

GSU Activity Report

This report covers the timespan from the 1st October 2013 to the 1st of June 2014. Over this period, the GSU officers have been extensively involved in the organisation of events for postgraduate students at Imperial College, as well as representing the constituents of the GSU on every College and Union committee relating to postgraduate matters. This report does not provide an exhaustive list of activities of the GSU but rather highlights events of particular interest.

1. Representation

Doctoral Proposition

The GSU President represented the students on the Doctoral Proposition Working Party (DPWP) which reviewed the Graduate School's (GS) provision in terms of professional development in light of budget restrictions and drafted the 'Doctoral Proposition', a document outlining Imperial's commitment to its PhD students. The GSU Executive Committee (EC) further provided feedback on the DPWP's proposals.

RSD Review

Following from the revision of the GS's provision, the Research Skills Development course, a very popular 3 day residential course, was to be heavily modified. This encountered heavy resistance from the staff involved in running the course and the GSU. The GSU's opposition to the modifications was presented to the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee (PPDC) by Boshuo Guo – GSU Deputy President (Representation). As a direct consequence thereof, all major modifications will not happen until wider consultation with students who have been on the course in the past.

Supervisor Training

Following a survey on PhD student wellbeing in 2009, the GS developed an action plan for supervisor training. This action plan was reviewed by the GSU EC and critical feedback was provided to the PPDC by the GSU President. As a direct consequence thereof, the action plan will be completely reviewed and a working party will be set up to review standards for PhD student supervision. This will run over the year to come.

Campus Outreach

In line with the Student Union's College Outreach strategy and the College's Cohort Building programme, the GSU facilitated the organisation of postgraduate events at both St Mary's and Hammersmith Hospital where a large fraction of the Imperial's postgraduate population is based. The objective in the long run is to set up a local student committee at St Mary's and revive the Hammersmith Student's Community.

PhD Wellbeing Survey

The GSU AWOs, Deputy President (Representation) and President were involved in shaping the questionnaire, which is a re-run of the 2009 survey, and advertising the survey to postgraduate students. Thanks to a very active campaign, responses were slightly up compared to the previous run of the survey. Results are expected early July.

2. Events

Theatre Trips

The GSU sold a record number of discounted theatre tickets this year, with 100+ people per trip. As caveat here it should be noted that the event with 150 available tickets proved difficult to sell out. For future events ticket numbers should be limited to around 100.

Christmas Party

The GSU events team organised a Christmas party which despite falling slightly short of expected attendance still managed to make a profit. The decoration bought for the party this year will be reused next year.

GSU BBQ

A PG BBQ is planned for early July.

3. Miscellaneous

Postgraduate Newsletter

In an effort to improve communication and avoid duplication of information, the GSU and the Union now issue a joint monthly newsletter to PG students.

Postgraduate Elections

Postgraduate Elections this year have been among the most successful to date with President, Deputy Presidents, half of the AWOs and the Events officer being elected directly in the first round of elections. However, low turnout and limited interest in the positions is still a concern and we will be working closely with the Union to improve the numbers for the year to come. By-elections will be held to fill the missing positions.