

DPEW Report

A note by the DPEW – Kirsty Patterson

The first version of this report was presented to the Executive Committee on 14th September. There is some new exciting stuff though but I'm sure you've already noticed that ;)

Training

During handover the sabbatical team attended numerous training sessions and meetings to introduce us to our roles.

I also attended two external training courses, Active Political Leadership and Action through Advocacy, with NUS. These were very relevant for the role of an Education and Welfare Officer and were of huge benefit. I have already started to implement some of the skills and ideas I developed on these courses to improve our representation provision.

Accommodation

I attended a walk around of the Southside Building project with Paddy Jackman (Head of Commercial Services) and Sharine Brown (Head of Residences) to measure the impact that portacabins, which have been erected on Watts Way, would have on students living in the North facing rooms. I managed to negotiate a £5 a week rent reduction for the 26 students living on the first and second floors that look straight out onto the portacabins.

I have arranged regular meetings with the Head of Residences, the first of these was on Tuesday 11th September. The main concern raised at this meeting was the issue of inadequate laundry provision in several halls of residence which will be monitored over the coming term. Other matters

Meetings

External meetings have included discussions with Nightline, the Imperial College Health Centre, a Trade Union Congress Representative (TUC) to advise us on how to better represent part time student workers and Securitas to discuss a Safer Student Scheme on campus.

Internal meetings have so far included Southside Project Board and Handover meetings where we finally took control of the building from Laing O'Rourke's. Myself and a number of other volunteers from RCS Motor Club (who thought we were heading towards the bar) helped Residences and Commercial Services to make the building habitable long into the wee hours on arrivals day.

Other meetings have included Student Experience Stream Board and a Fairtrade Steering Committee Pre-meeting.

Representation Network

I have been concentrating on ways that we can improve the network of academic and welfare reps throughout our faculties and departments. So far this has involved organising external training (although take up is somewhat lacking) and writing a basic guide to help support all Representatives in their roles. I am also setting up a mailing list to aid communication between reps.

Fresher's Bed Drops

Most rooms in halls contained a pack from the union when Freshers arrived on the 29th September. I ensured that these packs did not contain any overlap with those from the Health Centre and Residences to cut down on unnecessary twaddle. There was also a 'special' copy of Felix for all Freshers in their bed packs. There have been enquiries from one or two students who did not receive their packs. Having personally delivered 3000 copies to all Imperial College Halls of Residence and arranged these on desks in the Southside Hall of Residence over the evening before arrivals I can only assume that this is a simple mistake and have made up spares for anybody who still needs a copy.

Campaigns

I am currently working on skeleton plans for campaigns in the autumn and spring terms. This has involved attending RISE Week Planning Board meetings at City Hall; working on ideas for SHAG Week; contacting the National Blood Service to organise blood donor sessions on campus (after several requests from students) and liaising with Sport Imperial and the Health Centre to organise a Healthy Living Campaign.

Fairtrade University Status

I have the application form to become a Fairtrade University. College is about to accept a formal policy similar to that of ICU completing the award criteria. College and ICU have expanded their Fairtrade offer over the Summer to include exciting new products such as T-shirts and Beer. The Fairtrade Steering committee, revived last year after a paper passed by council, has also attracted new attention with different College departments requesting that a representative from their team can sit on the committee.

I have also been invited to join with other Westminster Student Unions to support Westminster becoming a Fairtrade Borough. To this end I am arranging a meeting for the 22nd October to bring together Kings, LSE and University of Westminster with members of the Westminster Fairtrade Group and local councillors to pick up the Westminster Fairtrade Campaign.

Felix

I am coordinating with Nigel Cooke (Information and Advice Centre) and David Hayton (Imperial College Health Centre) to write a regular 'Welfare Section' in this year's Felix. The Freshers' Issue and First Issue have included the section – headed SOS. Unfortunately due to problems with my email account there will not be a Welfare Section this week but there is now plenty of material and a growing stock of themes for the coming term.

Sub-warden and Warden Interviews

I have sat on the interview panel for Subwarden Interviews at Southside, Fisher, Garden and Weeks and Southwell Halls. Thanks to Tristan Sherliker for filling in at Beit when a request came through for a Student Representative at very short notice (about 9 hours before the interviews). I also helped appoint a new Accommodation Centre Manager after Residences have had a restructuring before their move over to the 'Student Hub'.

Freshers' Week

Starting on Saturday at stupid o'clock I offered my help to the Halls in the Beit area. This included negotiating with Security and Sub-Wardens on Prince Consort Road over rubble that was blocking the road; helping students moving into Selkirk Hall to carry their belongings into the building and to their rooms; hanging curtains in Falmouth Keogh Hall and selling and delivering bed packs to new arrivals.

On Saturday Evening I helped transport around 70 students to the Mingle using Jez and Clem, as the Motor Clubs do every year (unfortunately Clem only making it as far as Pembridge before waiting to be towed back) and I liaised with Sub-Wardens from Orient and Piccadilly at kicking out time to get their residents home safely using coaches booked by the union.

Freshers' Fair saw a Campaigns Stall and a Welfare Stall in the Marquee giving out information on how to get involved in SHAG and RISE and also asking people to choose their priorities for campaigns in the coming year. Unfortunately I was stuck in the Queens Tower for most of the day taking tours for RAG so never actually got to see the stall after having set it up. Many thanks to Nigel Cooke, Rebecca Coxhead, Hannah Theodorou and Hannah's helpers for keeping this going all day and getting rid of nearly 1000 condoms!

Annual Leave

I went on holiday from 27th – 31st August and enjoyed a day off for my birthday in September.

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