

### **Imperial College Union GSA report**

A note by the Graduate Students Association Chair – Ali Mozaffari

Since July, the GSA has been engaged in:

**PG Fresher's Welcome Packs** – Together we worked to make the PG freshers welcome packs more relevant to postgraduates – containing a welcome letter from the GSA chair; information regarding events in fresher's week that might appeal to a more mature audience (e.g. Jazz Big Band concert) and a new "**Welcome to the Graduate Students' Association**" pamphlet highlighting the roles of the GSA, the PG welfare structure, the graduate schools and their transferable skills programmes, as well as social events and our PG magazine Postscript.

**Fresher's Fair** – The along with the other 300 clubs and societies, the GSA had a stall, which was reasonably well attended, we gave out copies of Postscript, pamphlets and events flyers, as well as had the GSA coordinator and faculty representatives talking to the postgraduates. Despite the wet weather, the day was well attended by fresher's (both UG and PG) and all involved had a thoroughly good time.

**Induction Talks** – I attended the Hammersmith PG and South Kensington PGT and PGR talks, as well as running an ICU/GSA stall as part of the drinks reception following the SK PGR talks. I have also been present at the International Students PG talk and spoke to many students afterwards at the ICU stall. A few ideas that came out of these talks were that currently not much is done for PGs at the Hammersmith Hospital campus,

**Faculty Representatives** – We currently four faculty representatives:

Neki Patel – Physical Sciences

Sean Delaney – Life Sciences

Deena Blumenkrantz – School of Medicine

Shouying Cao – Engineering

A fifth Business School representative will be elected soon, as soon as a few technical and voting issues are sorted out!

**Training** – We conducted education and welfare training for our faculty and departmental/divisional representatives over the summer, giving them an idea of how they fit in the overall structure of PG representation, giving them a better idea of how to effectively deal with student who have problems and also giving them an introduction to the Graduate Schools (many thanks to Dr Caroline Hargreaves for helping us out!)

**GSA Coordinator** – We sadly had to say goodbye to Dr Joanna Swarbrick, who was filling the role of GSA coordinator, a part time member of staff who works to support the GSA in helping students and liaising with the graduate schools and the college. Jo did a superb job in streamlining the entire GSA operation, helping set up a clearer representation structure, spending time planning a lot of the training we conducted; as well as the social events and was a useful point of contact about staff/student contacts.

We are very happy to have Dr Dave Tricker, who is filling the role of GSA and Faculty Union coordinator at ICU and will hopefully be able to continue the very good work laid down by his predecessor! If you have any questions regarding his role or who to talk to if you would like to contact the GSA, please e-mail [gsa.coordinator@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:gsa.coordinator@imperial.ac.uk)

**Well Being Survey** – the President and myself had a meeting with Dr Elaine Walsh (Senior Lecturer at the Graduate Schools) looking at the results of the PG student well-being survey which was conducted in the spring of last year. A few of the big issues highlighted from this included; students dissatisfaction at their lack of progress and direction, as well as them being unclear about their next career step. The plan is to follow up on these issues, one thing already planned by the graduate schools is a dissemination event which is being held in December.

**Postscript** – The plan is to get a slightly cut-down issue of postscript (8 pages rather than 16) out before the end of term, if people want to write anything, please let us know!

**Working Group on PG Student Experience** - One of our big projects this year is going to be looking at the postgraduate student experience at Imperial. This is going to involve forming a student focus group, which will consider aspects such as academic workload, student/staff interaction, admissions as well as clubs and societies and student communities. The idea being that we whilst can certainly improve elements in all sorts of areas, little seems to have been done about looking at these solely for postgraduates. We will also be talking considerably with the college (in particular the graduate schools), as well about how we can improve the Imperial experience for both the taught and research postgraduate students. I will be presenting a plan of action on this at the next meeting of RWB, but if anyone has anything they think we should follow up on or look at, please let me know ASAP!

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