

Imperial College Union
President's Report
A Report by Scott Heath – ICU President

As this is my last Trustee Board meeting I would like to thank all members for their support throughout my year.

General Updates

Impact Report

The Union has completed an Impact Report which looks at the successes of the 2011-12 year. We have distributed multiple printed copies and it is also available online. This was feasible due to the shelving of the printed Annual Report.

Union Awards Ceremony

The Union Awards Ceremony was held on Tuesday 12 May in the Union Dining Hall. A list of all awardees is in Appendix Two.

Subvention

After a series of meeting with various members of the College I am pleased to report that, for the first time since 2008, the Union shall receive a subvention funding increase for 2012-13. These funds have been pledged by the College to increase the services the Union can deliver, particularly in relation to Volunteering, the development of Student-led Teaching Awards and campus engagement.

The College commitment is for an additional £105,000, taking the total support to £1.28M. It should be noted that the support is for additional services only and will mean that the Union will face the typical challenges linked to rising resource costs, wages and inflation.

Student Social Enterprise

A partnership between the Union, Student Hubs, Imperial Innovations and the Business School has been formed to create the supporting team for a bid for HEFCE-sponsored money. This money shall provide a £25,000 seed fund for social entrepreneurial ideas from the Imperial College Community next year. This money will be matched with time, facilities and expertise from all partners and is a significant move to improving the opportunities available for enterprising students in the Union.

Hall Seniors

After concerns around whether Halls Seniors would be guaranteed bed spaces in halls next year an effective lobby block consisting of the Union, the Wardens and interested parties has ensured that all students who were offered a hall senior place will have somewhere to stay. This was guaranteed by the Rector, personally, in a meeting with the Head Warden and I just over a week ago.

General Meeting and Constitutional Matters

The Union held a General Meeting with the aim of discussing areas of strategic changes linked to inefficiencies within the Union. Appendix Three provides the document we circulated. An 'intervention' by the Court and an inquorate Council prevented any progress being made on amending items before the required drafting of the Articles of Association next year.

The process did raise multiple questions that the Trustee Board should consider providing informal guidance. The first is to what makes a Court action 'political'? This is particularly important after a situation where a seemingly 'apolitical' topic became very political.

The second is to the level of involvement of all bodies in creating change. It was clear the Councillors did not feel comfortable with (or capable of) understanding the ramifications of all Constitutional changes. What can be done to ensure the Council's principles are upheld whilst providing the distance they request of checking line-by-line? (this is vital when considering charity registration).

Summer Elections

The Summer Elections went well with no issues! The results were announced during the Union Council's scheduled meeting.

Student Bursaries

The Management Board discussed the proposals the Union gave in the way of creating a dynamic bursary system that gave students as much support as possible. They welcomed our suggestions and are now preparing to battle with OFFA to defend them. This is a great example of where I am proud of the College and their approach to the Union's input. The survey we performed and the report I wrote and presented have been greatly welcomed and I can easily say that we are one of few Unions in the country that have directly influenced the OFFA Agreement so clearly.

Appendix One: Areas of Risk and/or Strategic Forethought

I thought, as this is my last report, it would be beneficial to provide an overview of what I feel are the most substantial risks and areas of required forethought for the Union, both in the next year and beyond, in hope that it can provide guidance.

NSS

This year will be the first where the Union will be rated using the NSS. Though we typically outperform the College on Institution-wide surveys, such as the Times Higher Education Student Satisfaction Survey, we must be aware of the risks this rating poses.

If we are ranked poorly, compared to counterparts within the Russell Group, we will inevitably face a 'value-for money' debate, with both the College and our membership. Equally, excessively good performance can easily be used to restrict funds required for expansion, as we are 'clearly doing a good job' with what we have got.

Looking further ahead, there is nothing to prevent this NSS question influencing rankings; especially likely with the recent shift towards student-centric data. In that scenario we will face significant pressures not to 'pull down' the College and depending on results might have to fight off divisions, like Sport imperial, from trying to run services that we currently provide.

Either way, we are soon to enter a place where we can only be critical of the College's performance when being self-critical and the Union must embrace this rapidly to facilitate change.

£9k fee regime

Though the increase in fee will not affect the majority of our members, when considering the non-EU, PGT and PGR students, it will still influence a significant proportion of our UG population. It is expected that students will want 'more bang for their buck' throughout the whole student experience. As such the Union must show willingness to expend and continue to be a nimble and dynamic organisation. Furthermore we must monitor and track relevant data, such as

participation rates. One school of thought is that we will see more career driven students, who may require convincing that engagement in high commitment activities is valuable. This means the Union must be clear it delivering the message of the scale of personal development that Clubs, Societies and Projects provides. It also means we must continue to work on the provision of an accreditation scheme as well as enhanced volunteering and student enterprise.

The £9k fees have also spurred to the College to implement the co-curricular programme, called Horizons. Starting with first year students, this will see the time-slot of 4:30-6:30 be taken up on Mondays in 2012-13 for specialised cross-Departmental activities. In 2013-14 it is anticipated that 1st years will take a slot at that time on Tuesdays, with 2nd years having the Monday one. No matter what days these activities take place, by 2015 Union activities on three days of the week will be unable to begin activities before 6:30pm. This will affect CSPs as well as Faculty Union and Central Union activities, including Council, CSB and the Trustee Board.

Lunchtimes

As well as the co-curricular pressures, the loss of the Universal lunchtime of 12pm-2pm is also going to constrict diaries further. Meetings which were typically held at lunch, such as FUs and Union Exec, will have to move to evenings.

This means a more firm Union timetable must be created to ensure that Council does not clash with Management Group activities.

It also means that Sabbaticals may become more constrained in their capacity to meet students or do their work. Instead of holding a '12-2pm drop-in session', for instance, this will now have to '11am-3pm' to endure universal access. Campaigns will also be affected by this, especially through lack of available volunteers, though the scale is difficult to quantify.

Institutional Arrogance

I am mildly concerned by what I call 'institutional arrogance,' that is the frequently seen attitude that being a student at Imperial College makes you "better" than Union staff.

This is corrosive, especially in Executive Officers who will plainly ignore advice of people we hire for their expertise.

Though as a cultural trait it is not easy to change, I do believe we cannot ignore this commonality.

Campus Development

With the plan to develop a second campus in Shepherds Bush, the Union must assess what interactions it would like with that campus. I strongly envisage the Union having an office on-site as well as coordinating Club, Society and Project activities on the campus.

If there is an office, who will staff it? What other facilities do we expect the Union to provide?

As more plans for Imperial West develop, the answers to these questions will become more relevant as we will need to advice upon our requirements.

Club Funding

This year the Union Executive applied a 10% cash reduction on the Clubs, Societies and Projects funding in order to deliver enhanced CSP support at a time of frozen subvention (note: despite the increase in subvention we have received, this is service specific and will act like a subvention freeze in respect to existing services).

The 10% reduction followed a 10% increase (2011), which was after a reduction (2010) and a freeze (2009).

Without a commitment from the College next year to increase 'all service' support, it will be difficult to provide extra support to CSPs. As such, a strategic view on how to fund CSPs is required.

This is especially true if we successfully receive additional support from the college for service develop next year i.e. a gross increase in subvention. It will be hard to explain to CSP chairs how a two year increase in subvention means less money available for them despite this being the truth unless there is a simple underlying strategy.

Appendix Two: Award Recipients

Colours

Kelly	Ameneshoa
Giada	Azzopardi
Noor-ul-Ain Sofia	Baber
Charles	Betts
Afonso	Campos
Sonya	Chan
Carol Ann	Cheah
Mark	Collins
Donal	Connolly
Pongsathorn	Dechatiwongse
Isabel	Fenton
Rosalyn	Flower
Marlen	Fuending
Sandeep	Ghelani
George	Goldberg
Zoe	Groom
Lisa	Hale
Oliver	Hall
Benedict	Harcourt
Geraint Lloyd	Herbert
Monique Hoi Yin	Ho
Douglas	Hunt
Alexander	Karapetian
Philip	Kent
Chintan	Khamar
James Alexander	Kimber
Tsz Shing	Kwan
Chiu Kuan	Lee
Susana	Lopes
Miss Helen E	Mackey
Gemma	Milman
Alexander	Norman
Kameswarie	Nunna
Patrick	Pang
Mitul	Patel
Shrawan	Patel

Chi Wai Charles	Poon
Kajann	Prathapan
Slobodan	Radosavljevic
Deepka	Rana
Michaela	Ruhmann
Victor Wyke	See
Phillipa	Skett
Alan	Soltani
Toby	Spittle
Thomas	Spurling
Theodoros	Stylianides
Charles (Meredith)	Thomas
Aleksandra	Turp
Olivier	Van Goethem
Thomas	Wilshere
Samuel	Withey
Alexander	Wray
William	Wu
Chia Chun (Shelley)	Yao

Outstanding Services Award

Henry	Abbot
Dominic	Andradi - Brown
Paul	Beaumont
Florence	Chamberlain
Rebecca A.	Clark
Pete	Davis
Wenjun	Er
Adam	Funnell
Hao Yi	Gan
Jaimie	Henry
Daniel Johnathan	Hughes
Mai	Kadi
Luke	Kanczes
Natalie	Kempston

Jonathan	Kim
Susuana Naadu	Laryea
Lucy	McGregor
Gareth	Naylor
Stefan	Piatek
Florian	Rathgeber
Philip	Sandwell
Alexander	Savell
Francisca	Sconce
Chandana	Shankar
Richard	Simons
David	Smith
Steven	Tran
Henry	Whittaker

Fellowship

Charlotte	Ivison
Heather	Jones
Kadhim	Shubber

Fellowship with Distinction

Hamish	Common
--------	--------

NB:

President's Awards were bestowed upon the following:

Clubs, Societies and Projects – IC Rugby

Representation – UG Computing

PG Electrical Engineering

Jonathon Kim

Suzie Rayner

Rebecca Coxhead

Appendix Three:General Meeting Discussion

File

Separate document to be circulated for information purposes

Introduction

Imperial College Union is facing significant challenges.

Over the next year we will be required to register as a Charity; we will welcome the first wave of UK Undergraduates charged £9,000 a year and we will see the College opening halls in an ever developing campus in Shepherds Bush.

Within four years the universal lunch break will be phased out, restricting what we can do during the day. There will be greater government focus on Postgraduate students and we will have candidates standing for election with a significantly higher level of student loan debt.

However each of these challenges can provide the Union with interesting and new opportunities; which, in turn, can improve the Imperial College Union Experience for everyone.

It is in this spirit that we have compiled our recommendations for discussion at the General Meeting, which we hope you can attend.

If you can't attend, but wish to voice your thoughts, feel free to email: president@imperial.ac.uk

The ICU Sabbatical Team 2011-12.

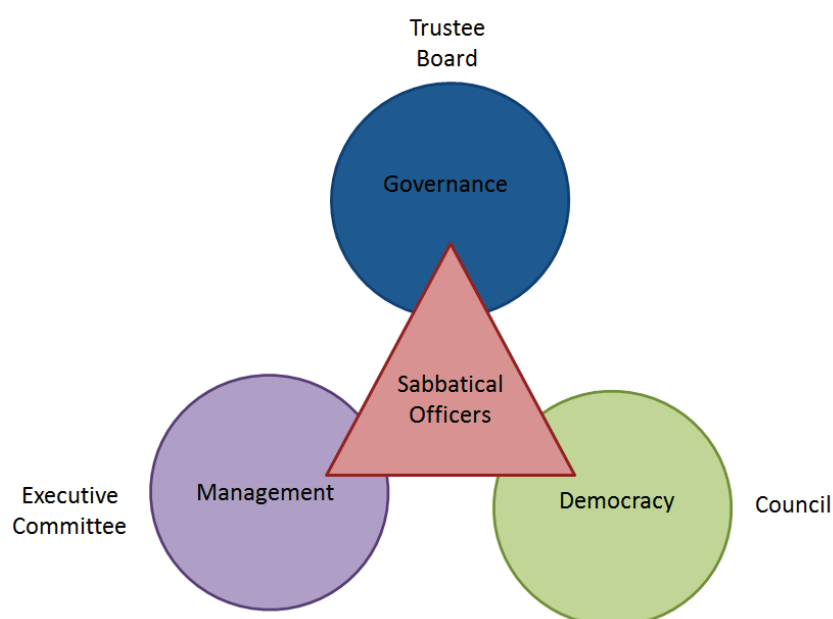
Preamble

There are three major areas to running Imperial College Union:

1. **Democracy:** The policies which are created to direct what we do;
2. **Governance:** The rules which tell us what we can and can't do;
3. **Management:** The people who are employed to put the policies we create into action and to make sure the Union can operate day-to-day.

The overlap between these three areas is your Sabbatical officers: the most democratically elected Officers and the people with the biggest mandate to represent you.

Each of these areas has an associated committee (Diagram below). Proposition A assess these committees and their effectiveness in delivering the oversight required.



Proposition A: The Creation of a fit-for-purpose Union Committee Structure.

Trustee Board

The Trustee Board currently has 11 members however only one is a Sabbatical Officer – the President. We believe, in order to provide the oversight necessary, that all Sabbatical Officers should be members of the Trustee Board.

A1: To discuss making all Sabbatical Officers members of the Trustee Board

Of the eleven members, four are Student Trustees elected by a cross-campus ballot with the Sabbatical Officers and four are External (Lay) Trustees appointed by the Council. The election for the Student Trustees provides great candidates, however sometimes there can be gaps. An example of this is that, in the period of 2007-2013, there will have been only one female student trustee out of twenty-four.

The addition of the Sabbaticals (A1) will reduce such effects however we may notice a lack of representation of a particular element of the Imperial Community (Faculty, Fee status, Postgraduates).

As such, we propose introducing a system where two of the Student Trustees are elected and two are appointed.

A2: To discuss introducing a system of electing two and appointing two student trustees

Representation and Welfare Board

The Representation and Welfare Board was created three years ago to provide a forum to discuss matters relating to student welfare, such as the Environmental Policy and education matters, like personal tutors.

As these two areas are rather unconnected, we feel a more effective system would be to separate these two parts of the committee. We believe they should operate as two smaller committees that deal with issues more directly and assist their officers in achieving their aims.

A3: To discuss a split of the Representation and Welfare Board

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee pre-dates the Trustee Board and has remained unchanged after the Board's introduction. As such, some of the duties it must perform are duplicated by the Trustee Board, making the Executive Committee rather redundant at times.

When registering as a charity these duplicated tasks will automatically move to the Trustee Board, in order to ensure clear governance.

Furthermore the committee regularly meets during the day; something necessary to interact with Union Managers. With the removal of universal lunch times this will reduce the capacity for Union Officers, who are not Sabbatical, to attend.

In light of these two issues we believe it is better to disband the Executive Committee.

A4: To discuss the disbanding of the Executive Committee

Management Board

Action A4 would leave a void where Operational Policy, which is too detailed for the Trustee Board, would need to be authorised and enacted. These areas span issues such as Room and Minibus Usage, Health and Safety, Staff recruitment, Resource Allocation, the Operational Plan and more. The Union will require a group of Officers to do this, on behalf of Trustee Board.

We believe the best place people would be the Sabbatical Team, who understand how the Union operates. Such a committee could be held during the day, to enable all senior managers to attend. As such, we recommend the creation of a Management Board.

A5: To discuss creating the Management Board.

Proposition B: The Shaping of Sabbatical Remits to ensure a Team Prepared for the Future

The Union needs to react to the ever changing demands from students. During the Strategic Review, held last year, students spoke of wanting a greater focus on alternative careers, skills development, outreach and volunteering. Students also desire a more visible Union; communicating the changes it makes and campaigning actively on topics they are concerned about.

In order to deliver on these demands we realised we had to take an holistic approach to the Sabbatical roles. To do this we had to do several things:

1. Assess the current areas of focus of Sabbatical; ensuring a good spread of work,
2. Provide Sabbaticals enough flexibility to pick up new areas of focus,
3. Make staff responsible for operational tasks that they are better suited for,
4. Make sure all Sabbatical roles are fulfilling, fun and facilitate change.

Diagram B is the result of this approach:

Sabbatical 1	Sabbatical 2	Sabbatical 3	Sabbatical 4	Sabbatical 5	Sabbatical 6
Democracy & Governance	Clubs & Societies	Volunteering	Student Wellbeing	Student Rights	Felix
Politics & Lobbying	Clubs & Societies Officers	Fundraising	Welfare Officers	Quality Assurance	
Staffing		Student Citizenship	Equal Opportunities	Education Officers	
		Environmental sustainability			
			Student Support (IAG)		
					Campaigning

Though some of these areas, such as Democracy & Governance, might sound rather vague; they are clusters of activities. For the given example it is a grouping of Elections, Constitutional Interpretation and Development, Policy Development, Committee Chairing and much more. In the General Meeting we intend to discuss this all in much more detail.

B1: To discuss the potential change in focus of some Sabbatical roles

We believe the Sabbaticals should be named in way that reflects their duties. As such, we would recommend the following titles:

1. President
2. Deputy President (Activities)
3. Deputy President (Student Development)
4. Deputy President (Welfare)
5. Deputy President (Education)
6. Felix Editor

B2: To discuss these potential titles for the Sabbatical roles

We also believe the time is right to introduce a Postgraduate Sabbatical Officer.

B3: To discuss the introduction of a Postgraduate Sabbatical

Proposition C: Ensuring a Clear Representation Structure

The Union has a relatively complicated representation structure, mostly due to the former Colleges which made Imperial College.

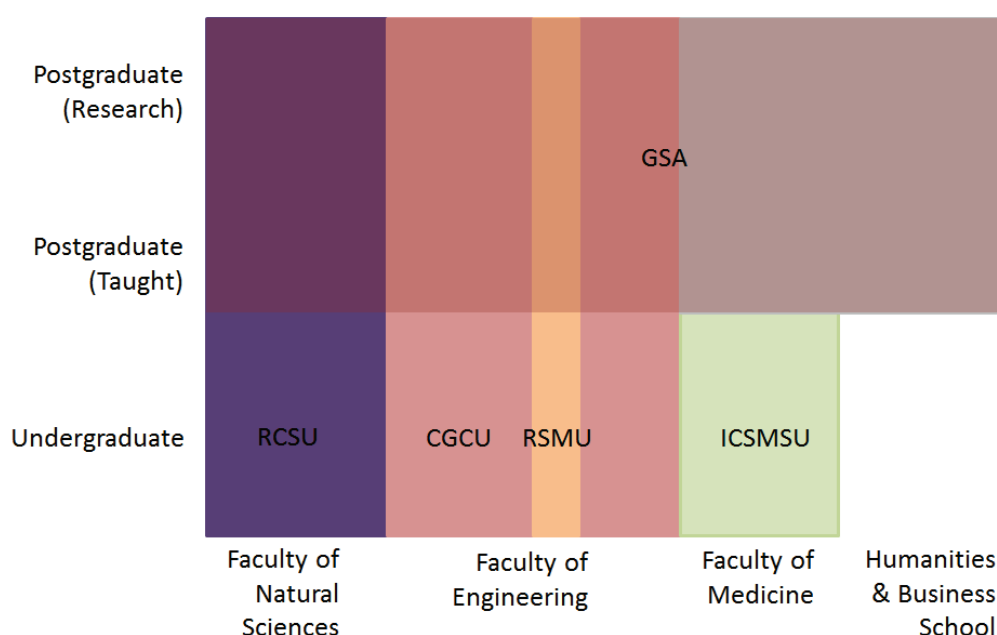
Undergraduates are represented through their Faculty Unions (RCSU, CGCU and ICSMSU), who's President, Welfare Officer and Education Officer sit on the Union Council.

The RSM, as a Constituent Union, represents Clubs and Societies associated with the RSM through their President, who can also raise student concerns to the Union. The student Welfare and Education is represented by the CGCU.

Postgraduates are represented through the GSA.

However, due to a technicality, the Faculty Unions represent postgraduates too.

This makes for a representation structure like so:

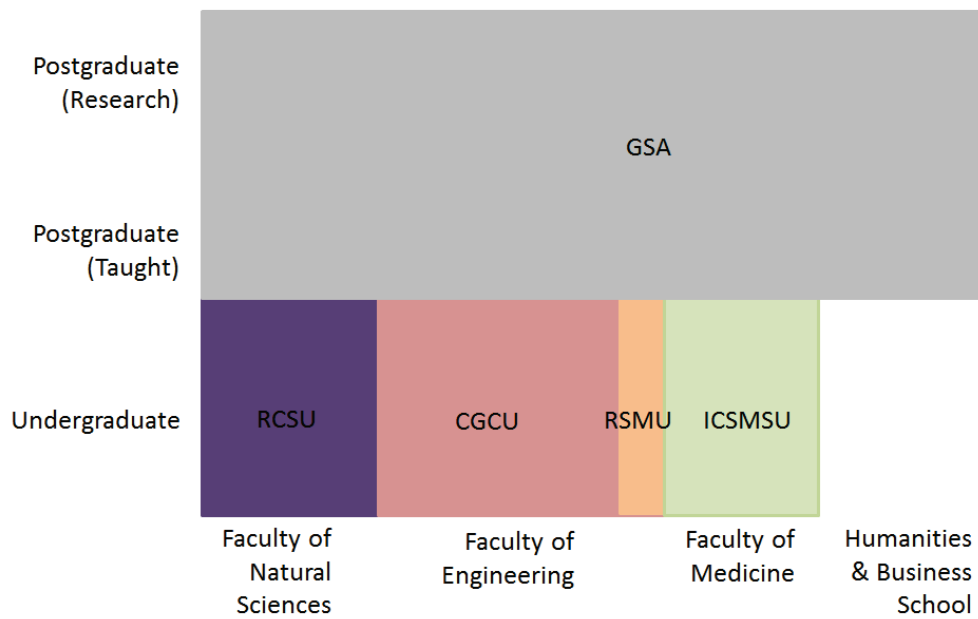


This arrangement has several issues:

1. Students are represented by multiple Unions, which makes it hard to explain who represents them;
2. Faculty Unions only represent the Academic and Welfare concerns of the Undergraduate Students,
3. Postgraduate Students receive emails from Faculty Unions they are associated with by Department, though most PG subjects are inter-disciplinary and frequently inter-faculty;
4. Postgraduate students get to elect the Faculty Union Presidents but Undergraduate Students don't get to elect the GSA President.

In the interest of making a structure which is easy to explain, we believe that any students should only be represented by one constituent of the Union.

The effect of this on the structure would be:



We would need to discuss the effects of this, which are:

C1: *Discuss the automatic representative rights of Faculty Unions with respect to Postgraduate Students*

C2: *Discuss the separation of the RSM from the CGCU*

Proposition D: Making Elections Run Smoothly and Efficiently

The Big Elections 2012 highlighted multiple flaws with the Unions Election rules. Despite the Returning Office and Elections Committee following the constitution and polices of the Union by the word a level of mistrust has grown between the Union and the membership. Furthermore, candidates who are 'constitutionally-savvy' frequently try to gain an advantage by exploiting the rules to attempt to punish their opponents. This culture is damaging to the Union and democracy on the whole.

Returning Officer

We believe that the Sabbatical Elections should not be supervised by a Sabbatical Officer.

1. A large majority of candidates are involved with the Union before running. This makes supervision without prejudice remarkably hard.
2. Sabbatical Officers understand how the Union works and what makes a good candidate. They are not constitutionally barred from having an opinion about the candidates but with one of the team supervising the election voicing such opinions is difficult.
3. We need to introduce a system where the rules cannot be used in a way which needlessly slows down elections.

Due to these points we recommend introducing an external returning officer, who is completely unconnected to the Union. We believe their decisions should be final and that, under the advice of the President, they should set the rules.

D1: To discuss the introduction of an external RO for Sabbatical (and associated) elections

Seconders

We believe that requiring seconders for elections is against the principle of democracy. It creates a barrier to standing for a position when our own constitution states that the only precondition should be being a Full Member of the Union. It discourages potential candidates from standing by making more work. It disproportionately penalises postgraduate student, making it harder for them to stand.

As such, we recommend that all candidates, in all elections should not require seconders.

D2: To discuss the removal of the requirement for seconders in elections.