Imperial College Union Board of Trustees

Managing Director's Report

June 2016

**The story so far**

After a month of meeting people, I still have a smile on my face most of the time. Without doubt, there is incredible drive and talent within the staff and officers of the Union as well as the relatively small number of non-officer members that I’ve been able to meet with so far. They have been open in sharing their experiences and helping me to understand where there is need for improvement as well as the areas that should be preserved.

This is paired with a student focused approach by many college staff and provides a fantastic environment for delivering a world class experience for our students. The consistency with which people are kept at the centre of decision making is incredibly encouraging and I’m delighted to be joining the community.

The timing of my arrival has coincided with an on-going feeling of recognition and celebration and I’ve been lucky enough to witness and join in on events around Investors in People, Investing in Volunteers, Student Academic Choice Awards and the Union awards. Whilst it is important to acknowledge that there is more that can be done, especially to recognise the efforts of our volunteers, there is a strong base to build on and it has been great to play a part in the recognition though I can claim none of the credit!

In summarising my time so far, it would be amiss not to reference the amount of work that has gone into building the proposed budget for 2016-17. The budget represents an investment into the Union and into our members and is the culmination of a huge amount of work and scrutiny by many. I’d like to thank everyone involved and in particular Malcolm for leading a very thorough and inclusive process.

**No more looking back**

You will notice that this paper does not include an appendix with a chart as per previous MD reports. I propose that this previously much needed appendix has now served its purpose. We have developed a Strategic Risk Register to provide oversight of organisational risks and our financial management is robust and progressive. What has been happening has now happened and I’d welcome your time, thoughts and input on what is to come which is where the majority of this paper will focus. That said, financial performance continues to be strong and supported by Social Enterprise, especially Catering, the Union remains on target to exceed the budgeted surplus of £50k at year end.

**The summer priorities – Officer Trustee induction and new Strategy development**

The handover and induction for Officer Trustees is one of the most crucial times of the year for the Union. I am working with key staff and including feedback from the conversation at governance sub-committee to formulate a plan that includes a wrap up exercise for the outgoing OT’s, a clear action list for items to be handed forward and an effective induction process for the incoming OT’s.

The other key focus for the summer will be developing the new Strategy and consulting effectively with our wide range of stakeholders.

Work so far is taking the direction of simple, clear language that is as jargon-free as possible to make the plan meaningful and easy to understand to as many of our members as possible. The framework will look to identify specific priorities with relevant objectives as well as more cultural objectives that capture areas not individually referenced.

An outline of the plan for development and consultation is included below for your reference.

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| Now – Mid June | Lucinda, Nas, Alex and Jarlath collate feedback from Strategy strands and produce a draft strategy for consultation. |
| Mid June –Mid July *(and throughout the process)* | Union staff and Trustee consultation |
| July-Sept | College staff consultation focused on key existing and strategically important relationships eg Alumni |
| July-Oct | Online hub for consultation designed to receive feedback on the strategy as a whole as well as narrower questions changing throughout - aimed at all students |
| July | Student consultation focused on PGT |
| August | Student consultation focused on PGR |
| Early sept | Compile into near final draft |
| Mid Sept – Mid Oct | Student consultation focused on UG and newly registered students (term starts 1st Oct!) |
| Mid Oct – early Nov | Final amendments |
| Mid –Late Nov | Trustee Board approval (text only) – needs an extraordinary Board meeting to discuss and approve |
| Late Nov | Final, Final amendments and produced as public document |
| Early Dec | Soft Launch event (key volunteers / college staff  / alumni etc) |
| 1st January 2017 - 2020 | Do it! |

**Other projects on the horizon**

Sport Strategy – the collaboration continues with Sport Imperial and work so far has been well received in terms of identifying the strategies for development going forward. There is some work to be done and potentially difficult decisions to be made in terms of what to de-prioritise to make these development points possible.

HoSVC recruitment – Following the interim arrangements around the MD recruitment process, there is now a full recruitment process in place for a permanent Head of Student Voice and Communications. Interviews will be held over two rounds in mid-late July. This is an important and exciting position and I look forward to receiving a strong pool of varied applicants.

Mini-buses – I am in the process of commissioning a piece of work to establish whether or not there is the ability to generate additional income from our mini-bus fleet when they are not being utilised. Initially this will look at the summer months but depending on the findings, has the potential to spread to investigating other periods of down time.

Internal communications – many of the staff that I have spoken to have referenced internal communications as an area for improvement. This is very common within organisations and much of what is said has as many positive connotations as it does negative so I don’t want to overstate this as an issue. Never-the-less, this is something that I will be looking to drive improvements on through looking at the communication channels for MD, SMG and SMT as well as the structures and purposes of management team meetings.

**Thank you and good luck Alex**

Whilst the welcome across the board has been very warm, I’d like to especially thank Alex McKee for the role he has played over the past two months to ensure that my induction and early weeks in the Union has been very smooth. He has served the Union incredibly well for over a decade and our loss will be UCLU’s gain. A huge thank you to Alex for all the support and I, and all at ICU, wish him the very best for the future.

Jarlath O’Hara

**Managing Director**

**June 2016**