



Felix

– Keep the Cat Free –

IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION COUNCIL REPORT 5TH DECEMBER 2017

HANDOVER

Handover was successfully completed between myself and my predecessor in July, over a two week period. I believe that this handover was aided by the two introductory days spent with the other sabbatical officers, as well as CU presidents and management group chairs, which provided a very useful overview of the Union. I would recommend that this is retained for the handover next academic year.

I believe that the handover period could benefit from a more formal outline of the areas that need to be covered. This year I will discuss with Union staff what areas they feel handover could focus on, and draw up a list of competencies my successor should have in various areas. I also believe that a document that covers what is discussed during handover would be useful for my successor, and that this should be passed on within the handover period.

WEST BASEMENT IT ISSUES

This term media societies have faced a number of problems with the West Basement IT facilities. On 12th October, roughly one hour before our print deadline, the West Basement server crashed. We managed to get that week's issue out, but following that none of the computers connected to the server were working. This meant that all media societies had to share a single computer - the one in the Edit Suite, which is off-network. Despite raising the issue the same evening it occurred, we had no input from the Union's Systems team until Monday 6th November, meaning

I had to assemble three issues of *Felix* entirely by myself, on a single computer, in a windowless room. I believe that this had severe negative effects on myself, the *Felix* team, and other media societies.

We have managed to get the computers back up and running with local user accounts, although the full server is not back as it was before the crash. After discussion with other media societies, and Media Chair Andy McLean, we strongly feel that more Union support is required in the West Basement, namely that it should come under the remit of a paid Union staff member, possibly one of the newly-recruited SysAdmins.

I would like to thank Andy McLean for his support during this time, as well as Luke Granger Brown (Imperial alumnus) and Phil Stewart (Union Web Developer) for their assistance.

FELIX TEAM

This year we have expanded the editorial team, which now consists of 34 students, 24 of whom are new recruits. All have been making great progress, and are quickly picking up the key skills needed to run their sections, despite the hiatus due to IT issues. I am hopeful that a number of the team will stay on next year, easing the transition period between editors.

During the last week of term I will be meeting with all the section teams individually, to discuss how the term has gone, and how we can better support them in the future.

CONTENT

Thus far this year, we have published a number of stories that have received a great deal of attention, and highlighted the importance of Felix in delivering relevant news stories to students and staff. Articles that gained a particular amount of traction include:

- Woodward Buildings' cladding fails fire safety tests (9th August 2017)
- College introduces wide-ranging changes to campus services, including removal of SCR cooked breakfasts (26th August 2017)
- Imperial sinks to the bottom of People and Planet's ethical league tables (17th November 2017)
- Report on the Union/College's handling of a sexual assault case this year (17th November 2017)

We have also significantly rearranged the sections in *Felix*. We have split the 'super-sections' from last year into their constituent parts. We have (re)introduced Politics, Travel, Tech, Books, and Hangman. We have removed the Sex and Drugs sections.

REDESIGN

This year the paper has been substantially redesigned, taking aesthetic cues from a number of well-respected newspapers. I believe that the new design has a strong visual identity, one that places an emphasis on clarity and order. Feedback from the section editors and the copy editors is that this design is substantially easier to work with than previous iterations of *Felix*. This reduction in layout time allows them to spend more efforts focusing on content.

OUTREACH

We have already hosted a couple of development events, including News Tutorials. We are hoping to continue this next year, and provide a number of workshops for students interested in getting involved with the paper.

DISTRIBUTION

Felix is being distributed across the South Kensington campus earlier than ever. Depending on delivery time, we usually have the paper out across the campus by 9-10am. We are also distributing to Silwood, Hammersmith, and Charing Cross. We are looking for someone at St Mary's to receive a bundle of papers and distribute them.

HALL DISTRIBUTIONS

This year we printed 2,600 copies of the freshers issue to distribute around halls. Despite spending the majority of the day driving around West London and dropping off stacks of papers, we had a number of reports from freshers that they never received their copy of *Felix*. While I strongly feel that it is important to greet freshers with a copy of *Felix* when they arrive at halls, I would recommend that my successor looks into whether it's possible to have the papers delivered to halls earlier, or possibly considers eschewing distribution to halls, to increase uptake.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Since August we have surpassed 4,000 likes on our Facebook page, and continue to have good engagement with many of our posts. Several of our posts on social media this year have had the widest reach and engagement since records began in 2015. We have also rekindled the *Felix* IG account (*felix_imperial* – go follow us!), and I am slowly getting to grips with how it works...

MEDIA COLLABORATION

Beginning this year, we had a number of plans we wanted to enact with other media societies, namely ICTV and IC Radio. Due to the IT problems mentioned above, these plans have had trouble reaching fruition. We are looking to work on closer collaboration next year, supported by Andy McLean, Media Chair.

Rob Garside, former Media Chair, has been working with our team to create a weekly podcast, exploring how the Felix team operates, and going through each week's issue. I believe that such initiatives are vital in ensuring *Felix* operates across a range of media.

WEBSITE

The new website is up and running. I would like to thank Cale Tilford, Charlie Egan, and Phil Stewart for all their help with development. We are currently looking for students to take over the Webmaster role, and ensure that we have a sustainable plan for the website in the future. We are also planning on moving more into interactive news and data journalism, and will solidify plans for this over the winter break.

PHOENIX

This year we have recruited three *Phoenix* Editors, all of whom are SciComm/SciProd students. This follows on from our excellent experience last year with *Phoenix* Editor Liz Killen, who was able to focus a large amount of attention on the magazine.

The Editors are planning on releasing three editions of *Phoenix* this year, of which at least one would be a stand-alone magazine. They also have the Blyth Gallery for 6 weeks in Easter, and will be curating an exhibition of student/staff work, alongside a series of events.

FELIX REVIEW

As some of you may be aware, last academic year the Union proposed having an external party conduct a review into *Felix*, including into its operational structure, governance, and financial model. Nobody had expressed an interest in conducting the review, and so – to prevent time from being lost – the decision has been made to conduct the review internally, and a working group has been set up. I am sure that a number of you will be asked to provide feedback over the coming academic year.

FELIX CLUB

Felix also incorporates a club element, which emphasised on the more social aspects of *Felix*. No AGM was run last year, so this term we held an EGM, during which we elected a new Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and Outreach Officer. We have already held a number of successful events, including a social at the beginning of term, and

look to continue this throughout the academic year.

Due to an aberrant PO, we did not spend nearly £700 of grant money last year, and have spent all our grant money for this year already. We have already met with Tom Bacarese-Hamilton, DPCS, and Matt Blackett, DPFS, to discuss financial management in the future, and I would like to thank both of them for their time.

The annual *Felix* Dinner, which was last held in 2015, will be making a return early next year!

