

Imperial College Union

GOVERNANCE REVIEW: PHASE I PROPOSALS

Proposed by the Governance Review Committee

Introduction

This paper summarises the first phase of amendments to the Union's constitution and regulations that are proposed by the ICU Governance Review Working Group. These proposals, which have been refined in light of the recent consultation, are believed to be amongst the least controversial (but not necessarily the least radical) ideas to come out of this governance review.

In the interests of transparency, the whole Union constitution and all seven regulations are appended to this paper with the proposed amendments clearly underlined.

Summary of the Phase I proposals

1. Amendments to establish a Union Court by:

- a. Separating ICU's sovereignty between the Council and the Court.
- b. Granting the Court powers to resolve the constitutionality of a referendum petition (instead of Council). There would no longer be an automatic appeal mechanism to the College.
- c. Replacing the Trading, Services and Retail Committee section in the Union constitution with a section on the Court.
- d. Granting the Court powers to interpret the Staff Student Protocol and the Union Constitution when Court meetings are in session (the President would continue to be able to interpret the constitution in the Court's absence).
- e. Replacing the Union's disciplinary appeal committee with the Court.
- f. Inserting a new regulation (Regulation 7) that would explain in detail what the Court's functions and powers would be.

2. Amendments to the Union's Committees by:

- a. Renaming the "Student Activities Committee" as the "Clubs and Societies Board" (CSB).
- b. Creating a Representation & Welfare Board (RWB).
- c. Renaming the "Accommodation Committee" as "Halls Committee".
- d. Incorporating two CSB members and two RWB members on the Executive Committee, to be appointed by the ICU Council on the recommendation of CSB and RWB committees respectively.
- e. Abolishing the Trading & Retail and Services committees and transferring trading responsibilities to the ICU Executive, minibus responsibilities to the CSB and Advice Centre responsibilities to the RWB.
- f. Reinstating the "Health & Safety" committee as a President's Committee (to be chaired by the DPCS). All of the Union's Constituent Unions and CSCs would be represented at this committee.

3. Amendments to improve the Accountability of Officers by:

- a. Expanding the ambit of disciplinary regulation to cover appointed members and the Court.
- b. Defining responsible authorities at the highest level of the Union. The Court Chair would be responsible for the Court members; the Court

Chair would be responsible for the Council Chair and the Council Chair would be responsible for the President and Court Chair.

- c. Introducing new avenues for censure or no confidence motions. The President, Council Chair and Court Chair would have the power to instigate such motions without requiring 20 signatures. The President would have freedom to table a motion against any officer for any reason. The Council Chair would only be able to do so if the officer failed to report to Council. The Court Chair would only be able to do so if the Court found an officer to be in contempt of the rules and regulations of the Union.
- d. Granting the Court powers to propose motions to any committee.
- e. Banning Officers who are dismissed from standing for the same position again.

4. Amendments to simplify Council Meeting procedures by:

- a. Reducing the number of procedural motions that can be voted on and instead award powers to the Council Chair to rule on such motions.

5. Amendments to reform election procedures by:

- a. Allowing campaigning on the record.
- b. Reinforcing the notion that candidates are responsible for actions taken on their behalf.
- c. Inserting a new punishment to allow candidates who are held to be in contempt of election rules to be disqualified from standing for all elected office.

6. Miscellaneous amendments to:

- a. Replace references to "Permanent Secretary" with "Union General Manager".
- b. Replace references to "Overseas Students Committee" with "Overseas Societies Committee".
- c. Add references to democracy, equality and diversity as principles within which the Union pursues its aims and objectives.
- d. Change life member status to allow them to sit on committees.
- e. Clarify that if students opt out of Union membership, they may not take part in the democratic mechanisms of the Union.
- f. Reintroduce but also deregulate the titles of the Faculty Unions.
- g. Rename the "Education Representatives" as "Academic Affairs Officers (Taught Student)" and "Research Representatives" as "Academic Affairs Officers (Research Students)". This is purely to standardise the semantics of officer titles and has no impact on these officers' roles.
- h. Clarify in the GSA section of regulation three that the GSA represents students who are presently studying PG courses, rather than students who have simply graduated with a degree.
- i. Incorporate a recently lapsed policy into the constitution that grants sabbatical officers ex-officio non voting membership of every committee (including clubs) in the Union.
- j. Clarify the remit of the Union's two disciplinary policies (between officers and general members).
- k. Deregulate large parts of the ICU constitution allowing it to change parts of its regulations without requiring permission of the College's governing body.
- l. Update the lapsed policy clause to include the CSB and RWB.