

Report to Union Council

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General Matters

I am now transitioning from a primary focus on the Rep Network, Rep elections and PG relationship-building to a broader portfolio on academic affairs and student development.

Academic Representation Network

- The UG Rep part of Your Rep & Council Elections has progressed relatively smoothly.
 - We saw a significant uptick in candidates standing for positions within 24 hours of the nominations deadline – including 9 new candidates standing within the span of a few hours for Y1 Medicine.
 - Only a few positions were unfilled and these were concentrated on roles in Y3 & Y4 of UG programs, which are traditionally difficult to attract large numbers of candidates.
- The PG side of the elections were much more interesting.
 - Most elections for PGT and PGR programs take place offline, and these have been progressing smoothly, albeit taking a lot of manpower and time from myself and Sky in order to follow-up with a myriad of staff across the campus.
 - Early responses have painted a promising picture and I am looking to have a more comprehensive list of PGT and PGR Reps in a much shorter period of time than we have done in the past. It is hoped that this will allow us to provide more training to more PGT and PGR Reps as part of our new Rep training program, and to help us start to build better and more sustainable PGT and PGR Rep Networks.
 - The new messages that we have been sending to PG students have attracted positive remarks, and have also led to a few direct student enquiries.
 - For PGT and PGR elections that take place online, I was surprised to find that our records were quite out-of-date.
 - There were about 20 Masters programs that were flushed from nominations either because they didn't exist, or because PG staff didn't know the Union had Rep elections and so had traditionally been organizing elections offline – meaning in the past we may have been running elections for positions that were already filled.
 - This was complicated by the Graduate School not having a full list of contacts for PG admins, requiring more time from myself and Sky to identify contacts and then getting in touch with them to figure out what was going on; thankfully the outcome of this is we now have a fairly comprehensive list of PG contacts across campus – possibly more robust than what we can get from College.
 - Myself, Sky and Rebecca will be sitting down in about two weeks to evaluate the state of PG Rep elections this year and the lessons that we have learnt from taking on the issue.
 - I expect the topic of PG elections to factor into my planned review of the PGR Rep system, which I plan on doing with the GSU and for which I hope to put forward a proposal to Council in December.
 - I am very grateful to Sky for their effort during the whole process, as the level of admin work that was generated reached an abnormally high level.



- We have redesigned the Rep training program which is expected to begin imminently. The new program will have a greater emphasis on skills-based training, divided between 'foundational' and more 'specialist' sessions.
 - All Reps are expected to attend one 'foundational' session.
 - 'Specialist' sessions are being explored with the Graduate School and the Business School, for example on topics like chairing meetings, writing policy and leadership development. I am also keen for CU AOs and Dep Reps to have the room to develop and deliver sessions based on their experiences, if they are so inclined.
- I have welcomed an Acting Dep Rep for Design Engineering, and a localized election will soon be held to elect a Dep Rep for Imperial Horizons.

Academic Affairs

- All Dep Reps have now been equipped with their Department's NSS data.
 - With the data, they have also been encouraged to complete an exercise that challenges them to come up with recommendations specific to their Department, which can support them in engaging with Department's NSS action plans, which require Rep approval this year.
- We are continuing work on our NSS Response and there isn't anything to report to Council at this stage.
- I remain concerned by developments in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, as some Departments seem very close to taking knee-jerk responses – potentially to the detriment of students – to poor NSS scores this past year.
 - I have flagged this up with FoNS staff and will continue to monitor this, and work with and support Ben Fernando, RCSU AAO
- I will very shortly begin work on a 'minimum expectations framework' for quality feedback, aimed at summarizing what the least students expect when it comes to coursework and exam feedback.

Learning Environment

- I have followed-up with Estates Management regarding the South Kensington-Imperial White City-Hammersmith Campus Shuttle service, reiterating the need for College to have a longer-term vision for the service if students are to be taught and based at Imperial White City.
 - The conversation was very constructive, and I am now waiting to receive a draft timetable proposal from Estates by December to scrutinize.
- I will shortly be following up on an action from ERB to organize Panopto training for interested Reps
- In Senate I raised the fact that the College lacked a coherent and visionary e-Learning strategy, with Panopto and Blackboard dominating conversations. There was a basic commitment to explore this from the Provost and Vice-Provost (Education), and I will follow-up on this with the incoming Acting Vice-Provost (Education), as it is one of my core objective areas.

Personal & Professional Development

- Nothing to update Council at this stage.