Report to Council
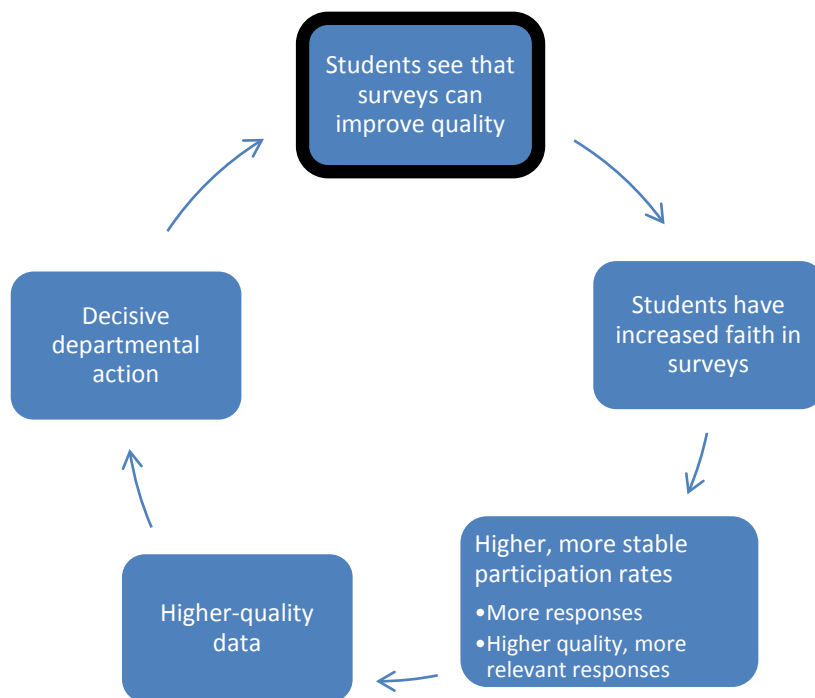Jonathan Silver, Deputy President (Education)

Successor
Congratulations to Alex Dahinten, a fellow bioengineer, who will be taking the helm next year. This year I've done my best to set the Union up to represent students more effectively and reliably, and it is no mean feat to follow that up to make sure that the changes have taken place, and make judgements on what changes are right and what changes need further work. I wish him luck (as well as an effective handover).

Rep Policy
This has now been approved and is to be implemented next year. I anticipate that there will be amendments early on, and it ought to go through some organic evolution before it is a permanent part of the Union. The representatives appendix, which is under the control of the DPE and the Representation and Welfare Board, is still coming on and I don't think it'll be 'complete' for a number of months. I entrust this to my successor!

Presentations
I've presented to the Strategic Education Committee and to the Student Welfare Day. Both presentations were well-received. The SEC heard about our representation reforms and our thoughts on access to external examiners' reports. On Welfare Day I spoke about the SOLE Cycle, as I call it:

The 11 slides explained more about the SOLE Cycle and how to achieve it, and there was spontaneous applause at the end, so we can only hope they liked the idea. Unfortunately there were only about 70 staff in the room, so it would be useful if we could find a way to get it out into a larger forum. Perhaps we need to produce a set of 'ICU Survey Guidance Notes' to be distributed to staff at the opening of each survey.

L2L
I've been on a working party reviewing the booklets known as Learning to Learn, Learning to Master and Learning to Research. I'll have been to a meeting of the group today so I can report back further. It's been my task to rewrite the final quarter of Learning to Learn, and we have provisionally decided to rename it "The Imperial Study Guide".

dpeducation@imperial.ac.uk

DSS, SAMS, OSS, VLEs
If any department likes their acronyms, it's ICT. (Apart from Life Sciences who like naming their modules things like FQPZ and NRMG, and Maths, who call them all M7C4 or K2N2. Sounds like pathogenic strains to me.) Anyway, **DSS** (aka Tardis aka Tisa), the departmental student system, is coming on well, and the delivery of Phase 1 will take place this summer, allowing staff to keep track of the modules that all their students are doing, the amount of teaching that staff do, programme specifications, course syllabuses, and upload all that data to other places like SOLE and the prospectus without them having to fill in numerous forms. The subsequent phases are more exciting for us: the ability to use it to pick our course options, the ability to view our coursework marks on it, that sort of thing. There's a long way to go but it will finally bring students and personal tutors the details on progress that they so badly need.

SAMS/OSS (Student Administration Management System/Oracle Student System) are the same thing: they both refer to the big daddy of databases in Registry. It's the one that holds everyone's data and module marks. Student e-Service (and the counterpart Faculty e-Service) are simply interfaces to this massive database. So it's getting old. Crucially, Oracle are withdrawing their support for the software in a few months, so we need to find a replacement, fast. ICT are working on it and we have met them to discuss the requirements for a new Student e-Service. One of the biggest features we suggested was better-designed, more streamlined fee and accommodation payment methods, so that paying using the online shop would be more like buying on Amazon and less like using an abacus. Over the next few months ICT will decide which product best fits our needs.

The **VLE** Review is coming on. One of the biggest problems with WebCT/Blackboard is that there is no outward-facing feature, no way to publish our teaching materials online. This will be the biggest requirement in a new VLE. Even though we are aiming to get a new VLE for this, there is still a move to use other systems to distribute and show off our teaching resources, like iTunesU, YoutubeEDU, Equella etc until our VLE has this functionality.

Representation Discussion Forum
One of my manifesto points was to establish an online place for reps (or even all students) to give feedback and report on academic issues. I am going to set up a small working group with Michael Larsson who has the same intention, and we may have secured some funding for this from ICT's Student Experience Stream Board.

Assessment feedback
College are not averse to the idea of a Student Agreement beyond the Faculty of Medicine that does not focus on behaving yourself (as Medicine's one does) but that focuses on assessment feedback, incorporating the following sort of points:

- I, student _____, will:
  - Make use of all opportunities for assessment and feedback, preparing for and attending tutorials to the best of my ability.
  - Pick up feedback sheets and marked coursework as soon as they are available.
- We, Imperial College London, will:
  - Provide timely feedback on all items of formative assessment, with individually marked scripts where possible.
  - Set the deadline for submission and the deadline for the return of coursework at the same time, and publicise both.
  - Be held accountable (and have to give an explanation) if coursework is not returned by the agreed date.

  Thoughts on the above?

Next year
Next year I will be back to being a bioengineer, and will do my best not to hover over the new sabbs too much. I will also be Artsfest Chair. Have a good summer!

JS, June 2010