

Week Zero 2018

**Faculty of Natural Sciences Education Committee
12th October 2016**

Overview: our current approach

There has been a lot of...

- **Structured welcome talks and addresses**
- **Some separate early international orientation events**
- **Commencement of teaching/academic activities in the first week of term**
- **Reliance on the Student Hub for visa, immigration, housing and finance related enquiries**



And not enough...

- **Opportunities to get to know members of departmental staff and course mates in informal settings to build community**
- **Time and free space for students to explore their new environment (campus and wider), adapt to UK/London living and make new, diverse friendships**
- **Online options giving alternative ways of obtaining welcome information thereby reducing information overload and anxiety**
- **Opportunities to have fun!!**

Overview: Feedback & Best Practice Examples

These are from a snapshot survey after WW 2015 as well as SES free text comments

"...more useful if it encouraged people to get to know with each other more by various activities rather than lectures.."

"It was a great experience, the best one was without doubt the Queen's Tower Tour"

"Getting to know South Kensington better would have been great"

"More focus on social activities as info too often repeated...meet other students before the term starts..."



The Russell Group Universities – 19 out of the 24 of these (including LSE, Kings College London & UCL) have a dedicated orientation/welcome period (most of them before the academic term begins) consisting of a variety of events and activities as well as free time for students to familiarise themselves with their new environment and to enable assimilation amongst peers. These run in conjunction with other welcome activities.

Most Events and Welcome sessions held before term officially begins, with a chance for students to familiarise themselves with a new city. **(University of Bath)**

Greater provision of resources online, such as audio and audio-visual recordings of welcome talks and key information. **(Edinburgh – Kent – York)**

Paring orientations down to the basic elements in order to avoid information overload for newly arrived students. Orientation taking place in extended sessions before the beginning of the academic year.

Week Zero: A Proposal for 2018

Campus Services and the ICU are proposing a new approach for 2018 that would merge International and Home/EU orientation and combine all Welcome Week activities into a single Week Zero: Saturday 22nd September – 28th September 2018, a week ahead of the traditional start of term date. In the run-up to this, we will be trialling and testing several new features and activities that will, if successful, form part of the full Week Zero.

A fully teaching-free Week



- Free time to become at ease with a new campus and new home
- More opportunities to make new friends and feel integrated
- Interactive and social events that facilitate mingling, getting to know others and having fun!
- Team building.



I-Connect – a new Welcome Fair



- A relaxed, informal event with information stands, interactive sessions and breakout spaces
- Live demonstrations & information platforms
- One-stop shop for all new student welcome information including volunteering, study skills and library information
- Content & information from the day available on online platforms



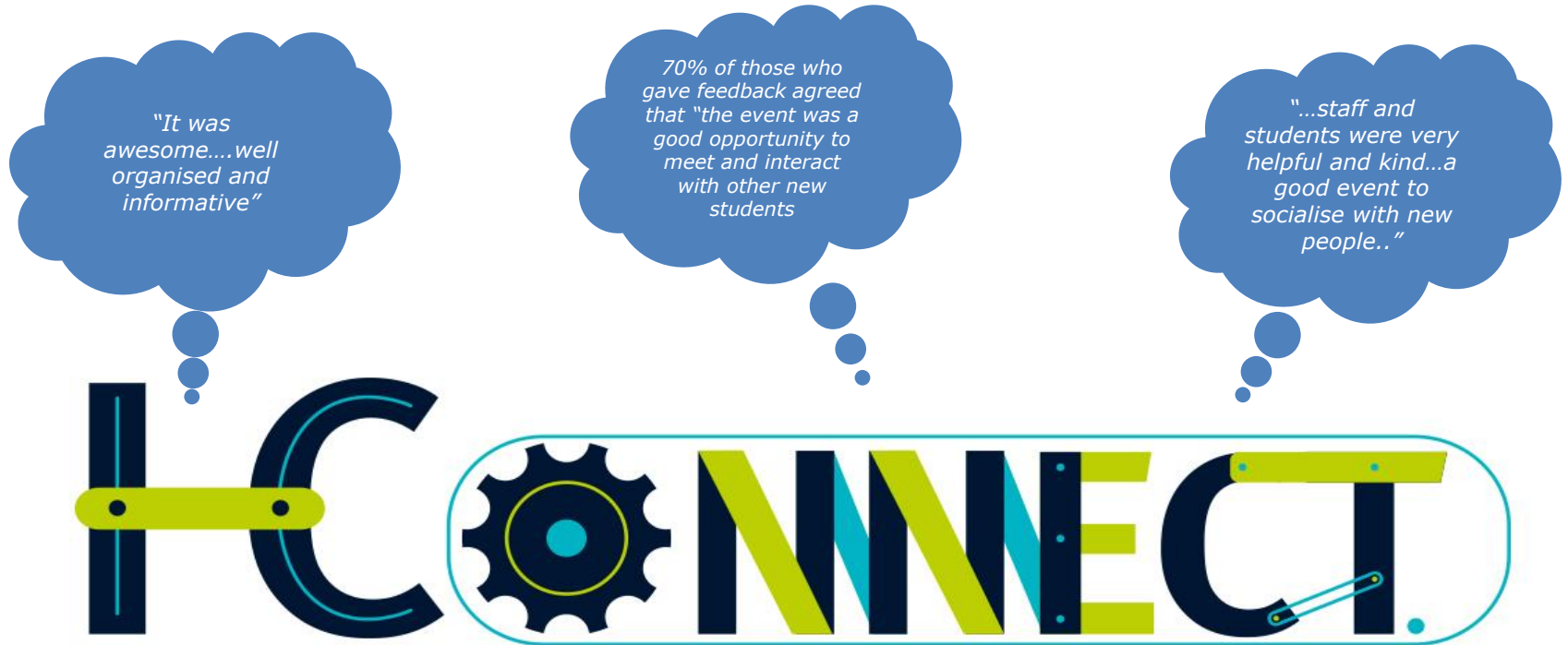
New Featured Activities



- University Life skills including cooking demonstrations, where to shop & managing your money
- Mental wellbeing: how to cope with moving away from home
- Managing stress & not letting a disability hold you back
- How to travel around London, with TFL representatives
- How to stay safe in London with basic self defence demonstrations
- Visits to local cultural sites such as the V&A and a South Kensington Treasure Hunt
- Get to know the Union Services



Week Zero 2018: I-Connect



Our Feedback Survey:

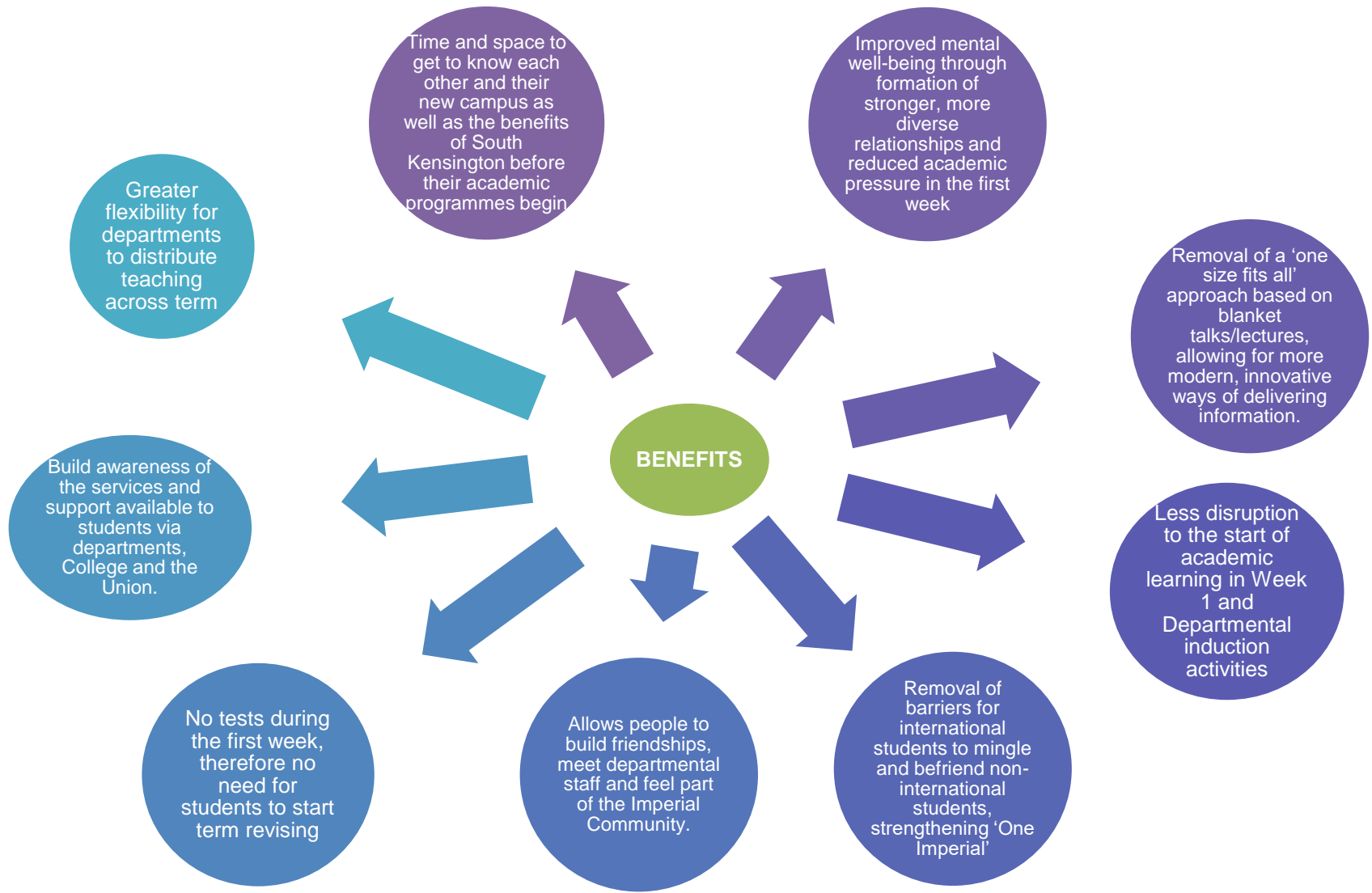
Would you be interested in attending a whole week of welcome activities, the week prior to your course commencing if there was an option to?

86%

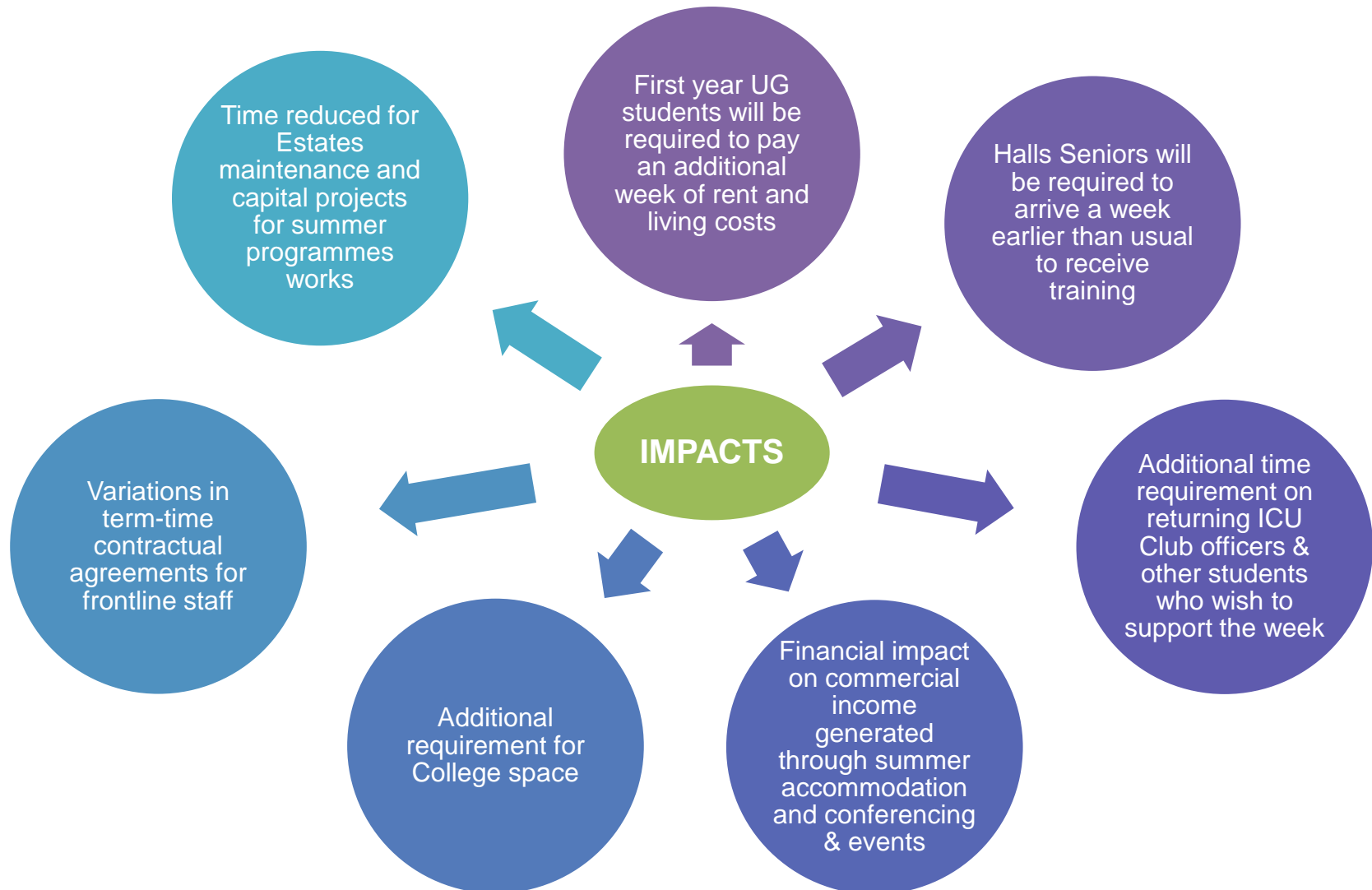
46 respondents to
this question

'Yes'

Benefits: Week Zero 2017/18



Potential Impacts: Week Zero 2017/18



Week Zero: Planning

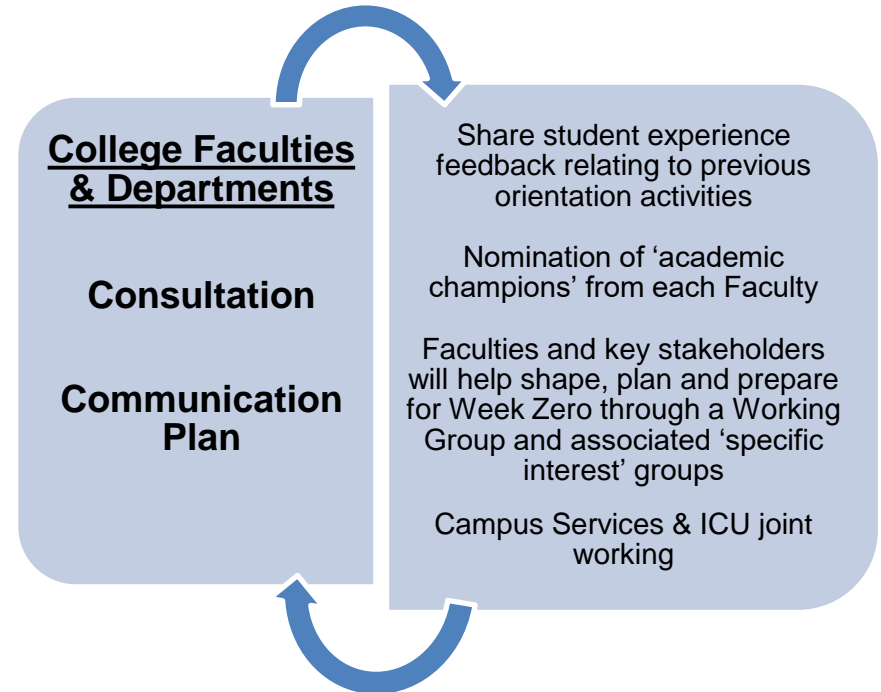


Our plans going forward in 2016 & 2017 include:

- Undertaking a review of Welcome Week 2016 and implementing a Rapid Improvement Project that seeks to put in place best practice tools for the development and delivery of future successful welcome weeks
- A Communications Plan to ensure clear, consistent communications between all parts of the College
- Secure College approvals on key cost elements including:
 - Bottom-line cost to the College of providing Week Zero in 2018 and other costs going forward;
 - The pass-on cost to first year students for an extra week of rent and living expenses;
 - Options for a financial support package for certain students as a result of the extra costs passed onto student body (if any)
- Explore a variety of different ways to distribute any cost to students across the academic year
- A continuation of the trial and testing of new elements of the Welcome Week package as well as new planning processes and systems

Planning: Consultation & Communication

Campus Services and the College Union will consult widely across the College including the Faculties and their respective academic Departments, as well as International Student Support, Advancement and other support services teams. This will be accompanied by a Communications Plan to ensure clear, consistent communications.



Week Zero

Thank You

Jane Neary
Director of Campus Services