

Imperial College Union

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A note by Stephen Brown

Beit Redevelopment

As you will have probably noticed in Felix – Job done! College approved our request for £1.93m in full and thanks to the support of the Harlington and IC Trusts only £196k of the funding for Phase II will have to come from Union Reserves. The tendering process will begin shortly and building work is due to start in the Spring.

Staffing

As promised, the position of Postgraduate and Faculty Union Coordinator has now been filled. Interviews took place during December and I would like to thank Eirini Spentza for giving up some time to sit on the interview panel.

Finances

Management accounts were presented to the Executive Committee and Trustee Board. The Union is having a very good year financially which allays some of the fears we had over the summer. Overall, we are seeing an 18% year on year increase for the first 5 months of the financial year although operational issues arising from the review of our finance function still continue to be one of our main focuses.

Elections

GSA and Sabbatical Elections are dealt with in separate papers.

Higher Education Funding Debate

The sunset clause on the suspension of our current HE funding policy expires on the 31st of January which we are not going to meet by a few weeks to no real practical detriment to this exercise. The DPEW has prepared an online survey which is going to go live on Friday 25th January and a new policy will be presented to Council at the next meeting on the 18th of February for you to accept/amend/reject as you see fit. This leaves us plenty of time to submit an amendment to NUS Annual Conference (the deadline being the end of February) if our policy is significantly different from theirs should Council wish to do so.

Aldwych Meeting

I attended the December meeting of the Aldwych Group at UCL where the Chairman of the Russell Group addressed us on topic of widening participation as there is currently a lot of concern that good science and maths A-levels are increasingly becoming the preserve of better off students which makes it very difficult for places like Imperial to reach their targets.

Meetings (many more, but here are the highlights)

Pro-Rector (Education) – The DPEW and I have observed that some departments are not sticking to Senate's policy on lunchtime teaching. Felix are thinking about doing a story on this as we would like to see this policy adhered to by all departments in future when they are constructing their time tables.

Safety Director – The General Manager and I met with the Safety Director to discuss how College's new Health and Safety policy would affect the Union.

College Secretary – He solicited the Union's views on the governments attempts to combat alleged extremism on campus in advance of a meeting that the Rector and Pro-Rector had with Bill Rammell on the topic.

Rector – In advance of our HE funding survey going live the Rector shared his thoughts on the 2009 funding review, the provision of science teaching in schools and attempts to widen participation at leading universities.

Trustee Board meeting

Verbal – I am writing this report on Monday and the Trustee Meeting is this Thursday.

Annual Leave

I took the 2nd of January off as I didn't particularly fancy travelling down from Scotland on New Years Day.

Wye

The DPEW and I met with the Principal of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Pro-Rector (Education) to discuss Imperial students experiences this year at Wye. Prof Knight and a Sabbatical Officer will be making a trip to Wye this term to meet representatives to identify any problems that students on this outlying campus are having.

The Executive Committee has transferred management responsibility for Wye Bar to Imperial College Commercial Services. 2008/09 will be the last year when Imperial undergraduates are based at Wye and it was not feasible for the Union to keep Wye bar open as over the past few years it has consistently lost around £20k per annum. The benefit to the student body at Wye is that they are guaranteed use of this vital social space for another year and the Union as a whole benefits as it removes a significant financial risk from our balance sheet.

Staff Party

I would like to thank Chris Larvin, Kirsty Patterson and Tom Roberts for rearranging their plans at very short notice (as did I) in order to work on the bars during the staff party.