be written over the vacation in plenty of time for the 30<sup>th</sup> April deadline. We're thinking about announcing the response with shirts.

Georgia has been working like a trouper on tutors who agreed to an anti top-up fees stance and Congregation has agreed to meet in 10<sup>th</sup> Week thanks to her and M. Woodin's (Balliol Tutor) help. This is amazing, a fantastic coup. Congregation has not met since 2001. Please lobby your tutors to attend and let's hope they pass the motion. On the national side of things, there was a lobby, organised by the NUS this Wednesday which was attended by several members of F+F, aiming to get MPs to change their minds and to encourage them to table EDMs.

Thanks: to all those who turn up to F+F week in, week out. You are fantastic. To all those who have turned up just one, to one event, thank you for giving up your time and becoming involved. It is refreshing to see how many of you are involved in the campaign. For those who have leafleted for two weeks solid in the run up to the march, thank you for braving the rain and the wind. To the non-payers, thank you for holding out for so long in your final year. For those who have taken the time in your CR/SU/Representative Campaigns to discuss the White Paper, thank you. To Will, thanks for all your help, and to Georgia – you are a true star. Students have begun shouting again. Next term we shall be shouting even louder.

## **Health and Welfare**

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This term the Health and Welfare Committee have held four sessions:

1. Listening Skills (2nd Week)
2. Welfare Feedback Forum (3rd Week)
3. A talk by James Hamilton on Stress (5th Week)
4. A discussion on cliques with the Student Advisor (7th Week)

The attendance for the 5th week session on stress was particularly good with over twenty people attending. We felt that the structured format of having a speaker and then a lead group discussion was the most successful and productive. The attendance for the rest of term has been dissappointing, and the issue will be focused on next term. Advertising has taken the form of a mailshot and e-mai every two weeks.

a mailshot and e-mail every two weeks.

## **International Students**

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from Vidur Bhatia, co-chair, International Students' Committee

The ISC has made good progress in the fees campaign this term. In the beginning of term, OUSU Council ratified the Committee's policy for international student fees and college international officers. Subsequently, we have decided to contact JCR Presidents to make them bring up the matter with their college authorities before the ISC contacts the authorities directly. We have drafted a JCR motion mandating the President to present the "International Students' Fees" Paper to their college authority, and have recently send this, along with the Paper, to JCR Presidents. We have had some positive feedback where the motion has passed in JCR General Meetings.

The ISC has also made rapid advances in preparing the OUSU International Students' Handbook 2003. The articles are in the process of being put on the website (quite a few have been done already) and we just need to add pictures. We hope that the Committee will endeavour to get sponsorship so that the handbook can be published as a hard copy.

After three terms of being co-chair, I would like to thank all the previous VP Graduates and OUSU Executive Officers who have been on this Committee, especially Andrew Copson and John Blake. I wish the Committee the best of luck for the future.

from Miklos Gyongy International Students' Committee Co-chair

This term I have spent most of my energy organising our international cultural event (ICE) for Diversity Week. Thanks to all those who helped in making it a success! Apart from that, I have been assisting my co-chair in our welfare campaigns: overseas fees and handbook. I have also been raising awareness of our elections to make sure our successors will be really enthusiastic and build on our past work, continuing the growth of our committee to an exciting and relevant campaign group

## **OUSU Reps**

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This term has been fairly busy for the OUSU reps committee.

On Monday 20th January Mandy Telford, the National President of the NUS, and Ruth Moore, the NUS South-West regional officer, came to Oxford to meet students and take their questions. The next day we held an OUSU Council workshop, led by Connor O'Neil and two or three of the sabbaticals. Both events were well attended and feedback was positive, and the OUSU council workshop is certainly something that we should look at doing again.

Many OUSU reps are also NUS reps, and with NUS National Conference looming and NUS being less than perfect in distributing registration packs, preparations for conference can be a bit of a nightmare. We will be working with Will Straw and Matt Richardson to try and make everything goes smoothly.

There was some concern expressed that the committee wasn't helping OUSU reps represent their colleges as best as it might. It was decided to move the committee from even weeks to odd weeks, so that we could discuss issues arising in council before council took place rather than afterwards, and to produce a questionnaire for OUSU reps. The results of the questionnaire indicate that the committee should be focusing primarily on helping reps represent their common room's views, and that advertising of OUSU services still needs improving. We will continue to work on these areas.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank Laura West and Will Straw, the exec member and sabbatical with responsibility for OUSU reps, and also to Andrew Copson. All three have been a great help and have given a significant amount of time to the committee.

## **Womens' Campaign**

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This term has been generally very successful. We have seen continuing high attendance and several newcomers to the campaign.

The highlight of our term was the Women's Cabaret as part of Diversity Week, which raised over £70 for Oxford Rape Crisis. It was a fantastic display of female talent and a great night, so thanks to all those who made a contribution to the event. We also hosted a lively and productive debate on female only space.

Our vote has consistently been used at OUSU Council, and we have had healthy discussions of many motions beforehand.

We have held discussions about a variety of issues, including college safety, varying

many motions beforehand.

We have held discussions about a variety of issues, including college safety, varying conditions/facilities for women in different JCR/MCRs, as well as an on going discussion about the single-sex status of St Hilda's which Women's Campaign fully supports.

This term saw the end of Lesley Anne Perry and Ros Dampier's years as co-chairs. Thanks to both of them for their work with the Campaign. Ros was duly re-elected and we also welcome a shiny new co chair in the form of Laura Moys from Wadham.

Next week is the NUS Women's Conference in Blackpool and there will be at least 5 delegates from Oxford which is an improvement on last year. We look forward to next term and hope to focus on women and admissions, and women within JCR/MCRs next term.

Finally, as you will see (from our lovely cakes at OUSU Council). we have also been fundraising for our women's calendar which we hope to publish as soon as funds allow.

16