

Operations Manager Report

Trading

The final term saw a continuation of an excellent trading year for the Union's outlets. Bars at South Kensington have seen a year on year increase in net surplus of over £48000, which has produced a forecasted surplus for the year of £207000. This surplus continues to absorb losses made in catering and cover the costs incurred in providing entertainments. Both of these areas have felt the benefit of improved cost control and are sustaining, as of 31st May losses of £55474 and £33545, which mark around a £20000 improvement in both areas. Early sales indications show that the Summer BBQ catering offer is being well received.

Retail outlets are continuing to buck the national trend and producing a year to date surplus of £80907, which marks a £21453 improvement on last year and a 2% improvement in net margin.

Charing Cross has had an outstanding year, despite pressures from the College with regards to opening times, with a forecasted surplus of £8319, which represents the best performance in this outlet for a number of years.

The Union has been working with the Assistant Director of Commercial Services in the College and we have entered into a joint purchasing arrangement for products from Scottish & Newcastle, ahead of the opening of Eastside Halls Bar. This has enabled us to increase the collective retrospective discount and has generated further savings and benefits. This new arrangement is set to come into place in October for the start of the new term and is a good step forward in terms of sensible procurement across Imperial, benefiting the Union and College.

Summer Ball

This year's Summer Ball is generally considered to have been a great success, with over 2100 people attending. As a result of much earlier planning and more rigorous budgeting process, feedback from College Estates and Soft Services departments has been extremely positive and the event is anticipated to have generated a surplus in the region of £12000.

A live music arena was introduced this year, proving extremely popular and the success of this initiative will influence the entertainments focus for the upcoming academic year and next year's Ball.

Officer Training

As the start of Officer Handover, training for incoming Officers was held on the 2nd & 3rd July at the Royal Holloway campus. From this event we have a set of SMART objectives for each of the Officers. The next stage of this process will be held in the second week of August where a programme of planning events will be held with Sabbatical Officers and Union staff. The purpose of these events will be to develop an appropriate staffing structure to best support the objectives for the year and to develop both a set of Customer Service standards for the organization and a set of operational objectives for the year. These documents will be circulated to the Trustees after their production.

Website

The Executive Committee passed a paper to conduct a re-design of the Union website on the 5th July. The redesign streamlines design, greater prominence to the activities of our Clubs & Societies, user content profiling, opportunity for increased advertising income

Since its launch in 2006, the Union website has gone from strength to strength, with over 75% of memberships to Clubs & Societies purchased online. This has clear benefits to the student experience and has ensured that memberships and the associated financial transactions are made extremely efficient, saving staff time and costs.

This year takings online have risen by 20% to £600,000.

Trustee Board
14th July 2009

Charity Registration

Clearly, the Union's registration with the Charity Commission will form a large piece of work for the Union and the Trustee Board over the Summer months. To assist in this process, I am meeting on the 23rd July to discuss implications of registering and the process we must go through with Matt Hyde, Chief Executive of NUS, who has a lot of experience in this area.

In addition to this, I am meeting with Horwarth Clark Whitehill, a firm of accountants, who are widely regarded as the experts in Students' Unions, Charity SORP and registration by the end of July. It is anticipated that they will provide some consultancy as we prepare to register, to ensure we get the most of registration and any associated tax benefits. I will report on these meetings at the next meeting of the Trustee Board.