

Union Review 2009/10



It has been a busy year at the Union, with a new management team, new facilities, new ideas and new plans. At the

start of the year we appointed a new Operations Manager and moved into new offices on the second floor of the Union building, following the completion of Phase 2 of the building redevelopment. Our amazing new spaces for student activities were all open by Christmas, providing additional large rooms for students to shout and beat each other with sticks, amongst other club activities.

Students hate paperwork, so we have tried to reduce the barriers to running activities as part of Imperial College Union – we are great with clubs but have not always supported smaller groups of students doing good work in the community. This is why we introduced 'Projects', which are like clubs but intended for small, short-term student-run projects which benefit society, whether locally, nationally or globally.

The paint was barely dry on Phase 2 of our refurbishment when Phase 3 kicked off, as we put in place a £2.4m funding package to replace our tired bars and nightclub. We are very grateful for the support the College has shown to get the project off the ground. The feedback we have had about the project has come from a broad range of students, and we have listened to it all. I will not be around when it opens, but next year's team will have an amazing nightclub and bar. For the first time in many years students will have direct control over events which are held in their nightclub, with student groups invited to submit formal proposals and the elected Entertainments Committee choosing which are accepted.

As part of our drive to spend more money on club activities and student representation, we are developing our conferencing brand to make maximum use of the building when students are not using it. We have had to take the difficult decision to cut funding this year, but hope the plans we have put in place for the next few years will allow that to be reversed in future. We cannot expect funding from central government and the College to increase, so we have to exploit our building and location to bring in external money, while ensuring that students can use our facilities when they need them.

Although lots of work has taken place on commercial services and student activities, we haven't neglected our core function: representation. This has always been a less visible part of our work, as people only notice it when things are going wrong for them. For the first time we provided training and a handbook for student representatives and have documented the representation system and how it works.

Although we struggled at the start of the year, we've devoted time to postgraduate representation, embarking on a project to identify and communicate with postgraduate representatives who previously received little or no assistance from us (and many we didn't even know existed). It's only the start of bringing postgraduate representation to the same quality as our undergraduate system.

It has not been plain sailing all the way, and we haven't achieved everything we set out to do, but it's certainly been exciting. There's been laughter and tears along the way, but it's been worth it. We wish next year's team the best of luck: there's lots for them to be getting on with!

Ashley Brown
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2009/10 in Pictures...



New Student Activities Centre



Sabbatical Elections candidates



Drinks in the Quad



The Noisettes perform at the Summer Ball



New meeting rooms, part of Beit Conference Centre