

Council
19th January 2009

Deputy President (Education and Welfare) Report

A Note by Hannah Theodorou- Deputy President (Education and Welfare)

Halls Visits

So far I have visited:

Tizzard, Falmouth and Keogh, Selkirk, Beit, Fisher, Holbein and Willis Jackson, Southwell, Orient, Wilson House

The issues have been followed up with the Head of Accommodation services and wardens and there will be a feature in Felix with the common issues and responses being discussed. There was also a mammoth interviewing session which saw the recruitment of a new warden to Southside and 3 Assistant wardens to Wilson, Clayponds and Holbein (with the usual round of subwarden interviews that ensued- a lovely way to spend a Sunday....).

SOLE and NSS

Thankyou to everyone who encouraged participation in SOLE- we had our best ever turn out rate, proving that a little bit of competition and a small incentive can go a long way to improve participation! The National Student Survey is online from today so all final years are encouraged to go online and fill it out- a participation rate of 50% or more is needed to publish the results.

Prayer Room

A big thank you to Rebecca Butler from Commercial services who has been looking into the feasibility of this project. The room is less affected by damp than we originally thought, and the report is going to the Rector this week. There will need to be some considerable fundraising on the part of the Islamic Society, however.

QA Review

This has taken up a considerable portion of many members of College and my time and justifiably so. We are reviewing our processes thoroughly and identifying areas for possible improvement. The ones I have been putting considerable effort into are the ones reviewing our appeal, complaints and disciplinary processes, welfare provision and Committees. I hope that some really good things come out of this in advance of next year's intake.

Strategic Education Committee

Myself and Alex Grisman had the wonderful honour of sharing our views on Assessment and Feedback at the Strategic Education Committee's Away Day (which means they crossed the road to the Gore). This is particularly significant because it is the University's most powerful Education Committee and the only one we don't have a seat on. The points stressed were:

- Feedback isn't just about a grade. It's about highlighting strengths, weaknesses and how to improve for the future.
- That Departments need to be accountable to an authority when monitoring how feedback is given to students. At the moment they're just left to get on to it.
- That feedback is also about giving students an overview of their progress so far, identifying their weaknesses and highlighting what they need to do to improve. This inevitably will require more input from personal tutors....
- ... Which opened a whole can of worms. And we talked about personal tutors for a while. It was extremely productive and pulled together a point we've been trying to make for years. Hurrah!

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Welfare Information Resources

I feel that welfare information for students is scattered, incomplete and impossible to find and it seems that I'm not alone in thinking this. Kat Wright and Mark from ICSMSU are keen to see an overhaul of how we provide students with welfare information and have some interesting ideas. We've seen the introduction of Welfare Posters into halls but there's more to be done and it seems the ball has started rolling on the College front, with the Dean of Students raising our concerns and pointing out to the Head of Communications that we need to pull something together.

E-Portfolio

There has been a growing movement in Higher Education institutions, both in the UK and internationally, to develop online portfolios of academic and extra-curricular achievements during their time at University. We are in the research stages of this now and really need student input to make sure everything that you want to be included is. Please let me know if you would like to be involved and I'll add your name to the list.

Job sites

With the economy on its head, a higher proportion of our students are finding their entry into the world of work significantly harder than they anticipated. We're not getting the jobs we wanted, and it's partly to do with poor performance at interviews and recruitment rounds, particularly in areas such as team work and communication. While careers are looking at this in one way, Commercial services are taking a different approach and are researching the possibility of a temping job site for current Imperial students to get some well-needed cash injections throughout the term and acquire some essential skills along the way. This meant at 8.03am I sat bleary-eyed on a train to Warwick where they have one of the most successful systems in operation. It looks interesting.

Welfare Campaigns

These have slightly fallen to the wayside, but I hope to be able to put some more time and effort into this term's campaigns in the next few days. Beat the Blues is a campaign aiming to get information relating to Mental Health out to students, particularly trying to reach out to those that would find contacting resources like the Counselling service difficult.

This is followed by our safety/ security campaign in Feb, Fairtrade Fortnight, Green Week and later on a Cycle Safety. There needs to be more work done on Disabilities and some thought given to a responsible drinking campaign (sigh.....). Any takers?

International Student Elections

I am the returning officer for these elections and the details are as follows:

- Nominations open at 00.01 on Friday the 23rd of January 2009 and close at 23.59 on Thursday the 29th of January.
- Voting opens at 00.01 on Friday the 30th of January and close at 23.59 on Tuesday the 3rd of February.
- Results will be announced on Friday the 6th of February.

Postgraduate Rep Training/ Introduction

This is taking place on Friday and is the first time we've attempted to bring together the representatives for Postgraduate courses and research students.