

Imperial College Union
President's Report
A Note by the President

Planning Round 2011

Myself and the Operations Manager put together the Union's submission to Imperial's 2011 Planning Round, where our subvention amount for 2011/12 will be decided. The main documents were a description of what has happened in the Union in the last year, and a budget with various solutions to a 3% increase, 0% increase or 3% cut. The next stage is an interview on June 6.

Strategic Plan

The first stage of the formation of the new Strategic plan was the formation of focus groups which identified key concerns about the Union and College. The groups did not involve the Sabbs. The second stage was a survey which was sent to all students and which had a response number well over 1000. Taking these findings, the Stakeholder Review met recently to identify issues from a Central Union perspective. From now on the stages will involve gathering opinion on the proposed next steps for the Union from a large number of students once term has begun. This Friday we are holding an 'Ideas Café' which will involve getting more specific student feedback on issues identified so far in the process.

Fees and Financial Aid Working Group

I have been involved heavily in Imperial's working group setting the new tuition fee and deciding what kind of financial aid disadvantaged students should receive. The Bursaries Survey the Union conducted in February has done a great job of persuading the group that cash-in-hand bursaries are essential for students to be able to live whilst at University, a point of view that is the opposite of OFFA. I cannot discuss the detail of the proposals as they are still being considered by OFFA but we have had a lot of input and I will be disappointed if OFFA demands significant changes to the plans.

The AV Referendum

I was asked (with the SCC Chair) to encourage a debate on AV and to spread word about the Referendum. Following this, I invited students to write in with their arguments for or against and have been posting them on the Union Website. I am glad to say that quite a few people wrote in about it and, since the link has been emailed to all students in the most recent Newsletter, I hope that a lot of students have been reading the arguments. We were also encouraging everyone to vote.

Commercial Services Manager

After two rounds of interviews we are happy to announce that we have appointed Darren Tompkins as the new Commercial Services Manager, who will start on June 18. Darren was appointed following the departure of Francesco Atanasio earlier this year.

Constitutional Changes

A lot of thought has gone into the Constitutional changes which have now passed Council and are being presented to the Trustee Board today. Many of the changes are tidying up the Constitution to reflect reality and to widen definitions in a move to include academic and welfare representatives more in the running of the Union. Examples include changes to the Colours Committee and the fact that the Representation and Welfare Board is now in charge of a budget.

Life Sciences Restructure

The Life Science teaching review has come up with a lot of suggestions on how to change the teaching in Life Science. Many of these suggestions have been welcomed and several criticised, particularly the plans to move Biomedical Sciences completely into the Faculty of Medicine (it is currently a joint course). The final plans were revealed last week and from a skim reading I am happy to say that they have incorporated many student suggestions, including the retention of a few plant based modules in the final year. My next step is to see what students and staff think of the final proposal.

Business School PhD Stipends

After two meetings between the PhD students concerned, the Union and the Principal of the Business School, the issue has now been resolved to the PhD students' satisfaction. The Business School agreed to pay them £2000 each to top up their stipends to an amount similar to the new contracts.

Budgeting

We have written a document to outline how the budgeting process should work in the future for clubs, societies and projects following some confusion in this year's budgeting rounds. The issues that arose this year will hopefully be dealt with and future officers will know what is expected of them far in advance. Part of that change requires a change to the Constitution.

Summer Elections

The Summer Elections, which are in the nominations stage at the moment, are to elect the welfare officers, Council Chair, Court Advocate and three members of the Entertainments Committee. So far all the positions are contested, a rare thing! Voting opens the week after next and we will be doing a drive to get students engaged in voting.

Union Awards

Nominations are now open for students to nominate other students to receive Union Awards. As well as the changes to the Awards the Union gives out every year, I have been looking at how to make the Awards more notable. Two ideas so far are to make the reasons for the awards more public on the Union Website and to have a larger ceremony.