

# IMPACT Report

2013/14



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



# Welcome

## TO OUR IMPACT REPORT

From Welcome Week to the last day-of-term Imperial College Union has been working hard for every one of our members to make their time at Imperial the best it can be. It's been a great year for the Union with some real examples of changes that have impacted the lives of Imperial students.

Representing our members' views directly to the House of Lords and the Government on issues such as International students' studying STEM subjects and Sharia-compliant student loans showed that the Union is the voice for all students at Imperial. Our local work centred around working with the College to improve how they communicate about accommodation, whilst our second-ever Student Academic Choice Awards allowed students and academics to come together to celebrate excellence in teaching and academic support.

Amplifying your voice so that it is heard at all levels of the College, and nationally, is integral to what Imperial College Union is all about. This report is a summary of some of what we have achieved in doing just that!

Yas Kieron David Marissa Nat



Read more about  
Our Plan for  
the next three  
years online at:

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





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WEBSITE FOR  
*even more information!*

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

# ENHANCING THE Student Experience

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

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Launched during Student Volunteering Week, Community Connections is the Union's brand new volunteer service connecting our members to volunteering opportunities in the local community and those further afield.

We ran our first Mass Volunteering opportunity with the London Wildlife Trust with a group of Imperial students, clearing scrub and building bonfires.

Through Community Connections, we've partnered with almost 50 organisations and there are hundreds of volunteering opportunities available at any one time. Opportunities include tutoring, befriending, environmental, IT, research and advice roles; volunteering with the young and elderly, supporting campaigns, tackling inequality, managing events and lots more.



48

Organisations have partnered with us to offer volunteering opportunities to our members.

1,195

Volunteer opportunities have already been offered to our members since Community Connections launched.

## IMPERIAL PLUS

Launched in October, Imperial Plus supports volunteers to reflect on the skills they gain through volunteering in our activities, enabling the Union to formally acknowledge the amazing work they do in delivering our services and activities.

29

29 Students have completed the Volunteer Accreditation.

98

98 Students have completed the Volunteer Certificate.

OVER  
14,000

Over 14,000 hours of volunteering have already been recorded for Imperial Plus.

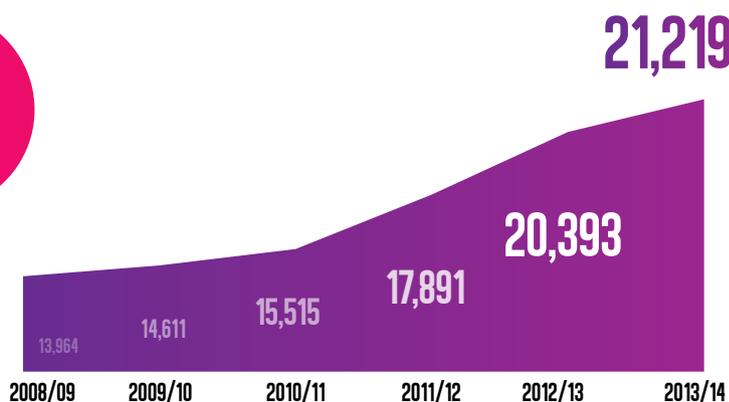


## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

It was another record-breaking year for our Clubs, Societies & Projects with more students buying more memberships than ever before. The total number of students who are a member of at least one group increased to 8,712 meaning that 53.6% of our members get involved with student activities, a fantastic number.

53.6%

53.6% of students are a member of at least one Club, Society or Project.



## A WEEK OF VOLUNTEERING

Run in collaboration with Imperial Hub, Student Volunteering Week (SVW) celebrated the efforts of our volunteers whilst providing the opportunity to engage students in new volunteering activities.

During the week 'Volunteers of the Day' were featured online, including Rep, Club and Society and Imperial Hub volunteers, capturing the programme of 15 activities designed to engage and promote volunteering to our members.

All of the over 250 students engaged in SVW activities agreed it had been a positive experience and 86% said that it had made them more likely to get involved with volunteering and social action!

86%

86% said they were more likely to get involved in volunteering and social action as a result of volunteering during SVW.

250+

Over 250 students were engaged in Student Volunteer Week events and activities during the week.



## STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Our second Student Experience Survey Response was published in March and the results were presented by Marissa Lewis, Deputy President (Welfare), at the annual College Welfare conference.

As well as outlining the findings of the survey, the response also featured recommendations to improve services within College and the Union.

Read the response



## NEW YEAR FAIR

Our first ever New Year Fair focused on new opportunities, activities and ideas for a new year. 27 external organisations 17 Clubs, Societies & Projects and a range of performances welcomed over 2,000 students to the fair. Plans are already underway for next year's fair.

2,000+

Over 2,000 students attended our first ever New Year Fair.



## DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

We had our biggest and best ever Summer Ball in June with over 1,500 students attending our Alice in Wonderland themed end-of-year party. Our largest ever funfair and performances from Duke Dumont, IC Big Band and a DJ Set from BBC Radio 1's Huw Stephens were book-ended with great weather and a huge firework display.



Check out Stoic TV's video of the Summer Ball here!



## GIVE IT A GO!

Give it a Go ran for the first time at Imperial College Union in October. It encouraged almost 3,000 students to take up new opportunities, attend trips or try new activities before committing to joining one of our 310+ Clubs, Societies & Projects.

71 Clubs & Societies were involved in our first Give It A Go and received publicity in booklets distributed at Freshers' Fair 2013 and on the What's On pages of the Union website. Across all the activities on offer by Clubs, Societies & Projects, 756 extra students attended the events as a result of the GIAG scheme. 60% of Clubs & Societies thought GIAG helped increase membership and involvement and 76% wanted us to run the scheme again.



## WORK FOR US!

One of our strategic objectives was to increase the number of students employed by the Union. We have made it our mission to ensure that we offer job opportunities to our members wherever possible.



239 students were employed by the Union during the year.

## OUR BUSIEST DAY EVER

Freshers' Fair was the biggest event of Welcome Week 2013 and saw over 5,000 students visit over 350 stands around the College's South Kensington Campus. From A Cappella to Yoga every one of our 310+ Clubs, Societies & Projects had a stand showcasing the best of their activities and interests.

It was a record day on our website too, with more than 76,000 pages served to over 6,500 unique visitors. Singapore Society sold the most number of memberships with 88 students joining!



Amplifying

# THE STUDENT VOICE

One of our primary functions is to represent our members to the College and the wider community. The Union should be champions for excellent teaching, research and feedback, and play a key role in helping the College improve students' experiences in this area.

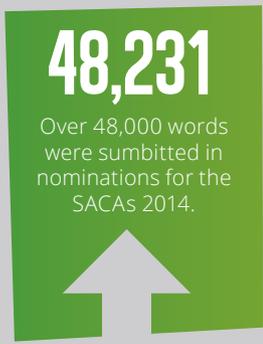
## RECOGNISING GREAT TEACHING

This May saw the second ever Student Academic Choice Awards (SACAs) and the most successful yet. The event showcased some of the most valued members of academic and support staff at Imperial, honouring those who have demonstrated excellence and innovation.

591 nominations were received and six candidates were short-listed for each of the eight awards. Panels consisting exclusively of Sabbatical Officers and Academic Representatives selected staff members according to their focus on quality teaching, supervision and support.

The ceremony, attended by over 140 students, staff and academics, featured video nominations from students and some extremely happy winners.

The opportunity for the Union and members of our Academic Representation Network to celebrate excellence in teaching and academic support alongside those who deliver a world-class education to Imperial students is vital in our mission to make our members' time at Imperial the best it can be.



"I was absolutely thrilled (and very pleasantly surprised) to have been nominated; winning the SACA is the highlight of my year. The student experience is my number one priority, and this inspires and drives my teaching to respond to the need to train the best students in the world."

**Prof Omar Matar**  
BEST TEACHING FOR UNDERGRADUATES WINNER

# Academic Representation Network



# 517

There were 517 Academic Reps elected last year across all Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses at Imperial.

## WHAT IS EXCELLENCE?

We held our first ever Representation Conference in February which brought together Academic Representatives and College staff to discuss the future of staff-student interaction at Imperial College London. The theme of the day was "What is Excellence", and delegates heard keynote speeches from senior College and Union speakers, and took part in workshops designed around four sub-themes:

- ▲ Delivering Excellence
- ▲ Campaigning for Excellence
- ▲ Rewarding Excellence
- ▲ Measuring Excellence

Discussions involved the National Student Survey, teaching awards, the effective use of staff-student committees, the role of the Union, personal tutoring systems, and more. Sessions were led by a mix of current students, Officer Trustees, College academics, Union staff and external speakers.

## IMPROVING YOUR EDUCATION

With over 500 Academic Reps trained and mandated to make your voice heard at all levels of the College and your Department, our Academic Representation Network is the heartbeat of academia at the College.

Our network of reps delivered hundreds of changes across the College from improvements to teaching and feedback to better facilities in common rooms, labs and lecture theatres.

## A VERY BIG ELECTION

For the third year running our elections were the largest student vote in the country as over 150,000 votes were cast for our new Officer Trustees and Constituent Union Presidents.

482 candidates stood for over 300 positions ranging from President to Student Trustees. Campaigning took place in early March with innovative and engaging campaigns including one candidate, our eventual new President, making a mobile game to promote their candidacy!

New and exciting live statistics were launched and proved to be more popular than ever before with over 38,000 views of the page during voting.

A final day surge brought us to our highest ever number of voters, 6,538 meaning a turnout of 39.31%. We also had our highest ever turnout for Undergraduate students with a staggering 60.2% registering a vote!

Congratulations to all the winners and welcome to our Officer Trustees for 2014/15 - Pascal, Tom, Abi, Chris and Alex.



60.2% of Undergraduate students voted in The Big Elections 2014, up from 59% the year before.

# 151,802

Votes were cast in The Big Elections 2014, more than any other student vote in the UK.



Check out our statistics page online now.



## LOBBYING THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Throughout the past year, Imperial College Union has been lobbying Government, Parliament and local politicians regarding a number of provisions in the Immigration Act. After directly lobbying Lord Winston, Emeritus Professor at Imperial College London and member of the House of Lords, Imperial College Union secured a House of Lords Science & Technology Subcommittee Inquiry into the Act's effect on international students of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

We submitted a brief to the inquiry on the potential impacts of the Act, which was well-received by the Committee; many of our suggestions were reflected in the Committee's formal recommendations to Government. The Government's response included a commitment to annually review the vulnerability of STEM degrees and Master's courses – an outcome derived directly from Imperial College Union's research and lobbying. We will continue to work with elected representatives and professional groups to minimise the impact of the Act's provisions on our members.



82% of students think that Imperial College Union fully supports International students, an increase of 26% points from last year.

## POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

As part of our Strategic Plan, we have launched a plan to engage with elected representatives wherever our members live and work. So far we have contacted members of the Westminster & European Parliaments, the London Assembly, and over fifty local councillors, each with significant populations of Imperial students in the area they represent. As well as lobbying decision-makers about issues affecting our members, we also work with representatives to deepen our links with local community organisations and charities.

This term, our Officer Trustees have met several local councillors – from the wards covering Princes Gardens, Wilson House, Earl's Court, Hammersmith Hospital and more. We have also met:

- ▶ Mark Field, Conservative MP for Cities of Westminster & London constituency, which contains the entire South Kensington campus; we discussed the impact of the Immigration Bill on international students
- ▶ Tom Copley AM, Labour member of the London Assembly and housing campaigner; we discussed the problems facing students in the private rented sector and agreed to work with him in future on campaigns for better renting and tenancy conditions for students across London.
- ▶ Darren Johnson AM, Green member of the London Assembly and campaigner on transport and housing issues; we discussed the creation of a safe cycling environment in London
- ▶ Dr Charles Tannock, Conservative MEP for London; we discussed the impact of the Immigration Bill and support for medical students in College.

We have also contacted the councillors elected on 22 May 2014 in wards with significant populations of Imperial students, and are actively preparing for the 2015 General Election.

## SHARIA-COMPLIANT STUDENT LOANS

Conventional tuition and maintenance loans are not an option for many Muslim students due to the interest charged on the loans – known as riba, a practice forbidden for Muslims. Consequently, many British Muslims delay or decline university despite having the required grades, as they cannot afford to pay tuition and accommodation fees up front.

To address this issue, the Government has proposed a model of student finance that would ensure Muslim graduates can access loans – and make repayments identical to non-Muslim students – but not have

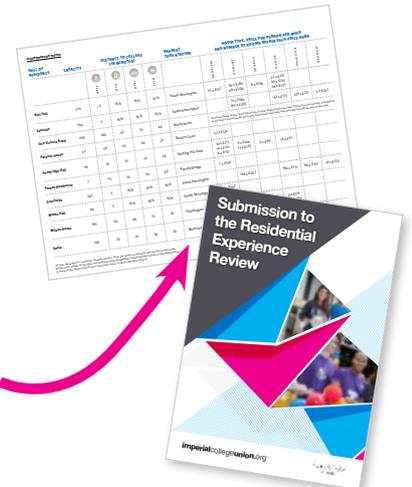
interest charged on their loan. Imperial College Union worked closely with our Islamic Society and Muslim Medics to survey our Muslim and non-Muslim members. Over 140 students shared their views, with the overwhelming majority expressing strong support for the Government's plans, as an innovation that could open up higher education to religious communities across the UK.

Our submission was received by the Department for Business & Skills and we look forward to more detailed proposals being put forth in the coming months.

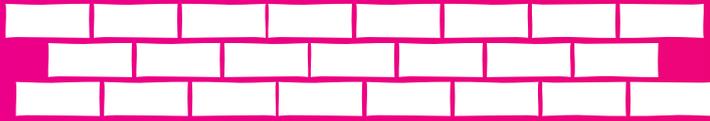
## A BETTER RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE

The College announced the Residential Experience Review at the beginning of the academic year with the aim of shaping the residential experience for Imperial students. It will also set out an action plan for the Review Panel's recommendations.

We published our evidence-driven submission and presented it to the review. As a result of the recommendations in our submission, changes including a student-led social fund for each hall and more powerful Halls Committees have been set up. Changes to how accommodation prices and College travel times are communicated have also been implemented as a result of our submission.



# 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.

### A STUDENT COMMUNITY ON EVERY CAMPUS

In March we published our first ever Campus Outreach Strategy. The strategy is arranged in three sections: Support for Student Involvement; Ensuring a local community is fostered and Campaigning for an equitable experience. Over the coming years the Union will be publishing annual plans to enable this strategy to be achieved, as

well as reporting on progress towards the measures which are outlined in each section.

The plan is ambitious and challenging, but we are confident of our ability to achieve the aims, objectives and measures presented in the plan.

Have a look back at our Campus Outreach Strategy online here.



*Read the strategy*



### CASH BACK!

Every year, dozens of students contact the Advice Centre for help with getting back the deposit they paid for their accommodation. Through letters from the Advice Centre, taking cases to tenancy deposit protection schemes, and supporting students in taking cases to Small Claims Court, we have helped our members secure approximately £10,000 in deposits that would not have otherwise been returned.



# £4,433,090

Over £4.4m was processed through eActivities this year up from £3.8m last year

# £10,000+

The Advice Centre has helped our members recover £10,000 in deposits this year.

### ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Students who are appealing against a College decision, such as the termination of their studies, can access support and guidance from the Advice Centre. This year, the appeal hearings we have attended have had a very high success rate, with students being given another chance to continue their studies at College. There are over a dozen ongoing appeal cases being supported by the Advice Centre at the end of this term.

### TALK TO DAS

This term saw the launch of our campaign #TalktoDAS. The campaign aims to increase the percentage of students with disabilities who disclose their disability to College, so they can get better support, advice and resources. The campaign is also a promotion for the College's Disability Advisory Service, which offers support to students with physical and non-physical disabilities.

# RECOGNISING OUR ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS

With over 16,000 members, 483 Imperial Plus members, 455 Academic Reps and 315 Clubs, Societies & Projects - Imperial College Union is a massive organisation.

All of these groups of volunteers, who find time away from their busy academic life, make the Union what it is. The Union Awards are about celebrating each and every one of those volunteers while taking a moment to recognise those that have had a real impact on the last year at Imperial.

A fantastic event with over 100 winners, the Awards honoured the best of our membership and the heartbeat of our student-led organisation.



## #HELLOICU CREW

Our brand-new team of volunteer students were on hand to welcome the 5,500 new students to Imperial during Welcome Week.

The #helloicu Crew were ever-present around the campus throughout the week helping students move in, meet new people at the Mingles and direct new students to lectures and rooms. 94% of new students said they were satisfied or better with the welcome provided by the #helloicu Crew!



88% of new students were satisfied or better with the information they received from the Union before they started at Imperial.

## MUMS & DADS

Our buddy scheme entitled "Mums and Dads", which matches returning students to new first year students based on their department and interests, saw its biggest year yet with over 1,000 returning students signing up. New students were able to log in to our online system and give us more information about their interests so we could better match them with their parents. We also added new functionality to the Union website so that any logged in user could easily find out who their children or parents were from any page on the site!

1,000+

More than 1,000 returning students signed up to be part of our buddy scheme.



## STRESS LESS

Stress Less returned during the exam seasons of Spring and Summer, de-stressing students with a number of free fun activities and signposting them to relevant College services. Spread over two five-week periods, the campaign's aim is to encourage a healthy attitude towards exams amongst students. Some of the most popular activities included laughter yoga and massages in our 'Zen lounge' accompanied by relaxing chill-out music as well as a bouncy castle on the Queen's Lawn. The campaign also provided free arts & crafts, de-stressing workshops and meditation in conjunction with the College Chaplaincy.

# WELCOME WEEK



## A CHANCE TO MEET NEW PEOPLE

Over 7,000 students attended one of our Welcome Week 2013 events, starting with the Undergraduate Mingle events on the first weekend.

For the first time we also ran the Alt. Mingle, a chilled out non-alcoholic alternative to the traditional Mingle. The event was attended by over 500 students over the weekend and was so well received by students that we will be running the same again next year.



## ONLINE WELCOME!

Our new Welcome section of the Union website was the one-stop shop for starting students, containing helpful and fun information about life at Imperial and being a new student. Our 'Top-tips' news articles were viewed over 15,000 times, dispensing essential advice such as what to bring with you to halls and, more importantly, what not to bring!

The Welcome site also included online versions of our newly designed Union Handbooks. The handbooks again contained lots of useful information for new students including different versions for Undergraduates and Postgraduates. New for this year, alongside our A-Z of Activities, was our 'Very Helpful Handbook' which contained essential information for every Imperial student. The handbooks were viewed over 7,700 times!

# 94% 2013

94% of starting students were satisfied or better with their welcome to the College.

# 7,000+

Over 7,000 students attended one of our Welcome Week events.



# 15,000+

We had over 15,000 views of one of our five 'Top-tips' news articles, dispensing essential advice and information about starting at Imperial.



# Creating a

## SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

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

### H-BAR

Our joint venture with College Campus Services to deliver a Postgraduate and staff bar and cafe launched in November, opened by James Stirling the Provost of Imperial College London. h-bar is the first time that Postgraduates have had a place of their own to socialise and relax. Since then thousands of Postgraduate students and staff have used the space with the Graduate Students' Union Pub Quiz and Real Ale Festival proving particularly popular!



The model of Imperial College Union delivering licensed trade, social events and constant student input, whilst College Campus Services deliver catering, is one that we think works well and plays to our strengths. It is an approach we hope to re-create in future venues.



### MAXIMISING OUR BUILDING

Previously named Beit Conference Centre, Beit Venues focuses on helping local organisations use the spaces and great facilities in our building when our members aren't. Beit Venues staff also help the Union and Clubs, Societies & Projects deliver larger events such as The Union Awards and Student Academic Choice Awards.

This year has been a successful one for Beit Venues as it surpassed budget by a considerable margin. This has enabled us to carry out a number of refurbishment works around the building that benefit all users of the space, especially our student groups. Improvements include a new floor for the Union Gym, repairing the Activity Spaces floors and also a redecoration of the East staircase, all in the Union Building.



Read more about the Union's financial position in our Annual Report 2012/13:



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

# A SOUND FINANCIAL FOOTING



The Union has enjoyed its third year of strong financial performance. Through a combination of revenue growth and a focus on efficiency and improved financial controls, the Union is in strong position to deliver its strategic aims.

The Board of Trustees passed a new Reserves Policy that sets out our plan

to ensure we have the appropriate amount of funding available for future capital expenditure and protecting any unforeseen circumstances.

Some of the initiatives that will be enabled by this improved position are detailed on this page.

# ENABLES NEW INVESTMENT

Six new minibuses have been ordered to replace some of our older buses. This is part of a multi-year plan to ensure our fleet of minibuses is reliable, fuel-efficient and available for the wide range of student activities they are used for.



# MORE SHOP FOR YOUR POUND

Shop Extra, our new outlet on the Sherfield walkway, opening in August, is an exciting new space offering daily drinks, snacks and cards and gifts.

Shop Extra has been designed to be complimentary to the existing Union Shop, situated just opposite it. It's bold design will really set it apart from other outlets along the walkway and we can't wait for you to see it!



# OUR NEW MEDIA CENTRE

The College and the Union are making a massive investment in the west basement with the opening of our new Media Suite and club storage space in September.

A brand new radio studio, darkroom, performance space, studio, edit suite and newspaper office will allow our media clubs the opportunity to create better content than ever before. We are investing £100,000 directly in software, computers and recording equipment to ensure that it will be one of the best student media centres in the UK.

**£100,000**

We are investing £100,000 in creating one of the best student media centres in the UK.

# OUR PROMISES TO YOU

With so many services, both commercial and non-commercial, that we offer to our members it is essential that what we offer provides the best customer service and is what our members want. Launching this Summer, we have been working on a set of promises for each of our venues and outlets.

'Our promises to you' share four organisation wide commitments to our members and customers. Each service has some specific promises too. Most importantly each of these promises will be measured regularly and tested with our membership through feedback, the

Union Survey and focus groups.

Imperial College Union will always:

- ensure you are treated with respect and provided with the best possible service.
- ensure the safety of our customers at all times.
- defend equal opportunities and promote a welcoming and diverse student community for all.
- seek feedback from our customers and respond promptly.

**Our promises to you**

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- ensure you are treated with respect and provided with the best possible service.
- ensure the safety of our customers at all times.
- defend equal opportunities and promote a welcoming and diverse student community for all.
- seek feedback from our customers and respond promptly.

**shop news+**

- We will serve all customers with respect and courtesy as quickly as possible.
- Our product range will be the best on campus always offering great value monthly offers and new products based on your feedback.
- Our products and services will be accessible to all. Online webchat will always be able to order via telephone, email and our website.

**Beit Venues**

- We will provide a dedicated team that will respond to all queries and meet personally on your events, ensuring a smooth delivery.
- All enquiries will be acknowledged as soon as possible. If you send us an email we will respond within one working day.
- We will provide competitive rates for our fees compared to the local area.
- We will ensure we accommodate any dietary requirements.
- A function sheet will be given to you before your event, giving you clear, progressive information about all fittings, equipment, staffing and catering needs. There will be no hidden costs.

imperial.collegeunion.org

## THE UNION ONLINE

The online home of the Union, imperialcollegeunion.org, continued to form an integral part of the services we offer with new functionality in Club, Society & Project pages and easier to find information on who your Academic Reps were.

eActivities cemented itself as an essential tool for all Clubs, Societies & Projects, as well as being the new home for recording volunteer hours for Imperial Plus.

The two systems came together to deliver Community Connections' volunteering opportunities and organisation listings.

Visitors to the Union website were up 144% compared to last year with over 8.8 million page views. Whilst eActivities processed £4.4m in claims, purchase orders, invoices and more; up from £3.8m last year.

# 144%

The Union website had more than 8.8 million page views during the year, 144% more than last year.

## WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT US...

Our annual member satisfaction survey received over 1,000 respondents and closed in April, offering us a vital insight on our members' opinions on our services and the Union as a whole.

Our members told us that, of those responding positively or negatively, 92% agreed or strongly agreed that Imperial College Union had a positive impact on their time at Imperial. Although there is more work to do, this is a fantastic response from our membership. Equally, 88% believing that we

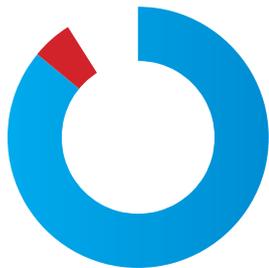
had a fundamental role in creating a positive student community and 79% believing that being involved with the Union enhanced their employability, shows real improvement as a result of our Imperial Plus schemes, campaigning and our Academic Representation Network, to mention a few.

Great progress has been made on our strategic goal for our members to agree that we are the voice for all students at Imperial with an 11% point increase to 71% year-on-year showing real progress has been made.



### Union Survey 2014

## 82% → 92%



92% of students think that Imperial College Union has a positive impact on their time at Imperial.

## 60% → 71%



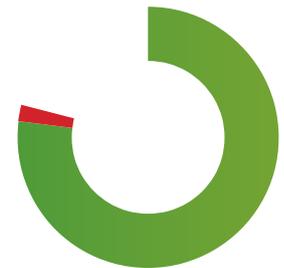
71% of students think that Imperial College Union is the voice for students at Imperial.

## 88%



88% of students think that Imperial College Union plays a fundamental role in creating a positive student community at Imperial

## 77% → 79%



79% of students think that Imperial College Union enhances their employability.

**Imperial College Union**

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