

Deputy President (Finance & Services) Report

A Report by Chris Larvin

Here is a review of what I have been up to over the summer...

Handover and Training

Throughout July I attended all the handover meetings and sessions with my fellow Sabbs and I also went on a three-day NUS training course in Leicester entitled "Action on Finance and Resources". Although sceptical at first, the course proved very interesting and provided valuable networking opportunities. Together with the President, I attended a number of London university handover parties which also provided networking opportunities with other London sabbaticals.

Audit and Union Reserves

As reported to the Executive Committee, a decision made by Council regarding the funding of the Beit Masterplan has left us in the situation where the Union's General Reserves are significantly depleted. As a result, I will be undertaking a review of club and societies finances which will include an in-depth look at levels of funding, expenditure controls and procedures. I attended a number of audit meetings with Stephen Brown, where senior College finance staff were able to appraise the Union's finances and provide guidance on how to move forward.

Freshers' Week

A large marquee has been erected in Beit Quad for Freshers' Week and this time round the floor has been carpeted which should reduce the damage to the lawn. At the time of writing, Freshers' Week is halfway through; so far it is going well with surprisingly few incidents, very good attendance (confirmed by excellent performance figures from the bars). Scott Mills' set on Wednesday was particularly well received and he commented that the crowd were terrific and the marquee created a great atmosphere. I have been able to assist the entertainments and stewarding teams during Freshers Week on Saturday and Wednesday night, and I will also be helping on Friday night during the Freshers' Ball.

Finally, prior to Freshers Week, in early September I attended the sound and light trade show, PLASA '07, at Earls Court with Malcolm Macpherson, Entertainments and Promotions Manager in search of ideas to implement during Freshers Week and Summer Ball next year.

Summer Ball

Work on the Summer Ball has begun, and a provision date has been set for Saturday 21st June 2008. Anyone with any feedback from the Centenary Ball or ideas for the next Summer Ball, please get in touch. This year I plan on vastly increasing the amount of sponsorship we receive and I have already begun courting a number of companies for sponsorship.

Finance Regulations

Early in the summer an alarming change made to the Finance Regulations at the final meeting of academic Council last year was noted. It concerned the level of authorisation for the Executive committee and the Deputy President (Finance and Services). We have been able to find a temporary resolution which has been approved by the Executive Committee, the Trustee Board and the College Secretariat.

Minibuses

Four brand new minibuses are now in service and, alongside one of our other older minibuses, sport new decals which look stunning.

Clubs and Societies

There has been a large volume of event budgets to approve which has generally been conducted well and I hope to review the event budgeting guide in the very short future. Associated with the event budgets, there are currently a large number of sponsorship deals are being finalised with various clubs and societies, particularly for the larger events. A new procedure imposed by the Finance Office has meant that companies will not be invoiced until a contract/agreement/purchase order has been arranged which has seen a large portion of my time taken up with the adjustment and approval of sponsorship contracts.

Council
8th October 2007

The Recreational Clubs Committee has a new Honorary Senior Treasurer which was passed through the Executive Committee and Trustee Board over the summer.

The Finance Manual has been a work in progress for months now, and I profusely apologise for not delivering it sooner. There have been some fairly radical changes made which I hope will make life easier for the club chairs and treasurers.

During the CSC and FU training session last week, I was able to present a brief summary of CSC-level finance and changes made to Finance procedures and regulations over the last year. I hope to run a more in-depth training session once Freshers' Week is out of the way.

Website

There has been a recent upgrade to the Union website which has added additional capabilities with meetings and policies, front page enhancements and the next update which adds a clubs and societies administration interface. Work currently on-going on the website means we are currently unable to add new club and societies to the A-Z, however we hope to have this resolved shortly.

Commercial Services

The term planner for the term has been out for over a fortnight now and a major new addition this year is the fortnightly band night, Too Posh to Wash. Run in conjunction with an offer on Tuborg, it is set to be a valuable addition to our Ents program. Another new face to our Friday nights program is Bar FTSE which is guaranteed to be great fun and will run twice this term.

We were able to incorporate the Cinema into the Freshers' Week programme which received a luke-warm reception which is likely to be the result of the showing times; constrained by a function running in the Concert Hall. However the society expressed that there was much more interest during Freshers Week which could be attributed to the additional promotion through ICU Ents.

The Ents Card has been revised to now include drinks offers all-year-round and I now feel it represents real value for money.

Catering and entertainments operations within dBs were reviewed this summer and included a visit from Jane Neary, Head of Catering at Imperial College. Changes made include opening DaVinci's from 8:30am to provide hot drinks and hot bites until lunchtime operations begin at 12pm. At lunchtime, dBs will be serving a selection of pre-made baguettes, hot drinks and snacks with the emphasis on the new service is speed to avoid the long queues associated with the sandwich bar in previous years.

In conjunction with the operations in dBs, in order to save in the region of £3,000, myself and the Sabbatical Officers along with a number of helpers repainted the walls in dBs the weekend before the start of Freshers Week. Many thanks to Stephen, Kirsty, Ally, Eugene Chang, Tom Roberts, and Robin Pitt for giving up so much of their free time to splat paint for the Union. Sofas to complement the lightly coloured walls are on order and should be with us within a fortnight.

Felix

Finally, I have been meeting with the Felix Editor to analyse the coming years' cash flow and set attainable targets for advertising to avoid any repeat of last year.

CL 8/10/07