

Imperial College Union
Freshers' Trading Forum
A Report by Daniel Hill
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The Forum

Instead of the standard termly trading forum advertised to all students, we decided to hold one specifically aimed at first year students. The forum was held on the 17/11/09 from 5pm in the Union Bar. The forum was advertised on the ICU Freshers' Facebook group with a message sent out to all 1543 members on 15/11/09 at midday as well as appearing as the front news article on the ICU website. The adverts promised a free drink to all students who offered advice so I decided not to repeatedly spam the facebook group. However the attendance figures were much lower than I had expected. Approximately 25 students attended and only 2 of these were freshers. So looking forward to next terms trading forum - the event needs a lot more advertising. With the phase 3 go-ahead confirmed on the 17/11/09 it was decided to include this topic in the trading forum. Many students were enthusiastic about the project and offered some great ideas. This report is consolidated from numerous comments I received, alongside the ICU President and DPE.

Comments on Bars

- Music being either too loud or absent in the Union Bar.
- Students would like to see more drink deals and promotions, something I feel we are missing out on, i.e. double up for a pound, double vodka red bull – don't give them the whole can.
- Students were very annoyed that it was impossible to obtain a glass, even when the customer is remaining inside.
- Generally the feedback on bars was very positive, many students commented on the general improvement in bar service (attitude of staff was good; staff are polite, queuing times were reasonable).

Comments on Entertainments

- Students commented that the entertainments provided during Freshers' Week were very good, which fits in with the comments already received, attendance at the events and the trading figures from the bars. Students enjoyed the Live acts during freshers week
- Students would like to see more variety on Friday nights and less drum and base on Wednesday and Friday nights. Students want to see more cheese / disco / pop music in dB'S.
- Students would rather not pay entry on Friday nights at the front gate. They feel they should only pay if they enter dB's.
- Students would like to see more comedy nights. They feel £5 is a very reasonable price.
- Students would like to see cheap end of term carnivals, £7 is absolute maximum students want to pay to enter venue.

Comments on Catering

- Very few comments were made on catering; generally students thought the evening menu was good value for money and that the service was efficient.
- However, students suggest introducing a similar catering system to that of Eastside Bar in the evening i.e. Tables should be numbered and the food delivered to your table.
- At lunchtimes students want larger portions and would sacrifice quality for this. Students want to be well fed for £3-4. Students are happy with the range of meals on offer.
- Students would like to see a roast dinner introduced some days in the week.

Conclusions

- The Trading Forum is a good opportunity to gather the views and opinions of our customers.
 - More advertising is needed to gain a wider scope of views and opinions of our customers.
 - Queries raised in this report should be passed on to the relevant operation staff and monitored.
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Comments and suggestions for Phase 3

The general consensus was to see dB's used as the dominant bar... i.e. open all week nights. Da vincis could be the primary catering venue. Students liked the idea of a weatherspoons style food menu. Students want to see longer bars in both venues and funky furniture to sit on.

Suggestions for dB's

- *Stage is too high at present.*
- *More lighting throughout and a flashing light dance floor.*
- *Longer bar stretching along the whole catering area.*
- *The entrance does not feel like a club entrance. Use doors onto quad as main entrance.*
- *Dance floor positioned at West end of club / as it is / at East end of club.*
- *Split club into zones with different furniture. Break the room up.*
- *More comfortable seating in dB's.*
- *Long tables for sports teams.*
- *Bar nearer entrance.*
- *Create patio area in quad from dB's – like a wooden paneled low balcony.*
- *Create more doors onto quad from dB's.*
- *Have different tiers for stage.*
- *Booths for seating.*
- *Pool tables.*
- *Cocktail Bar.*
- *Keep Bar away from dance floor.*
- *Lighter colours used for decoration, not grey and black.*
- *Doors are not night club esq. have double doors.*
- *More tv screens in club.*

Suggestions for da Vinci's

- *No shutter supports at the bar.*
- *Bar needs to be much longer.*
- *Table service for food.... Number tables.*
- *Keep as sports bar.*

General suggestions

- *Screens in toilets.*
- *Connect dB's and da Vinci's with a walkthrough.*
- *We don't make enough use of our location i.e. Royal Albet Hall on our doorstep.*
- *Specific smoking area in Beit quad.*