

Council
11th June 2012

Imperial College Union
President's Report
A Report by ICU President – Scott Heath

As this is my last report to Council I would like to firstly thank you all for your participation in the Council this year. It has been a great honour to be one of your Sabbaticals and I hope you have enjoyed the experience too.

General Updates

Impact Report

The Union has completed an Impact Report which looks at the successes of the 2011-12 year. It should be distributed at the Awards Ceremony on Tuesday and will also be available online.

Union Awards Ceremony

The Ceremony will be held in the Union Dining Hall at 6:30pm onwards.

Student Social Enterprise

A partnership between the Union, Student Hubs, Imperial Innovations and the Business School has been formed to create the supporting team for a bid for HEFCE-sponsored money. This money shall provide a £25,000 seed fund for social entrepreneurial ideas from the Imperial College Community next year. This money will be matched with time, facilities and expertise from all partners and is a significant move to improving the opportunities available for enterprising students in the Union.

Hall Seniors

After concerns around whether Halls Seniors would be guaranteed bed spaces in halls next year an effective lobby block consisting of the Union, the Wardens and interested parties has ensured that all students who were offered a hall senior place will have somewhere to stay. This was guaranteed by the Rector, personally, in a meeting with the Head Warden and I just over a week ago.

Subvention

After a series of meeting with various members of the College I am pleased to report that, for the first time since 2008, the Union shall receive a subvention funding increase for 2012-13. These funds have been pledged by the College to increase the services the Union can deliver, particularly in relation to Volunteering, the development of Student-led Teaching Awards and campus engagement. We are still yet to complete discussions surrounding the PG Sabbatical but signs are rather positive.

General Meeting

Despite a disappointing turn-out, I was still pleased to hold the first General Meeting of the Union since 2007. It provided us an opportunity to discuss the fundamental ideas behind the changes we would like to implement within the Union before ending our Sabbatical Terms.

Summer Elections

The Summer Elections as gone pleasingly (So far) and the results should (hopefully) be announced during/before this meeting.

Student Bursaries

The Management Board discussed the proposals the Union gave in the way of creating a dynamic bursary system that gave students as much support as possible. They welcomed our suggestions and are now preparing to battle with OFFA to defend them. This is a great example of where I am proud of the College and their approach to the Union's input. The survey we performed and the report I wrote and presented have been greatly welcomed and I can easily say that we are one of few Unions in the country that have directly influenced the OFFA Agreement so clearly.

Council
11th June 2012

Furthermore, the pressure I have applied for making Industrial Placements (sandwich years) as cheap as possible alongside Industrial pressures has seen the Management Board consider lowering the tariff even further than originally planned; which can only be for the benefit of future students.

Thoughts for the Future

As this is my last Council, and I won't be here next year, I wanted to leave you all with a few thoughts:

Annual General Meeting

I believe it would be a positive move for the Union to adopt a yearly AGM, held in the Spring Term, either before or after elections.

If it had a huge publicity drive it could easily attract a broad spectrum of students and may be able to discover new ideas for development of the Union's services.

NUS Referendum

When I joined the University we were part of the NUS. This was the result of a referendum that was called in the October of 2006. The referendum, held in the spring of 2007, returned a 53% 'Yes' result with over 4,000 students voting.

In 2008, at the end of my first year, we held the vote to leave; the result was 70.3% in favour of leaving, with a turnout of only 2,000.

What startled me, even at the time, was the dramatic reduction in people deciding we should leave in comparison to those who said we should join.

As a person who enters frequent debates (arguments) with Liam Burns, the current NUS President, I will openly admit that I am 1. Not a huge fan of the organisation and 2. Know a lot about our history with them. Every time that we have joined the NUS there has been a large number of students agreeing to the decision, which is followed by a smaller number collectively overruling that decision a year or so later.

Though I am in no position to call a referendum (the constitution is quite explicit about the durations required for this before term ends) I would like to encourage members of Council to assess whether they should have one next year.

This is not because I believe we should join. Equally, it is not because I am so strongly against joining that I believe we should kick them hard. It is more that I believe we should have the conversation frequently to ensure that our Union being (or not being) associated with the NUS is what the students of the time wants. After all, students who voted in 2007 on the exit from the NUS will account for less than 5% of student body in 2012-13.

Re-energize Council

This year's Council has been amazing. You have fed constructively into our proposed policies and haven't been the 'spell-checking body' that we had last year.

However, when I look at what other Unions have, I often feel like we are missing the energy and direction that their student councils possess.

This year we have had two papers proposed by non-members of the Council. Most of my counterparts have more than this in one sitting.

Equally, we act more as a forum assessing what the Sabbaticals are doing (a core function) but less as a lobby board demanding new and better things and saying what parts of the College needs improving.

In some respects I have tried to enhance this with my proposals through the year, and those discussed at the General Meeting.

We have added the Welfare Officers to Council, who will hopefully direct more chat about ethical and welfare issues to the Union Council.

We have suggested dissolving Exec, in order to direct more discussions and accountability to the Council (and occasionally Trustee Board) and to ensure part-time officers don't get bogged down in operational activities.

But this won't work unless the members of Council next year encourage the student body to engage more with what we are doing, invite them to present their complaints and (yes, this is a dig at myself) all papers are provided by Sabbaticals early so everyone can enter the room prepared.

Assessment of Manifesto

It is traditional to present an assessment of the Manifesto points to the final Council of the year. As I am certain my successor will discover, many of the things you believe are possible at the start of the year are never achievable. Equally, many of the things you do achieve would never be imagined.

Below I have listed my manifesto, whether they have been achieved followed by the significant achievements of the year (so far!).

Manifesto Points

Complete Strategic Review: Done.

Guinness World Record Attempt: Foundations set for one next year (if team are willing)

Create a more financially stable Union: Done.

Reform RWB: Done

Improve Food Quality: Hired and welcomed a new Commercial Services Manager who has been working on this area. Catering is performing the best it has in several years.

Better Communication/Community Impact: Published our first ever Impact Report; Redeveloped the Sabbatical Blogs; Developed a plan for a redevelopment of the Union Website; More reports to external bodies than ever before.

Cash Machine Back in Beit Quad: Done.

In my manifesto I stated "*I will work towards computerising processes which will mean student officers can spend less time planning and more time enjoying their activities*" not only has computerisation happen (though my part has been minimal) I have applied this ethos to the Sabbatical Roles themselves and offered ways to make them less administrative.

I indicated that "*I will increase our profits over Summer*" and again, though my role is minimal at certain parts this has happened. I have also been working on increasing our online sales through the development of a strategy for eCommerce.

Beyond the manifesto, I am also proud to have been part of:

- The NSS Response
- The Big Elections (and our biggest turnout ever)
- The creation of a partnership with Student hubs
- Representation Week
- Briefings provided to the House of Lords
- Conversations with Business Leaders in Industry
- Increasing representations: Getting us a seat on SEC and the CGCU AAO a seat on Engineering Studies Committee
- The Rectors Away Day, for the first time ever
- Getting chairmanship of a College ICT committee
- Inducting a new General Manager
- Getting the library nominated for a Times Higher Education Award
- Developing a better bursary system for students studying in 2014 onwards
- Providing the first ever report to the College's Risk Committee; which was focused on the Student Experience

Council

11th June 2012

- Attending (and hosting) an IDEAListic conference
- Applying for HEFCE/UnLtd Funding to develop student enterprise opportunities
- Ensuring the Sherfield Building will always have a PG-focused bar
- Building stronger connections with all parts of the College, from Imperial Enterprise Division to the Faculty Principals
- Building stronger external connections with associate institutes like FIE and the RCA
- Developing the Pre-freshers activities
- Creating one of the strongest bonds with the Medical Union for a while!
- And much more that I can't instantly recall

Calendar

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
May			
Tue 1 st	College	Meeting with Rector and GSA	The closure of Clayponds, long term accommodation strategy
Wed 2 nd	College	Senate	A few controversial papers
Friday 4 th	College	Interviews for Head of Co-Curricular Studies	Was asked to be part of the interview panel for the appointment of the new Head of Co-curricular studies
Mon 7 th	Bank Holiday		
Wed 9 th	PG Graduation		
Thurs 10 th	College	Fees, Financial Aid and Access Agreement Working Group	AA2014-15 and bursary support
		Subvention Meeting	Our first discussion with College about subvention funding
Fri 11 th	College	College Council	
		College Court	
Sat 12 th	Imperial Festival		
Mon 14 th	College	Rio Tinto Contract Signing	A display of the Unions support for the newly provided scholarships for Engineering students.
Wed 16 th	College	Undergraduate Co-Curricular Committee	Agreement on courses for next year
Thurs 17 th	Union	Trustee Board	
Fri 18 th	Union	Finance Manager Interview	
Mon 21 st	Day of Leave		
Tue 22 nd	College	Library Meeting	
		Payroll Discussions	
Wed 23 rd	College	Health, Safety and Environment Committee	
Thurs 24 th	Westminster	Visit to Parliament	Launch of policy for which I was at the roundtable discussions for
Fri 25 th	Shell, UK	Meeting with John MacArthur	Development of a relationship between the Union and Shell to provide support for Student Enterprise.
Mon 28 th	Hammersmith	Opening of L-Block	Attended the opening of the new building in the Hammersmith Campus
	College	Discussion about Orient House with Jane Neary	
Thurs 31 st	College	Subvention Meeting	Second meeting about subvention
	College	ICT: Student Experience Stream	
July			
Fri 1 st	College	SERG: Information Flow Training	
		Meeting with the Rector and Deputy Rector	Hall seniors
Mon 4 and Tue 5 th – Bank Holidays			
Wed 6 th	College	4 th Annual Welfare Seminar	
	Union	General Meeting	