

Council
7 October 2013

Imperial College Union
Council Report
By Yas Edwards, Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)

BUCS Conference

Prior to handover, I attended British University & Colleges Sport conference at Heriot Watt University, outside of Edinburgh with a union staff member and three staff members from Sport Imperial. I attended a number of interesting and useful seminars and the conference was a great opportunity to meet sabbatical officers and staff from other universities who I will be meeting at regional BUCS meetings throughout the year. On the final night at the awards ceremony, Imperial College Union won an award for raising the most for their chosen Charity Right to Play. I would like to congratulate the students involved in this achievement.

Handover

Handover was spent split between informative inductions with union staff about various aspects of the union, and learning the various tasks and roles of the Deputy President (Clubs & Societies) from Henry. It was a good few weeks and useful to get to know the various permanent staff at the union, and the staff at the college who I have been working with in the following months and will continue to work with throughout the year.

Beit Redevelopment

Phase one of the redevelopment was completed in time for the start of term and the new meeting rooms have been in use by student groups already. Further consultations will take place with users of the West basement to ensure 2013/14 committee members understand what is going on and can input their ideas and opinions. Space has been found in Garden halls for student groups who have storage space in the East basement. This has been communicated to those affected and we will begin the moving process in November.

RAG Conference

In early September I attended Raising and Give conference at Birmingham University with a union staff member and a number of RAG committee members. The conference gave me more insight into RAG and I had the chance to meet sabbatical officers and staff from other universities and charities. Exchanging ideas and experiences of successful events and ways to engage with students and increase participation in volunteering was very useful, especially as the union has a large focus on volunteering this year with the accreditation scheme imperial plus and volunteering opportunities for students. On the final night at the awards ceremony, Imperial College RAG received a commendation for most improved RAG and I would like to formally congratulate all those who were involved in this achievement.

NCC and NPC

New Clubs Committee and New Projects Committee occurred via email over summer as members were not available or around London to meet. A new project called Coppafeel was accepted and two clubs/ societies, Hungarian and Aikido have been put in the new club incubator (NCI).

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Freshers' Fair

Security, the Fire Officers and Soft Services were all consulted before the plans for Freshers' Fair were finalised and no changes needed to be made after these meetings. Few layout changes were made from last year but I tried to locate similar clubs close together in a logical way to make stalls easier to find. There was no wet weather plan due to lack of space for stalls to move in to in the event of rain, but outside stall holders were made aware of this and advised to prepare in advance by bringing appropriate clothing, umbrellas and paper sign-up sheets. The weather on the day was good so outside stall holders were not impacted upon negatively.

The recurring problem of external companies and organisations attending the fair to get student contact details deceptively occurred, and were dealt with by Union staff, Security and the Police. One location which was particularly bad was outside college main entrance and offenders repeatedly returned and then entered the event via the Car Park near SAF. The Union staff and volunteers were very good in looking out for external people who should not be in attendance and dealing with them swiftly.

This was the first year we had two types of volunteers. The volunteers from Management Group and Constituent Union execs started at 07.30 with setting up and although we were behind schedule, we had enough time for breakfast before stall holders arrived at 10.00. They were very good at helping stall holders if there was any confusion and ensuring the day ran smoothly. Many also stayed late to help clear up and I very much appreciate this extra effort some of them put in. The #helloicu volunteers who were new for 2013 were also very good in assisting throughout the day. They handed out maps, Give It A Go guides and answered questions attendees had. One issue we had was the lack of maps as 2,000 were printed and had run out by around 13.00 so people arriving later were being directed to the online map which was not ideal for everyone.

Last year there were complaints about one drink voucher per table being handed out when two people were carrying them in accordance with the manual handling guidelines. This year two were given out per table but the vouchers were limited and students were made aware of this beforehand by communicating this in briefings and an email. Complaints were received by people who arrived after the vouchers had run out. An alternative method of distributing tokens or different incentives to help clear up should be looked into before the next fair. Another issue was the large amount of litter which was left in many of the areas causing union staff and volunteers to work longer to return college campus back to normal.

Crowding was a problem in Queen's Tower Rooms with capacity nearing the fire limit at times. This was dealt with by Union Staff and Volunteers by implementing a one way system and closing the entrance at very busy times. The number and popularity of stalls in this area makes it difficult to manage and difficult for attendees to talk to people on stalls of interest but the crowding was monitored throughout the day for busy periods when further precautions such as entrance shutting were needed.

The space on Queen's Lawn set out for sporting demonstrations was left this year for groups to use and share with no timetable which worked quite well. Overall the event seemed to be successful with positive feedback on the day and after the event. I would like to formally thank all the volunteers and Union staff who helped out in the planning stages, behind the scenes and on the day to make it a great event for student activities.

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Give It A Go

The Give It A Go (GIAG) scheme which is new for 2013 was launched at the start of term after working with various student groups over summer. I compiled a calendar of events happening throughout October which did not need membership to participate in, nor were sporting trials. This is a new initiative to increase participation in Clubs, Societies & Projects and for the union to trial offering trips to students which are included in GIAG. Booklets were distributed at Freshers' Fair containing information but also directing people to the website for up-to-date details and more events. This way those clubs who did not engage with me over summer can still benefit from the scheme as they can create their events to be viewed in the What's on calendar on the union website. I will be following up with the participating clubs to gain feedback about the scheme, attendance levels and any effect on membership.