

ICSMSU Council report
By ICSMSU President David Smith

It has been an extremely active summer for ICSMSU. The last day of handover began with one of the biggest events of the year – the Affirmation Ceremony on 31st July. This event was created as an opportunity for our graduates to reflect on their six years of medical school and consider their responsibilities in the medical profession. They took an adaptation of the Hippocratic oath, promising to treat all patients equally. The event was attended by over 650 people and was a huge success, involving the presentation of the Stephen Morton Memorial Prize for outstanding contribution to university life. Each new doctor was awarded a certificate to commemorate the completion of their degree.

Union

The 15 other officers of ICSMSU have been doing a fantastic job over the summer. The academic officers and I have already attended several faculty meetings and almost all year reps are now elected. Special thanks to the ICU President and Alistair Cott for setting up the online elections, and ensuring that they ran so smoothly. We had to re-open nominations for Academic Officer Year 4, Biomedical Sciences & Pharmacology after the winning candidate took up an offer to do his BSc at UCL. Suzanne Rayner has now taken on this position and is settling in very well. There have been five Executive Committee meetings in this session so far.

This year we were initially only given £18,000 from the normal £40,000 donated by the Imperial College Healthcare Charity. After re-writing the application, agreeing to publicise the charity to our students and agreeing to a gradual decrease of funding (with the hope that the Alumni Association will soon be able to provide for us) we were successful in receiving the entire grant.

Shop

We have ordered in a lot of new stock for the ICSM Shop which is doing very well as a result. There is huge interest amongst the new first years in ICSM branded clothing, and we also provide items deemed mandatory by the faculty, such as lab coats.

Academic

We have been working closely with the Faculty of Medicine on two major proposed course changes. The first is the move from June to March of Finals. This move has been suggested to bring us in line with other UK Universities so that students who fail finals will not have to lose their foundation jobs, as they will have the opportunity to resit before the foundation year is due to start. The proposed change, however, raises several issues, such as needing to provide teaching for a further third of the year group, who would have previously been on an elective abroad. The Faculty have been asking us for advice and Annalan Navaratnam, Academic Officer Years 3, 5 & 6 has also been extremely proactive in this area.

The other proposed change is to alter the way that Problem Based Learning (a major part of first year) is examined. It has been suggested that it should be examined as a single question in each of the other exams as it does not seem fair to have students who fail this exam being unable to remain in the course. This is because it does not examine understanding of the course, rather the ability to research. The hope is that with it being spread more thinly, it will reward the excellent students, rather than cause unnecessary stress for otherwise very successful students. The Faculty has been consulting the Union regularly about this proposal.

Careers

Since Monday, application to the UK Foundation Programme has now begun. Our final year students have been filling in their forms after considering advice from the Faculty and the Union. I am writing a letter to the British Medical Association (BMA) Medical Students' Committee, with the backing of ULU Medgroup, after it transpired that there are plans by UKFPO to remove a question from the application form which awards points for having more than one degree (all Imperial graduates have two) and for having publications in journals. This move would greatly disadvantage Imperial students and those at other London medical schools. I also plan to bring a paper to the next Medical Students' Committee (again backed by ULU Medgroup) to ask that the BMA petitions UKFPO to reverse the decision.

Welfare

In September, the ICSMSU Welfare Officer, Gayathri Rajasooriar, supported all students who were unsuccessful in their resit exams. She sat in on their meetings with the faculty. We have been largely successful in petitioning the Faculty to give students another chance, although some inevitably were not granted this opportunity. I sit on the Hammersmith Ward Panel committee representing our students and answering complaints and requests from residents regarding medical students. I have already spoken to two groups of students about their unacceptable disruptive behaviour which is upsetting our neighbours.

The Reynolds Bar

The Charing Cross (Reynolds) Bar in Hammersmith has undergone re-decoration and refurbishment of the main areas including the bar. Additional furniture has been ordered to replace damaged or old benches and sofas. In addition, new taps have been added to the bar. The work was done as The Reynolds Bar had become tired, gloomy and uninviting, particularly during the day and on traditionally quiet evenings. In order for The Reynolds to remain financially viable, it must attract trade during these times. It was felt that a small refurbishment would help to attract business and provide a pleasant place for students and staff to socialise at times other than high volume 'bop' and event nights. It was felt that The Reynolds needed to be brought up to a more comparable standard to the Central Union bars with the ability to serve more efficiently as a result of works to the bar. The overall project budget was £20,000, half coming from college Commercial Services and the other half coming from Central Union Reserves. We hope that the venue feels more inviting, modern and suitable for relaxing post-lectures or at lunchtime, yet functioning well as a nightclub. We hope that an advertising campaign, in conjunction with ICU, at the end of the month will encourage undergraduate and postgraduate students across the college to use a service that comes under the remit of ICU Commercial Services.

The Reynolds re-opened on the 1st October with a 'Summer of Love' bop in aid of our Summer Ball. The Summer Ball committee has already begun fundraising and have hosted a series of events. I chaired the first Residents' Meeting of the year with the intention of allowing those who live in the area around the bar to voice their concerns and work with us. All residents within a three minute from the bar have my contact details after I posted letters through over 200 doors. We had some noise complaints largely relating to the music, but our Sites & Services Officer William Ibbotson has addressed this and we will be seeking further advice from the ICU Operations Manager.

Events

The Halfway Dinner was held on the 1st October to commemorate the halfway point for fourth year students and to encourage social interaction with the Oxford and Cambridge Direct Entry intake as well as the new Graduate Entry students. All three groups will graduate in the same year. The event was held in The New Millennium Hotel in Gloucester Road and was attended by 261 students. We are still in the middle of Freshers' Fortnight which has so far been a huge success, largely thanks to the hard work of the ICSMSU Entertainments Chair, Michael Colwill, and his team. It started on 3rd October with the Freshers' Barbecue and will finish on Friday 15th with the Freshers' Review, and involves a huge range of events designed to cater for everyone. We have record attendance this year, with 256 'passports' (passes to all the events) sold before term had even started. Both the Fortnight and the Freshers' Ball are projected to make considerable income for ICSMSU with the hope that it can support us for the rest of the year. The Reynolds Bar is also benefiting from record takings. Again, we hope this will allow us to finish the financial year within budget. Freshers' Fair was extremely successful, and active participation in clubs and societies has already been apparent.