

Council
13 October 2014

Council Report **Tom Wheeler - Union President**

Officer Trustee Induction

The Officer Trustee team and I took part in a 14-day induction period before commencing our terms on 1 August 2014. The induction period commenced on Monday 14 July, and consisted of training, handover from predecessors, introductions to Union Departments, as well as introductions to relevant individuals within College. The Officer Trustee team then spent 3 days training whilst on residential. This gave us an opportunity to plan for the year ahead, and discuss a few topics that arose during handover.

Introductions

I have had introductory (and then subsequent) meetings with all relevant Senior Management staff in College. Regular one-to-one sessions have been scheduled for the rest of the year to ensure that I can remain aware of upcoming College decisions.

Changes to Halls of Residence Wardening Teams

There have been changes made to the finance system and Wardening teams in Imperial College London Halls of Residence. In summary, there have been reductions to the Amenities fund, and Imperial College Union now manages the finance that is handled by Wardening teams. Wardening teams now form Union Committees that are capable of authorizing funds (similar to CSP's). This should assist Wardening teams in their primary function of supporting students, as the Union Finance system is more efficient than the College Finance equivalent.

Welcome talks & Volunteer Training

I have been assisting in the training of Union Volunteers, including the #HelloICU Crew, and Hall Seniors. I have also welcomed new students during Orientation Week (as a part of their series of Workshops) & Welcome Week (as part of the Provost's welcome talks).

All Party Parliamentary Group Post-Study Work Restrictions Inquiry

I have worked with Chris Kaye (DPW) with the assistance of Andrew Keenan (Education & Welfare Manager) to submit a response to the APPG PSW Inquiry. This was published on imperialcollegeunion.org's News page.

Petitions

I have been looking into improving student engagement with our Union structures, and would like to try and implement a Petition system, similar to that which currently exists at Sheffield SU. Incidentally, this was an idea that was mentioned during the 2014 Big Elections and was included in the manifestos of Plabon Saha & Jonny Pratt, and would like to point out that this is therefore not my idea, however I believe it is a good one.

Inter-Union Collaborative events

As promised in my manifesto, I am looking into collaborative social events with various nearby Institutions. Currently, the Royal College of Music and the Royal Veterinary College have shown interest in attending a semi-regular evening social event in the Union's venues. The Union's Commercial Services team has been part of these discussions to ensure that they are feasible, and the pilot evening should occur in November, date TBC. The Royal College of Arts is not particularly interested in a bar-orientated event, however would be keen to engage with CSP's on projects similar to Artfest, where all RCM, RCA, RVC, ICL students can participate in collaborative events. Discussion is underway to invite the GSU and RCA to collaborate in joint social events.

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Library Heating

Despite having planning permission granted, College decided that there is insufficient capital available to complete the extent of the work initially proposed in the Library redevelopment. Therefore, depressingly, air conditioning has not been installed during the summer. Chris Banks, Director of Library Services, is equally disappointed in this news and is making a brief presentation to Council on the 11 November to consult students (as recommended in the Student Consultation Framework). I am working closely with Chris & College to push for the project to be completed over the summer of 2015, as promised in my manifesto.

College Halls of Residence Portfolio

As you are probably well aware, Evelyn Gardens is closed for the 2015/16 academic year. This is very concerning news, as I believe permanent closure would seriously damage the student experience of first year students. Fortunately, the decision concerning the long-term future of Evelyn has not been made yet, and I am doing everything I can to ensure that student needs are put first in any decisions made regarding this. I have arranged monthly meetings with the College COO, to ensure I am up-to-date with any developments. Currently, the COO team is calculating the cost of the necessary redevelopment, and how much this would increase the weekly rent of bedrooms in Evelyn. Additionally, students have not resided in Garden Hall since the 2013/14 academic year. It has been promised to me that thorough consultation would occur once calculations have been carried out, as there will not be commercial sensitivity in these decisions, as no purchases are being made.

Affordable Imperial

A campaign will be occurring during first time to collect qualitative evidence of student experiences regarding the cost of living and studying at Imperial. This campaign was started by our predecessors, and is designed to highlight areas of student concern, and reflect these in the level of Risk that College associates with the effect affordability will have on the Student Experience.

Equality/Lad Culture

As you would have seen in the media, there is a nationwide issue with 'Lad Culture'. I strongly dislike this title, as I do not think it is representative of the actual issue, and does not encourage a solution. We are commencing a campaign to raise the level of debate regarding equality at imperial, to hopefully engage interested parties and look at how we can take steps to reduce offensive prejudice (that is prominent in behavior described as 'Lad Culture') at Imperial. We are hoping to set up a forum for these series of discussions to take place, and everyone is encouraged to get in touch with me if they want to participate.

Media Centre, Union Concert Hall & Shop Extra

The Union has had a few major projects take place over the summer. The new Media Centre, redeveloped Concert Hall, and our new Shop, Shop Extra, should provide our members with the best facilities possible.