

Imperial College Union

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A note by John Collins, IC Union President

Centenary

The Centenary Launch was by all accounts successful and literally dozens of balloons have been returned from as far a field as Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. I have tried to contact the Balloon Race's winner and she hasn't got back to me so if you're reading this, Roochi Solanki, then please get in touch!

The Student Centenary Working Group has met to plan future events. University Challenge is the next big thing and I hope to publicise our planned inter-faculty competition soon. The ball committee have also met and have settled on a "burlesque" theme. Council members are strongly advised to buy their tickets now as the early bird discount will not last forever.

ICU Governance

As I have reported in previous meetings, the governance review working group has endorsed a proposal to create an incorporated trustee board to govern ICU if it becomes a separate charity. The College, believing that ICU does not need to register with the Charity Commission next year when the new Charities Act comes into effect, are not keen on this idea because they do not believe that ICU will be required to register as a separate charity.

The Union Executive is considering seeking legal opinion from the NUS's solicitor and QC (who have been involved in this debate for some time, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/6334829.stm>) on the question of ICU's legal status and whether or not ICU is legally obliged to register as a separate charity.

Strategic Education Committee

Ben and I delivered a presentation that the College's Strategic Education Committee on January 24th. This presentation resulted in two outcomes:

1. PhD students will all receive a minimum pay of £14,300 from next year
2. Measures will be introduced to increase the proportion of 1st and 2:1 degrees that are awarded each year.

Result!

RCSU Office

After long and tortuous negotiations we have finally secured an office for the RCSU. This room is located opposite the climbing wall adjacent to the walkway by the EE department. Congratulations to all, particularly those involved in organising the protest that led to this decision, are in order.

Aldwych Group Staff Member

Ben and I attended a rather farcical Aldwych Meeting at Warwick on January 26th where the idea of a staff member was discussed again. We have said all along that this staff member requires a job description and should be based within another student organisation. If this project gets off the group then we are prepared to bid for money (around £1K) in the budgeting round to contribute to the expenses of this new staff member in the next academic year.

NUS Transition

Our transition from ULU to NUS is going well and this month we have seen the following developments:

1. We officially affiliated on Tuesday 13th February following a vote by National Council,
2. NUS Extra Cards are now on sale at www.nusextra.co.uk,
3. The NUS logo is now on the ICU website,
4. Affiliation fee for next year has been agreed at around £45K,
5. Affiliation fee for this year has been agreed at £20K,
6. Conference delegate elections are now running and a training session has been booked for Wednesday March 7th (lunchtime),
7. Job descriptions for delegates have been agreed (and will be finalised at this Council meeting),
8. Amendments to Conference motions have been prepared for this meeting.

ULU Governance

ULU is reviewing its governance and the President is proposing that ULU Council should be abolished and replaced with a Trustee Board and Senate. The Trustee Board would be led by the Sabbatical and membership of the Senate would be limited to constituent member Presidents only. This certainly makes sense to me and I encourage our ULU delegates to support these proposals.

ICU Elections

I am acting as Returning Officer for this election and Eric Lai is acting as Deputy Returning Officer for both the Sabbatical and NUS delegate elections.

This month 18 students are running for Sabbatical election and 14 for NUS delegate election. By any measure this is extremely positive and I am looking forward to a fun, fair and engaging election season.

Service Level Agreements

Recent governance discussions with the College have resulted in some positive developments. The General Manager and I have been working with several support service divisions of the College and the College Secretary to draft Service Level Agreements with each division that explain what we can expect from each division and what they can expect from us.

The divisions involved are:

1. Human Resources (HR)
2. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
3. Facilities Management
4. Estates Property Management
5. Finance

Essentially this means that the Union will receive further support from the College in these areas with little or no additional cost. So far it has been agreed that the Union should benefit from the ICT PC replacement programme. In practice this means we would get one third of our PCs replaced for free starting next year.

DPGS Reform

We have initiated a discussion about the future of the DPGS role and papers on this subject have been presented to the GSA, RWB and Executive. Three options have been identified and will be presented to the Union Council at the start of the summer term.

Wye Transfer

Jayinder Khaneka and I have been working closely with our counterparts at the University of Kent Union to ensure that WCUS is smoothly handed over to Kent this August. So far the only stumbling block seems to be Imperial College, who at present plan to introduce a whopping £70K space charge. This is obviously something we are not happy with and are discussing with College at a higher level.

London Assembly

Ben and I attended the inaugural meeting of the London Student Assembly, which is a joint project with NUS London, ULU and the Greater London Assembly (GLA) that is designed to give students a voice in the governance of London. Further information about this project will be reported verbally.

Building Redevelopment

Our architects will present proposals for Phase II of the building redevelopment at the next Union Executive Meeting on February 28th at 16:30. Council members are very welcome to attend this meeting but please let us know in advance so that we can be sure that the meeting room is large enough.

I am aware that a debate has been initiated over future phases of the masterplan and I welcome any input into this discussion. A paper is, I believe, being prepared for the next Union Council and I am planning to reopen the Building Redevelopment Working Group shortly after to continue this debate.