



# **termly reports**

**trinity 2002**

# OUSU Sabbatical Officers

**Ruth Hunt**

**President**

Trinity term for sabbaticals is traditionally the time when they consolidate their work for the year. The structures are all familiar and the work becomes easier providing you with the time and head space to find alternative employment and start the psychological break from the Oxford bubble. Alas, this years sabbatical team were never going to achieve that. We are an interesting bunch and this year has been different in terms of sabbatical dynamics. I think part of the reason for this is that we started working together at the end of last Michaelmas. We all know each other very well and work hard for the good of the student union. Perhaps the times when we go astray is down to different interpretations of what is good for OUSU. I think these are valid grounds for disagreement and what makes us quite a diverse and interesting bunch of people.

I have worked this year to ensure that OUSU is no longer viewed as a separate entity to the work done in colleges nor are we a separate department to the university. The work of OUSU should not be incongruous to the work of common rooms. When it is incongruous it is the responsibility of the common rooms to change it. Every student is OUSU (no individual has disaffiliated this year - two colleges have withheld payment) and therefore to suggest that OUSU is wank is a little bit odd. OUSU is wank when you mandate us to do stupid things on your behalf. I hope that this year there has been less of that and more projects that make us directly useful and beneficial. Such as the college redistribution report and information sessions on understanding battels negotiations rather than OUSU coming in ready for a fight. More controversially perhaps, Finance and Funding has also taken this direction. Until the spending review is announced in July, the responsibilities of the finance and funding committee must and have changed. Information about different funding methods is paramount for any student led campaign. Students do not have this awareness and it is understandable why they do not. The whole system is complex, beurocratic, and deliberately excluding. It is the responsibility of OUSU to inform and advise students on different options. This may not be as sexy as occupations and demonstrations but at this crucial political junction, direct action cannot work and it will only serve to ostracise students further.

The role of President is an odd one. I've made it my responsibility this year to provide direct help and advice to any common room who needs it and I've also made it my priority to keep the work of the VP's sacrosanct. It is also the job of the President to sell and promote OUSU. This is one of the more tricky areas because it generally has to be done in social settings, general chat, etc etc. The President has to be approachable and this means talking to people outside the normal confines of OUSU's general work. I think this aspect of the job is one of the most difficult things to communicate to the other sabbaticals. To a large extent, such 'networking' is distasteful to the general more worthy projects that OUSU work on. But it is equally necessary and it does mean that the OUSU President keeps irregular hours and suffers from a slightly dodgy liver by the end of the year. But unless individual students are told about OUSU, how are they ever to know? The other sabbaticals have to understand that this counts as work.

The student press will always be problematic to OUSU because there are two papers and respective egos to contend with. The editors and news editors of both papers are far more tuned in to the work of OUSU and the mixed feelings and mixed responses that surround them than in any other SU (apart, perhaps from Cambridge) and thus, every Tuesday (oxstu) and Wednesday (cherwell) night, usually until about midnight, my phone rarely stops ringing. Part of this is that fourteen newspapers a term equals a shortage of news and both teams know that you can always rely on OUSU to provide a story when the going gets tough. They usually get things right, or when they can't get in touch with anyone, make up enough stuff to fill the copy.

Relationships this term have been more strained than before but we all seem to have come out of it in one piece. Though I am writing this before the last two editions come out, and heavens only knows what trigger happy editors get up to in seventh week.

The work that OUSU does is unequivocally good and you need an incredibly strong sabbatical team to keep everything of the highest possible standard. The President acts as a firewall for the other sabbaticals and thus a rogue president is extremely dangerous and potentially damaging to the work of all the other sabbaticals as has been seen with some of the mistakes I have made this year. So, you need a good president who understands the intricacies of the others work and respects their portfolios and limits external damage. The Vice President (Welfare) must be extremely competent not just as a case work adviser but as a manager and a campaigner. The work load is immense, and though I have no tangible knowledge of the work undertaken in terms of case work, it inevitably has an impact on the rest of the job. The VP Welfare must manage the student advice service as well as the interests of Oxford students. A lapse in one year must be compensated for in the next and the work load has no limits. James has been unequivocally excellent this year. The close proximity of all the work that the sabbaticals do means that it would be easy for James to whinge at us about his workload. No such comments are ever made and it is a testament to James' skills that so much progress has been made this year. Any advances towards a central student venue are thanks to his knowledge and understanding of legislation and his unwavering commitment to ensuring that the matter is not dropped from the agenda. Diversity Week was an example of how campaigning can sit with welfare provision and the development of the Equal Opportunities committee is also a testament to his abilities.

The VP Finance is equally overworked. The responsibilities of the VP Finance has a very tangible impact on the work of the rest of the sabbaticals. So much of OUSU's recognition is dependent on publications, posters, fliers etc that the burden of responsibility placed on VP Finance is obviously massive. Add in publisher of a weekly paper, manager of the finances, line manager to the staff, all round computer fixer and you have quite a hefty work load. You do not, and should not have to be, a computer expert in order to be VP Finance but OUSU must recognise that such responsibility on one person is bound to cause trouble in the future. Eleanor has done an extremely good job under difficult conditions with relatively little acknowledgement and recognition.

VP Access and Academic Affairs is one of the greatest introductions to OUSU. The post holder must be bright, have the ability to assimilate complex information quickly, whilst still appearing approachable to potential students. From what I can gauge, it is one of the most schizophrenic sabbatical posts asking the post holder to fully grasp the significance of the slightest change in university structures whilst appearing like a normal student who likes the occasional game of football. Again, the unseen burden of case work adds an extra dimension to this role. The role of the President and VP Acacaff are inextricably linked but fiercely independent of each other. The role of attracting students to Oxford and then protecting their academic interests once their here, makes the job of VP acacaf hugely relevant to all Oxford students and thus an easy target for a president who wants to also appear relevant. I've worked quite hard to keep my nose out but have enough awareness to work out implications of media responses etc. Both John and Rhodri have been fantastic and it has been a pleasure and an honour to know the boy craig.

VP Women. That pervasive question to any woman who defines herself as a feminist. I think that the position of VP Women has undergone alteration in the light of the fact that the last three OUSU Presidents have all been female. I think the addition of a change in equal opportunities emphasis away from women and towards other liberation campaigns has also had an effect. Antonia has done a sterling job but I think that there needs to be a radical shift in the way the VP Women works and the portfolios that are allocated to the post holder. The role needs to be

much more generic and specific projects must be found and pursued. In its current structure, I do not think it is sustainable. I do believe that VP Women has a crucial and prominent role in OUSU but there must be change.

VP Graduates. This role is more essential than most who are reading this and attending council realise. It is unfortunate that the attempts made by the sabbaticals to ensure effective graduate representation has been misconstrued as a disinterest in their fate. Much of my year has been dominated by the various consequences of the VP Graduates and it is of course, inevitable that I have found this frustrating. But these things are unpredictable and must be responded to as and when they arise. A VP Graduates is absolutely essential in a structure like OUSU. The role of the graduate representative on the university committees cannot be emulated or filled by anything other than a full time graduate sabbatical officer. I am very pleased that Jeff decided to come on board in our time of difficulty and his role on the sabbatical team has been invaluable. I hope that Andy Garlick marks the end of the confusion regarding this role. The message however is clear: do not be a sabbatical unless you can commit and do not run for a position unless you fully believe in the worth of the organisation and the value of the work that is done. Being a sabbatical is a tiring but extremely rewarding role but it can only be rewarding if you want to do it. Simple concept. It's unbelievable how little significance is placed on this.

The executive. They are an interesting lot. This year we have had the president of OUCA, the chair of OULC and the President of OULD. We have had news editor from the Cherwell, Union standing committee members, college Entz officers, etc etc. They are diverse and it is for this reason that they provide an accurate reflection of the make up of students. The work of the exec is never as sexy as potential exec officers think it is going to be or anyone outside OUSU believes it to be, but I am pleased that we have kept the same team throughout and I hope they will continue for their final term. It has been an honour to work with them, and though they have very different ideas about their roles and responsibilities, they all come through in the end. Perhaps it is time to move towards portfolio based elections though this would restrict the amount of flexibility that they would be afforded once they were in the position and understood more about what OUSU does. It is certainly something to think about in the future. Much like the scrapping of delegates, but that's another five hundred words.

The rest of my term is explained in the motions. But I would like to end by saying that it has been a very, very good year and I feel it is an honour to have held the position of president for the year. My thanks are various and I will conduct those later but I wish next year's sabbatical team every success and I am sure that you will do OUSU proud.

In a galaxy far far away, in a world where access to education is not equal, in a country where higher education funding is diminishing and the RAE are under constant attack, a university is still struggling for supremacy. There is a force of good. A group who protect the inhabitants of the Oxford who believe in truth, justice, a campaigning student union and relevant service provision. The OUSU sabbaticals undergo rigorous training that arms them to defeat the foes who threaten the inhabitants. They have a calling and must make many sacrifices in order to fulfil their duty. Wisdom guides them, instinct shapes them yet they all share a fundamental belief in effective representation.

---

*EPISODE ONE: The Phantom Sabbatical.*

*Yuletide 2000*

*Yoda (a.k.a Kirsty – for it is she): Will undermine the strength of the OUSU sabbaticals the dark force that has now infiltrated the sabbatical elect team. Sabbaticals elect must act, and act swiftly.*

*John (for it is he): But the confederations will not like it. The senators must be persuaded.*

*James (for it is he): And Yoda, we are still in training. We have not yet sat the finals and therefore do not have the strength to take on such a mission.*

*Yoda (a.k.a Kirsty – for it is she): Skills you have and time to undertake this task. The motion you will submit before the deadline.*

*Ruth (for it is she): It will be done.*

*Eastertide 2001*

*Mission completed. Tangible damage received +10. Instinctive benefits +15. But the force of evil that is VP Graduates has not yet been laid to rest.*

*EPISODE TWO: The final training.*

*Yoda (a.k.a Kirsty – for it is she): Hard it will be the tasks that lie ahead of you. Scepticism there is much from the confederations of your work. Appreciate only what you do when perhaps they are in difficulty. Difficulties there will be and therefore allies will follow but the force of darkness will always be amongst you.*

*Antonia (for it is she): But Yoda, what are these forces of dark. The confusion of the finals and the sun addles our brains. We cannot see the presence of the dark.*

*Yoda (a.k.a. Kirsty – for it is she): Strength it gives to such forces to speak aloud. But I will say this: Oriel. The Cherwell. The University. The Union. But defences you have sabbaticals. The Nightbus. The Target Schools. The Student Advice Service. The largest publications house in Europe. The Buster of Battels. The Sabs on Tours. The Councils. Use the Councils sabbaticals.*

*Ruth (for it is she): But Yoda, the empire is too vast and the senators do not always recognise the worth of council. How can we speak to them?*

*Yoda: Drink you will in various places. And the email list make much use of.*

*Ruth: But Yoda, when we are each flung around this vast empire, how are we to know that we are right? Where will you be?*

*Yoda: We will be watching. And access we have to the Oxford Student. Watch we will. Maria you have. Guide you she will. Time it now is for us to retire. Use the Councils sabbaticals. Use the councils.*

*EPISODE THREE: The attack of the Freshers.*

*Anderson (for it is he): The whole area is swamped with random societies and I have to jazz the wide boys from Pop Ya Cherry.*

*Eleanor: Pop Ya Cherry will wait. Now it is time to smooth the head of exam schools. So many students all offering me cheques to join The Union. How can we be the force of good when there is so much temptation to be bad?*

*Anderson: Take the cheques VP Finance. With that money, every student can have a free condom regardless of the act or the regularity.*

*Eleanor: That would make James so happy, so fulfilled. Where is Ruth?*

*Antonia: Ruth is spreading the Gospel according to OUSU to all the freshers and she is organising the march against the fees.*

*Eleanor: Then she cannot know that the government has announced a U-turn on the subject and therefore the battle is won.*

*Antonia: I have not the heart to tell her. Ruth's dedication to the force of good has always been dubious. I fear that the label of 'so right wing' will be her destruction. Her efforts to prove otherwise has made her somewhat blind to the truth.*

*Eleanor: But she spent the summer folding gold ribbons so that all students, regardless of the confederation, can join in the war against student hardship. Her dedication to the cause surely cannot be faulted.*

*Antonia: Yoda has insisted that an occupation will occur but Ruth is already demonstrating reluctance to fulfil the prophesy. The march is as far as she will go.*

*Eleanor: But I have heard that a force of darkness will rise up and destroy her attempts.*

*Anderson: No, you don't mean.....*

*Eleanor: The gods (or it is perhaps the Cherwell) have arranged a downpour at the same time as the battle against student hardship. No student can face such a force on a Sunday afternoon.*

*Antonia: Ruth is going to need us goddamit. Let's get this fair over and done with.*

*Ruth: Sabbaticals. I have failed you. Thirty wet students do not constitute a movement. I do not have the force. Perhaps I am not worthy to be a sabbatical. Even the University Police mocked me.*

*John: The rain was too much for all of us Ruth. Remember what Yoda said: Use the Councils. All will be well.*

*EPISODE FOUR: The finding of the new sabbaticals.*

*Fairclough (for it is he who is fair by name and fair by nature): Sabbaticals must be found who will continue the fight against the dark forces and keep the confederations united. I, however, am impartial and do not care who wins. Bring me college lists, ballot boxes, coded ballot papers, a tribunal, UV pens, sealing wax. This is the hardest task so far sabbaticals. You will not sleep and you will be cold.*

*James: But we've only just started.*

*Catherine: I have no successor.*

*James/John/Antonia/Ruth/Eleanor:*

*Fairclough: Let it begin.*

*Candidates (for it is all of them): I believe in a student union that is open and accountable. I believe in relevance. I believe in OUSU policy. I believe in state school education. I believe in equal opportunities.*

*I believe in parties. The fun variety not the p\*\*\*\*cal variety. I believe in service provision. I just believe in OUSU.*

*Sabs (for it is all of them): We said that.*

*John: And more. Shall we ask a difficult question?*

*Fairclough: You will each have zones within the empire and will report back using your mobile phones, throughout the day. Do not expect to be reimbursed. We will then count throughout the night.*

*Labour club: It's not fair [stamp]. All the Independent's won. There's no such thing as an independent sabbatical.*

*Ruth/Eleanor/John/James/Catherine: Point of information.*

*Labour club: But we wanted to win. We're fed up of loosing.*

*Fairclough: The election is fair because I have been fair. Go now. Return to your meetings. Sabbaticals, it has been a long, enduring process. Return to your work.*

*EPISODE FIVE: The love scene.*

*Ruth: Comrade. The delegation is leaving at 0700 tomorrow morning. We must unite in solidarity with the other forces of good throughout the country to counteract the evil that is student hardship. The transport will take thirty and we will make it known that we are working for the forces of good; we will unite with the NUS. This is our mission. Are you prepared?*

*Ruth: It is, of course, more convenient for you to stay the night. I agree, that for the good of the mission, you should stay.*

*Ruth: Do not tempt me to reveal the doubts I entertain about the missions of the OUSU sabbaticals. I believe in democracy, solidarity and the cause.*

*Ruth: Please, you know that it is against OUSU code for sabbaticals to love.*

*Ruth: The confederations must be treated equally and I am already too tired, senator, to visit thirty two empires in this manner. I will be distracted from my mission and OUSU policy does not stipulate these sort of favours.*

*Ruth: They will not understand and I disagree: the other sabbaticals do recognise the importance of ensuring that there is no conflict of interest. They would be ashamed of my weakness.*

*Ruth: But the other confederations will disapprove. They will suspect corruption. And what of the other co-chairs, they will feel left out. OUSU sabbaticals do not have the time. It will be hard. Already I am too tired to march through the great London tomorrow.*

*Ruth: The senators will not understand. They are the stakeholders in the work of OUSU. "Use the Council". This is not what Yoda had in mind.*

*Ruth: I'm aware that you cannot legislate against love but OUSU must and will come first.*

Ruth: *It will be hard but we will try to manage. The force of darkness that is Evelyn and impressionable first years will object. I will have to return to my home land and work hard to prove my unwavering dedication to the confederations.*

Ruth: *Come, we must continue our mission.*

*EPISODE SIX: The return of the Phantom sabbatical.*

Catherine: *It is time comrades that I must leave you. The role of the sabbatical is too great and the trials and missions too various. I must return to private meditation and study.*

Ruth: *The graduates will suffer as a result of this. A replacement will be hard to find.*

John: *The sabbaticals will find it hard to fight the forces of evil that is the Oxstu and Cherwell.*

James: *And the unspeakable forces. Our weakness will be clear. Surely they will use this opportunity for revenge?*

Ruth: *This is a challenge that is too great. I must consult Yoda.*

Yoda (a.k.a. Kirsty – for it is she): *Hard will be the path ahead. Graduate representation must be your mission now.*

Ruth: *But Yoda, I am young and didn't really understand my undergraduate days. How am I to understand graduates?*

Yoda (a.k.a. Kirsty – for it is she): *Do they not breath like you do? Do they not cry as you cry? Do they not need low rent as you do? Do they not need student charters? Do not be hasty in your differences young one. Visit the empires once more. Take the force that is OUSU with you. And use the councils.*

Ruth: *I will go to the empires and will visit the land known as Green. It has been left on our database and perhaps we will be remembered. There is a man called Jeff. He has the force but is not aware of his skills. He has abused his powers of goodness in the realm of management consultancy.*

Antonia: *But surely the exec cannot allow such a man with that sort of training onto our missions?*

Ruth: *The exec will decide. Use the force exec. Ask questions. Be wise. Use your power and responsibility.*

Exec (for it is them): *OUSU sabbaticals. As your advisers and assistants we approve the choice of this Jeff. Can we now move on to duty morning rotas?*

Ruth: *It shall be so.*

*EPISODE SEVEN: The perennial quest.*

James: *It seems that our building is not accessible to all students.*

Eleanor: *Our funding is small and our time is limited. How should we make this better?*

Ruth: *Sabbaticals. I feel it is time. The University need to know. Our goodness is for their benefit as well.*

*John: Target Schools, Pembroke, admissions, case work.....*

*James: I know of a power called SENDA and a force known as litigation. Perhaps that will help us with our quest?*

*Ruth: Indeed. Let us present our case to the confederates.*

*Confederates: Is this not a sneaky way, oh OUSU sabbaticals, to secure victory in the war for a CSV?*

*Sabbaticals: No. Comment.*

*Ruth: We have the backing of the confederations. Let us take our case to the authority that is JCC.*

*James: But I am dyslexic. All these abbreviations are addling my brain. I cannot think clearly.*

*Ruth: Have patience. All will become clear.*

*The University (for it is them): Though you are good and frequently misunderstood, your property is beyond our remit.*

*Ruth: But we've found a really, really nice property. You could have some space....*

*The University (for it is them): But that is very expensive. Would you not prefer it if we bought you the smaller, cheaper offices in the centre of town.*

*Sabbaticals: Well, we are happy to co-operate on this issue, with the support of the confederates of course.*

*The University: Go on, take that property, you know you want to.*

*Sabbaticals: Um.....*

*The University: We'll do all the work, we'll arrange the leases. Go on....*

*Sabbaticals: ok. Ta.*

**THE FINAL EPISODE:**

*Ruth: Yoda, my year is complete. I have done my best to protect the interests of those I represent. I admit that there were a few controversial moments that did not help our cause, but all in all, we have done well.*

*Yoda: Yes.*

*Ruth: There is, of course, too much for the sabbaticals to do and as post modernism taught me, there is no right or wrong battle or war. I can therefore only try and do the best by the majority. But even the harmonious sabbaticals disagree on that occasionally.*

*Yoda: I have heard that it is so.*

*Ruth: Of course, the sabbaticals cannot work for the good of Oxford without the tireless support of individuals. Eleanor Thompson, Stuart Hudson, Rachel Logan, Nicky Ellis, Rosie Buckland, Phil*

Thompson, Julia Buckley, Marc Stoneham, Anatole Pang, Duncan, Andrew, Liz, John Cook, Chris Hanretty, Laura Santana, Daniel Harkin, Helena Puig, Louise Mc, Nick Anstead, Nabil, Luke Haywood, Ailsa Gibson, Sarah Caless, Ali Richardson, Damian, Dave, Alex, Jack, Kat Radice, Josh, Daniel Johnson, Alex Roth, James Kettle, Jamie Corner, Ed Turner, Chris McBride, Dan Paskins, Vino, Sacha, Sean, Mel, Sonia, Will, Andrew C, Matt Sellwood, Andy Garlick, Junior Proctor 1, Junior Proctor 2, Max Todd, Dame Fi, the big geezer VC, Ed Southerdon, Pete Morton, Ed Swann, Eleanor Murray, Brian Gasser. How can I ensure that they know how much I appreciate them and am grateful for their support?

Yoda: They will know.

Ruth: And the others? I know that we should all work tirelessly for the good of all, but they are like my siblings. John Craig – the older, wiser brother. James, the lovely man. Eleanor who I will always listen to Belle and Sebastian with. Antonia who never lets me slip from the left. Jeff. The wonderful, wonderful Jeff. And Colin. Too cool for me all year but I never got intimidated. How can I let them know?

Yoda: It is like jazz. If they have to ask they will never understand.

Ruth: And Maria?

Yoda: Ruth, she is not your mother.

Ruth: Yoda, I am now going to sleep for a very long time.

Yoda: You are very wise.

Ruth: Thank you Yoda.

## **Eleanor Fletcher**

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

What an exhausting year. Fun and challenging as well, that goes without saying but my final thought is that I'm knackered. Being V-P (Finance) requires one to take on a gargantuan task: imagine being responsible for an annual turnover of £350,000, managing a computer network, looking after a shabby and overcrowded building, guiding 15 or so publications through their often wobbly journey from appointment of editors to delivery into OUSU members' hands, overseeing a struggling shop and helping student in many areas from producing their Alternative Prospectuses to advising on rent negotiations. I have learnt so much, it makes me frightened to think how little I knew last June...

### Publications

The favourite part of my job, undoubtedly. An excellent year for the OxStu editorially, that prize really showed 'em that we'd made it. Advertising-wise, a little disappointing but not as bad as it could have been. And it's been a fun, fun year - I've loved and hated working on the paper: oh the pain and pleasure of those Tuesday all-nighters. The summer publications were of excellent quality, particularly the *Careers Handbook* and the *Freshers' Guide*, both of which benefited from major redesigns. We also had the most successful Freshers' Fair ever: more profitable and running more smoothly with everyone happy at the end of the day. Lots of occasional publications have appeared this year such as the *Student Parent Handbook* (formerly the *Childcare Guide*). The *Living Out Guide* was produced in conjunction with the University Accommodation Office which proved to be a very successful working partnership. Looking to the future, things are changing in the world of print and this means, inevitably, that OUSU will need to keep up. This spells large investment, in hardware as well as software. I had hoped by now to have fully prepared an ICT strategy for OUSU to plot out the next five years but this should now be ready for my successor at the beginning of handover.

## Building

One of the joyous duties of my job - being responsible for building maintenance. We have been more convinced than other sab teams that we cannot remain in New Barnett House. This view is being splendidly backed up by the government's recent legislative programme which will shortly make us illegal due to the utter lack of disabled access. The university have been very supportive and I think it would be totally fair to say that we have got further than any previous sabbatical team. Moving OUSU to a more central and larger location would be a wonderful thing making all our services and support so much more visible and thus inevitably more accessible to all. With a more visible and more participated in student union we would be in a better position to build on our strengths and provide more than ever before to our membership.

## OUSU's Finances

Not a brilliant year but hopefully the dramatic reassessment of how we spend our money that I conducted in preparation for the Amended Budget last term. When I came round to doing the Budget this term I found that I had cut a great deal of slack from OUSU's expenditure. OUSU's income from advertising has been adversely affected by the economic downturn: unfortunately this necessarily means that OUSU's activities are dependent on the buoyancy of the markets. With such large part of OUSU's income stream prone to fluctuations, the steady income received from common room subscriptions is most welcome and something that OUSU could not continue without.

## Staff

One of the best developments of the year has been making Maria into General Manager. It was with great relief that I handed over my responsibility for day-to-day staff management to Maria. I have come to the conclusion that to put a 22 year old with a mere history degree behind her in charge of staff is crazy and OUSU should strive to avoid such an arrangement being instituted in the future. With Maria handling that and salaries I can be assured that our staff our getting the management they deserve. The departure of Jenny Murray marked a milestone in OUSU's history and I fully recognise her long service to the student union and wish her very well with her retirement. The greater computerisation of the Accounts Office, started by my predecessor and furthered this year, has meant that we have not had to replace Jenny. The imminent of retirement of Valerie from the Shop also sees the end of an era and I wish her all the best.

## OUSU

Before I ran for election to this post I was fairly well convinced that OUSU was one of the very best things in Oxford. This year, I believe we have improved OUSU in numerous ways, many too minor to ever become clear to our membership but important nonetheless. I am constantly staggered by the amount that OUSU does, by the fact that many students willing put in time and effort to all its activities, by the fact that the sabbaticals devote so much to the organisation. In terms of great achievements there are many: the new website (finally a proper website to reflect all our activities), Diversity Week (a proper and prominent commitment to equal opportunities campaigning), the search for new premises (undertaken realistically and sensibly). Every year I have seen OUSU go from strength to strength and it is heartening for me to look back over our year and see that we have carried on that process. This is despite the many difficulties and crises that we have faced; these I would not wish on any other sabbatical team. In particularly, I most fervently hope that the problems surrounding the post of V-P Graduates are laid to rest once and for all. Recent years have seen a continuing growth in graduate involvement in OUSU: hopefully this will help OUSU find committed and hard-working individuals who believe in OUSU to stand in election for this post.

Thanks

To the siblings, whoops, I mean sabs... have we become that close? What a learning curve: never has a sab team worked together for as long as we have (remember Storch?), never has a sab team been so cohesive (a retired sabbatical recently expressed her absolute amazement that I was still speaking to Ruth, let alone being quite prepared to have a drink with her). But individually, to **Ruth** for red wine and Belle & Sebastian when it mattered, Leonard Cohen too; to **James** for falling over all the time and being the most hard-working and truly visionary V-P welfare ever, ever; to **Antonia** for her convictions and kindness; to **John** for always being so clever and his web enthusiasm; to **Jeff** for being the knight in shining armour, arriving in our hour of need. To **Maria** for always being the wisest and best. To **Mr Colin** for everything really, especially the business chats and mad expeditions, plus rabid and constant assertion of our superiority to CUSU (clearly, **the** defining feature of OUSU). Thanks to **Sue** for being a fantastic Accounts Manager, for jolly-dee and endless giggles over the chequebook, **Barbara** too deserves a mention for being generally great. To **Adam, Katie, Rachel, Julia** and **Sacha** (the Pubs Board crew) for your tireless service. To my **OxStu Eds**, you girls will always be the bestest in my eyes (and yes, Joseph, I do include you in that gang!). **Eleanor T**, for being more dedicated than anyone else and for putting yourself forward for a proper OUSU job at last. **Anthony**, an efficient and cheerful RO, even at 7.30am! Generally, to everyone who has helped OUSU by giving time and effort to all the areas of our work: the Exec, the ex-Exec and the co-chairs, officers and so on. To the common room representatives for keeping us all in line when Council comes around. To **Steph** for being before and **Alex F** for inspiring me to stand, many years ago. **Alex & Jamie**, for putting up with never seeing me and also with horrid OUSU invasions to the house. **JT & Mel**, for giving me that time out, and other things to stress about (as if I needed more!). **James** for being there and lovely as well. **Kirsty**, for listening and then telling me about rocks, Antarctica and mad Russians in the Arctic Circle - my sanity line this year, you always reminded how there were many, many other mad places to be, most particularly the Earth Sciences Department.

<b>James Rowlands</b>	<b>V-P (Welfare)</b>
-----------------------	----------------------

This year has been at times exciting, tiring, frustrating, stressful, fulfilling, fun, surreal and comic to say the least - but I would not have missed it for the world. Thanks to the hard work of my various co-chairs, exec and other interested parties. I hope that OUSU's welfare services are in a stronger position than when I inherited them. There are so many areas I have stumbled into and I only hope that the work done this year has been of use. As with most things only so much can be achieved in so short a time and much is dependent on who follows. Andrew certainly has a challenging year ahead of him but I am confident that he will do well.

The **Student Advice Service**, which was only formally launched in the last sabbatical year, has seen some rapid developments. For the first time the service has firmly established an independent identity within OUSU. Campaigns, including the long-term project on sexual health promotion, and publications have raised the profile of the service and this has been reflected in heavy use. Our stock of welfare publications are undeniably some of the best around and the new website has greatly increased our abilities to make that information readily accessible. Despite some claims to the contrary the Service is a vital one and the need for a second Student Advisor is greater than ever. It has been a delight to work with **Annily** this year and her efforts have been invaluable in raising the profile of the Student Advisor at a college level. As a general point, which I have made time and time again, it is time the University recognized the contribution OUSU makes to the University as a whole. Our welfare services are without doubt the most expansive of any services that exists at a University level yet they receive no or little formal or financial support. Andrew will have to re-negotiate the Student Advisor contract this Michaelmas but our commitment to the post is unquestioning. The Service will continue to provide confidential and impartial advice through individual casework, to common room officers and in our host of publications, and thanks to changes in the Standing Orders and Constitution, is now in a guaranteed position to do so. Thanks also to John, Jeff and Antonia who have been

working throughout the year on casework issues.

**Welfare training** is now radically different from the structure that I inherited and reform was widely over due. While the structures have not entirely settled down in the future OUSU will be in a far stronger position to deliver relevant training. The college group structure has a lot of potential, and while the VP Welfare has a vital role to play within it, the groups are first and foremost vehicles for the colleges within them. A direct and individual responsibility is being offered to common room officers to direct OUSU's provision. Oxford is well known for the extent of its welfare provision, but that reputation cannot be maintained by resting on our laurels. Student run provision is one of the most effective forms of welfare available, providing immediate support as well as effective referral, to far more students than are ever seen by our University counter-parts. But that responsibility is a heavy one and welfare providers needs to engage with their colleagues across the University and ensure that they and their successors have the training they need to ensure continuity of provision I only hope the challenges is taken up. This would be a good time to thank those common room welfare providers who I have worked with. Your work is often unrecognized but that does not stop you achieving great things.

**Equal Opportunities** have been a major focus of my year. The equal opportunities group is now up and running and has produced a fairly comprehensive guide to equal opportunities issues that I hope will be of use to common rooms and their officers. The group has also issued publicity and generally established itself this term. I see great potential to harness the enthusiasm that exists in colleges. Thank you to Phil and Nailah who have put in a good deal of work and will no doubt do great things next term. The OUSU representative committees have become equal opportunity campaigns and I hope that this greater freedom will help ensure that the vitality that you can see in some of the groups is sustained in the long term. There is a lot still to be done to generally reach a point where we can say with confidence that within Oxford people are not discriminated against because of personal characteristics. This is a job for all of us, regardless of our race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, and we should not avoid it. There is a tendency within this University to be complacent. Things are far from perfect in all quarters of this sprawling institution and I hope that OUSU, common rooms, colleges and the University can continue to press ahead on this absolutely vital front. Queer Rights and Disability Action have run high profile, and in the eyes of some, controversial campaigns. Nonetheless I remain committed to these efforts and challenge anyone who argues it is not for OUSU to adopt a vigorous stance on these issues in order to challenge prejudice.

The various groups with which I have worked have had their ups and downs but a huge amount of work has gone into their activities with some good results. The best of these was perhaps **Diversity Week**, which marked the first attempt to combine the work of our equal opportunity campaigns. Despite the difficulties of the week, and the hard work it required from all involved, I would like to think that it was a success. Future generations will build on this and I believe that Diversity Week really can become a yearly focus for interested parties and really make a difference in this University, and community, when it comes to promoting the importance of diversity in our city. Of course events like **World AIDS Day in Oxford** and the **National Holocaust Memorial Day** form a key part of the work of the welfare sabbatical. The chance to look beyond Oxford is a welcome one and serves as a timely reminder that solidarity with other groups and causes is in no way something that is either irrelevant or unbeneficial to an active student union.

**Disability provision** has always been a key focus of my experience in this university, both as a common room officer and as a sabbatical. The Disabilities Action Group, and the Oxford Dyslexia Network, has done tremendous work and thank you to those who have been involved. This year we have made a huge amount of progress, not only has the fight for an accessible student union moved on leaps and bounds, but the impending introduction of part four of the Disability Discrimination Act means that students with disabilities will soon be in a far stronger position to demand that they are not discriminated against by an institution through

ignorance or apathy.

The question of **college inequality** has come a long way in a relatively short space of time. Thank you to those who have put time and energy into the report, not least of all Josh Kern who started the whole thing off. OUSU now has policy to call for the University and colleges to ensure that all students have the right of individual students to expect the same provision and services as the next, regardless of the college at which they study. The impact of this difference is far reaching and does place a considerable disadvantage on students at the poorer colleges. The report has been submitted to colleges and the University, and although these things take time, will be considered. The question is now how to keep up the pressure for change to ensure that the issue does not get lost in the Byzantine committee structure of the University. Thankfully we already have numerous volunteers to keep the project going forward and I wish all the best to Eleanor T, Nick, Ryan et al.

Whatever you think of the **University** it is fair to that within its hollowed confines some very dedicated people are working to really help students out. Thanks to Mohammed, Deborah, Alex, Tracy and Jenny in the Equal Opportunities Team, the Junior Proctors (x2), the Assessors (x2) who are normally far too nice, Kate Davenport, Nigel Bowles, Max Todd and Jennifer Noon. Without these people life would have been far harder, and thanks especially to the Equal Opps Team and the Assessors who have done so much in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Amendment Act.

A final word on **OUSU**: we rely on the good will and dedication of so many people who give up their time and energy to help their student union. The sabbaticals as a team would find their work far harder without these often unsung efforts. At the same time it has been a privilege to work in a sabbatical team where people have worked so hard throughout the year. Ruth, I'm glad I had the chance to become your friend. I will miss sitting in your office even if I never did manage to take up smoking. John: ta for everything, it's been wicked. Antonia and Eleanor: sharing the sunny side of the building has certainly been fun and thank you Eleanor for your single-minded dedication to throwing social events in your house. Thanks to Jeff who found himself thrown into the deep end in less than propitious circumstances but managed to excel nonetheless. And of course Colin: for the amusement value, the odd moment of inspiration and the occasional adventure out on the town.

**Thank you** to all the people I have worked with this year. I am reluctant to start writing a long list for fear of missing people out. Firstly thank you my hordes of current and ex co-chairs and exec. As for the rest here goes: Three cheers for Eleanor T, Emma, Phil J, Nailah, Helena, Annily, Sue, Anthony Fairclough, Josh Kern, Nick A, Sonia, Reagan, Catherine Wallis, Catherine Muge, Vinca, Rachel L and Julia B. Thank you James for putting up with the general failings one associates with sabbaticals. To old names from the past: thank you Alice for setting me on this road, also to Anneliese, Rick and Arantza. Thank you Maria for generally being great and being one step ahead on more than one occasion. It was a privilege to work with you. Perhaps the greatest thanks goes to those not involved with OUSU who have overlooked my persistent exhaustion, failure to be attentive and generally confusion: Leonie, John Steward, Gemma, Clare Gardiner, Little Will and Lizzie.

<b>Antonia Bance</b>	<b>V-P (Women)</b>
----------------------	--------------------

It's been an interesting few weeks.

The Women's Open Day has taken up vast amounts of my time and will hopefully be a really good showcase for Oxford and for women at Oxford. We've had lots of people apply to come and lots of women volunteer to help – if you'd like to be involved showing people around your college or talking about your subject, please email me on [women@ousu.org](mailto:women@ousu.org).

Women's Campaign has also been going from strength to strength: our speaker meeting about the situation of women in Afghanistan was very well attended and provoked a lot of debate. In addition, the piece of pro-choice activism that we organised to counter the "Life Walk" through the city centre got lots of support and really highlighted that the anti-abortion propaganda is misleading and wrong and doesn't enjoy the support of Oxford students or citizens. Strangely, the event, billed as "a walk in support of the Life Pregnancy Care Centre", featured placards saying "Abortion Kills" and "Save the Human", and demonstrators shouting "Murderers!" at us. We gave out hundreds of stickers and flyers explaining our position; many thanks to everyone who joined us in the pouring rain.

I have continued to work on the Eating Distress project which is now clearly going to be Mel's to complete, have worked on co-ordinating the handover to our successors and have continued to work on the Nightbus. I'm really pleased that Ethics Committee are recovering from the blow dealt us by Wotnot and are moving forward with the Ethical Investment campaign and a new campaign focussing attention on the impact of the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) on higher education. As usual vice-presidential jobs have taken up lots of my time, and I hope that the developments in our student union will soon become apparent.

## **Reflection**

It's been a wonderful year, and I am so proud to have been given the opportunity to represent the women of our university. VP(Women) is a hard job, not least because people (not just men) tend to dismiss you as a token woman and the least important sabbatical. If you believe that, come into the office, look at how hard each and every sabbatical works to make sure that you get the best representation, services and campaigns possible. You should be proud that you have officers who see the student union as a vocation, act like professionals, and put the needs of the organisation before their own ambition. We have a great student union, with real accountability, award-winning publications, enviable campaigns, professional-standard advice and support, a productive relationship with the university, contested elections and a high level of involvement. But OUSU must evolve and change to meet the demands of a new generation of students who have never known a grant and for whom spending a year in a lowly-paid but worthwhile job is not only unattractive, but financially impossible. That means more money, greater recognition of the work sabs do and a valuing of every position, not just that of President.

In Michaelmas 2000, I stood on a platform of feminism, pro-choice, experience and commitment. Looking back at my manifesto now, it's clear that I wasn't aware of the subtle and multi-faceted nature of OUSU, but I can say that I have fulfilled every manifesto commitment except two – which are due to the timing of the general election 2001, and the creation of Diversity Week. This year I've worked to bring a real focus on student parents and their issues to our student union, rather than narrowly focussing on childcare. I've taken more responsibility for being a point of contact and answering queries and have worked closely with the university on joint initiatives. The Nightbus scheme has expanded beyond our wildest dreams, and really is one of OUSU's best services to members, as safe transport and as a cheap minibus to hire. I've loved working with the enthusiastic and principled women who come to Women's Campaign, and am really pleased to have pushed through a proper structure with a greater degree of autonomy for our equal opportunity campaigns. OUSU as a student union has a real commitment to equal opportunities, shown by Diversity Week and by the constant trainings, publications and briefings available to CRs/SUs. We don't just pay lip-service to access, equality and diversity, but as an organisation actually practice what we preach. Diversity Week was one of the highlights of the year. For me it was entirely appropriate to end the year with pro-choice activism, as arguments around abortion and unplanned pregnancy have marked significant periods in my life for the last three years. I believe OUSU should have a pro-choice policy and I believe that OUSU should go

further and make its commitment to the liberalisation of abortion law clear – let's end this ridiculous lottery of NHS provision, two doctors, arbitrary conditions and affirm that the only reason any woman should ever have to give for requesting a termination should be that she wishes to end her current pregnancy, full stop. I hope that I have expanded the portfolio of VP(Women) and made it clear through my work with Ethics Committee, the Elections Review, the Student Advice Service and every aspect of OUSU that we need a dedicated voice for women and that that position is not a second-class sabbatical. The way forward for my job is clear: more concentration on self-esteem issues, more encouragement for women to get out there and get involved, even greater support for female CR/SU officers, a real voice for female graduate students, a pledge to work for guaranteed childcare for every student parent offered a university place, an OUSU nursery. I've been getting there: I know Mel will carry on the work of countless VPs (Women) in her own indomitable fashion.

OUSU is a political organisation. Library opening hours are political, welfare is political, student funding is political, battels are political, target schools is political, nursery provision is political. If you want an apolitical union, abolish all sabbaticals and employ managers instead. I'm proud to be a political woman, elected to do a political job and I know I've been a better sab because of it. I'm a democratic socialist, a feminist, an openly gay woman, and a member of the Labour Party, OULC, the Campaign for Free Education, the National Abortion Campaign and Stonewall. Political involvement can change the world – don't be ashamed, get involved.

To Oxford's women: don't kid yourselves that we have equality in the UK – women graduates earn 15% less than male graduates, 18% of MPs and just 3.6% of company directors are women, just one in ten women reporting a rape will see their attacker convicted, one in four women will experience domestic violence, 70% of the population living below the poverty line are women. So it makes me angry that women don't adopt the cause of women as their own and reject the only ways that they have of bettering their lives and those of thousands of other women – collective organisation with other women, and the introduction of mechanisms fought for by generations of women to ensure that finally, we have a say in how our country and our institutions are run. It is hubristic and shortsighted to reject women-only shortlists and affirmative action as patronising and unnecessary: the plain truth is that nothing else works. It is wrong to abolish guaranteed women's places on CR/SU committees, as time and time again we see a minority of ten or so female JCR presidents, a minority of women directing plays and running societies, editing the newspapers and sorting out the finances. Oxford women should no longer have to settle for second best, and it is up to every person at this university to look at their own behaviour, to see the discrimination and sexism under the jokey comments about appearance and the porn nights and the boorish behaviour. This is the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and we don't have to stand for it anymore.

## **Sycophancy**

It's traditional to allow outgoing sabbaticals some self-indulgence, so here goes.

I've been involved in OUSU since my first week in Oxford; as the first year to pay fees and lose the grant, we were politicised from the word go, and we staggered on from campaign to occupation to conference to Exam Schools, OMOV, *that* Council, Stagecoach, Bacardi, Life, Sichrovsky, Storch, Divinity Schools, David Irving, Stop the War, Life again. I've met some really inspirational people over the last four years, and at the risk of sounding like a Union officer rather than an OUSU one, I'd like to acknowledge my debt to them.

*Kate Buckell, Carli Harper-Penman, Helen Aspell*, you made me realise that individual fights for women and students linked to a greater struggle for a better world.

*Sacha Ismail*, you are OUSU's conscience, and I credit you with never leaving my assumptions unchallenged. Somerville and OUSU will be poorer without you.

*Josh Bell, Kata Deakin, Barney Sandell, Mary Stevens*, you were there at the beginning and look what you've created.

*Abigail Coates, Rachel Griffin, Jane Blumer, Anneliese Dodds*, for the motivation to stay involved in OUSU and the encouragement to go for the top

*Jon Worth, Justin Bates*, for years you've been my sanity and my commonsense

Thanks also to:

My co-chairs and executive officers: *Ros Dampier, Liz Chare, Helen Evans Eleanor Thompson, Laura Santana, Lesley-Anne Perry, Katie Higgins, Jung-ui Sul, Chris Hanretty and Nicky Ellis*

All the Nightbus drivers and navigators, especially *Tony Brett*

*Tracy Perkin* and the University Equal Opportunities Dept

*Maria Burgess*, without whom the student union wouldn't function

*Annily Campbell*, the rock of the advice service

*Colin Anderson*, for being a politically-aware BM

All the OUSU staff and executive officers, especially *Rachel Logan* and *Andrew Thomas*

*Jeff Williams*, for stepping into a breach and filling it to overflowing

*Helen Salmon, Dan Paskins* and the left in OUSU over the last four years – some dedicated women and men whose contribution is rarely recognised.

*Nancy Mendoza, Helen Childs, Vinca Boorman, Dan York-Smith, Clare Sturman, Nic Boardman, the Sylvia left collective* at Somerville, *Georgia Toynbee, Cat Wallis*.

And finally:

*Ruth*, you've proved all your detractors wrong and been a vital and farsighted presence at the centre of our union.

*James*, some VPs(Welfare) do the bare minimum. Not you. Possibly the most astounding advocate for students I've ever met.

*Eleanor*, they said a woman couldn't hack VP(Finance). Be proud.

*John*, your political and ideological commitment to access is breathtaking. It's been an education.

*Melanie*: I know you'll do a great job. Don't let the bastards get you down.

*Will, Andrew, Sean and Sonia*, you have a hard act to follow. Good luck.

"If you think you're too small to be effective, you've obviously never been to bed with a mosquito".

## **Jeff Williams**

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

Another report! I have been serving as the VP (Graduates) since Easter break, and I must say that after completing a vacation report, third week council, fifth week council, Postgraduate Assembly and now termly report, not a week goes by that I don't assess just how valuable OUSU is for graduates and how significant this position can be. Over this past term much has gone on for graduates. I certainly have aimed to hit the ground running and make this transition as smooth and productive as possible. As this University is a complicated organization, I have used this period both to learn as much as I could about my role, to address individual issues that arose and to put in place a few plans. Here I'll capture the essence of what I have done under the headings of my four main job responsibilities -- representation, advice, publications and campaigns. I want to highlight that although I will only be serving for half of the year, I look forward to the summertime in which I can work on a few big projects and help the rest of the

new sabbatical team transition into OUSU effectively. Lucky me, among the sabbatical reports you are reviewing, I am the only one who is not closing his term in office, as I have as much time to serve as I have served to date.

## **Representation**

A former V-P Grads, Nick Smith, stated, “the V-P Graduates shoulders perhaps the greatest burden of University committee work of the sabbatical officers.” Given the new University structure of governance last year, his predecessor was scrupulous in securing graduate representation on as many committees as possible. “Indeed, at the risk of being hyperbolic,” said Nick, “arguably only the Vice Chancellor and Proctors sit on more committees”. It remains 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. The bulk of my efforts to become an effective representative of Oxford’s students have come in the form of “getting myself out there” and aiming to get cracking on those issues of greatest concerns to graduates. I did not have experience working with OUSU prior to this post, so I have needed to absorb and process all that people have been telling me. Fortunately, there have been plenty of graduate students willing to share their stories and perspectives. Notably, I have started to get to know just about every MCR President and arranged lunch and coffee chats. I’ve aimed to share ideas with OUSU reps with the intention of getting more collaboration and interaction among different MCR leaders. I have said before that I see social events as an important “way in” for OUSU to reach and serve graduates, and this summer will be an important time to test this hypothesis.

Postgraduate Assembly met as scheduled in 6<sup>th</sup> week. It passed useful motions on a number of graduate issues – transcripts, visiting graduate students, regulations for supervision, and opportunities for feedback on graduate provision. We discussed ideas to improve communication among MCR committees and emphasized that new web resources will be invaluable in this process. Liz Chare (Linacre) hopes to lead the effort on both web and entz projects this summer. John Cook (LMH) has been leading the efforts by serving in the graduate seat on the Education Policy and Standards Committee. Liz and John have been a highly enthusiastic and supportive team of graduate exec officers. Graduates approved the plan to elect the Graduate Executive officers and University committee posts held by graduates during week 2 of Michaelmas term. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> week. Prior to the PA meeting, representatives from half of the MCR’s attended a pizza social and term card sharing session. The goal was for different MCR leaders to get to know one another better and to coordinate some summer events together. During the meeting the idea of an MCR “Pres List” was circulated whereby presidents can circulate ideas and enhance collaboration. We discussed initial ideas about summer events, which will be open to all graduates.

Graduates have discussed important matters that provide me with the macro perspective on the graduate experience (covering everything from housing, phones, supervision issues, funding, fees beyond three years of study, new course hiccups, international student standards, visiting students and participation in graduation ceremonies). The main regular meetings for which I served as a representative included University Council, the Graduate Committee for the Council of Colleges, the International Students Committee. At the beginning of term, Oxford Counsel’s Local Area Committee called up OUSU and asked me to speak on graduate issues. This afforded me an experience speaking in town hall and informed the community about the contributions of OUSU and the graduate population. Informally, I have been meeting with the Assistant to the Proctors, the Senior and Junior Proctors and the Assessor. Since they are

keen to help graduates at Oxford, I have been in regular communication about issues that are arising for individual and groups of students.

### **Advice/Casework**

Currently I am involved in a few individual cases involving specific graduate needs and challenges. I find that some of the greatest influence in my role is in the form of individual casework. OUSU's non-directive advice assistance is delivers a customized service to any student who calls. I have had the chance to listen to act and in some cases to refer students on to other offices. I had a short training on listening skills with Annily Campbell, Student Advisor. And I attended a half-day seminar on the Race Relations Amendment Act (RRAA), as part of my role as Harassment Officer. This was especially good timing, as I received an overview of the harassment advisory service, details on the implications of the RRAA and a variety of information on bullying, harassment and discrimination. To date I have handled three significant pieces of casework and have served as an advisor to a handful of graduate students on matters ranging from employment, to housing to postponement of exams. I have enjoyed having an open door policy and encouraged students to come to me about any issues that come up. In this capacity I will serve graduate, mature and international student needs.

### **Publications**

I am responsible for making sure that graduate issues are represented in OUSU publications. I look forward to editing the 2003 Graduate Guide this summer. I have ideas to expand sections and provide additional support tools useful for graduates. To date, I have participated in interviews for future editors of publications like the Oxford handbook. Working with the International Students Committee, we look set to both publish and have an online copy of the new International Students Guide. Since OUSU has been refining its web site, I underwent training on how to adjust the sections that are most relevant to graduates. While I would have liked to have established more content on this site to date, I anticipate that as I spread the word on the site, I will work with the grad reps to make sure the content graduates are looking for is online. If you do visit <http://www.ousu.org>, you will find a section devoted to graduate students. It includes useful contact numbers and should contain minutes and agendas of meetings like Postgraduate Assembly.

### **Campaigns**

While I have not engaged in any campaign planning to date, I have had my ear out for different issues that are growing in importance to Oxfords students, especially its post grads. I understand from reviewing certain budget and other data that there may be room for me to work with graduates to plan a campaign in the summer. Mainly, I find that getting things done for graduate students is most effectively in the form of negotiation and individual discussions. I plan to "campaign" for individual colleges to interact more and plan to have more gatherings throughout the summer. Lastly, as I will detail in a moment, I have been beginning to analyse a graduate survey conducted by Nick Smith (in 2001). I would hope to summarize these findings and use them to organize any campaign ideas for Andrew Garlick who will take over the role of VP Grads in September.

### **Goals Moving Forward**

Given the end of Trinity term is upon us, I need to be realistic about what I intend to accomplish for graduate students in my role as VP Grads. I can still be ambitious, as I will have a long summer (through the end of August) with few distractions from achieving my main goals. Basically, if I can come away having created more collaboration among MCR/GCRs at individual colleges and if I can improve the nature of graduate students relationship with the college and department, I will consider this experience a success. In the mean time I plan to keep busy

working on two main areas of graduate academic and social interests. Feel free to contact me at any time, so that I can use this position for the greatest benefit to graduate students.

#### *Graduate Academic & Living Interests*

The graduate survey, which was begun last year at this time, will be of immense assistance at preparing the future V-P (Grads), Andy Garlick this September. Nearly 500 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 and have provided us with some useful ideas. All, however, can be used as a basis for future action. The survey was intended to enable OUSU 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, phones, child care, etc.) and the identification of certain desiderata within OUSU and the structures of the collegiate university that could be addressed and improved. By the end of the summer the goal is to have the responses 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.

#### *Graduate Social Interests*

We are tackling this project from two angles. First, working with David Wahl (St Catz), we plan to explore the options behind an informal graduate get-together on a weekly basis. The setting will likely be at a lounge that has an up-beat atmosphere and perhaps a “club” section. Results of a recent survey generally show that most graduates would be interested in a graduate night if it was put on well and avoided being lame. Free entry and discounted drinks sounded appealing. Most did not feel the need to bar others (i.e., members of the town or JCR members) from such an event, as graduates think that the differences between such populations are often exaggerated. Graduates seemed to like the typical undergraduate party music but would like such events to be put on with a bit less emphasis upon drinking. Second, working with Liz Chare we plan to have a large-scale graduate bop during the middle of the summer. Graduates are still in Oxford for the most part, and most are interested in having a chance to meet new people and get together with a large group of their peers. They recognise (and quite appreciate) how things slow down in the summer, but having one big event for grads seems appealing to many. Details to be circulated at the close of term.

#### **Thanks!**

I want to emphasize how fortunate I feel to be in this V-P (Grads) position. I couldn't have hoped for a more intense, challenging and friendly set of colleagues with whom to work. I have learned a tremendous amount from Ruth, Elena, James, Antonia and John. “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,” as one of my predecessors put it. , I wish them all the best for the future. Annily has been a star by getting me up to speed with listening and general advisory skills. She always seems willing to drop what she is doing to help me in my service to graduates even though she has commitments to many student groups throughout Oxford. I am grateful to the two graduate executive officers, Liz Chare and John Cook, for their help, and I would like to take the opportunity to wish Andrew Garlick every success when he takes up the mantle of V-P Graduates in September. I am confident that he 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 --

they are nice to me even when I seem to have put mastering OUSU general office procedures as secondary to understanding graduate needs). I look forward to welcoming the new sab team during week 9 and to working with them throughout the summer.

**John Craig**

**V-P (AcAff)**

At the end of Blair's term of office, it was generally agreed that 4 out of their five key pledges (miserly pledges, but key) had been kept. Blair was re-elected with as many votes as he had the first time. As we know, no one voted for me in the first place (an OUSU anomaly now consigned to history), so I could hardly do worse were I standing for re-election. However, it seems only fair to glance over my own key pledges. I have fought to defend central services like the Bodleian. The university now understand that shortening library opening hours, for example, simply isn't an option. From the university's point of view, this simply makes hard choices even harder, and problems of funding remain, but the views of students have been recognised and accepted. I have pressed, in a few duller moments, for a university photocopying card. While progress has been slowed by technical problems and lack of resources, I certainly believe that this is in the pipeline. Target Schools received, in total, an extra 5,000 this year, that it had never received before. Having built this into university action plans on widening participation and race relations, I believe that this 50% increase will be permanent. In part, this has allowed us to extend and improve our current activities, in part, this has been a case of at last compensating OUSU fully for the massive contribution we make to widening participation. My fifth pledge was to ensure that 'resources are allocated on the basis of merit not influence'. Think global, act local: my efforts on this have been channelled through the College Inequality Report, and, more often, the promotion and explanation of this report to the university. Gradually, their mock shock has been replaced by interest, and an acknowledgement that something must be done. At last, there is a growing recognition that it is right to think as a university about providing teaching, and from first principles, and improvements in students' experiences week to week will follow as a result. Lastly, the promise on which I haven't delivered. My manifesto promised the abolition of the Oxford application form and fee. In the case of the Oxford Application Form, this is largely because I lost the argument (which I did present on your behalf). Schools have responded differently to the rapid changes that have accompanied AS levels, for example, in terms of whether grades in modules are 'cashed in'. In addition, the Data Protection Act has made teachers' references blander. As a result, you can make the case that there is extra information that Oxford requires from its applicants. In August, I travelled to Cheltenham to speak to Tony Higgins of UCAS (the man whose signature goes on every UCAS form). He noted that with 66% of applicants to university applying online this year, adding extra questions and spaces on the UCAS form for those applying to Oxford would be simple. However, our experience this year with online bookings for Target Schools has suggested that we put a little too much faith in teachers' computer literacy (to an extent, we bought the Blairite hype). Until we are certain that everyone can apply to university online, and while changes in schools continue at their current pace, OAF will remain difficult to abolish. With the form remaining, arguments for getting rid of the fee are seriously weakened. In a climate in which many new access initiatives are taking off, funded by 'soft' short-term funding, it is difficult to see the university taking a step that is so expensive, and so obviously irreversible. As I see it, the options for next year are as follows: step up pressure on this issue, regardless of counter arguments, suggest that the fee's revenue be recouped from students at a different point in their Oxford career (remember, there are 3 times as many applicants as students in a year), or address our own policy. I would have sympathy with any of these options. Please do ask me about this issue in council if you would like. I don't treat lightly the points I made on my manifesto, and am happy to be held to account on this. What else have I done? I don't want to say too much about compulsory interview training for tutors, but it is clearly an OUSU priority,

and one on which I feel massive progress has been made this year. Much of the work of Target Schools has been professionalised; we have a volunteers' database, a massively improved website with online booking and volunteering, automatic email sign-up, allowing us to email volunteers according to region. By the end of this term, we hope, with the Admissions Office, to have developed an online feedback form for all student-led access work, in order to feed in to the new Admissions Office database, for which I pressed during my first few weeks in office. Support for Target Schools volunteers has improved, as have our records of where we have visited and when, allowing us to check against rates of application and success to see precisely what Target Schools contributes. This year, our regional events were as good as ever, and we got our first indications of the impact they can have. The event in Belfast last year (repeated this) doubled the number of people from Northern Ireland who got into Oxford, as well as increasing by 50% the number of applications. Our Target Schools Handbook is generally felt to have been the best yet. In academic affairs, progress has been slower, although projects on exam failure, a students' charter and equity of provision are all ongoing, and at last make a real impact in colleges and at the university level. We have at last developed the means to unite the concerns of students, creating web sites for JCCs, Divisional Boards and Academic Affairs officers. We can now invigorate the work of these groups, and multiply by many times the amount of information they have to work with. By bringing these groups together, if only virtually, we can also help to educate all of them about the nature of the university, and help them to work more effectively. Already, JCR Academic Affairs officers have an online handbook, their own discussion forum, can sign up to email lists instantly and are able to download posters to promote their work around college. To me, this is an important development in the way in which OUSU works to support JCRs, and I am excited about its potential for next year. I have done a huge amount of work on the National Mentoring Pilot Project work, I would add, that will bring in a quarter of my salary as revenue for OUSU. The mentoring scheme makes a huge difference to the lives of a few hundred young people in Blackbird Leys so what? Well, its like jazz.. .. I also feel that we have improved the administrative infrastructure, and that the job Sonia has to do in this area next year should be markedly easier. Anyone who wants more information about mentoring should see the campaigns section of ousu.org. On broader access work, I have had two memorable exchanges with education ministers. In the case of Estelle Morris, Ruth and I were given half an hour to make her case, and by the end it was clear that the minister had no answer. I have also met with the civil servant leading the review of student funding, again putting forward the policy of Oxforde students as forcefully as I could. I have always sought to do this job in a way informed by those who have inspired me, and as the democratic socialist that I have been for as long as I can remember. Often, pressure is placed on those in power by engaging with them, reclaiming their rhetoric for those they seek to disenfranchise, and forcing them to defend what they say. In the past, I believe Oxford students have been too happy with the comforting clichés of protest, no matter whether they were successful. We should remember the ancient lesson of democracy, that just occasionally politics can be an educative process. I joined the OUSU executive after six weeks in Oxford, and so naturally I have a few people to thank. Thank you to Anneliese Dodds, an OUSU president who put conscience and intelligence into action and inspired a nervous fresher. Thanks to Laura Walters for teaching us the basics. Thank you to all the sabbaticals who took time over the years to advise me and argue with me I hope I have now repaid my dues to them. Thank you to Oxford University Labour Club, especially Ed, Rick, Rhodri J, Julia, Fran and Mike S, without whom I would never have become a sabbatical. Thanks to everyone involved with Target Schools, especially Sonia, Chris, Jon, Jack, Jo, and Amber. A huge thanks to Jane Minto, Ruth Collier and Louise Horsfall at OCAO, Sufiya, whos done an amazing job for the Access Scheme, to Alan Evans at NMPP and to Prof Richard Pring (the man). Thank you to Rachel Reeves, a personal inspiration since my first day at Oxford. Thanks to twin, for unquestioning genius and for just knowing stuff. Thanks to Maria, who its been a pleasure to know for so long, and who I will really miss. Thanks to all the sabbaticals; we did as a team,

which is what counts. Thanks to Antonia for being left, to James for breathtaking ability, to Eleanor, who definitively bossed it, to Jeff for being awesome and to Ruth, for real honesty, and for living OUSU 24/7. And the thanks I just cant put into words: thank you Emma, Sacha, Laura T, Gill, New Coll (you know who you are), Alison, Kat, Tom, Andy and Chris, Rhodders, Alice, Leah, Ele, and another never-will-be-big-enough thank you to Mum and Dad.

## **OUSU Executive Officers**

### **Rosie Buckland**

It's been an exciting time for both Queer Rights and Disabilities Action, my two portfolios, this term. An anti-homophobia campaign has recently been launched and has made quite an impact, hopefully making people stop and think. Posters have been torn down in several colleges though, so please keep an eye out where this is happening. Homophobia within colleges does appear to be an issue at the moment and QR will continue to work to ensure students realise it's unacceptable, particularly by ensuring colleges have the relevant officers and that they are active and supported. I arranged a speaker meeting for QR this term, following on from successful speaker events last term and Dr Mitchell from Brookes came to speak about transgendered issues. The meeting was really interesting and has hopefully begun the start of QR being more vocal in terms of the transgendered debate. I've also arranged a speaker meeting for the beginning of next term, for when the freshers arrive; a question and answer session with politicians/councillors from all four main political parties. I've been particularly impressed with QR's attendance recently, which has been consistently good and the election of a new co-chair, Phil, the first open-place co-chair, is very exciting.

Disabilities Action has struggled with attendance this term, but nonetheless much has been achieved. A poster campaign was launched, which, as with the anti-homophobia campaign will hopefully alert students to the issues. Accompanying it is an article in 'Cherwell' exploring just how accessible Oxford is to people with mobility difficulties and I had a fun-filled afternoon pushing James Kettle around Oxford in a wheelchair. It's probably the most bizarre thing I've done this term in the name of OUSU, but hopefully it will generate a greater interest and involvement in disability issues. I didn't realise how infuriated I'd be until I realised how difficult it was to do the simplest things, mostly because people just don't think. Even something as simple as moving along the pavement was made near impossible by people leaving their bikes where they shouldn't. We've had a turnover of co-chairs as well, with Laura leaving, but Nick and Laura, co-chairs of the Dyslexia Network, joining.

Both committees will be prominent at fresher's fair and new involvement will be exciting. Apart from working with my two committees, I've done general office stuff on duty afternoons etc, as well as general exec stuff, which included stewarding the rag march. I'm ready for plenty more marches now with a newly acquired certificate in Event Marshalling! I wrote for the LGBT officer's handbook and was also elected in exec, along with Chris, to JCC; I hope I'm able to fulfil that role well. So much of what OUSU does is brilliant that I'm grateful to have the opportunity become more involved. I'd like to thank all the sabs for their hard work this year. It is appreciated and I think you're all stars. Good luck. Thank you to Colin as well for introducing me to Snood and the bug game, and to Maria for helping me out with the photocopier. And of course to James, for your time, effort and dedication and for being so cool to work with, I've really enjoyed it. Personal thanks goes of course to Ros and to everyone who's listened to me talk constantly about OUSU—I hope you know what it is now!

### **Liz Chare**

This term has been one filled with difficulties: the collapse of wotnot (and therefore the women's campaign email list) and a twice broken foot has hampered both electronic and personal communication for me this term. However, things could be worse: NTL is not my telephone service provider. Despite all this, I am proud to say that the co-chairs of the women's campaign have seen through the fuff and managed to put on some great events this term. Two highlights have been the women in Afghanistan Speaker Meeting with Siba Shakib, the author of "Afghanistan, Where God Only Comes to Weep" and the pro-choice demonstration that was held last Saturday on. Both events were truly inspirational and confirmed for me the importance the women's campaign still has in Oxford. I would also like to thank all those who attend Women's Campaign and look forward to working with them next term.

Monday of 6th week saw me attending our termly post-graduate assembly meeting which was preceded by a social gathering (with pizza!) for presidents and social secs. This provided a useful chance for presidents and social secs of different colleges to get to know each other and to exchange both ideas and email addresses so that joint events can be planned for the summer and freshers' week. Regrettably, there is still a certain apathy amongst graduate students to get involved in the student union. However, the work that OUSU achieves on their behalf is both acknowledged and welcomed. I believe that we are beginning to foster some interest which will need to be carefully nurtured by the graduate exec and sabbaticals next term.

I have continued to attend council and exec as has been possible and for the last nine weeks have had to face the problems that Oxford poses to those of us who are not fully mobile.

### **John Cook**

Throughout the past term, I have been actively involved in my role as an OUSU Graduate Executive. In addition to serving on the Executive and attending Postgraduate Assembly and OUSU Council, I have also served on the Career Services Committee, the Social Sciences Divisional Board, and as the graduate representative on the Educational Policy and Standards Committee. In these roles, I have worked on a variety of issues, including, among others, transcripts for graduate students. Since I expect to graduate this summer and not to be here in the Fall, I wanted to take the chance to thank the OUSU membership for the chance to serve over the course of my time at Oxford.

### **Nicky Ellis**

This term I have working with the anti racism committee and the promoting choice committee, providing support, ideas, and keeping an eye on budgets. Anti-racism has held a series of meetings; I have also met with the co-chairs to discuss various issues arising and whether action should be taken. This behind the scenes work often passes unnoticed, but is very important; the committee needs to have a framework within which it can act or provide support when action is needed on an ad hoc basis, and needs to be able to meet to discuss issues arising even if the decision is taken not to act. Promoting choice came into its own this term when the controversial motion to overturn the ban on life came to council; the committee was able to take this opportunity to quietly and calmly remind everyone that OUSU has a policy which states that every woman is entitled to non directional advice covering all available options. We leafleted cornmarket when the Life march was taking place, as it was felt that it was very important to reassert women's right to make their own choices and to be given all the help and support they might need to do so, and also to try to get the message across that Promoting choice is not Pro abortion, in direct opposition to life, but Pro personal decision, facilitated by advice, information and education. Beyond this I have worked within OUSU alongside the rest of exec to ensure the day to day smooth running of the place, to question the work of the sabs,

something this years team have worked very hard to encourage, so as to enable best possible feedback and cooperation, and very nearly gained a competent grasp of the mysterious (though ultimately wonderfully simple) ways of the OUSU web site.

### **Chris Hanretty**

Obviously, both of my committees have been hampered by Wotnots bankruptcy. Target Schools, which paid the costs of data retrieval through its HEFCE grant, has its lists back, largely undamaged. Ethics has been less lucky. There is a slight hope that the data will be retrieved, but we have already taken steps towards creating a new list that will (hopefully) distribute our campaigning information as widely as possible.

Target Schools has continued as usual our: Open Day in Worcester was great fun, though the low turnout was slightly disappointing. In future years, Open Days ought to be planned with the AS level exam timetable more in mind. However, the Open Day in 9th week, in Hertford (contact: Joanna.biggs@spc.ox.ac.uk, amber.arnold@medical-school-offices.oxford.ac.uk) is now fully booked, and should be amazing, thanks in no small part to outgoing co-chairs Amber Arnold, Jo Biggs, John Faley and Jack White, who have done a power of work, and to whom it is a great sadness to say goodbye.

Ethics has been dormant for the first half of this term because of Messrs Dutton, et al, but looks promising for summer activity. One immediate difference between this and previous terms is that there has been no high visibility campaign this term. This is no accident, but rather a shift in campaigning strategy. With OUSU's submission to University Council on Ethical Investment currently undergoing consideration, now is not the time to be drawing further attention to Ethical Investment, but to be continuing the pressure at, yes, the university level, but also helping individual colleges to push forward their own efforts. Thanks go to Jung-ui Sul and Katy Higgins for all their efforts and persistence over the term.

### **Rachel Logan**

This term has been fairly active, as usual. the most important development has of course been the prospect of at last being able to move OUSU to accessible, decent offices in the centre of town where we can provide a full range of services in house. this has been entirely due to the hard work of the Sabs, so a huge amount of thanks to them. my time has been mostly taken up with trying to get Entz up and running, despite problems with mailing lists. thanks go to co-chairs Nabeel and Nick for making a start on the Entz handbook which we hope to have out before next term. it will hopefully include a wealth of information on the services available to entz officers, ways to deal with college and university regulations and officials as well as the basic legal and health and safety stuff. Ruth has been wonderfully patient with me and my frequent illness and has put a lot of time and effort into getting this started, we finally have the entz mail list ready to go, and should be able to launch it very soon. Ruth and i have also been involved in negotiations with Rock Student to organise joint Freshers' events for next term, we will now be able to offer colleges two big nights on the Tuesday and Wednesday of 0th week at park end. tickets will be available soon in college groups.

Health and welfare is going along great, although my involvement has been minimal to say the least. james' reforms are extremely successful and we are getting a lot of positive feedback from colleges. it has been great to see such important changes actually being implemented. the push for a second student advisor is also going along well. hopefully Andrew Copson and i will be able to take them further next term. I've been to all but one exec meeting, where we've had some really valuable discussions on the responsibilities of the executive, and been to every council. the difficulties over ultra vires law were made unpleasantly obvious with the motion on the conflict in Palestine, and i hope that some concerted effort will be put into our executive

mandate to campaign against and investigate ways to circumvent these repressive laws which restrict our ability to conduct effective campaigns.

End of term thank yous go to the Sabs, who have one and all been both unbelievably competent and uniformly lovely. It has been a real privilege and a lot of fun to be on the exec under such an open and hardworking bunch of people. Colin too! Maria has been as indispensable as ever. The exec itself has really worked well together, and this term especially has been highly entertaining. Special mentions to Chris and Nicky who have been both supportive and essential.

### **Anatole Pang**

This term I have endeavoured to work as hard as God allows in my portfolio work. To this end I am in the process of drafting an entirely new constitution for the International Students Committee, which until now had not operated under any formal structure. Unfortunately this is not yet finished as the project seems to balloon each time a new situation crops up, requiring clarification in the regulations. However, with consultation with the co-chairs, the full edition is almost finished and shall be in place and functional by the beginning of Michaelmas, with the expectation of some furiously contested internal elections among other things.

Additionally the International Students Committee has almost finished its work in collating anecdotal evidence about the problems faced by overseas student in starting bank accounts. The results of this, alongside the results of another inquiry into the processes of student visas, shall both be published in electronic format and hopefully in a hardcopy that can be distributed by colleges. Lastly, the website is being updated by the perseverance of the co-chairs, and with some luck the International Students' Handbook should be fully online by the end of term. It is hoped that this too can be published in a hard format and distributed to all those international students coming up for the next academic year.

I have naturally continued to enjoy my association with the institution of the Student Union, and am encouraged by the apparent love of diversity amongst the Executive displayed by the sabbatical officers.

### **Marc Stoneham**

This term I have been involved more in OSSL and feel that it has a viable, if problematic, future. I have also begun work (at time of writing) on a guide for Fresher's Week and hope to get it finished before the end of term. Unfortunately, other commitments have made attendance at Exec. problematic, but I think these are now solved. Likewise, tutorial commitments have meant I have not been able to make a full council - but I have at least been able to put in an appearance. I would like to compliment the Sabs on their role in making OUSU more businesslike, and wish them luck in the future.

### **Andrew Thomas**

This term I have been involved with supporting the Finance and Funding Campaign and the work done by Eleanor with Battels support for JCRs.

This has been a slow term but this could be expected given the stress of exams. I do however, think that there will be a turn around in this respect for the Finance and Funding Campaign next term and I look forward to working with Will.

Thanks a lot to Ruth and Eleanor for their help since I have been on exec. I would also like to say a really BIG THANK YOU to Antonia who has always been there as a friendly ear with lots of advice.

### **P. Duncan Weldon**

This term, after conference, NUS committee has had little to do. Accommodation committee though has met and is currently working on plans to produce a web based database of student housing in Oxford as well as progressing with the earlier plans to produce a 'Living in guide'. In addition to my duties with these committees I have also attended duty mornings and exec meetings. My report is actually a bit dull, I'm very sorry for this, especially if you've just read to the end of it. Oh well, I've enjoyed this term anyway.

## **OUSU Committees**

### **Accommodation Committee**

This term the accommodation committee has attempted to make progress on the accommodation web database. Unfortunately the database on the OUSU website is not ready yet and thus the actual uploading of the information will have to be postponed until next term. Raw data covering a limited selection of houses is, however, available thanks to previous efforts by individual welfare/accommodation officers to amass information for use within their own colleges.

The living-in guide is largely ready to be put on the web as most of the information is contained within a current OUSU booklet although the format is yet to be decided. This will be done alongside the accommodation web database next term.

### **Disabilities Action**

It has been an interesting, if yet quiet term at Disabilities Action this term. Two new co-chairs of the Oxford Dyslexia Network – Nicholas Donelvy and Laura Donney - have been appointed and have joined Laura Timms and Penelope Berrill as co-chairs. Everyone at DA wishes them the very best with their new roles.

Work has been continuing on the Guide for Students who have a Disability in Oxford, and the publication looks set to be published in September, with a little help from HEFCE. The rest of the time we have been investigating getting new people involved with Disabilities Action, and raising awareness of people who have a disability through a poster campaign and hopefully some coverage in the student press. Looking forward to next term, we are hopeful that we will have a guest speaker on the impact of SENDA legislation for students who have a disability.

Thanks must be given to a number of people: to those who attend DA on a regular basis or who are in regular contact with it, to Rosie, our executive officer and especially to Laura Timms and James Rowlands. Laura leaves as co-chair at the end of Trinity to move on to pastures new and James finishes his term of office as Welfare V/P. Both Laura and James have worked very hard during their time with Disabilities Action and have given many valuable suggestions as well as a lot of their time to it. We wish them well in their future careers.

### **Entz**

Entz has had something of a slow boring term, Trinity being difficult to organise events and guarantee interest. Instead, we have been looking at the relationship between JCR entz and OUSU entz, especially how we as a committee can support colleges.

To this end, we have already produced a plan for an 'entz booklet' and which we hope to complete writing and publish over the summer. This will be similar to such OUSU publications as the Survival Guide and the Academic Affairs Handbook, in that its primary function will be to give useful information to JCR Reps. Projected contents include: Negotiating with your college on

Entz, coping with entz welfare crisis, especially involving alcohol, where to hire equipment and information on leading Oxford venues. Hopefully the entz booklet should be ready to distribute by the begining of next year.

On a more party orientated side, OUSU is also in negoations with a club promoter to do club nights during Freshers' Week. Watch this space!

## **Environment**

This term we have successfully continued the weekly meetings of environment committee, with varying, but encouraging levels of attendance. The main focus of our work has been the planning of university-wide recycling scheme and sorting out previous environment committee decisions (such as the Switch to Green energy saving campaign). The green guide for environment reps was produced and distributed, with much help from Paul Parrish (Keble) and the previous co-chairs. We have tried to involve JCRs and OUSU in our decisions and plans, this has happened by proposing and successfully passing motions in college JCRs and OUSU council. However, we have not had much response in terms of information or action from OUSU's executives and sabbaticals. This will hopefully change with the council motion passed in 5th week. We need stronger and more structured links with other committees (F&F, Ethics, Women.), groups and people involved in OUSU if we want to achieve our stated aims of creating a network of environmental activity throughout the university. The OUSU office's internal operations show a considerable (and problematic) lack of awareness for environmental concerns. We need more than an environment committee - environmentally friendly practices must be implemented and furthered in all OUSU's actions. In battels negotiations, for example, we need to make colleges aware of the fact that they are wasting students' money by leaving on lights night and day, by using fresh envelopes instead of re-using old ones etc. etc.

For the future we hope that the involvement of the president in the recycling scheme and contacts to colleges will be of help in setting up the recycling scheme. Contacts with Oxford City Council exist, but need to backed up by visible progress on the side of university and colleges.

We are also trying to attract new members into environment committee - chiefly by promotion at freshers' fair and an active conservation day that will be held in Michaelmas. We are hoping to work with other societies and organisations such as People and Planet. We welcome any support or help and look forward to seeing YOU at our next meeting in Mansfield at 5pm in the Council Room.

## **Equal Opps**

Given that this is the first term of the Equal Opportunities Committee's life, much of our work has been focused on creating the right foundations for the committee to ensure that its job is carried out properly. As a primarily conultative and supportive committee aimed at equal opportunities officers this term we have focused on creating a guide to equal opps, for use by both equal opportunity officers and those officers with responsibilities in this area, which is soon to be distributed. We have also been putting stuff up on the shiny new website and disseminating information and poster campaigns about dealing with harrassment. We have already held one meeting of equal opps reps, and hope to hold another before the end of this term, in order to discuss such issues as freshers week organisation.

## **Finance and Funding**

This term it's been rather problematic to call F&F meetings due to a severe lack of email list. Mr Wotnot decided to return all OUSU lists except the F&F one. We're not bitter, honest. Eleanor has now kindly created a new email list to which you can sign up by going to [www.ousu.org](http://www.ousu.org) and

clicking on a link. Very easy. Talking of the website, we have begun to add to it, and there is more to come over the summer. We also produced fact sheets that went out to all OUSU reps explaining the different funding options for higher education. The purpose of these fact sheets is that students become aware of the different problems that students could face depending on the decision the government makes on education funding. Decision still pending... which is possible why attendance to F&F has decreased this term. It is difficult to motivate students who are not sure what the government will do next. If the government decides to go down the route of graduate tax, as has been hinted recently, the grants not fees, slogan will be obsolete, and explaining the impact of graduate tax will be the next task of this committee. With this in mind, we have begun to plan a series of events for freshers next term that will ensure they are informed on the issues F&F is concerned with. This will include a stall in Freshers, Fair with postcards for freshers to fill in and a freshers F&F meeting in first week. We have also made attempts at addressing a few finance and funding issues particular to Oxford. We have liaised with the International Students committee over overseas funding, and they are now compiling a report on how banks treat international students. We have also helped to make the relevant links with the college inequality report and battels increases, which highlight two widespread financing concerns for Oxford students.

## **Queer Rights**

QR has continued to move forward this term with the election of a third co-chair, the renewal of a successful anti-homophobia poster campaign, and a well-attended speaker meeting on transgendered issues. Attendance at meetings continues to be strong and we have been pleased by the increased level of participation. We also saw the launch of our new website and hope to continue to elevate the profile of QR in the university and the wider community. Additionally, we have been revamping the LGBT Officers Handbook and look forward to new editions of the Careers for Queers and LGBT Student Handbooks which should be available in the autumn. Homophobia in various colleges and the university's harassment codes continue to be among our most significant areas of concentration. We are planning a major speaker meeting for the beginning of next term, involving the major political parties and their representative stances on LGBT issues.

## **Womens' Campaign**

The collapse of the wotnot email list has not made it easy to organise events this term, but despite this, those who attend Women's Campaign have enjoyed some great events. Two highlights have been the women in Afghanistan Speaker Meeting with Siba Shakib, the author of "Afghanistan, Where God Only Comes to Weep" and the pro-choice demonstration that was held last Saturday. Both events were well attended by both old and new members. In 8th week we are looking forward to meeting the successful Labour MP for the Don Valley constituency, Caroline Flint in Westminster. Tomorrow, many members of the Women's Campaign will be helping with the Women's Open Day held at St. Hilda's. We, the co-chairs, would also like to thank all those who attend Women's Campaign and look forward to some exciting events in Michaelmas term.