Sikh Soc

Imperial College London 2010-2011

Annual Report 2010-2011

The Imperial College London Sikh Society promotes activities that appreciate the culture, history and ideology of the Sikh way of life.

OUR VISION, VALUES AND AIMS

- Imperial College Sikh Society aims to provide a relaxing environment where members have a chance to reflect and escape the pressures that come with university life
- The society also aims to further members' knowledge of Sikhi through interactive talks at weekly 'Simran' sessions delivered by various visiting speakers, social events and online social networking.
- Imperial College London Sikh society is based on building friendships with Sikh students in the university and also creating networks with students in other London Sikh Societies, giving the opportunity for students to support each other both spiritually and academically.
- Another core value of our society is to integrate with other faith societies through Imperial Interfaith by attending other events and inviting people of different faiths to Sikh society events.
- The annual Imperial College Sikh Society Collaborations Dinner is aiming to be more popular and to appeal to more Sikh students nationwide to provide a platform to meet the aims outlined above.
- We also aim to serve the needs of society members. This can be achieved through setting up regular music classes, language classes and classes to develop understanding of the 'Guru Granth Sahib Ji'.
 Further to this we aim to extend our support to our members with careers advice and academic support.
- We have continued efforts previously made to bring together the Sikh and Punjabi societies. This is because there is an overlap in the values and aims of both societies; the benefit of this aim is to broaden our social network and also share special occasions in our common heritage.

INTRODUCTION Cha and Samosa Party

A positive and enthusiastic attitude from committee members at the start of the year led to high aims and a broad open mindedness to explore different means of fulfilling these aims. It was wonderful to see the results of this enthusiasm highlighted by the success of the 'Cha and Samosa' party, which was a platform to advertise the new activities we had organised. These are shown in the poster below:

Figure 1



Figure 1 illustrates the events that were advertised to Freshers' at the beginning of the year.

In addition to this, we had paper forms for people to sign up to the activities they were interested in so we could build the society to provide a service that would be most beneficial to students' needs. We also had a sheet to record peoples email addresses as they came in and a projector screen to display key Sikh society events for the upcoming year.

The martial arts demonstration proved to be entertaining and the large portions of samosas were also appreciated. We were fortunate to have an external guest to host the competition for 'the most samosas eaten in a minute.' We are also grateful to Narvir Singh who helped organise a raffle which proved to be very successful and we would recommend this for future events. It was also beneficial to have committee members walking around the hall, introducing themselves and talking to people in a friendly way to make

them feel welcome. Posters of upcoming events with key dates were handed out as people left.

Simran

In first term we were grateful to have different people leading Simran every week; this was followed by positive feedback as people heard different styles of singing, from traditional tunes with the harmonium to more classical melodies on the dilruba. The regularity of 'Waheguru Simran' each week was a main factor we found that people came to Sikh society as people were aware of the welcoming time and place for people to relax and reflect.

The Simran sessions were planned as follows:

- Every Thursday evening
- Punjabi class from 5pm*
- Refreshments and set up from 5.15pm
- 6pm Simran and Kirtan/talk**
- 6.30 pm Ardaas

[Week 1 – Refreshments, ice breaker, Simran, guest who did the Ardaas] ** - see well-being section

*Many students showed an interest in learning Punjabi at the start of the year and we wanted to organise collaborative lessons with Punjabi society, however, there was only one teacher available and as a result the class was not set up till the end of the first term. The class was run on a one-to-one basis in the second term.

We also offered Gurbani Santhia; however, more people were keen to improve their general Punjabi speaking skills. This may be because some people are not aware of what Gurbani Santhia involves.

We suggest that next year, teachers are found earlier so Punjabi classes can be set up quickly. In addition, there could be classes teaching Gurbani Santhia at the beginning of the year so that people can learn what it is about; should there be an interest from students, classes could continue.

We also had guest speakers at weekly Simran. For example, someone from Birmingham did a talk based on the subject of 'langar', which was followed by an opportunity for students to ask questions.

SELECTION PROCESS

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held where people wishing to run for a committee position had the opportunity to do a speech. The audience then voted for the strongest candidate on ballet papers and the newly chosen elected committee was announced. In addition, for those who could not attend the AGM, people could vote by emailing Sikh Society in response to the manifestos submitted by people running for the positions. An exception this year was for one person who did not submit a manifesto but was elected after doing a speech at the AGM.

SOCIETY OFFICERS

President x2 – Gurdev Thethy, Baldeep Sahota

*Vice-President x 2- Jasdeep Gill, Govindpal Kooner

Treasurer x2- Navraj Kular, Vikram Singh

Secretary- James Sawali

Publicity officer- Simran Dhillon

General committee members x2

British Sikh Doctor Organisation officer

Sports officer- Navraj Kular

*the vice presidents also took up the role as 'Interfaith' representative and 'Sikh Study class officer'.

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Paid members 23

General attendance figures: October - December 15-35, January - March 8-15, March-June 5-12.

Cost of membership £3

Information collected through membership: email address, forms to sign up interest in music classes, Punjabi classes, sports and Gurbani classes.

STUDENT SERVICES

ACADEMIC STUDIES

There were a series of academic classes which took place throughout the course of the academic year. The classes were run by an external organisation called 'Naujawani.com', who provide support for Sikh societies across the UK. The classes covered a wide topic area, which included Sikh history, philosophy and present day Sikhism. The classes required the attendees to get involved by essay writing on the discussion topics, which were submitted for competitions. Students were committed to the classes and were grateful for the one hour lesson a week, which enabled them to learn systematically about Sikhi alongside studying for their main degree at university. We suggest that members next year are encouraged to attend at least one class to decide if they would like to take it up further. We also suggest advertising the classes to students from other faiths and backgrounds who may be interested in learning more about Sikh history and ideology.

WORKSHOPS

Pugh tying workshop: this was a fun event that took place at the end of the first term after Simran and pizza. An external guest and students who knew how to tie Pughs both taught and helped others who wanted to learn or



Figure 2 photographs of students at the Pugh tying workshop.

As a result of the success of this first event of its kind at Imperial, we recommend having it next year on a bigger scale, possibly with more Pugh material to practice with. Sikh society could introduce a person who wants to practice with someone who ties the style of Pugh they want to learn. They could then make arrangements themselves to practice throughout the year. In addition, a workshop describing the different styles of Pughs and a possible discussion on the topic of the importance of a Dastaar could be held next year.

ASSISTANCE

The Imperial College London Chaplaincy provided support if students needed it. There were rooms available where students could go to relax or take a break from university commitments. Chaplaincy staff were kind throughout the year and very supportive of Sikh society's aims and vision.

Personal support was offered from Naujawani.com before the academic year; they arranged a meeting for main committee members from London Sikh societies, which gave us the opportunity to brainstorm ideas and share future plans. This support was invaluable as we had an opportunity to discuss and plan dates for the upcoming year. We were grateful to hear the services Naujawani.com offered students to build Sikh societies in a positive way, for example the importance of learning about Sikh history through Sikh study classes.

We were overwhelmed at the dedication and ideas that Naujawani.com suggested to us and their willingness to support our aims and vision. As a result of this, Imperial Sikh Society kept in contact with Naujawani.com throughout the first term for advice ranging from personal to financial support.

For example, Naujawani.com supported the Kirtan classes we set up by advertising the poster online on their website for other Sikh societies to see. They also responded to our needs by providing us with a Harmonium and Tabla to use for Simran and Kirtan classes.

We are indebted to Naujawani.com for their input to the 'Collaborations' event. They showed such care in making the event successful by helping to plan and find external guest speakers for the day. The financial support from Naujawani.com enabled us to hold the event because we were in great

difficulty finding a venue at the time. We cannot express the sincere appreciation we feel to Naujawani.com for all their assistance throughout the year, thank you.

ACTIVITIES

SPORT



Figure 3 shows footballers at Hyde Park during the first ever inter-uni Sikh society tournament that was held by Imperial.





Figure 4 shows the football tournament event advertised on Facebook.

Every Wednesday afternoon students were welcome to play football in Hammersmith. We realised that over many years, London Sikh Societies were keen to take part in an inter-university football tournament, however it had never been organised.

Thus we organised the first ever London Sikh society football tournament with two 5-aside teams from: Imperial College London, University College London (UCL), LSE and City. Refreshments included drinks and freshly sliced oranges. The winning teams, LSE and UCL, received prizes.

Following the success of the first football tournament at Imperial, KCL organised one for the second term. Members from Imperial Sikh society supported the event.

Next year we suggest having the football tournament at the beginning of the year to avoid cold weather and allow people from different universities to socialise early in the year. In addition, since 'Collaborations' is an event for all London Sikh Societies, we suggest that the money raised from the tournament be put towards organising the event.

Furthermore, next year's committee could consider organising gym inductions for Freshers, more sports activities for women and they could try to organise Subaig Singh as an external guest speaker.

ARTS

As part of the Sikh studies course, Naujawani.com organised the last class entitled 'The New World: Are Sikhs in the 21st Century progressing or repeating past mistakes?' at the British museum. Students then had the opportunity to see the turban exhibition, which was followed by a meal with students from other universities who enrolled onto the classes. This was a lovely end to the course.

WELL-BEING

- Weekly Simran and Kirtan contributed to good mental health of students. We were fortunate to have different external guests who performed in different styles. This included someone who played the Dilruba and introduced students to Indian classical instruments, someone from UCL and also the Music teacher.
- We had a speaker who talked about Simran and meditation techniques. This was successful as students could put this into practice and try the techniques at that Simran session.

- We had a speaker who did a talk on taking a 'Hukamnama'. The speaker did a word-by-word English translation and interpretation of the Hukamnama that was from the Golden Temple in Amritsar that day. He also talked about how easily accessible Gurbani is available to us online, on computer programs such as Sikhi to the Max, and even on our phones.
- Another speaker contributing to the mental well-being of the students gave a talk on 'Ek Ongkaar'. This was insightful and challenged students to think 'out of the box.' We recommend having this speaker next year.
- Towards the end of the year students recited Reheraas Sahib together. This could be done on a regular basis next year and the new committee could invest in 'Gutkas' with English translation and transliteration for Nitnem Bani's.
- A combination of the talks, Simran and the translations of the Shabad Kirtan on the projector are factors that attracted people to the society. This gave them the opportunity to learn and apply basic principles of Sikhi to deal positively with challenges in university life.
- We suggest that next year there is a question and answer session where the committee organise a panel of people to help answer any questions students may have.
- We also suggest holding a Kirtan Darbaar where students of the Kirtan Classes have an opportunity to perform. This would encourage the group of students to practice, learn and build up their confidence in performing if they so wish.

FRESHERS WEEK

The fresher's fair was advertised through Facebook, posters and word of mouth. We decorated the fresher's fair table with pictures, artefacts, Sikhi related literature and sweets. We aimed to be very approachable by walking around the area creating awareness of our Society and attracting students to our first major event of the year being the 'cha and samosa' welcome event. We made records of possible members and asked them what they would like from the society. Following the event a mailing list was set up and possible members were contacted with information relating to upcoming events. Next year we suggest that only students be part of the fresher's fair stand to ensure that a strong positive impression is made.

CELEBRATIONS AND SOCIAL EVENTS

- For Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurprub we were fortunate to have a group of Indian Classical Raag Kirtanis hold a Simran session. This involved short English translations of Gurbani, together with pictures and short stories to highlight the messages from Guru Nanak Dev Ji.
- In celebration of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurprub we were also grateful to a student who gave a talk on the life of Guru Nanak Dev Ji with first hand experiences from his recent trip to Pakistan. We gained an insight into the wonderful history and enjoyed looking at the pictures from the trip.
- As a society we went to watch Harry potter in the cinema.
- Other social events included ice skating, dinners throughout the year and attending other London Sikh Society Social events.
- There was also an end of term celebratory dinner passing onto the next committee.

EXCURSIONS

The main external outing that was organised by the society was the Shepherds bush Gurdwara inter-university London Sikh Society Sewa and Simran event, which we named 'Collaborations II.' Main committee members from eight different universities decided this name through a group on Facebook that was set up to have discussions to enable us to organise the event together. This enabled more people to have input compared to previous years. Reflecting on previous years events, we decided to have a two rather than three day event in the hope that more people would be able to attend.



Figure 5- poster advertising the activities on each day of the Collaborations II event.

The poster above illustrates the different activities that were organised, which included a homeless run on Friday, workshops throughout the day on Saturday and Kirtan and langar in the evening. This was a successful event with some students staying the night at the Gurdwara. The Yoga on Saturday morning was popular and students appreciated the opportunity to get involved with Sewa (for example, making and serving langar).

Members from Imperial College London Sikh society also supported activities organised by other London universities including the UCL Langar, KCL 5K run, the Roben Suite Kirtan and the LSE 'Q & A' session.

CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS

MAJOR EVENT

The 'Collaborations' dinner 2011 was the biggest event of the year. The event proved to be very successful as its popularity reached a new height. For the first year we had new Sikh societies joining us in what turned out to be an evening of quality dining, socialising and entertainment.

This year, we were very fortunate to hold the event at the magnificent 'Sarova Hotel' in Knightsbridge. Due to the grandeur of the venue, attendees made particular efforts to attend from great distances, some travelling on minibuses.

The aim of the event was to provide an opportunity for Sikh societies from London and across the UK to share the analysis of what their respective society has done so far by outlining their aims and activities, what has or has not worked well and ways they can improve. This would hope to help all other societies review their current systems and critically evaluate the society. Features from the evening included:

- DJ played background music and provided microphones for performances.
- Venue provided lighting and spectacular dinner arrangements. We organised table name placards to be labelled with different states in India to serve as an entertaining ice breaker.
- People received name tags as they came in for the ice breaker, which was hosted by the DJ. This proved to be effective as guests had the opportunity to socialise before dinner.
- Between courses we had entertainment from external guests including a Sikh poet, representatives from the Anthony Nolan Trust and ladies singing about Sikh history in traditional Punjabi folk tunes. We also had people to host a quiz at the end of the night; however, we did not do this as people were enjoying the opportunity to socialise at the end of the event.
- The raffle proved to be popular; prizes included Lord of the Rings DVD. Figure 6



Figure 6 shows two people from British Sikh Doctor Organisation advertising their first event which was going to be held at Imperial.

Figure 7



Figure 7 shows the raffle draw at the end of the evening.

Financial support from Naujawani.com enabled us to hold the event at this venue. Next year's committee should consider the pros and cons of holding the event at such a venue, taking into consideration the capacity of the venue, the available rooms and financial support.

It is possible to fund the event by a number of means. For example, Imperial Sikh Society could encourage other universities to be more involved in planning and contributing financially to the event (like with Collaborations II). Different Sikh societies could have a target sum to raise, according to the scale the committees wish, since the event is for the benefit of all societies. Thus it is of vital importance to establish links with other universities early in the year to allow this organisation to take place.

For example, the football tournament could be a key event to bring societies together and raise money as well as awareness to hold the event. On the other hand, it could be decided that a free venue within the university is more than sufficient to meet the aims and vision of the event seen by the new committee. It is important to take into account feedback from previous years, other students' views and opinions from other universities when making this decision.

Additional funds for holding the event could be from ticket sales, whilst the money raised from the raffle could go to charity. However, depending on the scale of the event next year, sponsorship may be needed. For example, if universities from outside London attend, it may be worthwhile organising a famous guest speaker and possibly advertising the event on radio stations and Sikh television channels.

Making decisions early in the year will allow ample time to advertise the event and sell all tickets.

ACTIVISM

Imperial Sikh Society supported the British Sikh Doctors Organisation, which endeavoured to increase the awareness of health issues within the Sikh community. A person was elected to be a representative for the organisation on behalf of Imperial Sikh Society and the first meeting for all London Sikh societies was successfully held at Imperial College London. The event was run well with an enthusiastic audience; refreshments were provided at the end and with the large number of medical students at Imperial, we hope relations with this organisation will continue to grow next year to enable more service within the Sikh community and for the opportunity to build relations with younger and older medical students at different universities, as well as qualified Doctors at different stages in their career paths.

MODES

Various forms of official communication were used to contact students throughout the year:

- Flyers- these were used effectively at the Freshers' fair with key details of the time, date and location of upcoming events.
- Posters- summary of key information about events were effectively displayed on posters, which made good use of colour, logos and pictures to be eye-catching. Posters were distributed to other universities.



Figure 4 shows an example of an eye-catching poster that was used to advertise the Kirtan classes online and also to other universities via email.

- The 'Cha and Samosa' event was advertised in the Imperial College London weekly newspaper 'Felix.' Photographers and editors from the paper also attended the event and it was featured in the paper the following week; this was the first time Imperial Sikh society had been in the 'Felix' newspaper.
- Text messages were used each week to remind people of Simran, to communicate with people from other societies in publicising and organising events and they were also used within the committee for during emergencies. For example, we once came to a group decision

- by committee members replying 'yes' or 'no' to one person and they were prompted to check their email if it was of high importance.
- Email- a list of all members of the society were on the email list. Weekly emails were sent out (please see the template email at the end of the report). These were effective since Sikh society offered a number of different events and the emails were set out clearly for people to find the relevant details. Having a separate weekly email for Sikh study classes proved beneficial because the details of the class changed regularly, for example, the topic of the class. In addition, emails were used to communicate with other societies and universities, mainly for advertising events.
- Website- although there was enthusiasm at the beginning of the year to update the website, we were unable to find someone who could help with this as it is technically challenging.
- Facebook- Imperial Sikh society had its own Facebook group where posters and pictures were uploaded and events were created. This was beneficial since there are more people in the Facebook group than there are on the email list. In addition, students from other universities were invited to events through other Sikh society Facebook groups. A private group was set up for people organising the Sikh society Akhand Path; this proved to be extremely effective as members replied promptly and the whole event was organised through this method of communication.
- Next year we suggest considering re-doing the Sikh society website, setting up blogs and using twitter. We also suggest writing articles for 'Felix' on major events that Sikh society does to make other university students aware.

WITHIN IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON

Punjabi Society – helped advertise and support each other's events. We planned dates for events to avoid any overlaps

Interfaith Society - held presentations regarding Sikhi and what Sikh Society does at Imperial to make other faith societies aware of our aims and vision.

Hindu Society - we supported their evening dinner for Diwali and some members from Hindu society came to 'Collaborations'.

Anthony Nolan Trust Society- members supported the Collaborations dinner as this was one of the charities we were raising money towards. Members did a speech at the dinner highlighting the importance of their work within ethnic minority groups.

NATIONAL BODY

NA

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Members from BOSS (British Organisation for Sikh Students) attended the 'Cha and Samosa' party and kindly asked us to contact them if they could help support the society in anyway, however, we did not contact them for help during the year.

Anthony Nolan Trust and Multiple Sclerosis Society were contacted with regards to charity payments.

Several phone conversations, emails and personal meetings with the staff at The Rembrandt Hotel in South Kensington were carried out in preparation for Collaborations.

We also contacted Naujawani.com throughout the year for assistance in running Sikh Society through meetings, phone conversations, emails and text messages.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

SUMMARY

To follow.

ACCOUNTS

To follow.

THE FUTURE

We hope the new committee will take on board and offer new suggestions to avoid mistakes and misunderstandings that can occur. With regards to room bookings for events, weekly Simran and the Collaborations dinner, we suggest the committee appoint someone to contact the union as soon as possible to book rooms online. We also suggest having regular meetings with the staff at the Chaplaincy who helped us a great deal throughout the year in booking rooms for Simran. Regarding Collaborations, we suggest that researching possible venues, deciding on the approximate number of people who will be attending, and taking into account cost and sponsorship early at the beginning of the year would be beneficial. This would involve speaking to other universities to confirm a suitable date and time in order to have ample time to publicise and make necessary additional arrangements for the event.

We also suggest getting feedback from other people on external speakers if you haven't heard them before and encourage more group discussions as well as social events. Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to the students, committee and people involved in supporting the society for contributing to its success; we wish the new committee the best of luck.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

WAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA, WAHEGURU JI KI FATEH!

All our events are open to everybody

******COLLABORATIONS 2010*****

Presenting the **biggest annual inter-uni Sikh Soc event** of the year, **COLLABORATIONS** is back: **bigger**, **louder**, **better** than ever!

Join us for an evening of fun on **Tuesday 7th December!**Doors open at **7pm!**

Raising money for Anthony Nolan Trust and Multiple Sclerosis Society!

Please follow this link for tickets:

http://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/sikh-238/sikh-collaborations-2010-2460/product.html

If you are from Imperial just login as normal and if you are from other universities just click on:

"I'm not a current or ex-Imperial College London student or staff member." and register.

Alternatively contact President of your Sikh Society for tickets or email sikh@imperial.ac.uk

Music Class:

Tomorrow: Wednesday 1st December 2-4pm
Meeting room 5, near the Chaplaincy

Sikh Study classes:

All students are more than welcome. Come and sit in a class of your choice, even if you haven't signed up for the course.

CLASS 3 - 30th November 2010 - The Republic:

The establishment of the 1st Khalsa Republic by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and the Khalsa.

Room 307 of the Skempton Building.

Directions: http://workspace.imperial.ac.uk/campusinfo/public/sthkencampus. pdf.

The Skempton Building is **No.27** on the map and is 2 minutes away from the final exit of the South Kensington tube station subway.

*******SPECIAL SIMRAN****** Thursday 2nd December

with a special guest Meeting room 5, Beit Hall

Refreshments from 5:45/Simran at 6:00pm This will be followed by a PUGH TYING WORKSHOP (6-7pm)

we have ppl coming down to teach how to tie turban (boys and girls, even if you dont wear a pugh, its useful to know to tie for someone else!)

bring along pugh material (maybe hairbrush and sly).

BRITISH SIKH DOCTORS:

Imperial College Sikh Society hosts the first event for British
Sikh Doctors
Monday 13th December

With guest speakers and a talk on Bhai Kanhaiya Ji.

Its an excellent chance to **meet medical/dental students and qualified**doctors.

Refreshments will also be served.

 $\frac{http://www.facebook.com/inbox/?compose\&oid=117670124954392\#!/event.}{php?eid=161341330574480}$

Become a member of ICSS!:

Please pay your subs :) its only £3 Go to the following link:

http://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/sikh-238/sikh-membership/product.html

Daily Hukamnama: http://hukam.sikhnet.com/

City Sikh Society Present

'THE LEGACY OF OUR BROTHERS' By Singhrow Productions (ex drugdealers)!!!!

Date: Thursday 2nd December

Time: 5:30pm cha and refreshments/snacks will be served

6:00pm the talk will start

Where: venue will be posted early next week

 $\frac{\text{http://www.facebook.com/?sk=messages\&ref=mb\#!/event.php?eid=1253566}}{97525248}$

Kind Regards ICSS

WAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA, WAHEGURU JI KI FATEH!