

Imperial College Union Council Report

Nas Andriopoulos, President

Our Strategy 2017-20

Over the last 6 months I have steered the development of the Union's new strategic direction and I am proud to say Our Strategy 2017-20 was revealed at our launch party on 19th January. The event was well attended by Union staff, College staff and students alike. I would like to thank those students, many of which are Council Members, who invested time and energy in sharing their thoughts during the development of the strategy.

I am incredibly excited for the future of the Union and I am confident that if our vision for Imperial College Union is delivered we will establish a world-leading student experience. It was also pleasing to embed some of the long-term elements of my manifesto into the strategy, namely Life Membership reform and investment in other campuses.

Our Strategy can be read here: <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/about-us/our-strategy-2017-20> . This document will underpin the work of Union staff and responsibilities of Officer Trustees for the next three years.

I urge everyone to read the short document and would welcome any ideas people have to achieve individual strategic objectives.

West Basement

The basement project is progressing with the first phase, involving re-plumbing two bedrooms above the studio, now complete with the rooms handed back for student use. College have informed me that the students were offered the choice of moving back to their original rooms or staying in their new rooms. The second phase of the project (the installation of the concrete slab and other acoustic works) is anticipated to complete later this term, probably by the end of February. This is slightly later than College initially anticipated, due to a greater level of complexity in clearing the ceiling space of services to make way for the block. I am of the opinion that it is better to do a thorough and comprehensive job rather than rush and find problems at a later date.

I continue to meet with the project team and student groups on a frequent basis to ensure satisfactory delivery of the project.

Bursaries

Following the last Council Ordinary meeting and coverage by Felix, College have produced a response (Appendix A) to the paper on bursaries. I have separately discussed the topic with senior college staff. Currently, Emily-Jane, Rachel and I are awaiting further information from College finance team on the number of people affected and the number of applications to the hardship fund before we decide our next steps.

Lords

Lord Winston invited me to attend the first day of debate on the Higher Education and Research Bill in the Committee Stage. The main purposes of my visit were: to share the "student perspective" with Lord Winston and others, gain understanding into the process & scope for influencing the Bill, as well as identifying potentially allies for us to approach. This will be useful should we decide to try and change legislation as it sits with the Lords.

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24th January 2017

I was pleased to see that many of the Lords were challenging certain aspects of the Bill that students have concerns with, namely international student visas and representation on the Office for Students board, and the number of amendments submitted suggests an appetite for altering the Bill.

Alumni and Life Membership

I am heading up the efforts within the Union to redevelop our Life Membership. This will involve lowering the price & simplifying the process when it is purchased, as well as increasing our offer to alumni. We aim to make becoming a Life Member of the Union the norm, with a focus on providing value for recent graduates.

Our initial plan will be to bring down the price of Life Membership and make it so the majority of the money spent on membership is passed on to CSPs of the member's choice.

The offer will be finalised over the following months and will be ready for the class of '17.

Library

Last term I was in discussions with College over the possibility of installing air conditioning in the library. This is something that students have (rightly) complained about for years and something the Union has been a fierce advocate for in recent times. We have been working with the library team to convey this as a priority within College and it is pleasing to be able to say that enabling works will be taking place this term.

The works schedule has been designed to minimise any disruption to students, with noisy works happening at the beginning of this term before a suspension of works over exam period in the summer. We have made it clear to College that they need to reach-out to departments and student reps to ensure that they can troubleshoot any problems or potential conflicts with deadlines well in advance of them occurring. We will be assisting them with this shortly and the college are prepared with various methods to minimise any temporary loss of working space.

We are very close to getting air-conditioning in the library.

Finally, a reminder that I am happy to talk to any student about any of the Union's work at any time.

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Appendix A

Note from College to ICU Council re: Bursary Package – January 2017

The College is committed to providing financial support so that all Home students can pursue their studies here.

The bursary package for 2015-16 Home entrants to undergraduate degrees saw a reduction in funding for students from household income bands between £35k and £60k compared to previous years. This was a result of the Government's decision to cease the National Scholarship Programme for undergraduates, which contributed approximately £500k to the College's funding of bursaries.

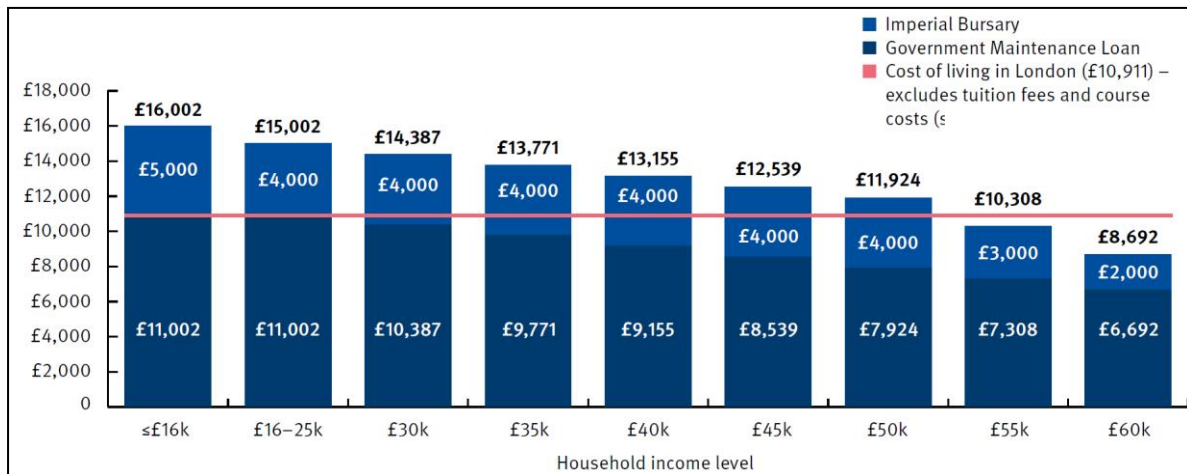
The College's bursary package for 2015-16 entrants remains substantially more generous than other London institutions, with UCL, King's and LSE offering no support for 2015-16 entrants from income bands above £42,620.

Household income 2015-16 entrants	Imperial	UCL	King's	LSE
£0-£25,000	£6,000	£3,000 up to income of £12,000 £2,000 up to income of £25,000	£1,500	£4,000 up to income of £18,000 £3,500 up to income of £25,000
£25,001-£30,000	£5,300	£1,000	£1,000	£2,750
£30,001-£35,000	£4,600	£1,000	£1,000	£1,750
£35,001-£40,000	£2,800	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
£40,001-£45,000	£1,200	£1,000 up to income of £42,620 only £0 for income above £42,620	£1,000 up to income of £42,620 only £0 for income above £42,620	£750 up to income of £42,611 only £0 for income above £42,611
£45,001-£50,000	£900	£0	£0	£0
£50,001-£55,000	£600	£0	£0	£0
£55,001-£60,000	£500	£0	£0	£0

Substantial work was carried out in autumn 2014 in conjunction with the Union to identify the best way to spend the bursary package for 2016-17 entrants onwards, following feedback from the Union that some students with household incomes slightly above the lowest household income brackets were facing the most financial difficulties. As a result, the total package was redistributed across the household income bands to enable as many students as possible to receive total maintenance funding above the estimated cost of living. The College and the Union both endorsed the changes to the bursary package then agreed, as in the best interests of the students overall.

Household income 2016-17 entrants onwards	Imperial
£0-£16,000	£5,000
£16,001-£50,000	£4,000
£50,001-£55,000	£3,000
£55,001-£60,000	£2,000

The College's bursary package remains the most generous of its kind in the UK in comparison to other equivalent schemes. It allows all students from household income bands up to £50k to receive total maintenance funding above the estimated cost of living. This is shown in the graph overleaf (bursary amounts are for students from England studying in London in 2017-18).



Every student has to be entitled to the bursary package promised in the prospectus for the year when they applied, and the College is committed by its Access Agreement to do this. Moving 2015-16 entrants onto the later package would result in students from the lowest household income bands seeing a reduction in their bursary. The College's Student Support Fund (formerly known as the Hardship Fund) is available to help any current students experiencing financial hardship with their cost of living. Further information about the Fund is available [here](#).