

Council
29 October 2013

Council Report

Union President- David Goldsmith

Welcome Week overview

Welcome week was a huge success this year. If you'd like to hear details of just how great it was click on to my blog 'Nothing compares to freshers' at <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/blogs/president/nothing-compares-freshers>

The senior staff, deputy presidents and I met to analyse what went well and what could improve. I brought the feedback I heard from students and decided that next year's undergraduate handbook should be less corporate-looking, with more student/sabbatical input. On the back of the success of the Hello!CU Crew (student volunteers who helped during welcome week) we will be expanding the roles for the crew next year. This year we will be reviewing how we train hall seniors, how we ticket halls for the mingles and freshers' ball and the range of welcome week events on offer- ensuring that they cater better to those that are under 18 and those that do not drink alcohol.

Graduation

Graduation this year was conducted in three ceremonies, one for each of the faculties, in which more than 2000 graduands (1) graduated. I was the student orator for these ceremonies and gave the opening proclamation. I also wrote the graduands a short piece in Felix alongside the constituent union presidents http://felixonline.co.uk/archive/IC_2013/2013_1556_A.pdf

Events I have attended in the College

In the past few weeks I attended the opening of the Centre for Blast Injury Studies by Prince Harry in the RSM building as well as the re-launch of Imperial 600- the staff LGBT network. I have also attended numerous College committees.

A new big push for union Council

I feel that in the past the student body has not been given enough exposure to Union Council- enough people weren't aware of what it is, what it does, and how they can use it to make their voices heard. So I made sure there was a big publicity push for today's meeting- it featured as the main item on my newsletter, on the website and it was the theme for the Sabb Hot-Desk (2)- headlines of papers being presented as features. There is now 'How to write a paper' guidance on the website as well as highlighting that all students have the right to attend and write papers. I will be ensuring that this push continues to happen for every Council of the year to empower more students to get involved.

Preparations for Council

It was noted that this year's Council is rather short of members who were also on Council last year. Therefore I wrote an accessible report on last years' Council- what happened and what action still needs to be taken- which I will be presenting. My hope is that this will help familiarise Council with the ongoing issues as well as informing them of the ways in which Council as

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been able to enact change. I have included an extended section on the AgainstActon campaign from last year. I also wrote a response to the Immigration bill that I will be presenting for decision.

Revamp of the Sabb Hot-Desk

The Sabb Hot-Desk is new for this year as a place where, once a week for an hour, students can find their sabbatical officers awaiting any of their questions or concerns. It started a few weeks ago and I have decided to spice it up. I have decided that each week it will have a different theme in order to engage students in discussion. Last week it was 'Union Council' and the week before it was 'Elections'. I will be rotating the location between the JCR, the Sherfield foyer and, when it opens, the new postgraduate café/bar. There will be a greater publicity push for it and it now features in my newsletter as a permanent fixture in a box on the right hand side- this details which two sabbs will be there and where it will be.

Pictures of Sabbs all over the place!

You may have noticed that there is now always a smiling face in the top right hand corner of the Union newsletter. The newsletter will usually come from me but will often come from a different sabbatical officer in order to help people familiarise themselves with who we are. This feeds into my plan, along with the sabb hot desk, and being at as many union events as possible, to increase student familiarity with their elected officers. I hope that this will help them feel more comfortable with approaching us as well as getting them more engaged with important issues and campaigns that feature this year.

Keeping abreast of student politics at the Union

Realising that we currently do not have a method for ensuring that sabbatical officers and students are sufficiently politically engaged I have set up an internal meeting, every three weeks, where we will bring to the table topics that we have researched. This will now form part of the remit of the Education and Welfare Manager at the Union to ensure that it is sustained and continued into next year. Not being a member of the NUS (3) it can be more difficult for us to keep well informed. My hope is that this meeting will ensure that we as a Union are better informed and quicker to act on issues affecting students.

- (1) Graduand: a person who is about to receive an academic degree
- (2) Sabb: an abbreviated version of the term 'Sabbatical officer' - this refers to the deputy president and me and sometimes to the Felix editor and the ICSM president who also take a year out of their studies for their role.
- (3) NUS: the National Union of Students