

President Report to Union Council – June 2020

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Highlights:

- COVID-19 Planning/Mitigation – College Autumn Term Announcement
- Appointment of a new MD
- Awards/SCAs

College Meetings & Prep	Student + Union Meetings & Prep	Operational work (day-to-day)	Project work (major goals)	Misc (largely MD recruitment)
23.4%	47.6%	19.3%	0.0%	9.7%

Updates:

- **College announcement.**
 - The College is set to make an announcement about the nature of the Autumn term by Tuesday evening (2/6). Shervin and I will have an update on this, as well as the Union comms/activity that should follow, in the meeting.
- **College COVID-19 Planning.** We have been involved in a range of conversations with the College regarding COVID-19.
 - **A new internal structure** has been set up as of last week, merging previous disparate meetings into one set of meetings. These are roughly five times a week, covering (in turn): online readiness, ongoing activity, student recruitment, timetabling, and innovation. Shervin and I sit on all of these, with other student reps joining some of the meetings. In addition, following the representations made especially by Shervin (complemented by Thomas and myself), the focus of one of the weekly meetings is the student experience. Shervin is co-chairing this meeting alongside a staff member, which is already a win for us. We're hoping that going forward, this committee yields positive changes and gives us a clear avenue to take your views back to the College.
 - **Staff changes**
 - The structure of staff around education is changing as Simone Buitendijk departs, with an interim VPE set to be appointed by July 1st and a large chunk of her role being given to someone else.
 - **What does this mean for us?** We're still working this out, and want to collaborate with whoever's in the new structure. It'd be fair to say we're nervous about what these changes might mean for student influence over important College decisions.
 - **College Council etc.** Senior leaders in the College are updating the College Council roughly once every 3 weeks – I'm happy to take any questions about these meetings although little of what has been discussed here is of direct relevance to students.
- **Union COVID-19 Update.**
 - Much of the Union's work is continuing, with far more planned meetings and scheduled social calls than normal necessitated by the crisis.
 - **Furlough update** – an issue with this, where less money was paid to student staff than expected, should be resolved by the date of Council. Conversations are ongoing as to what decisions we will take with our furloughed staff as

- Our bid for a new **block grant** was submitted at the start of April, requesting our regular funding + an inflationary uplift, as well as funding for several one-off projects. We've still yet to hear back from the College on this.
- **Financial planning for 2020-21 is ongoing** – by the date of the meeting, we will have had a detailed discussion about this at Leadership (OTs + senior managers) which I will update Council on.
- **Managing Director Onboarding.** The new MD, Tom Flynn, has now started. He'll be transitioning out of his previous role and into this one steadily, beginning with one day a week of work for the next two months. In the meantime, we're retaining our interim, and have begun the onboarding process for Tom (meetings, signing documents etc.).
- **Union Awards/SCAs.** Panels are taking place over the course of w/c June 1st. Congratulations to all who were nominated!

Upcoming:

- Work is ongoing on the induction process for next years' full-time officers, and as stated above, the onboarding process for the new MD is also ongoing. If you have any specific views about either of these, I'm happy to hear them.
- Lots of education planning is coming up, especially in response to the student feedback on the College's 2nd June announcement. Happy to hear views.
- We have started online preparedness meetings inside the Union; I'm open to any feedback you guys might have regarding the approach the Union should take in transitioning to adapt to these new circumstances for the longer term.

Key goals:

College Goal: Change the way decisions are made – **In progress**

- One of my objectives for the coming weeks is to produce a document detailing our relationships with individuals and committees of the College, which will help identify where we need to increase the influence of students.

Union Goal 1: Transparency – **In progress**

- We've written a plan for OT communications, committing ourselves to:
 - More frequent posts on social media
 - An interview series in *Felix*
 - ~~“OT Tours” across our campuses~~
 - Our blogs/written articles for more detailed stuff

Union Goal 2: Protecting/Improving our Services – **Frozen in the short-term due to COVID-19**

- Some work is happening in this area regarding (for example) planning around Welcome 2020, but its all in the context of much broader planning and the obvious uncertainty created by the Crisis.

Union Goal 3: London Living Wage – **In progress**

- We are in the process of developing a timeline for implementing this, which will be approved by the Board. I will update Council on this as work continues.