



Our Plan

2013-16

Enhancing Amplifying Building Creating

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imperial
college
union

Foreword from the President

Over the 2012/13 academic year, Imperial College Union has undertaken a number of reviews, governance changes, and entered into progressive new agreements and funding arrangements with the College. For two years, we have concurrently been consulting on what our members think of us, reporting our 'Impact' annually, and planning for the future: students are the Union's stakeholders and we must continually demonstrate our worth to the student body. It is the Union's ambition to continue developing and moving forward – and we have set out this development in our Strategy.

We have carefully matched our Strategy to complement the College's. I hope that over the next few years we continue to work collaboratively with our parent institution to enhance the student experience at Imperial to the best it can be.



Paul Beaumont
President 2012/13



Welcome from the Chair of Trustees

As Chair of the Board of Trustees, am I pleased to be able to introduce you to the Union's Strategic Plan, which was passed by the Board of Trustees in July 2013. This decision, which included the adoption of the Union's new Vision, Mission and Values, is the culmination of two years of consultation and collaboration between Board Members, elected officers, Union staff and management and, most importantly, our members.

This period has also been characterised by significant improvements to our governance structures. We have reduced bureaucracy and made decision-making clearer. We have introduced new groups, such as the Finance and Risk Committee, and Governance Committees which enable us to scrutinise important parts of the Union's work. Most importantly, we have strengthened the role of students on the Board, ensuring that the majority of its members are students, and the majority are elected.

Our job now is to work closely with officers, students and management to ensure that this ambitious plan is achieved and I am confident in the Union's ability to do so as the governance, management and democratic elements of the Union continue to work together for the benefit of Imperial's students.



Julia Higgins

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Welcome from the Managing Director

The past 18 months have seen significant changes for this organisation. We have comprehensively reformed our governance structure and registered with the Charity Commission. We have developed our financial and performance management structures and considerably improved our financial position as a result. The next few years will present substantial opportunities for the Union to grow its role at the heart of the student experience at Imperial, and this plan outlines the direction that we will take.

The plan is ambitious and challenging, but we are confident of our ability to achieve the aims, objectives and measures outlined in the plan. We know this because it is based on sound research and consultation with our members and stakeholders. It is also resourced by increases and developments in our staffing structure and a long-term funding agreement with the College.

I hope that you enjoy reading the plan – and that you will share our enthusiasm and anticipation for the coming three years at Imperial College Union.

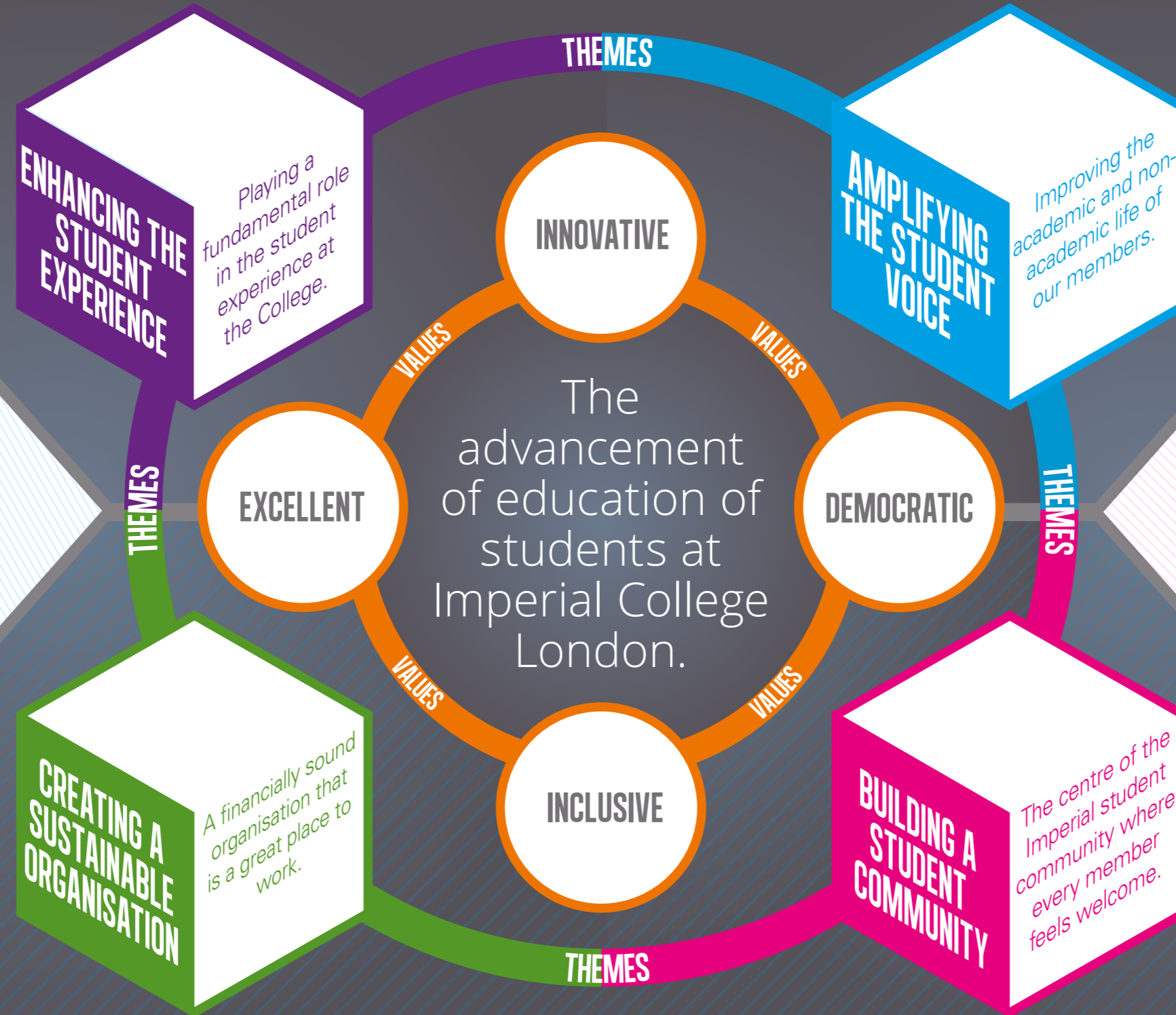


Joe Cooper

Managing Director

Vision

To be recognised as the leaders in student development and engagement, at the heart of the student community at Imperial.



Mission

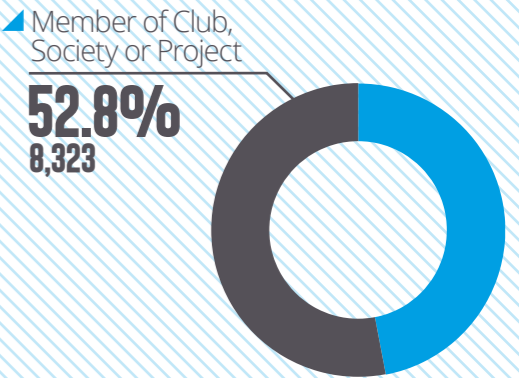
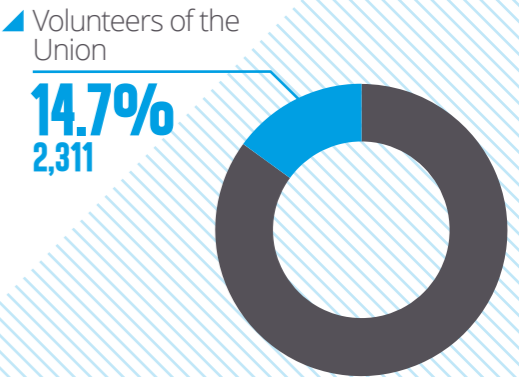
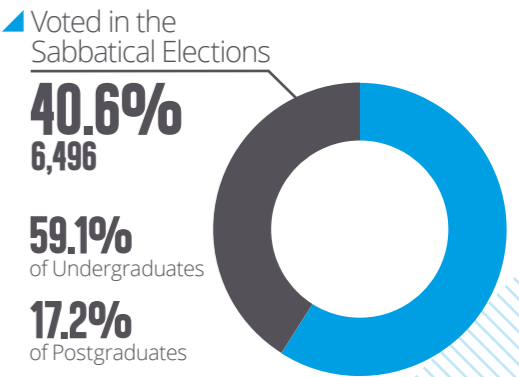
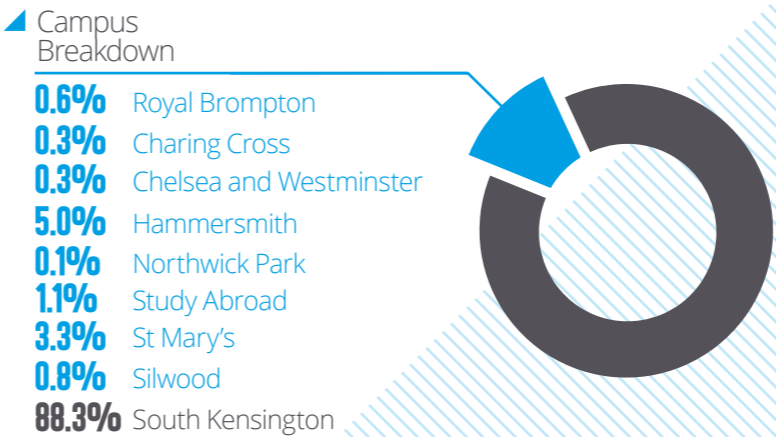
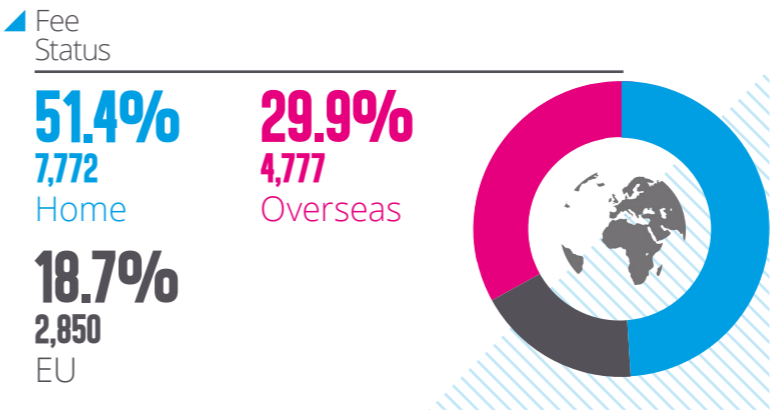
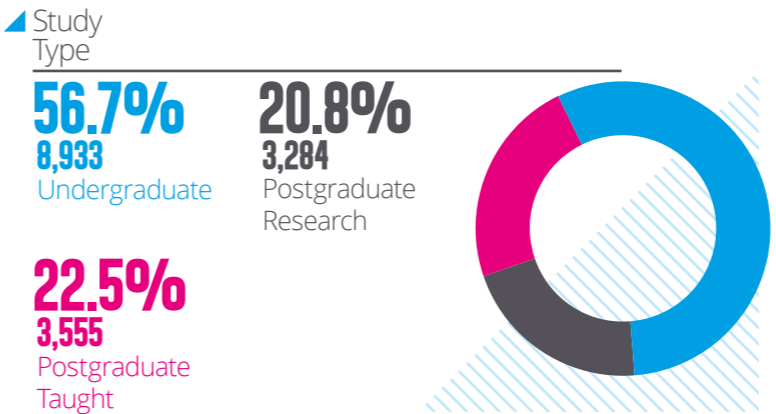
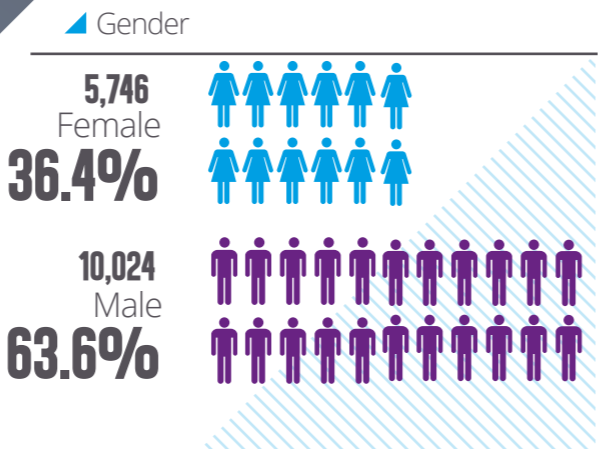
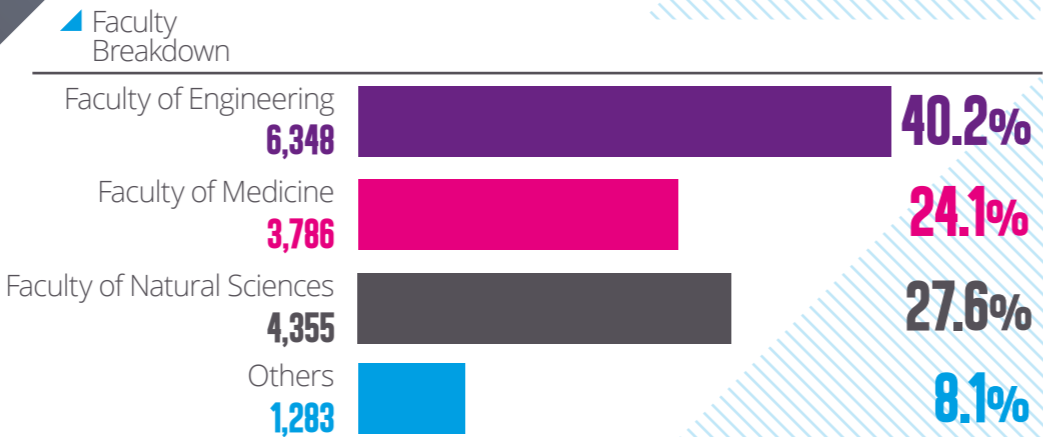
Imperial College Union prepares its members to be tomorrow's leaders, by defending and enhancing the student experience at Imperial, through the provision of innovative services, representation and activities.

Understanding our membership

With almost 16,000 members from 120 countries around the world, each and every member of Imperial College Union is unique. Understanding our membership is a key factor in ensuring that we play an important role in their time at Imperial.

We hold a sector-leading amount of information on our diverse membership, helping us better understand cohorts and groups of students who hold similar interests and backgrounds. Imperial itself is rapidly evolving with an increasing number of Postgraduate students and a changing Halls of Residence portfolio.

Now, more than ever, a clear picture of the make-up of the population of Imperial is paramount to helping us achieve the aims detailed in this document. In addition, we have outlined objectives that will help us further develop our understanding of our membership and their needs.



The graphs on this page are taken from a snapshot of our ever changing membership on 01 June 2013.

How the strategy came together

Discovery

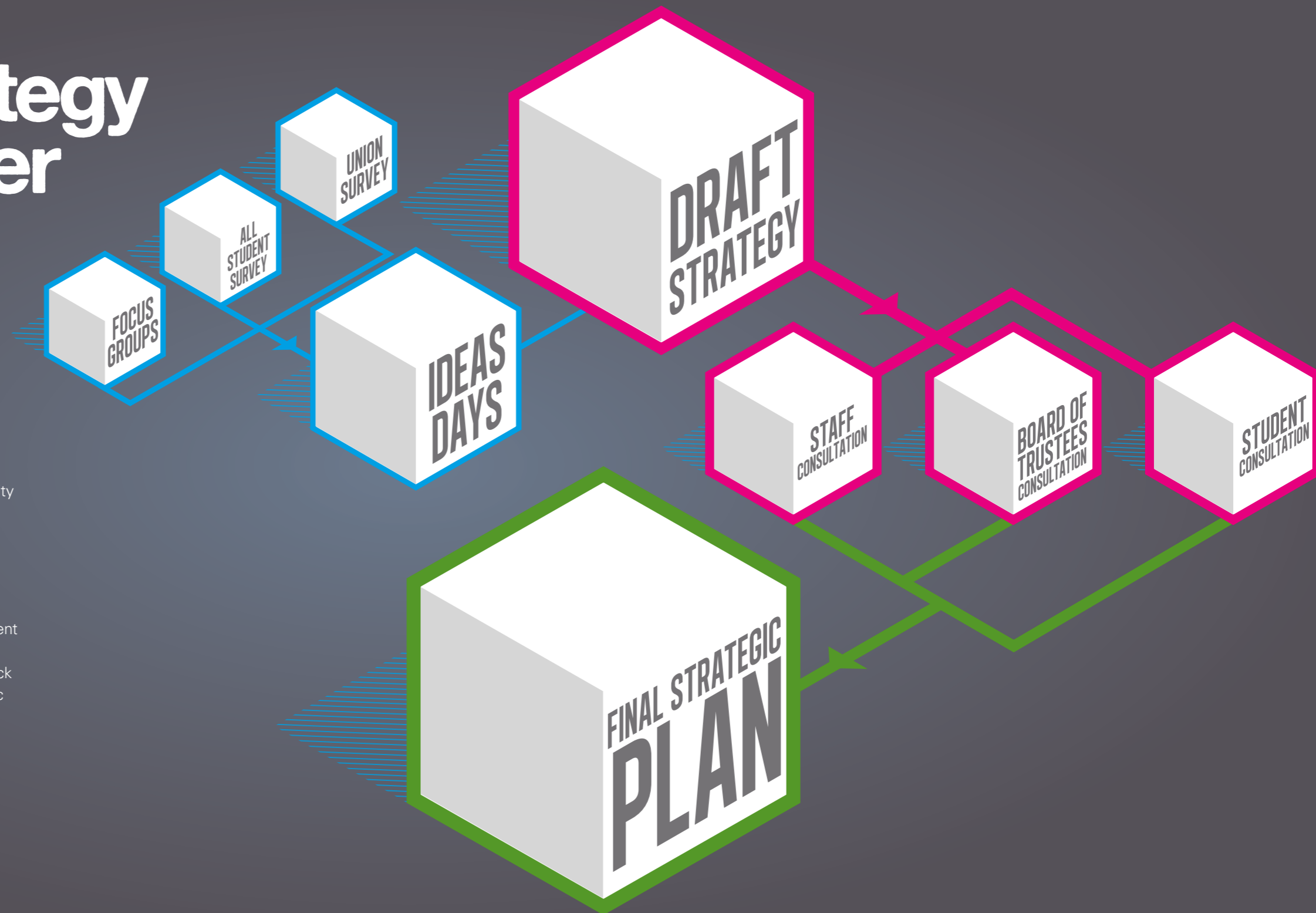
Our Strategic Review process began in late 2011 with a detailed research initiative. Focus groups, an all student survey and desktop research highlighted a number of key challenges and issues that students wanted their Union to address.

Testing

The trends and themes that emerged from this research were developed and tested with our members at our three Ideas Days, in 2011 and 2013. Interactive stalls provided students with an opportunity to provide feedback on the Union's draft strategic themes, Vision, Mission and Values.

Draft Strategy

The information gained through these initiatives led to the development of a draft strategic plan, which was used to consult with Union and College staff, our members, and members of the Board. The feedback collected during this process shaped this final version of our Strategic Plan for 2013-16.



How the strategy drives the organisation

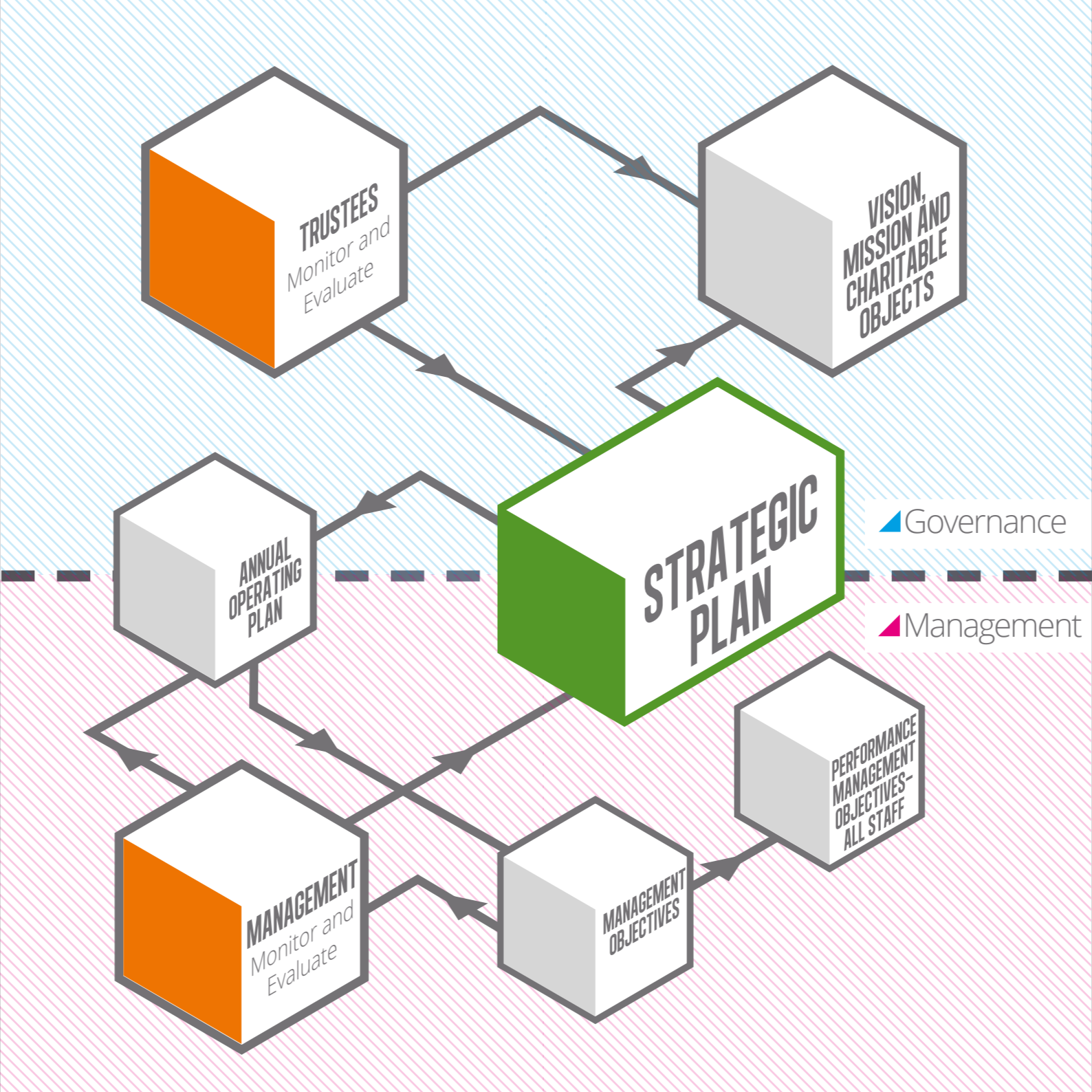
Values

Excellent

The Union strives to deliver first class services and experiences for its members, and works with the College to ensure that the student experience at Imperial is second to none.

Inclusive

The principles of equality of opportunity are fundamental to the Union - we promote diversity, take action on discrimination and strive for an inclusive and welcoming environment for our increasingly diverse student community



Our Values inform all that we do and influence all the decisions we take.

Our Strategic Plan informs the work of all our staff through the development of annual Operating Plans, which outline SMART objectives related to every goal in the plan. Our performance management system ensures that all staff feed into the processes and have personal objectives that relate directly to the plan, and to the success of the organisation.

Values

Innovative

We are bold and different – we constantly look for new ways of improving the student experience, whether directly through the Union or through the lobbying of the College and external bodies.

Democratic

The principle of student leadership is fundamental to the Union. At all levels students are empowered to influence and change the workings of the Union and their educational experience.

▲ Enhancing the

Student Experience

▲ Imperial College Union plays a key role in how students learn, develop and grow during their time at the College, especially through the skills that they learn through involvement in our activities.

Our Clubs, Societies & Projects are amongst the biggest and best in the UK and we will continue to develop them. We also want to grow the scope of our activities to ensure that students can access the widest range of development opportunities possible.

We will also maximise the benefits of involvement to help our members identify, develop and exemplify the skills they have developed through their involvement, enhancing their employability and widening the scope of their career options.

▲ Strategic Aim



By 2016 we will be recognised by the College, our membership, and by external measures as providing a fundamental part of the student experience at the College.

▲ Goals - By 2016 we will:

- SE1 ▼ Continue to grow membership in Clubs, Societies & Projects each year of the plan and develop the support available to them.
- SE2 ▼ Introduce a Volunteering Accreditation scheme, which is recognised by the College, and helps students identify the skills they gain through their involvement in our activities.
- SE3 ▼ Increase the number of students employed by the Union in each year of the plan.
- SE4 ▼ Introduce and establish a Development Programme for key volunteers and provide formal volunteering management qualifications.
- SE5 ▼ Achieve Investing in Volunteers status.
- SE6 ▼ Grow our Student Volunteering scheme and increase the amount of students volunteering in the outside world.
- SE7 ▼ Develop and publish, in the first year of the plan, a Postgraduate Student Engagement Strategy, in tandem with the College's review of Taught Postgraduate provision
- SE8 ▼ Ensure that the Union delivers at least three key contributors to the College's Graduate Attributes project.

We will know that we have succeeded when:

Union Survey



of students agree that the Union has a positive impact on their time at Imperial

NSS Score

we increase our question 23 score to



THES Student Survey



we reach this target in Students' Union scores

Amplifying the Student Voice

One of our primary functions is to represent our members to the College and to the wider community. We have recently developed a strong reputation in developing detailed, evidence-based research on behalf of our membership and we will grow and enhance the impact of this work.

In order to evolve further we must develop students' ability to affect our campaigning activity and continue to develop our communication loops to ensure that students are aware of changes that have been made on their behalf.

Our representative role is not limited to the College, however, and we must ensure that students' voices are heard locally and nationally. The Union should be champions for teaching, research and feedback, and play a key role in helping the College improve students' experiences in this area.

Strategic Aim

By 2016 the Union will have played a demonstrable role in improving the educational and non-academic experiences of our members through effective campaigning, lobbying and research.

Goals - By 2016 we will:

- SV1** Increased the amount and proportion of students who take part in the Union elections during each year of the plan.
- SV2** Review our democratic structures to ensure that they maximise engagement and add value to the Union's decision-making, and put proposals to decision making bodies within the first year of the plan.
- SV3** Continue to be a champion of academic best practice by developing our Student Academic Choice Awards scheme, with more than 1,000 students submitting nominations during the final year of the plan.
- SV4** Continue to publish an annual Impact Report detailing the positive changes the Union has made through officers, representatives and initiatives.
- SV5** Develop our engagement with local MPs, members of the London Assembly and representatives of local authorities, publishing the outcomes of these discussions to our members on an annual basis.
- SV6** Continue to develop relevant response documents, and in particular to respond in detail to the College's consolidated annual Student Survey and the National Student Survey during each year of the plan.
- SV7** Support 10 student-led campaigns with demonstrable outcomes each year by the end of the plan.
- SV8** Develop the support available to Academic Representatives, including the launch of an annual Representatives Conference, and increase the number of students in these roles supported by the Union in each year of the plan.

We will know that we have succeeded when:

Union Survey



of students agree that the Union is the voice of all students at Imperial

Elections



we remain in the top ten Students' Unions in the UK for election turnout

Representatives



we publish at least five changes delivered within the College each year as a result of effective student voice

▲ Building a

Student Community

▲ The Union should be the hub of the Student Community – ensuring that students are happy in their surroundings; feel supported by their peers and can seek advice when they need to.. The Union believes that the student community should be diverse, welcoming, non-discriminatory and inclusive, and will take positive action to promote and defend this.

The Union currently plays an important role in welcoming students to the College, but this experience needs to be improved and the Union should be at the heart of these changes.

The Union also recognises that the Student Community is constantly changing, both in terms of the demographics of our members, and their needs, demands and experiences. The Union must continually change to reflect this and remain at the heart of the Student Community.



▲ Strategic Aim



By 2016 the Union will be at the centre of the Imperial Student Community, ensuring that the Union and College are a welcoming place for our diverse membership.

▲ Goals - By 2016 we will:

- SC1 ▼ Publish an annual 'Advocacy to Action' Report, detailing how our advocacy, representation and campaigning work combine to improve the lives of students.
- SC2 ▼ Review the advice provision available to students on campus, including our own Advice Centre service and make recommendations to the College and the Union's Board of Trustees.
- SC3 ▼ Work in partnership with the College to review and improve the 'Welcome Week' provision through a review of the Union's activities and advising the College on how to improve their own arrangements.
- SC4 ▼ Complete a research-based report on Diversity, Inclusion and Liberation on campus, including Union activities and to develop a Union action and lobbying plan in response to the findings.
- SC5 ▼ Review the Union's processes for recognising students' and volunteers' achievements, including a review of the Union Awards scheme.
- SC6 ▼ Develop, publish and deliver a Campus Outreach Plan which outlines the Union's activities and objectives for providing services and representation to students who study at outlying campuses.
- SC7 ▼ Publish a research-based report on 'Student Journeys' highlighting the various changing demographics, trends, behaviours and needs of our members to inform our approach to representation, services and activities and deliver an action plan as a result of the findings.

We will know that we have succeeded when:

Union Survey



agree that the Union plays a fundamental role in creating a positive Student Community

College Survey



of students are satisfied or better with their welcome to the College

Engagement



of students have at least one interaction with the Union

▲ Creating a

Sustainable Organisation

▲ In order to achieve our Strategic Goals, we must ensure that the foundations of the Union are strong. We must protect and develop our financial and human resources and develop our central support and communication functions to ensure that our services flourish.

Our reputation with the College, our primary funder and a key stakeholder, is predicated on sound financial and operational management, and our reputation with our members, our primary stakeholder, is predicated on providing relevant and well-run services.

The Union's people are its most valuable asset and the Union needs to become an organisation that attracts, rewards and retains the best people.

▲ Strategic Aim



By 2016 Imperial College Union will be recognised as a Union that is financially sound, is a great place to work, and makes the most of the resources that are available to it.

▲ Goals - By 2016 we will:

- S01 ▼ Secure a funding agreement for the years following 2016, with a real-terms increase in the total level of funding from the College for each year of the agreement.
- S02 ▼ Review our approach to customer services in all parts of the Union and implement Customer Promises in all of our student-facing services.
- S03 ▼ Demonstrate our commitment to being an excellent employer by securing and retaining Investors in People status.
- S04 ▼ Grow our reserves and strengthen our balance sheet by generating a surplus in each year of the plan and ensuring that our capital expenditure is outweighed by our depreciation repayments.
- S05 ▼ Receive and retain full assurance from internal auditors.
- S06 ▼ Complete a review of our organisational structure, including consideration of incorporation or forming of a subsidiary.
- S07 ▼ Develop and publish our first Corporate Social Responsibility Policy.
- S08 ▼ Engage with the development of any new College strategy and increase the number of positive references to the Union compared to the current plan.
- S09 ▼ Develop and publish a Communications and Social Media Strategy.
- S010 ▼ Ensure that at least 1,000 students respond to the annual Union Satisfaction survey to ensure that the strategic measures generated in this survey are sound.

We will know that we have succeeded when:

Union Survey



of students are satisfied or better with the Union's Commercial outlets

Accounts



the Union has increased our general reserves by £300k

External



we have a year on year improvement in the Union-specific elements of the University Green League



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