

Council
12 March 2013

Council Report
A note by the Union President – Paul Beaumont

(Reduced font to fit on two pages - sorry!)

Lobbying College

Since the last (physical) Council you may noticed a few campaigns on campus...

Translation Unit

Following Council's paper on the Translation Unit I have made the Union's views clear to the Pro Rector (Education), College Secretary and Deputy Rector. The Management Board decided that new research activities in the TSU will not be started, and that new students will not be admitted to the MSc or PhD courses until after the final decision is made. A further review is being undertaken by the College, which will conclude in June.

Access To Medicines

I presented the Council's Access to Medicines paper to the College Secretary. He is currently undertaking work on an Ethics Policy for the College, which I will get to feed into at a later date. Something like Access to Medicines may be able to feature in that.

#AgainstActon

An email vote was taken and unanimously passed at Council supporting five requests to ask of College. This has been an incredibly vocal campaign – it is something that I've known about for about 5 months, but not been able to tell students about due to confidentiality. All of the Union's material on this is available at <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/againstacton> ; the 'pledge your support' page is <https://union.ic.ac.uk/presidents/againstacton> . The Rector has promised that the five requests will be considered by the College Management Board on the 20th March. I would like to thank all those who have helped me pull this together – sabbs, staff, Felix and the students who've been tweeting, emailing and pledging their support.

International Mobility

Based on data collated by Doug, I have written up half of the Union's Response to the International Mobility Survey, which has been taken to the Executive Committee and will come to the Council in due course.

College Web Redesign

I have been feeding into the College's website redesign that will take place over the coming years.

Union Alternative Prospectus

Work is continuing on the Alternative Prospectus. I've written about 60% of the central content; Doug is collating departmental responses; Becky the hall responses. The project will be coded by myself and Dario Magliocchetti; we're already working on it, but it's taking a bit longer than anticipated to get it all done correctly!

International Fees

I've completed rounds of visiting the College Secretary, Pro Rector (Education), Deputy Rector and Director of Strategic Planning. I have been assured that:

- International fees are now (as of October 2010 and in operation from 2011-12 onwards) set at the point of entry
- They increase inline with September CPI (roughly 2-3%), ie they are tracked to inflation
- This wasn't as advertised as much as it particularly could as there are some students still on the old system (who started before 2010) who had their fees set annually.
- It is not possible to split up where fee money is spent specifically, as that level of data doesn't exist, but a 'rough' broad guide can be worked out from the College's accounts.

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THE Awards

I have submitted nominations to the THE Leadership and Management Awards for the Library Services team (again – following on Scott's nomination that meant they were shortlisted) and the ICU Websites – Dot org, eActivities and the elections website. We'll hear if we're shortlisted in the coming months.

Interfaith Lunch

I held an interfaith lunch with the leaders of the Union's different faith groups and the Rector. As a result of this – on request of the groups – I have started an interfaith mailinglist for the societies to keep in touch with each other more easily.

Hammersmith – Hub on tour

I took (literally – I was driving!) 3 sabbs and 5 members of our membership services team to Hammersmith for 'Hub on Tour' where we met with students, took suggestions and answered queries for the day. As a follow up, we are working on providing some solutions to the problems people raised.

eLearning Working Group

Doug and myself have been feeding into the College's eLearning strategy through an afternoon working group, set up to brainstorm. Ideas focussed on capitalising on the College's strengths of research and translation to create something unique to Imperial, rather than copying and following the MOOC trend.

Beit Basements

A project to redevelop the Beit East and West basements, as well as parts of the 3rd and 1st floors of the main Union building are in development. If all goes to plan, the Union will have a redeveloped 3rd floor and 1st floor over this Summer. Development of the basements will then be the Summer after, so as to not adversely affect society activities. The new project will create new activity and meeting spaces, as well as new toilets and eventually, a new media centre.

Aldwych Conference

The latest Aldwych Conference was held in Leeds Union, where 'Leeds for Life' was showcased. This system is something that we're looking to emulate as part of our new accreditation system, that will then link in to the College's version of a 'HEAR'.

Payments in cash

The Trustees' Finance & Risk Committee has considered the cases of some clubs working with cash purely to receive a discount, and the possibility that this may be some sort of tax avoidance, and the risks of the union being complicit in anything untoward. The Executive Committee will be passing policy on this to back-up the F&R's position.

College Access Agreement

I have supported the College's Access Agreement submission for 2014-15. The College has one of the best financial support packages available, with the majority of support in cash-in-hand form, not reduced graduate debt offers. Students on the full bursary can expect to receive £1000 cash in their first year (limited by the NSP conditions unfortunately) with £5000 accommodation fee waiver – or other service discounts we're still currently investigating. For years 2-4, students would then receive £6000 in cash each year.

Brian May & Roger Taylor

Last week I welcomed Brian May and Roger Taylor in a speech at their award of a plaque from PRS for their services to music. The Union was the venue of the very first performance of Queen, and the group practiced regularly in the building, back in the late 60's and early 70's.