

Imperial College Union Council Report

Fintan O'Connor, Deputy President (Welfare)

Goals

Wellbeing Strategy

Working with the President, Alex 'Chippy' Compton, we have refined, consolidated and clarified the Wellbeing Strategy project. This includes its key objectives, the risks to the project, and its implementation. The President and I will be working to present this draft vision to the relevant leaders and decision-makers in the College, demanding that the College take ownership of the project, and place an unprecedented emphasis on wellbeing. We will make sure that the Union and the College collaborate effectively to shape student wellbeing for the better for years to come.

Wellbeing Representation Network (WBRN)

The Wellbeing Representation Network (WBRN) has continued to progress from strength to strength, and win new successes each week.

We achieved the highest ever number of voters for an Autumn Election, as well as the joint highest turnout, led by significant engagement from the Deputy President (Education), Nick Burstow, and me. As a percentage increase, turnout was 80% higher than the 2016-17 cycle.

All reps have engaged with the first ever mandatory training programme for student volunteers. This has been an incredible success, where only two reps in a network of 80 volunteers did not attend training and were removed from post. I have delivered 80% of these training sessions personally, to ensure an Officer Trustee (OT) lead, and strengthen the concept of a network. More importantly, this has meant that all reps have a deep understanding of the role, and have been empowered to make changes in their departments, from meaningful surveys and student engagement, to more effective awareness raising and signposting.

I have chaired the first Faculty of Engineering (FoE) SSC personally, and trained FoE dep reps and CU welfare officers in chairing and planning the meetings. The outcomes of this first Wellbeing SSC were extremely positive, including securing a community building budget of approx. £200 per department, to ensuring that procedures around changing personal tutors were advertised and clarified.

Engagement in departments in the Faculty of Natural Sciences continues to strengthen.

Liberation Review

The action plan from the liberation review is currently being implemented. It encompasses a wide range of actions and goals, short-, medium- and long-term, with some of the actions guiding how all of our staff, not just the Education and Welfare team, can engage with and support our officers. It is a priority for me to publish the report and action plan, and communicate across the College on our work.

To amplify the voice and self-representation of liberation officers, I have arranged a meeting for liberation officers from the four historical liberation zones, and our new mental health officer, to meet personally with the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, himself an LGBT representation advocate in the sciences.

Team Goals

Wellbeing strategy

Working together with Chippy, and using the President's connections at the College has been essential to the project gaining traction. Working with the Deputy President (Clubs and Societies), Tom Bacarese-Hamilton, the WBRN has been integrated into the new Sport Imperial Be Active strategy, as part of a holistic approach to wellbeing across the College.

Year-round democracy

The Community and Welfare Board of November 16 was one of the most effective ever, with students shaping the Union's welfare policies and proposing their own for discussion, including the Safe Space policy and the Accessibility of the Union for Neurodivergent Students policy.

Support & development of volunteers

I have personally supported the Wellbeing Dep Reps in planning and chairing high-level College meetings, before and during the first Faculty of Engineering Wellbeing SSC.

Accessibility & openness

Liberation Officers have shaped our work on liberation, and have begun to lobby the College themselves

Operations

Bursary Stance – In response to Council Paper of 8th November, 2016

I spent three equivalent full days working on researching the bursary provision at Imperial. Attached in Appendix A are some of the results of my work.

Last November, the Union was mandated to increase provision for students whose household income (HHI) was between £35-60,000 on the 2015 cohort scheme. However, I have established that to change schemes would seriously disadvantage the lowest income students, who in fact make up the largest HHI bracket in receipt of the bursary. Last year's resolution could have seen us ask the College for a £75,000 cut to the bursary scheme.

As such, I have agreed with Rhidian that he will continue to work on lobbying the College by working with affected students to share their experiences.

Investigations

Where a complaint is submitted to the Union, an OT and staff member lead an investigation to establish the facts. A significant part of my time in the last two weeks has been occupied with conducting an investigation and the corresponding report.

Training – Wellbeing and Academic Reps

I worked with Nick Burstow to ensure the success of both our Wellbeing and Academic Rep development days, emphasising on team-building, communication, and global vision.

Gender Neutral Toilets

I have been liaising between the LGBT+ Officer, Alessio Incitti, and the College's Estates Department, to secure more gender neutral toilets across the College.

Governance Review

I have been working with the other OTs for the governance review. I will be leading the 'Elections' part of the consultation, working with students on the steering group to decide what we review.

Appendix A – Bursary Research, Fintan O’Connor

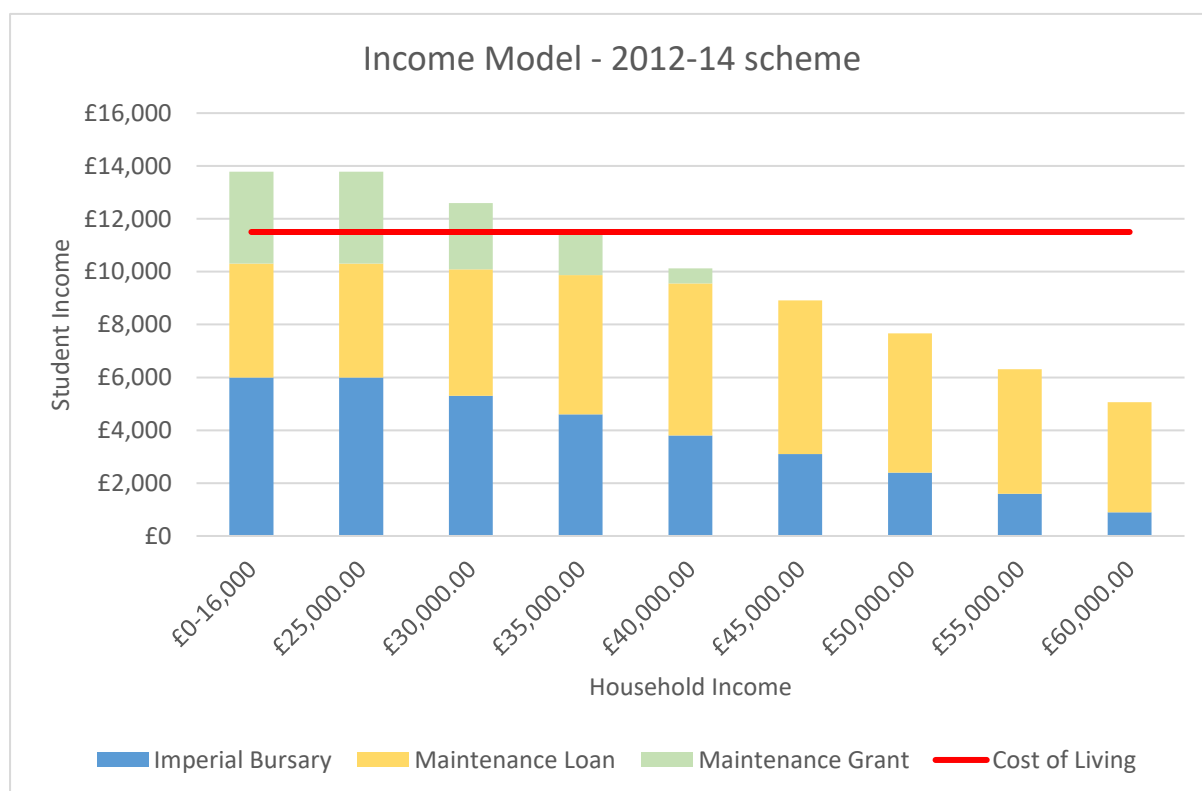
DATA

1. Income and Expenditure Models: 2015 cohort

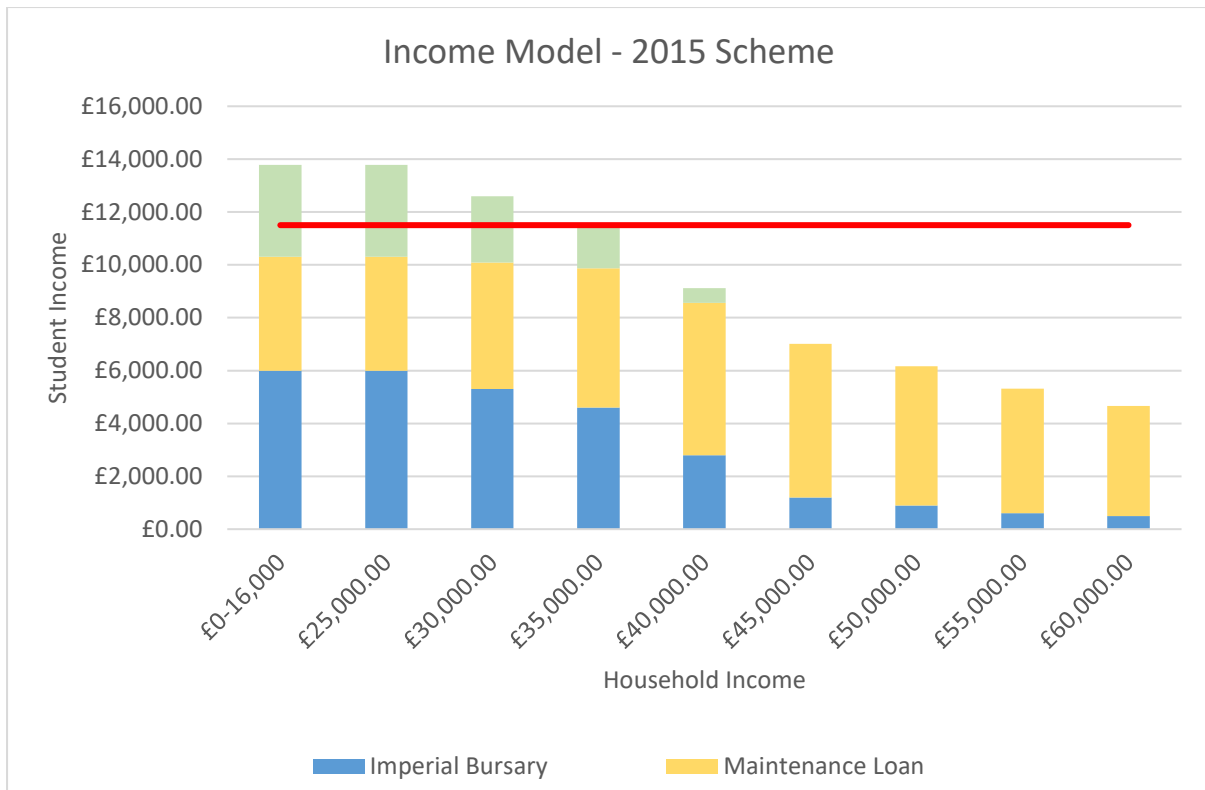
The cost of living in London is based on the guide from the *Cost of Living in London* page on the Imperial website. (Imperial College London, 2017). The total estimate for a 39-week term in one of the halls of residence is £11,112, which has served as the basis for the cost of living estimate. This does not reflect that many students will have to agree 52-week contracts as standard, or pursue personal and professional development during the summer break. Course costs were not included in the 2017 College estimate, and so an estimate of £390 for 39 weeks was included from the 2015 undergraduate prospectus (Imperial College London, n.d.). The total estimate for the cost of living was £11,502.

Student Finance information was retrieved from the practitioner notes for the 2017-18 academic year from the Student Loans Company (Student Loans Company, 2017).

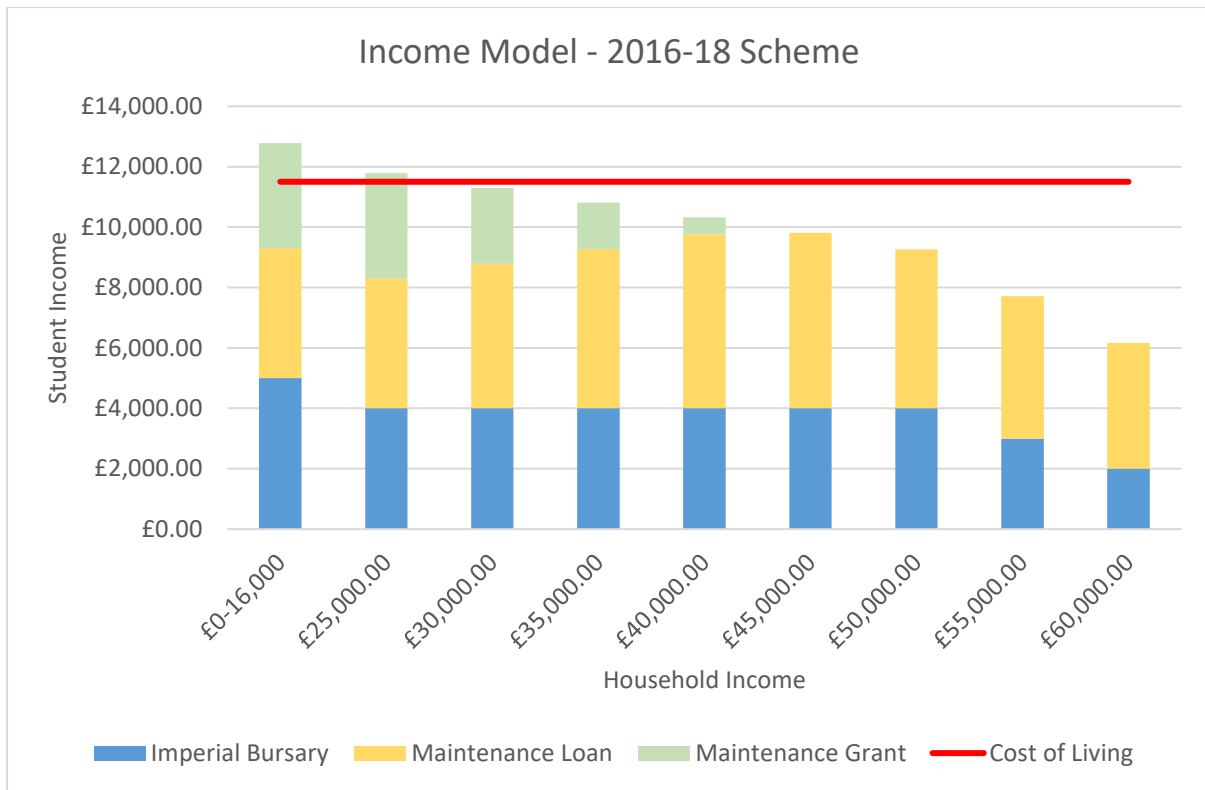
Bursary information was retrieved from the College’s bursary pages. (Imperial College London, n.d.). Each household income point below represents the upper limit of a bursary threshold.



Household Income	<16k	25k	30k	35k	40k	45k	50k	55k	60k
Surplus/Deficit Based on Cost of Living	£2,282	£2,282	£1,096	£-90	£-1,377	£-2,592	£-3,840	£-5,188	£-6,436



Household Income	<16k	25k	30k	35k	40k	45k	50k	55k	60k
Surplus/Deficit Based on Cost of Living	£2,282.00	£2,282.00	£1,096.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
	£2,282.00	£2,282.00	£1,096.00	£90.00	£2,377.00	£4,492.00	£5,340.00	£6,188.00	£6,836.00



Household Income	<16k	25k	30k	35k	40k	45k	50k	55k	60k
Surplus/Deficit Based on Cost of Living	£1,282.00	£282.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	£1,282.00	£282.00	£204.00	£690.00	£1,177.00	£1,692.00	£2,240.00	£3,788.00	£5,336.00

2. Applications to the Student Support Fund (SSF) by Home students with HHI in the range of £35-60,000 for the academic year 2017/18.

Grants

SSF 2015/16				
Income Band	Applicants	Awarded	Avg	Total
A1	8	3	934.67	2804
A2	3	1	500	500
B	1	0	0	0
C	0	0	0	0
D	2	1	2000	2000
E1	1	1	500	500
E2	0	0	0	0
F	2	1	500	500
G	0	0	0	0
H	1	0	0	0
Over 60k	1	1	250	250
Not Assessed	29	23	641.3	14750
Total	48	31	687.23	21304

- 8.33% of all SSF grant applications came from students whose household income was in the range of £35-60,000.
- These applicants had a success rate of 50%, compared to the overall success rate of 64.6%.

Loans

SSF 2015/16				
Income Band	Applicants	Awarded	Avg	Total
A1	1	1	2000	2000
A2	2	2	550	1100
B	0	0	0	0
C	0	0	0	0
D	1	1	700	700
E1	0	0	0	0
E2	0	0	0	0
F	1	1	500	500
G	1	1	500	500
H	0	0	0	0
Over 60k	2	2	1325	2650
Not Assessed	4	4	900	3600
Total	12	12	920.83	11050

- 25% of all SSF loan applications were made by students whose household income was in the range of £35-60,000. All applications were successful.

3. Estimated cost to place 2015 cohort on another bursary scheme

Table 1: Students in receipt of 2015 cohort bursary as at end of 2016-17 academic year

Income Band	Household Income (HHI)	No of students	Imperial Bursary (£)
A	£0-25,000	282	1,692,000
B	£25,001-30,000	38	201,400
C	£30,001-35,000	46	211,600
D	£35,001 - 40,000	30	84,000
E1	£40,001-42,500	13	15,600
E2	£42,501-45,000	18	21,600
F	£45,001-50,000	40	36,000
G	£50,001-55,000	32	19,200
H	£55,001-60,000	36	18,000
Total		535	2,299,400.00

Tables 2 and 3: Estimated Cost to Change Bursary Schemes for 2015 cohort

2015 cohort	Number of Students per Income Bracket*	Difference in bursary: 2016-18 and 2015 schemes	Cost to change remaining 2015 cohort to 2016-18 scheme for 2018-19 academic year
£0-16,000	188	£-1,000.00	£-188,000.00
£16,001-25,000	94	£-2,000.00	£-188,000.00
£25,001-30,000	38	£-1,300.00	£-49,400.00
£30,001-35,000	46	£-600.00	£-27,600.00
£35,001-40,000	30	£1,200.00	£36,000.00
£40,001-42,500	13	£2,800.00	£36,400.00
£42,501-45,000	18	£2,800.00	£50,400.00
£45,001-50,000	40	£3,100.00	£124,000.00
£50,001-55,000	32	£2,400.00	£76,800.00
£55,001-60,000	36	£1,500.00	£54,000.00
TOTAL			£-75,400.00

2015 cohort	Number of Students per Income Bracket	Difference in bursary: 2012-14 and 2015 schemes	Cost to change remaining 2015 cohort to 2012-14 scheme for 2018-19 academic year
£0-25,000	282	£0.00	£0.00
£25,001-30,000	38	£0.00	£0.00
£30,001-35,000	46	£0.00	£0.00
£35,001-40,000	30	£1,000.00	£30,000.00
£40,001-42,500	13	£1,900.00	£24,700.00
£42,501-45,000	18	£1,900.00	£34,200.00
£45,001-50,000	40	£1,500.00	£60,000.00
£50,001-55,000	32	£1,000.00	£32,000.00
£55,001-60,000	36	£400.00	£14,400.00
TOTAL			£195,300.00

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