

Deputy President Welfare Union Council Report, 6th December 2016

By Emily-Jane Cramphorn

General Overview

Having been on holiday for the first two weeks of November I have less to report than I would ideally like, much of my time has been spent catching up with emails and work missed whilst on leave.

Consent Matters

Consent Matters was a topic of discussion whilst I was on leave, thus I was not able to respond in full. Consent Matters was purchased from money allocated by College to tackle consent and sexual violence on campus. The amount of money allocated was £17,000 meaning that approximately 30% of the budget was spent on Consent Matters. Moreover, £5000 of the budget was already set aside for consent training.

I explored a number of options for delivery of consent workshops and consulted with [Lime Culture](#) (Lime Culture is an independent community interest company that works with frontline professionals, and their organisations, to improve the response to victims of sexual violence, through training/development initiatives, research and consultancy) about the risks associated with them:

- Initially we investigated face-to-face consent training and thus consulted Bish Training and Lime Culture about them providing this. Bish were unable to answer questions about potential risks and deliver what we required. Lime Culture offered the best approach to face-to-face consent training with thorough understanding of the associated risks, how to handle disclosures and the importance of small interactive sessions as opposed to lectures. However, the logistics of this are incredibly challenging with a pilot to include 210 students would take 3 days and cost £3000.
- An approach taken by other universities is peer led training, which would cost £5000 to train the peer trainers. We discussed this with Bish Training who, as stated before, were unable to adequately respond to questions and concerns about the risks involved and potential disclosures. Moreover, Lime Culture advised against peer-led training as it has many risks associated with disclosures and inadequate delivery.
- Online training was logistically the easiest option. I reviewed a number of online consent websites and videos including 'simple as tea.' Consent Matters was the most comprehensive option. It covers navigating relationships, talking about consent, what is consent/how it is given, bystander intervention and what to do if you need help, advice or support. Moreover, it is interactive and engaging as opposed to simply giving you information. The entire course takes 1 hour to complete but it is broken down into short sections which take no longer than 5-10 minutes each. You can complete the sections individually so that it does not need to be sat in one

sitting. The course is also more inclusive than other tools which purely focus on heterosexual relationships and male perpetrators. Consent Matters was developed by professionals (Brook sexual health charity, Dr Alan Berkowitz, Dr Alison Phipps and Dr Tanya Palmer) and when consulted Lime Culture they advised that the content was good. It has a cost benefit over other forms of training which would have to be re-purchased each year and would logistically have a smaller reach. Additionally, Consent Matters will allow people to go back over the information in their own time and provides a known place to access information about disclosure and support.

Consent Matters is being trialled this year and is, therefore, non compulsory. A feedback form has been developed by College and ICT is currently working to integrate Consent Matters into College systems so that students are not required to fill in lengthy sign up/in forms as well. I will be pushing for Consent Matters to be part of the start up session next year, so that every incoming student must take it. Additionally, I will be pushing for bar staff, hall seniors and key people within clubs and societies take the course. At present Consent Matters has been used as part of the Union's disciplinary process.

Consent Matters will form part of a larger strategy to tackle sexual violence. At present I have had discussions with College about creating a framework for handling disclosure of sexual violence and am hoping to run an initiative about sexual consent, bystander intervention and safe sex. The idea behind this is to educate students about consent, sex and the difficult grey area that often exists, the simplification of consent by tools such as 'simple as tea' often fails to address this and can perpetuate the myth that sexual violence is always committed intentionally by 'bad people.'

Follow up from NUS feedback

- The president of the NUS has faced criticism over anti-Semitic comments and has alienated Jewish students across the country. Affiliating with an organisation that holds, or is thought to hold, an anti-Semitic sentiment contradicts our [Safe Space Policy](#) and is likely to alienate Jewish students at Imperial.
- It is not clear that there will be any financial benefit of joining the NUS and there will be expenditure (circa £50,000 per annum) due to affiliation fees.

Actions since last council:

1. Mental Health

- I was on the interview panel for the recruitment of an additional Mental Health Advisor. This recruitment forms part of the work to expand the Counselling and Mental Health Advice Service. I have continued discussions with Helen Joseph, the senior mental health advisor, and have agreed to work together on creating a mental health tool kit. I will also be supporting Helen to make links with Central North West London Trust mental health services.
- I have attended the Doctoral Student Wellbeing task and finish group, in which I helped to shape the training they will be offering to PhD supervisors regarding mental health and wellbeing. In this meeting I also suggested that a postgraduate (research) wellbeing and success guide is created in addition to the student space and undergraduate success guide. Along with the Counselling Service and the Graduate School I will be leading focus groups to find out what PGR students needs are.
- Funding has been secured to train a mental health first aid trainer within the Union. However, due to the time taken for this to happen I have pushed for the Union to deliver mental health first aid training to students for free. This is currently in the process of being organised.
- I have liaised with IQ to help support and promote their Mental Health Week.
- I have worked to re-brand Stress Less to a campaign that focuses on stress management rather than setting unrealistic expectations of eliminating stress. The campaign has been rebranded as 'Under Pressure?' and will launch on the 12th December. I am hoping to receive input and ideas from CU welfare officers and liberation officers at Community and Welfare Board. The first action of the campaign will be to provide students with information about the biological function of stress, how to manage it and how to channel it positively. To do this we will be giving out information from Mind. Additionally, we will be giving out sensory packs containing a few items to help ground and calm people in times of high stress. The idea is that people will try out these things and hopefully find/explore a technique that helps them stay calm under pressure. Additionally, it helps provide people with alternatives to self destructive behaviours they may be using to manage stress, such as hair pulling and skin picking.

2. Liberation and CU Welfare Officers

- Liberation and CU welfare officers are not given adequate support, training or resources. Thus I am trying to arrange focus groups to create a

plan of what officers need in order to create a framework/network for them to work within.

- We are looking at expanding the Education and Welfare team so that we are equipped to provide adequate support and training.
- I have received an agreement that we will reopen elections for the disabilities officer after Christmas as some people have shown interest in the role.
- I have agreed with Vice Provost of Education that I will set up meetings between her and the liberation and CU welfare officers; this will be raised at Community and Welfare Board.

3. Interruption of Studies

- I have attended the Tutor's forum where registry presented about the current state of interruption of studies. I took part the discussion about how the current processes need to be changed and better regulated. My suggestions were received well and I will be meeting with registry to discuss this further in the near future.

4. Inclusive learning

- I have been involved in the development of an inclusive learning plan with ICT, the Disability Advisory Service and the head of student support.
- As part of this plan I will be lobbying College for increased use of panopto so that it can be captioned for students with hearing difficulties. Widespread use of panopto will also help students with a variety of health issues and whose first language isn't English.
- As part of the strategy we will be developing guidelines for lecturers on delivering inclusive lectures and providing accessible learning materials.

5. Finance

- I have agreed with advice centre that they will deliver finance workshops, where they will cover student loans, debt management, credit cards and general financial literacy in addition to some budgeting tips. I have been and will continue to promote this.
- I have met with Rhidian Thomas and Abhijay Sood about the Imperial Bursary structure and will be supporting them to lobby College for movement of the 2015 cohort onto the new scheme.
- I have started work with Rachel Blythe (DPFS) to create a paper on student finance and the Imperial Bursary in order to lobby College and the government for more support for middle/high household income students and/or changes to how entitlement is calculated.

6. Casework and referrals

- I have helped a number of students to access the support they need from College, ICHC and the advice centre.
- I have supported a student with a complaint about the Disability Advisory Service and liaised with the Service to resolve the problem.