

## Friends of Imperial College Annual report

Tuesday 09 November 2004, Tanaka Business School, London SW7 2AZ

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### 1. Introduction

We continue with our aim of helping the College with one of its five strategic intents “to communicate widely the significance of science in general, and the purpose and ultimate benefits of its activities in particular.”

We have continued our programme of lectures, visits and social events with three lectures, one Behind –the –Scenes@Imperial College event, a reception for the launch of the Tanaka Business School and a Christmas party attended by altogether some 332 Friends and their guests.

### 2. Organisation

Discussions have continued during the year with the Office of Alumni and Development, OAD, as to the future role and responsibilities of Friends. Encouraged last year by the OAD suggesting that Friends would become an important channel for the College to interact with alumni and the public the committee of Friends presented a paper in April 2004 which saw Friends developing as the main gateway between the College and a broad external community which would include alumni, local residents and those with a real interest in keeping abreast of science technology, medicine and business.

The OAD has said it would prefer Friends to develop as a gateway to College principally for neighbours giving access to College lectures, performances, courses and sporting and other facilities.

The OAD has expressed concern at the internal cost of supporting alumni groups and Friends and is intending to introduce a Service Level Agreement to all groups including Friends which will outline what services the OAD will provide to Friends in the future. As part of this agreement the OAD will be organising two lectures for Friends and alumni in the Autumn and Spring terms and one event in the Summer Term.

Friends will continue to organise Behind-the-Scenes and social events and arrange to attend a programme of special lectures and events being organised for all alumni and support groups.

#### Survey of members

Before finalising the relationship the committee carried out a survey of our members to identify why members joined Friends; how they rated the events organised by Friends and the College; what College services they used and how they saw the future of Friends. There was an unusually high response rate of over 40 per cent

#### *Findings and conclusions*

People join Friends principally because they are interested in science, technology and medicine combined with an interest in learning more about College research and activities. Others want to keep in touch with and support the College. However about a half rated

learning facilities as an important criterion in their decision to join and significant numbers attend College events.

Few joined to support fund-raising activities or take advantage of cheaper access to the Sports Facilities. Nevertheless for about 10 per cent access to Sports Facilities is 'very important' and 30% of respondents use the Sports Facilities at least occasionally.

The high response rate to the questionnaire, the high ratings of events and the constructive and positive comments contained in the completed questionnaires, suggest that that members are committed to Friends and wish to see the organisation flourish. The average length of membership is between five and six years and a number of Friends have been members since its foundation in the eighties. The vast majority of Friends live in London with two thirds having a London SW post code. Over a third of respondents were alumni and staff.

Members rate their enjoyment of all events organised by Friends very highly. Friends enjoy 'Behind the Scenes' events somewhat more than lectures and lectures somewhat more than social events. The Christmas Party is a popular event being rated higher than some lectures.

A small but significant number of Friends attend College events including inaugural lectures (the most popular), the graduation ceremony and lunchtime concerts. All were rated very highly.

The small number of members who take advantages of College services including language laboratories and the swimming pool rate them very highly and this is clearly a valuable part of what membership offers.

A number of members expressed surprise at the availability of College services and events, of which they had been unaware. It is therefore apparent that we are not doing enough to inform our members of what is going on at College and how to get access to events and to take advantage of services.

Two thirds of respondents said that the cost of subscription was not particularly good value for money. By contrast two thirds rated events as good or excellent value for money. It is difficult to improve the package offered to Friends and therefore lowering subscriptions combined with better publicity for the range of events and services should be investigated.

There is enthusiasm for the idea of running short evening courses explaining science to lay people. An idea which will require more work to establish whether it is feasible.

Friends is providing a 'gateway' to the College but it needs better signposting.

The report will be used to inform the discussions with the OAD

### **3. Past events**

We have organised the following events in the Academic Year 2003 tom2004:

*Spinning Gold: innovation and wealth creation 23 September 2003 94 Friends and guests*  
Dr Susan Searle, CEO of Imperial Innovations Ltd, talked about the college programme of patenting and spin out companies. She was joined by alumni Steve O'Dea and Bruce Garvin

directors of a spin-out company Ceres Power; Professor David Klug, an Imperial academic and founder of Powerlase; and Richard Harris, alumnus and early stage investor.

#### *AGM 15 October*

Sixty members attended the AGM at which the Chairman and the committee were re-elected unopposed.

#### *Through body experience - imaging our bodies is leading to new methods of health care 15 October 60 Friends and guests*

The AGM was followed by Professor Kitney who gave an outstanding lecture on the way in which imaging the body from the macro level of whole body scans to the micro level of imaging individual cells played a huge role in the future understanding of how our bodies worked and became diseased. He showed how a range of technologies were being used to capture images of the body and how these images were improving in resolution and accuracy. The evening was rounded off with dinner in the Rector's Residence after which a spirited discussion ensued.

#### *The Evolution of Female Promiscuity Dr Olivia Judson 19 November 84 Friends and guests*

Dr Olivia Judson, a Research Fellow, Department of Biological Sciences and author of *Dr Tatiana's Sex Advice to All Creation* gave a witty and provocative talk about the role of female promiscuity in the evolution of species and the need for males and females of all species to protect their future. She kindly signed books during the wine reception after the event.

#### *Friends Christmas party 11 December 35 Friends and guests*

In December we held our annual Christmas Party at which a choir from College who led the more than 35 members and their guests in singing some well-known and lesser-known carols. Our thanks to Committee member Anne Barratt who made arrangements with the help of The Rector's wife Lady Sykes who also attended this successful evening.

#### *Chelsea & Westminster Hospital 24 March: 37 Friends and guests*

In March we were guests of the Dean, Professor Mervyn Maze who introduced the history of the hospital and gave an overview of research taking place at London's newest teaching hospital. We heard from Dr Ann Bishop who works closely with Professor Dame Julia Polak on regenerative medicine and tissue engineering. Professor Frances Gotch introduced her work on the treatment and prevention of diseases of the immune system, such as HIV, and showed us the laboratory where blood samples from all over the world are analysed. In addition, Professor Richard Grove gave us an insight into his investigations into inflammation of the skin and wound healing.

#### *Tanaka Business School reception July 22 Friends*

Friends were guests of the College at a reception for alumni and guests to launch the Tanaka Business School in its new home the Tanaka Building. The evening included an introduction from the Rector Sir Richard Sykes, a tour of the building, short talk by a well-known speaker and a reception with excellent food, champagne and wine.

#### 4. Membership

Membership stands at 87 in total as against 78 this time last year. There are 72 single members (65 last year) and 16 family members (13 last year). There were 27 new members in 2004.

#### 5. Recruitment

During the year a new brochure was printed and distributed to all graduates at Commemoration Day and widely to local residents through local residents associations. The distribution of these brochures is still continuing.

I would like to thank Ian Mackenzie and Renee Medney the committee members who are particularly concerned with this programme.

#### 6. Finance

We are facing a radical change in our relationship with College and as part of that change we believe we will be in greater control of our budget and of the resources that the OAD provides for our activities. We received figures for last year's profit and loss only yesterday and the Committee has not had an opportunity of examining them prior to this meeting. Staff costs have been included for the first time in the figures supplied. Under last year's system we would have been able to report a surplus from subscriptions and events of £2875 including some generous donations. However the College charges of £5284 will turn this into a £2,409 deficit which is covered by OAD. Your committee will be clarifying these figures at its next meeting.

We have received a copy of the proposed Service Level Agreement in the last few days and if this accepted will define the charges to be levied by the OAD for their assistance, for which we have been extremely grateful in the past but we may have to rely on to a far lesser extent in the future.

#### 7. Future events

Your committee is working on a full programme for the coming year which includes:

*Monday 13 December 2004 18:00*

Christmas music, carols and readings in the Tanaka Building – main entrance.

*Wednesday 16th February*

*BEHIND THE SCENES @ IMPERIAL Mechanical Engineering*

Professor Rod Smith will introduce a tour of the department where we can see the work of the department and the way it is changing to meet new challenges.

*Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2005*

*On the path to a cure for rheumatoid arthritis*

Professor Sir Ravinder Nath 'Tiny' Maini is a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, was Knighted in 2003 and won the Crafoord Prize from the Swedish Academy of Sciences in 2000. Last year he was awarded the Lakser prize. He is recently retired as director of the

Kennedy Institute for Rheumatology at Imperial College London, where he led a team of researchers over a 15-year period looking for new treatments for rheumatoid arthritis.

*May 2005 Is sustainability achievable – ever*

Julia Marton Lefevre Executive Director of LEAD International. (Leadership for the Environment and Development) founded by the *Rockefeller Foundation* and hosted at Imperial College and is dedicated to training and creating a network of people from all over the world in the techniques of sustainable development.

*Weekend 9-10 June Imperial College Alumni and Friends weekend event*

Programme lectures and a lively recreational programme

#### **8. Thank you**

Alison Hiller has provided us with administrative support from within the Office of Alumni and Development. She has been joined by Paula Lowdell for the last three months. The administrative support includes organising the promotion and ticketing of our events, organising and reporting on finance, arranging the events and supporting the committee and attending its meetings. I would like to thank them and others in the OAD team thank for their hard work and enthusiasm during the year.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee who have contributed so much to the smooth running and success of the events. Rodney Allen, Anne Barrett, Olivia Graham, James Joly, Professor Richard Kitney, Dr Ian Mackenzie, Renee Medney, Professor David Philips, Philip Temple (who keeps our committee minutes) and Melanie Thody.

Roderick Rhys Jones

9 November 2004