

Kirsty McNeill

President

Introduction

There are two strands to the Oxford University Student Union, and it would be a foolish president indeed who sought to ignore either of them. The first is that the Student Union is an organisation run for students, by students. It exists to represent and further the interests of scholars within a named institution, and should pursue an agenda external to that remit only at the express behest of its membership. Contrary to common propaganda, not only the majority but the entirety of the working time of officers is spent working for students as students, ensuring that their concerns are raised (if not acted upon, of which more later) at every stage of the policy process. However, the student union remains, primarily, a union. Its very existence is predicated upon the notion that we achieve more together than we do alone. It has given me great pride, therefore, to be a sabbatical in one of OUSU's most successful campaigning years yet. The Student Union need not make a trade-off between services and campaigning, and I hope that this year has demonstrated that a dynamic organisation can combine the two in a way that enhances the student experience in a meaningful and long-lasting way.

Sab team

The role of president is a slightly curious one. Each sabbatical is elected separately, with a different range of experiences and fields of expertise. It is not at all clear, therefore, that the electorate select a president to *lead* the team, or indeed the union. Rather, it appears that they select the person that they believe is best equipped to do the specific work of president. I have, therefore, striven to allow this year's officers to work in their own areas free from interference. However, I have sought throughout the year to be of assistance as and when requested, and to take a holistic view of how various aspects of the union's work relate to one another. Whether it has been proof-reading publications or attending OSSL meetings, I have always sought to keep abreast of the various areas of our work without trying to dominate or control it. It is undoubtedly the case that I have been able to take a hands-off approach to the "presiding" aspects of the presidency because the officers elected in Michaelmas 99 were of such obviously high calibre. The respect that this has engendered within the team has meant that I am delighted to report that there has been not a single major internal disagreement and that officers have spent their time working for those who pay their wages rather than planning their next move in a big back-stabbing game. Conclusive proof that petty politicking is not endemic in the Student Union, and can be avoided if a professional attitude is adopted by all concerned. Thanks, then, are due here to the five amazing officers who have made OUSU what it is today: Jane- deliciously devious, Tony- I have **serious** worries about you in a welfare capacity, Nick- I bow to your patience, your good humour and your dancing, Steph- thank god you didn't join a trade union or OUSU would have been taken to a very high up court somewhere very far away a very long time ago. Last by no means least Rhod- if I start I won't stop. Suffice to thank-you for twelve months of thick-as-thievesery. Here's to many more. A humungous thank-you is also due to Tom, who gets all the work of a sab without any of the (ahem) glamour- thank-you so much for all of the quiet work you do to keep us above water,

Much of my work has involved taking general responsibility for the running of the SU. From issuing presidential interpretations to discussing strategy for the OUSU shop I have sought to make the wider priorities of students a priority for the Student Union.

Entz

The Student Union suffers a chronic credibility problem in this area and, on finding a poster in the 1990 archives advertising a 30 pence "OUSU disco", I began to see why. In light of this, I have tried to avoid major risky outlay of union funds. Our credibility has, I hope been restored somewhat by the provision of the Divinity and Battle of the Bands, and I very much hope that we can build on the success of these events to a wider and more ambitious portfolio in the future. However, the amount of work and commitment required to put on an event even on the scale of Divinity should not be underestimated. The sheer hard work put in by the following (among others) deserves much praise- Will, Rachel, Philip, Steph, Tom for

everything in the run up, the sab team, the leafleters, the f and f crew etc for the night itself. Stars all. Our entz presence will increase significantly next term with the signing of a deal with the Zodiac and, it is hoped, OUSU will build on this year's modest successes to become a major player in student entertainments.

F and F

This remains one of the key areas of our work. Almost all of the work of the committee this year has been covered extensively in the student press. I will, therefore, leave it at the following list: the biggest and best occupation in Oxford since, from what I can gather, the 70's, the biggest Oxford turn-out in years at the National Demonstration (three times the size of UCL's delegation!), a series of arresting and heavily covered stunts, a large and popular non-payment campaign, a huge response to our petition-gathering, a wide and productive dialogue with MPs through letter writing, massive penetration of the gold ribbon campaign, it goes on and on and on. If our campaign shows anything it is this: direct action and professional lobbying and not mutually exclusive- in fact, they are mutually re-enforcing parts of the same whole- an interactive, exciting campaign that can win for students. Internal to Oxford my primary aims this year were two fold- to generate involvement, and to generate positive coverage. The f and f campaign has secured both in abundance. The list of f and f thank-yous could go on forever, so I'll settle for a few here: Sean (as lovely in as many different ways as you are wrong), Will, Rachel, Phil, Alex Lord, Regan, Cat Muge, Cat Wallis, Helen, Kate, Justin, Jon, Sacha, Adam, Nick, Alexis, Vicky. Most of all a big thank-you has to go the non-payers, whose astonishing tenacity was truly inspirational, and to all the lovely people who take the time to put up the posters, come to the committee, nag their friends etc.

Exec

The two separate executives with which I have worked have contained some of the most committed, inspiring and competent individuals I have ever had the pleasure to meet. This year has seen a real culture change in the executive, whereby the body has become more professional and business-like, and the individuals within the committee have been freed from the harness of meetings lasting several hours. This has allowed them to get on with what OUSU does best, generating involvement through our committee work and grass roots campaigning. I was delighted that so many obviously able and dynamic people sought election in the by-election, please please please do so again in Michaelmas. The exec induction pack and day this year were intended to make the exec more aware of their role from the start, and I think the way that they all hit the ground running has made for a more effective exec and, ultimately, student union. It would be desperately unfair to single out any of the many exec members that we have worked with so they have a collective THANK-YOU for the extraordinary amount of work they put in.

Council

This year has, in my view, demonstrated quite clearly the extent to which the collective will of ordinary students can find its expression in the Council-forum, if and only if sabbatical officers and others are serious about putting the student agenda first. Thankfully this has, I think, begun to happen. One of the very first motions to the very first OUSU Council of this year concerned the prioritisation of students as students. Since council expressed its overwhelming view at that meeting, meetings themselves have become more relevant, more businesslike and more focussed on what the student union is actually here to do. I am absolutely delighted that common room officers no longer have to set aside five or six hours every fortnight if they wish to represent their members in a Student Union forum, and I am delighted to have helped to institute a culture in council which is much more reflective of the meetings of our constituent members in content, style and length. Much praise is due here to our excellent chairs- MTPT, Fairclough, Mel, as well as our excellent ROs, Catherine, Stuart and Tony. By far the greatest thanks, however, is due to members themselves, who have lost patience with procedural nonsense and irrelevant rambling. Thank-you, therefore, to the common room officers who have helped transform a torturous, stagnating body into a short, dynamic decision-making forum. Although there is lots more to be done, rarely have common room representatives been so in control of council. Thanks to all the ordinary members who take the time to come and tell us their priorities- I hope you think that the one hour average is an improvement on previous six hour marathons.

NUS

This year has seen various changes in the way in which we approach the National Union of Students. Firstly, preparations for Conference occupied much more time than I think has been the case in previous years. I was delighted that we took the unprecedented step of organising presidential hustings, and pleased that the Oxford delegation formed such a self-supporting group at conference. I hope that the packs prepared for them helped them feel better able to represent their members, and I think Oxonians certainly felt their presence felt. My particular highlight was one of our delegation having a national officer call him obstreperous before storming off and refusing to answer his questions. It made me very proud. Every delegate who went to conference deserves a big thank-you for being so cool- but special ones have to go to Rodrigo for heckling, Edd for becoming a pack horse for 18 bottles of wine and Phil for being such a thorn in the side of evil NOLS. Helen Salmon also deserves a thank-you for representing Oxford so faithfully- it is a testament to the type of critical, engaged and questioning students that Oxford produced that she received a standing ovation from the Oxford lot for beginning her speech "I am the biggest trouble maker my University has seen in years". I think even the VC would have been proud. Biggest thanks here, however, are due to Ed Swann- hard-working, cheerful, and by far and away one of my favourite co-chairs.

Anti-Racism

My role in the anti-racism committee has been non-existent- all credit for the work of this important body is due to its hardworking volunteers. However, I hope that I have provided a strong voice for those suffering discrimination of all types. It was a great honour to be asked to read at the Holocaust Memorial Day service, and I hope that OUSU's involvement in this important event continues. The need for such continual reaffirmation of the horrors of the Holocaust was at no point more obviously confirmed than in the cavalier attitude displayed by some at the invitation extended to David Irving. The response of the majority of voting members, both of the Union Society and the Student Union, was a truly humbling commitment to student safety and to multiculturalism. Rarely have I been prouder to be a member of the Student Union. The list of people requiring a thank-you in relation to our anti-racism work is basically endless, but a few that definitely need mentioned are: Mr Paskini, Sacha, Robin, Rachel, Sarah, Mike, Craig, Juliet, Ed, Helen, Antonia, Nick Clark,, DJM. Most of all- an unlikely trio- Mason, MacKerras and JDC. Utter stars "in the absence of anyone else who appeared to know what was going on".

OUSU Reps

OUSU reps have this year, as ever, been a fabulous bunch. The Student Union would never be able to carry any sort of message back to common rooms without them, and I hope that they feel the mailings we send them and demands we make of them have not been too cumbersome. In particular, the OUSU Reps Committee Co-Chairs this year- Colin, Laura, Ruth, Dan, Simon- deserve huge thanks for their time and energy.

Ethics

Ethics committee is doing extremely well since its remit has been extended. The campaign for ethical investment is taking hold in colleges and JCRs across the city, and the University-level movement is also enjoying considerable success. Positive and engaging coverage by the student press of this, and other related areas, is a source of considerable hope, and it is a mark of the genuinely high quality of our papers that issues such as these can be covered without the sneering cynicism heaped upon other student concerns. University Council has already received a paper on the ethical investment of its funds, and the paper has been referred to the investment committee for their comments. Making impact in a University such as ours is a matter of maintaining some form of continuity in pressure, and I am quite sure that the University management are well aware that this issue is not going to be allowed to die in endless committees. One of the primary reasons for this is the enthusiasm for the endeavour amongst senior members, particularly those occupying seats on University Council. Thanks in this area are due primarily to Tom and Ben, whose hard work and dedication have been second to none. Eleanor also deserves a big thank-you for taking on the committee late on in the year and throwing herself into it so whole-heartedly.

Elections

The organisation of the student union elections with the highest turn-out in Europe is always going to be a nightmare task. This much is inevitable, particularly when there are those in Oxford whose hostility in the process is directed not at any of the candidates, but at the process itself. I was involved at almost every stage of the Michaelmas elections, from validating nominations to chairing hustings, from counting votes to days and days of fossilising in Tribunal, and I can honestly say that whilst this year may not have been perfect, it saw many improvements in the experience, both for the candidates and for the electors. The guide to being a candidate was an excellent innovation. My role in this was limited to writing bits about rules freakery and proof-reading and many thanks are due here to the boy Rhodri. Another significant change was the institution of an overnight count- a prime example of the benefit of having people involved in OUSU used to hanging about in the Union. They do lots of things better than us in this arena so thanks have to go here to the union rules freaks whose regs input was so helpful- John Everett and, as ever, Shezza. By far and away the greatest thanks, however, have to go to Stevie, whose attention to detail, painful attachment to democracy and scary ability to get inside the mindset of the truly awful people who plague OUSU elections were some of the greatest assets OUSU had in Michaelmas, and over the summer. Over the vac I set in motion and helped draft one of the most comprehensive overhauls our governing documents have had in the post Constitutional Working Party era. The most comprehensive set of electoral regulations ever undoubtedly made the work of some candidates more cumbersome, Good- I make no apologies. The rules are there to create a level playing field between genders, sexualities, ethnicities, classes and so. The rules are not, and never have been, about creating a level playing field between talents. Sorry. We were also quite unlucky this year to have been required to organise another electoral process in second term, and Stuart deserves much praise for taking on this potentially horrendous task.

Handover

One of the greatest flaws of any student organisation is the lack of continuity, and this is even more pronounced in OUSU than in most JCRs where at least previous officers continue to live in the same city for a time. Alleviating this problem as far as possible has been a major priority this year, and I have always sought to keep my successor informed and involved as far as is possible. Much time has been spent preparing a proper handover course and pack, and I hope that she feels the presence of a proper handover as keenly as others have felt the absence of theirs. The commitment to handing over properly, however, should be read as nothing other than a desire to see one of the best OUSU Presidents ever have as little as possible preventing her from pursuing her agenda in the first few months. I am confident that the Student Union is in some of the most capable and dedicated hands it has ever seen next year, and I wish Ruth the very best of luck, However, knowing both her and the job as I do I would like to charge council with an explicit responsibility- make sure she goes home **sometimes** won't you?

Central Student Venue

The eternal quest for a central student venue received considerable attention this year, although I am disappointed to report that much of the work has been in vain. The problems are considerable. Contrary to popular belief OUSU does not have millions of pounds that we are hoarding for when the revolutions comes, In fact, we are in a continually precarious position financially and, as such, are in a weak position to take major risks. It is for this reason that taking on the lease of a venue which currently used as something other than a licensed premise is ill-advised. Rents in a central business district such as Oxford are considerable, and we would be required to wipe out the reserves paying for a venue during the period of a (potentially unsuccessful) planning application. We would, therefore, be required to lose a lot without any guarantee of gaining anything at all. The other option is to secure a venue which is already licensed. This route has been investigated and we have been registered with all the agents in the South East who deal with such premises. Unfortunately, not a single suitable one has come up this academic year. The University have also instructed their commercial agent to hunt for properties which fit our specifications (at no charge to us) but this is also yet to bear fruit.

General Election

I have prepared briefings on electoral law and also party stances for common room officers and members, and hope very much that the student turn-out in this general election reflects some of the work done in this area.

OSS

The Student Scholarship Scheme remains one of the most straightforwardly positive things the Student Union does. Mel and I spent considerable time in the early part of the academic year shifting applications for the scheme and, although we cannot be told if any of our selected candidates have actually gained entrance to Oxford, I am confident that many of the candidates we saw deserved to.

JCRs

Every JCR President has been asked at the beginning of every term whether they would consider having a sabbatical address the JCR and answer questions. Although the penetration has not been as deep as I would have liked, it has been a pleasure to speak directly to so many students, and I hope that this year students have felt closer to their sabbaticals than may otherwise have been the case. Although small, changes such as sending out 'sabs on hand' leaflets to colleges have, I hope, helped bring us closer to the common rooms we serve, and I hope officers feel that the many mailings and briefings that have been provided have been of use. I have regularly attended the Presidents Committee, and sought at all times to be on hand to officers seeking advice. One of the most interesting and satisfying aspects of my job has been the extent to which I have (I hope) been able to help with individual concerns about governing bodies, committee members, constitutions and so on. This year has also seen one of the best "OUSU" recruitment drives ever. We now have an officer of one kind or another from almost every undergraduate college in the University, and the old insider/ outsider culture has, I think, finally begun to crumble. Our near-constant contact with JCR Officers implies an increasing feeling that OUSU is able to provide valuable resources for elected officers.

University relations

University relations have remained consistently good throughout this year, and many of the officers of the University deserve many thanks for their help and support this year. Throughout the year myself and other sabbaticals have adopted a consistently constructive attitude in University committees. I have attended many Heb Councils, JCCs, meetings with the Proctors and others. Despite frustration at how slow moving the University is, I have genuinely found most officers to be well motivated. University committees have been a slow process of arguing for things like compulsory interview training, and extra childcare and attempting to engage in a professional way with the University on its own terms. Biggest thank-you is due to the inhabitants of the Proctors Office, in particular Brian Gasser who has been consistently efficient, helpful and friendly. As well as the committees I sit on, I have solicited candidates to fill places on bodies such as Clubs Committee and Rules Committee. It is on committees such as these that many of the boring, but worthwhile efforts of the Student Union are rewarded. As well as arguing for changes such as the reservation of Wednesday afternoons for sport and societies, the Student Union has argued (successfully) for minor changes such as the abolition of computing charges for clubs and societies. Major thanks are also due to the Marshall who, despite heading a bonkers institution, has been one of the most helpful and decent University officers I have had the pleasure to work with.

Legal Stuff

I have spent considerable time researching and explaining various aspects of student union law to members, common room officers and SU officers. This has been a task made considerably harder by systematic misinformation spread by people with half-baked understandings of things they've overheard in a bar. Stop it. Please. Thanks here are due to Steph, his predecessor, the boy Shezz, the boy Steve, and many more,

Proctors

I have attempted to provide assistance and support to all those faced with Proctor's Court. This included briefings about rights under statute and ways in which defences could be mounted. Although the behaviour

of the Proctor's was, frankly outrageous in this instance, I remain convinced that it is hard to behave genuinely justly in an environment in which one must wear velvet breeches in order to review evidence.

Press

The Student Union has, this year, enjoyed a fantastically successful press year. Our coverage, both student and national, has been overwhelmingly positive on the whole and I have been delighted to work with Stuart as he has done the vast majority of the work involved in getting our message across. Thanks here are also due to Jeff for his work earlier in the year. Thanks here then are due to the lovely Oxstu people, too many to mention, and to the Cherwell, both for their impeccable taste in nominations and for the professional and challenging way in which they have dealt with the student union over the year. Many thanks are also due to the old school lot, esp Brinders and Rich.

Conclusions

I have missed out LOADS, including many many thanks-yous. This is broadly because (a) I'm running out of time and (b) because I intend to send proper thank-you notes later. My final word is to say a big thank-you to the many ordinary students who give us the benefit of the doubt, and the many hidden hard workers who populate our committees- you are all stars. Biggest thanks, however, have to go to the student population at large- it has been an absolute pleasure to represent you.

A little last self-indulgence

Ruth- a whole year in the best job in the world- I hope you relish it as much as the student population will benefit from your talents.

All the staff, esp Maria, whose hard-work and cheerfulness may be missed by ordinary students but is certainly appreciated by us.

Joshie- where to start, where to end? If I even half lived up I'm over the moon.

Smazz- I hope you know that in my own strange way...

Steph Gray

Vice-President (Finance)

It has been a truly amazing year, which I've found more challenging and varied than I could ever have expected. It's crazy to put a 20-year old in charge of £400,000 of turnover, crazy to try to operate a Student Union from two floors of an office block, crazy to expect people to work 70-hour weeks and then say OUSU isn't doing anything: but then Oxford is a crazy place. I'm proud of what we achieved this year – exec, editors, staff, helpers, and sabs – though after four years of OUSU and 40 OUSU Councils, I am happy to be moving on.

Publications

More OUSU-branded publications have appeared in 2000-I than in any year in OUSU's history. In addition, I have given help to sixteen separate JCR and student magazines from the *Oxbridge Traveller* to OU Women's Rugby Club's 'glamour' calendar. Never has OUSU's publications stable been so large, so well-produced, or so profitable. Everyone who has played a part in achieving this should feel proud.

This term has seen a lot of work preparing the ground for successful publications next year, recruiting and managing editors, and arranging printing so Eleanor can take over the reins without any problems. I've also done some deliveries to colleges of surplus *Oxford Handbooks*, plus arranged the distribution of *Law Careers Handbooks* and *Alternative Prospectuses*.

The *Oxford Student* has had an eventful and successful year. I'm glad that it took the opportunity to challenge its rivals in a new format, and that some weeks especially, the tabloid approach was absolutely the right one. *Cherwell* is a fantastic newspaper which achieves incredible levels of quality and success without the institutional support the *OxStu*

receives. Having said that, I believe the *OxStu* can, with a recruitment drive in Michaelmas, and a greater degree of self-reliance and self-discipline, become the better newspaper for students in Oxford week-in, week-out.

Looking back on the year, two other publications stand out: the *Living Out Guide* was a radical departure from previous versions which proved one of OUSU's most visible successes this year. The *Careers Handbook* was a project which encountered major problems, which were entirely overcome, resulting in its most profitable and best-read year to date. Though the commercial future for graduate recruitment-funded publications is not quite as positive as it was a year ago, the steps we have taken this term to outsource the production and concentrate on the editorial and commercial side will ensure we retain our competitive advantage.

Finance

OUSU's finances are healthier now than they were this time last year. The main reason for this is the hard work done by the Business Manager this year and last. This term, I completed the transfer of OUSU's reserves from low-interest current accounts to 12-month (still-ethical) bonds and notice accounts. I also reported to the Joint Committee of Council with Junior Members on our implementation of the recommendations of Critchley's Accountants following their review of our financial control procedures in June 2000. Nearly all of their suggestions have been adopted now, including two measures to computerise the Accounts Office. It is curious that OUSU affiliations have hit the headlines as often as they have this year, since I am delighted to leave OUSU with more affiliated (and above all, paid-up) common rooms than I found when I started. Since September, Keble MCR and Wycliffe Hall and Green JCRs have joined, convinced of the value for money that OUSU offers. Oriol JCR's departure is sad but not surprising, and it is a great shame that a few people's misinterpretation of the Education Act will cost Oriol's freshers so many useful services, while saving the JCR very little.

Building and Facilities

OUSU's other sabs and exec officers have carried fewer boxes this year than ever before. By hiring space on the edge of town, OUSU publications have rarely had to be carried up two flights of stairs, only to be distributed a few weeks later. Our secure storage unit has facilitated the expansion in OUSU publications, and saved literally tons of effort. The glorious sight of 10,000 *Careers Handbooks* being smoothly forklifted into a suite of vans will remain with me for ever.

On a more serious note, OUSU's aim of achieving a CSU has not been fulfilled this year. While movement has been made by Kirsty to obtain University support, there is still no imminent central OUSU bar, pub, or shop for Oxford students. While success depends heavily on good fortune, I feel one of the major obstacles is that the three officers – President, V-P (Finance) and Business Manager – upon whom the work would naturally fall, are all too busy during the crucial periods of the year when it might be possible. I think a central venue would be a great thing, and is right that we should seek to find one; OUSU is also more than just a bar, though, and in many ways, has to work harder as a student union without one.

This year has seen the completion of the refurbishment programme started in 1999. The Meetings Room was repainted over Easter, and the Publications Room has been reorganised to seat up to 11 eager journo-hacks simultaneously. Though we were forced to return the CLNC room to its owners Unison, the effects of this haven't been as disastrous as they might have been, given our new storage facility and a cleared-out Meridian room. CCTV has been installed in the past couple of weeks, adding greatly to OUSU's security. The General Office has had something of a rejuvenation with new furniture and a new photocopier installed last week.

The OUSU Van long since ceased to be trusty. Leaky and cold in winter, and reliably unreliable in summer, it is soon to go to the Big Garage In The Sky. The new baby of OUSU is a brand-new van on contract hire, which will save us money on maintenance, give us a larger and better vehicle, and greatly facilitate the cruising of chicks. Apparently.

Entz

Hilary Term saw Divinity, a one-night occupation of Jongleurs and Bar Risa, which showed that OUSU-run entz has potential. OUSU also supported IMSOC's Battle of the Bands competition in recent weeks. CUSU have tackled the issue of central entz provision in Cambridge with a separate venture, Creation, employing full-time staff, and it could be that that is a model worth considering in Oxford. I'm sure that Eleanor's skills in entz management will help revitalise OUSU's club nights next year.

Another piece of news is OUSU's new partnership with the Zodiac on Monday nights from next term. A new student night is to be launched in conjunction with OUSU, where we focus on marketing and leave the running of the night to professional entz promoters – it promises to be a great new student option for Mondays, without a hack in sight.

Computers & IT

Three years of taking OUSU's IT infrastructure seriously have resulted in a semi-professional network that is both stable and flexible. Every full-time officer or staff member has an iMac; everyone uses email; nobody really complains about the server any more. Though software crashes are inevitable, and printers have been a disappointing drain on resources this year, the computer situation as a whole has never been better – and this has reaped rewards in terms of publications which have been printed smoothly and cheaply. For all their editorial prowess, Cherwell have had many more IT crises than the OxStu this year. And OUSU has wasted practically no money or effort this year on major printing mistakes or emergency technician call-outs.

The OUSU web site is in a good position now. It works, most of the stuff on there is up-to-date, and it really does have potential to be truly useful to Oxford students. I'm glad that OUSU didn't employ an eBM, as we simply couldn't afford to fund one from dot.com advertising revenues these days, but the issues raised in the report last year are still valid. With a new web manager fully-involved in OUSU, and a commercial partner to help with the dynamic content-management side such as the clubs and societies listings and vacancies, I think the OUSU site can become really, really impressive.

Battels support

Though never directly involved in battels negotiations at a college level, or in OUSU's battels work before, I helped promote and disseminate the work done by Colin Anderson on the Executive in the form of a new online resource for battels negotiators: BattelsBuster. I also resurrected the JCR/MCR Treasurers email list, long-dormant, and it is now functioning as a forum for discussion and enquiries, in parallel with the Presidents' email list.

OUSU Shop

I have warned previously that the OUSU Shop has not had a good year. The rather unexpected retirement of Hilary Burdett at the end of Trinity last year led to problems at the start of Michaelmas which meant revenue and customers were lost. The new manager, John Potter, has introduced a number of innovations including a wider range of computer supplies, more chocolate and drinks, and haberdashery including balloons, corkscrews and combs. I have devoted more time to the Shop than many of my predecessors, emphasising the important of marketing, and even working an hour a week behind the counter myself, in order to keep it open until 5pm every day. With John, I have also tried to improve our service to colleges in terms of bulk ordering. A new order form and catalogue was produced this term, and we have committed ourselves to more flexible delivery options. While I am disappointed that this year will probably record a loss on the Oxford Student Services Limited side, I do feel we have been doing all the right things since Christmas at least, and if our successors give the Shop the big push it needs at the start of Michaelmas, it needn't be in inevitable decline.

Staff

Jenny Murray, who has served OUSU as Finance Assistant for twenty years, has indicated her intention to retire at Easter next year. Only former V-P (Finances) will truly appreciate the hard work, commitment and quiet assistance that Jenny has offered through the years. As I said in my introduction, it is crazy to entrust such financial responsibility to 20-year old graduates, and it is the calming, questioning, stabilizing presence of dedicated staff such as Jenny which has kept OUSU afloat and functional all these years, though the periodic crises and personality clashes. We all wish her a very happy retirement.

Thanks

Without the help of the following, this year would have been much less than it was. Their hard work, good humour and in many cases, breathtaking dedication are much appreciated. It is people like you who enable OUSU to defy its critics and continue to provide relevant, high-quality campaigns and services for everyone else. So, Union-President and Julia Roberts-stylee...

My fellow sabs: never can six different people have rowed so little, or achieved so much. **Kirsty**, never the red menace (in the way we were warned about, at least), and simply the greatest OUSU President I could have hoped to work with; least but not last **Rhodri**, for whom every day is a bad day, but who still gets stuff done like no-one I know; **Nick**, who stuck at a job when most fishing scholars would long since have thrown in the rod; **Jane**, part of

OUSU ever since I can remember, who always seemed happy, however difficult things became; and **Tony**, whose (adopted) grandchildren will be told tales of 'Storch' and 'Election Tribunals' whether they like it or not at (quorate) family gatherings. **Tom**: I don't think V-P(F)s and BMs have ever got on quite as well, let alone gone on freebie holidays together. You even made some money along with being the office antidote to political-correctness. The **OUSU Staff** – especially Maria, Jenny, Annily and John: life in OUSU is not easy, but I really appreciated the efforts and achievements you managed. **The Exec(s)**, especially the **stars**: the stupidly-hard-working **Colin** (who is about to discover what OUSU is really like), the limelight-grabbing **Stuart** (who successfully kept the 'OUSU Press Officer is Mandelson love-child' story out of the papers all year) and the lovely **Sonia**. Eleanor T, Heenal, Laura, Regan and Sean are truly assets to OUSU – thank you for your help this year. The **OxStu couples**: Jerome & Pete, Mark & Jake and David & Martin – it has been the most fun bit of my job, not least all that interfering, keeping you out of trouble and stopping you from making your pages look shit. The **Editors** of other stuff: Peter & Francine, Jon, Andy Limond, Amy Smith, Chris & David, all at www.oxfordstudent.com, even the guys at Cherwell. **Heroes of OUSU's past**: Simons McD & S, Josh, Geoff, Paul, Alex, James, Rich, Matt and the lovely Hannah. **Heroes of the University**: Dr Brian Gasser, quite a few Proctors, Keith Thomas of Exam Schools, and nameless academics who pipe up in support of students on countless University committees. The **people in the real world**: the guys at PCP, MFP, Big Yellow, the City Council, Bookers, Manches and Macfaction. Thank you to one and all. **Good luck** everyone, especially **Ruth, Eleanor and Colin**, who are taking on the hardest jobs in Oxford. Be nice to them.

Tony Lord

Vice-President (Welfare)

I do feel very strange, coming to the end of my year as OUSU V-P (Welfare). This year has been the culmination of a couple of years of planning – not everything has gone to plan, not everything I wanted to has happened and I wouldn't do everything I did in the same way (if at all) again, but that doesn't mean I haven't enjoyed it. In fact, despite the low points, where I felt like I was banging my head against the wall of a burning building while hot bricks covered in boiling acid fell on me, I have enjoyed this year. This perhaps is a tribute to wonderful support and atmosphere that pervades the OUSU offices: I feel very grateful that there has been no intrasab bitching, no huge rifts and we all spoke to each other all year. Which is a huge contrast to previous years...

The biggest event of my year was the **appointment of Annily Campbell as OUSU's Student Adviser**. As soon as I came into the job I identified that this was such an important service, it could not be just abandoned. After a very difficult interviewing process (greatly helped by the sagacity of Jason and the good sense of Rhodri) Annily was appointed. Of course, this being Oxford half the University officers wanted to put their tuppennyworth in and unfortunately I still haven't managed to persuade them that it's none of their business how we employ our Student Adviser – good luck with this James!

On that note, I have had many, many, many **meetings with University officers** and others: Committee for Diversity and Equal Opportunity, Advisory Panel on Disability, Advisory Panel on Harassment, Working Party on the Disability Conference, Student Health and Welfare Committee, Joint Committee of Council with Junior Members, HEFCE Disability Project Steering Group and that's just the official ones. These meetings sometimes are quite useful.

Publications wise, new editions of the **Welfare Handbook**, **Careers for Queers** (thank you **JP Morgan**), **LGBT Handbook** and **Living Out Guide** have come out. Their editors all deserve thanks, but the Living Out Guide was entirely designed and distributed by Steph and so he requires a damn big smacker on the lips. He also redesigned the entire Welfare handbook after I went on holiday, so he gets a gold star for that too.

Caseworking: I have been amazed at how much time this takes up, even with Annily being in the office three days a week. Often cases require just a quick email in response: these are usually fairly simple and give me a quick burst of feel good endorphins. Often however they take hours, days, weeks... Seriously, this has been the major function of my job this year and I'm very pleased that I've been able to help so many people – it is a real way that OUSU can directly and visibly affect the lives of Oxford students.

Committees and Groups

QR – has done less than it should, for many and varied reasons, and I share some of the blame. However this term has been v cool with a bi-weekly (ho ho) discussion group getting going.

Accommodation – has rewritten the LOG and finally managed to get some dialogue going, which is v cool

Health + Welfare - has been fantastic. This year we changed H+W into a very much training based group, which means that we've basically run a mini-training each week, which is more effective than having a bi-termly training session. The dedication of the co-chairs and exec has been remarkable.

Anti-Racism - organised a wikkid Holocaust Memorial Day event and now has great plans for an awareness raising campaign next term. I'm not blinded by the greatness of future plans however – there has been problems with this group this year, which hopefully will be resolved soon.

Disabilities Action – is doing some great stuff – look out for this group to make a huge impact at the start of next term.

SHAG – woohoo! I love condom runs!

Elections. Yes, I know it isn't part of being V-P (Welfare), but the help that the other sabs and **Steve Moses** and **Tribunal** (especially **Dan Butt**) gave me during the elections, especially during the ludicrous Proctorial hearing was invaluable and so thanks to them for that too. And my previous comments still apply.

Thanks, balloons and flowers to

The Sabs: **Kirsty, Steph, Jane, Nick** and **Rhodri** have all made my job easier this year by supporting me and helping me to fulfil my objectives in many and varied ways. **Annily**: you have been the dream of my predecessors – I feel very lucky to have been the first V-P (Welfare) with a Student Adviser for my whole year. **Maria**: thank you for being so efficient, kind and understanding. My Exec members: **Colin, Laura, Joel, Vivienne, Sonia, Vino, Regan** and **Cie**. My Co-Chairs: too many to list here, but special mention goes to **Colin** (again), **Catherine W, George, Dave** and **James**. Others who've helped **Steve, Stuart, Sean, Eleanor, Anatole, Will, Natalie** and **Peter**.

No thanks, brickbats, cricket bats and fruit bats to

Those who've made my job more difficult than it already was. You know who you are so I don't think I need to name names.

Jane Blumer

Vice-President (Women)

As the V-P (Women) of OUSU, the past year has been at times hectic, at others fun, and also occasionally nightmarish. In retrospect, however, I cannot honestly say that there has been any part that I would not do again and which I do not believe has added to the Student Union and the lives of students across the University.

My work has been focused upon various areas this year. Childcare has been a major issue, as the current University provision for student parents is woefully inadequate. From my role on the University Childcare Panel, I appreciate that work is being done to improve the situation, but it will take time. Projects have included the first Student Parent Welcome event in mid-Michaelmas, allowing student parents to meet each other, myself and the University Childcare Project Officer, Tracey Perkin. Feedback was positive, so I hope the event will be repeated next year. Another scheme I have been working on over the course of the year is the Childminder network, allowing students to baby-sit for other students, which could make a huge difference. Again, I hope my successor will build upon the foundations and develop the scheme into something which has real impact on student parents in the University. My thanks go to Regan Early for her hard work as the Exec Officer for the portfolio, and I apologise for not having achieved as much as I would have liked.

Over the course of the summer I began work on what is now the OUSU Harassment Policy and Code of Conduct. My place on the University Harassment Panel was extremely valuable in drawing up the Policy as was the legal advice from the University Equal Opportunities Officer, Judith Secker. Jason Dorsett, ex-VP Grads, also gave advice.

A big achievement of the year has been the new OUSU Goldman Sachs nightbus. This was brought in to replace the previous scheme (the old bus crashed in 1997) and, despite some teething problems, has already been of immense use to a large number of people. Following several meetings and countless pieces of correspondence, Goldman Sachs agreed to sponsor the scheme extremely generously: without their contribution, it seems unlikely that we would have been able to buy the minibus. My thanks go to everyone who has helped, ranging from CRs who gave donations to the Clerk to the Proctors and the University Insurance Office. The support of my fellow sabbaticals has also been invaluable; perhaps this is why previous VPs Women were unable to resurrect the scheme. There are, of course, many improvements to be made, and I am sure that in the coming academic year the Nightbus scheme will develop to new heights – as a practical resource, I believe it is a valuable expansion to the range of services OUSU provides for students.

I have spent a considerable amount of time working on eating distress. As an estimated 70% of people will suffer from an eating distress at some point during their lives, I feel this is a really important step forward in welfare provision in Oxford. As the result of numerous meetings and much co-ordination, both this year and for the two years previously, the new Oxford Eating Disorders Association, under the umbrella of the national EDA, has established a helpline based in OUSU and a support group for sufferers and their friends. The scheme is not solely for Oxford students but is a community venture and I sincerely hope that it will promote University relations with the rest of Oxford; it certainly deserves to prosper, and I wish all involved the best of luck.

Work on academic achievement has also been a focus of my efforts this year. In Michaelmas the first 'Women in Academia' day was held, with a mixture of presentations from current female academics and students, graduate and finalist. An extremely lively debate was sparked around the issues facing women who wish to pursue an academic career and the feedback from those who attended (far more than I anticipated) indicated that the event was a success. As OUSU is often unfairly knocked for its efforts towards graduate students, I hope the event will be repeated: it seems a logical progression of the Finals Forums for final-year women. This year, these have not enjoyed the success of previous years, due to a combination of factors, although they were organised in Physics, English, French, Philosophy, Politics, History and Arch and Anth. Problems faced included the fact that I under-anticipated how busy some tutors are in Hilary, difficulties booking rooms and general apathy. Despite this, however, I believe the Forums are a valuable means of encouraging the confidence of women approaching finals – believed to be the main cause of their overall lower results. The scheme also has the firm backing of the University. Having said this, however, it must be conceded that not all women do lack confidence, nor are all men over-confident when it comes to finals, and the developments made by Annily Campbell in conjunction with myself and Tony in holding general exam stress/relaxation/revision sessions is a step forward; again, I hope they will be continued and expanded next year.

Access issues have formed a major part of my work. As well as answering random queries from prospective students, I have organised two major events – an 'Access Day' and the Women's Open Day. For the former, held at Oriel in January, it was a great success regarding access to Higher Education generally, and several of the sixth-formers later contacted me to say how helpful the day had been in knocking down many misconceptions. Unhelpful comments, however, included those made by students at the College to the effect that school visits, particularly those whose pupils are from a mainly Indian background, were a Bad Thing. This is exactly why schemes such as Target Schools and the Access Scheme are so valuable, and people with those sorts of reprehensible attitudes should be reprimanded in the most severe manner. The Women's Open Day, held in the middle of May, was also a success, feedback from those who attended indicating that the vast majority of them would be applying to Oxford. In a change from previous years, the focus of the day was primarily upon the sciences: women are not underrepresented in the Arts and, although they were welcome to attend, prospective Arts students were not the main aim. Their comments, however, indicate how valuable prospective students find the WOD: one person suggested that simply the fact that it is advertised in the University prospectus demonstrates that Oxford doesn't live up to the stereotypical view of a men's club. It was unfortunate, however, that despite my earlier requests, many colleges were unwilling to allow the visitors beyond the lodge – this does give negative overtones and is reflected in the comments made on the feedback form. My thanks go to all the volunteers who helped organise the day and to St. Hilda's for hosting the event as well as Rhodri and Sonia for their help throughout the year.

Another main area of work this year has been Women's Committee. As one of the most vibrant of OUSU's Committees, I believe this has been its most successful year since my time in the University, due mostly to the hard work, efficiency, dedication and spirit of fun of its co-chairs, Leah Zeto, Jo Briggs and Melanie Marshall. As this has been the first year that we have had a graduate co-chair, this has been reflected in our focus on matters of general interest to women, rather than just emphasising undergraduate issues. The Hilary term focus of discussions on the nature of feminism and this term's theme of 'Reclaim...' have led to a large number of people attending with extremely diverse views; I feel that this diversity is vital if Women's Committee is to continue to be a relevant forum for all women in the University – there really isn't a standard view on anything. The support given by Women's Committee to many projects, including Reclaim the Night, the Open Day, one-off events, etc has made a huge difference to my life this year and I would like to thank everyone who has been involved and wish the new co-chairs, Emily Hooker and Eleanor Thompson, the best of luck for next term.

I have not spent as much time on some projects, however. This is for various reasons. Firstly, with regard to the NUS: I had little contact with the NUS Women's Campaign over the summer and the one event I did attend ended up being a slagging-off-Oxford-and-promoting-Laura-Spence day, with absolutely no regard for any facts or truth. Since then I have received a total of five pieces of literature from the NUS, leading me to suspect that they value OUSU (or at least me) as little as I value them. I have yet to learn that the NUS has anything to teach OUSU or to add to my job, though I would be happy to be proved incorrect; the main impression given is that we are irrelevant, that the views of elected officers are utterly pointless and that, in my case, by not self-defining as a feminist, I am betraying the cause of women the world over: nonsense. 'Nuff said.

Another thing I haven't done as well as I might is work on the area of pro-choice. Although the OUSU Promoting Choice Committee is extremely lucky to have as its chair Melanie Marshall, surely one of the most sensible people in Oxford, the Committee has been largely inactive until this term when we have had one speaker meeting and a debate.

Before this, the committee was severely hampered by the attitudes of its exec officers who certainly could have done a great deal more to help. These things happen. Now that the Committee is motoring again, I hope it will continue to prosper, encouraging informed debate and ensuring that women across Oxford know what all their options are with regard to contraception and unplanned pregnancy.

The third area in which I have not excelled is that of publications, Again, I feel there is a good reason for this: those produced by my predecessor (the Unplanned Pregnancy Pack and the Childcare Guide) did not come out until towards the end of her year in OUSU. To update them sooner than next year would be a waste of money, and it seems more sensible to leave them as a project for my successor (sorry Antonia!).

My time has also included sitting on University Committees (Diversity and Equal Opps, Childcare, Harassment), liaising with City Council committees, attending one-off training events, random meetings, a surprisingly large amount of casework, etc. I've dutifully carried boxes, answered phones, quarked posters etc. It has been an inspiring and stretching year. In addition to those already mentioned, I have a few people I would like to thank particularly, though this could go on indefinitely. To be brief ... my fellow Sabbaticals are a super bunch of people - Steph, in particular, works too hard, though why Kirsty should be expected to answer the phone at 11:30pm escapes me. Both are consummate professionals and a pleasure to work with. Tony has put up with sharing an office with me for a year, so shd be congratulated; Rhodi's antics with The Shirt will always make me laugh, and his help on all issues access is much appreciated. Nick is nowhere near as old or wise as he pretends to be, for which I'll be eternally grateful - so glad you've been part of it this year. Tom, ta, and again thanks for making me laugh (lots, often). My thanks also to the Exec; your help is much appreciated. Maria and Annily have also made a huge difference, as well as all the OUSU staff. Other people include Mel, who has helped with almost everything I've done and been smashing, Abigail, people like Ruth and Eleanor who have always made it seem better, other friends, and in particular Leah who has always been supportive and provided extremely constructive criticism. I'm really sorry you couldn't do it, but thank you so much for everything you've done to help me. St. Hilda's is also wikkid. Finally, I would like to wish everyone the best of luck for next year; there's a cool new line-up of Sabs, so OUSU shd continue to rock.

Nick Smith

Vice-President (Graduates)

The V-P Graduates shoulders perhaps the greatest burden of University committee work of the sabbatical officers. Spying a window of opportunity with the advent of the new University structure of governance last year, my predecessor was scrupulous in securing graduate representation on as many committees as possible. Indeed, at the risk of being hyperbolic, arguably only the Vice Chancellor and Proctors sit on more committees. And now, for the first time, the President and Vice-President Graduates have been invited to attend meetings of Conference of Colleges. It has been enlightening to watch the new governance structures settle into place, and it is pleasing that graduate issues receive frequent and serious consideration at every level, and that the V-P Graduates is included in the discussions. At Educational Policy and Standards Committee, for example, I have been invited to make submissions to the graduate panel on changes to regulations for research degree examinations, the possibility of awarding distinctions for D.Phils, examination regulations for research degrees and minor corrections, and policy on disclosure of contents of supervisors' reports. As member of the Standing Committee of Tutors for Graduates Committee, I have been able to table agenda items such as library hours.

A number of significant initiatives are taking place for graduates at the University level that are worthy of mention. The new Vice-Chancellors' fund was established in Hilary term and is intended to assist D.Phil. students in the last twelve months of their research who are academically outstanding as well as in financial need. New legislation on D.Phil. referral will enable all doctoral students the opportunity to resubmit for the degree sought. University accommodation is being improved and expanded. The new University Club project continues to gather momentum. Graduate research partnerships at Princeton, provisionally organised around twelve research projects, are intended to exploit the combined resources and intellectual strengths of the two universities and will enable graduates to experience an alternative academic environment. The new Clarendon bursaries will enable 70 odd new (and current) international graduates to come to Oxford on partial or full studentships. The Ostle report on graduate provision, if its propositions are accepted and implemented in their totality, promises to change radically the landscape of graduate studies at Oxford. It will form a major agenda item on both College and University committees next year, and my successor can look forward to being invited to join in the discussions at every level. For the past two terms, the

report has been receiving preliminary consideration by EPSC and University Council, and its many (interrelated) concerns have been separated (where possible) to expedite more focused and specialist discussion. In this respect, and in the absence of a joint machinery for University-College collaboration on graduate studies within the new governance structure, the EPSC graduate panel itself will play a key role in interfacing between the Divisions, Colleges, and central administration and in co-ordinating further discussion, bearing in mind that it has been charged to report on its progress to Council in Michaelmas term. Divisions will shortly be receiving a communication from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Academic requesting information pertaining to the section of the report dealing with facilities provision within the Divisions. The report has also received initial consideration at the standing committee of the Conference of Colleges.

Postgraduate Assembly has met with mixed fortunes this year. It passed useful policy on a number of graduate issues – teaching opportunities for graduates, regulations for supervision, and opportunities for feedback on graduate provision – and minor constitution changes were made to improve the way it despatched business. It also elected two Graduate Executive officers, a position that had been difficult to fill the previous year. Initially, there seemed to be a general reluctance among graduates to volunteer to sit on University committees (crucially, all five Divisional Board positions were filled); however, those graduates who did volunteer discharged their responsibilities with enthusiasm and efficiency. In an attempt to enable more MCR officers the opportunity to shape the Postgraduate Assembly agenda to reflect their concerns I arranged an additional meeting in 3rd week. This was poorly attended, although I remain committed to the principle of the initiative. The last PA meeting was attended exclusively by MCR OUSU reps. I hope that next year will see more MCR Presidents coming to Assembly: this is the opportunity for them to ask questions of OUSU, to bring up matters of concern within their CRs for OUSU to act upon, and to contribute to discussions of the role of graduates within the University.

On the latter, the recent graduate survey will be of immense assistance. To date, 420 responses have been received. Of these responses, 95 included substantive written comments, which run to approximately 26 pages of A4 in total. The majority have been constructive, some splenetic. All, however, can be used as a basis for future action. The survey was intended to enable the Student Union to develop and target its services more effectively towards the issues that concern graduates. This would involve both an honest appraisal of our current work (campaigning on matters such as library hours, and committee discussions with University officers about accommodation, quality of supervision, increased financial aid etc) and the identification of certain desiderata within OUSU and the structures of the collegiate university that could be addressed and improved. The survey will remain online until the end of term. Thereafter, the responses will be collated and the results communicated to interested University bodies: Tutors for Graduates Committee and Educational Policy and Standards Committee. The results will also be feed into current discussions at the University level about the improvement and expansion of graduate provision within the collegiate university.

Setting the mechanisms in place that will allow more graduates the opportunity to teach has been my main priority this year. The Graduate teaching survey jointly undertaken by the Institute for the Advancement of University Learning and OUSU will provide a valuable picture of the numbers of graduates who teach, their reasons for doing so, what training and support (if any) they received, the allocation of teaching, and the pay and conditions. Work has begun on collating and analysing the data and a working party will be formed to explore possible ways of increasing opportunities for teaching by graduates and possibly integrating this teaching, underpinned by appropriate training, into postgraduate research courses. The intention is to take a costed set of proposals to EPSC in Michaelmas term. I hope that the salient points of the AUT employment charter and good practice guide will be embedded in the eventual scheme and that a two-tier system that perpetuates the current arbitrariness of graduate teaching will not emerge. This will require careful monitoring in the future.

The University's introduction of Divisional Boards has added an extra layer of graduate representation. Crucial to the effectiveness of our representation in this new area of administration is the ability of the graduate reps to be able to canvas grassroots opinion, which can be fed into discussions at Divisional Board meetings. Mindful of the fact that graduate JCC networks appear to be less developed than undergraduate JCCs I wrote recently to Divisional Secretaries asking what could be done divisionally to consolidate the Joint Consultative Committee networks. In future, it would be extremely advantageous if Divisions could identify the faculty or departmental administrators responsible for maintaining the JCC lists and co-ordinate this information centrally so that the OUSU divisional representatives may have the opportunity to consult more widely than they are able to at present. Once the basic administrative structure is in place, this information ought to be simple to maintain, and would without doubt enable the OUSU divisional representatives to interface more effectively between the senior officers and the junior members

of the Division, which is presumably one of the aspirations of the new Divisional structures. Already there have been successes. Vasan Seshadri, the Mathematical and Physical Sciences Divisional rep, submitted a proposal for a careers fair and industry interaction event, which has been approved in principle by the academic committee of the division. We are now investigating possible venues for the event and finalising and costing the proposal.

I have attempted to increase the online resources available to MCR officers. The graduate pages on the OUSU web site have been overhauled and the information on graduate rents and other charges up-dated. The success of the latter has been largely contingent on the number of returns I received, and I hope that at some stage the list of rents will be as comprehensive as it is for undergraduates. The 'Memorandum of Guidance for Supervisors and Research Students' has been rescued from the depths of the *Examination Decrees* and put online, as has the successful *Graduate Guide*. I visited a number of graduate common rooms at the beginning of the year to introduce OUSU and its services to graduate freshers, and I organised a drinks event at the University Club for new graduates. These types of outreach are just two examples of our concern to maintain conspicuous and constructive links with our constituent organisations.

Student Unionism can be a rewarding occupation (pardon the pun) although it is inevitably under continuous assault from 'without' (at the risk of perpetuating the fallacy of OUSU's evil cliquishness). I do not propose to dwell on the election for V-P Graduates. I never expected, however, that it would become the site of such fervid contestation and be hijacked, as it seemed at the time, by 'political zealots' 'who resign the use of their own eyes and ears, and resolve to believe nothing that does not favour those whom they profess to follow' (Samuel Johnson, *Idler* 10, June 17, 1758). In the face of unrelenting opposition, it seems at times that we strive simply to maintain the status quo:

So the boat's brawny crew the current stem,
And, slow advancing, struggle with the stream:
But, if they slack their hands, or cease to strive,
Then down the flood with headlong haste they drive. (Dryden's *Georgics*)

What is noteworthy is that OUSU's most vociferous critics are the ones who seem least prepared to play a constructive role in precipitating change. While it is indeed right that OUSU should be transparent, accountable, and open to challenge through its legitimate democratic structures, gratuitously divisive criticisms based on a priori assumptions, promulgating as they often do the absurd and offensive notion that OUSU's officers simply sit in their offices conspiring to make life worse for students, militate against constructive dialogue and discredit any underlying serious point.

Miscellaneous and indigested observations over, it remains only for me to thank all those who have supported me throughout the year. I couldn't have hoped for a more amiable and open-minded set of colleagues with whom to work. At the risk of lapsing into the gushing, emotional idiom more commonly associated with the Union term card, I would like to pay tribute to Kirsty, Rhodri, Steph, Jane, Tony, and Tom. People have only an imperfect idea of how much time, effort and commitment they put into helping students at this University, and they deserve so much more credit than they are given. Without wishing to tar them all with the same brush, as time has gone on there has been a disquieting tendency among them to indulge in delinquent antics of which I have often had to bear the brunt. Nevertheless, I wish them all the best for the future. Annily has proved to be a wonderful student advisor and a great asset to the team. I am grateful to the two graduate executive officers, Jen Jackson and Catherine Sangster, for their help with the graduate survey, and I would like to take the opportunity to wish Catherine every success when she takes up the mantle of V-P Graduates in September. I am confident that she will do a superb job. I am grateful also to the graduates who have assisted with me with University and Divisional committee work, and the MCR Officers who have continued to show their confidence in OUSU. My thanks also to Maria and the other members of the office staff who provide the sabs with such essential administrative support (and much more) – and always with a smile. I look forward to welcoming Ruth, Eleanor, James, Antonia, John, and Colin in 9th week.

Rhodri Thomas

Vice-President (Access and Academic Affairs)

The past year has gone amazingly quickly and it's quite strange to think that this is my final report to OUSU Council. It's also the 40th Council I've attended - this equates into about an entire week of my life... However, getting involved

in OUSU and finally being a sabbatical is one of the most rewarding things that I've done. It has at times been extremely stressful and tiring but the support of my fellow sabbatical officers and the excellent volunteers who I've worked with has made it all worthwhile.

The main objective of this year was to justify the creation of the position of Vice-President (Access and Academic Affairs). I believe that this has been achieved. On a wide range of issues I believe have shown that Access and Academic Affairs need a full time sabbatical officer and that these issues can only be tackled properly with a full time officer.

This has been a good year for OUSU - on a whole range of issues the sabbatical team has produced results. It is worth remembering all that has happened this year - the appointment of a professional student adviser, the Nightbus, the Living Out Guide, the Library Campaign, Divinity I and II, a reinvigorated fees campaign, more professional publications than ever before etc. There remains a great deal more to do but I'm confident that next years sabbatical are more than up to the job.

Access

Target Schools

Target Schools has had its most successful year to date, and I am extremely proud of the success that the scheme has had this year. I have also been blessed with a tremendous team who have worked phenomenally hard throughout the year. We have organised three Open Days which will have been attended by over 500 prospective students. The regional events were a new initiative, and although a lot of work to organise, are definitely worth continuing in the future. They were attended by over 400 students and attracted a lot of local and regional press attention. We have also organised numerous school visits to Oxford that means that over 1,000 students will have attended Target Schools events this year.

The quality of the Handbooks both in terms of content and presentation was also dramatically improved and very favourable feedback was received from schools and Further Education colleges. Copies of the Handbooks were sent to every state school and FE College in the country in just four hours thanks to the help of volunteers - a record achievement.

The operation of the Visiting Scheme was also improved. Volunteers were given more information than in the past and we also organised a training event attended by over 100 students. Further improvements for the Visiting Scheme have identified which hopefully will be implemented next year. However, even without these changes around 600-800 schools received visits this year.

The website has also been improved thanks to the work of our Web Manager. The collection of subject interview reports has proved to be extremely helpful to prospective students and have helped to break down some of the myths that exist about the interview process. Further improvements to the website have been identified and hopefully these can be implemented over the summer. I believe that the website will become one of the main vehicles for reaching out to schools and prospective students.

Other stuff: I also organised a conference in Cardiff over the summer attended by over 200 students, helped find volunteers for Admissions Office events, provided support to JCR Admissions Officers and spoken to dozens of prospective students.

Mentoring

The establishment of the National Mentoring Pilot Project in Oxford took up a considerable amount of time and effort throughout this year. However, now that the project is up and running, with just a few small teething problems left to resolve, I would say that this is one of the best things that I've done this year. There are 58 students engaged in mentoring 3-4 students aged 11-13 in the Blackbird Lees Education Action Zone. This is a long term project, and hopefully continued government funding will enable the scheme to be expanded to include more Oxford students. It is excellent achievement that this year links between the Student Union and the local community have been formed in many different areas.

Admissions Policy

There were two major policy developments this year - the Education Select Committee and the Admissions Working Party. I prepared the OUSU submission to the House of Commons Education Select Committee and from the feedback received from MPs our input was welcomed. A number of the recommendations in the OUSU report were part of the final Select Committee Report. It will now be the responsibility of John Craig to ensure that the University takes action on these issues.

Our policy on admissions and access was completely rewritten following the Admissions Working Party. The AWP met over several weeks and discussed a large number of new and controversial issues such as ending applications to colleges, introducing SAT tests and quotas and targets. Council accepted the final report and OUSU now has clear and up to date policies on access and admissions.

In the last two weeks I have written a joint report on access with the Oxford Access Scheme (based largely on the AWP Report) which has been submitted to the Admissions Executive and will be discussed in 7th Week.

Press

We have also been successful in promoting Oxford in our relations with the national and local press. The Submission to the Education Select Committee attracted coverage in the *Times* and I was a guest on the Today programme. The regional events attracted significant press attention especially in Belfast. I have spoken to numerous reporters from the national and international media and have hopefully managed to promote a more accurate image than the press reporting during the Laura Spence affair. I even had the indignantly of being quoted in one paper as the Vice-President of the NUS.

University Relations

Relations between OUSU and the Admissions Office have been strengthened considerably over the past year. The Admissions Office has been great and has provided Target Schools with a lot of help and support. We have also received extra financial support this year - a £1000 grant when we needed more Handbooks and an increase of £1,300 in our yearly grant. Hopefully the increased financial support will be continued next year. We have also provided the Admissions Office with help - providing volunteers for events and the publicity our events have generated.

I have attended the Conference of Colleges Admissions Executive as the OUSU Representative. The Committee has done a lot of good work some of which will be seen in the coming months. However, in the future there should be a greater focus on policy issues and in a number of areas the University is more than open to allegations of bias in its admissions system.

Academic Affairs

Academic Affairs Committee

The Academic Affairs Committee has continued to grow this year. The Committee run one of the most successful campaigns in recent OUSU history (the library campaign - this will be dealt with later) and the preparation work for a major campaign on student rights will be undertaken over the summer. Welfare training for JCR Academic Affairs Officers and others involved in welfare provision in colleges was organised and positive feedback was received. There is a need to increase the training offered to JCR Reps especially in Michaelmas Term and this is something that I should have looked at more carefully. Increased publicity for JCR AA Reps has also been produced. The Campaign Resource Pack was improved and from visiting colleges in Oxford it has been used by many of the Reps to advertise their position, surgeries and the issues they can help students with. Perhaps more of the budget should be spent on this next year.

The Committee has begun working on a Student Charter campaign for next term. We spent Trinity term collecting information from colleges. In Michaelmas the Committee will aim to help JCRs improve the academic rights granted to students but also campaign for the University to improve the academic rights they can offer students. Separating college and university issues is the only way that any real progress can be made. As with Target Schools I have been blessed with excellent Co-Chairs and Exec Officers throughout this year.

I have also produced a website for Academic Affairs Committee that provides on-line resources for JCR Officers, JCC Reps and ordinary students.

Academic Affairs Handbook

A new and improved Academic Affairs Handbook was produced over the summer and I hope that JCR Officers and JCC Reps have found the Handbook useful. The 2001-2002 Handbook will be produced over the summer and more information on Divisional Board Representatives will be included.

JCC Reps

More support and help was provided to JCC Reps this year than ever before. A whole host of new initiatives for next year are in the pipeline that will hopefully raise the profile of JCC Reps in the University and enable OUSU to provide more support to subject reps. Getting the names of all JCC Reps took up far more time than it should have.

Tutorial Feedback Forms

I spent a lot of time on tutorial feedback forms this year. The postcards and posters (featuring the Nutty Professor and Austin Powers) were excellent thanks to Steph and JCR Reps found the publicity an excellent way of raising the profile of tutorial feedback forms in their college and encouraging people to complete and return them. I have also produced a paper on how tutorial feedback forms can be improved which has been sent to all JCRs. The matter has also been raised by the Chair of the Senior Tutor's Committee.

The Library Campaign

The campaign to stop the Bodleian from closing at 7 from October 2001 was one of the most successful and high profile campaigns that OUSU has run. The publicity was bold and eye catching and thousands of postcards were returned to Professor Slack the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Services and University Collections). A great deal of work went into the campaign and nearly all of Michaelmas was spent consulting JCR Academic Affairs Officers and preparing publicity material and strategies for targeting students and common rooms.

The sample motion that was produced by OUSU was passed in 27 JCRs and 19 MCRs. I doubt any OUSU motion has ever before been passed in so many JCRs and MCRs. While no final decision has yet been taken it is highly unlikely that there will be reduced opening hours next year. Indeed, this term we have seen extended weekend opening hours and a reduction in photocopying costs. Again, thanks must go to Steph not just for increasing our budget and making this campaign possible but for technical and creative advice. The only regret is that I never got to use the extremely rude posters that were produced for this campaign...

Welfare Casework

The actual number of welfare cases I have dealt with have been small in actual number - just over 40. However, while some of the cases took a matter of minutes others were extremely difficult and took a considerable amount of time to resolve or find the necessary information. The appointment of the Student Adviser undoubtedly has made my position easier. I have also helped JCR Academic Affairs Officers on a number of college welfare cases.

University Relations

I sit on a large number of University Committees. The most important is Education Policy Standards Committee (EPSC). The Committee takes up a lot of time (probably just under a day every two weeks) but has discussed some important issues to both graduates and undergraduates. I have also met with Dr. Black the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) who has been genuinely helpful and always ready to take the views of students seriously. I have also attended the Curators of the University Libraries Committee, the Bodleian Sub-Committee and the Libraries Users Group. The Libraries in Oxford are under severe financial pressure but a number of improvements in service provision has been made - reduced photocopying charges, weekend opening in Trinity and the slow introduction of automated stack ordering. The work on University Committees takes up a great deal of time and often the things achieved by sabbatical officers are small issues not covered by the student press. However, the work on these committees is crucial both to student representation and to arguing the case for students. While this work is largely invisible it is of crucial importance.

Manifesto:

These were my main manifesto ideas:

1. **Third Target Schools Open Day**
Done - Christ Church, New, St Peter's
2. **Cheaper, Faster Photocopying in the Bod**
Done - self service photocopying introduced, prices reduced in Trinity

3. **Order stack books through OLIS**
Done - being introduced gradually across all University libraries
4. **Develop study skills for all students**
Done - Report being presented to EPSC - study skills section on the OUSU website
5. **Weekend Opening Of the Bod**
Secured weekend opening during Trinity - stopped Bod from reducing opening hours
6. **School Support Scheme**
Done - assessment being carried out over the summer also launched Mentoring Project providing support to schools in Blackbird Lees EAZ.

I think that this is a good record and while some of the things were in the university pipeline already I have argued and lobbied successfully for changes such as weekend opening in Trinity and reduced photocopying charges.

Thanks

There are many people who have contributed to the work of OUSU and who have helped me who deserve thanks, so here goes:

All of the other sabs plus Tom - I think we were the first proper sabbatical team in OUSU history - we've had a good year. Kirsty - for being a friend and for listening - here's to London. Steph for doing so much of the work behind the scenes and for being the best VP OUSU has had. Nick I think I won the war - cellotape, summons, hole punch, shirt etc...! Jane for being fun and prepared to take risks - the files are still on the server! Tony for being happy despite having to deal with the unhappy people. Tom for always smiling and for cruising in the OUSU van! It has been a pleasure working with all of the sabbaticals and while nobody becomes a sabbatical for thanks they have all worked tremendously hard to promote the interests of students in this University. Maria for being so much more than an office manager and for keeping the show on the road. Annily for making my life much easier. Sonia for being the most hardworking Exec Officer I've seen and for being so supportive - it will be repaid in full I promise. The Target Schools Co-Chairs - Clare, Colette, Tom M and Tom W for being a great bunch of people. The Academic Affairs Co-Chairs and Exec Officer - John Craig, Nicholas Cole, Abigail Coates, (the nicest person in the world) Sonia Sodha, Stuart Hudson and Karim Palant. Josh for creating my position. My campaign managers - Julia and Jenny for working so hard to get me here. Katherine and Jonathan for starting it all and OULC for keeping it going. Rachel for being my constant political ally and friend. Steve for still being super. Finally to my friends, especially those in Anne's, for freezing themselves for a day to get me here. John for putting himself through all of this - you'll be a great VP and I'm only a phone call away. Good luck to Ruth (you'll do an excellent job) and all the other sabbaticals.

<p>Tom Mackrell Business Manager</p>

That was the year that was....

My job over the last year has been to secure advertising revenue for OUSU's publications, in order to fund the entirety of the welfare, service provision and campaigning side of the Student Union. Without this money, OUSU would simply cease to exist. Rather than a chronological account of the year, I thought I'd write a brief word about how each of them performed.

The Oxford and Cambridge Careers Handbook

OUSU's most important publication by a distance, we made a profit of £50,000 on this year's edition, which pays for an awful lot of services etc. It took a lot of hard work by a lot of people to make it happen, and plenty of lessons have been learnt to make the production of this year's far, far easier. Arguably it's greatest success was it's successful distribution in 3rd week, in what was possibly the most impressive logistical exercise ever attempted within the Oxford. If you were a second or third year and you have a pigeon hole, then you got your copy, and that fact is very valuable indeed in terms of advertising revenue.

Canvassing for this year's edition is well under way and already the effects of a slight slowing of the economy are being felt. I very much doubt last year's profits will be matched this year, which all of next year's team must be very aware of. OUSU is so very dependent on the Graduate Recruitment market that a serious downturn could spell disaster as there is no obvious replacement as the major source of income. The Careers Handbook will always be a

fantastic resource for students, but it will take a lot of hard work to maintain its vital position as the main prop of OUSU's finances.

The Oxford Student newspaper

The Oxford Student this year has been so good as to be awe –inspiring. When you can happily send off copies to advertisers knowing they will be simply desperate to feature in it because of its quality alone, then life is very easy for a Business Manager. The paper took more advertising revenue in Michaelmas term than it ever has previously in an entire year and the overall profit has proved another vital part of OUSU's finances. However, this rosy view should be tempered with the knowledge that it is the Graduate Recruiters once again who are responsible for 95% of the OxStu's advertising revenue, and should anything happen to this market, the repercussions would be quite devastating. However the paper is now firmly established as Oxford's premier student newspaper and the infrastructure is now in place to stay that way for a very long time indeed.

The Freshers Guide

In terms of publications seeking mainly local advertising, the Freshers Guide is by far the easiest to sell and the handsome profit made by last year's is testimony to this. All advertisers want is evidence that it really did get posted to the home addresses of the Freshers before they came up and they're happy. Once again, it was a fairly major logistical exercise, but they all got posted as far afield as Uganda and Nepal and there is no reason why this year's edition shouldn't build on this success. Although the early dotcom rush is well and truly over, several regular advertisers are beginning to establish themselves more permanently and we should be able to look forward to a steady income stream from these in the future.

The Oxford Handbook

This year's Oxford Handbook is by a distance the best ever written, which makes it a shame that it was the only one of our publications we had any real production difficulties with. Arriving back from the printers in third week meant it missed the vital first two weeks of term to be picked up from the OUSU shop and has never really caught up. In terms of advertising revenue however, it remains a strong brand, and although unable to compete with the Freshers Guide, there is no reason why it shouldn't be able to hold its own over coming years.

Freshers Fair

As an organisational nightmare, Freshers Fair can have few equals, but thanks to a lot of hard work by a lot of people, this year's was a great success. The introduction of the marquee in the Exam Schools quad increased the area available for commercial stalls making this also the most profitable Freshers Fair ever. This looks set to become a permanent fixture, and this year we will be reversing the people-flow through exam schools so they exit through the marquee. This will allow us to book stalls offering food and drink freebies for the first time, which should further enhance the experience of the fair and increase profitability.

Term Diary and Term Planner

Outside of Milkround time, it has proved difficult to secure enough advertising to cover the costs of these publications. For this reason, the Term Diary will not be produced next year and efforts can be concentrated on the Term Planner, which feedback tells us is more popular with students and advertisers alike. Great efforts have been made with the distribution of both publications this year, which I hope students will appreciate. However, there is still a lot of opposition from many porters to pigeon holing them, and if anyone has any advice on how best to circumvent this, I would be very eager to hear it.

Other publications

The main aim for the majority of OUSU's other publications is merely to cover printing costs through advertising revenue and this has largely been successful. The Graduate Guide, the LGBT Handbook, Welfare Handbook, Careers for Queers and many others were all successfully produced and are excellent services for students without being a massive burden on OUSU's finances. There is no reason why this shouldn't continue to be the case in the future and

with the talented team of Assistant Business Managers appointed for the summer vacation they could well turn a profit this time around.

The future

As I have mentioned several times earlier in this report, we cannot take our current strong commercial position for granted. Relying so very much as we do on the large city graduate recruiters for our income is not ideal, but we have very little alternative. Without a central student venue we will never be in a position to make money in the traditional ways of all other Student Unions, so until we have this OUSU's long term financial future can never be secure. For this reason, the acquisition of one should remain the long term goal of next year's Sabbatical team and indeed the next and the next. With the economy still relatively buoyant, the short term future is not too much of a worry, but the long term is worryingly unknown.

My thanks

Coming to work in OUSU as an outsider was always a little nerve wracking, but I can happily say that this year has been both my most enjoyable and most usefully productive in Oxford (my contributions to modern historical thought over the previous three years having hardly set the world alight) and I owe a great many people many thanks for this.

Firstly thanks to all my friends at Wadham for putting up with me babbling OUSU at them the whole time, especially Steve and Alex for being wonderful housemates and the whole of B4 for letting me live there most of the time. A special thanks to Steve for his work as the unseen logistical arm of OUSU and being so very useful. Thanks to Aneen and the rest of Wadham SU for doing such an amazing job and making a sad old President very proud. Many, many thanks to Wadham Ladies cricket club, especially Francesca, Hannah and El, for making this term simply the best ever.

And of course, thanks to everyone at OUSU, you are simply the best bunch of people ever to work at 28 Little Clarendon Street. Kirsty, Steph, Tony, Jane, Rhodri and Nick, you have made my year and I will never forget it. Thanks to Maria for being so amazingly lovely and to the rest of the staff for doing all the work I never get around to doing. Thanks to everyone on exec for brightening up the office, especially Sonia who probably works more hours than me!

Finally, and most importantly, I must give special thanks to Steph whose technical wizardry, amazing design skills, and dedication to his job have made me look so much better than I am. He is without doubt the greatest Sab that OUSU has ever had and probably ever will. He is probably also the nicest guy I have ever met, and it has been an honour and a pleasure to work with him. Cheers mate.

OUSU Executive Officers

Stuart Hudson

My portfolios in my first term on the Executive have given me the opportunity to help promote OUSU's work and its profile in a variety of areas. The major obligation on my time has been our press relations. This consists of writing press releases on a weekly basis to publicise OUSU's work on everything from the launch of the OUSU Goldman-Sachs Nightbus to the response to Oriel JCR's decision to disaffiliate. We have therefore continued to get regular positive exposure in the student newspapers as well as the Oxford Mail, Fox FM and BBC Radio Oxford and BBC News Online. Our media profile was at its highest during the David Irving saga when newspaper and television interest was strong. OUSU was in full support of the campaign to have the invitation to Irving rescinded by Amy Harland. While Kirsty concentrated on working with student groups to make Ms Harland take into account our fears about safety, I was able to keep the press fully informed of our work and consequently our aims received newspaper support particularly from The Guardian. In a new initiative, copies of my press releases are also now posted on the OUSU website. This has all helped to extend OUSU's profile and to bring to the attention of students the excellent work done by the sabbaticals, Exec members and officers. Adherence by colleges to the Van Noorden Index may make Battels appear at first sight an issue about which students need not feel much concern. However discrepancies between college rents are substantial and Colin Anderson, the previous Exec officer, has produced an extensive report on this. Work will continue over the Summer to make sure that this information is available to students in Michaelmas. Academic Affairs Committee has continued to meet regularly and has had some notable achievements. Our campaign to ensure the rejection of proposals to cut the Bodleian Library's opening hours was a great success. Early in the term we learned that it will now remain open at the usual hours into the next academic year. A questionnaire was sent out to all Academic Affairs Reps and Joint Consultative Committee Reps to collect information on academic issues within colleges and on future steps that OUSU can take. The questionnaires are now being returned and the information is being collated. Work is also getting underway on the new Academic Affairs Handbook and this will be a major project over the Long Vac. Finally in our last committee meeting of the term, for the first time a full quota of people were elected to serve as student reps on faculty Divisional Boards. This is an important step forward in guaranteeing undergraduate representation on boards which have a crucial influence on academic affairs across the whole range of subjects studied at Oxford. The bulk of the work done by the Academic Affairs Committee has been down to the leadership and support provided by Rhodri throughout the course of the year and also to the excellent co-chairs, Sonia Sodha, Karim Palant and Michael Bradfield. The above portfolios have allowed me, in my first term on Exec, to play a considerable role in issues which have a great impact on the welfare of Oxford students and on how OUSU's work is presented and publicised. I am extremely grateful to Council for having given me this opportunity and I have worked to the best of my ability. However I was extremely fortunate to have worked with a group of such dedicated sabbatical and Executive officers, especially Kirsty who has provided inspirational leadership during the course of the year.

Heenal Rajani

My second term on Exec has been quieter than my first. I have worked on the Target Schools and Alternative Prospectus web sites (cunningly found at targetschools.com and alternativeprospectus.com) and have worked with Future Outlook on plans for the careers' fair next term.

Vivienne Raper

The wheels of activity have ground into action this term. Things are up in the air, and in the pipeline (excusing the mixed metaphors for a moment). There is nothing concrete to show as yet, but many rolling stones, so watch this space.

One World has really activated this term in a big way. We started with a What OUSU can do for you? leafleting campaign to draw the attention of One Worldy type groups to the existence of the committee, since this seemed to be the main problem causing us to be under utilised. I've attended most (if not all) of the One World Group meetings at 13 Bevington Road since I took over the committee as executive, and have posted on the One World Group mailing list. Everyone seems to be aware of us now and I have managed to have several meetings where 5 people have managed to be present all at the same time, which is completely unprecedented. Our main project is the long-dreamt-

of One World Group joint term card, which has been through various incarnations and is now more of a Freshers One World Group leaflet with term card bits. This should, hopefully, be being produced over the vacation and distributed at Freshers Fair. If anyone is involved in a One World Group who isn't aware of this and wants to be involved, please get in touch. A brief thanks to everyone involved in One World stuff in Oxford, especially Tom, Catherine and Ed. You have been spectacular!

An Accommodation Committee mailing list has been set up despite the valiant attempts of the e-mail account to stop us doing so. I've been in touch with Kate Davenport and have tried to get ideas for activities for the committee from college reps to which I've had a quality rather than quantity response (2 replies). I'm hoping to collate them (all) and produce some kind of report so that we can decide how the committee can best serve JCRs. Once again, if you're a college rep dealing with accommodation or anyone with an interest in accommodation issues and have any ideas of where we can take the committee, please do contact me.

Careers: I had this committee at the beginning of term and I've carried on being involved. It coordinates with Future Outlook, the alternative careers fair, and I'm currently checking the e-mail account and trying to liaise with the student unions of other universities.

Health and Welfare: Due to shifting portfolios mid-term, I'm something of a latecomer to this committee. However, I've been to one meeting so far and contributed some ideas.

People I'd like to thank

Oxford has been the dynamic, exciting and challenging place that it always is this term, but slightly stressful at times due to personal reasons. Thanks go to the Oxford political community, in general, who have been great and supportive on several counts, respecting me for the most part even if they don't necessarily agree with the choices I've made. I hope that I can continue to work with comrades old and new in the future. Special thanks go to my mother for her spirited and frank discussions about immigration in Britain and, once again, to the budgie for its vocal contributions to the whole debate. Also to Adam, your friendship is priceless, you are my inspiration and my strength; I can say only one thing - Flocinocinihilipilification. To my mad compatriots for bathtubs and to everyone in my house (particularly Susan, to whom I owe my new mantra chilli powder with everything (apart from celery)) for putting up with me irritating them in the kitchen at strange times, especially all those to whom I have described my dissertation project (in long, graphic detail). Excuse my mortal failings; after all, although faith (and, indeed, Australian bauxite mining companies) can move mountains, it is rare that you have the chance to do so as a second year undergraduate. Finally, a short dedication to Teresa, a loyal friend who was too good for the world and so could not bear to remain; even though you are no longer with me, you will live forever in my soul.

Vinothan Sangarapillai

This term, I have been responsible for two committees - OUSU reps and NUS reps as well as having nominal executive responsibility for the NightBus.

OUSU reps meetings have been held in 2nd wk and 4th wk this term. At the first meeting, Ben Newton (the Chair of Ethics Cttee) addressed us on OUSU's "Not in Our Names" campaign, which aims to stop colleges investing in firms which are involved in the arms trade. It was a good chance for OUSU reps to get to know one of the aspects of OUSU's work which may not be immediately obvious to all students.

The 4th wk meeting included a talk on Target Schools. Tom Morran told us about the activities the committee does in an attempt to try and ensure that a more representative cross-section of the population applies to Oxford.

As far as the NUS is concerned, the highlight of the NUS year was Conference - which took place over Easter. It gave about 20 NUS reps from affiliated colleges the chance to go to Blackpool and to take part in the democratic mechanisms of the NUS.

NUS reps committee met in the Turf this term on every second Thursday at 6:30pm and there was also a joint OUSU/NUS social there in 5th wk.

For next year, if current NUS or OUSU reps are stepping down, it would be good if their successors could get in touch with OUSU so that we know who they are and can make contact with them.

As far as the NightBus is concerned, Jane has been doing the necessary hard work and so it has not been necessary for me to do anything.

So far, it has been a rewarding two terms working on OUSU exec and I wish Council all the best for the holidays and look forward to seeing you once more in Michaelmas.

Catherine Sangster

As Graduate Officer, I have attended all but one Exec meetings and all OUSU Councils. With Nick Smith and Jen Jackson, I have worked on various issues affecting graduate students. Central to this term's progress has been the

graduate survey, which was put on-line with the help of Steph Gray and which is yielding a good deal of useful information about graduate students and (among other things) their relationship with OUSU. I also attended the termly Postgraduate Assembly.

I hold the Queer Rights portfolio, and have been at all their meetings, working with co-chairs Catherine Wallis and Peter Orlov. Key achievements of this committee this term have been the informal evening debates and the constitutional amendment motion concerning the definition of women; I was closely involved with both of these initiatives.

Sonia Sodha

Target Schools

This term has seemed relatively quiet after the madness of last term! The Christ Church Open Day which was on Monday of 9th week last term went really well, as did the New College Open Day in 5th week of this term (apart from an ice cream glut!). Everything is on track for the St Peters Open Day on Monday of 9th week this term.

This year was the first in which we held Regional Events rather than a regional tour. These took place over the Easter vac at the Belfast Waterfront Hall and the Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds. The feedback we received from schools was excellent. I would recommend holding these in future years rather than the tour as they have a greater potential outreach than the tour (we could invite more schools) and they gave a very professional image. They were also very effective at capturing media attention; we received good coverage, especially in Belfast.

This term, Target Schools has also produced a newsletter which will be sent to college academic offices, JCRs and to the university admissions office; its aim is to improve the profile of Target Schools and what it does throughout the university.

Thank you to everyone who has helped with Target Schools events over the past year this makes a real difference. A massive thank you must go to the co-chairs, Colette, Tom W, Tom M and Clare, who have been brilliant to work with, and one of the reasons why my time on exec has been so fun! And HUGE thanks to Rhodri, who is one of the most hardworking, dedicated and efficient people I know OUSU wont be the same without you!

Anti-racism

I took over this portfolio at the start of this term. We held an anti-racism lunch in fourth week to brainstorm this was very well attended and a lot came out of it. The committee has started to plan a discrimination awareness raising campaign for the start of next term, and has also been brainstorming about the possibility of a Diversity Week next year. By the end of this term, the sabs/exec/co-chairs from the relevant committees should have met to discuss this prospect. Thanks to Tony, Sacha and Rebecca.

Mature Students

Unfortunately it has been difficult to find mature students willing to take on the committee. We have drafted a mature students questionnaire which we feel it would be better to put out next term when we may have some more interest from freshers.

Academic Affairs (co-chair report)

This has been more of a planning rather than an active campaigning term for Academic Affairs committee. We have sent out questionnaires about academic practice at each college in order to collate information now that we have started to gain an idea about what academic practice in each college is like we hope to coordinate a campaign for a Student Charter next term.

This term has also seen an initiative to try and increase JCC involvement. There was a mailing to all JCC reps this term and we created lists of JCC reps for each college Academic Affairs officer. This will be continued next term, hopefully with a training session for incoming JCC reps. Thanks to Stuart, Karim and Michael.

Thanks also to all the outgoing sabbaticals, who have been great to work with over the past year, and to Maria and the other OUSU office staff.

Sean Sullivan

Finance and Funding - this has been a highly active and dedicated committee. Details of what it has been up to can be found in the report of its co-chairs. It is impressive that a concerted campaign for grants not fees has been maintained. A large number of people have been attending our meetings and the co-chairs are brilliant. Their industriousness and commitment put others to shame. Due to pressure brought by the committee funding has been made a real issue in the election campaign in Oxford West and Abingdon. Plans are already in place to make sure things get off to a strong start in Michelmas.

My other portfolios have concerned the OUSU shop and Clubs and Societies. I hope that I can find the time to assist more with these next term. That said I have spent a number of pleasurable occasions serving in the OUSU shop. I have attended my duty afternoons and my relationship with the photocopier is improving. I have enjoyed wonderfully short exec meetings and councils. I am glad to see a decline in leftist activism within both these bodies. Indeed the current members of exec are most civilised and members of council now seem wary about putting motions calling for solidarity with random striking workers. I'm glad that OUSU can now be argued to be more relevant to students and this should continue for fear of further disaffiliations, a real threat to our student union. I wish the departing sabs well with whatever they are going on to do and hope in vain that next term we shall be living under a Conservative government.

Eleanor Thompson

Having become an Exec Officer in the by-elections held in Council at the end of last term, I've been allocated Secretary, Mentoring and Ethics Committee as my portfolios: As Secretary, I've regularly taken and written up minutes in Exec. I will also have minuted two OUSU Councils, a challenge in anybody's terms. The mentoring scheme is being piloted in Oxford, amongst other places, and this term the first University students will be helping secondary school pupils. I have helped the VP-Academic Affairs in photocopying for the scheme. Ethics Committee continues to be active, due to the enthusiasm and commitment of the two co-chairs, Tom Harrison and Ben Newton, both of whom are retiring this term. No advertising ban has been referred to the Committee this term, and so their efforts have been consumed by the 'Not In Our Names' campaign promoting ethical investment in the College and University. I helped with the organisation and publicity of the die in protest on Monday of First Week, designed to coincide with an Ethical Investment motion being put to Hebdominal Council, and latterly with a speaker event on the difficulties of investment in Burma in Sixth Week.

OUSU Committees

Anti-Racism

Anti-Racism Committee has, after a year of virtual dormance, returned to life. Before the second half of this term, the committee's only visible achievements this year had been the final publication of the Anti-Racism Handbook and the organisation of a very successful Holocaust Memorial Day event in co-operation with Jewish Society and others. This term, however, we have substantially increased the involvement of JCR representatives, organised the biggest ever Oxford delegation to NUS Black Students' Conference, begun work on an awareness raising campaign, and co-operated with the Access Scheme on the publication of the next Access prospectus, as well as developing a number of plans for next year, including a week of meetings and events centered around the theme of liberation and organised in co-operation with Women's and Queer Rights Committees. We will also be working to ensure the every JCR has someone on its committee well-placed to combat racism and deal with the concerns of ethnic minority students. A large number of people have expressed interest in becoming Co-Chairs, and the future of the committee looks bright.

Disabilities Action

After the previous co-chairs had to step down due to finals (hope they all went well!), the group had been dormant for about a term. As a result, the activity of the group this term has mainly been focused on preparatory work in order that students with disabilities will be able to enjoy as much support as possible from the student union from the very beginning of the next academic year.

By the end of this term, the list of college co-ordinators for assisting with students with disabilities will be completed, ready for publication in the first ever Disabilities Action handbook which will be compiled over the summer, ready to go out to any prospective or current students who might wish to use it.

In addition, a notice mentioning the work that the group does went out this term in the university newsletter for students with disabilities, which will hopefully allow more students to become involved in running the group and in having their say about what it should be focusing on.

Most encouragingly of all, the group has been able to offer assistance to attempts to set up a support network for dyslexic students. The planning meeting to decide what such a support network should focus on will be held on Monday of 8th week in the Rainold room, Corpus Christi at 6pm.

In terms of the development of the group, the handbook will obviously be a massively important resource, providing information for students with disabilities, college welfare officers, and anyone else interested in the area. In the longer

term, the aim of the group continues to be to raise awareness about the challenges facing the university in ensuring that students with disabilities of whatever kind are not discriminated against, and to provide a social and support network where students with disabilities can meet, discuss experiences and use the group to provide for their needs. If anyone wants to become involved in helping with this (we could do with at least one more co-chair!), please contact daniel.paskins@magdalen.ox.ac.uk

Thanks to Alex Larg, the unfailingly helpful University Disability Adviser, to James for offering excellent advice about what the group should be working on, to Tony, to Maria (whom no one can ever thank enough!) and above all to Regan for being an absolute star in helping with all the work that the group has been doing this term.

Dan Paskins (Magdalen) Co-chair

Ethics

Ethics Committee has had a productive year. Following the reports submitted to Council on Life and on Lonely Planet Publications there have been no further referrals to the committee since Hilary Term. This has allowed the committee to devote its time to the Not In Our Names! campaign for ethical investment of college and university funds.

The momentum created by press coverage of college arms shareholdings in Hilary Term was maintained at the start of Trinity Term with a protest on High Street which drew front page coverage from the student press. This event coincided with Kirsty McNeill presenting an ethical investment proposal to the university. The two well attended speaker events which Ethics Committee has held have made many students aware of the problems with colleges investing in arms companies and in those companies doing business in Burma.

People are becoming aware of the potential for change in their colleges, and we are witnessing steady progress. We are continually learning of JCRs which have passed ethical investment motions, and we anticipate that around two-thirds of college JCRs will have ethical bank accounts by the end of 2001. Many JCRs have initiated dialogue with their SCR's, and colleges in which progress is being made on this front include Balliol, Somerville, Jesus, Wadham and St. Hilda's.

We wish to thank Eleanor Thompson for the extra energy and enthusiasm she has brought to the campaign in Trinity Term, Kirsty McNeill for her support and hard work, and all those who attended the 1st week protest, the speaker meetings or have implemented the campaign in their colleges. It has been encouraging to see the response the campaign has received, and we are confident that the newly appointed co-chair, Jung-ui Sul, will be able to take it forward over the coming year.

Ben Newton (Jesus) and Tom Harrison (St. Hugh's), co-chairs.

Finance and Funding

This year has been one of the F&F campaign's most successful years with the highlight being the ruling out of Top-Up Fees by all major parties, with promises from Labour and the Liberal Democrats of legislation to back it up.

In Oxford the focus has been on non-payment with 70 individuals choosing to take such measures at the start of the year. Freshers were also brought into the campaign through the introduction of gold ribbons for matriculation, an initiative which dominated much of the press coverage in Hilary Term. In November a delegation of 150 Oxford students, including many first years, set off for London for the NUS' historic march against Top-Up Fees, with many enjoying the Roni Size concert which followed.

The spring saw much protest in Oxford as the situation for non-payers worsened. Gold naked men, silent protests and ultimately the occupation of the Great Divinity School in the Boolean all signalled the campaign's support for those who attempt to highlight the inequity of the Government's policy by withholding payment of their fees. A successful march marked the end of a successful term.

Trinity has been more low-key in terms of protest but just as busy. Over 1200 signatures have been collected for a petition which signals students disquiet with both tuition fees and the University's treatment of non-payment. Collections have been made and the collective rather than the individual have paid virtually all fines resulting from occupation. Next year plans are afoot to get many more freshers into the campaign with a shift in focus towards co-operation with the University and colleges to outline the failure of the Labour Government's policy.

One World

We spent most of Michaelmas finishing the OUSU One World Handbook 2001, which we had started to produce in Trinity of last year. Thanks to Sarah and Ben, the ex-co-chair and ex-exec who helped to produce it and especially to Steph, who did masses of the work we should have been doing ourselves but were too incompetent. Thanks also to everyone who contributed articles to it, they're all fantastic!

In Hilary we gained a new co-chair, Ed, and exec, Viv. Together we learnt how to use QuarkXPress for ourselves (so that we wouldn't need to pester Steph so much) and had great fun advertising and distributing the Handbooks (which we have continued to do all year). We also started to give our details out to members of the One World Group, letting them know about the OUSU resources they could use. As a result of this, several groups have started to advertise their events in This Week, set up photocopying accounts with OUSU etc. We have carried on with this this term and have managed to build up a higher profile within the One World Group than we had before.

This term we've been putting most of our efforts into planning for next year. Our major plan is to have a leaflet/termcard to introduce people to all the different groups in Oxford involved in One World issues which we can give out to all freshers. This will be produced over the summer vac and should be really cool!

Throughout the year we've done random other stuff such as talking part in Amnestys Cage Weeks, stewarding at Future Outlook, distributing leaflets for One World Week (well done to Sonia and Aneen for organising that, it was excellent) and so on. Hopefully we've managed to revive the committee slightly over the course of this year, and I wish Viv and Ed the best of luck in continuing with this next term!

Catherine Wallis Co-Chair

NUS

This term has been significantly less busy from last term and as a result the committee only met on odd weeks. Firstly I would like to thank Kirsty McNeil for helping me considerably last term in organising the Oxford people both at and getting to conference. Particularly of note this year was the provision of a mini bus (organised by Kirsty) to ferry us all down to conference and back again. The ENTZ budget was spent on a social on the first night of conference to let all of the Oxford people there get to know each other.

Apologies for my absence from 5th week meeting, I had tonsillitis. I would also like to welcome the new exec member Vinathan. Furthermore I would like any NUS reps that have never heard of me to get in touch (Edward.swann@balliol.ox.ac.uk). Minutes from the terms meetings shall be posted on the mailing list after Thursday's meeting. Also anybody interested in joining the mailing list should contact me as well.

Promoting Choice

As they are invariably ill-attended and if anything more likely to be so in Trinity, Promoting Choice has not been holding fortnightly meetings this term, and the committees work has been on more of an ad hoc basis. It was brought to my attention as Chair that the Yellow Pages listings for services concerning unplanned pregnancy were disparate and confused, and I have attempted to prompt a review of their listing policy in such matters. This will be ongoing. The planned talk on reproductive issues from the Annily Campbell, the student adviser, was not able to go ahead this term, and has been rescheduled for next, but many thanks to Annily for her kind offer to address the committee. Promoting Choice also held a debate in 7th week on the subject of whether men should have rights in abortion, and indeed whether they were even entitled to a say in such decisions. It was a lively and broad-ranging discussion, and we were pleased to welcome both male and female students of differing views to take part. Many thanks to all those who contributed to its success. The Unplanned Pregnancy Pack is up-to-date and did not require reviewing/reissuing this term; it offers practical information about provision for unplanned pregnancy in Oxfordshire and is still available from the OUSU offices, the V-P (Women) and college welfare officers. In Promoting Choices activities, Jane Blumer has been a stalwart as ever and her help and good sense will be missed.

Melanie Marshall (Christ Church) Promoting Choice Chair

Queer Rights

It's been a fun year at QR!

In Michaelmas we spent lots of time trying to encourage freshers to come along and publicising ourselves within colleges. We also wrote copious letters to the National Blood Service and NHS, who replied with the same line every

time – “we’ll keep on discriminating against gay men even though your arguments against this are very forceful”. We organised a petition with a few hundred signatures from around the University condemning the current policy (as well as a motion through OUSU Council to the same effect) and Nick (the ex-co-chair) and Catherine went on covert operations to blood donation centres in Oxford and our home towns, checking what their exact policy was in practice (beware – we found that because national policy is so vague, an awful lot relies on the sympathy of the staff at individual centres). We also spoke about this at NUS LGB Conference and on various mailing lists, encouraging other SUs to protest with us. This saga culminated in a motion of condemnation of the head of the NBS last council, but we hope the next co-chairs will continue to fight on this issue which is far from resolved.

We’ve spent some time investigating reports of homophobia around Oxford, but found little evidence that this was a serious problem. Nevertheless, we gathered information from various venues around the city, finding out what their policy on gay customers was, so we now have quite a cool database on this. We also spoke at a couple of JCR meetings and assisted LGB reps doing the same, making it clear that homophobia within colleges would not be accepted.

We took part in the National Holocaust Memorial Day service in Hilary (which involved hours of decorating pavements with chalk advertising only for it all to be destroyed by rain) as well as organising the QR protest on Cornmarket (with our very own preacher and all!). We also gave out our sex packs (in gorgeous little candy bags) to encourage safer sex.

We are in the process of changing the OUSU Constitution to allow M to F transgendered people to be considered women. We have made sure that at least one of us was at each of the two NUS LGB conferences this year (and what fun they were!), and helped pass (and fail, where appropriate) motions there. QR was part of the pressure group that formed to oppose the Union’s invitation of David Irving and many members were present at the SPBM. We also organised a series of successful discussion groups on various aspects of queerness. All this in addition to our considerable load of welfare casework (please could QR co-chairs get peer support training? It would be sooo useful!) and you have a rough summary of the QR year. Chances are I have forgotten stuff, but that’s because I only have a few hours until this has to be in ☺

Thanks must go to: Tony for being very helpful both at the meetings and variously at other times, **Cie** for keeping us on track and helping with shopping and being generally fab, **Antonia** for *always* speaking her mind (we love you!), **Dave McC** for keeping us entertained when he turned up to meetings in his pyjamas! **Dave M** for doing his JP act more convincingly than we thought possible, **Joel** for his contributions at the beginning of the year and for driving us to Manchester, **Mel** for the best use of black and red and for advertising our stuff really well to all her friends, **Steph** for sorting out expenses quicker than is natural, **Jane** for not minding when we regularly requisitioned her office, **James** for being the most fabulous VP (Welfare)-elect we have ever known and for keeping all our spirits up (good luck for next year!), **Jon Boone** for writing/commissioning articles about us (and expressing occasional opinions!), and **everyone who ever turned up**, especially people who kept coming, even towards the end of the year and to all the people who have taken an interest in QR in any way – thanks guys (and girls, and those not identifying as either)! Have a great vac!

Love, Peter and Catherine.

Shameless plug (1) – election of new Chairs is this Monday, 1 o’clock in Oriel JCR Annexe.

Shameless Plug (2) – last discussion of the term, Tuesday, 7.30pm in Mansfield Old Bar

Womens

Womens committee planned a low-intensity term in the awareness that people have exams. It began with an informal de-briefing for those who attended NUS Womens Conference in the Easter vacation, which proved useful for compiling a report on the event. Since then our theme for the term has been the lively and varied one of "Reclaiming". In post-committee discussions we have observed aspects of life, in the university and beyond, that needed to be reclaimed by women, and devised some ways of doing so. The posited methods of reclaiming womens sexuality were particularly intriguing and fun. In 8th week we plan to reclaim food and body image by having a picnic in the park, a practical way of reinforcing the message! The "cat" project, intended to help reclaim space, has finally come to fruition, and we look forward to seeing the photos of the Womens Committee cat and accompanying report when they appear. Apart from that, a fair amount of time has been devoted to discussion and redrafting of the constitutional change to the definition of "woman"; to the helping at the Womens Open Day, a great success; to discussion of the Jezebel page in the Oxford Student; and to sitting in the sunshine. We intend to collaborate with Anti-Racism cttee, Queer Rights and Disabilities Action group on a liberation week Hilary, and have begun the planning for that. One of the biggest events of the term for Womens Committee has been the resignation of two of our co-Chairs after long and valuable service to the committee. We wish to thank Leah Zeto (CCC) and Jo Briggs (Wadham) for their

incredible energy and efficiency, and likewise Jane Blumer (St Hildas) who leaves the post of V-P (Women) and with it a committee which thanks her for all her hard work. Emily Hooker (St Catz) and Eleanor Thompson (Wadham) take over the co-chairships.