



# Impact Report

2018/19

[imperialcollegeunion.org/impact](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/impact)

imperial  
college  
union

# Welcome to our Impact Report

We believe that our role as the Union is to ensure that each student's time at College is the best it can possibly be. No matter the location, level of study or subject – Imperial College Union is here to support, enhance and drive positive change for our members. Fundamentally, students lead and are at the heart of everything that we do.

This year we have continued to work in partnership with our 3000+ volunteers, ensuring that all our members feel empowered to make change and that their voices are heard. This has led to meaningfully shaping initiatives across Imperial – from influencing the design of I-Explore and in partnership implementing the first year of the Be Active Strategy, to shaping changes to the catering on campus and setting a new direction in the Union's approach to EDI.

We are working towards achieving a truly diverse and inclusive community, changing our communication channels and governance to allow for a membership better empowered to be the change that our students wish to see. This is before we even talk about our record election turnout placing us among the highest engagement in the UK. Imperial College Union is run by



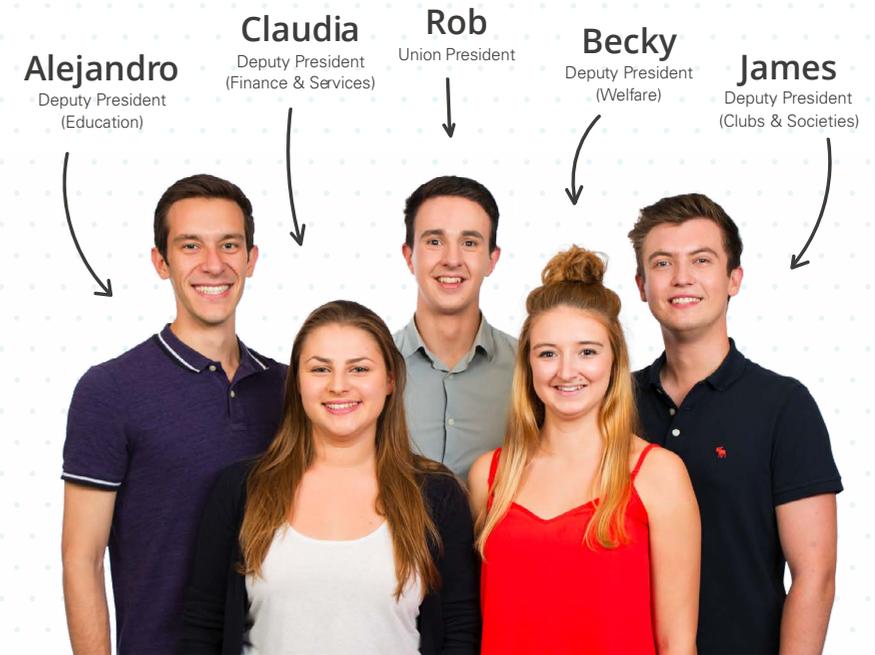
**Rob Tomkies** - Union President

our members, for our members and this we are unbelievably proud of.

Our Impact Report highlights some of our key achievements from the past year, which have only been made possible with our staff's and students' energy and commitment to our work. Thank you to everyone – students, staff and partners who have made this year unforgettable.

Rob Tomkies, Union President

# 2018/19 Officer Trustees





# FOR YOU

Something for all students



We aimed to increase our reach to all students and ensure we are making a difference to their lives no matter their location or area of study.

## Over 509,000 users on [imperialcollegeunion.org](http://imperialcollegeunion.org)

Our website is often the first touchpoint for our students to access information about the Union and a vital tool for us to engage our membership, no matter their location or area of study. Students can register for events, find out how we're run and what our Officer Trustees are doing to drive change. They may also purchase shop items online, log volunteering hours and nominate someone for an award.



## Over 109,000 sessions logged on e-Activities

Our bespoke e-Activities tool helps our students manage their activities, finances and access training. Staff also use e-Activities for services to support our students. Usage of the tool is rising each year, as more students engage with their membership.

## Over 1 million emails delivered to students

Each week we send our students emails with the latest events, activities and programme updates. Our newsletter is an important means of keeping our students informed and engaged and our open and click through rates continue to achieve double the industry average.

## The student newspaper: **Felix**

Our weekly student newspaper remains an important touch point to inform and engage students. This year we introduced a section for Postgraduates and increased our digital footprint.

## Over 34k social media followers

To understand our students, we aimed to reach them where they interact and engage, by joining their conversations on social media. By responding to comments, queries and listening to opinions, we support and listen to students via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.





## 34,213 memberships in Clubs, Societies & Projects (CSPs)

With 10 new CSPs established this year, we continued to provide strong support for one of the largest collections of clubs and societies in the UK. Around £505,000 were distributed to over 370 CSPs to fund new activities, help run events and access supplies.



**663 students** attended Varsity, Imperial's biggest sports event of the year



**970+ students** trained in person while others accessed our online Training Hub



**919 minibus** bookings, helping clubs and societies get out and about



**1659+** Associate Memberships registered



Over **20,000** room bookings processed, ensuring access to spaces for varied student activities



**313 Life Memberships**, 21% growth over the last 2 years



## Improving sports services for students

James Medler, Deputy President (Clubs & Societies) worked in collaboration with College to make sports at Imperial more accessible, affordable, fun, and of higher quality. Imperial gym, Ethos, was expanded with a £500,000 investment, and the creation of a dedicated sports hub.

## 222,091 votes cast across three elections



Participation continues to be robust with two record results this year. The Autumn Elections was our best one yet with 6,570 students voting or 33% of the student body. It was an increase of 1,455 more voters over the year before and a whopping 57% increase in Postgraduate (PG) participation.

In the main Leadership Elections in March, a record 8,121 students voted with a 7% increase in PG voters, a voter turnout north of 40%, and more than 60% of Undergraduates (UGs) voting. Leadership Elections 2019 also saw the election of one of our most ethnically diverse Officer Trustee teams ever, as we continue to work towards a more representative Union.

**Autumn: 30.14% Leadership: 41.23% Summer: 6.35%**

## Equality, diversity & inclusion

Becky Neil, Deputy President (Welfare) chaired 'Inclusivity Starts Here', the first EDI focused panel event run by the Union for the inaugural Liberation Week launched in January. The event saw both students and Imperial staff discussing what inclusivity means to them.



## Alumni partnership

Collaborating with College, Rob Tomkies, Union President, has worked on a partnership to support and engage alumni through Union events, club and cohort specific events.

## Improving Postgraduate engagement

Not only did more PGs engage in our elections than ever before, but we also diversified our PG support, which led to more PGs accessing our Advice Centre service. This year also saw the launch of the first ever PG Ball, a regular section in our weekly newspaper, Felix, and the creation of new communications channels for the Graduate Student Union, including a Welcome video. This year, a Postgraduate Research (PGR) student was elected to our Officer Trustee team.



# FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Here when you need us

We aimed to improve our capacity to support students through the academic, emotional and social challenges of studying in the high-performing, pressurized, and fast-paced environment of Imperial.

## Supporting nearly 500 students at our Advice Centre

This year saw even more students reaching out to the Advice Centre for support with academic struggles, Mitigating Circumstances, and Appeals to name a few of the services offered. Our Advice Centre is accredited with the Advice Quality Standard as expert, independent and confidential advisers. This year, we launched our new wellbeing support offer and spoke to hundreds of students about wellbeing during Mental Health Awareness Week.

We also undertook an exam awareness campaign and got involved with College's Housing Week. Our Union President who ran on a platform to make the Advice Centre more accessible, paved the way for increased opening hours. It is now open for appointments on Wednesdays.



## Under Pressure campaign

This campaign, now in its third year, has seen over 30 events and activities to support students during the stressful exam time. 600 goody bags were handed out, with 53 students enjoying relaxing massages to support their wellbeing. The goody bags contained stress busting tips, revision strategies, healthy recipes, mindfulness craft, and other items to help students relax and manage stress.



Campaign video reached **4,775** people on Facebook with over **1.6k** views

## Welcome Week safety campaign

During Welcome Week we ran a campaign that aimed to ensure all first year UGs know how to get home safely when out late at night in London. We gave away 1,000 wallet cards with information on local taxis and a space for students to write their address, and 500 bottles of water to encourage responsible drinking.



## Wellbeing Representation Network

Our support network, which launched in 2017/18, had a successful second year by constantly looking at ways to improve students' wellbeing. Wellbeing Reps across the College played a huge role in building stronger student communities, developing better connections with staff and influencing wellbeing initiatives in their departments.

We saw Reps give out free fruit in the Design Engineering study area during revision time, co-host an informative WellFair for Maths students, run a puppy therapy session in Chemical Engineering and coordinate fortnightly tea and biscuit events to build a community in Materials, Earth Science and Engineering.

Over 750 students responded to a personal tutor survey led by the RCSU Welfare team, which resulted in College revamping their training for personal tutors.

## Bursary Survey Response

Becky Neil, Deputy President (Welfare) collated feedback from students receiving the Imperial Bursary for UG domestic students, analysing 733 responses. We submitted our recommendations for College to improve the scheme and make bursary recipients' voices heard, which College has acknowledged and is taking forward.



**975 student email**  
enquiries actioned



## Student Support Strategy

We consulted students about the draft Student Support Strategy, which was adapted as necessary. Becky Neil, Deputy President (Welfare) presented the second version, together with the Director of Student Services, to Provost Board, which endorsed it - a huge step in an Imperial wide effort to improve student support and wellbeing. We also ensured that the Wellbeing Representation Network will be part of the Student Support Strategy.



## Supporting College Welfare Initiatives

We worked with College to introduce Sexual Violence Liaison Officers, including training our Advice Centre team as part of the initiative. SVLOs support students who have experienced sexual violence with reporting the offence, counselling and medical checks. Becky Neil, Deputy President (Welfare) represented student needs to College with the Inclusive Technology project seeing College spend over £100k on technology to support students studying and working.

## Holistic student experience

Alejandro Luy, Deputy President (Education) undertook vital work this year in shifting College's thinking about student experience from just considering the academic experience to seeing the student experience holistically. For the first time, we brought people from all Faculties and Departments at College together to talk about the holistic student experience.

## The Times partnership

Rob Tomkies, Union President has been instrumental in bringing The Times, College and the Union together for an agreement to run regular events throughout the year, as well as an ambassador scheme for students, with free subscriptions for our members.

## 212 entertainment events planned and delivered

We provided a range of events for students to socialise and enjoy their time at Imperial and feel part of the community. We also processed 30 student event bookings and held 18 events during Welcome Week across all of our venues.



- 1** Summer Ball
- 3** Carnivals
- 4** Comedy Nights
- 5** Karaoke Nights
- 5** Wine Tastings
- 7** Club Reynolds Nights
- 19** Student Live Music Nights
- 27** Friday Ents
- 30** Wednesday Ents
- 30** PGI Fridays at h-bar
- 63** Quiz Nights

## Improvements in campus food

Claudia Caravello, Deputy President (Finance & Services) worked with College to introduce meal deals in all outlets, increase the variety of food and introduce hot food and drink vending to the Library café to support students studying after hours. She also successfully lobbied College for improvements across Reynolds, Wolfson and Silwood cafés. Following a Meat Free Monday trial that highlighted a lack of vegan food on campus, more vegan meals and snacks were introduced and a completely plant-based café, 'Plantworks', opened on South Kensington Campus. Following a consultation with over 150 students we worked on improving the food menu in Reynolds Bar.

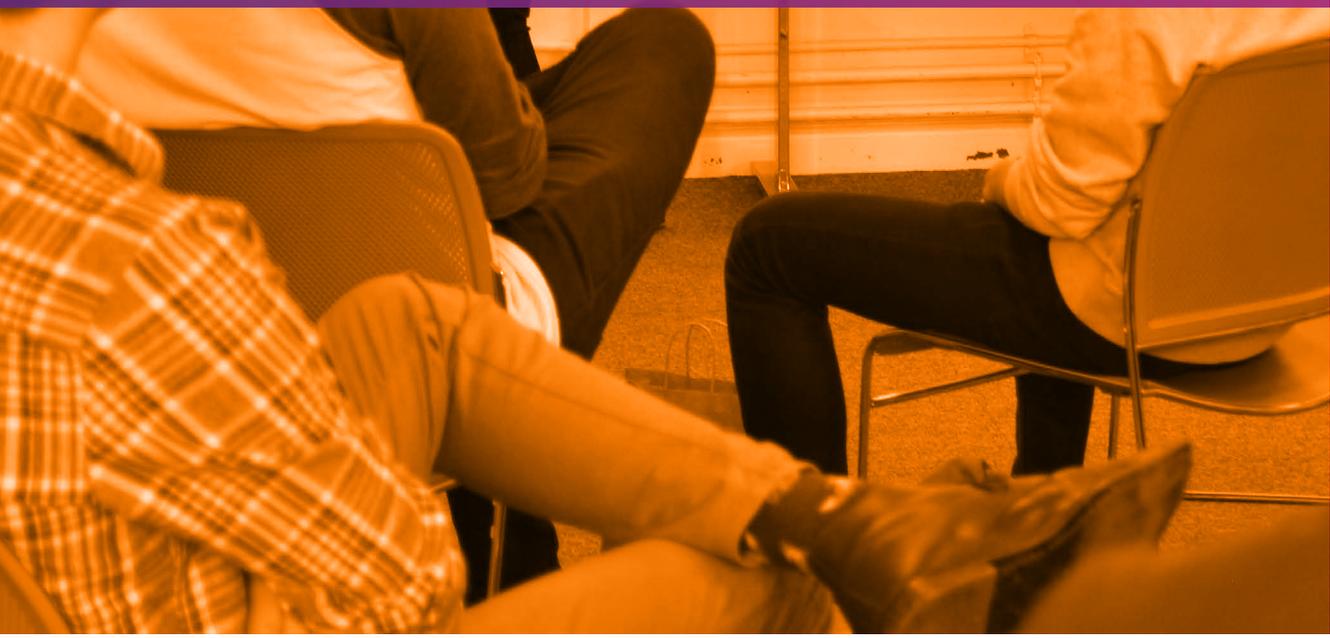


We aimed to enhance the enjoyment and talents of our members in order to form well-rounded people who are confident in articulating their skills to employers.



# FOR YOUR DEVELOPMENT

More than a degree



## 500 students take part in Imperial Award

Since its launch in January 2018, nearly 500 students took part in our programme to encourage students to reflect on their personal development and skills and articulate these to potential employers. For the academic year 2018/19, 260+ students registered. Since the launch of the programme, which consists of three different streams, 25 students successfully completed one or more streams, resulting in a total of 43 completed awards to students. In consultation with students, we are making the programme more suitable for Postgraduates with extended timeframes, flexible learning methods and more peer-to-peer support. Alejandro Luy, Deputy President (Education) and the Student Development team conducted a consultation with over 250 Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students to make the award more attractive and beneficial to PGT students.

“  
As an engineer I’m super used to talking about what I’ve done and why, but very inexperienced in talking about how I thought of it, or how I actually grew as a result of what I’ve done. This is the only opportunity I’ve had to work on these skills.

”  
(Participant in Imperial Award online evaluation, Jan 2018)





## Our workshops help students develop soft skills

During autumn and spring terms we offered six types of skills workshops, 23 workshops in total, scoring on average 8.6/10 in feedback from students. Delivered by our team of student trainers, we supported students to develop the skills employers are looking for, helping them transform into 21st century leaders. The workshops included skills such as managing teams, building resilience and emotional intelligence.

Our team of student trainers also value our workshops, as they can practise their presentation and facilitation skills:

“

Hosting workshops for Imperial Plus has really allowed me to grow in confidence as a speaker and work professionally with my peers. The job has given me exposure in communicating knowledge with older students, prepared me to think methodically and allowed me to think critically, yet constructively, of myself and others.

”

Veera, Student Trainer



## Building a community of volunteers for Union events

Every year, we recruit a team of volunteers to help new students during Welcome Week. In 2018 we changed our approach to training, development and volunteer support by introducing a blended learning approach to training, allowing for more flexibility. For 2019 we are implementing further changes, engaging with volunteers throughout the entire academic year to build a community of volunteers supporting Union events and initiatives.

## Student Halls senior support

We have worked on a new and improved approach to Hall senior support, which will be implemented across 2019/20, including online and face to face training, improved communication and ongoing support for community building initiatives.





We aimed to empower students to be proactive, responsible citizens who have the capacity to change the world.

### Supporting student campaigns

This year more students shared ideas for change-making and awareness raising campaigns and we saw over 400 students support these ideas.

Campaigns included 50 by 2020 which aims to make more healthy plant-based food options available on campus, lobbying College to implement responsible, ethical investments through Divest Imperial, and PAARRY which seeks to raise awareness on how students can combat sexual misconduct and influence College policy. Claudia Caravello, Deputy President (Finance & Services) led a number of student-inspired campaigns this year.

We joined a national movement and committed to donating all profits from newspapers identified by the student body as being discriminative and spreading hate and violence to the Stop Funding Hate charity. Meat Free Monday was a collaborative effort between the Union, students and College which trialled offering vegetarian-only meals once a week across four campuses and 35 outlets – our most wide-spread campaign so far!



## FOR YOUR VOICE

Make change happen

### 1,570 Student Academic Choice Awards nominations (SACAs)

This year, we continued to receive a strong number of nominations for our annual SACAs, which are a vital means of providing feedback to Imperial's teaching and support staff. We introduced three new award categories to celebrate and reward excellence beyond learning and teaching. The new awards enable us to identify best practice and formally recognise College's commitment to diversity & inclusion, student wellbeing support and developing student-staff communities.



**158,591 words** written in nominations statements.

**970 individual students** submitted nominations for their teaching and support staff.

**874 staff** nominated.

SACAs nominations campaign video had a reach of **5,747** and over **2.6k** views on Facebook.

## Academic Representation Network

**506 Academic Reps in 2018/19 with 90% of positions filled**

Our Academic Reps listened to student feedback and shaped a range of initiatives that impact the learning and teaching experience at Imperial. This year, Reps saw to it that mock exams were free for UG students, optimised staff-student communication and community, and played a key role in shaping the curriculum review which affects all future UGs. Faculty-wide Meet your Rep sessions were introduced in RCSU and the Life Sciences Rep team's lobby led to the planned introduction of a common room opening in August 2019.

As part of the improvements to the Academic Representation Network, we brought 60 representative roles that were not previously elected online into our system, and re-designed our induction training, which engaged the highest number of reps to date!

**192 Undergraduate Academic Reps | 314 Postgraduate Academic Reps**

## Liberation & Community Officers' achievements

Our team of Liberation & Community Officers continued to campaign and represent our students to bring about cultural change. This year, our Officers flew a joint BME-inclusive pride flag at the Union for the first time; we had our first non-male President of the IQ Society in over 25 years, started outreach work to create a London Disability Network, surveyed students on health and wellbeing experiences, as well as supported several campaigns including Meat Free Mondays, Greening Imperial and Eco-fashion. Officers held an International Student Week with quizzes, Holi celebrations, career and visa talks, worked with the chaplaincy on Inter-Faith Buddies and ran an interactive stall in the library for International Women's Day. We also held our first ever Liberation Week in which a panel of students and staff came together to share ideas on how we can make Imperial a more inclusive community.



## Feedback to College

We analysed a total of **3,134 student comments** to the National Student Survey and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and submitted 33 recommendations to College. For the first time, our Officer Trustees have also had input into the Student Experience Survey, which was **completed by over 3,000 students**.

**How do you experience Imperial?**  
imperialcollegeunion.org/bigsurvey

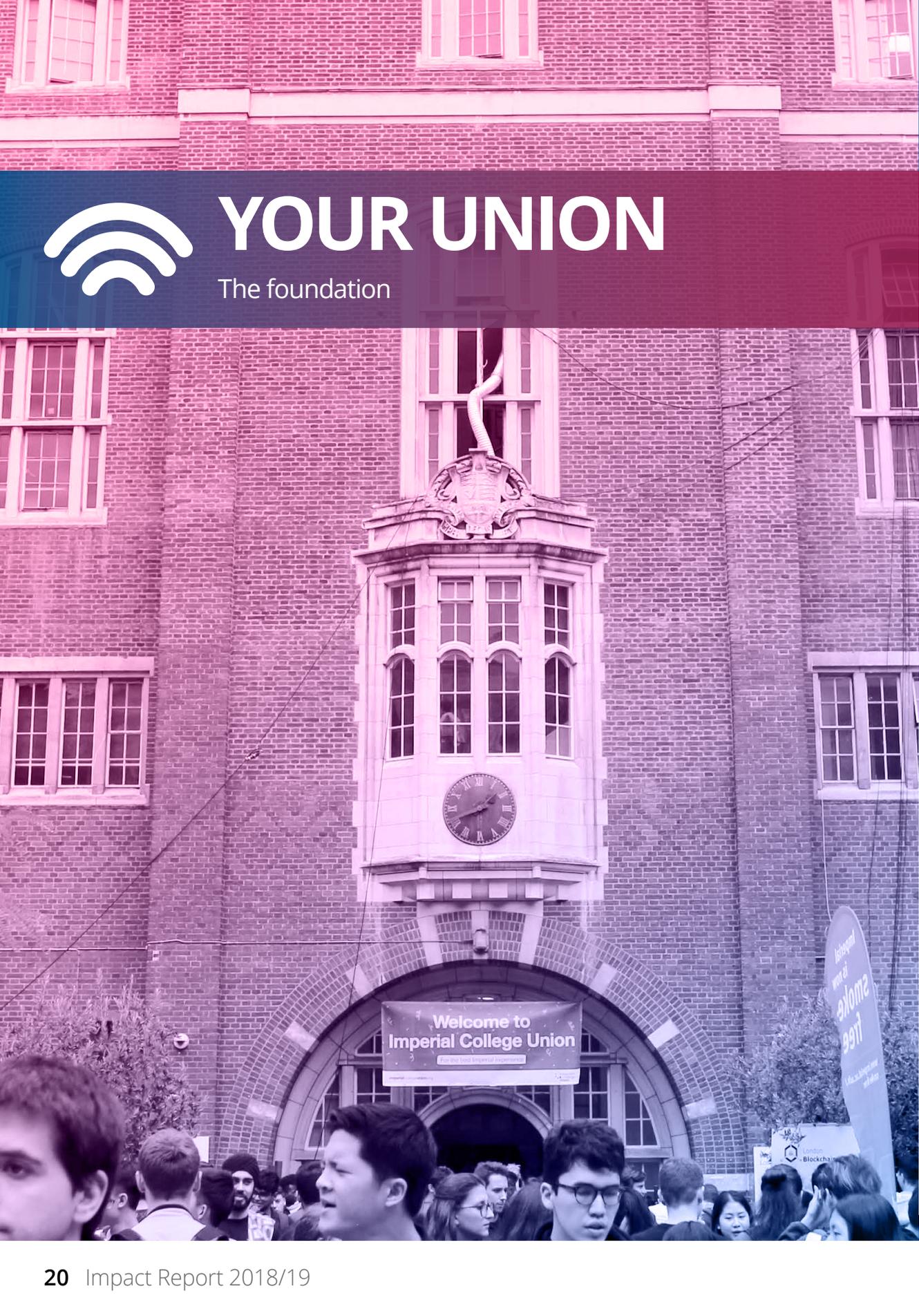
**You said...**  
“ Central Library lacks air conditioning, study spaces and power sockets. ”

**We did...**  
The Union worked with College on a project to **bring cooling and ventilation** to all floors of the Central Library and another to get **extra study spaces and power sockets** on levels 4 and 5.

## Involving our students

Alejandro Luy, Deputy President (Education) worked closely with College to design the I-Explore programme, which will offer UGs the chance to try a module outside of their discipline. He also co-designed the StudentShapers programme, which launched this year, providing paid opportunities for students to engage with staff in authentic partnerships. To improve high PGT student engagement, Alejandro campaigned for student input into the curriculum review and provided recommendations at the Learning & Teaching Committee.





We aimed to ensure that we are a well-run, sustainable, and functional organisation, positioning people and resources to best serve our members now and in the future.



# YOUR UNION

The foundation

## Healthy & sustainable

In our efforts to be more environmentally sustainable, we sold £5.7k in reusable travel mugs, moving towards reducing the amount of plastics used on our sites. We also sold 4,418 apples and bananas to boost our students' health and brought back bendy straws that are now biodegradable. Claudia Caravello, Deputy President (Finance & Services) teamed up with Greening Imperial to improve College sustainability including the use of disposable plastics from catering outlets and the introduction of a cup levy to encourage users to bring their own cups.



Sold **£5.7k** in reusable travel mugs

Sold **4,418 apples and bananas** to boost our students' health

## 12.2% growth in retail income

With a steady growth in sales at both our shops year on year, we can invest more in our members. New products offered this year included Imperial wristbands, chilly water bottles, premium quality sandwiches and our popular PG Graduation Twin Pack of a hoodie and t-shirt. We also made sure our members have the necessary caffeine intake for their studies, with over 5336 cups of fresh coffee sold. Shop Extra purchased two coffee/tea machines and introduced food-to-go meal deals, seeing 26% of growth over the year. We started redeveloping our online shop with a better user experience, more options, as well as products for alumni and prospective students.



**18.4%** growth in clothing sales

**573** Graduation Day hoodies worth **£19.8k** sold

## Summer Ball 2019

With all 1,700 tickets sold, our annual Summer Ball again proved incredibly popular and students enjoyed a night of dancing, great food & drinks, entertainment acts and a stunning fireworks display. We also had some fun rides on campus, delicious ice cream, vintage cars and photo booths to capture a memorable night. Thanks to the dedicated work of staff, volunteers and services, Summer Ball 2019 was a fantastic success.



## 1 joint College & Union Strategy Day in May 2019

### IIP Gold standard

We have been accredited with the IIP Gold Standard following assessment against the Investors in People sixth generation framework in February 2018, as we continue our effort to ensure we are a happy, healthy place to work.

## 34 training sessions for our Officer Trustees

To enable our Officer Trustees to make the best use of their time with us and drive change for our membership, we supported them to develop the necessary knowledge and skills over the course of a three-week induction, involving all Union staff teams. The feedback was very positive with 24 sessions rated as 'very useful/useful'.



### Investment

In line with the Union's investment policy, **£1.5m** was invested last year with Rathbones, our investment managers. This investment has earned us **£8k** of interest so far this year.

### Management restructure to put students at the heart of decisions

Our Strategic Management Team worked closely with our Officer Trustees to restructure the Leadership Team within the Union ensuring a more joint up approach between policy and operational decisions. We also redesigned our budgeting process and the new system now allows CSPs to get a better overview of their spending throughout the year.

### Concert Hall

The Harlington Trustees have agreed to contribute £427k to the development of the Union Concert Hall. The renovation project will focus on the installation of new retractable seating, improvements to the entrance and remodelling of the storage and dressing room areas. This uplift is much needed and essential. The refurb will benefit our students as the theatre will have enhanced facilities, and as an additional benefit, will attract prospective customers to hire the space, bringing more resources into the Union.

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Published July 2019



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