

ICU GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2006

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Last amended November 3^d 2006

Introduction

This is probably the biggest governance project that ICU has ever conducted. Around 30 volunteers have put over 400 hours of discussion, research, consideration and work into this review and wrestled with issues ranging from Sabbatical Officers' pay to gender balance in Union meetings. In short, this project is anything but a "back-of-the-envelope" job.

The recommendations of the governance review are described in a long and detailed 120 page report. This much shorter Executive Summary has been prepared to summarise key issues that have emerged during this review.

Findings from the review

Several weaknesses with the ICU governance system have been identified:

1. Council, Executive & SAC all behave like **mini-councils**. There is no clear differentiation between the legislature and Executive elements of the ICU governance structure.
2. SAC's success in building a forum for clubs and societies has highlighted the lack of one for those more interested in **welfare and academic representation**.
3. **Lay members** (ordinary members) form a minority of the membership of the Union's governing body (Council); this is not considered good practice.
4. Most **procedural motions** can be off-putting and the role call vote is open to abuse.
5. Council has demonstrated that it is not the right forum to deal with detailed election appeals. An **independent body** is needed instead.
6. The system for resolving **media disputes** and complaints is neither consistent nor entirely independent.
7. Poor **performance** by Officers is rarely addressed.
8. The President can use the **constitutional interpretation** tool to make him or her very powerful.
9. Officers have no means of implementing their **manifesto pledges** without first going through committees.
10. The **Charity Bill** will increase the regulatory burden on the Union, and the College is using this as an opportunity to encourage the Union to formally become a College department.
11. Our Executive members are **personally liable** if legal action is taken against any part of the Union.
12. The **trading committees** are poorly attended and ineffective.

Recommendations

Separate power in the Union

- Create an **independent Court** to consider election disputes, media complaints and conduct judicial reviews.
- Transform **Council** into a **Representatives' Assembly** by removing all non Executive managers (CSCs, Faculty Officers, RAG, CAG, Welfare, and Equal Ops) and increasing the number of lay members (a.k.a. ordinary members).
- Move these officers (CSCs & Faculty Officers) to two powerful and well resourced "doing" committees:
 - **Representation & Welfare board** for representation, campaigns, halls and welfare officers to manage forums.
 - **Clubs Activities Board** for CSCs and FUs to run clubs.

Bring the students closer to the higher levels of the Union and College

- Create a **Rector's forum**: a meeting with the Rector in the hot-seat.
- Develop **web resources** to create a democracy home-page and allow students to second papers remotely.
- Cut back on **procedural motions**: they put students off Council.
- Transform **elections** from farces to festivals.

Give Officers resources to deliver; and hold them to account when they don't

- Give senior officers **personal budgets** to fund their own projects.
- Automatic **censure motions** for officers who fail to report to Council.
- Allow officers to be **publicly held to account** for their past conduct and effectiveness in office during election campaigns.

Move the Union away from committees towards forums.

- Abolish all but five **Presidential Committees**.
- Abolish all **trading committees** and replace them with a forum.

Proposed committee structure

