

Imperial College Union
President's Report
A Note by John Collins, IC Union President

This report summarises my activities since August 1st 2006.

Handover

I have met almost all of the senior managers in the College that Sameena regularly dealt with last year. Most of the incoming Sabbatical team have accompanied me to meetings with the Rector, Deputy Rector, College Secretary and Director of Project Management. No major issues have been discussed with senior managers yet although these meetings have been an efficient way of coming up to speed with the latest developments at the College. I have attended Silwood training, ULU training, Aldwych Handover and various internal training sessions. I am happy with the way handover has been conducted this year and would like to thank the outgoing sabbaticals and Union staff for making it so successful.

External Relations (and NUS)

Ben and I have put in a reasonable amount of time representing the Union to external organisations throughout the summer. We have been to ULU, Aldwych and (out of core hours, of course) NUS events throughout this month. Incidentally, we have been awarded the right to host the next Aldwych meeting on October 20th, which is a small honour as we are the only London College that has been invited to do so this year. On the NUS front, I have received a petition to call for a referendum on affiliation to NUS and I will be presenting a report to the Executive Committee on this matter tomorrow. In anticipation of a referendum this November, I have been negotiating proposed affiliation fees with the National Treasurer to ensure that we get a decent (and fair) deal.

The ICU Governance Review

I led the initial stages of the governance review and was granted Executive's formal approval (and financial support) to start it this summer. In addition to managing the logistics of the review (which involved over 30 people and six sub groups) I also chaired two of the Sub Groups, which was a time consuming but interesting task. The first draft of the review report is now complete and is tabled at this Council meeting. I keep promising to put everything up on the website and I apologise for not doing this yet. I have presented it to SAC, Executive and Council and I am now starting to register everybody's concerns and find a way to address them. So far, we seem to have found a consensus on most issues.

Fresher's Week

I gave eight introductory speeches in the first week of the autumn term and I am getting thoroughly tired of the sound of my own voice! I also helped Eric and co. with Freshers' Fair on Tuesday 3rd. This was a fabulous event and I would like to thank everybody who was involved in it for their efforts.

Discipline issues

I have dealt with several disciplinary cases this summer and I have also been threatened with a legal action. As you can imagine, dealing with disciplinary issues is very time consuming so could I please request that people stop being naughty!

Officer Training

I have attended a variety of training sessions, both internal and external programmes. I supported Ben with the Union training weekend at Wye on September

23rd / 24th I think the actual programme worked well although I was disappointed by the poor turnout. I understand that Ben will be raising this matter at Executive in the near future.

Recent College Meetings

I have seen a lot of the Rector lately and so far we haven't fallen out over any major issues yet. I have started a debate about our legal status with Sir Richard and others; they seem to be rather undecided as to what we should do next. I have also finally met the mysterious Martin Knight, who is the College's new Chief Operating Officer, and he's not as scary as I thought he might be. I discussed the Beit Masterplan project with him and he has given me some helpful advice on how to argue for College money in the next planning round.

I attended College Council at a governors' away day event on September 15th and learnt about recent developments in Wye and Imperial's latest successes in research. The RAE was discussed in some detail and the consensus from College managers seemed to be that it was a daft idea to change the assessment technique to the metric methodology. I have invited a few newer governors to come on a short tour of the Union building and I understand several have agreed to see the building on October 12th.

I also attended meeting with the Deputy Rector and a host of College managers with the Wye Executive to discuss the latest developments at Wye. There I learnt that University of Kent at Canterbury (UKC) have not yet agreed to increase their block grant to the UKC Union when undergraduate teaching at Wye is transferred to UKC. This clearly needs following up and I am presently making arrangements to visit UKC this month.

The ICU Centenary Programme

I have been working closely with the College and several people in the Union to develop a strategy for our Centenary. Shiv Chopra deserves most of the praise for taking this project forward and will be taking on the role of project manager for our programme. Lately we have been working on setting up a student workstream within the College's overall project management team and developing a sponsorship strategy, the latter being driven by several approaches from blue chip companies we have received in recent weeks. Our programme is building in size but it needs to get bigger. Unfortunately, Shiv and I have been snowed under in freshers' week work and so things have slowed a little lately. The College has granted us permission to approach a handful of high profile speakers for our centenary ball, which will take place on June 16th. Look out for much more news on the Centenary front in weeks to come.

Building Update (including carbon footprint reduction initiative)

Da Vinci's is now open and we are waiting for new furniture to arrive. New EPoS tills have been installed and they will be fully integrated into a wider EPoS system within the month. Discussions on what the next step should be with the Beit Masterplan are progressing slowly but I am optimistic that things will speed up soon. Ben and I have been speaking to a variety of external people about how we can lower the carbon footprint of our building and the advice we are getting is that we should ask our Council to appoint an external consultant to prepare a detailed feasibility study as soon as possible.

JC 07/10/06