

Council
28th April 2008

GSA Chair Report *A Report by Kilian Frensch*

GSA Spring Mingle

On March 13th, the GSA ran an event titled "Spring Mingle - Feel the Tingle" to announce that the GSA was back. The main purpose, aside from the obvious, was twofold: to introduce the GSA to the many postgrads who do not know of its existence, and to issue a statement to those that do that it is back and ready to make an impact. The new committee was introduced to the postgrads that attended, and asked the students what they wanted to get out of the GSA in the near future. The event, held at dB's, included free food and drink, as well as a raffle and a live band, all subsidised by the GSA. Although expensive (costing around £1000), it was a great success on numerous levels. The event reached capacity and food and drink were out within 2 hours, while the raffle tickets sold subsidised the raffle. This made it one of the highest-attended GSA events ever and a lot of feedback was given as to how to progress over the next months in order to maximise what the GSA can offer to postgrads.

The GSA is now contemplating running two "mingles" yearly, albeit with a smaller budget each, in order to bring together postgrads from different departments.

Representation

The GSA has been in contact with all the Directors of PG Studies from all departments in South Kensington in order to gather information about the way in which their postgraduate representation system is structured and, where necessary, work on improvements. This has thus far been a very fruitful process, and it seems that postgrad representation is very well looked after in nearly all departments on behalf of the college. However, there are still individual cases where the structures in place haven't worked, and the GSA will be looking into finding ways of getting involved so that problems that arise for postgrads in these situations can be better solved.

In addition, the GSA is trying to set up termly meetings of all departmental postgrad representatives so that common problems can be identified, and also to promote interdepartmental activities.

Departmental Representatives

The GSA is currently extending the departmental representatives' roles to include an induction event at the beginning of October for new students. They will then attend these departmental events and give a very brief presentation (prepared by the GSA as a template) on Union services, the structure of the representation system, who to ask for what, and Transferable Skills Courses.

Also, the GSA is currently trying to get every department to have an adequate induction booklet, which students can later use as a source of information for deadlines, contacts and general guidelines.

General Guidelines for Health and Safety Issues

There have been a few problems with inconsistencies between departments, where some treat students very differently from others with respect to certain health and safety issues. The GSA is currently trying to identify where these problems actually lie and how to allow the Union to get involved quicker in such cases so that the problems can be solved adequately.

Student Status for Writing Up Students

This has been ongoing, together with the Deputy President Education and Welfare, Kirsty

Patterson. The GSA chair has been meeting with Directors of PG Studies from different departments, or, alternatively, sitting in on Staff-Student Committee Meetings, in order to gather support from staff to grant full student status to research students in the writing-up phase. This has been successful so far and we hope to carry that success into meetings with college.

Activities

The GSA Committee is currently finalising plans for a monthly postgrad pub quiz, to be held in the Holland Bar, starting in the second week of May. This will be run as a league, and at the end of every year the leading team in the league will get its name inscribed on a plaque.

The committee is also finalising plans for periodic themed movie nights (a suggestion brought forth by many postgrads) in conjunction with ICU Cinema, also beginning in May.

Sports

The GSA is starting a football league, which will be launched at the end of May on a weekly basis in Hyde Park. We had been waiting for nice weather to begin, and it looks like that should be working out soon.

Website

The GSA website is currently being revamped by Jad Marrouche, and will be done in the next two weeks. It will offer information pages, an online forum for postgrads to organise or suggest their own events and will host the league tables for football and the monthly pub quiz.

PG Students Ball

This has been discussed briefly within the GSA Committee and will be elaborated on in the next few weeks. The GSA would like to stage a postgrad ball in October, however it will depend on funding and finding a ball committee.