

Council

Tuesday 06 December 2016

Report to Union Council

Rachel Blythe, Deputy President (Finance & Services) December 05, 2016

## General Matters

Since the last Council meeting, I have continued administrating CSP finances and found various ways to improve Union services. My bigger goals for the term have been on the following:

1. Finance Timeline implementation
2. Prayer room refurbishment
3. Credit/debit card machine rental (PDQ machines for CSPs) – reducing cash carrying
4. Environment and sustainability objectives for Imperial College
5. Door charge infographic
6. VAT training and instructions on how to reclaim

## Finance

- Authorising expenditure (POs, MFRs, Claims, etc.) and income (sponsorship [167 contracts reviewed and approved to date], charitable donations).
- Committing all Union refunds [125 as of Fri 18/11 @ 16:33].
- Protocol for the Finance Timeline is being evaluated and edited. The timeline is planned to be in place next year (after elections) to ensure that students can see how much time it will take to be recompensed once their transaction has been approved. As a result of initial discussions and reviewing the submission -> authorisation -> payment made data, our Finance Analyst has made the following change:  
*Currently, claims cannot be processed during month end.  
Month end closes the previous month's accounts before starting the next month.  
The claims Unifi system has now been redesigned to include a new option to 'review' claims without posting them.  
Claims can now be reviewed whilst they come in during month end.  
They will then be paid in advance without being posted until the new month is opened.  
This removes the backlog of claims that build up in the 4-5 days when the month end accounts are being processed.  
It further avoids the subsequent rush to get the backlog paid after the new month opens.  
This is effective immediately and is currently live, being tested when November closes and we open December.*
- Created several role accounts and updated passwords for all Union email addresses: ([singapore@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:singapore@imperial.ac.uk); [felix@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:felix@imperial.ac.uk); [felix.sport@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:felix.sport@imperial.ac.uk); [amsa.academics@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:amsa.academics@imperial.ac.uk); [medtech@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:medtech@imperial.ac.uk); [connect.careers@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:connect.careers@imperial.ac.uk); ICCS case study request; [physsoc@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:physsoc@imperial.ac.uk); [history@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:history@imperial.ac.uk); [icmts@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:icmts@imperial.ac.uk) , etc.).
- Advised students on their transaction lines and cases for reimbursement, locating income, or emergency payments e.g. ArtSoc, OSC Indian, SCC Punjabi, OSC CSSA - *have now settled the majority deficit with OSC CSSA, awaiting ticketing sales income for SCC Punjabi after speaking to the NEC organisers and box office, the SCC Punjabi Foreign Performers leader and researching HMRC tax forms.*

- Have further streamlined the Events Budget authorisation chain with DPCS, we have opened the options to written proposals and phone calls for students that do not study on South Kensington campus.
- Have tested electronic sponsorship on development eActivities site to reduce some of the DPFS unnecessary admin. This is continuing work from Kieron Creagh's DPFS year.
- Worked with DPW and students to open discussion on Student Finance and amendments to Imperial bursaries.
- Written up a short working document for students to rent out credit card machines. The Union is due to purchase a new PDQ machine for the Reception on Level 2 of the Union Building. This is in conjunction with the new EPOS tender which is set to be rolled out for Licensed Trade and Retail in January-February 2017.
- Authorised use of a CostCo card for Woodward Halls with the Student Activities Manager. This will be monitored to see how cost effective it is to students and the Woodward Hall budget before rolling out to CSPs and other Halls.
- Collated VAT FAQs to begin putting up a more thorough VAT information pack/picture. Have circulated a 'how to reclaim VAT' list of instructions to Finance and Systems to evaluate before sending out in a simplified summary to students.
- Will update the management group authorisation minimum once the VAT 'how to reclaim' instructions are sent out to all students. Without this in place, we are risking students missing out on the reclaim opportunities and spending more than necessary.

## Services

- Met with the Provost, Director of Estates & Facilities, Head of Energy & Environment and a representative from the Grantham Institute to discuss both the Union and College strategies regarding environmental aims and objectives. I have now been invited to join the new College environmental and sustainability steering group with the Grantham Institute. Have also proposed two goals for the Union strategy:
  1. "We will work with College to improve the environmental sustainability and carbon management of all Imperial College facilities."
  2. "Demonstrate our commitment to being a responsible organisation by retaining our NUS Green Impact Bronze status, and working to attain Silver (or higher) status."
- Settled a complaint about vegetable oil usage in the Union outlets in South Kensington within 24 hours. Double checked and made sure that Beit Bars only ever use vegetable oil and separate vegetarian and vegan items during preparation and cooking. The FiveSixEight menus will be updated to explicitly describe vegetarian and vegan options for all items.
- Finalising the Entertainments budget (door charge) infographic. This is due to come out in early January alongside the Beit Bars January Sales. Currently considering options for students to make the door charges cheaper (i.e. buying for the month/year in advance at a subsidised price).
- Worked with James (DPCS) to get College to agree and begin planning refurbishment of the Prayer room in Princes Gardens. They are now finalising details on carpets, wall colours, etc. and College have found two rooms in Sherfield (next to h-bar) to accommodate them during the refurbishment period.
- Still looking to get a Systems focus group up for our Systems team to answer student frustrations on imperialcollegeunion.org, CSP websites on union.ic.ac.uk domain, eActivities, etc.
- Revisited Silwood to update the committee on progress from my previous meet (entertainment, mini buses and sports facilities). Further discussed Welfare and community building options with DPW.

- Visited Hammersmith campus on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December to discuss the Union strategy.
- Have received details on Careers Service survey and have been consulted on by Eric Suen with a written proposal to Council. Have contacted the Director and Deputy Director of the Careers Service to discuss the survey results and work for improvements on 20 minute consultations, the 12-2 lunch period availability and other advice alternatives, e.g. peer to peer training.
- Looking at the College catering and hot food policy with the International Liberation Officer to see if we can run the international food fair with food that students have cooked at home.
- Still reviewing Reynolds cafe finances. Have been in touch with ICSMSU Sites and Services officer.
- Working with Women @ Imperial to help them plan their annual event in March, providing information on CSPs built to promote and support women at Imperial. This includes all of our female sports teams and I am hoping to include them in the exhibition for 2017/18.

### **Health, Safety and Disciplinary Committees**

- Sat on College disciplinary committee for the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016.
- Chaired the Union Health & Safety Committee for the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016.
  - Looking to improve H&S and risk mitigation for the Summer Ball.
  - Increase SALUS reporting for CSPs and improve groundwork for immediate protocol in the event of a serious incident.