

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.

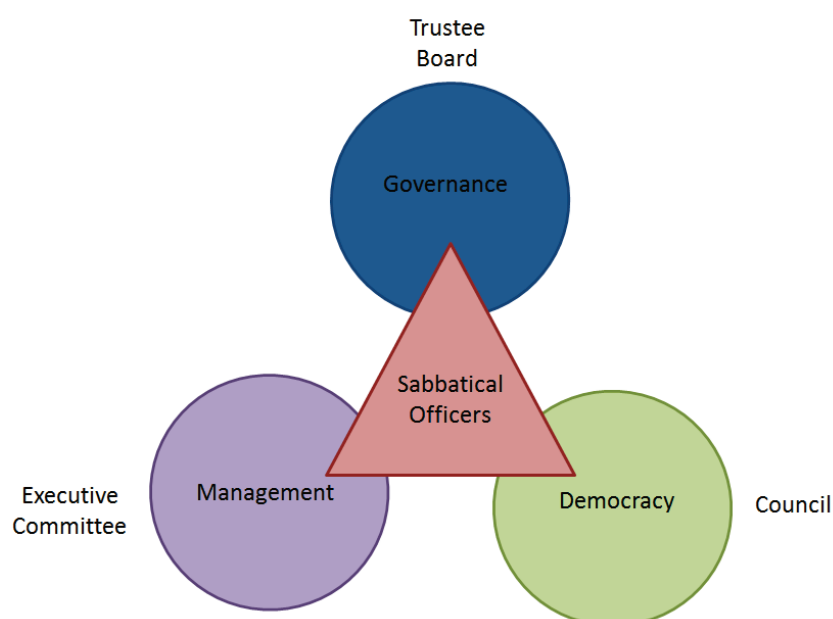
Preamble

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.

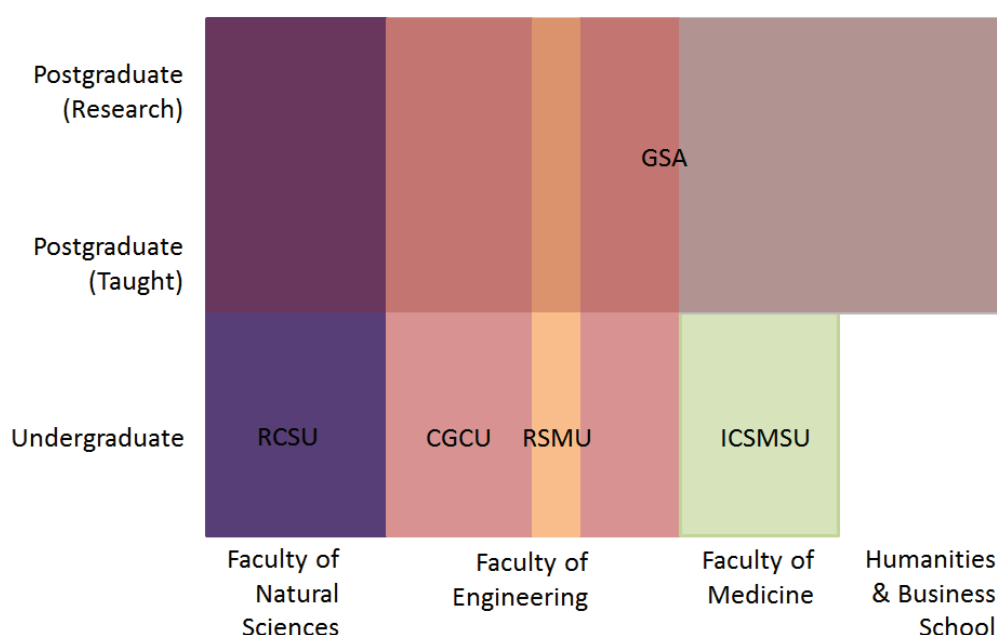
Undergraduates are represented through their Faculty Unions (RCSU, CGCU and ICSMSU), who's President, Welfare Officer and Education Officer sit on the Union Council.

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:

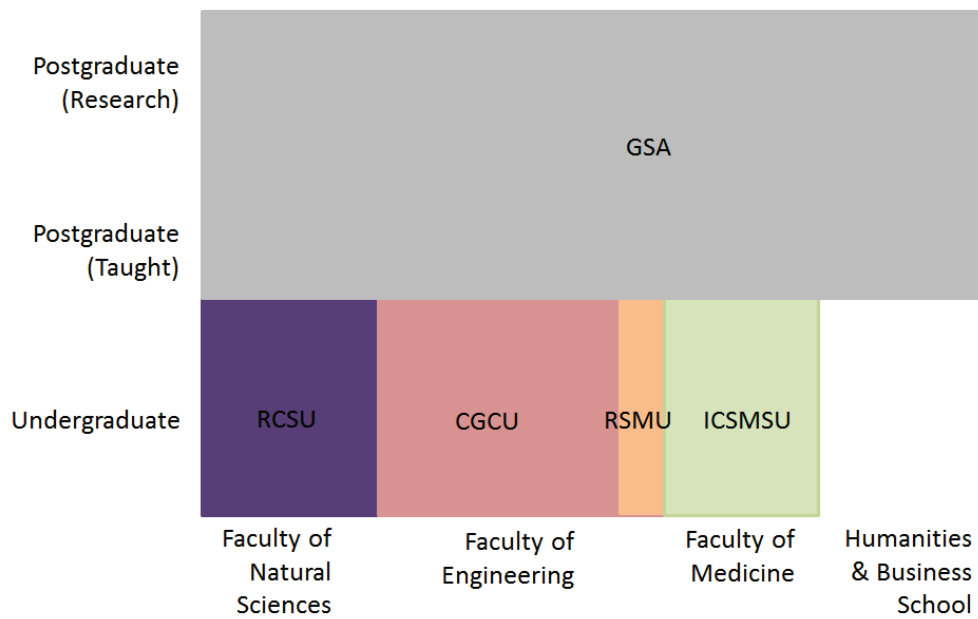


This arrangement has several issues:

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.