

## Report to Union Council & ERB

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### General Matters

A significant part of my work over the past two months had been spent building robust working relationships with staff across Department, Faculty and College levels. This include a number of important new relationships, including:

- Getting to know and work with Directors of Postgraduate Studies and PG Tutors, including introducing Union services so PG staff can actively refer their students to what we offer (e.g. Advice Center) and making sure we have a much more coherent approach to PGR Rep elections this year
- Setting up fortnightly catch-ups with Faculty education coordinators
- Getting to know Faculty Deans and Vice-Deans (Education), and working with them on topics such as effecting change in response to the NSS

I have also sat on many College and Faculty meetings, and giving student perspective and scrutiny wherever relevant.

### Academic Representation Network

Efforts to streamline and strengthen the structure of the Undergraduate Representation Network has continued. Academic Affairs Officers and Academic & Welfare Officers have been given clear responsibilities and status within the Rep Network, including membership on a Central Rep Team led by the DPE for more consistent and unified engagement on the Faculty and College levels.



UG Dep Reps are being progressively briefed and consulted of the changes; so far I have received no objections, and returning Reps have received it positively, seeing it not as a disruptive change but formalization of how the Rep Network had been operating already.

Introductory meetings with GSU Academic & Welfare Officers have raised concerns about AWOs' workload. 'Quick fixes' such as changing meeting times and reducing AWO meeting commitments have been done where possible. Further changes will be actioned as soon as possible, including better direct engagement between the DPE and the PG Reps and ensuring as many Reps can attend training.

The new Imperial Horizons representation structure has been drafted. Subjected to approval from Education & Representation Board, the draft structure will be presented during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Union Council of October for approval, ahead of a November election for Horizons Reps.

Nominations for Your Rep & Council Elections are ongoing and are due to close Oct 15. Early signs are promising as UG Dep Reps are doing shout-outs and introductory emails. When I was at various PGT and PGR welcome events over the Welcome weekend, I have also come across some students who were interested in becoming a course Rep. A communications plan is being exercised in collaboration with the GSU, with the aim of ensuring participation by PGT and PGR students.

### Academic Affairs

NSS and PRES response work is under way. This year we are taking a two-thronged approach. On one hand, Dep Reps and their teams have been given data briefings and access to a breakdown of their Department's NSS scores, and been asked to follow an exercise that would

get them to think critically about their Department's NSS results in order to come up with recommendations and also priorities for their team ahead. The aim is to ensure Reps can effectively shape Department's NSS action plans, which are given increased importance this year, with Rep approval required before Departments can submit their action plans.

Meanwhile, the ICU NSS Response – drafted in conjunction with my Office Team – is targeted for publication in November. Analysis of PRES results are beginning in collaboration with Tom Bond, our Management Trainee. A PRES Response is targeted for before the end of the calendar year.

Additionally, I have begun to explore with the Graduate School the potential for improving cohort-building support and introducing some form of mechanism to review research supervisors. Initial responses have been more positive than expected.

I have endorsed FoNS's intention to take a more 'hands-on' approach in taking a hard line when it comes to delayed feedback and lack of access of Panopto, and have shaped their approach. This include ensuring Reps are a part of the mechanism that would monitor feedback response times.

### **Learning Environment**

In response to complaints from PhD students based at Hammersmith Campus in White City, I was able to stop the closure of the Wolfson Restaurant at very short notice and re-instate a catering service for the many students based there. This ensures that students at the campus can continue to choose between two catering outlets.

I have also lodged a position with Estates Management regarding the South Kensington-Hammersmith Campus Shuttle service, with the view of making sure that the service is better catered to students' educational commitments, and also getting College to start thinking about the future of the service when Imperial White City opens. The discussion is ongoing and I am due to follow up with Estates imminently.

In addition, I have started conversations with the e-Learning team with regards to Panopto and Starfish. For the former, I am due to meet with the AV Technologists in each Faculty to understand better the technical nature of Panopto, and explore how the technical issues that affect the recordings – arguably the biggest hurdle to campus-wide recordings currently – can be resolved. For the latter, I sit on the Starfish steering group and alongside other OTs, are due to receive a demo of the system at the end of the month. I was pleased to hear new courses taking part in the Starfish trial this year.

The e-Learning team expressed interest to provide more training to more students when it comes to setting up Panopto recordings. Likewise, some Dep Reps have expressed an interest for their teams to be trained. I plan on facilitating a link once my workload comes down.

### **Personal & Professional Development**

I have begun to explore with the Careers Service and Student Hub about providing better support and protection for students undertaking UROP placements. The initial response from relevant staff has been of a highly engaged, supportive and collaborative nature. I hope that this will be able to lead to some concrete results over the next year.

Finally, I have been discussing with the Graduate School and Outreach about making available a greater array of public engagement and science communication opportunities to PGT and PGR students. The discussion was very positive and constructive, with some actions being immediately taken. It is hoped that over the next year, there will be more and accessible opportunities for PGT and PGR students to participate in likes of Fringe and Festival, and be able to record and reflect on their work through Imperial Plus.