

A Note by the Deputy President (Graduate Students)

Buddy scheme proposal

I have prepared a proposal for the Graduate schools to introduce a formal Buddy scheme amongst research students at Imperial. This is important pastoral care for students who have had a major re-haul in their lives on starting a PhD. It is proposed that the buddy be a second/third year and show the new PhD the ropes especially on how to deal with their supervisor and other staff if in the same department. This is the most serious and unfortunately common complaint of a PhD. Apart from this, the buddy would help the new student settle in even in London (if they have come from another city).

I have proposed that the structure for this be formalised by providing money for at least one lunch between new student and their buddy.

Usual college meetings

I have attended QARC, the Recruitment and Admissions Policy committee, GSEPS Management Committee Meeting and GSLSM Management Committee Meeting.

Budget for GSA strategy

I have been preparing the GSA budget for next year with the help of my treasurer when possible. It has been interesting (what is construed as a core activity, welfare etc.) as there is no real example for me to follow as this is the first year that the GSA is going through this process of bidding.

PG roadshow/ GSEPS talk for MSc

I have helped host the Postgraduate Roadshow from ULU. I organised the walkway space in front of the SCR and sourced the relevant equipment they needed.

In addition, I manned a stall for a special GSEPS talk for MScs. This talk doubles up as an induction of sorts as these MSc students were not included in the large-scale GSEPS induction talk in October 2006.

GSA events

Since last Council the GSA has had one event which was subsidised. Entry was £1 with a free glass of wine/orange juice and the theme of the night was Speed Mingling (networking and/or dating). We had approximately 50 participants and subsidised the evening to the tune of £68 approximately.

I have since then been liaising with the social rep from Tanaka and we have agreed on doing a joint event on Friday 23 February to co-incide with the beginning of their half-term. It will be held in Notting Hill Arts Club and I have managed to get a deal with the club for happy hour all night (£2/drink). This is along with guaranteed entry for our students (pre-sold tickets). The GSA should be making on average 50p per ticket sold and the only cost it will incur is £35.77 for a book of tickets.

Festival of inspirational leadership

We have now written and sent off a letter to Bill Clinton and have drafted letters for Barack Obama, Gordon Brown, Tony Blair, Christopher Gardner and Kelly Holmes.

DPGS role review

Along with John Collins I have been investigating the possible different models the DPGS could follow for next year. These models have been shown to members of the GSA Academic Affairs and the GSA Activities Committee and I am compiling their responses. It has also been shown to Mary Ritter (Pro-Rector) who was very involved with the DPGS role during its inception.

These models have to be revised further before final models are presented to a students' forum which I will be organising.

Other meetings

GSA meetings (Academic, activities, executive) and individual meetings with social reps from other departments/ GSA members

Gender focus

I have attended a Gender focus group organised by Esat Alpay and have integrated a possible outcome into my proposal for the Buddy Scheme. It was very enlightening in general and very useful in order to organise "Women in Research" events.

Faculty of Medicine representation

Had a meeting with Bernie Morley (Director of the Graduate School of Life Sciences and Medicine) and Shiv Chopra (ICSM SU President) at the Hammersmith Campus. We felt that there was not adequate representation from this faculty and felt that it stemmed mainly because of the spread out nature of this particular faculty across four campuses (Hammersmith, Charing Cross, South Ken and St Mary's). It was therefore thought that individual campus reps would be the best option and advertising of the facilities available to students; this latter point to be especially emphasised in the remote Hammersmith campus where there is an unused fully-furnished common room and an unused students union office already present. Particular subjects were thought could be used to attract students' interest in representation and in the Student Union mainly transportation links between the Hammersmith Campus and South Ken. It was also thought that the best way of congregating students to try and elect a rep would be through the Director of Postgraduate Studies for each department.

In addition, I thought it would be useful to go through the accommodation route. On that note, I have spoken to a GSA rep, who has put me in touch with a very popular student in the halls of Du Cane housing situated in Hammersmith. We hope that she will be the ideal candidate

In addition, I will be in touch with the secretary of the Faculty of Medicine to investigate possible options of hiring transportation to and from Hammersmith, St Mary's and South Ken.

PG Survey

With the Merit award for MSc students survey, we achieved over 21% response rate from MSc students over a period of four days. On presentation of these results the graduate schools would like a higher number of responses. I have resent the survey out to those who have not completed until I get 40% response.