

Deputy President (Education) Report

A report by Jason Parmar

Handover

Handover took place over July. Alex Dahinten has now moved onto North Carolina but left me with a lot of advice and a “Handover Bible”. Handover consisted of meeting countless members of staff in college and the Union, the handing over of projects and learning procedures. After just a week in position, the weekend of 9th – 10th July was the weekend of Aldwych in Oxford (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aldwych_Group) where the Russell Group Students’ Unions share best practise. Since Imperial are no longer members of the NUS (National Union of Students - even though we co-founded it in 1922) or ULU (University of London Union) Aldwych is very valuable to us as it’s our best opportunity to discuss best practise with similar research intensive universities. The White Paper and Higher Education was the main point of focus of this Aldwych meeting along with other several other best practice talks. Over the rest of handover I attended countless meetings with college staff, the QAA Annual Liaison Conference, several Graduate Schools PQC’s, Joint Research Degree Programme Committee, VLE Review Meetings, OSS Student Replacement Project, DSS meetings etc.

White Paper

Over summer I, President Scott Heath and Rep Coordinator Andrew Keenan wrote the Unions response to the Higher Education White Paper – ‘Putting Students at the Heart of the System’. For more information please read my blog (<http://goo.gl/Ytgk4>) or read our response (<http://goo.gl/SZtuc>). We conducted a student survey over September and we responded to the government according to the results of the survey.

National Student Survey (NSS) Response

The NSS is a governmentally funded, annual survey of all final year students which provides an insight into how satisfied students are regarding feedback, learning resources etc. at their institutions. The Union, as well as College, take the results VERY seriously, and although slightly flawed, allow us an insight into how departments are improving with regards to academic support, teaching etc. This year, as you are probably aware from the Sunday Times Good University Guide “the college finished outside the top four in our league table for the first time in 14 years, off the back of a poor showing the year’s NSS”. We dropped 11 places from 3rd to 14th.

The NSS Response will be ready for 10th October and I hope you all enjoy reading it. With the Rector announcing the Student Experience as the main focus for the year, this is the year for real change. I believe this document will have a real impact to improve nearly all aspects of education, welfare and life at Imperial College (if the advice is followed).

E-Learning

This was my main manifesto point; to effectively increase the amount of blended learning at Imperial College. Again, with college focusing so much the student experience, this year should see great improvements in e-Learning. I will be sittings on e-Learning Strategy Committee (e-LSC) on 15th November. This year has already seen the launch of Imperial Mobile (which I hope you have all

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downloaded), which has integration with iTunes U, but we hope will soon have full integration with our chosen VLE (when it is chosen). Over the year I hope to work with the e-LSC to help pioneer a "OpenCourseware" similar to that of MIT's, this may appear optimistic due to the huge financial cost of MIT's e-Learning resource, however there are signs of us being able to possibly develop our own, much cheaper alternative.

Poster Boards

Something Alex didn't have time to do over the year was to put up poster boards and posters with departments AAO's and key contacts in the Union. However, this year it will happen. 16 A3 poster boards have been ordered and are currently in my office. I have expanded on the original idea of just having Union contacts and Academic Affairs Officers and included Dep Reps, FU Presidents and Senior Tutors from each department which will be included on the posters. Approximately 85% of the photos have been collected and the posters are being designed. Dep Reps will shortly be contacting their departments to find appropriate locations for the poster boards.

Buddy Scheme

Deputy President (Welfare) has taken the lead on this with RSCU Vice President (Operations). However, we have successfully implemented a strong basic structure for the Union Buddy Scheme for following years.

Year Rep Elections

This year will see/saw the year rep elections run alongside the Council Ordinary Member elections.

Rep Handbooks

After learning the basics of Adobe InDesign, I have almost finished editing and updating the undergraduate and postgraduate representation handbooks. These will be printed and available to all year/dep reps, AAO's and FU Presidents who attend Rep Training in late October and/or early November. If anybody wants a copy for reference, please send me an e-mail or pop into my office.

Rep Training

I'll be continuing Representation Training from Alex. This year it will be 27th October for UG and 1st and 9th November for PG. It is expected that all year reps, dep reps, AAO/AWO's and FU Presidents attend, but anyone else who wants to come is welcome. It will run 6-8pm in Physics Lecture Theatre 2. Presentations will be from myself, Andrew Keenan (Rep Coordinator), Scott Heath, Nic Massie and Caroline Hargreaves (GS Transferable Skills).

Annual Leave

On a final note, I took annual leave from 15th August – 2nd September. I spent the time touring most of Japantah, seeing a lot of different culture, sights and an incredible amount of bright lights and tech. I also ate some fugu (incredibly poisonous puffer fish) and some Kobe beef (the cows which are fed a very strict diet and massaged daily). A GIF esque video of my trip to the music of Careless Whisper by Wham can be found here: <http://youtu.be/E-NDv1SpvMk>.