

Imperial College Union  
President's Report  
*A note by Ashley Brown*

At the time of writing we've only had two-and-a-half weeks in the office since the last meeting, but they've been fairly eventful with regards to Council's mandates and developments on a number of projects.

### **Biology Zero Weighting**

We spoke against this at Senate and explained Council's views on the proposal, which some academics shared; however it was decided to allow the trial to begin next year. The department will monitor the overall grades of first years to see if they drop, which will be a good indicator of whether they are coasting through the first year when it ceases to count. If this is the case then it can be reviewed.

### **Representation on Engineering Committees**

I have brought up the subject of academic representation on Engineering committees, with no progress (much as expected). The situation was not helped when it was highlighted that Natural Sciences representatives missed the November Faculty Teaching Committee. The DPE is following this up.

I hope that the QAA audit will express concern at the lack of student representation on strategic committees, so we may be able to resolve Council's issue by placing the Guilds President on the Faculty Teaching Committee.

### **Building**

Phase 2 is finally just about complete! The new activity spaces (old offices) are in use and provide a large amount of extra space for club activities. At the time of writing there are still some bits to be removed (a redundant ICT cabinet, for example), but the space is usable.

Phase 3 is continuing – we might have some designs for you – and the Phase 3 working group has had another meeting. On 12<sup>th</sup> January the Trustee Board approved the finance package, so we just need final approval from the College.

### **Quality Assurance Agency Audit – Pre-audit Briefing**

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of January, eight of us attended the pre-audit briefing with the QAA's panel of auditors, which included the UK's first student auditor. They seemed impressed with the Student Written Submission and thanked everyone who had put input into the process, so I wish to pass on those thanks to those who helped us put it together.

The audit is at the start of February, so some of you may be selected to sit on a student panel. They will be talking to 'normal' students as well as student representatives.

### **Strategic Education Committee Away Day**

I attended the Strategic Education Committee Away Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, with the DPE and DPW. It was going to discuss lots of exciting topics but had to be cut short by the snow. Thankfully the bits that were left were also fairly exciting: we discussed the College's international footprint and the HE funding review. The SEC is one of the few committees where we do not have a seat, so it was excellent to hear that our input had been very constructive. There will be an opportunity for us to attend part two of the away day when it is scheduled.

Council  
19<sup>th</sup> January 2010

### **External Relations & Training**

The reason Council is not on a Monday this month is because I had another meeting with USU (the non-NUS affiliates & Durham) at Southampton University Students' Union. I was accompanied by the DPCS and two members of staff. The topic of this meeting was training, specifically how we can share training resources and knowledge and develop common training resources for student officers. Discussions within USU have also helped to drive forward a review of the training we offer internally, which was one of our aims for the year. We hope to develop a more coherent set of training materials for all officers, using more than just plain PowerPoint. I hope to give an update at the meeting.

Following our epic trek to Belfast via surface transport last month, Council should be pleased to know that the next Aldwych Group meeting is in London. Better still, we are hosting at least the first session at Imperial.

### **Elections**

It is election time again! Our intended timetable for sabbatical elections is on the agenda for this meeting. It is broadly the same as last year, when we got a good turnout. We have extended the voting period so that students on Geology field trips are able to vote before they go (thanks to Dr Lorraine Craig for supplying the dates of field trips, and Kirsty Patterson for reminding me about the problem).

### **Commercial Services**

We have some new deals on food this term:

- Most lunchtime meals are falling in price to £2.95.
- Following the success of our Christmas dinners, we are trialling a roast dinner on Thursdays for £3.50.
- From February we will be doing a fish finger sandwich + drink meal deal.

The shop is also discounting some lines of binders and notebooks.

The cheap Christmas Ball was very successful, but did show how desperately we need a bigger nightclub with more service capacity at the bar.

### **Service Level Agreements, Constitutional Tidy-ups etc.**

During this term I will be reviewing our service level agreements with the College. Some of them are unclear, some are out of date and it is prudent to look at it before charity registration in any case. There are also some bits in the constitution which we need to change, as a result of last year's changes in structure and staffing. If you spot something which is broken, please let me know. Likewise if you have a serious proposal to change the structure of the Union, as I'd prefer to only indulge in constitutional hackery once.

### **Deans of Students & Learning and Teaching**

Some highlights from our monthly meeting with the Dean of Students, Denis Wright, and the Dean of Learning and Teaching, Susan Eisenbach. The survey software used for SOLE, TOLE and MOLE (and ROLE, POLE etc) might be changed to make it easier to use.

We would like a good response rate for the National Student Survey – if you're a final year student, please do it. The DPW will be running a campaign to get people to complete it. **It does make a difference.** The current work on improving assessment and feedback is driven by College's poor NSS scores in these areas.

### **Rector**

I had my first meeting with the acting Rector, Sir Keith O'Nions, on the 12<sup>th</sup> January. This was a simple introductory meeting, but I have invited him to look around the building and meet the sabbatical team. We will use that opportunity to discuss the current issues facing students and how we are looking to address them.