

**Imperial College Union President's Report to Trustee Board**  
**A report by Alex Kendall, President**

**Life Sciences Restructure**

The Life Sciences Restructure again became top of the agenda as towards the end of November the names of the academics being threatened with redundancy were revealed. This prompted a swift outcry from students and staff as 14 academics, who teach 25% of the teaching hours in the Biology and Biochemistry degrees, were being forced to leave. We took charge of the campaign to highlight the unfairness of this issue to College and attempt to get the restructure re-thought. We organised a meeting where those responsible for the restructure could explain themselves; over 400 students and staff attended and none were satisfied with the reasons they heard. Indeed, the questions asked were insightful and no answers were provided. This was followed by a peaceful protest outside the Faculty Building.

The online petition to re-think the restructure passed 1600 signatures and there was widespread condemnation of the restructure from academics at other Universities, as well as Research Institutes. With this support the Union and the Universities and Colleges Union at Imperial submitted a joint paper to College Senate which met on 15 December, to highlight the issues to this democratic body to try and get the restructure stopped until the affect on teaching could be properly analysed. Senate was overpowered by Management who were adamant that the restructure was flawless. We are now left with the situation where everyone apart from senior management believes that Biology and Biochemistry degrees will suffer from this change, while Management insists that breadth and quality will not be decreased. Since they have admitted there is no plan to fill the gap in teaching, they have clearly handled this situation very badly. We will keep up the pressure.

The least we can do in all this is let the academics know how much the students appreciated their teaching while they were here. We have already received many emails from academics expressing their thanks for what we have done so far.

**Silwood Park**

On December 1, several Sabbs, the Transport Officer, Representation Coordinator and the Clubs & Societies Coordinator went to Silwood Park to meet the committee there. We were given a brief tour of the facilities available for the Union there and the catering facilities. There are several issues which will have to be addressed in the short term such as the uncertain future of the Manor House and the imminent collapse of a former student work area.

The most important issue was the state of their main social area in the Refectory, which is pretty grim. It was good to hear that College Commercial Services and Facilities plan to put approximately £20,000 into the project, but I have yet to hear their plans and we are making sure they consult with students at Silwood before doing anything. A recent meeting with College's Director of Commercial Services has reassured me that a plan will soon be in place and that students will be consulted. The poor condition of the only student social area at Silwood is embarrassing for the College; luckily for us they realise this too.

We also attended the Silwood Management Meeting to be updated on what is going on around the campus.

**College Day**

A working group within the College has been tasked with discussing the possibility of extending the College Day (possible teaching time) from 9-6 to 8-7. The DPE is on this group and we are assessing the impact to Clubs & Societies.

**College Council**

26 November saw the first full College Council of the year. Other than an interesting lack of update on Life Sciences even though the decisions must have been made by then, the prospect of the loss of Fisher Hall was discussed. College has a commitment to accommodate all first years who request it; I

reiterated the point made by the previous President last time this came up that they stick to this commitment if Fisher was to be refurbished or sold.

### **Harlington Grant**

The ICU President is one of three committee members who sit on the Harlington Grant committee, awarding money to Clubs & Societies for equipment. Myself and another member of the committee, the Pro-Rector for Education, are hoping to reform the committee. Last year only 13k out of a potential 50k was spent; we would like to widen the remit to appeal to more clubs, including funding instruments and considering tours. I am also aiming to widen the committee to include the DPCS. The committee last met in person about two years ago!

### **Metric Opening**

On 20 November we opened Metric and it was a great success (apart from the fire alarm). Since then we have held several events, some successful, some needing more work. The applications for Clubs and Societies to put on events in Metric have now opened and these events will begin early in the New Year.

### **Finance Manager and Charity Registration**

After several meetings with College Finance and HR, myself and the Operations Manager have reached an agreement where College will advertise internally for a new Union Finance Manager, but where this position will be offered as a secondment. Failing the identification of a successful internal candidate we will advertise externally. At the time of this Trustee Board meeting, the internal advertisement will have finished, and the Operations Manager will provide more details.

We are also consulting with an external company 'Counterculture' about producing a booklet documenting the Union's financial procedures, which will help our accountability to College, but also make the Union more stable. The yearly turnover of Sabbaticals and the potential secondment of the Finance Manager mean that documented procedures are extremely important. I have added to this process by drawing up a finance flow-chart between the Union and College which I have attached to this report. The need for this arose after a meeting in which no one seemed to know how it worked.

### **Honorary Senior Treasurers**

The DPFS and I have been discussing the future of HSTs and their role when it comes to signing club cheques, especially with the introduction of online claim and income processing. (see appendix for information)

### **Strategy 2011-2015**

We have so far had two meetings of the Strategy Project Group, comprising the Sabbs and the Union Senior Managers. The DPE has been consulting other Unions to get input as to how they structured their strategic plans. We have each been assigned another Union to research for the next meeting. We have also started a short survey on what the Union means to students to gauge an idea as to where we need to focus attention on. This survey has gone online and we will be closing it and analysing the input shortly. The idea is also to raise awareness of the impending strategy working groups and survey.

Myself and the Operations Manager also met with the company 'Red Brick' who facilitate the production of Students' Unions Strategic Reports. They will help us structure the process and produce the booklet, but would not write the content. The Operations Manager will have more information about this.