

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS
Of the second Ordinary meeting of the
Community and Welfare Board
Of the Imperial College Union
In the 2014/2015 session

The meeting of the Community and Welfare Board was held in the Union Building on the 4th December 2014 in Meeting Room 3, Imperial College Union.

Present:

Deputy President (Welfare) – Chair	Christopher Kaye
Deputy President (Education)	Pascal Loose
Deputy President (Finance & Services)	Alex Savell
President	Tom Wheeler
GSU Chair	Nida Mahmud
RSMU President	Ben Warnick
RSMU Welfare Officer	Rachael Shuttleworth
GSU Engineering Academic and Welfare Officer	Ethan Butler
GSU Life Sciences Academic and Welfare Officer	Rachel Vaux
GSU Business School Academic and Welfare Officer	Alex Derrick
LGBT Officer	Kyle Hellemans
International Students Officer	Katherine Chio
Gender Equality Officer	Madeleine Maxwell
Interfaith Officer	Shamim Ahmed
Education and Welfare Manager	Andrew Keenan
Student Advisor	Nigel Cooke
Representation and Campaigns Coordinator (Minute taker)	Sky Yarlett
Apologies	
BME Officer	Shiqu Qiu

1. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

- i) Christopher Kaye welcomed members of CWB and opened the meeting, also formally welcomed 3 new members of CWB.
- ii) There were no updates

2. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- a) Minutes accepted unanimously

3. MATTERS ARISING

- a) Weeks hall – Tom Wheeler. All accommodation portfolios undergoing review. How much will it cost to renovate poor quality halls. Full consultation been promised once costing exercise has been conducted.

ACTION: KEEP ON AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

- b) Postgraduate stress meeting not held, Action point to be renewed and a meeting to be called.
- c) General Meeting was not quorate – 45 people turned up. However some final discussions – on the union council website to be discussed further at union council next Tuesday. TW summarises, maintain highest quality of fees, fees reduced to £3,000. There was no clear voices wanting free education at gm. Reversing privatisation and marketisation of education.
- d) CK sits on neighbourhood watch panels – the police want students to not climb into Hyde Park.
- e) College Strategy – TW summarises – college strategy broken into 3 global challenges – Union involved in community workstream. Workstream not finalised, Nida and Tom sitting on meetings to provide student representation.

4. INTERNATIONAL IMPERIAL

- a) Currently every event is almost separate. Katherine Chio is keen to bring the events together. KC also outlined problem in contacting International student and engaging them. KC also enquired about the Overseas Students Chair which is a role overseeing the student groups focusing on international students.

ACTION: OSC chair and KC to be put in touch

- b) KC provided attendees with an update from a meeting held at Kings College London, which sought to bring together international students across London.
- c) Fixing International Fees – NM said last conversation was about publishing fees earlier, but union is keen to have the fees not rising over time. Alex Savell saying that it's being looked at in student finance meeting

5. ADVICE CENTRE UPDATE

- a) Presented by Nigel Cooke, this month there have been 25 new cases, most of the academic cases have been in business school.
- b) High number of cases in regards to housing often around reclaiming deposits, also a scam within housing in regarded to housing contract.
- c) Talk to DAS campaign – tweets coming out – creating targets to benchmark of the campaign. Looking to create helpsheets to support students and expand their understanding of DAS. One draft of academic appeals. Guides of helpsheet in regards with housing. As part of the campaign NC is looking to include updated information online.
- d) NC has also been supporting College in regards to the Imperial app – there was out of date information on the helpfinding section.
- e) AS wants to know if we have numbers from advice centre aligned with college numbers in regards to this – and what the underlying figures might be.

- f) Andrew Keenan, all the services within College create annual reports with information and statistics about the work they are doing. If we are interested in comparing our enquiries or services to College we can compare them.
- g) TW – during the induction period it is clear to students that often there is support, from different sources and coming in different forms. However it can become very overwhelming as the information is often presented at the same time. There is an opportunity with the app to centralise some of this.

6. INTERFAITH WEEK

- a) Shamim Ahmed presented information on first interfaith week – SA felt it was a great success. There were a wide variety of events which were well attended, with a key theme throughout – looking at the Joseph Interfaith Foundation. A particular highlight was a poetry night in the chaplaincy

7. OUT IN SPORT

- a) Kyle Hellemans updated CWB as to the progress with this campaign, that we have almost completed the survey and are currently planning distribution, We have widened the target audience of the survey in order to capture differences in experiences and more people taking part in the survey would be a positive thing

AFFORDABLE IMPERIAL

- a) TW - In regards to the College's halls portfolio there are some significant changes in the pipeline which are currently meaning we are likely to have to put this on hold at the minute.
- b) TW provides an overview on the ongoing campaign in regards to the Medics bursary and support for the medics in years 5&6. Working with the faculty of medicine and other student unions in regards to this issue
- c) Changes to Imperial Bursary brackets – final report on this coming to next union council and John Neilson will be in attendance to provide a response.
- d) There is some discussion around the college becoming a guarantor for international students – an update was asked for.
 - a. College can't withhold academic progression because of owing money.

ACTION: Tom to find out more about this & work with KC and present to next CWB.

- e) Affordability – how much have we looked into funding with PGs, if someone is funded outside the UK – they are eligible for 800 euros per month which is a minimal amount.
- f) TW – Gradpad is making a profit. It's presented as only option to PG. NC highlights that there is a lot of issues and no clarity on whose responsibility Gradpad is.
- g) Make it a lot more clear that there are more housing options –
 - a. GSU possibly running an event to help PG flatshare

ACTION: E&W to work with GSU to create a PG alternative info

ACTION: to look into pre arrival information – for PG and International students.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Rachel Vaux brings up PhD submission rates have been dropping – this might be likely because if someone has a long term illness they are meant to take an interruption of studies – this can cause visa issues and may cause issues with funding. There are also a high amount of discrepancies within funding bodies and there appears to be a hierarchy based on funding.

9. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

- a) Alex Savell recently discovered that currently any international student who currently pays fees from a different country. The bank places a £4 charge on to the college for this, and college places this fees onto international students. There are roughly 200 cases of this per year, AS is keen to get a steer from CWB on this issue. General agreement from room that this seems like something which should change

ACTION: AS to challenge the charges on these transactions and ask college to take on this costing.

- b) PL is there currently a demand for a buddy scheme within PGR/PGT students. RV – its been tried in the past but unsure of its success – might be helpful in regards to gradpad / PG accommodation issues. CK says it might be interesting to see mums & dads opened up to PGs, as often students who stay at imperial to do PG might have good experience to share.
- c) Rachel Shuttleworth – there is currently an online petition against the governments cuts to Disabled Students Allowance. The costs of which have been placed onto college.

ACTION: Briefing on DSA & campaigns

- d) Further to this improved access to lecture recordings may have an effect on amount of money available for students through note takers.
- e) There was discussion brought up by representatives from the GSU, on the early years education centre Early years education centre
- a) Student parents used to have a separate fund, being absorbed into other funding. People think that students are starting to drop out. The early years centre is 90% used by college staff.
- b) Union used to fund part of the early years centre to ensure provisions for students, but cost has been taken on by college. RV – maybe we should look at priority of students over staff members as students are less likely to have high enough income to support childcare while studying. Board agree that students should get priority,

ACTION: Chris to lead campaign in this area. Imperial West nursery provisions?

ACTION: Create a wish list for Imperial West – Tom

Reminder that next meeting of Community and Welfare Board is 19th February