

Liberation Review

“You can't be what you can't see”

July - August 2017 | Pari Dhillon



IQ

Imperial College Union LGBTQ+



Imperial 600

Summary

This research project reviews the role of liberation officers and student-led campaigning at ICU. It aims to enable an understanding of the current challenges facing this work and what might be preventing ICU from supporting sector leading quality or quantity of activity in this area. It also aims to look at the exceptional opportunities available to ICU and Imperial students to make this an area of excellence. The review has looked at a range of models for liberation work across the student movement and the wider third sector and seeks to provide ICU with recommendations to support the development of liberation work within its own unique context.

The now ubiquitous phrase, “you can’t be what you can’t see” was coined by American activist Marian Wright Edelman and has become a mantra for those trying to diversify science, tech, engineering and maths (STEM), including women like PwC’s Sheridan Ash tackling the problem of women only making up 14% of the STEM workforce in the UK. Students at Imperial studying STEM subjects and seeking careers in STEM industries are acutely aware of the demographic imbalance in

their sector. Imperial College Union is uniquely placed to play a groundbreaking role alongside Imperial College to transform the diversity of STEM study, work and the society around it. Together, ICU and Imperial College have an opportunity to become a centre for excellence on understanding and tackling the barriers facing STEM students at ICU and beyond from diverse backgrounds: in recruitment, retention, attainment, graduate destinations and wider society.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Engage students that self identify in to the liberation zones in a governance review of ICU. Work with students from liberation zones to create processes and systems that facilitate and enable students to own and lead on liberation autonomously and intersectionally through all layers of ICU's governance: trustee board, council, sabbatical officers, liberation officers, and liberation societies/associations.
2. Develop an annual programme of learning and development to build skills and confidence for all liberation officers to maximise their potential within the union, the university, STEM industry and wider society. Extend this programme to students across liberation zones to build a base of confident and skilled campaigners and a pipeline of diverse candidates for all elected offices.
3. ICU to become a centre of excellence in understanding the barriers faced by diverse students in STEM. ICU to gather and use data to understand the oppression that different students face at ICU, IC, in STEM studies and work, and wider society in order to understand which barriers and systems to remove. ICU to start the work of removing these barriers and systems whilst building confidence in students that it is a place for students to build their own communities to autonomously tackle the barriers.
4. SMG to build liberation officer priorities and the living record of liberation issues in to the business planning cycle, so that these inform ICU whole organisation planning, and annual departmental planning allowing for collaboration across teams
5. Develop a whole organisation approach to liberation with a staff team who have the experience, skills and knowledge to support liberation officers and their work; and the confidence to challenge/ dismantle oppression wherever they see it at ICU, IC, STEM and wider society. Create a programme of liberation, equality, diversity and inclusion training and ongoing development for all staff, officers and volunteers
6. Create a communications plan to radically change the image of the union but ensure that this is paced alongside radical change in access to the union's support, its services and its decision making structures. The aim of the communications plan must be to improve the engagement of students from liberation groups in to safe

Summary of Recommendations (cont.)

and empowering spaces. This will mean beginning with what exists and growing communications alongside increases in liberation activity.

7. With planning for liberation embedded in to the business planning cycle (as recommended above) collaboration opportunities and structures to support them can be identified through the officer and departmental planning processes.

8. Broader than the training and induction programme for liberation officers to perform their role, volunteer development should enable these officers to be successful change makers throughout their lives. It should therefore include the components that will allow officers to make activism an integral part of their life: mentoring, networks, skills development, articulating/ applying/transferring skills, links to external organisations.

9. Trustee Board and SMG to go back to the value of “inclusivity” to be clear on what they mean and boldly tackle any cultures that undermine this value

10. Monitor, report and set targets on diversity of trustees, staff and students involved at all levels of ICU.

Introduction /The Brief

Imperial College Union seeks to commission an independent consultant or organisation to undertake research and generate recommendations that will support the development of our Liberation Officer roles and deliver sustainable growth in student-led campaigning.

Imperial College Union's strategic commitments include developing student communities, ensuring our members' voices are heard, and providing excellent personal and professional development opportunities, as well as building upon our unique history and traditions.

We have a long history of providing sector-leading student activities, such as sports, social clubs and recreational groups, as well as social enterprises such as our bars and shops. In recent years, we have amplified the student voice by investing in support for our Academic Representation Network, building a strong relationship with Imperial College London and ensuring effective student influence on the university's educational strategy.

Our new strategy builds upon this by

stating our intention to develop our capacity to support student-led activity in non-academic areas, such as mental wellbeing, environmental campaigning, gender equality and social justice. These areas have been challenges for Imperial College Union in recent years, and are one of the few areas where we do not support a sector-leading volume or quality of activity.

Challenges identified by ICU prior to this research include:

- Disengagement from elected Liberation officers after start of academic year;
- Lack of established annual calendar of Liberation events to develop and build upon;
- Lack of clear role descriptions and expectations of Liberation officers;
- Lack of communication and cooperation between Liberation officers and related student groups – for example, there is no established relationship between the LGBT officer and LGBT society;
- Low understanding among membership of personal and professional development opportunities available to Liberation volunteers;
- Perception of Liberation campaigning being a less 'valuable' use of scarce free time against other, more established extra- and co-curricular activities;
- Inconsistent processes and lack of clear communication between Activities, Education & Welfare and Development teams when supporting students with proposals for new activities;

We intend to resolve these issues in a sustainable manner through reform to our operational practices and policies.

Research Aim

To provide Imperial College Union with the analysis and information required to make strategic and operational decisions that will improve the impact, effectiveness and engagement of our Liberation work.

Research Objectives

Imperial College Union seeks analysis and recommendations on the following areas of discussion:

Roles and policy

We seek analysis and recommendations about the policies and documentation needed to effectively underpin our Liberation work, such as role descriptions, or a specific Liberation policy.

Training and induction

We seek analysis and recommendations about an effective training and induction programme for Liberation elected officers and volunteers. Ideally this programme would share structure and content with other volunteer training programmes within Imperial College Union, as well as take advantage of existing and new relationships with external partner organisations.

Support and resource

We seek analysis and recommendations about the appropriate financial and material resources needed for our Liberation work, including staff time, budgeting, space and marketing capacity.

Communication and messaging

We seek analysis and recommendations about how to effectively communicate our Liberation work to a range of stakeholders in a manner that reinforces our strategic priorities and our values.

Collaboration with other ICU activities

We seek analysis and recommendations about how to build partnerships and collaboration between different teams within ICU in order to offer high-quality experiences to volunteers in Liberation areas.

Volunteer development

We seek analysis and recommendations on how to maximise the positive impact that Liberation work can have on the personal and professional development of our volunteers and members.

Definitions of liberation and oppression

Dictionary definitions of liberation and oppression oversimplify these terms and the underpinning theory of them that shapes the social justice movement. Equally as Audre Lorde states, "*The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.*" Therefore the following definitions draw on the social justice movement, wider student movement and NUS. Imperial College Union may wish to create a definition that is specific to the experiences of its membership and the STEM sector.

“Oppression: Systems of power and privilege, based on bias, which benefit some social groups over others. Oppression can

- 1) take many forms, including ideological, institutional, interpersonal and internalized;
- 2) be intentional and unintentional;
- 3) be conscious and unconscious; and,
- 4) be visible and invisible.

Oppression prevents the oppressed groups and individuals from being free and equal. Many people face oppression based on more than one of their identities, creating a unique complexity of challenges and resilience.

Ableism: A system of oppression that benefits able-bodied people at the expense of people with disabilities.

Classism: A system of oppression that benefits people with high and middle socioeconomic status at the expense of people with lower socioeconomic status.

Genderism: A system of oppression that benefits cisgender people at the expense of transgender and gender nonconforming people. Genderism may take the form of Transphobia, bias and discrimination towards transgender and gender nonconforming people.

Heterosexism: A system of oppression that benefits straight/heterosexual people at the expense of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Heterosexism may take the form of Homophobia or Biphobia, bias and discrimination towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Racism: A system of oppression that benefits white people at the expense of people of color.

Sexism: A system of oppression that benefits male-identified people at the expense of female-identified people.”

– GLSEN

Definitions of liberation and oppression (cont.)

“Building a Students’ Union for all is one of our key priorities at KCLSU. To be a liberated union, KCLSU needs to be an institution that promotes the reproduction of and respect for group differences without oppression. Oppression does not describe one process, but a series of interlinked processes that disadvantage a social group. These processes can be both conscious and intentional or institutionalized.

Institutionalised discrimination creates barriers for our student body, leading to socio-structural disadvantages in terms of engagement, empowerment and overall student experience. Institutional barriers are a result of systematic oppression. Systematic oppression recognizes that oppression of one group by another is not always conscious or intentional. It is instead a process of reproduced practices and methods of one group at the disadvantage to another.” – KCLSU

“Liberation is: The seeking of equal status and freedom from all forms of oppression.

The word liberation is symbolic for NUS and reflects the four groups who face oppression in society today: women, LGBT, Disabled and black people. NUS use it because we believe that the struggle for equality is about liberation and freedom – freedom from discrimination in every area of life and freedom from fear of violence and prejudice that we can face because of our identities. The Liberation Campaigns are also led by those who self define into the group facing that collective oppression.

Liberation is important to NUS because discrimination against students’ identities can affect their participation, achievement, retention and progression in education.”
– NUS

Methodology

Use of structured interviews to find common themes and where possible to triangulate findings.

Structured telephone/face to face interviews or where necessary written questionnaires with:

- Past and current liberation officers to understand why they stood, what they hoped to achieve, what they did achieve, what barriers they faced, what they believe would have enabled them to achieve their aims;
- Relevant staff to gather their understanding of the purpose of the liberation officer roles, what support they believe is available to the officers, the barriers they perceive to liberation officer success, what they believe will enable success, possible internal and external collaboration potential, and what successes have been achieved by liberation officers;
- Senior management to understand possible future resources and structures to support a growth or development of liberation activity;
- Officer trustees to gather their understanding of the purpose of the liberation officer roles, what support they believe is available to the officers, the barriers they perceive to liberation officer success, what they believe will enable success, possible internal and external collaboration potential, and what successes have been achieved by liberation officers;
- Leaders of students activities that relate to liberation groups to understand what liberation officers have done for and with them, the existing relationship with liberation officers, what barriers they face in working with liberation officers, what value liberation officers could bring if set up differently, what they believe will enable success, what democratic structures/processes to put in place to create stronger relationship between liberation officers and their constituents as individuals and organised groups/societies;
- Focus groups with students from liberation groups to understand what liberation officers have done for and with them, the existing relationship with liberation officers, what barriers they face in working with liberation officers, what value liberation officers could bring if set up differently, what they believe will enable success, what democratic structures/processes to put in place to create stronger relationship between liberation officers and their constituents as individuals and organised groups;

Methodology (cont.)

- SU's with high volumes and quality of liberation work to understand what enables success at their union in terms of support and resource, policy, role descriptions, training and induction, communication, collaboration and volunteer development (Kings College London SU, University of the Arts London SU, London School of Economics and Political Science SU, University College London Union, Leeds SU, Exeter Guild, University of East London SU, University of West London SU, Manchester SU, Warwick SU, Bristol SU)

Desk research to analyse data available on candidates for liberation positions and to gather best practice from peer SU's, NUS and partners undertaking liberation activism.

Desk research:

- Analysis of all available manifestos for candidates for liberation officer positions to understand why they stood, recurrent issues, thematic priorities;
- Analysis of demography and course type of candidates for liberation officer where information is available – none available;
- Analysis of any relevant existing policy, written processes, training, role descriptions, communications and volunteer development processes currently in place to find gaps, barriers or missed opportunities;
- Analysis of previous ICU liberation campaign reports or impact reports, etc to understand what successes have been achieved and how: none available;
- Analysis of current ICU resourcing and structures to support liberation officer activity with a view to recommending future resourcing required to achieve the volume and quality of liberation activity comparable or better than peer SUs;
- Analysis of the ICU and peer SU democratic structures and processes in relation to liberation officers, e.g. are liberation officers elected by those self-defining in to that liberation group or the whole student body or through student societies? Are these paid positions? How are they held to account?
- Gather examples of best practice in supporting liberation officers from NUS and peer SUs in terms of support and

Methodology (cont.)

resource, policy, role descriptions, training and induction, communication, collaboration and volunteer development to make recommendations to ICU;

- Gather best practice and/or partnering opportunities from liberation and campaigning organisations (Stonewall, the Fawcett Society, Southall Black Sisters, UKBP, Liberty);
- Analysis of the calendar of liberation events as supported by peer SUs to build a recommended calendar for ICU;

Research challenges:

Undertaking this research during the summer months has limited the number of students engaged in this research. Whilst focus groups were held and relatively well attended for each liberation zone, the students in attendance were those already engaged in liberation activity whether in an elected position or through a society.

The creation of structures around the liberation officers, such as liberation associations/assemblies, and targeting of communication methods with diverse

students, will allow there to be ongoing engagement with larger numbers of students to continue to build ICU's understanding of the challenges facing them.

The lack of direct university involvement in this research may have missed an opportunity to engage them in building shared solutions. There remains a great opportunity for the university to work together to become a centre of excellence in understanding and tackling the barriers faced by diverse students in STEM.

Recommendations

SECTION 1 - ROLES AND POLICY

Key recommendation 1:

1. Engage students that self identify in to the liberation zones in a governance review. Work with students from liberation zones to create processes and systems that facilitate and enable students to own and lead on liberation autonomously and intersectionally through all layers of ICU's governance: trustee board, council, sabbatical officers, and liberation officers.

a. Engage students that self-identify in to the liberation zones to take part in the entirety of the governance review to ensure that all levels of ICU governance are accessible and pro-actively seeking to be representative of the IC student body;

b. Engage students that self-identify in to the liberation zones to lead the governance review of the liberation roles;

c. Review of liberation titles as part of the governance review to consider:

c.1. Limiting the title of liberation officer to the four classic zones: black students/BME students, women/gender-equality, disabled students/disabilities, LGBTQIA+ students;

c.2. Reviewing each of the above four titles to consider which titles will increase campaigns and activism at ICU (as per the brief);

c.3. Including the mental health zone if this is a campaigning rather than welfare post;

c.4. Renaming non-liberation roles as part-time officers;

d. Review of liberation constitutional job descriptions to limit the representation of the liberation zones to the oppressed group so that the:

d.1. Womens/Gender Equality Officer shall "Facilitate the engagement of women and non-binary students in Union activity" rather than all genders and "Represent the views of women and non-binary students on gender equality issues" rather than all students;

d.2. Black students'/BME Officer shall "Represent the views of black/BME students on black/BME issues" rather than all students;

d.3. LGBTQIA+/LGBT officer shall "represents the sexuality and gender related needs of LGBTQIA students" rather than represents the "sexuality-related needs of all students" – there will be an overlap with the Gender-equality Officer that requires further

Recommendations (cont.)

consultation with the TQI+ community;

d.4. Disabled students officer/

Disabilities officer “represents the needs of disabled students, whether diagnosed or undiagnosed” rather than students with disabilities in line with the social rather than the medical model of disability;

e. Review of liberation constitutional job descriptions to specify who the officers represent these students to (ICU and the college and wider society) and create structures or space to enable self-representation, e.g. a standing item on council agendas for feedback from ‘liberation communities’ on issues within ICU, or BME Officer invited to University Academic Board to request action in relation to the race attainment gap;

f. Review the Representation Policy and all elections documents relating to it to make liberation zones autonomous: candidates and electors must self-identify in to this community, rather than being open to all students;

g. Remove the Campaigns Officer position and consider increasing staff support for campaigns if this is the purpose of the role;

h. Support the formation of liberation assemblies or associations following the

KCLSU or LSESU models;

i. Review the union’s decision making structures, specifically council, to assess its accessibility and effectiveness in enabling students to participate in decision making and influencing the union and university: see the work at KCLSU to review decision making processes. Include an assessment of the role of liberation officers in whole union decision making;

j. Create a committee or structure that allows liberation officers to tackle intersectional issues together, and work alongside OTs to influence the union and university;

k. Review and map the existing structures for influencing the college. Revise these to enable liberation officers to represent their communities directly, with a specific focus on:

k.1. seats on committees;

k.2. relationships with decision makers;

k.3. the power to decide how an issue is presented;

l. Work with peer students’ unions to trial making financial support available to students who may otherwise be unable to take on a role in the union (LSESU, UALSU and KCLSU are all looking at this).

Recommendations (cont.)

SECTION 2 - TRAINING AND INDUCTION

Key recommendation 2:

2. Develop an annual programme of learning and development to build skills and confidence for all liberation officers to maximise their potential within the union, the university, STEM industry and wider society. Extend this programme to students across liberation zones to build a base of confident and skilled campaigners and a pipeline of diverse candidates for all elected offices.

a. Create candidate engagement and training programme to build diversity across all elected officer positions and to build greater expectation of liberation officer roles and their potential, e.g. training in identity group safe spaces, on public speaking skills, activism and organising, running a campaign, etc;

b. Run a session with all OTs and staff to hear liberation officer priorities for the year ahead, with a session for staff to action plan and suggest ways they can support that liberation officer in teams (e.g. Activities Team might take on an action to support the development of a structure for liberation

assemblies or associations, and the Advice Team might start to collate all liberation related cases and run outreach);

c. Create an induction checklist for all liberation officers which includes an introduction to all ICU teams and how to work in the office space;

d. Engage liberation officers in OT training to build relationships, team, and greater understanding of the Union's workings, as well as creating a potential pipeline of diverse candidates in to OT positions;

e. Develop a calendar of training to ensure early and continuous engagement to include but not limited to the following topics:

April

1. Post elections meet and greet with other officers;

June

1. An induction to the union, its structures and its services;
2. What is liberation vs equality vs fairness, history and achievements of liberation movements, liberation issues in society, liberation issues at Imperial (Union and College), liberation data for College and

Recommendations (cont.)

Union, liberation roles at Imperial, policies and structures supporting these roles, how staff and OTs can provide allyship in dismantling the barriers to liberation at Imperial;

3. Meet your union staff buddy and college mentor;

July

1. Handover with outgoing officer;

September

1. Planning your year ahead as a liberation officer: priorities, SMART plans, allies, who to influence, timeline/milestones, etc;

2. Resources and budgets available;

3. How to apply for a budget;

4. How to run an event;

5. How to run a campaign;

6. How to get information out to students via ICU communication channels;

7. How to work with other liberation officers on intersectional issues;

November

1. How to work with other officers and committees to get ideas/campaigns/motions taken seriously;

2. How to write council papers and motions;

3. How to influence & negotiate, especially

with the university;

4. University committees and other decision makers;

5. How to engage students;

6. Resilience, mental health and wellbeing when tackling oppression;

January

1. Review of term 1, revise action plans and undertake a training needs analysis (TNA) for role and personal development;

2. Pre-election training on transitioning from liberation officer to OT;

Feb onwards

1. Training as per TNA;

May/June

1. How to translate your experience as an officer to build your CV.

Recommendations (cont.)

SECTION 3 - SUPPORT AND RESOURCE

Key recommendation 3:

3. ICU to become centre of excellence in understanding the barriers faced by diverse students in STEM. ICU to gather and use data to understand the oppression that different students face at ICU, IC, in STEM studies and work, and wider society in order to understand which barriers and systems to remove. ICU to start the work of removing these barriers and systems whilst building confidence in students that it is a place for students to build their own communities to autonomously tackle the barriers.

a. ICU to work with liberation groups to create its own statement of liberation: recognising the specific oppressions facing STEM students and identifying the unique role ICU can play in removing those barriers and systems;

b. The first objective in the “Your voice” section of the strategy will require ICU to develop an understanding of the experiences of its most marginalised members inside and outside of Imperial. A robust and live evidence base of the

experiences of these students will enable liberation work whether undertaken solely by the liberation officers or the whole union. ICU to build a living record of liberation issues at IC/ICU including but not limited to:

- b.1. Advice service cases;
- b.2. Incidents reported to ICU/IC in relation to the 4 liberation zones;
- b.3. Demographic data from IC or HESA on recruitment, retention and attainment of students from liberation groups;
- b.4. Demographic data on ICU staff and officers in relation to targets (recommend London working age population and student body respectively – though the latter is based on a lack of diversity in STEM studies);
- b.5. Action taken by ICU and progress made, e.g. lobbied university on lack of gender neutral toilets at X committee in 2017 and now have approval for this to be changed in all buildings or reported 10 cases of race discrimination to academic board in Dec 2017 and no introduction of compulsory equality training for staff and no record of disciplinary action for racial micro-aggressions;
- b.6. Existing research in to the barriers facing STEM students from diverse backgrounds: specifically on recruitment/

Recommendations (cont.)

retention/attainment/graduate destinations;

c. Employ an intern to create the living record of liberation issues and populate it with the following available data in a way that the data can be used to identify patterns, possible interventions and track progress:

c.1. personal anecdotes of racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, misgendering, sexism from interviewees (see the hardcopies of interviews with officers);

c.2. demographics of the union;

c.3. reported incidents and the ICU/IC response;

c.4. demographics of the university;

c.5. attainment gaps;

c.6. recruitment and retention of diverse students;

c.7. the student experience;

c.8. graduate destinations;

d. Where it does not already exist, commission research in to the barriers facing STEM students at ICU from diverse backgrounds: specifically on recruitment/retention/attainment/graduate destinations;

e. Living record of liberation issues to be used as part of all staff and all officer training, including the setting of OT priorities;

f. Living record of liberation issues to be used to hold ICU's board and IC to

account on progress;

g. Living record of liberation issues to be used by liberation officers and the Welfare Committee to build campaigns, work on intersectional issues together and track progress;

h. ICU to start working on and lobbying the college for change on liberation issues immediately, to demonstrate that it is an ally and to address the basic needs of students so that they can focus on the big stuff (i.e. how can a trans student begin to tackle issues of transphobia in the classroom when their basic need of using a toilet is not met?) ICU must take care in this approach not to take on a saviour role and completely fill the current vacuum, but to demonstrate its support while it builds up structures for student groups to autonomously liberate themselves.

Key recommendation 4:

4. SMG to build liberation officer priorities and the living record of liberation issues in to the business planning cycle, so that these inform ICU whole organisation planning, and annual departmental planning allowing for collaboration across teams.

Recommendations (cont.)

a. Operationalise the strategic commitment made to liberation work in the “your voice” section of the strategic plan: this could be SMG setting out priorities for liberation work against each of the 3 “your voice” objectives

b. Operationalise the strategic commitment to liberation work by gathering an evidence base, using this to inform operational plans and work plans, allocating staff and resource to supporting officers, their campaigns and their action plans.

c. Include support for liberation officers and their campaigns in operational plans and individual staff workplans to ensure that the strategic commitment is translated in to allocated work to include:

- c.1. Information and data on the experience of students in liberation communities inside and outside of Imperial;
- c.2. Training programme development;
- c.3. Training programme delivery;
- c.4. Setting up a buddying and mentoring system and IC/ICU and potentially beyond;
- c.5. Event support;
- c.6. Campaign support;
- c.7. Writing of papers and motions to IC and ICU committees;
- c.8. Research;

c.9. Budget development and management;

d. Review the Job Description of the Wellbeing and Campaigns Coordinator and any other relevant roles to ensure it clearly allocates responsibility for liberation officers and campaigns. This allocation of staff resource is comparatively low and should be reviewed annually as activity in this area increases;

e. Work with liberation officers in September to ensure that action plans are realistic and can be adequately resourced in terms of: budget, staff support, venues/ space, media/communications support required, etc;

f. Liberation month events become a central part of the ICU events programme: ICU to enable liberation officers to offer financial, event, staff, communications and volunteer support to existing student society run liberation history months and build this support in future years through liberation associations/assemblies.

Key recommendation 5:

5. Develop a whole organisation approach to liberation with a staff team who have the experience, skills and knowledge

Recommendations (cont.)

to support liberation officers and their work; and the confidence to challenge/ dismantle oppression wherever they see it at ICU, IC, STEM and wider society. Create a programme of liberation, equality, diversity and inclusion training and ongoing development for all staff, officers and volunteers.

a. Introduce a Liberation, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (LEDI) training programme with compulsory elements for all staff including: Introduction to LEDI, equity at work, creating and maintaining safe spaces, and equality impact assessments;

b. Work with partners including NUS, Stonewall, peer SUs to source aspects of this programme;

c. Create an annual pre-enrolment training course for all OTs and staff to understand liberation work covering: what is liberation vs equality vs fairness, history and achievements of liberation movements, liberation issues in society, liberation data for College and Union, liberation issues at Imperial (Union and College), liberation roles at Imperial, policies and structures supporting these roles, how staff and OTs can provide allyship in dismantling the barriers to liberation at Imperial;

d. Formally introduce the concept of

ICU being a learning and improvement zone on LEDI issues: this could include sharing a resource of accessible readings/videos to build understanding of oppression and liberation, actively increasing awareness of own privilege and learning how to be an ally, not asking people in the identity groups to educate but being open to challenge from them, workshops to share best practice from peers and partners and “discovery missions” as run by UWLSU;

e. Build and deliver the above programmes with input from liberation officers and/or students from liberation zones and annually review them to ensure compliance with law and accepted terminology and ensure that ICU is proactively responding to priorities for its students (e.g. following recent transphobia incident and rise of misgendering at IC should trans awareness be compulsory for all staff?);

f. Support liberation officers to lobby the university to extend and improve its own LEDI training ;

g. Lobby the university to sign up to relevant liberation quality marks such as Stonewall’s global diversity champions programme and the two ticks scheme.

Recommendations (cont.)

SECTION 4 - COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING

Key recommendation 6:

6. Create a communications plan to radically change the image of the union but ensure that this is paced alongside radical change in access to the union's support, its services and its decision making structures. The aim of the communications plan must be to improve the engagement of students from liberation groups in to safe and empowering spaces. This will mean beginning with what exists and growing communications alongside increases in liberation activity.

a. ICU communication channels can provide a platform for the existing events and activities of liberation societies to reach more students, simultaneously improving its image in a way that empowers liberation communities. Report on events, students and achievements that are outside of the Union's image as sporty, alcohol fuelled, masculine;

b. Build a targeted communications campaign to recruit diverse candidates for all positions and to raise the profile of liberation officers for 2018/19 elections that includes

b.1. Examples of liberation success and achievements at other SUs and nationally as a starting point for early 2017/18;

b.2. The problems facing liberation communities at IC/ICU and how ICU is trying to remove barriers;

b.3. The achievements of 2017/18 liberation officers, and national/partner examples;

b.4. Why is your (diverse) voice important?

b.5. Examples of how ICU engages officers/students in an inclusive way (officers skype in to meetings, offer of childcare, guarantee that alcohol will not be allowed in any democratic meetings, champion the use of inclusive language including not misgendering and not using bureaucratic language);

b.6. Positive images of the diversity of your current team;

b.7. What do you gain from being an officer? (training, CV development, mentors, experience of running events/campaigns/ working with IC, network of contacts in IC & partners);

c. Create a communications plan for liberation officers for this year with allocated staff resource to report on officer and society activity, and to support the officers to engage

Recommendations (cont.)

students in their campaigns and events;

d. Engage students from diverse communities to create their own content, e.g. liberation officers and societies have take over weeks on ICU's social media;

e. Alongside liberation officers this year, run a high profile communications campaign on the value of liberation work and liberation officers that covers the entire life cycle of a student from pre-enrolment to graduation to cover: issues faced at Imperial and how ICU can support you, how to get involved in liberation societies, campaigns, events, why and how to stand to be an elected officer, what previous officers/ campaigns have achieved, how diverse and engaging ICU is becoming, how ICU/IC are tackling lack of diversity in STEM studies and industry.

Recommendations (cont.)

SECTION 5 - COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ICU ACTIVITIES

Key recommendation 7:

7. With planning for liberation embedded in to the business planning cycle (as recommended above) collaboration opportunities and structures to support them can be identified through the officer and departmental planning processes.

a. Induction of liberation officers to include an introduction to each team that includes a discussion of opportunities to work together on liberation priorities (e.g. BME officer works with HR on engaging more BME students in to ICU student jobs or advice team gathers case studies for the Gender Equality officer to support campaign to tackle sexism in STEM);

b. Advice team, Student Activities team and Education and Welfare team to be given shared operational responsibility for the success of liberation officers and their campaigns;

c. Advice team, Student activities team, Education & Welfare team to include support for liberation officers, liberation campaigns and the living record of liberation

issues at ICU/IC in their workplans and identify a way to work together on planning and delivering in collaboration: project teams/ cross team meetings/cross department planning sessions;

d. Advice team, Student activities team, Education & welfare team to work with liberation officers early in the planning cycle to agree officer action plans and to consider what this means for staff workplans and team operational plans;

e. Structures for OTs to all work with liberation officers as outlined in section 1;

f. Cascade LEDI training, safe spaces training and access training to all students leaders through student activities team;

g. Give liberation officers access to all volunteer development opportunities given to student leaders of clubs and societies;

h. Explore opportunities to develop student societies that directly link with partner organisations such as the Fawcett Society having its own ICU chapter or the LGBT+ society having an official link to Stonewall's Youth Network.

Recommendations (cont.)

SECTION 6 - VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

Key recommendation 8:

8. Broader than the training and induction programme for liberation officers to perform their role, volunteer development should enable these officers to be successful change makers throughout their lives. It should therefore include the components that will allow officers to make activism an integral part of their life: mentoring, networks, skills development, articulating/ applying/transferring skills, links to external organisations.

a. Volunteer development that enables activism and celebrates political/societal change makers should be introduced which could include:

- a.1. mentoring from successful campaigners/organiser/activists in the field;
- a.2. membership of networks of campaigners/organiser/activists particularly those organised around liberation zones (e.g. NUS Black Students Campaign, Stonewall Youth Network, etc);
- a.3. training on campaigning/ organising/activism;
- b. Training and development programme as outlined in section on training

above, advertise this to potential candidates and support outgoing officers to translate their development in to their CVs;

c. Each liberation officer to have the most senior union staff buddy and College mentor who self-identifies in to their liberation community (the buddy and mentor can be given role descriptions for how to support these officers but in essence it is to be an informal support mechanism and will help them navigate the organisations – not to be confused with the dedicated staff support of the Wellbeing & Campaigns Coordinator). Mentors from the university or within the sciences will be more powerful than mentors within the campaigning world;

d. Identify opportunities to engage diverse industry mentors ;

e. Talks from voluntary sector partners such as Stonewall, Fawcett Society, ROTA, BLMUK, UKBP, Disability Rights UK, Liberty to be arranged by Imperial College Union or to be accessed via NUS. The senior leaders from all of these organisations are regular speakers at NUS leadership conferences for liberation zones;

f. Support outgoing liberation officers to become role models/champions and to run workshops or talks to encourage others like them to stand for the position with real examples of their experience and successes;

Recommendations (cont.)

SECTION 7 - CULTURE OF ICU

Key recommendation 9:

9. Trustee Board and SMG to go back to the value of “inclusivity” to be clear on what they mean and boldly tackle any cultures that undermine this value

- a. ICU to engage students and staff from liberation groups to provide regular feedback on creating inclusive cultures and tackling its own oppressive practices;
- b. OTs to be trained on the liberation issues at Imperial as part of their induction in to the union and part of their training to consider union-wide priorities;
- c. Question the ongoing value and risk of the union’s connection to the “tie-clubs”;
- d. Run events aimed at liberation groups and/or exclusively open to liberation groups;
- e. Advertise the sorts of issues that students in liberation groups can talk to the advice service about, get the advice service out at liberation officer events;
- f. ICU to openly review the “special relationship” with the College: what does it

allow, what does it prevent, what is expected of ICU in this relationship and what would happen if it did not meet those expectations, what is expected of IC in this relationship and what would happen if it did not meet those expectations?

Recommendations (cont.)

SECTION 8 - DEMOGRAPHICS OF ICU

Key recommendation 10:

10. Monitor, report and set targets on diversity of trustees, staff and students involved at all levels of ICU

- a. Introduce an annual staff diversity survey;
- b. Introduce systems for monitoring and reporting on diversity in recruitment, retention and progression of staff;
- c. Introduce systems for monitoring and reporting on diversity of candidates and elected officers;
- d. Introduce systems for monitoring and reporting on diversity of the board;
- e. Introduce systems for monitoring and reporting on diversity of student leaders, volunteers and members of clubs and societies;
- f. Use the data gathered to benchmark against the employment pool for staff and against the student body for candidates, elected officers, students in clubs and societies;

g. Develop an action plan to increase the diversity of staff, elected officers and board members at all levels;

h. Develop an action plan to increase the diversity of students engaged in clubs and societies;

i. Review communications and media representation of ICU staff and elected officers to ensure they are representative and diverse;

j. Review current ability to recruit, retain and support staff from liberation groups.



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